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Eric C. Sheffield, Managing Editor
Jessica A. Heybach, Associate Editor

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** Cover design by Jessica A. Heybach

** Our thanks to the cadre of scholars who serve as reviewers without whose services the journal could not exist.

Critical Questions in Education: Volume 10, Issue 3

The Academy for Educational Studies

June 15, 2019

Colleagues and Friends of the Academy:

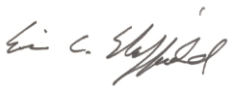
We are feeling like we are hitting back to back home runs with this issue as it comes on the heels of a recent, spring, special issue! If you haven't yet put in a proposal for our upcoming symposium in the windy city, never fear, there is still time to do so. Proposals are due to Steve Jones by July 1. This year's symposium interrogates the public/private tension so prevalent in educational institutions today. The Chicago symposium will take place at the beautiful Ambassador Hotel November 11-13. We hope to see there. Our 2020 Spring conference will take place February 17-19 at the Seattle, WA Renaissance Hotel. Details are forthcoming. You can find all things Academy by pointing your browser here: academyforeducationalstudies.org.

With this issue, we also seem to have hit the Illinois jackpot: all but one of our authors is connected to our home state. The first manuscript penned by Laura R. Johnson and more than several of her students takes up community-based research and focuses on issues of participant observation and dialogic reflexivity when research is connected to graduate level study. Their insightful piece is followed up by Jay Percell's piece extolling the virtue of "practicing what we preach" when it comes to grading.

Next in this issue's lineup is study conducted at (yes, you guessed it) an Illinois institution by Ronda Mitchell and Nancy Barrett examining a program meant to increase diversity among its teacher candidates. Our final regular manuscript examines educational policy following the "Unite the Right" protest in Charlottesville Virginia. This engaging manuscript is written by our only non-Illinois authors, Zachary W. Taylor, Danielle Zaragoza, and Catherine Hartman. We close with a film review of *Voices of Baltimore* by Gary Homana and reviewed by Yanika Patterson.

As always, happy reading.

PAX,



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Contents

Manuscripts

Review

"Earning the Right": Conducting Community Based Research[1]

Laura Ruth Johnson, Northern Illinois University
Colleen Stribling, Elgin Community College
Nicole Rivera, North Central College
Katharine Preissner, University of Illinois at Chicago
Chia Pao Hsu, Northern Illinois University
Antoinette Jones, Northern Illinois University
Amy May-Schroeder, University of St. Francis

Abstract

In this article, we examine the process of conducting community-based research within graduate coursework, discussing and analyzing student reflective narratives on various aspects of the research process as a way of providing insight into the challenges, dilemmas, and joys entailed in conducting community-based qualitative research. In particular, we focus on the process of gaining entry into a research site; negotiating one's role as a researcher, and how researchers can be ***observant participants*** *rather than just participant observers; and building reciprocal and collaborative relationships with participants. We also explore how our experiences in the community helped us challenge pejorative stereotypes about low-income communities and communities of color and lead to expanded views of the role of researchers within community contexts, as well as more nuanced and critical notions of researcher reflexivity that consider how researchers themselves are implicated in the issues and contexts that they study. We articulate the notion of* ***dialogic reflexivity****, which calls attention to how reflexivity involves on-going and collective refection and discussion with research team members and community members.*

Keywords: *Community-based Research; Participatory Action Research; Teaching research methods; Researcher reflexivity*

> *It was not my first choice. I wanted to find a more "interesting" place to do my fieldwork. I envisioned discovering something revolutionary that I could report in my findings. My initial thought was, "So, what? What will I learn from my Saturdays at the café?" The café workers were also hesitant about my participation. It seemed more of a chore than a useful addition to their already busy days.*

1. The authors would like to thank the many organizations, businesses, and residents in the Humboldt Park community of Chicago that generously shared their knowledge, time, and resources with students enrolled in summer research courses, especially the Puerto Rican Cultural Center and Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School. We are particularly grateful to Dr. José López who provided invaluable historical and cultural context to students through his guest lectures, and offered helpful insights and feedback on students' ideas and projects.

The above reflection, from a graduate student enrolled in a community-based research class, raises important issues related to conducting research in community contexts. One issue concerns the student's view of what might be gained from her site—a context she viewed as somewhat banal and unremarkable, rather than as a place where she might gain "findings" worthy of research. This view speaks to prevalent notions within educational research that often disregard everyday community contexts as sites of learning. Another view expressed by this student, also an author of this article, implicates workers at the site, who viewed the presence of a student researcher as a hindrance; in this case, employees in this community business were unwillingly being positioned as research participants, as their supervisor had approved the project but had not conferred with employees. Their reaction to the student underscores the need for constant and sustained negotiation with community partners and participants at all stages of the research process, not just at the outset. In order to be able to talk to, and thus learn from, participants, this student would need to, in her words, "earn the right" to be there, which meant not just building rapport and relationships of trust, but also being of use to her site. This article attempts to explore some of these issues and concerns related to learning and conducting community-based research and ethnography, by sharing the experiences of a group of researchers, comprised of seven students from a course in community-based research, as well as the professor for the course (they are all co-authors of the article). Here, we explore some lessons learned from the process of entering a research site and participating in a variety of community-based settings, and how these can be used to inform the design of community-based research courses. The issues raised by an analysis of this student's experiences are important ones for researchers to be cognizant of as they conduct ethnographic research in a community setting, particularly if they are novice researchers.

Although some research has been conducted that examines the process of teaching research to graduate students (Delyser, 2008; Hopkinson & Hogg, 2004; Hsiung, 2008; Kleinman, Copp, & Henderson, 1997), less research is available that explores student perspectives on the process of conducting such research, and even less focuses on research that has taken place within a particular community setting as part of coursework and how students' engagement in reflective practices during the research process helped them rethink traditional notions of research. In this article, rather than report findings from the projects, we emphasize the process of conducting community-based research within graduate coursework, discussing and analyzing student reflective narratives on various aspects of the research process as a way of providing insight into the challenges, dilemmas, and joys entailed in conducting qualitative research. In particular, we focus on the process of gaining entry into a research site, negotiating one's role as a researcher, and the process of building relationships with participants, demonstrating the ways researchers working across multiple and diverse contexts within communities that have too often experienced distress and disinvestment must navigate a "methodological tightrope" that "demands a fully reflexive approach that moves beyond simple constructions of the self to one that fully and explicitly engages the context" (Stich, Cippollone, Nikischer, & Weis, 2012, p. 464). We also explore how our experiences in the community, as students and as researchers, helped us challenge stereotypes about low-income communities and communities of color, as deficient and devoid of resources, and lead to expanded views of concepts such as learning and community, as well as transformed views of ourselves—not only as researchers, but also in relation to the community settings within which we participated. Examining these processes from a student perspective can provide substantial theoretical and practical insights to educators and researchers regarding how to view communities as intellectual spaces (Community as Intellectual Space, 2005; Johnson, 2017), and as sites of knowledge and theorizing, instead of as merely as "authentic" or "engaged" contexts for students to learn research

skills or to provide community service. As we share our reflections, completed for course assignments and also as part of reflective practices engaged in after the class had ended, we also aim to provide a critique of our own initial assumptions, and detail how some of the early missteps we made as nascent community-based researchers have informed the development of our views of what it means to conduct this sort of research. In this way, this article hopes to respond to the "renewed reflexivity," (Stich et al., 2012) some others have called for, as well as document the important knowledge and learning that often takes place in community-based research courses, with the goal of helping instructors design reciprocal community learning experiences for their students.

Relevant Theory & Literature

This article seeks to add to extant literature and scholarship in the area of teaching research methods, in particular, work that has focused on community-based research approaches (Hacker, 2013; Johnson, 2017). In this section, we review some of the research in the area of teaching research methods and also briefly discuss community-based teaching and research models undergirding our approach in the class. In conducting this study, the research team was informed by perspectives that urge reflection by researchers regarding the process and "politics" of conducting qualitative research (Mikesell, Bromley, & Khodyakov, 2013; Stich et al., 2012; Weis & Fine, 2000). Within class sessions and throughout the research process students were encouraged to be self-reflexive regarding aspects of their own background, following the lead of researchers such as Behar (1996) and Delgado Bernal (1998) who have challenged traditional research paradigms and notions of the researcher as neutral, objective, and unbiased, and have urged for new research epistemologies which build on researchers' "cultural intuition" (Bernal, 1998, p. 556) and consider the ways that researchers themselves are often made vulnerable within the research process. Thus, we will review some of the research on reflexivity, including that which has called for a "renewed reflexivity" that moves beyond mere discussions of how researchers' backgrounds figure into their research (Stich et al., 2012).

Teaching and Learning Research Methods

Although other researchers and teachers of qualitative research methods have described the process of teaching research to graduate students (Booker, 2009; Delyser, 2008; Henderson, et al, 2008; Hopkinson & Hogg, 2004; Hsiung, 2008; Kleinman, Copp, & Henderson, 1997; Trujillo, 1999; Unluer, 2012), few have offered in-depth *student* reflections on the process of conducting qualitative and ethnographic research, and even less have provided insights on how students negotiate participation in communities and build and navigate relationships with community institutions and residents. Often, when student reflections on the research process are included, we learn very little about their backgrounds and how these intersect with or are challenged by their experiences in the research setting and interactions with participants

Weis & Fine (2000) offer student reflections that examine how students negotiated and grappled with various "speed bumps"—referring to obstacles, points of reflection, ethical dilemmas, and warning signals—within the research process. Others have explored the ways that researchers are insiders and/or outsiders within research settings (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Hellawell, 2006; Weis & Fine, 2000) and this study seeks to add to this work by exploring the ways that researchers' lives intersected with those of research participants and how community-

based research can transform researchers, as well as help them reconsider existing notions regarding the contexts within which they research. Teachers of research methods such as Hsiung (2008) highlight the importance of explicit instruction in reflexivity within their research process, whereby students interrogate their assumptions, backgrounds, and theoretical and conceptual lenses. Hellawell (2006) also advocates for helping students think through the series of insider-outsider continua on which they are situated, so that they can better understand their roles as researchers. Cousik (2015) urges teachers of ethnographic methods to build awareness among students of the ways that characteristics such as race, class, and gender affect their interactions with participants, particularly for those students not part of the majority culture. Others have called for a more critical view of reflexivity, that does not just examine individual identity vis-à-vis the research process, but accounts for broader conditions and resources.

Community-based Research Models

The course described in this paper was premised on a community-based qualitative research design (CBQR): a collaborative and reciprocal approach to research which involves building relationships with community-based organizations and community members to develop and implement research projects that investigate salient community issues and concerns (Johnson, 2017). This approach is grounded in participatory paradigms that challenge more traditional, positivist designs viewing research as an objective and value neutral endeavor (Hall, 1992; Lather, 1986). CBQR is guided by the concept of communities as intellectual spaces wherein communities and their members are acknowledged as rich sources and sites of theory and knowledge and entails that research involves learning that occurs "through participative investigations…[and] supportive, situated experiences…[which] make use of a variety of resources in multiple media" (Community as Intellectual Space: Preliminary Program, 2005, Symposium Overview, para. 2; Johnson, 2017; Rosing, 2008). CBQR is also informed by the notions of praxis and engaged learning. Praxis refers to practical knowledge and involves the integration of reflection and action upon the world aimed at transformation (Freire, 1970). Engaged learning takes place when students are provided with real-life contexts and activities in order to apply their knowledge and skills towards addressing relevant issues and problems. Although each CBQR project is unique, and there is no "blueprint" for this type of research, CBQR studies have some common characteristics.

First, CBQR projects are *collaborative* and involve dialogue and discussion among researchers and community partners at various stages of the research process. Researchers conducting CBQR adopt a *critical* stance, utilizing research to challenge status quo narratives about social problems. Finally, CBQR is intended to be *transformative* by employing research findings to make substantive and meaningful changes related to the issue under study; in addition, projects should enact transformations on researchers and participants, by shifting or impacting their perspectives on particular phenomena, as well as expanding their views of specific community and educational contexts,

The approach that was employed for the research course described in this article draws heavily from the above model. We view it as an approach to course and community-based research that involves critical immersion, inquiry, and reflection on the part of graduate students within particular community settings. Furthermore, over the years that the course was offered, students' own reflections and feedback from community members led the course towards a more collaborative and participatory approach. Whereas initial instantiations of the class involved students in

more traditional research activities within community settings, later offerings focused on participatory projects, and involved students in creating proposals for research projects in conjunction with organizations and individuals from the community. Although the course was at the outset designed to provide graduate students with immersive research opportunities within a community setting, and to promote more enhanced views of community knowledge, over time the course also sought to build reciprocal research relationships with individuals and communities towards the development of emancipatory knowledge "by asserting that everyday people not only engage in sophisticated self-reflection, but also learn how to make changes to their communities" (Cammarota, 2009-2010, p. 7). Guiding theories for the course, and for the research described here, include critical perspectives on teaching and learning as collective and liberatory processes (Freire, 1970).

A Renewed Reflexivity

Many researchers have called attention to the need for researchers to be mindful of how their own backgrounds, characteristics, and experiences figure into the research process and their building of relationships with community partners and residents. This self-reflexivity assists researchers in being aware of the ways they are both insiders and outsiders relative to a research setting and participants, and how their own backgrounds and experiences intersect with and/or diverge from those of participants. This sort of awareness is important within community-based research, as it helps researchers understand how such characteristics and various identity categories enable or restrict resources, shape conditions and contexts, and inform our perspectives.

Behar (1996) has explored the ways that researchers themselves become vulnerable, as they react and respond to events occurring within the setting and to participants, challenging views that ethnographers must remain neutral in the face of trauma and pain. Delgado Bernal (1998) addressed failures of traditional and mainstream educational research in explicating intersections of gender, ethnic, and class oppressions, positing the notion of cultural intuition—whereby scholars of color are acknowledged as having unique viewpoints for understanding and analyzing their own experiences and those of their cultural community—and epistemologies that are premised on certain cultural and local knowledge as necessary paradigms for research. In opposition to views of bias as a polluting factor, this sort of cultural intuition serves as a lens that allows researchers to more accurately make meaning of contexts, beliefs, and practices.

Some researchers have urged for a view of reflexivity that goes beyond a "simplistic focus on the self" (Stich, et al., 2012, p. 464) and that makes connections to the material conditions and contexts within which projects take place, particularly as related to state disinvestment in urban communities, increased economic inequities between city populations, and neoliberal policies that have led to the privatization of many public services, such as education. These shifting conditions and declining public resources create complex contexts which demand that community-based researchers not merely reflect on their backgrounds and experiences in relation to community issues, but think critically about and problematize their own experiential narratives and viewpoints, and particularly reflect on how they might be implicated within, or even complicit to, larger destructive and oppressive policies and practices. It is important for researchers to be mindful that power inequities exist between themselves and research participants, but more importantly also be attentive to how they might also be endorsing or replicating such unequal relationships within their own research projects and daily interactions with participants (Abu-Lughod, 1996; Weis & Fine, 2000). Furthermore, researchers inhabit a range of identities and relationships with participants that shift

throughout a study and must be constantly negotiated (Dmitriadis, 2001); these reflect the dynamic contexts and shifting conditions within which research takes place.

Community-based qualitative research's insistence on collaborative research projects that are premised on community knowledge, and guided by community concerns, demands attentiveness to how relationships are formed and negotiated throughout the study. These sorts of research projects often require that academic researchers cede a significant amount of power and authority within the project, a task difficult for scholars used to serving as "the expert." Although many community-based and participatory models have advocated for the establishment of symmetrical relationships between researchers and community members, CBQR often urges for *asymmetrical* relationships which privilege community knowledge and leadership, entailing a radical reimagining of the role of research vis-à-vis communities and a repositioning of academic researchers in relation to community leaders and communities. This process involves a sort of *dialogic reflexivity* wherein researchers and community members engage in on-going and critical reflection and dialogue regarding power, positions, resources, and social and economic conditions and contexts in ways that often challenge the hegemony of academic research and knowledge.

Course and Study Details

This article represents the experiences of students enrolled in graduate courses in field based qualitative research that took place over five consecutive summers, from 2008-2012. Each summer the class had a unique focus, but the overall emphasis was on gaining access to a community and developing qualitative and ethnographic research skills. In some class years, students were assigned to specific sites within the community—such as a community-run aerobics program, a bike shop, a café, a summer arts program for youth, an Afro-Caribbean music and dance group, the public library, and a community newspaper—to conduct field work and explore processes of knowledge acquisition and transmission taking place in each setting. Other summers, students decided on a topic or phenomenon, such as gentrification, youth mentorship, or social-emotional learning— and then explored this topic through interviews with individuals in the community who could provide them with relevant insight.

The class met on Saturdays for six weeks at a community-based organization. Students completed reflective journals throughout the research process that focused on their reactions to and experiences within the community and included reflections on their roles and responsibilities as researchers. Within course sessions, students discussed their research findings, aiming to describe particularities of individual sites and experiences, as well as to identify commonalities and patterns across settings and within the broader community. In addition to conducting fieldwork, students attended community events, which helped them gain further insight into community life. At the completion of the course, members of the community and former students were invited to participate in informal presentations of research projects, followed by a luncheon. These culminating events allowed for discussion and dialogue of research findings and the exploration of issues related to researcher role and the establishment of university-community partnerships.

Description of Site and Community

The community setting was Humboldt Park, Chicago, (also referred to as *Paseo Boricua*, or Puerto Rican Way) and many of the programs were either direct projects of or associated with

the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC), a community-based organization that has provided educational and cultural services in the area for over 35 years. The motto guiding the PRCC's work was 'Live and *help* to live', a philosophy which reflects their collective framework for service delivery and emphasizes the need for "giving back" to one's community and helping others become successful. Humboldt Park is located on Chicago's Near Northwest Side, about four miles from Chicago's downtown loop. Humboldt Park and its institutions possess a long legacy of social activism, and grassroots community organizations, such as the PRCC, have designed and implemented numerous programs and initiatives aimed at maintaining the cultural character of the community; staving off encroaching gentrification and displacement of community residents; and maintaining the vibrancy of the community.

Description of Student-researchers

Many of the students in the course had never before been to Humboldt Park, and rarely spent time within city limits, save to attend a sporting event or visit a tourist attraction in the downtown area. Other students had grown up in other areas of the city—mostly in predominately African American communities on the South Side—but now lived closer to the university for school and/or work. A few students did live in the city, but had not often ventured into the community because of fears of crime and violence. They were all graduate students, most pursuing their doctorates in Education at a university located 60 miles west of Chicago. The data presented in this article draws from four years of the course being offered. During this period 30 students have enrolled in the course; of these, there were 18 Caucasian, eight African American, and two Latinas enrolled. There were also students from Palestine, Taiwan, and Belize enrolled. The students who collaborated on this particular article were four Caucasian women, a Taiwanese woman, and an African American woman. They ranged in age from 30 to 50.

The instructor's relationship with the community began in 1994 when she served as the director of an educational program for young mothers, a program of the PRCC. In 2002, she conducted dissertation research within the community, and, when she began work at as a professor, continued this research and work with community organizations and residents. In 2008, she began offering a community-based summer graduate-level research course at the PRCC, as a way of providing students the opportunity to conduct hands-on ethnographic research, as well as to begin forging a more formalized partnership between the university and the PRCC. She is also a community resident and lived about ½ mile from where class sessions took place. Her longstanding ties to the community helped facilitate students' access to community organizations and residents. Many students cited this relationship as instrumental in providing them with access to sites that would otherwise have been largely closed off to them as researchers.

