ABSTRACT

Moraima Machado Raga, FAMILY STORIES MATTER: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY OF STORYTELLING IN FIFTH-GRADE CLASSROOMS (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2021.

Critical race pedagogues and culturally responsive educators advocate for greater emphasis on the voices of Students of Color that invoke their lived experiences, cultural knowledge, ancestral wisdom, and supportive familial relationships. However, few educators have adequately described how to bring these stories directly into K–12 classrooms. Using participatory action research methodology, we incorporated the counter-stories of Students of Color in the elementary school curriculum. A co-practitioner research group (CPR) including the principal, teachers, a parent, and a community activist planned and held Community Learning Exchanges to share student, teacher, and family stories. As we practiced storytelling in the CPR meetings, we listened for the epiphany moments that demonstrated how storytelling could be an act of critical literacy, described as "listening to witness." To be successful, the process must be symmetrical; teachers needed to experience storytelling and authentic dialogue before applying the theories of culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogies in their classrooms. We then co-designed and implemented an experimental curriculum in 5th-grade classes. The innovation shifted roles in the classrooms; as students and teachers witnessed each other's stories, they redefined power relationships in the classrooms and the school at large. Listening to witness is a critical component in bringing forth the voices of Students of Color in schools. The findings have implications for anti-racism education as the stories of Communities of Color enable educators to unmask the role of privilege and subtle forms of oppression.

FAMILY STORIES MATTER:
CRITICAL PEDAGOGY OF STORYTELLING IN FIFTH-GRADE CLASSROOMS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

Moraima Machado

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FAMILY STORIES MATTER:

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY OF STORYTELLING IN FIFTH-GRADE CLASSROOMS

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DEDICATION

To my sons, Elvis and Samuel, for teaching me about love and inspiring my advocacy.

To my mother, Angela, who personifies resilience and who encouraged me to be all I can be.

To my husband, Tomas, for always believing in me and supporting me to find my *musa*.

To my sister, Morelys, for encouraging me to find my inner light and strength.

And in memory of Tía Elsita who loved us fiercely.

Juntos lo logramos.

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CHAPTER ONE: NAMING AND FRAMING THE FOCUS OF PRACTICE (FOP)

In recent decades, substantial demographic changes in the US have occurred that will culminate by 2045 with the White population becoming a minority, a change fueled by increasing numbers of youth (Frey, 2018). In the years 2000–2015, approximately 21.5 million new Immigrants of Color, documented and undocumented—particularly of Latinx and Asian descent, settled in the US (Camarota, 2011, 2016). Throughout the dissertation, following Pérez-Huber and Cueva (2012), I use the terms “People of Color, “Students of Color,” “Communities of Color,” and “Families of Color”; the intentional use of capital letters offers “a means of empowerment and represents a grammatical move toward social justice” (Pérez-Huber & Cueva, 2012, p. 406). The infusion of these populations adds cultural and linguistic assets to our communities; my choice of terminology in the dissertation honors that asset.

However, our schools have failed to embrace the increased diversity in linguistic and cultural practices and do not fully honor their presence as an asset. In fact, our schools continue to prioritize English through initiatives such as Proposition 227 in California; they rely on a Eurocentric curriculum and use pedagogical approaches that elevate the dominant culture and devalue indigenous epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Gay, 2018; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Mills, 1997). When the histories, languages, and cultures People of Color are shown in classrooms, they are often negative portraits, stereotypes, and half-truths. When we teach history from the perspective of the dominant racial group and center the languages and cultures of the dominant racial group in classrooms, we devalue the histories, languages, and cultures of People of Color (Cruz, 2016; Delgado Bernal, 2002).

To counteract the dominant narratives that celebrate White people as superior and People of Color as inferior both within and outside of schools, Communities of Color must engage in counter-storytelling to create narratives that include their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for their children. Stories help their children make sense of the historical moment in which they are living and support them to develop the resilience they need to resist the dominant narrative (Guajardo et al., 2016; Prieto & Villenas, 2016) The counter-stories are rarely heard in formal educational settings, nor are Families of Color asked to share them. Yet these stories deserve to be heard, acknowledged, gathered, and honored in the formal educational system. As educators, we have a social and moral responsibility to bring the stories of all students into the curriculum; by doing so, we teach to create the democratic society we aspire to live in and to embody the critical literacy pedagogies we want to utilize as teachers of and for social justice (Freire, 1970).

The participatory action research (PAR) project and study took place at an elementary school, Rosa Parks, in a medium-sized urban district in the Bay Area in California. Through the PAR project and study, my colleagues and I took a big step toward enacting our espoused values of social justice and critical literacy. In our work we placed the assets of our racially diverse population, its rich experiences, histories, and cultures, front and center. We asked for, listened to, and learned from the stories of the Youth and Families of Color in schools. In doing so, we answered the call of Shor (1999) to "redefine ourselves and remake society… through alternative rhetoric and dissident projects. This is where critical literacy begins, for questioning power relations, discourses, and identities in a world not yet finished, just, or humane" (Shor, 1999, p. 1).

In this chapter, I introduce the focus of practice (FoP) that guided the participatory action research (PAR) project at Rosa Parks Elementary School in the Bohemian Unified School District in Northern California and outline the assets and challenges that affected the project. Along with the purpose of the study and the research questions, I outline the study design that we used for the three cycles of inquiry. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the PAR project's significance, its limitations, and relevant ethical considerations.

Focus of Practice

In the PAR project, we contested the negative portraits and stereotypes of People of Color that prevail in society and in the Rosa Parks Elementary curriculum by bringing the counter-stories of Youth and Families of Color into our classrooms (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As a result, the school embraced the identities of Youth of Color by inviting their counter-stories into the classroom. Thus, the project redefined the way the school approached its work. Rather than accepting a curriculum that espoused deficit views of People or Students of Color, a team of teachers and I co-designed a curriculum that built on the strengths of Communities of Color as captured through families' counter-stories and celebrated students' vibrant cultural life. A co-practitioner research (CPR) team of seven persons, including myself, designed a curriculum that now focuses on the critical pedagogy of storytelling and brings the counter-stories of the Youth of Color and their families into the classrooms.

Rationale

The co-practitioner researchers (CPR) and I had to remain vigilant so as not to unconsciously slip into common stereotypes of Youth of Color. The stereotypes are not only prevalent in the existing curriculum, social media, and television; they are prevalent even in our perceptions and generate implicit biases (Hammond, 2015). Three school factors underlined the importance of a different approach to teaching and learning: achievement, discipline, and implicit biases.

Achievement

The low achievement data—reflected in the state and district mandated assessments—of

Students of Color is insidious; it has become the norm rather than the exception. According to Bohemian District and Rosa Parks Elementary school data, the pattern of achievement of Students of Color has remained almost the same over the last 3 years (see Appendix C). Because central office and site administrators frame achievement in the language of accountability, student achievement is characterized in deficit terms as a problem in the students rather than a problem of the schools or district. The language of administrators and teachers tends to blame the students for the achievement gap instead of recognizing it as an opportunity gap (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). For example, the district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) states, "Our targeted *student groups* continue to show disproportionality" and "The dashboard shows several *targeted student groups* performed well below district-wide results" (California Department of Education, 2019). The very language used to document inequity in the district relies heavily on the stereotype of Students of Color as deficient.

As the principal at Rosa Parks Elementary, I selected the focus of practice because I recognized that, despite our lively conversations about equity, all of us—principal, educators, and support staff—were invested in these blaming stereotypes of Youth of Color. For example, when we discuss student achievement data at staff meetings, the conversations promptly default to comparing the percentages between groups of students who have achieved grade-level standards and those who have not. The narrative of the disproportionality of achievement highlights the Black and Latinx students' performance as the problem to be fixed instead of seeing the curriculum and pedagogy as issues to be addressed. We frame the language and culture of Youth of Color as the problem rather than as potential assets to be embraced in the classrooms.

Discipline

The district's language also reflects a deficit perspective in how we frame our understanding of discipline data involving Students of Color. Black students comprise 10.5% of district enrollment in the BUSD but account for 31.5% of the students who received out-of-school suspensions. While Black students comprise only 25% of the school enrollment at Rosa Parks Elementary, they account for 70% of the office referrals for disciplinary measures. By contrast, we have no data on the rates of implicit bias among teachers and other school-level actors because we do not collect it (Hammond, 2015).

Researchers at the Yale Child Study Center exposed how implicit bias influences teachers and school staff disciplinary decisions (Gilliam et al., 2016). Teachers are more likely to "see" the misbehavior of Black youth because they are unconsciously looking for it. In their study, Gilliam et al. showed educators videos of two Black preschoolers (boy and girl) and two White preschoolers (boy and girl) in classroom settings. The teachers were asked to watch the videos to detect challenging behaviors. Although the videos did not include examples of any challenging behavior from any of the four children, 42% of the teachers identified the Black boy as the child who required the most attention. When the school and district only collect and present "outcome data" (data that shows that Black students are disciplined at higher rates), they reinforce the narrative that the youth themselves are to blame; the narrative becomes about the Black youth themselves. If we were to collect data on implicit bias by teachers and staff with the same rigor, the narrative on the nature of the problem might shift considerably.

Implicit Biases

Thus, at the classroom level in Rosa Parks Elementary, teachers sometimes act on their implicit biases in reacting to student actions and in curricular and pedagogical choices. In my classroom observations, I have seen Students of Color being taught to act and behave according to White/Eurocentric classroom rules. When Students of Color do not comply, they are perceived as “rude,”, “too loud,” or “disruptive” to the learning environment.

Further, teachers continue to present a Eurocentric curriculum that celebrates the stories of White men. Although the school serves a student population that is diverse in both race and nationality with students from 11 countries (Ghana, Ethiopia, India, Yemen, Afghanistan, Philippines, China, Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, and El Salvador), the school history and literacy curricula currently only contain the stories of White America. We use the same overwhelmingly Eurocentric Social Studies, English Language Arts, Science, and Math curricula for all students; the counter-stories of Families of Color are largely absent.