Study Data Sources and Analysis

The data shared here primarily consists of reflective writings from class assignments. After participation in the class had ended, a few of the students came together to discuss their learning process in the course, including some of the challenges faced in conducting this research. In the tradition of narrative inquiry, the group used this collaborative, reflective and analytical process to better understand their roles as researchers and how the process transformed the group's notions of what it means to be a researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Furthermore, the group also engaged in a reflexive process of "active self-examination" in order to examine how "research

agenda and assumptions, subject location(s), personal beliefs, and emotions enter[ed] into" (Hsiung, 2008, p. 212) the research, as well as explore the "emotional work" often entailed in "navigating" research relationships in the field (Brown, 2011, p. 109). These group discussions and analytical process were used to construct narrative vignettes, based on reflective writings, that could shed light on aspects of the research process within community settings and student-researcher positionality. Although all of the data shared here are from the authors of this article only, IRB approval was obtained for this project.

Earning the Right: Reflections on the Research Process

The reflections described here are meant to provide insight into the process of conducting such community-based research, rather than present findings from research studies conducted as part of the class. Through self and group analyses of experiences and reflective journals, members of the research team identified aspects of their participation in the class and community that contributed to their understanding of the community, the research process within a community setting, and roles as a researchers. This type of self-reflexivity is a hallmark of much ethnographic research, and is an especially important component within PAR models; however, in our presentation and discussion of the following vignettes, we aim for a more nuanced discussion of the process of conducting research in community settings and building relationships with participants—a "renewed reflexivity"—so as to better understand tensions and challenges related to various aspects of the research process: entering the field, negotiating and building relationships, and transformation of the researcher (Stich et al., 2012).

Entering the Community/Field: Challenging Stereotypes and Notions of Research

For most of the students, this was their first experience conducting research in an urban community. Before the course began, students were asked to complete a writing assignment that asked them to describe and discuss their impressions of Humboldt Park. Many admitted that they were initially influenced by stereotypes and media images of the community as dangerous. They shared how family members and friends questioned their decision to enroll in the course, warning them not to drive into or park their cars in the neighborhood. One student's husband insisted on driving her the first day. However, over the summer, students' experiences in the community helped them shed these negative perspectives, and they developed an extremely positive view of the community, one that many sought to disseminate among fellow students and within their respective communities.

Students inevitably began the class with their own lenses, which often included pejorative views of the community and its residents. These lenses also included perspectives of the community as deficient and in terms of problems that needed to be "fixed." Some viewed their task as student-researchers to devise solutions to these perceived problems. For example, after one class session, two nurses enrolled in the course immediately suggested conducting a needs assessment to determine ways to combat health issues within the community (they later discovered that such an assessment had already been done and that there were numerous health and diabetes/obesity initiatives). Within the course, students were challenged to cast off assumptions about the community and the need to evaluate or assess the community, and instead seek ways to learn from community members and research participants. In this way, students' experiences conducting research

often challenged and/or transformed their notions of concepts such as community, learning, and research.

Below, Kathy, a doctoral student in Adult Education and an Occupational Therapist who lived and worked in Chicago, described her initial impressions and experiences in Humboldt Park:

> **West of Western:** I live in Chicago and had some limited familiarity with the Humboldt Park neighborhood, mostly through patronage at restaurants, shops and bars just east of Paseo Boricua, in an area that had been recently gentrified. I knew lots of people who were either looking for apartments or just making recommendations about the area say, "well it's safe up until Western. You don't want to go west of western." That's just something that I heard a lot. Because of these feelings that the neighborhood was unsafe, the first day of class I established a carpool plan with classmates, and chose not to immediately tell some of my family members that I was taking a course in Humboldt Park. After only one weekend in the community however, I realized that my previous thoughts about the area were inaccurate, and began to feel safe and welcome. I also began to challenge some of my friends and family members' views of and attitudes the community.

In the vignette above, we see that Kathy examined her assumptions about the Paseo Boricua neighborhood. Her previous views were based on the perceptions of others, but being immersed in the community and interacting with community members provided the opportunity to establish new perspectives of the community that were based on her own experiences. In class discussions, she revealed that an older relative by marriage, who used to live in Humboldt Park as a child, shared racist views of the neighborhood, and she expressed some feelings of guilt and complicity about these views in her own family. During this process, she began to think differently about the encroaching gentrification in Paseo Boricua and also critiqued some of her previously views of the gentrification as a benign process and her own role in perpetuating it; through her exposure to community organizations and interactions with residents, she was able to think more deeply about community issues, and make connections between her personal choices and familial viewpoints and the larger structural and economic forces bearing down on low income and marginalized communities. Within her reflective notes, Chia-Pao, an international student from Taiwan enrolled in the doctoral program in Instructional Technology, also described her first entrée into the community and how her experiences conducting research within a *Bomba* (Afro-Caribbean music) music group challenged initial assumptions:

> **An Outsider and Another Outsider**: "Where are you going?" The taxi driver, an Asian man with black-grey hair and wrinkled face, asked me: "Please drive me to Division and California, the Puerto Rican Cultural Center," I said. "Do you speak Spanish, Miss?" "No!" I laughed. The taxi driver: "So why do you go there?" I answered him: 'There is a festival today"…An outsider of the Puerto Rican community (me) being challenged by another outsider (the taxi driver). There are indeed assumptions of linking the language with culture, race, and territory. My research experience with *Bomba* musicians has led me to rethink the relationships among language, ethnicity, community, and identity.
>
> As a Taiwanese student in the United States for a few years, I have traveled through several cities and states but have never been in this area of the Chicago. Both the native Puerto Rican community and Humboldt Park community seemed remote to my native culture.

> Was I a sensitive tourist/outsider who was curious and interested to everything, an eager student wanting to learn the music of *Bomba*, or a researcher who took on a mission to make sense of cultural practice in this community? Being a mixture of all these roles during this research project pushed me out of my comfort zone. Not only because I had to filter through several cultural layers to understand the context of Chicago's Humboldt Park community, but also to change my practices from passive observation to active participation.

The above reflections illustrate how students' initial experiences within the community generated a thought process on their own backgrounds in relation to the community, as well as caused them to reflect on her own lenses and interpretative frameworks in the context of the community. Here, Chia-Pao was also confronted with the narrow views of the community by the taxi driver, and his view of her in relation to the community. The taxi driver's comment also pushed her to think about her own presumptions of what it meant to be a researcher and how to navigate the roles as insider and outsider as she sought to understand cultural practices within the community through her own lens (Hellawell, 2006). Furthermore, she spoke to the inherent discomfort involved in such research endeavors, as researchers are challenged to rethink their own stances and roles.

The start date of the course coincided with the Puerto Rican People's Parade. Students were asked to read articles about the community prior to the first day of class. After a morning of introductions and orientation to the class and community, students were directed to go out on their own to experience the neighborhood and encouraged to navigate their own way into the community and for lunch and the parade. At the time of this reflection, Nicole worked as an instructor at two local higher educational institutions. The following edited journal entry demonstrated her responses to the first contact with the community:

> **The People's Parade:** The People's Parade provided such a wonderful opportunity to become immersed in the community…The community groups in the parade demonstrated what is important in this community: social justice, youth, health care, and empowerment. The float for Oscar Lopez Rivera[2] was a reminder that this community is tied to larger political story. Another group brought focus to the youth of the community and contemporary youth issues such as underage drinking. Health issues were represented by agencies that support children and families dealing with asthma and diabetes. Common to all of the groups was the element of empowerment. The story of people coming together to make a difference and serve a greater need was a constant and truly inspiring.

As illustrated by Nicole's reflections, The People's Parade provided an excellent opportunity for students to gain a snapshot of the community. The parade represented the smaller groups and needs of the community. During the fourth year of the class, two students came to the class with doubts that they would find a group to connect to in a community that they perceived as so different than their own. Antoinette, an African American woman who identified as LGBTQ, was very interested in exploring issues related to the LGBTQ community. Another man was an international student from Palestine. During the first day of class, both of these students saw evidence that their own interests did exist in this community. Antoinette remarked on the imagery of rainbow flags and a float spotlighting transgender individuals. The man saw Palestinian flags as part of a solidarity contingent in the parade and also met Palestinian shopkeepers who he ended up

2. A Puerto Rican political prisoner sentenced in 1981 to a 70 year sentence for seditious conspiracy, (he was released in 2017, after this experience at the parade).

interviewing as part of his project. This underscores the need to view communities not as monolithic entities but as diverse and heterogeneous spaces. Students marveled at how welcoming people in the community were to them as "outsiders." Many of the African American students enrolled in the class were particularly taken aback by this, as they perceived a divisive relationship between the African American and Puerto Rican communities within Chicago. In contrast to their expectations, they found that a number of community residents went out of their way to talk to them and share the African aspects of Puerto Rican culture. Antoinette, who grew up on the South Side of Chicago, described her initial experiences in the community:

> **Education in an Unlikely Space:** During the Parade the atmosphere along Division Street was electric. I was quickly reminded of summers I spent as a child in on Chicago's South Side at the *Bud Billiken Back to School Parades* held each year in the African American community. It was evident that the residents of the Humboldt Park community were anticipating something special and I was eager to witness the parade. Before the parade I strolled down Division Street, this time on foot, and had the opportunity to mingle with the residents of the community. I met Juan, a Puerto Rican man who made me laugh heartily with his quick wit and comparisons of James Brown dance techniques and traditional Puerto Rican salsa. Juan "schooled" me about the connections between the African-American and Puerto Rican communities. His lesson was about not only dance technique but of historical solidarity and bloodlines…I met people I would have never met had I come back to Chicago and travelled to my familiar South side and West side neighborhoods…I had received an education in the most unlikely of spaces.

Here, Antoinette was able to make connections with a community that she initially viewed as potentially unwelcoming, and maybe even hostile to her presence. Her preconceptions about the area also speak to larger stereotypes about certain communities and ethnic groups, and the hyper-segregated nature of the city. Her experience within the community helped her rethink views about the divisions among certain communities. She learned to not view the community as an "other" (see Abu-Lughod, 1993), but in terms of the common struggles and issues shared by marginalized communities of color. This shift also helped her view community problems as connected to broader inequities impacting a range of marginalized communities, and her exposure to organizations addressing specific problems in one particular community provided her with models and approaches that she believed might be employed in her own community.

However, not all students felt such an affinity with the community during their initial experiences. One student in particular wrote in her reflective assignment that she was bothered that there were no "American" (U.S) flags at the parade. These different reactions to the parade and expressions of community identity illustrate how our own worldviews can inform our views of a community and our ability to authentically participate in community-based research. In some cases, it is necessary to part with viewpoints and strongly held beliefs, so as to be able to see a situation or context from another's point of view. These differing stances on the community also reflect the students' distinct identities: one was an African American lesbian woman who was raised in Chicago, whereas the other was a white woman who lived in the suburbs. The latter student also entered the course intent on "fixing" problems in the community, which reflects a deficit-orientation towards the community and a view that the primary purpose of the class should be to help the community, possibly disregarding the wealth of opportunities for learning purveyed within community settings.

These divergent reactions to the community speak to the role that "cultural intuition" (Bernal, 1998) can play in the research process, and how power and position can influence one's view of community practices and shape interactions with the community. Those who undertake such community-based projects and coursework should provide preparation at the outset of the project/course—through relevant readings and community tours—and also provide opportunities for students/researchers to reflect on personal stances and experiences relative to the topic and setting prior to the beginning of the project**.**

Negotiating Researcher Role: The Observant Participant

Although students were allowed entry into research sites through relationships developed by the professor, many learned the hard way that they needed to gain trust of research participants through their own efforts. In some cases, when students started by engaging in what has been termed "participant observation" they quickly realized that it was more useful to be "observant participants" and become involved in the activities and daily life of sites. For example, Kathy who conducted fieldwork at a community bike shop, endured some awkward moments during her initial field visits as she attempted to collect data standing in the corner with a notepad. One bike shop member jokingly asked her who she was an informant for. On subsequent visits, she brought her bike and participated in a fix-it workshop, finding this a better and more natural strategy to gain insight into the learning processes at the shop. Colleen, who conducted her research at a community bakery, had to don an apron and prove to bakery workers that she was willing to work hard before they agreed to participate in an interview.

Participant observation has often been viewed as occurring along a continuum and thus allowing for researchers to serve in roles that range from passive observers to active participants. However, the term emphasizes the role of the researcher as an observer and outsider rather than as an active participant, or even as a potential member of a research group that includes academic researchers and community members. We believe that the term "observant participant" more adequately describes the relationship and role one should aim for when conducting community-based research. Below, Colleen, a student in Adult Education and Literacy and a professor at a local community college, described how she gained access into her site and developed relationships with community residents:

> **Earning the Right:** My research site was Café Colao, a busy bakery and sandwich shop along Division Street. Initially it was an uneasy partnership. Part of my struggle in this setting was earning the right to be a researcher. My presence in the cafe, during the lunch rush on Saturdays, was intrusive. I had gained entry into the site on the reputation of my professor, but it was clear that I was going to have to earn some trust from the employees. As we sat with our lunches my first day at my research site, I could hear a hushed discussion in Spanish about me between the cook and the front room worker. She wanted to relegate me to the cook's domain. The cook was not receptive to the idea. She questioned my reason for being there…I had no history in this place…Sitting at the bar with my notebook as a passive observer would have endeared me to none of the workers in the café; I was already an outsider. It was also apparent that no one had time in their day to train me for my role as an active participant in the café. My challenge was to make myself a help rather than a hindrance during my Saturdays there.

> Each week during my time in the community, I would don my apron and look for opportunities to help. I cleaned tables, washed dishes, and emptied the garbage. I learned how to make coffee "properly" and became familiar with the sandwiches and pastries. I tried to help without being asked to and to learn the routines through careful observation. I noticed that personal service was valued in the community, so I worked to remember customer names and preferences. Through these efforts, I gradually earned the respect and trust of the café workers.
>
> What I learned from this process is that to be successful as a researcher you should acknowledge that you are entering into a reciprocal relationship. You must give something of value to the process, you cannot simply take. I tried to contribute through my efforts as a worker and in turn the employees agreed to share their stories and histories with me. Although the interchange is rarely equal, I believe it is the researcher's willingness to contribute in a meaningful way to participants that forges the relationship.

Colleen's experience at the café underscores the need for developing relationships of trust with participants and participating in research settings in genuine and authentic ways. Harrington (2003) terms this self-aware ethnography "informed improvisation," whereby the researcher continuously evaluates the relationship to "engage skillfully and flexibly with new people and situations" (p. 595). As illustrated, the women's initial reactions to Colleen's presence point to the ways that as researchers we are often a disruptive element rather than a helpful one. This vignette is from the early instantiations of the course, when students were conducting ethnographic research in community settings, in order to study learning in various community contexts, and was not intended as a participatory, collaborative project. The worker's reaction to her as an imposition and disruption to daily work activities highlights the tensions between the researcher and those being observed that can arise from a traditional ethnographic study. Although Colleen sought to identify points of connection between herself and participants and became involved in the work of the café rather than observing from the sidelines, this may not have been sufficient to overcome some of the workers' apprehensions about her presence. In a PAR project, workers would be consulted beforehand regarding the research study and be involved as co-researchers in the design and implementation of project, instead of having a researcher foisted on them. Wherever a project might land in terms of amount of participation from community members, researchers should strive to participate in authentic and meaningful ways, and be involved in community activities and daily practices as much as they can, rather than observe passively.

Personal Transformations and Building Relationships

At the beginning of the course, students were for the most part outsiders to the larger community setting and the particular sites within which they conducted research, and unfamiliar with many of the realities community residents were daily confronted with. Despite these differences, there were a number of commonalities that were shared with participants that enabled students to forge connections with them. Some of the issues and experiences addressed within interviews were ones shared between interviewer and interviewee, regardless of race, ethnicity, and class, such as struggling with weight and body image, learning a new job, raising children, negotiating between work and parenthood, and losing a parent. Although it is important to be cognizant of differences between researchers and research participants and how these might shape the research process, an

overemphasis on such differences can contribute to "otherizing" (Abu-Lughod, 1993). Although Humboldt Park is identified as a Puerto Rican community, it is by no means monolithic and homogenous in terms of race/ethnicity, class, education, sexual orientation, occupation, or age. Participants in students' research projects included teachers, business owners, college students, librarians, children, activists, youth, and elders.

Many students were personally impacted by their interactions with research participants and community residents. In a number of cases, students' experiences on Paseo Boricua caused them to reflect on, and even critique, their own lives and beliefs, to view their families, communities, and perspectives through a different lens. A number of students made changes in their daily practices and behaviors on account of their research experiences, as when Kathy began biking more regularly after her fieldwork at a bikeshop that advocated biking as a way to address health and environmental issues. Below, Amy, a doctoral student in the literacy program and the mother of two teenage boys described the connections she forged with adolescent girls attending and summer program:

> **What I Brought Away:** To call my experiences in Humboldt Park and specifically with five teenage girls in Humboldt Park transformational is an understatement. I prepared myself for my journey into the "foreign neighborhood" as many would…reflecting on all the things that the people there did NOT have that my family and I were fortunate enough to enjoy daily. What I learned was the many things my family and I did NOT have—those things that only five teenage Puerto Rican girls from Humboldt Park could enlighten me about.
>
> The words that I use to describe the inner sense of these girls and their community connection are *loyal, committed, dedicated* and *empowered.* I would use none of these words to adequately describe my own sons' community connection…I questioned these girls about this: "Where had I failed my own children? Why didn't they have the love of community that these girls emanated on a daily basis?" One of the girls…told me that my boys have never had the threat of their community being taken away…Humboldt Park is in danger of being gentrified beyond reclamation and this fact spurs its citizens—even the youngest—to fight for her with a vengeance. At the end of eight weeks I was not only inspired by the girls and their inherent defense and love of their neighborhood, but sorry that my boys had not been brought up to have these same instincts.
>
> Ultimately what I thought I was going to bring *to* this experience—inspiration for the downtrodden people I expected to meet—became what I brought away from the experience…We learned together that they had some preconceived ideas about me too and laughed about it all. Ethnography and qualitative research will never be considered in the same way for me. I was transformed—I learned a lot about ethnographic research, yes, but I believe more importantly I learned more about my own beliefs about me, I learned about being a better mom and I learned that five teenage girls from Humboldt Park have changed the world for this middle aged, blonde, suburban woman in a most positive way.

Amy was obviously extremely impacted by her experiences working with youth at the center, as well as transformed. Within this reflection, she addressed some of the deficit-oriented assumptions about the community and its residents that she held at the outset of the research. Although her

initial expectations were that she would provide assistance and help to "downtrodden" community residents, her engagement with this group of girls taught her some valuable lessons about resilience and fortitude, and the privileges she enjoyed on her account of her racial and class background, lessons that she hoped to instill in her own children.

Chia-Pao similarly addressed the ways that researchers learn from research participants, and in the process sometimes become part of the community:

> **This is Your Community Too:** Several moments indicated the change in my relationship from an outsider to an insider during my fieldwork. I felt like a complete stranger…at the beginning of this research project because seldom was there an Asian woman in that area, not to mention one who was sitting in the *Bombazo* and playing drums with community members. I started as a quiet observer in a *Bomba* drumming class until someone handed me a drum. "Hey! Do you have an extra drum?" asked a woman sitting beside me who was the mother of one of the girls learning *Bomba* dance. She pointed to me and said, "She wants to learn."
>
> My feeling of distance because of the culture and language differences was totally changed during my interview with the music director of a *Bomba y Plena* group. *Bomba* is a tool to "build community"…He talked about…how the *Bomba* community is like a village that people always come back. Knowing me as a learner in the *Bomba* class and a community researcher, the music director said: "This is your community too." A warm feeling came through my mind when I heard him. I knew it had been a long way from outsider, to researcher, to student, and finally to part of this community.

"Giving Back": Building Reciprocal Research Relationships

The goal of the ethnographer is to become immersed in a setting, and we readily acknowledge that a summer course does not provide the type of long-term and in-depth community engagement usually associated with high-quality ethnography. In fact, some would disparage it as merely a snapshot, providing students with a superficial glimpse into the issues and realities of the community. Yet, the course did furnish participating students with the opportunity to explore issues involved in the research process, such as negotiating researcher roles and developing participatory partnerships. Furthermore, for many, their brief experience on Paseo Boricua helped them expand their notions of community and what it means to be a researcher. As mentioned earlier, a few students from each summer session joined a research and writing group that has conducted presentations exploring their research experiences at local and national conferences.

Within coursework in many graduate education programs, there is little time devoted to explorations of participatory or community-based research and ethnography, and graduate students are generally provided scant opportunities to become involved in communities in authentic, sustained, and mutually edifying ways. The sharing of student-researchers' experiences within community settings can add to our theoretical and practical understanding of research approaches that bear the potential of transforming relationships between universities and communities, which is particularly crucial given the ways that low-income urban communities and residents have often been exploited by researchers. It is important for qualitative researchers to identify their beliefs and biases, in order to understand how their assumptions influence their interpretations of experiences (Hellawell, 2006; Hsiung, 2008). In this study, engagement in the community and dialogue

with the instructor, peers, and community members allowed the students to move beyond being reflective to be reflexive—that is to analyze, question, and change their beliefs, attitudes, biases and assumptions (Hsiung, 2008). By doing so, the students had a greater understanding of themselves, as well as developed an awareness of the self as dynamic in response to experiences and engagement in reflexive processes. The course provided a context for this process by affording students experiences outside of their comfort zone, which sometimes lead to disorientation, but supported what we refer to as *dialogic reflexivity* by offering a collective context to further examine experiences and their reactions to them, and engage self-critically with the experiences of teaching, learning, and doing community-based research. Furthermore, the notion of the *observant participant*, articulated in our research, emphasizes the participatory nature of community-based field work and the underscores the need for deep listening and attention as well as meaningful interactions with community leaders and residents, thus steering us away from positivist notions of the detached and objective researcher as observer.

Throughout the course, many of the students were anxious that they were not doing enough to help the community, were not adequately "giving back" to the community for the opportunity they were provided to conduct research there. However, developing a research relationship that could be described as reciprocal takes time and does not occur overnight. It would be naïve to assume that a group of researchers with little knowledge of the community could sufficiently produce or contribute something of use to the community in a mere six weeks, or that the community would even want or need their "help." Throughout the course, students were encouraged to "give back" in small ways, by frequenting community businesses and eateries, donating materials to local programs, and attending and volunteering at community events. One of the longer-term goals of this course is to strengthen linkages with the community and develop sustained initiatives and projects. One project was expanded into an independent study project. This project explored health perspectives and the role of urban agriculture in fostering healthy communities; the student worked with a science instructor at the participating alternative high school to work with students on the issue of healthy communities and also connected the school and students with university resources, such as engineers who work on solar, wind, and water issues. The hope is that in the future other projects can continue beyond the course, and help the group develop additional collaborative university-community initiatives. Throughout the span of the course, members of the research group have elicited increased involvement and input from community leaders and members, and this has helped facilitate dialogue regarding the purposes of the course and how research projects can best meet the needs of the community.

Although the reflections offered here are not meant to serve as a template for community-based research courses, it is hoped that they can inform others interested in developing similar sorts of initiatives. Some of the practical lessons gleaned from the group's experiences are included below:

- **Provide guided engagement experiences for students in and out of classroom settings:** This could include community tours led by leaders and community members, as well as structured in-class events, such as panels comprised of community youth, for them to participate in and learn about the community.
- **Offer opportunities for formal and informal learning:** Include more formalized lectures on research methods and the history of the setting/community, as well as occasions for students to learn *in situ* through field work and unstructured experiences in the community, such as community walks and lunch at community eateries.

- **Provide sufficient opportunities for students to reflect on their community experiences:** Students should be able to discuss their reactions and responses to the community; the completion of regular reflective journals can help students process their experiences and be reflexive about how aspects of their own autobiography intersect with the community and its residents, as well as connect community conditions, resources, and practices to broader social, historical, and economic factors and contexts.
- **Develop initiatives in dialogue with community organizations and leaders:** Community members should be involved in all stages of the course, from development to culmination. Researchers should identify specific community liaisons to help facilitate the planning of class activities and the development of projects.
- **Initially focus the course on the process of becoming engaged in a community, rather than on the products:** Be realistic regarding what the course can accomplish in terms of "deliverables," as it would be more damaging to the university-community relationship to promise products that were not completed, or shoddily thrown together because of time constraints. Instead, craft ways to maintain continuity from year to year, building on work from previous years.

We believe that the above research and instructional practices can support the building of reciprocal research relationships and also help students "earn the right" to conduct research within communities; furthermore, these practices can also work towards building partnerships between universities and communities that can address inequities between these entities and help to transform and expand conditions, resources, and perspectives in *both* realms.

Much of the focus on university-community partnerships and community-based research efforts has been on transformations and action within communities on account of these projects, often ignoring how researchers and higher education institutions might also be changed—and more importantly the sorts of shifts in thinking and emphasis on the part of research and universities that are necessary in order to conduct research within communities that is premised on and respects local knowledge and expertise. These practices can help us reimagine the role of academic researchers vis-à-vis communities and emphasizes the need to reconsider researcher reflexivity in ways that go beyond mere reflection on one's own background, experiences, and perspectives, so as to include how researchers themselves are implicated in the social issues and processes they are studying.

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Democracy in Grading: Practicing What We Preach

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Abstract

This study examined how teachers' grading impacts students' socio-cultural notions of value and worth. At issue was whether teachers can grade in ways that foster democratic ideals; whether authentic democratic environments can truly exist in public school classrooms; and whether or not traditional grading supersedes learning in favor of capitalistic interests. Findings indicated that teachers who champion democratic instruction can use their grading practices to eliminate the need for students to accumulate capital as a means of self-achievement, and can refocus classroom priorities on critical thinking, civility, and promoting a sense of community. One implication of these findings may be that values learned through being assessed and graded in school manifest themselves in students' social capacities such as civic responsibility, community engagement, and future employment.

Keywords: *Grading; Democracy; Pedagogy; Classroom Environment*

The school is the only institution in our nation specifically charged with enculturating the young into a political democracy. The education of teachers must, therefore, be specifically directed toward this end.

John Goodlad (1991)

Introduction

Teachers and teacher educators currently practice in a precarious era for public education. Fraught with financial worries, teacher shortages, and challenging classroom environments, they must also manage maligned policy mandates from the highest powers in the land, some of which seem counterintuitive to the aims of public education (Camera, 2017, July 18). Simultaneously, our current political landscape appears to have deliberately undermined the democratic practices that we have traditionally championed in this country (Swenson, 2017, July 10). However, I question whether this undercurrent has less to do with high-powered lobbyists or foreign financial backing than it does with the way in which American students have been taught to assign meaning and value to their work in the ways they are assessed in public school classrooms—and specifically, the ways in which their work is graded.

My institution of higher education proudly states our dedication to "realizing the democratic ideal"—a framework built upon ethical and intellectual commitments, such as: sensitivity toward individual and cultural diversity, respect and appreciation for diverse learners of all ages, a deep knowledge of content, the ability to use technological resources, and a contagious enthusiasm and courage to be creative. The goal of this framework is to prepare dynamic teachers who are reflective practitioners and who will blossom into teacher leaders who embody these same ideals within their classrooms and in their own developing perspectives. Happily, I am continually encouraged and inspired by the zeal of our teacher candidates, and I remain optimistic about their ability to achieve these lofty democratic goals.

Nonetheless, when I think back to my own schooling, it was hardly democratic. Even as an emerging classroom teacher, I remember employing practices that were far more authoritarian than equitable. Over time, my beliefs about teaching and learning evolved and shifted to more student-centered practices incorporating collaboration, promoting autonomy, and the constantly striving to develop a sense of intrinsic motivation among my students. I began to question traditional grading systems, those solely based upon accumulating points to earn a percentage of the whole. What did those grades and percentages truly mean, and how were they influencing student learning? In this present environment, where democratic classrooms are more desperately needed than ever, I wonder if democracy can ever truly exist in classrooms and schools where traditional grading—and the accumulation of capital as a means to an end—is the ruling order of the day.

The fact that grades do not accurately reflect student learning or understanding has been verified by educational researchers who have studied the meaning of grades. Kohn (1999), a stern advocate against formal grading, asserted that grades serve only to reduce students' interest in learning, to prevent students from attempting challenging tasks, and to limit the quality of students' thinking. Guskey (2006) found disagreement among teachers as to the purpose of grades and the criterion from which grades are derived. Additionally, Brookhart (2011) verified that grades are not indicative of what students know and can demonstrate, but rather only serve the purpose for marking or reporting progress.

Assessment experts from O'Connor (1999) to Marzano (2000) to McMillan (2001) have established that traditional grades are ill-defined and variable from teacher to teacher, student to student, class to class, and school to school. There is no consistency with which to determine what students' grades truly mean given the traditional 100-point system. As such, it might be easy to deduce that traditional grades are essentially meaningless. Nevertheless, to assume that grades are inherently meaningless is both paradoxical and problematic.

Grades as Status Quo

Regardless of the advice of assessment experts, traditional grades continue to be the ruling order of the day. Even while more and more school districts are rethinking their grading policies and attempting to comply with the recommendations of experts—typically by introducing standards-based or competency-based grading initiatives—they continue to do so to the tune of confusion and backlash among teachers and parents alike (Young, 2012, November 8). Traditional grades are so deeply entrenched in our societal status quo that it is difficult for the lay population to conceive of school without them, and many people attribute their understanding and progress within school to the traditional grading measures. Even outside of school, traditional As, Bs, and Cs are used to "grade" everything from restaurants to hotels to cars to the NFL Draft. In one sense, traditional grades hold immense social meaning. There is a historical comfort that traditional

grades offer the collective population, the vast majority of whom have endured traditional grading practices themselves and have ascribed them a measure of ubiquity and authority.

Additionally, grades carry a great deal of meaning for students and for their families. Competition for valedictorianships are fierce. Colleges and universities still accept students based on Grade Point Average, as well as national test scores, and those facts are not lost on students. Students take honors classes to boost GPAs. They barter with teachers for grade point-retrieval. They submit extra credit to increase their raw scores. Cramming for tests is the norm. The lack of authentic connections to their own lives is irrelevant as they busy themselves accumulating as many points as they possibly can in the inexorable rat race that school has become. Within such institutionalized systems, those governed by "token economies" that traditional grades represent (Ayllon and Azrin, 1968), actual learning is oftentimes relegated to an afterthought, or at least subjugated to what Brown (2015) refers to as "the human capital race," all in pursuit of career and college readiness.

Purpose of the Study: Thesis and Guiding Questions

This article is an offshoot of a larger work related to alternative grading in secondary schools and the impact of traditional grading practices. My overarching thesis is that the ways in which teachers grade are directly impacting notions of value and worth among their students. In turn, these values will manifest themselves in social capacities such as civic responsibility, community engagement, and employment opportunities. The research questions for this revolve around notions of democracy related to traditional grading systems, as such:

1. How can teachers grade students in ways that foster democratic ideals and communities?
2. How can truly democratic environments exist in public school classrooms?
3. Do traditional grades supersede learning in lieu of capitalistic interests?

While these questions inform the body of this article and the crystallization of my larger work, I postulate that even in classrooms with the most democratic of aspirations, if a traditional, points-based grading system is employed it undermines any democratic value a teacher hoped to achieve.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this paper consists of twin pillars of Deweyan constructivism and the theoretical framework of grading purported by Brookhart (1994), which has been corroborated by other experts in the field of assessment (Guskey, 2006; Marzano, 2000; O'Connor, 1999; Reeves, 2008). Additionally, the work of Goodlad (1991, 2004) supplies a bridge between these two frameworks, adhering to a fierce sense of democracy and duty, but simultaneously committed to an authentic sense of learning at the expense of traditional grading practices. This theoretical framework will be outlined in the paragraphs below.

Constructivism and Progressivism

The progressivism and constructive approach that Dewey (1916) advocated was staunchly framed within a dedication to realizing the democratic ideal. His aims manifest themselves as the

antithesis to promoting achievement over learning and the type of "grade-grubbing" for personal advancement that has become so commonplace in American classrooms. Dewey maintained that education should never be used as an instrument of exploitation of one social class over another. Indeed, he warned of the national aims of education—devotion and commitment to national loyalty and patriotism—superseding the social aims of education—to equip youth with the teaching and discipline to be masters of their own economic and social careers. As Dewey (1916) maintained, only through the freedom found in these social aims can a truly democratic ideal be sustained, and without it, democracy can only be "inconsistently applied" (p. 99).

Goodlad echoed this sentiment when he necessitated that the role of public schools is to foster the ideals of democracy. "The school is the only institution in our nation specifically charged with enculturating the young into a political democracy. The education of teachers must, therefore, be specifically directed toward this end…Schools, through their teachers, must introduce our young people to the ideas inherent in our political democracy and the ideals from which they are derived" (Goodlad, 1991, p. 48).

Goodlad placed this democratic charge firmly within the scope of the classroom teacher. "We should expect in our teachers a driving purpose: to maximize the learning of those placed in their charge. And because even sincere educational purposes can be corrupted by misguided beliefs about learning potential, our educators…must also believe in the ability of all to learn; and they must hold steadfastly to this belief in their work" (Goodlad, 1991, p. 44). This directive for teachers to maximize learning within their classrooms may seem intuitive, but it is one that requires constant attention and reflection.

To that end, Goodlad related the analogy of teachers to gardeners cultivating their fields. "If we believe that the ideas as well as the rights of the Constitution come to each of us with birth, then the role of schools and teachers is diminished. But if we believe, as we must, that the rights inherited at birth depend on careful cultivation of ideals and ideas in the community, then schools and teachers rise to positions of paramount importance" (Goodlad, 1991, p. 45). It is imperative that teachers are intentional about embracing this all-important charge.

Grading

In order to document genuine learning, educators appear stuck with the process of grading, and traditional grading, specifically, contains inherent flaws that have been empirically proven by assessment experts. Namely, grades do not clearly measure students' abilities (O'Connor, 1999), grades are inconsistent and vary within different contexts, and hodgepodge grading practices are prevalent (McMillan, 2001). Still, the original intention of grades as a mechanism to report student achievement remains. Wormeli (2006) advocated that grades should be indicative of students' actual abilities, and behavioral considerations should not factor into a student's grade. This view has been upheld by assessment experts, and has served as the foundation for alternatives to traditional grading practices such as minimum grading (Carifio and Carey, 2010), standards-based grading (Guskey, 2009, Scriffiny, 2008), and even no grading at all (Kohn, 2011).

A gradeless classroom is in keeping with Goodlad's (1976) vision of assessment. He pictured a school without grades or report cards, nor extrinsic rewards of any kind, but only performance evaluation. This is perhaps a bit utopian, especially after nearly 50 years of adherence to traditional grading where students and teachers have allowed the accumulation of points to determine value and worth, almost exclusively. In today's school culture, extrinsic rewards are often regarded as the sole purpose for doing anything, or at least for doing anything of value. However,

according to experts like Guskey and Jung (2009), grades should be more precise than that – they should accurately communicate students' academic performance on specific sets of skills. When classroom teachers are intentional in their grading practices, it can have a deciding factor in the ways students go about the learning process, and ultimately affect the learning climate of the classroom.

Data Sources and Methods

In addition to reflections from my own personal experience as a classroom teacher, teacher educator, and researcher of assessment and grading practices, much of the data for this paper comes from a year-long qualitative study of five high school teachers who implemented an alternative grading system within their classes (Percell, 2014). Teachers were selected based upon the fact that their grading systems were not built upon points and/or percentages. The study itself presented as a multi-case phenomenology, however, for the purposes of this article, one case, Simon's, was specifically analyzed for the democratic considerations that were incorporated into the teacher's grading.

Methodology in the Data Collection

Data collection occurred over a period of one academic school year and the initial study included five high school teachers at four separate sites who each employed alternative grading methods within their classrooms. The data collection of the initial study was comprised of four main elements: initial semi-structured interviews; an online focus group interview; follow-up interviews debriefing the focus group and reflecting on the study itself; and a self-analysis of the teacher participants' own feedback to students. All interviews were limited to 60 minutes, were audio recorded on the researcher's tablet, and were member checked to ensure trustworthiness.

Data Analysis: An Individual Case Study

After the initial data analysis using phenomenological methods (Moustakas, 1994), one case stood out as having a particular focus upon democratic ideals and an adherence to social justice issues. Therefore, Simon's case was extracted for individual analysis in support of this current project. Using open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), Simon's case was analyzed for common themes relating to democracy, citizenry, and justice as a result of the teacher's grading system. Four themes were established from Simon's case: Freedom, Democracy, Critical Thinking, and Citizenry. This analysis was appropriate for the bounded context, as case study has been established as a distinctly qualitative design specifically geared towards the field of education (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, trustworthiness was upheld in this case through naturalized generalizability (Stake, 1995) for readers interested in democratic implications from their own grading practices.

Participant: Simon, Social Sciences Teacher

This case featured Simon, a second-year social sciences teacher at Middleton High School, which was located in a mid-size, rural-fringe area that is diverse in nature. Twenty-two percent of

Middleton's 1,942 students came from low socio-economic situations and 10% have individualized education plans. Simon was a socially conscious individual and felt strongly about issues of justice, diversity, equality and fairness. Outside of school, he was an active member in several community organizations that promoted advocating for issues of justice and community awareness. Simon overtly attempted to incorporate these philosophies into his teaching in efforts to make his classes more democratic and encourage more critical thinking among his students.

Additionally, Simon did not use the traditional, points-based gradings system. Instead, at the time of the study, he employed the 3-P Grading system (Peha, 2005). In this system, students were "graded" in the areas of Participation, Progress, and Performance. Within each category, students received one of three marks: a check (✓) meaning sufficient, a check plus (✓+) meaning outstanding, or a minus (–) meaning unsatisfactory. Just as in other mastery-based grading systems, retakes were allowed so students could revise any minuses until they reached a level of demonstrated proficiency.

One interesting aspect in the 3-P's Grading System Simon used was the element of collaboration with students to arrive at their final grades. Since final traditional letter grades are difficult to ascertain with the 3-P system alone, Simon would regularly conference with his students about their standing in the class, the assessment of their coursework, and students offered insight into what they feel their grade should be based on their quality of work. His students' assessments were not just empty words, either; they counted for 50% of the final grade (Peha, 2005). This type of collaborative negotiation gives 3-P Grading a distinctly democratic feel over other traditional forms of grading.