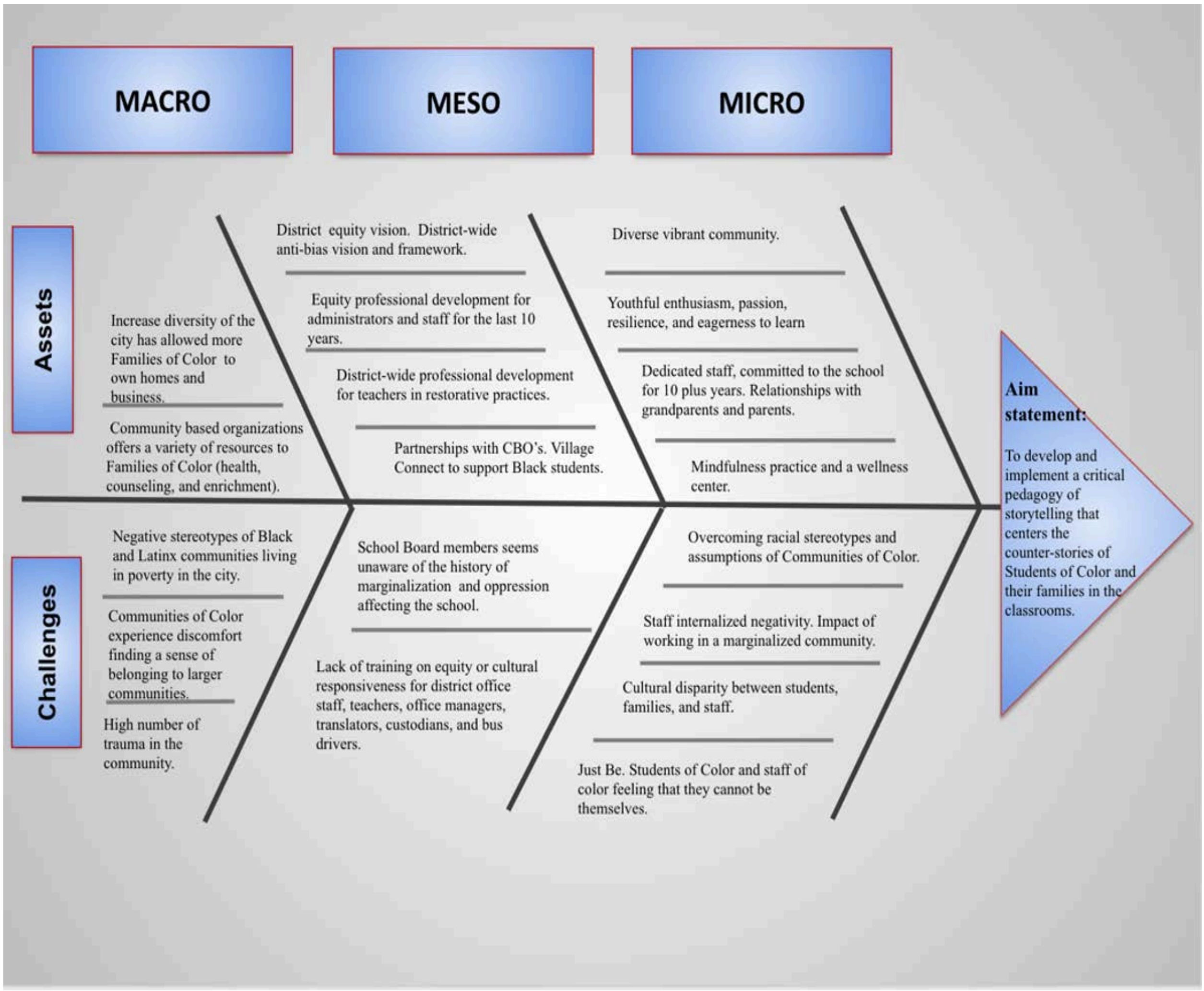
Where we do see People of Color in the curriculum, they are often stereotyped. According to Loewen (1995), history textbooks in the US present a partial and incomplete analysis of U.S. history, omitting the perspectives of diverse racial groups and reinforcing the idea that the stories of Youth of Color are not worth hearing.

Focus of Practice (FoP): Assets and Challenges

To provide an overview of the assets and challenges, I used a fishbone diagram, adapted from the improvement sciences work of Bryk et al. (2015), Mintrop (2016), and Rosenthal (2019) to analyze the focus of practice. I outlined the assets and challenges of the focus of practice from micro, meso, and macro perspectives. The micro level included the practices and resources at the school level; the meso level included the school district organization and policies; and the macro level included the city policies and local resources (see Figure 1).

Assets at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Organizational Levels

Several micro level assets were essential to the PAR (see Figure 1): diversity; family



Increase diversity of the city has allowed more Families of Color to own homes and business.

Community based organizations offers a variety of resources to Families of Color (health, counseling, and enrichment).

District equity vision. District-wide anti-bias vision and framework.

Equity professional development for administrators and staff for the last 10 years.

District-wide professional development for teachers in restorative practices.

Partnerships with CBO's. Village Connect to support Black students.

Diverse vibrant community.

Youthful enthusiasm, passion, resilience, and eagerness to learn

Dedicated staff, committed to the school for 10 plus years. Relationships with grandparents and parents.

Mindfulness practice and a wellness center.

Aim statement:

To develop and implement a critical pedagogy of storytelling that centers the counter-stories of Students of Color and their families in the classrooms.

Negative stereotypes of Black and Latinx communities living in poverty in the city.

Communities of Color experience discomfort finding a sense of belonging to larger communities.

High number of trauma in the community.

School Board members seems unaware of the history of marginalization and oppression affecting the school.

Lack of training on equity or cultural responsiveness for district office staff, teachers, office managers, translators, custodians, and bus drivers.

Overcoming racial stereotypes and assumptions of Communities of Color.

Staff internalized negativity. Impact of working in a marginalized community.

Cultural disparity between students, families, and staff.

Just Be. Students of Color and staff of color feeling that they cannot be themselves.

Figure 1. Fishbone Analysis of assets and challenges.

stories; student knowledge, skill, passion, and bilingualism; and staff longevity at the school. As I explain in detail in Chapter Three, we serve families born in the US as well as families who have migrated from 11 other countries. Each family carries a story. The robust and rich stories of their lived experiences were assets for the PAR project. Other assets were the skills, knowledge, youthful enthusiasm, passion, resilience, and eagerness to learn of fifth-grade students at Rosa Parks Elementary. For example, many Students of Color are bilingual, a skill often under-appreciated in U.S. schools. They translate for their parents and others in their community.

Students brought with them family stories that are passed down to them by their relatives. "Familial cultural wealth" is "those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition" (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). The students' knowledge of these stories is a critical asset for the PAR project and study.

A third asset at the micro-level is the longevity of the staff at the school. Some members of the staff have been teaching in the school for over 10 years. Generations of families have sent their youth to Rosa Parks Elementary. Grandparents know some senior teachers by name. Some teachers take pride in having taught more than one generation of youth from the same family.

Additional assets at the micro-level include the relationships that I formed with the teachers, especially the co-practitioner researchers (CPR), and the establishment of wellness practices at the school. We used storytelling during staff meetings to deepen our knowledge of and relationships with each other. The school counselor provides weekly mindfulness practices for staff. The students receive at least 6 weeks of mindfulness classes from their teachers or by a certified mindfulness teacher. The school opened a Wellness Center to provide a space for students to attend when they need support in regulating their emotions.

Several meso level assets supported our work, including the district-level equity vision and its anti-bias framework. The equity framework contained a set of practices for implementing positive anti-bias practices in schools and classrooms. The Bohemian District staff provided monthly professional development meetings to build capacity in the administrative team to actively address issues of equity at the school and district level.

The assets at the macro level include the policies of the City of Bohemian serving Families of Color. Families of Color are making the city their hometown. Currently the city's demographics show that the Latinx population is 43.3%, and the Asian population is 23.5%. The high percentage of People of Color in the city was an asset for the PAR project because we had a number of stories to draw upon for the research. In addition, local community-based organizations, partially funded by the city, provide health, medical, wellness, and social-emotional support for local families.

Challenges at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Organizational Levels

Multiple challenges co-existed with assets at the same organizational levels—micro, meso, and macro. At each level, certain practices had the potential of subverting our attempts to co-develop pedagogy of storytelling that center the stories of Students of Color in the curriculum.

The first challenge was cultural disparities between Students of Color (and their families) and school staff. We hear frequent racial misconceptions about Students and Families of Color expressed in formal meeting and informal spaces such as the teachers' lounge. The comments are based on misconceptions and misunderstandings about the cultures of our Students of Color. For example, faculty members often misunderstood Black parents; the teachers perceived them as "aggressive." The misconception about Black parents aligns with stereotypes of Black women as sapphires and Black men as aggressive (Pilgrim, 2012). Staff also perceive Latinx parents as lazy and uncaring when they do not attend school governance events such as Parent Teacher Association meetings and School Site Council meetings.

In addition, the staff at times has a narrow understanding of the cultures of the immigrant families coming from African countries, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. For Staff of Color, this means that they do not fully share their ideas or feelings because they fear stereotyping or microaggressions (Steele, 2010). Finally, staff have alluded to the challenges of working in a school that has high levels of trauma and stress due to systemic societal oppression of Communities of Color. Though they recognize the source of trauma in institutional and structural factors, they blamed (and disciplined) the students for the ways that trauma manifested in the classroom.

At the meso level organizational challenges, district leadership and the Board of Education hold biased views about Black and Latinx families. The stereotypes have proliferated for many years, and district achievement and discipline reports substantiate their use. The reports conspicuously exclude reports about the prevalence of implicit bias.

The macro-level organizational concerns are related to the deficit stereotypes about the Families of Color in the community. The stereotypes include examples of deficit attribution; for example, police negative stereotypes of Black families—mainly equating black people with criminals— resulting in over-policing and that immigrant families are “illegal” and do not deserve services (Alexander, 2010; Anderson-Zavala et al., 2017; Gay, 2015; Jilani & Smith, 2020; Meiners, 2011; Scott, 2017).The PAR project challenged the script of what is wrong with Families of Color; instead, we explored what assets the families have to offer to schools.

The identification of assets and challenges influenced the PAR design. We as a Co-Practitioner

Research group built on the student and family assets to address the misconceptions and deficit stereotypes of Families of Color in the school community.

PAR Study: Purpose, Research Questions, and Project Design

The purpose of the PAR project was to bring the counter-stories of Students of Color into the classroom and to iteratively study how we, as co-practitioners, designed and implemented the project. With the Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) group, the fifth-grade teachers and I co-developed a pedagogy of critical storytelling and then used the process with Youth of Color. We engaged in three cycles of inquiry in which we used iterative, qualitative evidence to understand how to best engage with students and families, collect and use their stories, and use the stories to design and implement a fifth-grade curriculum.

Research Questions

The PAR was designed to answer an overarching question: *How can schools use an asset frame that celebrates the backgrounds and histories of Students of Color to counteract deficit narratives and build trust between educators and Families of Color? A set of sub-questions guided the PAR project and study:*

1. To what extent can a CPR team co-generate an asset-based curriculum of critical storytelling that validates student identity and history?
2. To what extent do school educators transform their practices and pedagogies to incorporate storytelling?
3. To what extent do teachers shift their perceptions of Students of Color as a result of their engagement in this work?
4. How does my engagement in the PAR project transform my leadership practices?