Findings

After analyzing the data specific to Simon, four common themes were identified related to the democratic consideration regarding his grading system: Freedom, Democracy, Critical Thinking, and Citizenry. It was clear from the data that Simon was a teacher with a core belief system regarding education and civility, and he adhered to those beliefs in his instructional practices within the classroom, even regarding his grading.

Freedom

Simon discussed Freedom several times in his interview(s), and from different perspectives: for his students, a freedom to have a share of control over their learning, and for himself, a freedom from the confines of traditional points-based grading practices. It was obvious that instilling a sense of freedom in students and adhering to a practice of freedom was central to Simon's teaching:

> If we want to truly practice freedom, we need to structure the process to be as free as possible. If my students were free to explore and learn what they really want to learn, then I think that would be a higher reflection of good teaching.

Simon's commitment of freedom manifests itself in his instructional practices, such as his assignments and grading. Some teachers may balk at a lack of rigidity, but for Simon it seems to carry an inherent sense of accountability. "I don't have strict due dates for most things. All of my

tests are basically application-critical thinking-response, or project-based, so, it's not something that students can cheat on."

Regarding his 3-P grading system specifically, where grades are both scored and negotiated student-to-teacher, Simon stated, "With my grading system, it frees everything up and I'm not bound to a rigid points system. The grading procedures is affecting [instruction], but for me, it's freeing it up."

For whatever reason, these sentiments expressed by Simon do not seem to be traditionally embraced by schools. Notions of freedom are often situated outside of the denotative aims of schooling, which largely center around conformity, especially within school grading practices. Perhaps that is why Simon's commitment to promoting his students' freedom rings so odd in contrast to the status quo. "Education," he said, "can either be a means to indoctrinating young people into the way things already work, the mechanisms of the current institutions and systems, or it can be a way to practice freedom."

Democracy

Simon displayed a particularly intentional commitment to democratic practices in his teaching, both in content and in process, and that sense of shared governance was apparent in his classes. He did not mince words when he articulated his commitment to democracy in his practice. "I'm slowly trying to make my classroom more democratic," he said," and for my students to have more share of the power in our relationship. I want to give them more freedom, because I think power should be shared, society should be democratic, and we should be free."

These seem like difficult concepts for many teachers to embrace, especially to those who have not only endured schools that were authoritarian in nature, but who have also completed teacher education programs that have directed them to wield a certain power and control over their classrooms. Nonetheless, Simon remained invested in democratic principles, and carried out his shared vision right down to the specifics of coursework and assignments. "I give [students] power to decide for themselves the parameters and projects, and even who will do the assessing."

Critical Thinking

Another theme that arose from the data in Simon's case study was his commitment to fostering critical thinking among students. Critical thinking, as Holland (2018, June 11) points out, is more than just thinking of correct answers, but the ability to sit with a given problem, to mull it over, and to envision multiple solutions rather than just the first one that comes to mind. Simon concurred, stating, "We're not really encouraged to think sociologically or critically. So, the first intervention happens on the first or second day, when I say, 'I am encouraging you to question everything we do in this class; even question me, challenge me.'"

Simon again pointed to his alternative grading system and his feedback practices as a way to usher in a reliance upon critical thinking in the classroom. "The grading system itself is a challenge and a critique of the institution that we are in, it leads [students] to think—the grading system itself leads to critical thinking."

Critical thinking has been a goal of education for over a century (Holland, 2018, June 11), and yet, many of the common practices of schooling only serve to diminish students' capacity towards critical thinking. However, through his grading practices, Simon's focus continued to be moving his students towards critical thinking, even in the feedback he was giving to students. "The

feedback that I tend to give is trying to encourage my students to think more critically and to keep exploring and keep opening their minds."

Civility

The final theme that arose from Simon's case study data was a commitment to fostering a sense of civility among his students. It was clear this was an overt focus within his classroom. "If you actually want to inspire change in people's consciousness through education, you have to—sort of—do education in a way that will allow for that," he stated, "and I don't think that traditional, hierarchical, points-based, ranked, competitive education models allow for that."

Goodlad (1991) concurred with such sentiments when he summarized the task of public school teaching as: "facilitating enculturation, providing access to knowledge, building an effective teacher-student connection, and practicing good stewardship" (p.46). He went on to relate that "society's moral shortcomings lie primarily in grossly misunderstanding what our schools are for and underestimating what is required of those who are their daily stewards. The school system's moral delinquency is in structuring the enterprise in ways that deny students access to the knowledge they need" (Goodlad, 1991, p. 53).

Discussion and Implications

What becomes burgeoningly clear from Simon's case was his commitment to a progressive belief in the democracy of education. All of his pedagogy was centered around this commitment, including his style of grading students which, out of necessity, eschewed all points and percentages. The convergence of Simon's instructional practices as rooted in his educational philosophy served to bring about this promotion of democratic ideals throughout his classroom.

The four generated themes generated in the data analysis and detailed above: Freedom, Democracy, Critical Thinking, and Civility held some interesting implications for answering the initial research question of this case study: *How can teachers grade students in ways that foster democratic ideals and communities?* It was clear that Simon extended a measure of freedom to his students, allowing them to practice collaboration and negotiation as valued partners in the learning process, and even in classroom assessment and grading. Because of his philosophical beliefs and his insistence on his classroom serving as a model of democracy, he felt compelled to remove any capitalistic influences that adherence to a points-based grading system might impose. Admittedly, given his druthers he would likely do away with grading altogether. "Grading…to me is like a necessary evil within the system," he said. "Really, I just do it because I have to."

Additionally, his case also offered insight towards answering the second question of this study: *How can truly democratic environments exist in public school classrooms?* It takes a teacher, or according to Goodlad (2004), a "steward" (p. 324), with a deep-seeded belief structure rooted in cultivating democratic principles and civic duty. It requires one who is willing to analyze their instructional practices and bring everything into alignment with democratic ideals, including room set-up, coverage of content, format and scope of assignments and projects, and even assessment and grading of said assignments and projects. Oftentimes, this intentional commitment to a democratic approach within the classroom may fly in the face of traditional notions of how school operates.

It was unclear whether Simon's data could answer our third question: *Do traditional grades supersede learning in lieu of capitalistic interests?* In the data, Simon clearly his students about

the inherent problems with capitalism. At one point he stated, "The institution as a whole exists to socialize people into the logic of the current systems, and to create hierarchical ranks—you know, wage slaves for capitalism."

Furthermore, by not employing a traditional grading system within his classroom, it was impossible to test and verify these conditions. However, it appears that by replacing the traditional, points-based grading system with an alternative grading system, one that fostered more democratic practices, Simon was able to consciously disrupt the normative capitalistic undertones of his classroom.

Finally, Simon demonstrated ways in which teachers can grade students in order to foster democratic ideals and communities. By overtly attempting to give his students a share of the power dynamic within the class and extending them genuine control and agency over their learning, he created a classroom dynamic built on shared governance, collaboration, and compromise. Using his teaching platform to promote education as a means to freedom, democracy, critical thinking, and civility, Simon intentionally worked to foster the type of "moral ecology" that Goodlad (2004) described as a means to connect students' schooling to a measure of the larger public good (p. 318).

Conclusion

An individual case was extracted from a larger multi-case study and analyzed due to one teacher, Simon's, overt commitment to a particular educational belief structure, namely democracy. His case was analyzed in isolation to examine how democratic ideals manifested themselves in his grading and classroom practices. Consistent with Goodlad's (1991) notion of the school being "the only institution in our nation specifically charged with enculturating the young into a political democracy" (p. 48), Simon took this charge seriously. While he maintained a critical perspective, he viewed of the aims of the current institution of school as being bent more toward indoctrination than mere "enculturation." Simon stated, "Education is indoctrination and it perpetuates the system. In a capitalist society like ours, you need people to accept the logic of capitalism and become workers in a system that exploits them."

It was clear that Simon took intentional measures to disrupt this capitalistic culture that dominates most public-school classrooms. Instead, he found ways to promote freedom, democracy, critical thinking and civility through his pedagogy and, in particular, through his grading practices. By eliminating the need for students to accumulate capital as a means to self-achievement, Simon was able to refocus the classroom priorities of his students towards a sense of genuine learning and community.

Simon is a good example for stakeholders of public education, particularly teachers, who maintain a belief in democratic ideals. By critically examining the meaning behind the grading practices teachers employ and enact upon their students, we can gain a clearer sense of the influence these systems are having upon the sense of community and student learning within our classrooms. It may be that traditional grading is achieving the desired effect—lulling students into completing the bare minimum requirements and dulling their collective sense of wonder and ingenuity over time, producing the "wage slaves for capitalism" that Simon described. However, if we, teachers and teacher educators, truly champion our instructional practices as emblematic of democracy and its influence in our classrooms, we must endeavor to carry out our democratic pedagogical practices all the way to our gradebooks.

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Exploring Teacher Diversity: How a Historical Review of Project Midstate Student Support for Teaching (MSS) Informs Future Practice

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Abstract

Project Midstate Student Support for Teaching (MSS) (http://www.uis.edu/projectmss/) is an initiative at University of Illinois Springfield (UIS) designed to increase the number of first generation and diverse teacher candidates in area school districts. Students accepted into MSS receive full tuition waivers, a $200 book stipend per semester, and academic support. Key findings from the document review of 424 student records show that 94% of the candidates came from the targeted areas and 83% were non-white. The teacher test passing rate was 96% with an average score above the Minimum Passing Level set by the state. Since 2012, all initial inquiries resulted in official university enrollments. Five of the 424 candidates became principals and six took master's-level education courses. While not part of the target group of recent high school graduates, some older candidates also enrolled in MSS. These older candidates (enrolling after the age of 23) graduated with GPA's statistically higher than the younger age group (p=0.04) and were more likely to graduate than their younger classmates. The older candidates were also more likely to complete student teaching requirements, suggesting that more of the older group actually went into teaching. In large part, the findings corroborate the potential value of teacher development programs like MSS to diversify the future teacher pool. The study also suggests ways that MSS may be improved to further its mission in the future.

Keywords: *preservice teacher education; student recruitment; minority group students; student diversity; teacher education; first generation college students*

Introduction

The University of Illinois Springfield (UIS) is one of three campuses of the University of Illinois. It offers 31 bachelor's degrees, 20 master's degrees, and one doctoral program.

As of fall 2016, the total enrollment was 5,428. There were 2,959 (55%) undergraduate students and 2,469 (45%) graduate students, with 56% registered as full-time and 44% part-time. There were 52% males and 48% females. The average age of an undergraduate was 26 and a graduate was 31. Approximately 11% of the students are African-American, 6% Hispanic, 20% International and 63% other ethnicities. The majority of the students come from Illinois (67%), and a smaller percentage are from out of state (13%). The remainder (20%) are international students (UIS, "At a glance").

The College of Education and Human Services is the home for educational and social service professional programs at UIS. Students can earn MA degrees in Educational Leadership, Human Development Counseling or Human Services. The Social Work program offers a BSW degree and Teacher Education provides training for a BA in Elementary Education or a minor in Secondary Education (UIS, "Departments in the College") Teacher Education offers coursework, both onground and online, in general education, introductory courses, core courses, methods courses, clinical practice (student teaching), and concurrent academic content major area (UIS, "Teacher Education").

Project Midstate Student Support for Teaching (MSS) began in 1991 as Project Minority Student Support for Teaching and is housed in the Department of Teacher Education. Its original goal was to increase the pool of diverse and first generation teachers in area school districts by providing incentives for high school graduates and community college students. Since its inception, there have been two Directors, with the current Director beginning in the fall of 2013. While MSS has been referred to as a program or a project in past years, it is actually an initiative of TEP and not a stand-alone program. The incentive is administered by the university in conjunction with area school districts and community colleges.

Students apply to MSS, which includes a well-developed essay discussing their reason for choosing to teach and, specifically, why they believe MSS will benefit them, and how they will benefit it. The essay is not only to determine their fit with MSS but also to gauge their writing skills. Transcripts are sent to university admissions for review. In addition, MSS considers high school or community college GPA, high school class rank and any accomplishments, awards or recognitions.

Students decide which licensure program they plan to pursue, either elementary or secondary. If they choose elementary, they can also receive a middle school endorsement in one of the following content area: language arts, math, social science, or science. If they are interested in the secondary licensure, they can choose from the following content areas: science (biology), science (chemistry), mathematics, English, social science, sociology/anthropology, political science, or history.

Students take a series of exams, some that may be completed before they arrive at UIS. If they have taken the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP) or ACT + Writing, they must provide the date. They also complete the Fingerprint Background Check (through Accurate Biometrics for the university) and provide that date, as well. By a student's junior year, they can be admitted into the Teacher Education Program, if they have met all of the requirements.

Students also sign an agreement. Each student participant must be in good academic standing to be eligible to receive financial benefits offered through MSS. Upon acceptance, the student is required to meet all requirements from semester-to-semester. General MSS requirements are summarized in *Figure 1* (next page).

- Be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours per semester as advised; 8 hours of these must be courses toward teacher licensure.
- Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least 2.50.
- Maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in all Teacher Education courses.
- Perform 10 hours of community service each semester.
- Attend all regularly scheduled MSS meetings and activities.
- Submit a signed agreement, agreeing to teach two (2) years in the MSS contract region after graduation from the University and teach if said employment is available or offered.

Figure 1. General MSS Requirements.

The MSS Application and Agreement are included in Appendices A and B. Upon admission, the students are referred to as "candidates." If the requirements are not met at the end of each semester, the candidate will receive a written letter of Notification of Probation by the Director within 15 days of the semester's end confirming that he/she has been placed on probation. Candidates on probation are not eligible to receive the MSS tuition waiver.

Upon receipt of the Notification of MSS Probation, the candidate can request a meeting with the Director to discuss specific areas needing improvement. Appropriate help and/or counseling for improvement will be made available, and the candidate will be given one year to eliminate MSS probation status. Candidates are also eligible to make a written case for extenuating circumstances that may have impeded progress or participation for that semester. Cases will be reviewed on an individual basis and follow-up which may include an interview with the candidate or request for further documentation will be instituted by the Director. If a successful case is made, reinstitution of the tuition waiver may result.

At the end of the MSS probationary period, if confirmation of satisfactory status has been met the candidate will be removed from MSS probationary status and reinstated to good standing. The Director will notify the candidate by written correspondence that good standing has been restored and that candidate has been reinstated in MSS.

If the candidate does not make the improvements necessary for minimum requirements during the MSS Probationary period, the Director will determine whether all or part of the direct financial benefits previously awarded to the candidate must be returned. In such cases, written notification will be forwarded to the candidate stating the specific amount owed to MSS and the terms for repayment. The repayment agreement complies with university regulations. In the event that reimbursements are not made as scheduled, the candidate will be placed on academic hold until such debt has been satisfied.

When candidates are accepted into MSS, they are required to take an eight-week course with the Director every semester. The course is designed to provide them with an opportunity to explore teaching as service and involves community and campus connections as well as exposure to professional from the field. They are expected to complete a 10-hour service project working with children every semester. They can gain an understanding of the teaching career, connect with members in the community, see how content they are learning in their courses is applied in the

classroom, and gain confidence in their abilities and skills. They must also submit a midterm status report, which is signed by each of their professors, indicating how they are progressing. As a department, we will know if they are struggling in one or more of their courses and need additional support or resources. Candidates also see two theatrical productions a year, usually held at UIS Sangamon Auditorium. This is a great way for them to interact with each other and the Director outside of the classroom and gives them an opportunity they may not otherwise have on their own. Each semester, the MSS group decides on the production they want to attend. Attending a production also allows them the opportunity to see how others think and feel, while appreciating the arts.

Many guest speakers visit the class and present information on various topics: interviewing, technology, mathematics, licensure, counseling, and writing resumes. Candidates also visit one K – 12 classroom each semester, giving them opportunities to examine school activities, curriculum, discipline and classroom management, school organization, transitions in the classroom, styles of teaching, etc. Books and articles utilized in the course have varied over the years, covering many topics related to education.

Lastly, candidates meet with their Teacher Education Program faculty advisors every semester, so they can plan their schedules and know that they are progressing. They are given support to complete their degrees.

Literature

Having a more diverse teacher workforce is important in our state since 52% of students in public schools are non-white, suggesting a need for more teachers of color (ISBE, 2015-2016). Diversity is important because students perceive their teachers in different ways. Cherng, an assistant professor of international education at New York University, and his colleague, Halpin, an assistant professor of applied statistics, found that all races have more positive perceptions of their black and Latino teachers than they do of their white teachers. Using a data set of over 50,000 adolescent student reports on 1,680 classroom teachers, they asked if students' perceptions of teachers varied by the race/ ethnicity. They found that perceptions do vary. Students have more positive ratings of Latino and Black teachers than White teachers. Students were asked about individual classroom teachers rather than the general workforce of their schools. Black students have particularly favorable perceptions of Black teachers, but the same is not true for Latino students and Latino teachers. Moreover, they find that Asian American students also have particularly favorable perceptions of Black teachers (Cherng and Halpin, 2016).

The literature identifies many programs that provide encouragement or support for first generation students seeking to enter college. The 2017 Illinois Office of Education report identified Rockford University's *Education Pathways,* Arlington Height's District 214 program, and Ozark Teaching Corps in Missouri as programs of note. Holt (2017) describes five other Midwestern summer bridge programs for promising students. Parks (2017) describes Elon Academy (Elon Acadmy, 2019), part of Elon University's Center for Access and Success, as another example. This North Carolina university offers a three-year summer residency experience for academically promising high school students and provides academic and financial support upon successful admission to the university.

In addition to traditional recruitment events at high schools, Henry (2017) suggests broadening the scope by attending minority sporting events, barbershops and religious activities. Researchers offer many suggestions for recruitment and retention of first generation and minority

college students. Both Henry (2017) and Johnson (2017) identify the importance of having a sufficient cohort for support. Means and Pyne (2017) echoes the importance of cohorts by suggesting institutions adopt "cohort-based academic and social support" systems (p. 921). Demetriou et al (2017) suggests that living-learning communities can be a means of building cohorts for those who live on campus.

Helping students socialize to the college experience was seen as important for retention. Developing an academic mind-set and learning how to navigate the system were mentioned by Olson (2017), Johnson (2017) and Means and Pyne (2017). Demetriou et al (2017) suggest that first generation/minority students must learn "that college will be challenging and that challenge is a part of learning" (p. 34). Holt, White and Terrell (2017) noted that students unfamiliar with college often lack the "navigational capital" (p. 35) to properly transition to college while Katrevich and Aruguete (2017) noted that "poor academic integration" (p. 42). Increasing the sense of what Means and Pyne (2017) calls "academic belonging" (p. 16) might help these students become successful in college. Participation in student organizations, service learning activities, research projects were suggested by Means and Pyne (2017) and Demetriou et al (2017) as ways to create a sense of belonging.

Fostering executive function skills among first generation and minority students may be another strategy to help students socialize to college and facilitate retention. Olson (2017) indicates that helping students learn self-regulation skills will help them develop the necessary "grit" to be more successful in college. According to Castillo-Montoya (2017), student "modes of thinking" (p. 559) derived from their lived experiences impact their academic success. Johnson (2017) stresses the importance of mental preparation, suggesting that if a student has strong internal motivation he or she may be able to overcome some negative external forces that may exist.

Because many first generation and minority students often lack appropriate academic preparation for college (Johnson, 2017) there is a real need for "just in-time" academic support (Holt, 2017) as well as peer or faculty mentoring. (Henry, 2017; Holt, 2017,; Means, 2017). Demetriou et al (2017) suggests encouraging faculty mentorships to develop naturally through existing research or employment relationships.

In addition to a mentor role, Means and Pyne (2017) and Katrevich and Aruguete (2017) pointed out the crucial role of faculty in helping to create a sense of academic belonging. They do this by recognizing any gaps in prior learning and encouraging scholarly activities. Because of the faculty's key role in socializing first generation and minority students, professional development is important to help them understand and navigate cross-cultural differences.

Additional elements seen as important for the success of first generation and minority students were the family, noted by Katrevich and Aruguete (2017) and Parks, Parrish and Holmes (2017). Of course, the need for consistent and adequate financial aid goes without saying as noted by Means and Pyne (2017) and Katrevich and Aruguete (2017).

Besides race, ethnicity and first generation status, there are other ways to think about "minorities." Ocampo (2018) indicates that different colleges and universities use other variables such as age, sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic status and geographic background. Diversity, then, is an extensive term with meanings extending beyond race or ethnicity. A "minority" candidate, therefore, can refer to any student who does not belong to the majority group, typically Caucasian at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). Ocampo goes on to talk about the sociological definition of "minority" as focusing on any group of people who are singled out from the others for

differential and unequal treatment. Ocampo sees recruiting students from this broader pool as another way of diversifying the "academic experience" since these students bring their "culturally authentic" backgrounds to the institutions.

Methodology

In the 27 years of its existence, MSS has accumulated 424 candidate records. During that time, there has never been a systematic review of academic outcomes or student demographics. There was no systematic summary of the age, gender, race or geographical location of candidates who had been enrolled in MSS. Also, missing was whether the candidates went into teaching or even if they had successfully completed MSS. Understanding what had happened in the past seemed the best way to make changes going forward.

This desire to learn more about the MSS's history resulted in two major questions which drove the study:

1. How well did MSS meet its enrollment, diversity, and academic achievement goals?
2. Are there ways these findings can improve MSS going forward?

An exploratory grounded theory methodology provided the conceptual framework for this document review of the files.

We requested and received IRB approval to conduct the document review and assigned each file an ID number. Because most files were those of former MSS candidates, informed consent for this group was not practical so we requested and received a consent waiver.

While file content varied, each student/candidate record included some combination of application materials, high school completion data, previous college enrollment and, in some cases, University Identification Numbers (UIN's). Having UIN's enabled a secondary search of demographic and academic data in the University's Data Warehouse. These data included date of birth, gender, race/ethnicity, program major, graduation date, GPA, and ACT scores.

After gathering data from the files and university sources, we were able to generate descriptive aggregated tables summarized as either mean scores or percentages as appropriate for the type of data. We were also able to compare age groups and student learning outcomes for graduate and non-graduate groups. To ensure confidentiality of the MSS candidates, results are reported only in the aggregate.

Findings

A review of the 424 paper files revealed that only 144 (34%) included a University Identification Number (UIN) which allowed for subsequent review of student demographics and learning outcomes. Data from the MSS records and University sources provided information on enrollment, teacher candidate diversity, and academic outcomes. Figure 1 (next page) summarizes the filtering process:

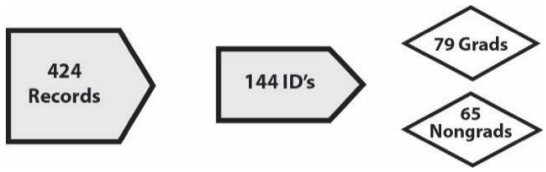

Figure 1. Numbers of records used in the analysis.

We will first look at enrollment.

Enrollment

For students/candidates where high school data are available, 95% of them reported high schools from two local geographic locations. These areas represented the MSS target; only five (five percent) come from high schools outside the target area. See Table 1 below.

Table 1.
High school location for MSS students/candidates

	number	percent
Other	5	5%
Target Area 1	11	13%
Target Area 2	70	82%
Total	86	100%

The study also found variation in the total number of candidates in any given year. While the number of candidates in MSS has an official cap of 10, records show that MSS exceeded that cap from 2009 to 2015. The number of MSS candidates enrolled ranged from 19 in 2009 to 11 in 2015.

Diversity

Besides geographic location, increasing ethnic diversity was and remains a second major goal for the MSS initiative. Having a more diverse teacher candidate pool is important in the two target areas because the most recent data show that 55% of candidates in Area 1 (55%) and 62% of candidates in Area 2 are non-white (ISBE, 2015-2016). Drilling down into MSS candidate data, we found that 76% of all MSS candidates were non-white females. These data represent almost the reverse of the traditional teacher education population. In fact, the 2016 Title II Report indicated that 80% of all UIS teacher candidates were white females. While increasing the numbers of First Generation college students is a goal for the Initiative, the existing data do not allow an exploration of this topic.

Academic Outcomes

In addition to geographic and diversity goals, we also looked at the academic outcomes of GPA and graduation rates for MSS graduates and non-graduates. See Table 2 (next page).

Table 2.
Comparison of graduate/non-graduate GPA scores

	Non-Graduates (N=65)	Graduates (N=79)
Mean GPA	1.89	3.19
STDEV	1.03	0.57
GPA Range	0-3.76	2.08-3.96
% Greater than 3.00	9%	72%
% Lower than 2.00	45%	--

Not surprisingly, Table 2 shows very pronounced differences between the graduate and non-graduate groups. Only nine percent of the non-completers had GPA's greater than 3.00 while 72% of the graduates did. In fact, 45% of the non-graduates left UIS with GPA's that were less than 2.00.

While only 10% of the MSS candidates had required state test score data[1], the candidates where data were available did well. They had an overall pass rate of 96% with an average aggregate score of 251. The Minimum Pass Level in Illinois is 240 and 80% is considered to be the acceptable aggregate passing level for teacher education programs.

Non-traditional Learners

Age at entry was calculated by subtracting the date of birth found in University archives from the start date located in MSS files. Although the target audience for the MSS Initiative was recent high school graduates, 58% of the graduates were older. This unexpected finding gave the ability to compare outcomes for "traditional" and "nontraditional" graduates. The traditional graduation age is typically described as a young adult ranging in age from 21 to 23, while the nontraditional graduate, typically comes from other careers, has more life experiences, is older than 23 and may be in their 40s or 50s (Podsen, 2002). Gender and age data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
MSS Graduate Outcomes by Age at Entry

	N	%F	%W	Age Mean	Age STDEV
Older than 23	46	79%	0%	31	9.12
23 or Younger	33	72%	42%	20	4.94
All Graduates	79	75%	28%	26	7.95

The data show greater range in ages of the older group. All of the older group were non-white.

Table 4 (next page) shows GPA and ACT mean and standard deviations for the older and younger groups of graduates.

1. Teacher Education's test score database began in 2011 so earlier records are not available.

Table 4.
MSS Graduate ACT and GPA Scores by Age

	GPA Mean	GPA STDEV	ACT Mean	ACT STDEV
Older than 23*	3.28	0.46	19.50	3.87
23 or Younger	3.05	0.34	21.06	4.21
All Graduates	3.19	0.45	20.76	4.10

Note: *A testing using the Student's t statistic showed a very statistically significant difference in GPA's between the older and younger groups of graduates at the p=0.04 level. The 95% confidence interval of this difference is 0.0124 to 0.4076. T = 2.1160; df = 77 and the SEM = 0.099.

It is interesting to note that, while the older graduates started with slightly lower ACT scores than their younger counterparts, they graduated with statistically significantly higher GPA's.

The older (nontraditional) cohort was also more likely to complete teaching requirements. Table 5 compares student teaching completion rates for these two groups.

Table 5.
MSS Graduate Teacher Education Completion Rates

	Student Teaching Completion Rates
Older than 23	65%
23 or Younger	48%
All Candidates	58%

While more of the older MSS graduates completed student teaching requirements than did the younger group, only 58% of ALL graduates actually finished student teaching.

Digging deeper into MSS teacher candidate data for those who completed teacher training, we uncovered exciting and unexpected success stories. Five MSS graduates (all African American) went on to become school principals. Six other graduates, again, all African American, enrolled in master's-level education courses at UIS.

Discussion

While descriptive in nature, this study has uncovered rich, and often unexpected, findings. Delving into the findings yields both negative and positive outcomes that can help shape the Initiative going forward, identify directions for future research and possibly suggest aspects that can be applied to other teacher education programs. We will first review the negative outcomes we have found and consider what we can learn from them.

Negative Outcomes

The first negative aspect this study uncovered was the nature of the files themselves. Only 34% of the hard copy records contained University Identification Numbers, which allowed access

to the University's data system. This means that we are only able to report learning and demographic outcomes for one-third of the candidates. The fact that there were so many files but so few applicants who were officially enrolled as university students suggests issues with initial recruitment efforts. This relatively high level of initial enrollment and subsequent attrition should probably not be surprising given the nature of the students entering MSS. Many of these first generation/minority students who are, after all, the MSS target population, have what Johnson (2017) calls strong negative external forces that they must overcome to consider themselves viable college students in the first place.

The review also identified some concerns with the numbers of candidates enrolled in MSS at any given time. While MSS has always had an official cap of 10 candidates per year, records show that MSS exceeded that cap from 2009 to 2015. Because these students often require what Holt (2017) calls "just-in-time" academic support to achieve success, having more students enrolled may have put too many demands on the administration so that the MSS candidates were not given the necessary resources, both academic and financial, for them to successfully complete requirements. The number of MSS candidates enrolled ranged from 19 in 2009 to 11 in 2015. As older candidates leave MSS, the enrollment numbers are gradually decreasing and are coming into compliance with MSS's mission. Keeping the cap at ten allows the Director to attend to academic needs while maintaining control of costs, which is congruent with helping these students develop the send of "belonging" as indicated by Katrevich and Aruguete (2017).

For those candidates where academic outcomes can be documented only 55% actually graduated from UIS. See Table 2 in the Findings section for details. Also in Table 2, we see that the 45% of MSS candidates who did not graduate had ending GPA's of less than 2.00. This relatively low graduation rate suggests that past candidates had greater academic needs, suggesting more careful applicant screening up front. Both the high non-completion rate and low GPA's suggest that this group of candidates may have needed a great deal of academic support to successfully complete their program of study and graduate from UIS. Because many of these MSS candidates have academic and social deficits making success in college difficult, admitting these students into the Initiative requires that they receive academic support, again, corroborated by the literature. In other words, MSS has a responsibility to help those who are admitted to remain and complete it. However, other factors, including self-regulation skills suggested by Olson (2017), are also important, so support should be necessary but not sufficient in and of itself.

In addition to the low graduation rate, Table 5, also in the Findings section, highlights the relatively low rate of graduates who actually completed student teaching. Only 58% actually completed the student teaching requirement that would allow them to become licensed teachers. MSS is housed in the Teacher Education Program so it is not unreasonable to expect a higher student teaching completion rate. Also, since increasing the number of teachers for the district was one of the Initiative goals, having such a high percentage of candidates who did not complete student teaching suggests that the Initiative would have difficulty meeting the goal of funneling more teachers, diverse or not, into the local education pipeline. This low completion rate again corroborates what we find in the literature on persistence for high risk college students: the need for academic support and strong mentoring. If these items are not in place, then it will be more difficult for these students to be successful, which may account in part for the low completion rates.

While an interesting result, Table 3 in the Findings section highlights another negative outcome of the study: The relatively high number of older candidates in the MSS Initiative. This was surprising to us since MSS was intended to focus on recent high school graduates. The data show that 58% of candidates who successfully completed MSS were older than 23 at the time they

entered. Since MSS was intended for recent high school graduates, this high percentage of older candidates suggests that the Initiative only partially met its recruitment goal, at least in terms of age range at time of starting MSS. However, it is quite possible that these older students may actually have more resiliency and what Olson (2017) called "grit" than did the younger group so maybe their higher success rate should not be so surprising after all.

Despite these negative outcomes, there were interesting positive outcomes from this study.

Positive Outcomes

Since 2012, our data show that all official MSS applications have resulted in official university enrollments. This suggests that there is a more careful scrutiny of candidates expressing initial interest in the MSS Initiative. This increased selectivity may be admitting candidates who are more prepared for college with an academic mind-set allowing them to be more successful. If this is the case, we may anticipate a higher percentage of successful completers going forward. This implies that MSS is not right for every student who wants to become a teacher, at least initially. Summer bridge programs or other types of "academic boot camps" might provide the prerequisites INCLUDING executive function skills that high-risk prospective teachers need. This increased attention on recruitment efforts should result in fewer inappropriate enrollments and more completions going forward. Furthermore, having a more stable cohort should also help build a support group for these students as they progress through the teacher training program as suggested by Henry (2017), Johnson (2017), and Means and Pyle (2017). Low graduation rates and low participation in teacher education were two historic problems for MSS candidates, which appears to have been addressed.

Reviewing the historical data indicates many other positive outcomes for the MSS Initiative. Regarding increased teacher diversity, we found that 94% of the MSS candidates came from high schools within the Initiative's target area, thus meeting the stated goal of increasing the potential pool of teachers from the local area. See Table 1 in the Findings section. This high percentage suggests that the goal of recruiting candidates from the targeted geographic area was largely met. A recent plan to offer dual credit education courses in high schools may help MSS reach more of these younger students.

Recruiting diverse candidates was also found to be successful. Our data show that 76% of all MSS candidates were non-white females. While there is still room for improvement by recruiting more males of color, these data suggest that MSS was largely able to achieve its diversity goal of increasing the number of minority teacher candidates for the area. While MSS will continue to strive for more gender, racial and ethnic diversity, its future teacher candidates may actually reflect more of the diversity suggested by Ocampo (2018). MSS's diversity may very well include a mix of candidates from different urban-rural settings and those who are older or military veterans. These diverse groups can bring their lived experiences to the teacher education cohort thereby enriching it as well as the students they will eventually teach.

The report also identified some success in achieving academic outcomes. While not part of the Initiative's target population, older MSS candidates graduated with GPA's statistically significantly higher than their younger peers, as reported earlier in *Table 3*. The older group also completed teacher education requirements at a higher rate than the younger group (*Table 4*). These data raise questions and may need further research to identify the reasons for the success of the older group. One possible reason might be that this group has stronger self-regulation skills important for success in college, echoing what Olson found in her 2017 study.

Another positive academic outcome was in the area of standardized teacher test scores. For those candidates where test score data were available, there was an overall testing pass rate of 96% with an average score of 251. The Minimum Pass Level in Illinois is 240, and 80% is considered to be the acceptable passing level for teacher education programs. Success in test taking is another area where more research may be warranted, as we are not sure what factors helped the MSS candidates be successful test takers. A better understanding of their strategies for success may be generalizable to other parts of Teacher Education, thus benefiting the program as a whole.

Most surprising of all were the success stories we uncovered. We found that five MSS graduates went on to become school principals. All five of them were minority candidates, thus spreading diversity beyond teaching into the administrative arena, a positive unintended consequence of the MSS Initiative. Six other MSS graduates, also minority candidates, went on to complete Master's-level Educational Leadership courses. Continuing their education in this fashion provides the local educational community with a pool of candidates with advanced skills in education and research to help districts better address educational challenges. Following up with these groups would be another interesting area of research to determine their motivations for moving on with their education.

Limitations of the Study

While we did learn a great deal from our deep dive into the MSS data, it is important to remember that there were two major structural problems that negatively impacted this study. The first is that we had only paper files to reference and the contents of the files varied greatly in their level of completeness. As mentioned in the Findings Section, only one-third of the files included UIN's, the only way to access demographic and student outcomes. Because only students enrolled in the University receive a UIN, this means that the vast majority of the MSS student files included inquiries that did not result in actual student enrollments. This means we were unable to find information for almost two-thirds of the students.

The second structural problem is that, while we can identify candidates who completed teaching coursework, we do not know if they actually went on to become teachers in the area. Having outcome data on their subsequent teaching careers would allow us to make a more definitive statement about MSS success in increasing teacher diversity.

Next Steps

This review provided us with historical data that can improve the current Initiative and suggest topics for future research to further enhance and improve MSS.

Program Improvement

This study identified practical suggestions to improve the MSS Initiative:

1. Accurate and thorough record-keeping is essential. Having a robust database will allow the Director to track candidate outcomes over time.
2. Careful recruitment is important to ensure that candidates have the skills to successfully complete MSS requirements.

3. Initially, MSS may not be right for every student expressing interest in teaching. Referring worthy candidates to a campus program such as *Necessary Steps* may provide those interested in education as a career with additional skills that will equip them to be successful in MSS.
4. Along with recruitment, MSS applicants need to clearly understand the teaching requirements of TEP. Part of this understanding includes having the maturity and skills to take on the rigors of college.
5. Explore ways to further diversify the Initiative, especially as relates to increasing minority male recruitment, such as the *Call Me MISTER®* program (https://www.clemson.edu/education/callmemister/). Additionally, The College as a whole is creating a plan to increase the diversity of faculty, staff and students, which should also help make TEP a more diverse and welcoming program.
6. Provide training on how to develop and use executive function skills to enhance the college experience. This task can be accomplished either within the Initiative itself or through existing campus boot camps or other enrichment activities.

Suggestions for Other Teacher Education Programs

While MSS is not perfect, we strive to improve and hope these suggestions may help others. To facilitate the program development process, we have included a copy of the Application and Agreement, included in the Appendix. Other programs are free to adapt them as appropriate.

Financial aid is an important component to consider and supported by the research. In addition to federal and state funding sources, programs who are recruiting older or non-traditional students/candidates might consider funding to supplement on-campus expenses such as meals and housing. Funding to support transportation and child care for returning adult students/candidates might also be important for recruitment.

To recruit interested and qualified students/candidates, it is, of course, important to work closely with local high schools as well as community colleges. However, it might be helpful to try some of the non-traditional recruitment avenues suggested by the literature, including dual enrollment options. After students/candidates are recruited, retention is the next step. In addition to financial aid, faculty mentoring and connections are seen as crucial to encouraging completion. Making connections with existing campus mentoring programs can provide additional support and may even serve as additional on-ramp for future teacher candidates.

Future Research

The data also raised unanswered questions. Future research might focus on the following:

1. How can faculty best mentor and support MSS candidates?
2. Which elements of MSS were most helpful for successful completion?
3. Why were older candidates more likely to graduate and complete teacher education requirements?
4. What are the long term effects of dual credit options on enrollment?
5. What is the effect of executive function skills training on retention, academic performance and completion?

Final Thoughts

On another note, MSS is changing its name to Prairie Area Teaching Initiative (PATI) to better reflect who we are and what we do. The vision of PATI is "Forging Equity and Unity in Teacher Education" and the mission statement is 'to inspire and support aspiring future teachers from historically marginalized populations." This new vision echoes the broader definition of diversity suggested by Ocampo (2018). These statements will be added to all documents, along with a descriptor at the bottom of the mission statement that describes changes to the population that we will accept into the Initiative, (high school graduates, paraprofessionals, community college students, etc.).

One big change that PATI will make is in where graduates will be able to teach. While MSS required graduates to teach in one of the two partner school districts, PATI will allow completers to teach anywhere in the state of Illinois, still for at least two years as employment opportunities are available. In addition to increasing a diverse pool of candidates, we hope that this new initiative will also help the teacher shortage in the state of Illinois.