Participatory Action Research Project Design

In collaboration with a co-practitioner research (CPR) group, I conducted a participatory action and activist research project in three successive cycles of inquiry from October 2019 to November 2020 (Hale, 2017; Herr & Anderson, 2014; hunter et al., 2013). The co-practitioner researcher (CPR) team included three 5th-grade teachers, one school counselor, one parent, one community-based organization leader, and me as a veteran school leader (n=7). I discuss the theory of action and outline of the three cycles of inquiry for the project. Then I discuss the driver diagram, which helped me understand how to organize key elements of the project and study (Bryk et al., 2015).

Theory of Action

A theory of action is a compelling improvement hypothesis, based on the question, "What does relevant theory and empirical research suggest about promising changes and what seems plausible for educators who might try out these changes?" (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 73). My theory of action was: If a school leader and teachers engage in a process of co-creating a critical pedagogy that encourages Students of Color to bring their counter-stories into the classroom, then

- the stories of Students of Color can take a prominent place in the curriculum;
- teachers can learn the counter-stories of Families of Color and shift their perceptions of Students of Color;
- teachers can change their practices more widely to incorporate storytelling into their practice more regularly; and
- students have a more positive experience of the classroom.

As this project and study demonstrated, when we value the stories of Students of Color and include them in the curriculum, the students are fully engaged, and teachers' perceptions of their students change.

The collaborative nature of the research required that we use methodologies that incorporated inquiry, reflection, dialogue, and processes for relationship building. I used qualitative research methodologies to assess the transformation in teachers' perceptions of Students of Color (Bryk et al., 2015; Herr & Anderson, 2014; hunter et al., 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). I documented and analyzed the changes in practices of storytelling, teacher-participant interviews, the process of our work as a CPR (such as looking at artifacts produced during CPR team meetings), and my reflective memos. Through the participatory action and activist research process, I envisioned a shift in teacher practice and my role as a leader as we collectively understood the practice of and the value of bringing the stories of Youth of Color into the curriculum in an elementary school. Through three cycles of inquiry, we learned to value our own stories and those of families and students and were able to design and pilot curricular units.

Cycles of Inquiry

The goal of the critical pedagogy of storytelling was to bring the voices, stories, and histories of Students of Color into classrooms and more deeply understand how the practices of critical literacy could enhance our roles as school leader, teachers, and students. To achieve this goal, I engaged with the CPR group in three cycles of inquiry Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Fall 2020. The focal points for the first cycle of inquiry were to establish the CPR group and conduct a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) with students and families about the innovative idea of critical pedagogy of storytelling. During the second cycle, we analyzed the learning from stories families shared at the CLE and used them as the foundation of the storytelling curriculum. During the final cycle, we observed how teachers implemented the storytelling curriculum in a new, fifth-grade, virtual classroom. I kept the primary and secondary drivers in mind as I facilitated the processes through these three cycles of inquiry.

Driver Diagram

The driver diagram, adapted from the improvement sciences work of Bryk et al. (2015) and Mintrop (2016), was useful in co-designing and implementing a strength-based critical literacy storytelling curriculum that focused on the counter-stories of Students of Color and their families. Our short-term goal was to change the perspectives that teachers held of Students and Families of Color and to improve the experiences of Youth of Color in their classrooms. Our long-term goal was to shift the narrative the school and district held of the Rosa Parks community and our families and students. In Table 1, I detail the key actions in which the CPR group and I engaged as the primary drivers and the key actions of the families and students, community representatives, and district personnel engaged as secondary drivers.

Study Significance

The significance of the study was its explicit focus on enacting social change in our community. The racial segregation practices of Communities of Color (see Chapter Three) directly affect the students and families of the community where the PAR took place. Although schools are not immune to policies and law enforcement actions that oppress People of Color, we as educators have the option to work to dismantle policies that punish and disproportionally harm Communities of Color by not replicating societal racism and criminalization in our classrooms. Therefore, we can empower young people by creating opportunities in schools to value and

Table 1

Driver Diagram and Key Actions of Primary and Secondary Drivers of the PAR Project

AIM

To co-design and implement a strength-based critical pedagogy of storytelling that brings the counter-stories (voices and histories) of Students of Color and their families into the classrooms

Primary Drivers: People and Processes	Secondary Drivers: People and Processes
Co-Practitioner Researchers/Teachers facilitated the PAR process • Engaged in storytelling/ sharing stories during CPR meetings. • Co-designed the critical pedagogy of storytelling. • Provided ideas for Community Learning Exchange with students. • Implemented the critical pedagogy of storytelling. • Engaged in praxis: Reflection to action.	Assistant Superintendent supported the PAR project • Communicated with district leadership regarding the project. Shared results of the project with district leadership.
Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) Protocols • Used storytelling as a process to build community and as a primary evidence and change tool. • Valued the wisdom of place and people closest to the work. • Used storytelling during staff meetings as a process to build community.	Families and Students • Engaged students in researching family stories. • Encouraged family members to share stories. Community Based Organization Partnership (Village Connect) Developed relationships with Village Connect leadership. Shared study findings with CBO leadership.

affirm the lives and histories of Families of Color who historically have been targeted by institutionalized systems of oppression. This dissertation joined the incessant struggle to use counter-stories and *testimonios* to challenge institutionalized racism and was significant to practice, research, and policy.

A standard of validity for participatory action and activist research is its usefulness to the people engaged in the project—the teachers, students, and families (Hale, 2017). We shifted from a Eurocentric curriculum to using a curriculum that included a representation of the histories, ancestral knowledge, and voices of the Students of Color in our school (Emdin, 2016, Gay, 2018; Jimenez, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009). We developed a critical pedagogy of storytelling to bring into the classroom the voices, stories, histories, and experiences of Students of Color by making their counter-stories part of the curriculum. Our results both in terms of the new curriculum and the process that led to its creation are useful to others in practice communities that are working to shift curricular and pedagogical practices.

The research is unique in its methodology because we identified a dilemma and used a participatory design to address it. We know that, despite well-intentioned educators, policy makers, and researchers, Communities of Color are underserved in the current educational system (Gay, 2018; Jimenez, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Khalifa (2018) encourages principals and school leaders to honor, humanize, and promote all students' identities and to invite teachers to include ancestral knowledge in their curriculum and instruction. The study extends the work of Khalifa (2018) by looking at the work that a school leader can do with teachers to change teacher practice, teacher perspectives of their students, and students' experiences of the classroom. Although this is a single study in one school, the study added to the growing body of research on culturally responsive leadership and pedagogy by exploring how leaders working with teachers can address issues of implicit bias in schools that are underserving Students of Color.

The implications for small-scale change at a school level included changes in classroom pedagogy that influenced students' lives as well as historical awareness of the community served. The research provides a model for a holistic approach to reform and policy efforts that engage the schools and their communities and a model for culturally responsive education that could be used in other schools and districts serving Communities of Color.

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

I co-constructed the PAR study with a co-practitioner research (CPR) group. These participants were current, site-based teachers, a counselor, and a parent who voluntarily joined the CPR group out of a desire to challenge their thinking and to find new ways to teach Students of Color. The CPR participants agreed to participate in this study and signed a consent form. I informed them that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. In the study, I served as the co-researcher, co-participant, and co-observer. I acted as an insider working with other insiders (Herr & Anderson, 2014). My relationship with each CPR member was based on trust and the ability to have an honest conversation about the data for this research project.

The student population were students in the classes of the CPR teacher members. The pedagogical changes gave students access to the state-mandated curriculum but also supplemented the curriculum with their own stories and life experiences. The changes were in the normal range of changes that teachers make to their classrooms each year. The stories teachers, parents, and students shared were analyzed to understand how they experience the classroom and to teach the teachers.

All appropriate consents for the study were in place prior to initiating the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Prior research in the area was identified, recognized, and cited in the study. Disclosure of data, research, budget, and other information was disclosed. The code of ethics provided by our educational institution was considered prior to beginning the study.

Study Limitations

The PAR project places me as co-lead and as a researcher-facilitator. As a member of the co-practitioner research group, I brought my experiences that result from being a Woman of Color who was a former English Language Learner student with personal and professional perspectives. I am aware that my background identity and experiences influenced the project, and I was cautious to not let my biases and pre-conceived notions influence data analysis. Yet, I believed that my positionality and experiences were assets to the project and study. As a person who grew up and studied in Venezuela, I brought cultural knowledge about my experiences outside of the US that enabled to appreciate Communities of Color and the social and community orientation that the PAR project aimed to bring to the Rosa Parks school community.

The size of the study is a further limitation. This is one small study in one school. Because the entire premise of participatory action research is that the context is essential to the study, the results of the study may not be generalizable to other contexts. However, the processes we used can be replicated by others and may be useful to other school-based research projects.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I made the case for engaging student voice and family stories in the classroom learning of Students of Color. I believe that schools need to be grounded in positive beliefs about the cultural heritage, histories, and academic potential of Students of Color. I argued that, as educators and leaders in the field, we had the power to enact change and contest negative stereotypes. I maintained that to create a new narrative of Students and Families of Color, we needed to honor their past and identify their assets and strengths. The research study aimed to answer the overarching question: *How can schools use an asset frame that celebrates the backgrounds and histories of Students of Color to counteract deficit narratives and build trust between educators and Families of Color?*

The project encouraged teachers and support staff to learn from the counter-stories of their students and to shift our perceptions of Students of Color, their families, and their cultures from a deficit view to an asset-based view. During the three cycles of inquiry, we co-designed and implemented a critical pedagogy of storytelling and documented qualitative evidence to examine how teacher perceptions and student experiences changed. By learning to listen as witnesses of the stories to our Communities of Color, we changed perceptions and relationships between the school and the community.

Chapter Two reviews the extant literature in preparation for the study. In Chapter Three, I describe the context of the study; Chapter Four contains a description of the methodology of participatory action research. In each of Chapters Fix, Six, and Seven, I describe what happened in each successive cycle of inquiry and analyze the evidence from each cycle. In Chapter Eight, I discuss the key findings and the implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Three areas of literature support the focus of practice and the participatory action research study: the dominant deficit narrative, the concept of counter-narratives, and pedagogical practices. The single story narrative of the dominant group in U.S. society about Students of Color is harmful to Youth of Color in the schooling system. The deficit stories about Students of Color originate from a system based on White, middle-class values. I analyze the impacts of the negative stories about People of Color on students.

Secondly, counter-narratives and *testimonios* are authentic cultural stories, and I examine the literature that discusses the importance and effects of stories that celebrate People of Color. As presented in the introductory chapter, the stories of Youth of Color and their families, such as counter-narratives and *testimonios*, are often filled with expressions of hope, resilience, and aspiration and offer portraits of family values and goals (Yosso, 2005). The stories are passed down from generation to generation, often told at the dinner table or at family reunions (Guajardo et al., 2016; Pérez Huber, 2009). Guajardo and Guajardo (2013) name the stories *pláticas* (talk) but much deeper and richer—*pláticas* are "an expressive cultural form shaped by listening, inquiry, storytelling, and story-making that is akin to a nuanced, multi-dimensional conversation from our parents" (p. 161). The stories from Families of Color often go unheard by people in power in our current socio-political and educational contexts; instead, we primarily focus on preserving the stories, goals, and values of the dominant groups in the society.

In using critical pedagogy, we can bring the stories of Students and Families of Color into the classroom to counter the dominant narratives about People of Color. These pedagogies are based on using the stories as strengths. Specifically, I review literature that highlights pedagogies designed to center students' culture into classrooms, honor their voices, and value the wisdom of their community and family experiences. To meet the needs of Students of Color, school leaders and practitioners need to use culturally responsive and critical race pedagogies (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lynn et al., 2013; Valenzuela, 1999).

Two theoretical frameworks -- critical pedagogy and critical race theory (CRT) -- provide analytical and theoretical lenses for examining the history of deficit perceptions that schools hold of Students of Color. As well, these lenses provide insight into the histories and experiences of Students and Families of Color as strengths to be drawn and built upon in classrooms. Critical Pedagogy challenges the role that schooling plays in the reproduction of social and political structures in society and questions the way that macroeconomic and political systems create-and replicate stories about marginalized students and families. Critical Race Theory examines the role that race plays in schooling and relies on practices—counter-storytelling, parables, *cuentos*, and *testimonios*—that magnify the experiences of People of Color in the educational system.

The Single Stories We Tell Harm Students of Color

Since the beginning of the 20th century, United States classrooms are experiencing a large influx of immigrant students (Gay, 2018). After the1965 immigration law, a profound demographic shift occurred in US as Immigrants of Color, particularly immigrants of Latinx and Asian descent, made the United States their home (Contreras, 2002; Rubinstein-Avila, 2017). Approximately 21.5 million new immigrants —documented and undocumented—settle in the US in the years 2000-2015 (Gay, 2018). By 2045, the US will no longer be a majority White nation (Frey, 2018). Despite this transformative demographic shift, schools in the US failed to embrace the increased diversity in linguistic and cultural practices; in fact, the schools continued to emphasize Eurocentric views and curricula (Emdin, 2016; Mills, 1997; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Stories about Communities of Color that are included in classrooms are most often told from the perspective of the dominant racial group.

In this section, I focus on the dominant narratives about Students of Color, their history, and why they exist; then, I discuss how they are not unique to educational settings, but rather are global stories and serve a purpose to further marginalize People of Color. The deficit stories about Students of Color come from a system based on White, middle-class values and examine the single narrative of Black, Asian, and Latinx families and youth. Finally, the Eurocentric U.S. history curriculum inculcates single narratives, and negative stories about People of Color impact identity development of Students of Color.

Dominant Single Narratives: Why They Exist

The dominant or majoritarian story presents a single narrative of the experience of Youth of Color and is the product of a complex system of oppression based on race, class, gender, and other socially constructed identities. To understand the dominant story's purpose and repercussions, we need to understand its roots and history. Who benefits from the stories and who is harmed? According to Mills (1997), we live in a world built on White domination, which permeates the economic, political, social, and educational aspects of life. The dominant group creates its own stories and uses those stories to achieve its goals, to locate themselves in positions of power and to reproduce the relationships of the oppressor-oppressed (van Dijk, 1989).

Delgado Bernal (1989) refers to the dominant narratives as "stock stories." He explains that stock stories perpetuate a view of reality that privileges the dominant group and oppresses marginalized groups. He argues that those stories are not innocent; they function to justify White supremacy and the subordination of People of Color. Bell (2003) analyses stock stories of different racial groups to examine how these stories function to oppress People of Color. The author points out that the dominant story determines how we interpret the world and maintains White supremacy. These stock stories pick and choose from the facts to paint and present a reality that justifies White privilege. The dominant story is ingrained in society and creates a deficit perception of Groups of Color.

When people from the dominant or oppressor group create a story about themselves as the people in power, they intentionally create stories about other groups as less than themselves. They create what is called a single story for different groups of People of Color. Each single story of each subordinate racial group provides a deficit perspective of that group. Adichie (2009) in her *TED Talk*, *The Danger of a Single Story*, argues that a single story describes People of Color as one thing and only one thing over and over again until that is what the people become. It creates stereotypes of people and makes that stereotype the sole story. She explains that Eurocentric literature and media show people from countries in Africa as half devil and half human. The media simultaneously characterize people from countries in Africa as illiterate, suffering from diseases, and living in the jungle with no electricity, stoves, or basic supplies. She adds that the media also portray people from Mexico as undocumented, poor, and fleeing their countries. The single story creates stereotypes about people by picking pieces of their story and making one aspect of the story their whole truth. She argues that the single story steals people's dignity by dehumanizing them and flattening their complexity and reality.

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), dominant stories about White people privilege White, middle- and upper-class, straight, and cisgender male people as the invisible norm. Privilege is often expressed through stories, which are perceived as "natural," as the way that life should be. The oppressor needs the stories, “the narration,” to maintain the oppression by making people believe that they are inferior.

Majoritarian Story in Education

In education, the dominant group continues to maintain and reinforce one-sided stories about People of Color. Education is political, and schools are not neutral institutions (Freire, 1970). Indeed, education serves as one arm of the government to instill in its citizens its society’s highest goals, values, aspirations, and cultural norms. As People of Color were denied civil rights and participation in the political process, institutions in the US (such as schools) were not created by or for People of Color (Jimenez, 2010; Lynn et al., 2013). For example, common majoritarian stories are that biological and cultural deficiencies are the reason for low achievement; that persons living in poverty are lazy and unwilling to work; that noisy families prime their children to misbehave in schools (Payne, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). While scholars contest the stories, teachers who believe them often use them as an excuse not to have high expectations of students (Gorski, 2008; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). They describe scholarly works that use a deficit model to proclaim that Mexican, Black, and Native American students lack the traits to succeed in schools. Next, I describe how the single narrative creates images of weakness about Youth of Color.

Single Narrative of Black Families/Youth

The dominant narrative creates stereotypes of Black students as less human and less socially appropriate. Ferguson’s (2001) ethnographic study of an elementary school, *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of black masculinity*, suggests that school leaders, teachers, and school staff dehumanize Black children by treating youngsters as if they were adults engaging in adult behaviors; she coins the term *adultification* to refer to how school adults treat elementary children. When the White dominant narrative uses terms such as active, defiant, vicious, and criminal, these persons are using racialized images of Black students to produce perceptions of them as "other" and as troublemakers, "at risk," or "unsalvageable" (Ferguson, 2001). One by-product of these perceived identities is the creation of negative, deficit profiles of Black youth that follow them throughout their lives. Once the narrative has been established, people in schools assume Black children are Machiavellian, manipulative, and controlling. The image of the Black male as a criminal is most familiar because of its prevalence in print and electronic media as well as in scholarly work.

Single Narrative of Asian American Families/Youth

According to Kim (1999), the single story told by White elites about People of Color reinforced their racial and economic power. She explains that Asian Americans have been racially triangulated through comparisons with White and Black people, which also produced a one-sided/single narrative of Asian American and Pacific Islander people (AAPI). The story has its roots in the mid–1800s due to the urgent need for cheap labor. According to Kim, AAPI people then became the race that disrupted the bipolar racist relationship of White people at the top and Black people at the bottom. AAPI folks became the middle ground, located as superior to the Black race.

However, there are inconsistencies in the single narrative of Asian immigrants. Sometimes, Chinese immigrants were seen as docile, lazy, dishonest, and thieving. Yet, other times when compared to African American labor, they were framed as stable, strong characters with a great deal more brain power than African Americans although unassimilated to Western culture. The single story of AAPI folks as intellectually superior to Black people but "forever foreigners" when compared to White people perpetuates the domination of both groups.

Single Narrative of Latinx Youth

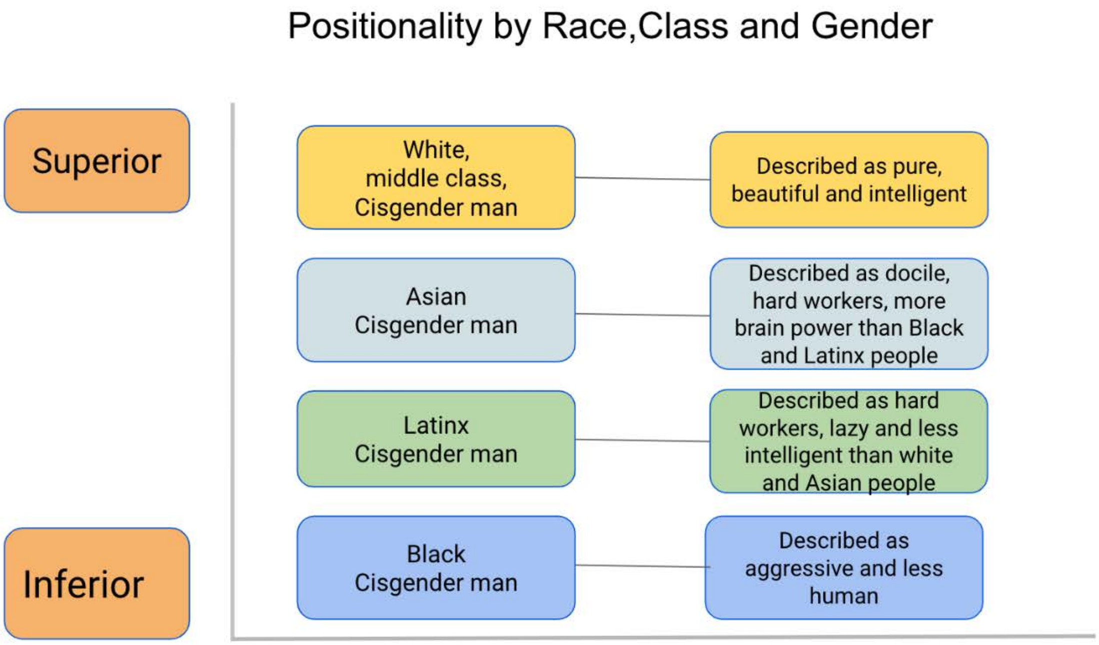
Utilizing biological deficiency models that are a holdover from the eugenics movement of the early 20th century, Rushton and Jensen (2005) report on how inferior mental capacity compared to their White peers. Latinx students were portrayed as genetically and physically inferior to White students to justify their segregation from White students (Taylor, 1934 as cited in Delgado Bernal, 2002). The deficit story of Latinx students emphasizes that the Latinx culture rooted in family ties is not conducive to acquiring the skills needed to succeed in an industrialized society. Instead, they should be limited to agricultural labor. The single story of Latinx youth assumes that they cannot master higher order thinking but that they can be efficient workers. Figure 2 shows the parallels among the deficit stories created about People of Color based on race and other identities such as class and gender.