Increasing the pool of diverse teachers is important to enhance education for all of our candidates. This was and remains our goal. Our study showed that MSS has largely met its goal for its targeted area. Careful attention to recruitment and administration coupled with support and mentoring will further encourage teacher diversity, allowing PATI to continue this mission of diversity for decades to come.

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Appendix A

Project Midstate Student Support for Teaching (MSS) Application

Project Midstate Student Support for Teaching (MSS)

"Helping local students become local teachers"

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT SPRINGFIELD
College of Education & Human Services
One University Plaza, MS BRK 330
Springfield, Illinois 62703-5407
DR. RONDA MITCHELL, PROGRAM DIRECTOR
Ph: 217.206.7008 Email: rmitche@uis.edu

APPLICATION FOR PROJECT MIDSTATE STUDENT SUPPORT FOR TEACHING (MSS)

Today's Date: _____

Project Midstate Student Support for Teaching (MSS) is a partnership designed to assist the Springfield and Decatur school systems in the recruitment of diverse and first generation teachers by establishing an articulated teacher recruitment and preparation initiative beginning at the junior year of high school and continuing through licensure at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Please print clearly for all information requested below

- **STUDENT INFORMATION**

Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Birthdate: _____

Email Address: _____ UIN (for current UIS students only): _____

- **ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

Beginning with the most recent, list all high schools, community colleges and/or universities attended. Use back side if necessary.

Name and location (city/state) of school	Diploma/Degree	Cumulative GPA	Date Received

- **COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY ADMISSION STATUS**

Have you applied to **any other** community colleges, colleges and/or universities that are not listed above? If yes:

Name and location (city/state) of school	Date of application	Acceptance Status

Have you applied for the Free Application of Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)? Yes: _____ No: _____
If yes, date of received confirmation: _____
Have you applied for Financial Aid through UIS? Yes: _____ No: _____

- **TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROCESSING**

Which licensure program do you plan to pursue?

Elementary licensure: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, are you interested in a middle school endorsement? Yes: ____ No: ____

If yes, which content area? Language Arts: _____ Math: _____ Social Science: _____ Science: _____

Secondary licensure: Yes____ No_____

If yes, which content area?

Science (Biology): _____ Science (Chemistry): _____ Mathematics: _____ English: _____

Social Science (Sociology/Anthropology): _____ (Political Science): _____ (History): _____

- **UIS TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM (TEP) ACCEPTANCE**

Have you been accepted into Teacher Education at UIS? Yes: ____ No: ____
If yes, date accepted: _____

Date of meeting with **TEP Initial Advisor**: _____

- **TEP ADMISSION TESTING**

Have you taken the Illinois Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP)? Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, date taken: _____

Have you taken the ACT + writing? Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, date taken: _____

- **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

Have you completed the Fingerprint Background Check (through Accurate Biometrics for UIS)? Yes: _____ No: _____
(For those 18 years and older)

If yes, date completed: _____

- **SIGNATURE(S)** VERIFYING INTEGRITY OF THE APPLICATION'S CONTENTS

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____
(If applicant is under 18 years of age)

- **ESSAY (REQUIRED):**

Please provide a well-developed essay discussing your reason for electing to teach and, specifically, why you believe the Project MSS Program will benefit you, and how you will benefit the MSS program. The purpose of this essay is to not only determine your fit with the MSS program, but also to gauge your writing skills. Please write legibly.

Appendix B

Project Midstate Student Support for Teaching (MSS) Agreement

Project Midstate Student Support for Teaching

"Helping Local Students become Local Teachers"

Dr. Ronda Mitchell, Program Director
University of Illinois, Springfield
One University Plaza, MS BRK 330
Springfield, Illinois 62703-5407
Ph: 217.206.7008 Email: rmitche@uis.edu

Program Requirements

Each student participant must be in good academic standing to be eligible to receive financial benefits offered through the Midstate Student Support office. Upon acceptance into Project MSS, the student is required to meet all program requirements from semester to semester. These requirements are as follows:

- Enroll in **at least 12 credit hours per semester** as advised: Students who drop below 12 credits or more will not be eligible for financial benefits from Project MSS.
- Students with 45 credit hours or more must be enrolled in a minimum of **six (6) hours of TEP coursework at UIS per semester.**
- Maintain a minimum **cumulative grade point average of at least 2.50. (GPA requirements are subject to change according to catalog year.)**
- Maintain a minimum content major **grade point average of at least 2.75.**
- Maintain a minimum **grade point average of 3.0 in all Teacher Education courses**.
- Complete all general education, content major, and TEP courses with a minimum grade of C or better.
- Perform **10 hours of community service each semester**.
- Attend all regularly scheduled MSS meetings and activities.
- Upon licensure for a teaching position, apply to at least one of the two partner school districts (Springfield District #186 or Decatur District #61) and provide verification of the applications.
- Submit this agreement, signed below, agreeing to teach two (2) years in the Project MSS region (Springfield, Decatur) after graduation from the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Tuition Waiver Requirements

- Tuition waivers apply to general education coursework, TEP coursework, or coursework required by the content major.
- Eligibility must be confirmed by the Office of Financial Aid
- Acceptance of any level of waiver funds confirms participant's understanding and intent to participate in Project MSS and to graduate from UIS and teach in a partnering school district for a minimum of two years.

Timeline Completions

- Incoming freshmen will be eligible for tuition waiver for no more than five (5) years.
- Timeline completion parameters for transfer students will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Probation

Notification

If the above Program requirements are not met by the end of each semester, the student participant will receive a written letter of **Notification of Probation** by the Director **within 15 days of the semester's end** confirming that he/she has been placed on academic probation.

Consequences of Academic Probation

Students on academic probation **are not** eligible to receive the MSS tuition waiver or stipend for subsequent semesters until the remediation terms of probation have been met.

Student Response

Upon receipt of the Notification of Probation, the student participant will meet with the Director and any pertinent advisers, if necessary, to establish a plan for remediation. Appropriate help and/or counseling for improvement will be made available and the student will be given a specific designated time frame to eliminate academic probation status, dependent upon the scope and degree of remediation necessary. If a student feels s/he has been subjected to extenuating circumstances, s/he may choose to present the case to the Program Director in writing for possible reconsideration.

Resolution

At the end of the probationary period, the Project MSS Director and pertinent adviser(s) will review the student's remediation plan and progress and determine if the terms of remediation have been fully met. Upon confirmation of satisfactory, the student will be removed from probationary status and reinstated to good standing. The Project Director will notify the student by written correspondence that good standing has been restored and that student has been reinstated in the Program.

Failure to Resolve Probationary Status

If the student does not complete the terms of the remediation plan satisfactorily during the probationary period, the Project Director will determine whether all or part of the financial benefits previously awarded to the student must be returned. If the student is found to be in default, stipends from the most recent school semester will have to be reimbursed to the MSS Program. In such cases, written notification will be forwarded to the student stating the specific amount owed to MSS and the terms for repayment. The repayment agreement will comply with existing community college or University of Illinois Springfield regulations.

Failure to Repay Monies Due

In the event that reimbursements are not made as scheduled, the student will be placed on academic hold until such debt has been satisfied as required under existing regulations identified in the previous paragraph of this Program Agreement.

Agreement Renewal

Every MSS student will be required to sign a new agreement at the beginning of each academic year. These agreements will incorporate any necessary changes reflective of legislative, advisory, or departmental policy.

Signature

By signing below, I agree that I have read and understand the terms and conditions necessary for participation in the Midstate Student Support Program as given in this agreement. I agree to such terms and conditions and understand all Program requirements as given above, including how to resolve probationary status and/or failure to meet that status. Upon successful completion of the Program and graduation from the University of Illinois Springfield, I agree to teach in the Program region for two consecutive years following graduation **if said employment is available / offered.**

_____ _____

Student Participant Signature Date

_____ _____

Director Signature Date

The Dangers of Opportunity: How Leaders in U.S. Higher Education Articulated Policy After "Unite the Right" in Charlottesville

Zachary W. Taylor, Danielle Zaragoza, & Catherine Hartman, University of Texas at Austin

Abstract

By many accounts—on August 11th and 12th, 2017—a "Unite the Right" rally organized by white nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia, catalyzed a series of violent events culminating in the injury of dozens of people and the death of three people (Alvarez, 2017; Astor, Caron, & Victor, 2017; Heim, 2017; McKelway, 2017). Subsequently, dozens of college and university leaders across the country released official statements condemning the violence. This study examines 99 of these institutional statements released during or immediately after the crisis in Charlottesville to learn whether these statements informed campus community members of institutional hate and bias policies meant to protect members against acts of hate, bias, and violence, such as the ones witnessed in Charlottesville. Findings reveal only 8% of statements included a directive on how to engage with institutional hate and bias policies, yet over 75% of institutions had hate and bias policies in place. Implications for executive leadership communication and future research are addressed.

Keywords: *higher education; policy; official statements; educational leadership; hate and bias*

Introduction

Charlottesville, Virginia is home to the state's public flagship university, the University of Virginia (UVA), whose leadership canceled conservative and self-defined White supremacist Richard Spencer's speaking engagement in May 2017 on the UVA campus (Wood, 2017). Spencer—a UVA alumnus and self-proclaimed advocate for a white "ethno-state" (Wood, 2017, para. 40)—was credited as being an influential factor in the decision of white nationalists to host the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville over the weekend of August 11th and 12th, 2017 (McLaughlin, 2017). By numerous accounts, a removal of a statue of Confederate Army Commander Robert E. Lee from Charlottesville's Emancipation Park had catalyzed many of the "Unite the Right" protesters, in addition to the cancellation of Spencer's speaking engagement (McKelway, 2017; McLaughlin, 2017).

As many of Spencer's supporters, including "Unite the Right" organizer Jason Kessler and other White nationalists, arrived in Charlottesville and on the UVA campus, bouts of violence and hatred began to erupt, as those on Spencer's side were met by counter protesters on the night of August 11th (McKelway, 2017). Over the course of the weekend, protesters and counter protesters

clashed, ultimately culminating in the injury of dozens of people and the death of three people (Alvarez, 2017; Astor, Caron, & Victor, 2017; Heim, 2017; McKelway, 2017). Shortly after the event, news outlets on both sides of the United States political spectrum—from democrat to republican—considered the "Unite the Right" rally one of the most hateful, bigoted, and violent events to occur in U.S. in the 21st century (Alvarez, 2017; Astor, Caron, & Victor, 2017; Heim, 2017; McKelway, 2017).

As a result of the "Unite the Right" rally and subsequent violence, the University of Virginia itself was thrust into damage control, with university administration delaying classes and urging all educational stakeholders to remain in their places of residence until Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe's state of emergency was lifted (Alvarez, 2017). From August 11th through August 12th, the University of Virginia and then-UVA President Theresa A. Sullivan issued a series of four statements commenting on the situation in-progress in Charlottesville. In the first statement from August 11th, Sullivan (2017a) claimed "violence displayed on Grounds is intolerable and is entirely inconsistent with the University's values" (para. 2).

The next morning at 10:29 AM, the University released a statement supporting Sullivan's earlier statement and asserting that "The intimidating and abhorrent behavior displayed by the alt-right protestors [sic] was wrong. Those who gather with the intent to strike fear and sow division do not reflect the University's values and will not influence or diminish the University's commitment to inclusion, diversity and mutual respect" (University of Virginia, 2017, para. 1). Four hours later, Sullivan (2017b) again commented, asserting "We strongly condemn intimidating and abhorrent behavior intended to strike fear and sow division in our community. Acts of violence are not protected by the First Amendment" (para. 4).

Finally, roughly four more hours later, Sullivan (2017c) stated that "The safety and well-being of all members of our community is my most important priority as president" (para. 3). However, nowhere in any official university statements released during the Charlottesville crisis—August 11th through August 12th—did President Sullivan or university leadership articulate the processes for engaging with the university's hate and bias incidents policy in the event that a UVA community member felt threatened or was harmed and needed help to protect themselves. In fact, the only mention of university policy in all four statements was the August 12th statement from the University of Virginia (2017) stating, "While University policy speaks to the ability to reserve space inside University-owned facilities, permits or registration to access public and open outdoor spaces are not required" (para. 2).

However, roughly 150 miles away, Towson University took a drastically different approach to articulating institutional hate and bias policies during this crisis. In her official post-Charlottesville statement, Towson University President Kim Schatzel (2017) wrote, "As hallmarks of our democracy, the U.S. Constitution protects and guarantees our rights to free speech and assembly; however, no one should ever feel threatened for their safety or well-being as a result of such expression" (para. 2). This sentiment echoed UVA President Sullivan's (2017b) reference to the First Amendment from her third August 12th statement (para. 4). However, President Schatzel (2017) went one step further, outlining specific action for Towson community members to take in the event of a hate and bias incident akin to the events in Charlottesville:

> In the wake of the terror and violence of this past weekend, it is up to all of us to lead and model civility and respect in our conversations, interactions and relationships with each other. We work actively against hate and bias, and every member of our community is encouraged to immediately report it using our Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents process. (para. 5)

Moreover, Schatzel embedded a hyperlink to Towson's official process for reporting hate crimes and bias incidents, cementing her position in support of institutional policy.

This disparity of policy articulation from institution to institution catalyzed this study. Through a quantitative content analysis (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2015) of post-Charlottesville statements immediately released by 99 postsecondary leaders in the United States (August 11th through August 13th) and a policy analysis (Fischer, Miller, & Sidney, 2007) of these institutions' hate and bias incidents policies, this analysis seeks to answer two questions:

1. Do institutions of higher education articulate how to report a hateful or biased incident on their institutional website?
2. Amidst a crisis filled with violent, hateful, and biased acts—do institutional leaders compose official statements urging their community members to engage with institutional policies meant to deter and remedy these acts?

Answering these questions will inform two salient gaps in the literature: how institutional leaders address their constituencies through official statements and whether institutional policies are made apparent on institutional websites to protect racially and socially minoritized populations experiencing hateful and biased incidents on college campuses across the United States.

Literature Review

This study focuses on two different elements of postsecondary leadership—executive leadership communication with their campus community and the online presence of hate and bias incidents policies to improve campus climate—and therefore requires two separate but equally important reviews of literature. The first will describe theories and conceptions of how modern leaders of U.S. institutions of higher education communicate with campus community members and their broader society. The second will outline the legal precedent framing hate and bias incident policies on college campuses and further action taken by postsecondary leaders to ensure a safe campus climate through the implementation of hate and bias incidents policies.

How Institutional Leaders Communicate with Their Campus Community

Decades of research on higher education leadership has produced many books focused on the topic, but little research has substantially addressed how higher education leaders communicate with their campus community, especially racially and socially minoritized students. In fact, aside from examinations of institutional mission statements of various types (Morphew & Hartley, 2006; Taylor, 2017; Wilson, Meyer, & McNeal, 2012), few studies have analyzed official statements made by institutions of higher education through their executive leaders. Recently, higher education-related news outlets (i.e., *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*) have broadly summarized official statements released by postsecondary institutions in reaction to President Donald Trump's rescission of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, a policy meant to allow some individuals brought to the U.S. as minors a two-year renewal stay of deportation and eligibility for a U.S. work permit (Adams & Hoisington, 2017; McGuire 2017). However, these broad summaries capture the language of a few official institutional statements without conducting a rigorous investigation of a larger sample connected to extant research. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature.

Of the general aims of executive leadership communication in U.S. higher education, Tierney (1988) argued, "An organization's culture is reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it. It concerns decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and a symbolic level" (p. 3). Among members within the institution, Tierney also asserted that "oral discourse predominates among members of the institution. Internal constituencies appear well informed of decisions and ideas through an almost constant verbal exchange of information through both formal and informal means" (p. 12). However, Tierney's (1988) work did not address official institutional statements made by executive leadership in the United States and instead focused primarily on internal communications.

Specific to change leadership in higher education, Rowley and Sherman (2001) posited, "The key to effective campuswide leadership is effective communication, and the keys to effective communication are openness of the process, honesty, building trust, listening, choosing the proper forms for discussion, and agreeing that it may be OK to disagree" (p. 161), arguing that "some methods of communicating are clearly better than others" (p. 186). The authors did not elaborate on these methods of communication, but they asserted that the context for communication should drive its channels (Rowley & Sherman, 2001). Later, Kezar, Carducci, and Contreras-McGavin (2006) argued, "Communication and relational skills posited by many researchers are critical competencies that [higher education] leaders need to spend time developing" (p. 159), suggesting that communicating at the executive level in higher education is a difficult, laborious task requiring leaders to understand their "institutional contexts in which they are involved, particularly institutional culture" (p. 159). Ultimately, Kezar, Carducci, and Contreras-McGavin (2006) asserted communication and relational skills are developed through a focus on "people's perceptions," which can vary from institution to institution and across time and place (p. 159).

Jacobson (2016) suggested that aspiring or new institutional presidents and chancellors should emulate the communication styles of other institutional leaders such as the University of Pennsylvania's Amy Gutmann, who "is in constant communication with her constituencies, ensuring that all members of the community understand her vision for the institution" (para. 6). Jacobson also urged institutional leaders to hire a speech trainer as "best university presidents, CEOs and elected officials all get professional training" (para. 12) and use social media to "provide another medium to disseminate your message with a less formal tone and more casual format" (para. 13). These strategies, according to Jacobson (2016), help facilitate the dissemination of communication to the broadest audience possible. Furthermore, Brennan and Weaver (2017) suggested shifting the burden of communicating with the campus community from the executive leader's shoulders to a specialized team of institutional communicators: "One of the best ways to do this is to remove layers of approval and pre-authorize people to act and communicate immediately" (para. 13).

Finally, to achieve a culture of communication on campus, Boyer (2016) suggested executive leaders view communication tasks as a matter of

> using the right techniques to engage the right audience about a relevant topic at the optimal time. This strategic alliance of communication channel, audience, topic, and timing is what enables certain institutions to create environments with both appropriate transparency and authentic dialogue. (para. 5)

This assertion falls in line with Rowley and Sherman's (2001) notion of context as the driver for communication methods. Touching upon crisis communication strategies employed by executive

leadership, Boyer (2016) also urged all executive leaders to "Develop an emergency-communication plan: In times of crisis or unrest that require more real-time interaction, keeping the line of accessibility open using the president's voice and a planned communication strategy is often the key" (para. 16).

However, no extant research has addressed how executive leadership in U.S. higher education compose and disseminate official statements to their campus community and the broader society. Furthermore, limited research addresses how institutional leaders communicate the parameters of institutional policies in communications with campus stakeholders, especially racially and socially minoritized students, faculty, staff, and community members who are the survivors of hate and bias incidents, representing gaps in the literature.

Institutional Hate and Bias Incidents Policies

Broadly, student affairs professionals in higher education define hate speech as "an imprecise catch-all term that generally includes verbal and written words and symbolic acts that convey a grossly negative assessment of particular persons or groups based on their race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or disability" (Kaplin & Lee, 2009, p. 1018). However, this definition is problematic given its First Amendment implications. Kaplin and Lee (2009) elaborated:

> Hate speech regulations may prohibit and punish particular types of messages, they may raise pressing free expression issues not only for public institutions but also for private institutions that are subject to state constitutional provisions or statutes employing First Amendment norms or that voluntarily adhere to First Amendment norms. The free expression values that First Amendment norms protect may be in tension with the equality values that institutions seek to protect by prohibiting hate speech. (p. 499)

Moreover, prior to the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was no legal precedent specific to higher education—at the local, state, or federal level—to guide postsecondary institutions and their leadership when crafting hate and bias incident policies (Gould, 2001; Kaplin & Lee, 2009).