How Single Stories Harm Students of Color

The dominant group (European Americans) creates a one-sided story about Communities of Color. The single story portrays People of Color as less intelligent and irresponsible while depicting White middle- and upper-class people as the opposite (Yosso, 2006). The most troubling is that the Eurocentric U.S. history curriculum inculcates single narratives and silences and distorts or dismisses the stories of Communities of Color (Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Loewen, 1995). The impact of the single stories on Students of Color are “too devastating to be tolerable” (Gay, 2018, p. 1). Next, I examine the literature from scholars who analyze how the Eurocentric curriculum privileges White values and how the negative stories about People of Color harm students.

Eurocentric Curriculum

Particularly in the curricular materials that schools and districts use, the typical narrative


Positionality by Race,Class and Gender
Superior
Inferior
White,
middle class,
Cisgender man
Described as pure, beautiful and intelligent
Asian
Cisgender man
Described as docile, hard workers, more brain power than Black and Latinx people
Latinx
Cisgender man
Described as hard workers, lazy and less intelligent than white and Asian people
Black
Cisgender man
Described as aggressive and less human

Note. (Adapted from Kim, 1999).

Figure 2. Racial, class, and gender triangulation.

privileges White American experiences and values and purposefully distorts or omits positive stories of Communities of Color (Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2018; Jimenez, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Loewen, 1995). Textbook stories are often incorrect, minimize the experiences of People of Color, and devalue the history and culture of Students of Color.

According to Loewen (1995), history textbooks in the US often exclude the stories of triumph and resilience of African American families; instead, they present a distorted reality of the history and accomplishments of the Black community. In his work, the author described a memorable experience teaching history to his college students (who were 99% African American). He explained that when teaching the events that followed after the Civil War in the US, he asked his students what Reconstruction was. He found that the majority of students' responses were that "Blacks took over the government too soon out of slavery and messed up, and Whites had to take control of the state governments…[and] for young African Americans to believe such a hurtful myth about their past seemed tragic" (Loewen , 1995, p. 56, 157). The most troubling facts in American history textbooks are: (1) the White supremacist domination in the analysis of critical events in U.S. history such as the retelling of the Emancipation and Reconstruction in a way that invites readers to conclude that "it is only right that Whites be in control" (p. 157); and (2) textbooks present a partial, incomplete analysis of U.S. history, omitting the perspectives of diverse racial groups. The author concludes that the White supremacist history replicated in the U.S. history textbook creates stigmas of People of Color and harms the self-image of many Students of Color.

Secondly, children's literature used in classrooms minimizes the lived experiences of Communities of Color. Patterson and Shuttleworth (2019) studied 21 recently published elementary-level books that portray enslavement in U.S. history. The authors categorized visual and textual depictions of enslavement into three stances: selective tradition, social conscience, and culturally conscious. In the books of both selective tradition and social conscience books, enslavement appeared to be an enjoyable experience for Black families as the illustrations present Black people smiling while at work. The owners are portrayed as benevolent. The authors caution teachers about the impact of this single narrative story presented in children's literature: "Students may receive the unintended message that enslaved persons were content in their positions" (Patterson & Shuttleworth, 2019, p. 27).

Several researchers have provided evidence that the U.S. Eurocentric curriculum, built on instilling middle-class European values beliefs and cultural heritage, contributes to the achievement of White students (De Leon, 2002; Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009). However, this curriculum does not provide an appropriate education for Students of Color. The Eurocentric curriculum distances Students of Color from their histories and cultural heritages because textbooks and curricula present "superficial, inaccurate, negative and stereotypical information about the lives, values, and experiences of African American, Asian, Latinx, and Native Americans" (Gay, 2018, p. 147). The implicit message that the Eurocentric curriculum sends to Students of Color is that their voices, histories, and experiences are not valued (Fishbein, 2016; Khalifa, 2018).

Single Narrative and Identity

According to Steele (2010), the single narrative about Students of Color has negative effects on the psyche of the individuals. He argues that repeated exposure to negative images of the People of Color causes these images to be internalized and accepted as true. Internalizing the narrative causes self-doubt, low self-esteem, low motivation, and low expectations. Through his research with Aronson (Steele & Aronson, 1995), Steele found that the stigmatization impaired intellectual performance. In their research, Steele and Aronson administered tests to Black and White college students. The researchers administered the exam to two groups. One group took the exam as it is administered usually. On this test, the White students performed better than Black students. In the experimental group, the researchers, prior to the test, informed the participants that the exam "was a task and didn't measure a person's intellectual ability" (Steele, 2010, p. 51). Results from the experimental group showed that black students performed at the same or higher level than the White test takers. Steele and Aronson (1995) concluded that when students are made aware of any stereotype, negative or positive, they perform accordingly. The study has implications for the PAR project because, as Steele (2010) further explains, unless educators confront the stereotypes embedded in the single story and make Students of Color feel safe from the risk of stereotypes, the low achievement of Students of Color may persist.

In summary, single narratives of People of Color help to maintain White supremacy. The narrative is reinforced by the educational system, social media, and many scholars. The dominant narrative too often guides the values and content of textbooks and the standard curriculum offered to all students and reinforces a narrative that is harmful to learning as it is incomplete, inaccurate, or simply false history. Next, Communities of Color create counter-narratives to resist the dominant narratives; these are critically important in presenting a more complex story. For example, Delgado (1989) describes how dialogue and stories, though used by the dominant group to oppress, are essential tools for liberation.

The Importance of a Counter-Narrative, *Testimonio*, and Identity

Single stories of People of Color undermine Black, Latinx, and other Communities of Color, make them feel inferior to the White dominant group, and steal their pride and dignity. As the stories and curricular narrative reinforce dominant views about inferiority and omit historical truths, they are harmful to all learning. In contrast, counter-narratives told from the perspectives of People of Color transgress oppression and give hope and resilience. I describe the types of counter-narratives and conclude by arguing how teachers and school leaders need to recognize the importance of using stories of dignity and identity in learning experiences for students.

The Value of Counter-Narratives

Communities of Color have historically taught and learned through stories. Enslaved Black families were forbidden to learn to read due to compulsory ignorance laws, but some managed to circumvent the laws. While their stories in verse, songs, and letters—oral and written—about their pain and oppression are somewhat limited, they provide a window into the importance that the Black community placed on learning and literacy (Botkin, 1945, as cited in Delgado, 1989; Perry et al., 2004). For example, Mexican American families composed *corridos*, stories passed from generation to generation, to relate how lawyers and developers took their land without their consent. Native American families shared tales about their history of resistance and how White people took their land. Feminists tell stories from personal experiences to resist the majoritarian stories that support a patriarchal society.

Delgado (1989) explains that oppressed groups have known instinctively that these stories are an essential tool for liberation. He argues that reality is socially constructed by the exchange of stories about individual situations and that counter-narratives told by subordinated groups can be used for self-preservation and for addressing oppression. Counter-storytelling for self-preservation encompasses resisting the internalization of the negative images and stereotypes in society. He explains that by naming the history of the oppression and explaining why it happened, People of Color resist stock stories. By engaging in this process, the teller can move away from the demoralization and internalization of negative images produced by the dominant groups in society and find healing, mental health, and liberation. He further explains that when People of Color engage in counter-narration, they are better able to resist oppression as tellers find their own voices. “Telling counter-stories bring People of Color together and creates group solidarity” (Delgado, 1989, p. 2,437).

Bell (2003) explains that people from both dominant and subordinated groups tell stories to further their goals and promote their strategic interests. She argues that historical and social positionality shape the stories we tell. “People of Color “tell on” or bear witness to social relations that the dominant culture tends to deny or minimize (Bell, 2003, p. 8). She explains that People of Color told stories of danger— recount incidents in which they were vulnerable to assaults by the police—, stories of differential and inferior treatment in public services, and stories of White insensitivity and cruelty toward People of Color. According to Bell (2003), counter-stories “provide a powerful counter-narrative to the dominant story of racial progress to confirm the ongoing reality of racism in American society” (p. 14). Counter-stories also create capacity for People of Color to create a counter-reality and see themselves as human in a society that has treated them inhumanely.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) argue that counter-storytelling is a tool to respond to, contest and challenge the dominant story. The authors caution scholars of color on limiting the counter-storytelling only to the purpose of responding to dominant stories, which allows the majoritarian story to control the discourse. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) argue that the unheard stories of People of Color can strengthen traditions of resistance and cultural survival. The authors explicate that counter-stories serve four functions:

1. Build community among People of Color;
2. Challenge dominant stories;

3. Open new windows of opportunities for Communities of Color;
4. Teach others.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) explain that when telling counter-stories "one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone" (p. 36). In storytelling, community is built and rebuilt because people show care and concern through telling their stories, which leads to a deep sense of belonging. When basic physiological needs are not fully met, stories that serve to inculcate first safety and then a sense of belonging and provide a tool for self-actualization are an antidote to oppression (Maslow, 1943). For the purpose of this project, I use the term “counter-storytelling” as the methodology or tool for Youth of Color to tell their stories. I argue that storytelling touches all cultures as it carries the rich history, knowledge and wisdom of the people. By engaging in the process of storytelling, people bring their histories and experiences and provide sources of knowledge that counter the dominant stories that society holds of Communities of Color. We intend to use and honor the many forms of counter-narratives that I discuss next.

Types of Counter-Narratives

Academics have used different terms to describe written and oral counter-storytelling: personal stories including autobiographies and biographies; composite stories or narratives; and resistance stories. These are stories with a purpose of teaching and preserving traditions often have a moral purpose of guidance (Bell, 1999; Bell & Roberts, 2010; Pérez Huber, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), but resistance stories are especially important because they can be used to teach about anti-racist work (Bell, 1999). For example, a *testimonio* as a term is stronger than a story as it describes a testimony, a public statement that is also a declaration. A *plática is* an “expressive cultural form shaped by listening, inquiry, storytelling, and story making that is akin to a nuanced, multi-dimensional conversation" (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2013, p. 160). Thus, the counter narrative in whatever form or by whatever name offers a way to do what Bellah et al. (1984) remind us in *Habits of the Heart*: "[to] know ourselves as social selves, parents and children, members of a people, inheritors of a history and a culture that we must nurture through memory and hope."

Personal Stories and Autobiographies

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) explain that counter-personal narratives tell individuals' experiences with different forms of oppression. Usually, these are autobiographies in which the authors reflect on their experiences in relation to their critical race in the socio-political context of the society one is in. For example, McBride (2010) and Dailey (2011) offers examples of using counter-personal narratives to reflect on their experiences. McBride (2010) uses critical race theory in her dissertation to analyze the stories of three African American social studies teachers. The author concluded that the life stories of the participants shaped their teaching philosophies and practices. Dailey (2011) uses autoethnography in her dissertation to analyze her experience as a first-time African American woman superintendent and concluded that there are different standards and double marginalizing experiences of African American women superintendents. She recommends the creation of racial identity groups to compare the experiences of superintendents of color and their White colleagues. The autobiographies are counter-stories because the authors examined the life stories of themselves to share information about the challenges and perspectives of People of Color.

Biographical narratives are third-person accounts of a person's story in response to the oppression that person lives in (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Matsuda et al. (1993) offer examples in legal education. In their seminal work, *Words that Wound*, the authors explore the victims' stories of the effects of racism and oppression. One of the analyses presented illustrates the experiences of law professors and critical race scholars receiving hate messages through social media, phone calls, books, letters, magazines, posters, and cable television. The biographical stories are considered counter-stories because the authors of the book, all, explain other people's stories to raise awareness and dismantle oppressive practices in society.

Composite Stories or Narratives

In composite stories, authors create characters that represent multiple narratives and place them in a social, political situation to illustrate different forms of subordination. For example, Bell (1999) used parables to exemplify composite counter-narratives. In his parable "Space Traders," Bell (1999) reflects on how the deficit mindset and dominant- majoritarian storytelling is engrained in the political and economic systems and their institutions in U.S. society. In his analysis, he raises questions regarding the involuntary role Black families played in creating wealth for the dominant racial group. This is a counter-narrative because Bell's fictional characters challenge the idea that injustices were buried in the past and instead show that injustices exist even in today's modern world. He unmasks the hypocrisy of U.S. society in blaming Black people for its problems while profiting from the work of Black people. He elaborates on the dominant narrative fictional idea that Americas' problems are often the fault of Black people.

Resistance Stories

According to Bell and Roberts (2010), counter-stories offer stories of resistance; these are stories intentionally created to challenge the dominant story and to offer ways to transform the reality of People of Color. Counter-storytelling is different from fictional storytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The stories use real characters grounded in real-life experiences to demonstrate the power of story to overcome obstacles or the power of resistance as a means to claiming power. For example, Delgado Bernal (2002) uses critical race theory to analyze the counter-stories of Chicana students and how they used what they learned at home to navigate higher education. Pérez Huber and Cueva (2012) use a Latina/o critical race theory to analyze the testimonios of undocumented and U.S. born Chicana/ Latina students in higher education. The authors used the testimonios to understand how the students experience the effects of and responded to racist microaggressions. The authors concluded that the students in their educational journey created counter-spaces within K-12 institutions such as participating in a *baile folklórico* dance class or other special programs to challenged oppression and the deficit educational discourse about Chicana/Latina students. Both studies offer educational counter-stories because that bolster People of Color. *Pláticas* and *testimonios* are a form of counter-storytelling in which individuals tells stories that originated in oral traditions or from the practice of speaking about the injustices suffered by oppressed people.

Bell and Roberts (2010) explain that resistance stories are stories told by individuals or groups who fight against the dominant narrative stories about People of Color throughout history. They elaborate that resistance stories feature the stories heroes and superheroes characters who have challenged the dominant story. Resistance stories manifest through literature, poetry and mural paintings (Bell & Roberts, 2010). For example, Augusto Boal (2002) used the *Theatre of the Oppressed* as a tool for resistance and social change, and Scott (1992) uncovered hidden stories of resistance of Black people during the time of slavery. Two forms of resistance stories are *testimonios* and pláticas.

Testimonios. The word *testimonio* derives from Latin American practices of people voicing injustices, violence, or exploitation in response to human rights abuses by corrupt governments (Blackmer Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2016; Jimenez, 2010). Human rights tribunals use these in countries like Chile, Argentina, and Venezuela so persons recount under oath what they have witnessed. Although a *testimonio* is an account made by one person, the life story represents the voices of many whose lives have been affected by the same political conditions. In other words, a *testimonio* of one person while unique, extends beyond the individual person to represent the community of which the person belongs (Haig-Brown, 2003).

Pérez Huber (2009) defines *testimonio* as "a verbal journey of the person who speaks to reveal the racial, classed, gendered, and nativist injustices they have suffered with the means of healing and empowerment for a more humane present and future" (p. 646). In her analysis, she explicated that the purpose of testimonio is put the knowledge of the oppressed at the center of the discussion; it is a tool for the oppressed not for the oppressors and elites. *Testimonios* provides the space to discuss those issues that would not be discussed otherwise. This fine distinction of *testimonios* as a form of counter-storytelling is important for this participatory action research project because the students who will be part of the project come from Latinx, Black, Asian, African Native, and Native American Communities.

Pláticas. Guajardo and Guajardo (2013) explain that *pláticas* are co-constructed spaces created by People of Color to learn about ourselves and each other. *Pláticas* encompass oral conversations, storytelling, listening and inquiry. This form of counter-storytelling is different than the *testimonio* as it builds resistance through community story-telling. Rooted in the oral tradition of Mexican American communities and performed in native languages, the stories become a collective story as an expressive form that felt natural, respectful, and affirming. *Pláticas* become critical pedagogy when the storytellers use the stories to move the listeners to action; through generative themes in the stories, the storytellers and the witnesses of the stories become fortified to act for social justice (Freire, 1970).

In the participatory action research (PAR) project, we documented family histories and stories. We used oral histories and family stories to initiate dialogue across generations. Through the stories, elders can share their wisdom and culturally specific knowledge of hope, segregation, assimilation, deportation, conquest, and resistance (Gluck & Patai, 1991 as cited in Jimenez, 2010). Then, in classrooms we used both oral and written stories as a part of the curriculum that we developed.

Counter-Narrative and Identity

In explaining the connections between counter-storytelling and the identity formation, I primarily draw on the research of Steele (2010), who explains that identities are local and depend on the identity contingencies, or conditions that result from a given social identity which in turn affect individual behavior choices and perpetuate broader societal problems. According to Steele (2010), identity is situational and fluid, and its influence on the individual is activated by local relevance. Delgado's (1989) work on how identity concurs with Steele; identities are socially constructed. We can change our conceptions of identity production through storytelling.

Different social groups – based on identity contingencies -- receive certain treatment in society, and, at different times, persons can detect that they are being judged by their identity. In other words, society defines what behaviors are rewarded or punished for certain groups. Social identities such as age, race, sex, sexual orientation, profession, religion, and nationality determine access to opportunities or restrictions in a particular setting or place. However, as Steele (2010) asserts, People of Color face what he calls "stereotype threat," more often in social situations, they are threatened because of certain characteristic in a specific place. He argues that stereotype threat affects the lives of Students of Color and contributes to the relatively low achievement of African Americans, Latinx, and women whose academic abilities, for example, in math domains are negatively stereotyped. Although Steele's (2010) work does not focus on storytelling as a way to counteract the negative stereotypes, he suggests the following strategies to reduce the identity threats that "hover in the air around People of Color" (p. 208):

1. Establishing trust through demanding but supportive relationships;
2. Fostering hopeful narratives about belonging in the setting;
3. Arranging informal cross-group conversations "to reveal that one's identity is not the sole cause of one's negative experiences in the setting" (p. 181);
4. Allowing Students of Color to affirm their most valued sense of self;
5. Increasing the numbers of People of Color in a given setting to "improve its members' trust, comfort and performance" (p. 216).

Storytelling supports the creation of positive social identities in Communities of Color. Delgado Bernal (2002) and Pérez-Huber and Cueva (2012) argue that telling the experiences, histories, and stories of Students of Color supports the creation of a sense of positive self. Since reality is socially constructed, and the stories that we tell are mediated by our perceptions of that reality (Delgado, 1989), our identities are also socially created. Delgado (1989) argues that we actively participate in creating what we see and that our narrative patterns of seeing help us to form ideas of what we aspire to be. He explains that by listening to stories of all sorts and discussing them, people acquire the ability to see through the eyes of others.

Identity can be produced or reclaimed by storytelling. Through counter narratives, particularly *testimonios* and *pláticas*, Families and Communities of Color form their ideas of themselves as members of the larger community. By telling their stories, People of Color create identity and knowledge. According to Delgado Bernal (2002), Students of Color are holders and creators of knowledge. Their experiential knowledge, life experiences, histories, cultures, and languages offer credibility and direction for their children and others as they form their identities in relation to others and how they know and understand the world.

In summary, I discussed the literature surrounding how Communities of Color counter the single narrative. I described different forms of counter-storytelling. Telling the stories and histories of People of Color creates community as people find commonalities in their lived experiences. Knowing that there are others in the struggle helps people to build trust and positive identities. In the next section, I describe the dynamic critical pedagogies that advocate for bringing the voices, experiences, and knowledge of People of Color and their communities into the classroom.

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Critical Race Pedagogy: Pedagogies for Students of Color

In previous sections, I reviewed the literature regarding the single stories that society holds about different Communities of Color and about the racially dominant group, White communities. I discussed that the dominant group creates and replicates stories about itself to preserve its power and creates stories of Black and Brown students as less than White people. I argued that one of the problems that we have in education is that we tell limiting stories about our Students of Color. For example, we use a single narrative of Black youth as criminals (Ferguson, 2001) to define who Black youth are, and we oblige them to learn the stories of White people (Eurocentric curricula) to reinforce the concept that their own stories are not valuable in schools. In previous sections, I described how Communities of Color counter these single narratives by engaging in counter-storytelling. Through sharing counter-stories, People of Color honor their own histories and experiences and provide sources of knowledge that counter the majoritarian story that society holds of them.

To actually shift the stories that Youth of Color tell and the identities they are forming, we need to engage in culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy to bring the stories of People of Color into the classroom and shift the way we engage in teaching and learning. Critical pedagogies dismiss the single narratives of Youth of Color, interrogate the Eurocentric narratives often in place in classrooms, and build on the strengths, gifts, and stories of Students of Color (Perry et al., 2004). I review critical pedagogy as the foundation of both culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy; explore critical race theory as a conceptual, theoretical foundation in critical race education; and discuss influential research in the area of culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy. I conclude with some questions regarding the implications of the research literature on the PAR research project.

Critical Pedagogy: The Foundation of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Critical Race Pedagogy

For critical pedagogues, schools are not neutral; they traditionally function as one of the arms of the government to maintain the domination of the oppressed (Freire,1970; Gay, 2018; Jimenez, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Lynn et al., 2013). According to Freire (1970) and hooks (1994), by systematically and intentionally using the tenets of critical pedagogy, we, as teachers and school leaders, examine the role that schools play in the reproduction of inequities. The purpose of education, they argue, is to transform the institution of schools and liberate the oppressed. Critical pedagogy is a pedagogy in service of students' liberation.

Freire (1970) contends that education is a process of inquiry and reflection. Students are creators of knowledge capable of transforming their own social context and realities. Through inquiry and reflection, students are encouraged to examine their current state of oppression with a critical eye and to contest the passive role imposed on them. Schools presently use a banking concept of education. In this model, students are "empty passive receptacles with no knowledge" (Freire, 1970, p. 72). The teacher becomes the depositor of knowledge, and the role of the students is to passively listen to teachers and repeat their lectures. The banking system teaches students to be submissive and accept their oppression. The banking system of education implicitly dehumanizes students by sending the messages that their ideas, histories, and stories are not valued by the educational system.