Although not a case focused on college or university law but rather U.S. Constitutional law via the First Amendment's freedom of speech, *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire* (1942) introduced the fighting words doctrine, which are words "which by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace" (p. 572). The Supreme Court's unanimous 9-0 ruling established that such words were not essential to use when articulating someone's opinion or exploring an idea, instead holding that such words are "clearly outweighed by the social interest in order and morality" (p. 572). Yet, multiple legal scholars have contended that the *Chaplinsky* ruling holds that hate speech is protected by the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment, as hate speech is often defined as "advocacy of bigoted views" and not words meant to provoke fighting or violence (Volokh, 2017, para. 8). Ultimately, the *Chaplinsky* ruling has encouraged colleges and universities to attempt to curb potentially-harmful forms of speech, such as fighting words.

In 1989, the University of Michigan unanimously adopted a "Policy on Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment of Students in the University Environment," which was the subject of inquiry in *Doe v. University of Michigan*. Therein, the U.S. District Court ruled in favor of Doe—an anonymous University of Michigan student—finding that the University of Michigan's policy was overbroad on its face and in application, as the policy was so vague that enforcement of the policy would violate Fourteenth Amendment Due Process rights. Penning the opinion, Judge Cohn (1989) echoed Justice William Brennan's assertion about the First Amendment and breathing

room, suggesting that because First Amendment freedoms need breathing space to exist, the U.S. government may regulate First Amendment freedoms with narrow specificity.

The University's speech code was simply not narrowly tailored. Here, the University of Michigan's failed speech code policy demonstrates just how difficult it is for leaders of institutions of higher education to balance hateful speech and rhetoric with Constitutionally-protected forms of speech and related Constitutional rights.

Just two years later, *UWM Post v. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System* (1991) witnessed the UW Rule—a university policy like the University of Michigan's failed one—be deemed unconstitutional by the U.S. District Court. Akin to *Doe v. University of Michigan*, the court found the UW Rule to be overbroad, vague, and likely to violate due process and free speech rights of University of Wisconsin System students, as the UW Rule was not narrowly tailored and exceeded the scope of the fighting words doctrine articulated in *Chaplinsky*. Both the University of Michigan and University of Wisconsin System cases highlight the difficult line leaders of institutions of higher education must walk between curbing hateful and biased incidents and upholding the First Amendment rights of all campus community members.

Articulating this difficulty, Gould's (2001) study summarized the efforts of postsecondary institutions implementing speech codes on their campuses prior to the year 2000. Therein, Gould found that 100 public and private institutions enacted nearly identical percentages of speech policies from 1987-1992 (publics at 44%, privates 43%), while over 13% of all four-year institution types enacted speech policies that prohibited verbal harassment, verbal harassment of minorities, and offensive speech (p. 359). However, from 1992 to 1997, eleven institutions enacted new campus speech policies similar to those of the University of Michigan's and the University of Wisconsin System's, even though these policies were deemed unconstitutional just a few years earlier. Ultimately, Gould's research articulated the notion that even though legal precedents were established in relation to campus speech policies, many postsecondary institutions enacted speech codes contradictory to these legal precedents. In short, many public and private institutions, as recently as 2001, have successfully adopted and implemented potentially unconstitutional speech codes and hate and bias incidents policies without issue or legal contest. Since Gould's (2001) study, there has been no case law or legal contest made publicly available that challenges the Constitutionality of a postsecondary hate and bias incidents policy, including policies that could be considered campus speech codes (Kaplin & Lee, 2009).

Of executive leadership reaction or rhetoric toward hate and bias incidents, Thorne (2014) argued college presidents often practice a "cancel-and-cling" mentality, as "When something happens on campus that appears to some to be an act motivated by racial, sexual, or homophobic bias, quite a few schools cancel classes and take the occasion to cling to their positions on 'tolerance'" (p. 31). Thorne (2014) continued by asserting that presidents "urge students into activism and make it their mission to eradicate particular biases on campus" and then promote action to respond to the hate or bias incident by "planning activities in their place that will supposedly help the community process what has happened" (p. 31).

Beyond Thorne's (2014) perspective focused on college presidents, little research has addressed how executive leadership for institutions of higher education address hate and bias incidents or their policies with their campus communities, especially racially and socially minoritized individuals, representing a critical gap in the literature. Other institutional stakeholders, including those working in Equal Employment Opportunity offices (Ball, 2013), diversity and inclusion departments (Wong, 2017), and hate and bias response teams (Miller, Guida, Smith, Ferguson, & Medina, 2018) have been found to be valuable sources of support for students, faculty, staff, and

community members who have experienced incidents of hate and bias. However, no extant research has examined official statements released by these sources of institutional support meant to communicate hate and bias policies with the larger campus community.

Methodology

The following sections detail how the researchers gathered data, analyzed data, and negotiated the limitations of the study

.

Data Collection of Official Statements

All official institutional statements were gathered from institutional .edu websites: This decision was informed by the massive volume of popular news outlets (i.e., CNN, Fox News, the BBC) covering the situation surrounding Charlottesville and the "Unite the Right" rally. Instead of analyzing news outlets reporting on official statements, the research team decided statements published directly by institutional leaders on institutional websites were the most accurate, authentic sources of institutional communication available. Moreover, all statements in this study were signed by either the institution's president or chancellor, filling the gap in the literature focusing on official statements released by executive leadership in U.S. higher education.

To locate these statements, the researchers employed Google Advanced Search, delimiting the search results using the following protocol:

- find the words college and/or university and/or community college, plus statement, and plus Charlottesville;
- narrow results in English;
- narrow results published on domains within the United States;
- narrow results within last 24 hours;
- narrow results to the .edu domain.

This advanced search was performed ten times every day from August 11th through August 14th to specifically narrow the focus on official institutional statements published immediately during or immediately after the Charlottesville crisis. At the end of the four-day period, the researchers located 99 total statements published on .edu institutional websites.

The decision to delimit the timeframe of the collection of official statements was made understanding bias incidents policies should encourage victims to report the incident as soon as possible (Hughes, 2013), and organizational leadership should issue crisis communication as quickly as possible (Coombs, 2015). Therefore, it is important to learn whether institutional leaders adhered to this sense of immediacy and made their hate and bias incidents policies known in a period during or shortly after hateful and biased activity and violence. All statements and their hyperlinks were uploaded into an Excel database with the following metadata extracted from each statement: publication date, institution, institution type (public or private, two- or four-year), URL, and full text of statement. In total, fifty-one statements came from public four-year institutions, four from public two-year institutions, and forty-four from private four-year institutions.

Data Collection of Institutional Policies

Once the researchers located the 99 official statements, the team revisited each institution's website to explore the institution's presence and articulation of a hate and bias incidents policy. Institutional hate and bias incidents policies were located using each institution's embedded search tool on each institutional website using the keywords "hate and bias policy" or "hate and bias reporting." If this search did not yield an institutional policy for reporting hate and bias, each institution's policy library was analyzed to locate student conduct codes, freedom of expression policies, or violence prevention and threat assessment procedures. When a policy was located, its hyperlink was uploaded to a collaborative Excel database, allowing all members of the research team access and review all institutional hate and bias policies.

Data Analysis

Both sources of data for this project—institutional statements and policies—were made readily available on institutional .edu websites, and the following questions guided the project: 1.) Do institutions of higher education articulate how to report a hateful or biased incident on their institutional website? and 2.) Do institutional leaders compose official statements urging their community members to engage with institutional policies meant to deter and remedy hateful or biased incidents? Given these questions, the researchers performed a quantitative content analysis of the statements and policies (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2015) via grounded theory (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014).

These methodological approaches were appropriate because of the size of the statement corpus—99 statements, totaling 28,539 words—and the focused, direct nature of the research questions pertinent to institutional statements and policies. Quantitative content analysis involves the "systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods," (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2015, p. 3). This sense of systematic assignment of communication content caters nicely to a grounded approach to coding the content, as grounded coding allows for the categorization and recategorization of data as new information becomes available through a collaborative, iterative analysis of the data (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Given the flexibility of both analytic methodologies and the amount of text that required precise, yet mutable coding, quantitative content analysis via grounded theory was appropriate for this project.

To better describe the corpus (collection) of statements and their overall messages delivered to campus community members, two quantitative content analysis techniques were also employed: word count calculations and grade-level readability measuring of the statements. Both the length of a text and its grade-level readability contribute to its effectiveness, as over five decades of readability research has found that the longer and the higher a text's grade-level readability is, the more difficult that text is to read and comprehend (DuBay, 2004). Consider these findings alongside recent research suggesting the average U.S. adult reads and comprehends at between the 7^{th} and 8^{th}-grade level (Clear Language Group, 2018), and it becomes important to assess the length and grade-level readability of English language used in official statements per the suggestion of extant research (Neuhauser et al., 2013; Novak & Biskup, 2011; Temnikova, Vieweg, & Castillo, 2015).

To calculate word count and grade-level readability, Readability Studio—a quantitative linguistics software program—was used. The text of each statement was extracted and then uploaded into Readability Studio, using the Automated Readability Index (Kincaid & Delionbach,

1973), Flesch-Kincaid test (Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers, & Chissom, 1975), Gunning-Fog test (Gunning, 1952), and the SMOG index (McLaughlin, 1969) to calculate grade-level readability, as these measures were created to specifically analyze different semantic (word choice) and syntactic (sentence structure) elements of nonfiction text. This strategy produces a semantically and syntactically triangulated readability average. This data is displayed in Table 1 in the Findings section of this study.

Although the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (1990) requires institutions of higher education to report hate crimes, institutional policies were analyzed to determine whether an institution currently has a policy in place that facilitates the reporting of hate and bias incidents, including those that do not meet the federal threshold of a hate crime. The federal definition of a hate crime is an act that willfully causes bodily injury, or attempt to do so using a dangerous weapon, because of the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of any person (United States Department of Justice, 2017). Due to legal precedent, the research team decided to analyze hate and bias policies for all types of sanctions, including those that explicitly punish actions beyond fighting words and hate speech. *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire* (1942) found fighting words to be cause for legal action, while *Doe v. University of Michigan* (1989) and *UWM Post v. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System* (1991) found institutional policies were not narrowly tailored and sanctioned beyond fighting words.

Here, many of the hateful and biased acts witnessed in Charlottesville—the carrying of Nazi flag or the chanting of racial slurs (Heim, 2017)—do not meet the federal threshold for a hate crime and may not meet the federal threshold for fighting words, yet these hateful incidents do affect campus climate in negative ways, especially for the victims of hateful and biased incidents (Hughes, 2013). For instance, Towson University's (2018) hate and bias incidents policies asserted, "In cases of hate crimes, individuals can be punished with fines or imprisonment" (para. 8), while "cases where a student is found responsible of a University policy violation, penalties may include: educational sanctions, probation, and/or suspension/expulsion" (para. 9). Ultimately, the research team was interested in learning if institutional policies actually include mention of sanctions, as previous policies—namely those at the University of Michigan and University of Wisconsin System—were found unconstitutional.

In order for each policy to be coded as an institutional hate or bias incidents policy, it needed to satisfy two criteria: an "officially expressed intention backed by a sanction, which can be a reward or a punishment" (Fischer, Miller, & Sidney, 2007, p. xix) that includes an explicit procedure for campus community members to report the hate or bias incident (Hughes, 2013). During this analysis, the research team analyzed each policy to learn whether the policy included how a hate or bias incident could be reported (binary coding: 1=yes, 0=no) and the sanctions for those found guilty (binary coding: 1=yes, 0=no). Institutions that failed to meet these criteria were coded as not having a hate and bias incidents policy. From these policies, the following metadata was extracted: URL of the policy and the title of the policy. This database is available from the author upon request.

Employing a grounded approach, all 99 statements were initially analyzed without coding the data to gain an understanding of the aims and scope of the statements through an iterative, reflective process meant to develop inductive categories through systematic data analysis (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). During this reflective process, the research team gained a better idea of how institutional leaders communicated the Charlottesville crisis to their campus community and beyond, as extant research has not addressed such institutional crisis communication in-depth. As

a result, this exploratory process familiarized the research team with the statements in order to better analyze their content.

Once an exploratory evaluation was completed, the research team decided to code the data to focus on the initial research question, paying special attention to each statement's mentioning of policy or a direct reference to institutional policy using a binary coding strategy (1=yes, 0=no). After the first round, the iterative process of grounded coding revealed two salient phenomena. First, references to the U.S. Constitution or to freedom of speech and/or freedom of expression were apparent in many of the institutional statements. As the U.S. Constitution is the overarching legal signpost for all institutions in this study, each institutional statement was recoded as referencing the U.S. Constitution and/or the First Amendment and freedom of speech/freedom of expression using the same binary coding strategy (1=yes, 0=no). Second, the iterative, grounded coding process revealed a small number of statements did not condemn the violence in Charlottesville by using modifiers with negative connotations to describe the violence, such as unacceptable, intolerable, terrible, and others: statements condemning or not condemning violence were also coded using the binary strategy.

Finally, a third round of coding focused on statements including a reference to institutional hate and bias policy(ies). These statements were coded into two categories: statements that mentioned institutional policy and statements including a direct weblink to the policy and guidelines for reporting hate and bias incidents. Institutional hate and bias information was coded using a binary strategy (1=yes, 0=no), specifically focusing on whether each institution included specific reporting procedures and sanctions for those found guilty.

Limitations

The two primary limitations of this study are the timeframe during which institutional statements were gathered and the mode of communication the research team analyzed. First the researchers gathered statements in the period immediately during and following the series of hateful, biased, violent incidents in Charlottesville, beginning on August 11th and concluding on August 13th by many accounts (Alvarez, 2017; Astor, Caron, & Victor, 2017; Heim, 2017; McKelway, 2017). It is likely that other institutions—including UVA—released official statements commenting on Charlottesville after August 13th, and it is also likely that other institutions released similar statements that were not clearly titled or described as commenting specifically on Charlottesville. Google Advanced Search results were also artificially delimited to .edu domains within the United States. It is possible that other institution types—i.e. for-profit institutions with .org or .com domains—released Charlottesville statements that were not located by the Google Advanced Search. However, this limitation was purposeful, as extant research suggests hate and bias incidents policies should encourage reporting as soon as possible (Hughes, 2013) and that institutional leaders should issue crisis communication as quickly as possible (Coombs, 2015).

Second, this study only analyzes statements from institutional leaders which these leaders published on their institutional websites. It is highly probable these institutional leaders and other members of each institution's community issued official statements through email, across social media platforms, or in-person, resulting in a much larger body of communication than what was apparent on institutional websites. To render the study much more feasible, the research team analyzed statements published on institutional websites instead of attempting to capture all forms of crisis communication being issued by hundreds, if not thousands, of institutions of higher education across the United States and beyond.

Ultimately, this study of this kind does not have a precursor, as no extant research has examined how leaders of institutions of higher education articulate institutional policies during or immediately after a crisis filled with hateful and biased incidents on a college campus or in a college town. Subsequently, the limitations of this study are purposeful and appropriate given the study's feasibility, intentionality, and originality.

Findings

A quantitative content analysis of post-Charlottesville statements published by postsecondary institutions in the United States can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Quantitative content analysis of post-Charlottesville statements published by postsecondary institutions in the United States (n=99)

Average word count (# of words):	279
High	1,024
Low	53
Average readability level (grade level):	14.4
Public	14.4
Private	14.3
Automated readability index	14.3
Flesch-Kincaid test	13.9
Gunning-Fog index	13.8
SMOG index	15.4
Percentage of statements:	
Condemning violence	96.9%
Public	96.4% (of publics in the sample)
Private	97.6% (of privates in the sample)
Referencing institutional policy	15.1%
Public	21.1%
Private	7.1%
Including a weblink to institutional policy	8.1%
Public	12.3%
Private	2.4%
Referencing free speech or expression	37.3%
Public	35.1%
Private	40.5%
Referencing Constitution or 1st Amendment	12.1%
Public	17.5%
Private	4.8%

First, the range of word count and high levels of readability are notable. One statement was over 1,000 words in length, whereas another statement was 54 words. Furthermore, the average statement—across institution types—was likely unreadable by the average adult and many postsecondary students: the average statement was written above the 14th-grade reading level, equating to roughly a 2nd or 3rd year postsecondary student reading level. These high readability levels were owed to both word choice and sentence structure difficulty. The Gunning-Fog Index—which measures sentence structure complexity—was lower (13.9th-grade reading level) than the SMOG index (15.4th-grade reading level), which measures word choice complexity. Here, official statements were often too difficult for the average U.S. adult and many postsecondary students due to both complex diction and complicated sentence structures, as the average U.S. adult only reads and comprehends between the 7th and 8th-grade level (Clear Language Group, 2018). As a result, institutional leaders may have inadvertently composed a statement that could not be read by a large segment of the U.S. population and beyond, rendering this communication potentially inefficient and ineffective.

In terms of statement content, 96.9% of all statements condemned the violence in Charlottesville, reaffirming and supporting the comments made by then-UVA President Theresa A. Sullivan. Pertinent to policy, 15.1% of statements directly referenced an institutional hate and bias incidents policy, as there was a notable gap between publics (21.1%) and privates (7.1%). This gap was also apparent in statements including a direct link to an institutional hate and bias incidents policy (12.3% of all publics in the study, 2.4% of privates).

Over one-third of all institutional statements—37.3%—referenced the importance of free speech or free expression on a college campus, occurring nearly three times as often as references to institutional hate and bias incidents policies. The gap between publics and privates was reversed in these instances, as slightly more private institutions (40.5%) referenced free speech and free expression than public institutions (35.1%). However, references to the Constitution and the First Amendment—the origins of free speech and free expression rights—were made more frequently by public institutions (17.5%) than private institutions (4.8%). This was a surprise in the findings and will be discussed later in the study.

An analysis of institutional hate and bias incidents policies can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Analysis of institutional hate and bias incidents policies and institutional post-Charlottesville statements (n=99)

Percentage of institutions:	
Not having an institutional hate and bias incidents policy	24.2%
Public	17.1%
Private	7.1%
Not having a policy + mentioning Constitution/1st Amendment	3.0%
Public	3.0%
Private	0.0%
Not having a policy + mentioning free speech/expression	10.1%
Public	7.1%
Private	3.0%
Having an institutional hate and bias incidents policy	75.8%
Public	41.4%

Private	34.4%
Having and referencing an institutional hate and bias policy	10.1%
Public	8.1%
Private	2.0%
Having and referencing a policy + mentioning Constitution/1st Amendment	9.1%
Public	7.1%
Private	2.0%
Having and referencing a policy + mentioning free speech/expression	27.3%
Public	14.2%
Private	13.1%
Statements condemning Charlottesville violence without mentioning an institutional hate and bias incidents policy, the Constitution/1st Amendment, or free speech/expression	52.6%
Public	26.3%
Private	26.3%

Overall, 24.2% of institutions releasing post-Charlottesville statements do not have hate and bias incidents policies per Fischer, Miller, and Sidney's (2009) definition, with a notable disparity between publics (17.1%) and privates (7.1%). Furthermore, institutions that do not have hate and bias incidents policies were less likely to mention the Constitution, the First Amendment, free speech, and free expression (3.0% and 10.1%) than institutions that did have hate and bias incidents policies. For instance, 41.4% of publics and 34.4% of privates in this sample have hate and bias incidents policies, and these institutions referenced either the Constitution or the First Amendment in 9.1% of statements and referenced either free speech or free expression in 27.3% of statements. It was also interesting to learn that more public institutions have hate and bias incidents policies than private institutions. Moreover, having the policy did not automatically translate into a reference of that policy in official post-Charlottesville statements, as public institutions were more likely to reference the Constitution or First Amendment (7.1% public to 2.0% private) and free speech or free expression (14.2% public to 13.1% private) than their private peers.