Further, critical pedagogy engages students in a process of dialogue, redefining and deconstructing the traditional teacher-student relationship. Critical dialogue is essential for education and creates horizontal relationships between students and teachers, a horizontal relationship built on love, hope, humility, and trust (Freire, 1970, p. 91). Freire specifies that for schools to serve a liberatory political function, educators must transform their epistemological perspective and embrace students as creators of knowledge and active participants in their learning (Freire, 2005, as cited by Jimenez, 2010). This epistemological shift happens in dialogue.

According to Freire, changes in the schooling system cannot come from the elites or from the people in power. He states, "The pedagogy of the oppressed cannot be developed or practiced by the oppressor" (Freire, 1970, p. 54). It would be contradictory for the oppressor to change the system that maintains their power. Instead, Freire (1970) argues, the oppressed must engage in a process of producing and acting upon their own ideas of liberation, not consuming the ideas of others (p. 108).

Finally, a central characteristic of critical pedagogy is that the lives and experiences of students are centered in the work. For Freire, experiential knowledge is the foundation for learning. In his view, pedagogies should be deeply connected to the daily realities of people's lives. The act of teaching is to foster agency that helps people find their power and voice. Freire's ideas about a "pedagogy of the oppressed" serve as the foundational principles of critical pedagogy. Though initially articulated as a pedagogy of class oppression, others have built upon his contributions to apply to race-based oppression. Next, I review critical race theory, a critical framework that examines race and oppression and their impact on People of Color.

Critical Race Theory: The Foundation of Critical Race Pedagogy and an Influence on Culturally Responsive Teaching

Critical race theory has its origin in law schools in the late 1980s when scholars challenged race and racism in the United States legal system and society. For critical race scholars, the dynamics of White privilege and race are embedded in all institutions and especially within the legal system (Bell, 1999; Delgado, 1989; Matsuda et al., 1993). Scholars in the field of education expanded this critical analysis to examine the ways race and racism are built into the processes, structures, policies, and outcomes of schooling (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2006). According to Yosso (2006), critical race theory in education draws on the strengths of critical pedagogy and multicultural education to study race and racism in and out schools. These scholars seek to listen and learn from the histories of People of Color who traditionally have been silenced by the majoritarian stories in education.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) identified five tenets of critical race theory as they apply to education: (1) race and racism as endemic and permanent in U.S. society and central to other forms of subordination (2) challenge the dominant ideology by questioning approaches to schooling that “pretend to be neutral or standardized while implicitly privileging White, U.S.-born, monolingual, English -speaking students” (Yosso, 2006, p. 7); (3) place a priority on social justice, arguing that education is not neutral and that teaching is a political act; (4) experiential knowledge is central; and (5) adopt an interdisciplinary perspective; they analyze racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia from a historical and multiple perspectives of sociology, economics, anthropology, and politics. The five tenets of critical race theory serve as a foundational framework for critical race pedagogy. Critical race pedagogy scholars embody a pedagogy that aims to teach students to understand their lived experiences and respond to systemic oppression. In identifying the essential concepts of culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy rooted in critical pedagogy, I explain how the foundational roots of critical race pedagogy and further extend on racial self-awareness, and racial pedagogical content knowledge as knowledge that are essential for critical race pedagogy educators.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Educators can apply the characteristics of critical pedagogy to their work with Communities of Color through the pedagogical approach of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999). Although called different names—culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally-centered pedagogy, culturally-contextualized pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching—they share the idea of making teaching and learning responsive to the cultural backgrounds of Students of Color (Gay, 2018). Culturally responsive teaching explicitly addresses the dimensions of culture in the context of the larger social, political, and economic conditions that create inequitable outcomes for Students of Color as well as the larger socio-political context of racism. Culturally responsive teachers avoid a banking pedagogy and use instead a culturally empowering praxis for Youth of Color. Further, culturally responsive teaching is situated in the experiences of students.

Culturally responsive teaching is based on the founding authors and practitioners. Several factors are key to all: students as creators of knowledge; authentic relationships between teacher and student; and cultural and racial self-awareness for teachers.

Students as Creators of Knowledge

Geneva Gay (2018), a founding scholar of culturally responsive teaching, advocates for the culture and experiences of Students of Color as the foundation for teaching. In her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice*, Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge of students to make learning more relevant to them. She believes that instructional reforms and pedagogies need to be grounded "in positive beliefs about the cultural heritage and academic potential of these students" (Gay, 2018, p. 29). The author emphasizes that Students of Color are creators of knowledge and that telling their own personal stories plays an essential part in culturally responsive teaching.

Gay explains that in culturally responsive teaching (CRT) teachers validate experiential knowledge to liberate and empower Students of Color. They teach students to take ownership of their own learning and "to be proud of their ethnic identities and cultural backgrounds instead of being apologetic of them" (Gay, 2018, p. 42). They encourage students to find their own voices and analyze their own realities. The author emphasizes that by becoming active participants in shaping their own learning, Students of Color engage in the process of "critical consciousness" and cultural emancipation (Freire, 1970).

Ladson-Billings (2009) considered by some researchers to be the mother of critical race theory in education (Lynn et al., 2013), emphasizes the centrality of experiential knowledge. In her study of eight teachers who successfully taught African American students, culturally relevant teachers see teaching as “pulling knowledge out—like mining” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 38) instead of putting knowledge in, the banking concept of education (Freire, 1970). The author emphasizes that students come to school with knowledge, experiences, stories, and folktales that “must be explored and utilized in order for students to become achievers” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 56). She encourages educators to listen to and learn from the students and to incorporate students’ experiences into the curriculum.

Authentic Relationships

Gay (2018) explains that culturally responsive teaching requires doing the hard work of creating authentic relationships with the students. In her view, interpersonal relationships have a tremendous impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Positive relationships with the students are as important as the curriculum. She states that “the personal is powerful” (Gay, 2018, p. 269). Telling personal stories in classrooms creates a community and a bond between teachers and students where students feel valued. Educators need to be willing to be vulnerable and share stories of moments of mistakes to help students to see them as people. The teacher’s stories can help students to overcome the anxiety caused by the teacher’s authority. The author emphasizes that relationships grow gradually as students and teachers open themselves to listen and learn from each other’s stories.

Caring is a foundational piece in creating authentic relationships with students (Gay, 2018; Valenzuela, 1999). Gay (2018) emphasizes that culturally responsive teachers demonstrate caring for children “as students and as people” (p. 59). In her view, through caring interpersonal relationships, teachers empower students by turning their personal interests and strengths into opportunities for academic success. Valenzuela (1999) explores what it means to care authentically instead of aesthetically about the cultural needs of children in a racist political context. In her three-year ethnographic study of the effects of generational status on high school students' academic achievement, she described the perceptions of Mexican immigrant and non-immigrant youth and their schooling processes in the US. She found that the social relationships between high school students and their teachers were fragile or nonexistent. Students cared about their education but felt uncared for by the staff whom she describes as having aesthetic or but not authentic caring. In applying authentic caring, teachers care for students as people; in aesthetic caring, teachers worry about things and objectify the learning process by caring about the form of the curriculum, the ways students behave, and the learning outcomes, but fail to form subjective and authentic relationships with students. In this type of classroom, the students perceived themselves as culturally and socially distant from their teachers and U.S.-born counterparts. Caring for Students of Color implies building on the students' strengths and valuing native languages and cultures as assets. Valenzuela's work suggests the need for authentic caring, critical pedagogy, and a culturally responsive curriculum with Mexican immigrant students.

Another aspect of authentic relationships is trust, which Hammond (2015) posits is the core of authentic relationships. "All human beings are hardwired for relationships" (Hammond, 2015, p. 73). In her view, we can build trust through acts of caring, listening, and by being more authentic and vulnerable with the students. For Hammond (2015), practicing vulnerability requires that people "let down the guards" (p. 80) and allow others to see them as human beings. She highlights how teachers are selective about what they tell or share with students, thinking they should remain somewhat aloof as adults. Instead, full vulnerability is what students value in teachers as they feel cared for by teachers modeling vulnerability. In the case of this project, when the teachers and I moved from selective vulnerability and only telling part of our stories to more open vulnerability, we immediately saw the difference in family and student responses. Authentic relationships grow from sharing stories as students see educators as people not just only as teachers and administrators.

In culturally responsive classrooms, the authentic relationships create a family community. Ladson-Billings (2009) highlighted in her research that culturally relevant teachers perceive their relationships with their students as those of an "extended family" (p. 67). In the author's view, the teacher in a culturally responsive classroom, structures social relationships and extends those relationships into the community. The student relationship is fluid, and teachers "demonstrate a connectedness with each of their students" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 72). The authentic relationship between teachers and students grows stronger as the teachers create a classroom community that shows that the students are being seen "as real people by their teacher" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 73). She states that teachers with relevant cultural practices see themselves as members of the community. They perceive teaching as giving back to the community and encouraging students to the same.

Cultural Knowledge and Racial Self-Awareness

Hammond (2015) examines the intersection between brain-based learning and culturally responsive teaching. She posits that culture is critically important to the teaching of youth: "Culture is the way that every brain makes sense of the world" (Hammond, 2015, p. 22). She states that educators need to have a deep understanding of culture beyond the surface level of heroes, holidays, and food, recognizing cultural archetypes so that they can respond positively and constructively to students' cultural displays of learning. To promote effective information processing, teachers need to draw from the cultural knowledge of the students, using what students already know to scaffold new concepts. For Hammond (2015) culturally responsive information processing techniques are grounded in the learning traditions of oral cultures where knowledge is taught and processed through storytelling, songs, movements, chants, rituals, and dialogic talk. For generations, Families of Color have used these learning traditions to teach children important family traditions, life skills, and cultural knowledge. She argues that storytelling is a central cultural theme in Communities of Color and that storytelling can be used as a powerful pedagogy because our brains are wired for stories. While we know that learning happens best through storytelling, this is important for Students of Color in a different way. All learners learn by identifying big themes and to transform abstract concepts into pieces of information that are easily to be remembered, but in early research on testing and the stories used in achievement tests, Hill (1989) found that incomplete story structures interrupted the ability of Students of Color to choose the correct responses on standardized tests. When the full story structure was used, their test scores improved.

Personal and professional cultural self-awareness and critical race consciousness from educators are critical elements of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Teachers must understand how their own conceptions of Black students and of themselves impact how they see and teach their students. According to Ladson-Billings, teachers of Students of Color must revisit their epistemologies and reflect on their preconceived ideas about their Students of Color. She states, “[I]f a teacher looks out at a classroom and sees the sons and daughters of slaves, how does that vision translate into her expectations of academic excellence?” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 35).