Over half of post-Charlottesville statements (52.6%) condemned violent behavior and activity without mentioning an institutional hate and bias incidents policy or mentioning the U.S. Constitution, the First Amendment, free speech, or free expression. In a coincidence of the findings, an identical percentage of public (26.3%) and private (26.3%) institutions crafted statements that did not address institutional policy or Constitutional implications of hate and bias incidents on their campuses or elsewhere.

Discussion

Kaplin and Lee's (2009) discussion of the First Amendment and institutional prohibition of hate speech serves to contextualize the findings of this study, particularly their assertion that "The free expression values that First Amendment norms protect may be in tension with the equality values that institutions seek to protect by prohibiting hate speech" (p. 499). Here, it seems that two types of post-Charlottesville statements and two institutional attitudes toward hate and bias incidents policies and their Constitutionality emerge.

The first type of post-Charlottesville statement was one that avoided a discussion of hate and bias incident policies and the Constitutionality of addressing and adjudicating these types of incidents on campus. Over half of the sample—52.6%—seemingly distanced themselves from the difficult conversation of hate and bias incidents policies and their First Amendment complications, rather choosing to condemn violence, perhaps in an effort to appear non-committal in future dealings with hate and bias incidents on campus. Furthermore, equal numbers of public and private institutions omitted institutional policy and discussions of the First Amendment: it seems that the discussion of hate and bias incidents and Constitutional protections is viewed as equally difficult by both types of institutions.

This notion of rhetorical avoidance surrounding the Constitution could be explained by two phenomena. One, the institutional leader is either untrained in policy articulation or did not recognize the tensions between hate and bias incidents policies and the Constitution and therefore chose not to engage in this discussion, akin to Kezar, Carducci, and Contreras-McGavin's (2006) notion that executive-level communication with a campus community is a complex skill that must be developed over time. Two, the institutional leader desired to only condemn the violence without framing the Charlottesville situation as one that contained a wealth of Constitutional entanglement with institutional policy, thus avoiding an institutional explanation of a potentially unconstitutional speech code as Gould's (2001) work suggested. This notion of rhetorical avoidance could be addressed in future research that examines how institutional leaders—presidents, chancellors, CEOs, or the like—discuss the Constitutionality of behavior or policy on their campus.

The second type of post-Charlottesville statement referenced institutional hate and bias incidents policies and addressed—in one way or another—the policy's relationship to the U.S. Constitution, the First Amendment, free speech, or free expression: 36.4% of all statements referenced policy and Constitutional issues. Consider this partial statement from the University of California (2017):

> The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution grants us all freedom of expression. University campuses in particular are meant to foster an exchange of ideas, and to teach students how to respectfully approach viewpoints different from their own—even when those viewpoints are offensive and hurtful. But the acts of domestic terrorism we saw in Charlottesville represented an assault on our cherished values of diversity, inclusiveness and tolerance. We must continue to speak and act against the shameful behavior we witnessed over the weekend and ensure that our colleges and universities, and our nation as a whole, remain safe and civil for all. (para. 5)

Leadership from the University of Nevada at Reno (2017) offered similar thoughts:

> Equal opportunity, inclusiveness and diversity are core values for the University of Nevada, Reno. We must always encourage a campus environment that supports and respects all members of our diverse learning community. This defining principle includes standing against all forms of bigotry, hatred and racism, as well as providing learning environments that are peaceful and encourage the free exchange of ideas. We also stand for the basic principles of the Constitution, which says we have freedoms to peacefully assemble and to have free speech. (para. 1)

The above statements both mentioned institutional values and stances aligned with diversity or against racism, yet both statements also mentioned freedom of speech and freedom of expression guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Statements such as these did not avoid the difficult discussion of institutional "tension" with Constitutional rights as alluded to by Kaplin and Lee (2009, p. 499). It is also paradoxical to learn that public institutions were more likely to have hate and bias incidents policies, even though private institutions have considerably more legal longitude and flexibility in mandating student and community conduct than public institutions do (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). Future research could address the nature of public versus private hate and bias incidents policies and how these policies address and adjudicate incidents of hate and bias on campus across institution types, including community colleges, for-profit institutions, and trade schools.

It is also important to highlight how public institutional leaders were more willing to address the Constitutional entanglement with hate and bias incidents policies than private institutional leaders were. In all, there was a 7% gap between public institutions and private institutions having hate and bias incidents policies, yet public institutions were four times as likely to reference their policies in official statements. Furthermore, 21.3% of public statements acknowledged the Constitution, the First Amendment, free speech, or free expression, whereas only 15.5% of private institutions were inclined to do the same. Helping to explain this phenomenon is Gould's (2001) work that revealed that many public institutions adopted potentially unconstitutional speech codes in the 1990s, even though multiple public speech codes were deemed unconstitutional just years before. Gould (2001) hypothesized that these public campus speech codes were able to remain unconstitutional because of a lack of legal challenge. Therefore, it is possible that leaders of public institutions were more willing to not only mention their hate and bias incidents policy but also address Constitutional concerns because public institution's hate and bias incidents policies have simply not been challenged. As a result, future research could address the Constitutionality of hate and bias incidents policies and whether or not these hate and bias incidents policies have been challenged by students, faculty, staff, or other educational stakeholders, such as regents, trustees, donors, or alumni.

There are also two types of institutions that emerge from the findings of this study: institutions with hate and bias incidents policies (75.8%) and those without (24.2%). It was particularly helpful to have Fischer, Miller, and Sidney's (2007) definition of a policy and Hughes' (2013) insight regarding hate and bias incidents policies as touchstones throughout this study. Fischer, Miller, and Sidney (2009) defined policy as an "officially expressed intention backed by a sanction, which can be a reward or a punishment" (p. xix), while Hughes (2013) argued that hate and bias incidents policies should include an explicit procedure for campus community members to report the hate or bias incident. As a result, nearly one quarter of all institutions in this sample either do not adjudicate a hateful or biased incident through a policy that enforces a sanction, or these institutions do not make clear how campus community members can report a hate or bias incident. This is a particularly relevant finding for student affairs professionals working with racially and socially minoritized students on campus. Hate and bias incidents policies should make their reporting procedures clear (Hughes, 2013), yet nearly 25% of institutions in this study do not heed this advice.

Therefore, future research could focus on how postsecondary institutions—across types—compose their hate and bias incidents policies ways that do or do not impose sanctions against those found guilty of hateful or biased incidents. Also, future research could evaluate how hate and bias incidents are reported on college campuses and whether those procedures are made clear on institutional websites, as this study's sample suggests that nearly 25% of institutions do not make their hate and bias incidents reporting procedures clear on their institutional website.

Implications

Ultimately, considering the evaluation of both institutional statements and policies, public and private institutions were unified by three findings.

First, institutional statements were likely difficult to read by a wide audience. Surely, the violence witnessed in Charlottesville needed to be addressed, and institutional leaders must ensure that their messages reach the widest audience possible. Composing official statements above the 14th-grade reading level does not achieve this goal. Data in this study suggests that institutional leaders should go beyond mere public address training (Jacobson, 2016) and the delegation of public relations tasks (Brennan & Weaver, 2017). Institutional leaders and their support teams should audit written statements meant for public consumption to ensure they are written in inclusive, simple language that all members of a campus community can read and comprehend.

Second, even though this study does not address pre-crisis communication between the institutional leader and their campus community, it is important for institutional leaders to articulate hate and bias incidents policies to their constituencies during times of hateful and biased incidents, even if these incidents are off-campus. A large majority of institutions have hate and bias incidents policies in place (75.8%) but did not address these policies in official statements (15.1%). As the incidents in Charlottesville were undoubtedly hate-filled and biased against marginalized populations on campuses and in our larger society, it is crucial that all educational stakeholders be aware of institutional policies meant to protect them against such incidents and deter their perpetuation. What good can a hate and bias incidents policy do if it is never mentioned? And do all campus community members know where the policy is, what the policy does, and how to engage with the policy? It is unlikely that every campus community member from every institution in this study knows about their institution's hate and bias incidents policy and knows precisely how to report an incident. Therefore, institutional leaders must seize the opportunity—especially during a crisis—to promote institutional policies meant to deter and sanction hate and bias incidents on campus.

Finally, few institutions of either type fully embraced the power of the internet to communicate with their campus community: Only 8.1% of all institutions in the sample embedded a weblink to their institutional hate and bias incidents policy in their official post-Charlottesville statement. As Internet technologies continue to advance, institutional leaders must learn to harness these technologies and streamline their communication processes and articulation of institutional policies. Surely, all policies and their reporting procedures can be uploaded to an institution's website; this also means that these policies can be hyperlinked in official statements, connecting the campus community to the campus itself, no matter where the person may be physically situated. Here, Towson University President Kim Schatzel (2017)—and her tech-savvy ability to hyperlink a policy into her official statement—may have supplied a Towson campus community member with not only the knowledge of institutional policy meant to protect but also the procedures to follow in order to be protected.

Conclusion

Although President John F. Kennedy was incorrect in his belief that the Chinese word for "crisis" means both danger and opportunity (Nguyen, 2014), his sentiment is fitting to summarize this study. In no uncertain terms, the violence perpetrated in Charlottesville from August 11th to August 13th, 2017 constituted a dangerous crisis, especially for the racially and socially minoritized members of our society. Did postsecondary leaders view this danger as an opportunity to disclose

institutional policy meant to protect these members of society? The data gathered in this study suggests they did not. A large majority of institutions in this study have hate and bias incidents policies in place, yet many of these institutions chose not to promote these policies to their campus communities in their official statements, nor did they discuss the Constitution and its many free speech and free expression implications of institutional policies.

In short, the discussion of hate and bias policies alongside the U.S. Constitution must start. Campus community members must be made aware of the legal parameters of their institution's hate and bias incidents policy, heaven forbid a hateful or biased incident is perpetrated against them. And if a hateful or biased act encroaches upon a hate crime, campus community members should know how their institution can assist, inform, and protect them.

Perhaps most important is the necessity for institutional leaders to lead—to communicate—with racially and socially minoritized individuals to deliver the message that their institution will do everything in their power to stand up and protect them from the many hateful and biased acts that the United States of America simply does not stand for. To do this, it is essential for institutional leaders to convey in all official communications that the institution is committed to diversity and inclusion, so that all students feel protected from any danger. Where there is danger, there is opportunity, and institutional leaders should embrace this danger and opportunity with rhetoric that protects through policy.

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Voices of Baltimore: Life Under Segregation
By Gary Homana

Project Voice in association with Caught Up Productions (2019). 57 Minutes.
Available Streaming: https://video.mpt.tv/video/voices-of-baltimore-life-under-segregation-wyknbt/

Reviewed by Yanika Patterson, Kenosha (WI) Unified School District

Abstract

This review of Gary Homana's 2019 documentary, Voices of Baltimore: Life Under Segregation showcases the oral history of seven African Americans who lived in Baltimore during segregation. Four areas will be discussed: Answering the call, insulation/isolation, expectations, and then and now. This film takes a deeper look at how Baltimore dealt with segregation being on that Mason/Dixon border.

Keywords: *Segregation, Desegregation, Baltimore, Jim Crow*

Introduction

Gary Homana, PhD, a professor at Towson University, brings to life the lived experiences of those who lived in the city of Baltimore during segregation and desegregation. The documentary hears from those who lived through the Jim Crow Era as they expressed how their lives were shaped at the time and what pushed them to want to change the situation. In this review, four areas will be examined: Answering the Call, Insulation/Isolation, Expectations, and Then and Now.

The documentary captured the oral histories of Louis S. Diggs, Treopia Green Washington, Evelyn Chatmon, Dr. Patricia Welch, Dr. Walter Gill, Elizabeth Francis Nichols Gill, and Judge Robert Bell. These prominent African American discussed growing up in Baltimore, which is on the Mason/Dixon[1] border during the era of legal segregation, or Jim Crow. They discussed how segregation affected education before and after the 1954 Supreme Court ruling of Brown v Board of Education.

Answering the Call: Make a Way Where there Ain't No Way

Voices opens up with retired judge, Robert Bell. He discusses the importance of sitting down for the documentary. Bell describes how no one wants to speak about segregation and how

1. The Mason-Dixon border refers to the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania. Along with the Ohio River, the line separated slave states of the south and the free states of the north. Today, it still figuratively dives the north and south politically and socially (Davenport, 2004).

it affected society then as well as today. He explains that it is important for this topic to be discussed because we are still experiencing the same situations as those during the Jim Crow Era.

Dr. Walter gill discusses how during legal segregation, black students and white students did not attend school together. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) started the fight to integrate schools in Baltimore. In 1952, Gill, along with 9 other black boys, help to integrate Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. These boys were considered the most academically capable of handling the rigor of the institute. Ten years later, the same group of boys integrated Baltimore City College.

Dr. Patricia Welch discussed how students in Black schools were group together based on their academic abilities. She along with 7 other students, were told they were going to integrate the White high school. Children were not given the choice as far as participating in integration, rather, it was forced integration. This situation put significant pressure on children aged 16-17. Welch stated that you did what you were told. She also said that at the time the children felt like they were doing something important, but they did not understand the impact they were making. The students experienced culture shock. Black students were used to their Black teachers encouraging them and being helpful. In this new setting, their White teachers did not think they were smart and deserved to be in the school.

Treopia Green Washington has a very interesting back story. She is the sister of Ernest Green, one of the Little Rock Nine, who helped to integrate Central High School. She saw what was happening to her brother and wondered if it was worth it. She saw the same protesting going on in Baltimore that was seen in Little Rock. Treopia pointed out that many of the protesters were White mothers since the White men had to go to work.

Louis Diggs explained how his students would ask him about the history of Black communities in Baltimore and realizing this knowledge was not there. Looking through books in the library and other resources, the history of the Black communities of Baltimore seemed to have disappeared. He made it his mission to research and retell the history of those black communities. One black community in particular was Winter's Lane. He researched and found that it was listed as a historical African American community, but not much else was accessible. He looked through old documents and families of former residents to get information about Winter Lane. He compiled his finding into the book, *It All Started on Winters Lane: A History of the Black Community in Catonsville, Maryland*.

Elizabeth Gill discusses how there were different rules of segregation depending on the environment. Blacks and Whites could not eat together, but they could work together. One day, she and a couple of other Black co-workers decided to go to lunch at Cove Restaurant, which did not serve Blacks. They sat and waited, while being insulted and having things thrown at them. After a few hours, they were finally served. This experience reinforced the idea that no one was really interested in integrating restaurants.

Insulation/Isolation: Insular Notion of Segregated Communities

After the first section of the film provided viewers an introduction to each participant, the documentary allowed the participants to just speak on different aspects of segregation in Baltimore. They started by discussing Jim Crow. The Jim Crow Era left Black America in their "place" in America. They could live in America, but they could not experience the benefits of America. Black Americans were here to be used by Whites for their benefit. This notion was felt by every Black American, including those in Baltimore. The participants did not have to be told that they lived in segregation. It was just their life. They knew which streets were safe to go on and the

places that they could shop in. Examples included the pharmacy and Old Town Mall, which catered to the Black community in Baltimore.

Next, participants discussed the Black experience in education settings. Black students who went to Black school were made to feel like they belonged. The teachers continuously told them that they could be somebody and that getting an education was very important to their life. Black student felt that they could learn and be successful within the segregated school system.

Life in segregated Baltimore was more known than shown. There were no signs that said "Whites Only" or "Colored Only." Yet, everyone knew of the invisible barriers. This was in stark contrast to segregation in the south. Blacks had to walk in the back doors. There were signs that blatantly told everyone where Whites could go and were Blacks could go. Louis Diggs spoke about segregation in the War. Black soldiers did not sleep in the bunks, but slept under the tanks. Black soldiers ate World War II rations. Although Harry Truman ended segregation in the military in 1948, this did not make things easier for the Black soldiers. Black soldiers would come home, after fighting for their country, to being treated like the lowest of the lowest.

The Black community knew a segregated life was not easy, so they made sure that Black kids felt loved. They did not want children to think they were missing anything by not being able to do the same things as White kids. Everyone in the Black community looked out for each other.

Expectations: The Responsibility Greater than Yourself—the Obligation

The participants spoke passionately about how education was perceived in the Black community. The Black community pushed their Black children to excel, be good, and be somebody. Black children were told that a high school education was needed in order to face to obstacles once they became adults. Baltimore Black families wanted to preserve the generations. They encourage their children to be successful so they can reach back, and pull up others.

All participants spoke of how mediocrity was unacceptable—excellence was the expectation. They had to be twice as good as the White children in order to even get their foot in the door. Black children were always told that they did not just represent themselves, but they represented their entire race. Black girls were encouraged to come back to the neighborhood and teach, since teaching was the highest occupation for Black women.

Robert Bell stated that schools are as segregated now as they were during legal segregation. However, expectations for high academic achievement is low for Black students. Furthermore, Black students are being criminalized in school at higher rates. Bell says,

> I see us on this—the—same path today as we were on then. While we have made a tremendous amount of progress—if you look at it—we have a good ways to go. And a lot of it has to do with trying to beat back—once again—the same kinds of issues that we were facing back then. You know, you would've thought that you wouldn't have to fight certain battles again, but we are now looking at a situation where race as a factor—a negative factor—is again raising its head. Racism in this country is becoming much more tolerant. It started back in—I guess it started with Reagan—and he talked about the bright city on the hill or something of that sort and being proud of the country and urging people not to look critically at the flaws in the society. You've got the same thing coming back around again.

Then and Now: Where We've Been, Where We're Going

Evelyn Chatmon described desegregation as mismanaged. Black children and White children should not have been thrown together without a significant plan for real integration. The decision to integrate should have been deliberated and talked about first. However, few want to talk about the scars of desegregation, but we, as a society, need to confront these realities. These discussions are limited because white privilege often works to silence the history explored in this documentary and many others like it.

Segregation needs to be talked about in order for it to be eradicated. People need to realize that segregation is still apart of society. Issues facing Black America in the 50s and 60s are still issues relevant today. Walter Gill spoke about how Blacks today need to learn from the people who have been there. He and others who lived through segregation need to share their stories.

Welch, Chatmon, and Washington all touched on the need for there to be more Black teachers in educational settings. However, the education system today does not have the same type of commitment from black teachers as was seen before segregation. Chatmon mentioned that currently, 84 percent of elementary school teachers are White. This reality perpetuated the thought that some students are "up here" and some students are "down there" throughout schools systems nationwide. This belief system needs to change before any structural change can come to end segregation in education.

Voices in Baltimore: Conclusion

Voices in Baltimore gives a taste of segregation life in Baltimore. The participants seemed to go back in time as they told about their experiences. All have gone on to have stellar careers in law, education, and corporate. They also remembered what was taught to them: to go back and pull others up as well.

Homana provides other scholars studying racial segregation a great starting point to conduct future works. More oral histories are needed to share the heartfelt stories of those who experienced these troubling times. The documentary sheds light on to a dark period of American history, but showcases how these stories are important to remember in contemporary times. The participants challenge all of us to start the discussions and not be afraid to be uncomfortable to make a change.

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