In addition to engaging in self-reflection, teachers should engage in reflective dialogue about cultural diversity with others. According to Gay (2018), dialogue about cultural diversity should be inquiring and collaborative in nature to encourage educators "to talk openly and deeply about cultural differences and racial inequities" (p. 83) and to articulate their thinking about the role of race and racism in teaching and learning.

Culturally responsive researchers and practitioners have made important contributions in the field of education. Scholars have built on the key principles of critical pedagogy, providing insights to further understand how to educate youth oppressed in schools and society. They have provided detailed explanations from research, theory, and practice describing the positive effects of using cultures, backgrounds, and experiential knowledge of Students of Color in teaching instead of forcing students to learn from the White supremacist culture embedded in textbooks and/or curriculum. Culturally responsive pedagogy encourages Students of Color to find their ancestral knowledge and teaches students to find their voices and analyze their own realities.

Critical race pedagogy merges critical pedagogy and critical race theory in education. Critical race scholars interrogate the intersections of race, class, gender, and power in education. Similar to the way in which culturally responsive teachers challenge Eurocentric narratives in schooling, critical race pedagogy is a useful consideration for how we approach the project and study.

Critical Race Pedagogy

The concept of critical race pedagogy (CRP), first introduced by Marvin Lynn (1999) in his article *Toward A Critical Race Pedagogy: A Research Note,* incorporates the tenets of critical race theory (CRT), Latinx critical race theory (LatCrit), and critical pedagogy in education. Both critical race theory and Latinx critical race theory influence critical race pedagogy, which was born from the work of Derrick Bell utilizing storytelling and counter-narratives to draw upon the experiential knowledge of Communities of Color. The characteristics of critical pedagogy apply to (CRP), which places Students of Color at the center and utilizes inquiry, reflection, experiential knowledge, and critical dialogue.

CRP explicitly addresses race and power in the education of students. It encourages educators to teach students controversial topics of race with an understanding of the "endemic nature of racism of American society" (Lynn et al., 2013, p. 618). It invites educators to recognize the importance of understanding the power dynamics in society and work toward relinquishing power in their classrooms by empowering the voices of Students of Color. It emphasizes the necessity of self-reflection about race by Students of Color. Lastly, a critical race pedagogy encourages educators to enact the practice of a liberatory pedagogy by "advocating for justice and equity as a necessity "(Lynn et al., 2013, p. 620).

While critical race pedagogy has been mostly used in education that is "only accessible to [a] tight-knit academic community" (Lynn et al., 2013 p. 605), recent work from scholars and practitioners in the field of K-12 education is emerging to build on aspects of critical race pedagogy and provide insight about how educators can engage in this social justice work. Racial self-awareness (Howard, 2016) and racial pedagogical content knowledge (Chandler, 2015; King & Chandler, 2016; King et al., 2018) are two emerging themes that are critically important to the teaching of Youth of Color.

Racial Self-Awareness

Howard (2016) focuses on racial identity growth development and what teachers need to teach and work effectively with Students of Color. He explains that the work of becoming a skilled, culturally responsive teacher is a complex and difficult journey that requires teachers, especially White teachers, to engage in self-reflection of their White racial development in terms of White dominance, race, and racism. In his book, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know,* he presents a model of White racial identity that emphasizes the personal and professional growth process in racial awareness. The model describes three White identity orientations: fundamentalistic, integrationist, and transformationist. The fundamentalistic White identity refers to White people as “literal and linear thinkers regarding issues of race and Whiteness” (Howard, 2016, p. 106). Colorblindness and preservation of White hegemony characterize this orientation. Integrationist White identity orientation refers to White people as curious about their Whiteness and often demonstrating confusion and remaining ambivalent about their conclusions. Transformationist White people actively seek to understand cross-cultural and cross-racial points of view.

Rooted in his belief that educational equity and school reform depend largely on White educators' willingness to engage in the process of their own transformation and growth, Howard proposes a transformationist pedagogy for educators to teach Students of Color that incorporates three dimensions of knowing and action. The first dimension is knowing the current pedagogical practice, which entails the curriculum and pedagogical approaches. The second dimension is knowing oneself. This refers to teachers knowing their own racial identity and their privileges. The third dimension is knowing the students, their cultures, and their racial identities. He concluded that “when we fail to recognize the racialized nature of our identity as White people, we are ignoring the potential for race-based barriers between ourselves and our students and thereby contributing to the reproduction of racial inequalities in our schools” (Howard, 2016, p. 127). Howard’s work suggests the need for self-reflection about race privilege in educators and a commitment to learn the racial and cultural identities from the students when working with Students of Color.

Racial Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Racial literacy is a new area in the literature that emphasizes the need for educators to explicitly address race when teaching content knowledge. Chandler (2015) introduced the concept of racial pedagogical content knowledge (RPCK) in response to the White social studies curriculum in the US privileging White cultural and historical knowledge and the absence of stories and histories of Communities of Color. At its heart, racial pedagogical content knowledge is a conceptual understanding, a lens to instruction that places the tenets of critical race theory (CRT) at the center of the social studies curriculum. King and Chandler (2016) argue that current social studies education tries to present a neutral and non-racist perspective; however, curriculum that favors passive behaviors, discourses, and ideologies unintentionally produces outcomes that serve to reinforce White dominant narratives as a pedagogical mindset, reinforce racial structures, and accept racism by being silent about racial knowledge. Instead, they propose that social studies should promote a curriculum that explores anti-racism frameworks. The anti-racism approach rejects institutional and structural aspects of race and racism and calls for new policies in education that support explicit attention to anti-racism (Kendi, 2019).

Racial pedagogical content knowledge (RPCK) scholars call on teachers to have both their pedagogical content knowledge as well as a working knowledge of how race operates within the structures of social science and education from a critical race theory perspective. Racial pedagogical content knowledge researchers have found that the controversial topic of race can elicit fear, anger, and guilt in educators and cause them to avoid the topic (King & Chandler, 2016; King et al., 2018). King and Chandler (2016) explained that the lack of racial discourse in K-12 classrooms occurs not because teachers do not "know about race; rather it is the active disengagement with a racial knowledge that dominates the teaching space" (p. 10). In their view, the first step toward achieving racial literacy involves defining race and racism as social constructs. Racial literacy involves the ability to name a racial moment, do something about it, and leave with a greater understanding of the situation.

King et al. (2018) propose five steps to racial literacy: (1) understanding the intersections of power and race; (2) locating and analyzing racial systems; (3) gaining awareness of the vocabularies associated with racial discourse such as White supremacy, anti-Blackness, racialization, racial identity, and intersectionality; (4) learning to differentiate among terms such as ethnicity, nationality, discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping; (5) learning to "read, recast, and resolve racially stressful situations" (p. 318).

King et al. (2018) invite teachers to foster racial literacy skills in the classrooms and propose a Let's Act framework that includes setting up a safe environment to explore racialized issues by utilizing storytelling where students and teachers can share stories or autobiographies about race; engaging students in dialogue and deliberation of issues of race; and creating opportunities for Students of Color to take action.

The section has been driven by the overarching question of finding the pedagogies that work for Students of Color. Theorists of culturally responsive teaching have provided detailed explanations from research, theory, and practice on how to use the cultural knowledge of students to make learning more relevant to them. By using these methods, they encourage Students of Color to discover their ancestral knowledge to find their voices, and to analyze their own realities. Critical race pedagogy researchers have offered insights regarding what educators can do to address race and power in the education of Students of Color. Taken together, research findings from culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy show that both pedagogies form a strong foundation for understanding what pedagogies work for Students of

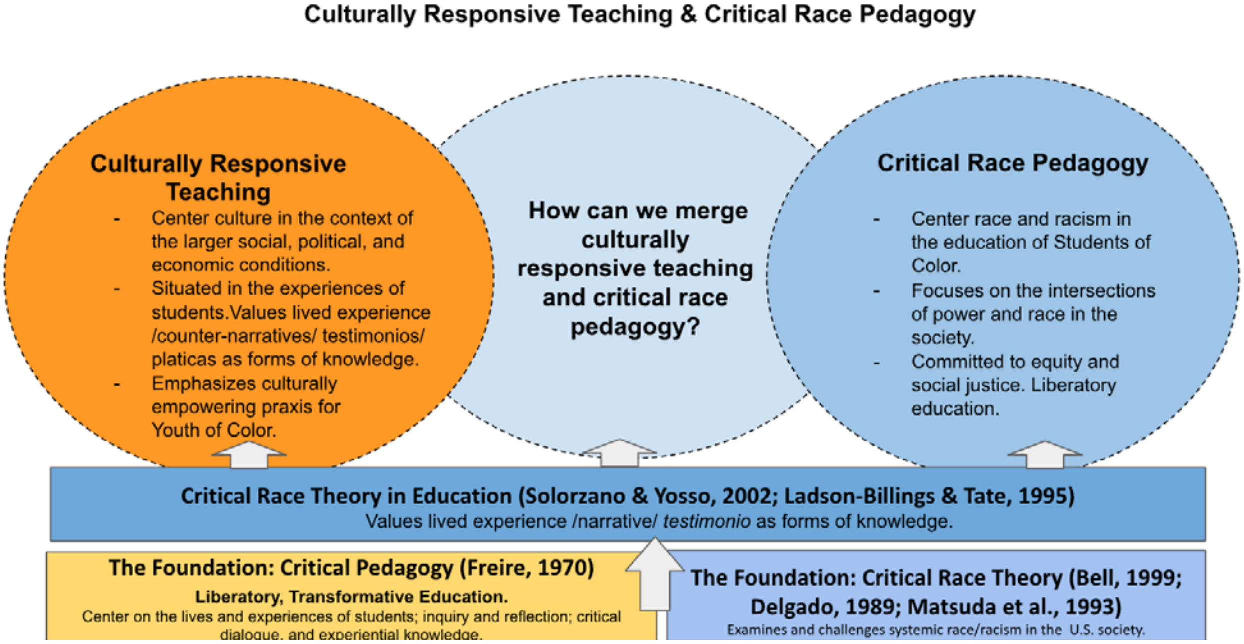
Color. However, the research literature does not yet provide a way to merge the contributions of culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy into practical applications for schools.

In seeking to understand how to apply the research findings of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and critical race pedagogy (CRP) in the Participatory Action Research project, I created Figure 3 to illustrate the foundation of both pedagogies and the critical concepts that differentiate them. Critical pedagogy's common roots provide both culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy scholars and practitioners similar epistemologies regarding critical dialogue, non-banking education, experiential knowledge, and emphasis on relationships. Critical race pedagogues differ from culturally responsive teaching pedagogues in their approach to issues of race and systemic oppression in the education of Students of Color. While critical race pedagogues directly address issues of power, race, and racism, culturally responsive educators mention race and oppression but do not necessarily offer how to teach them in the classrooms using critical race theory.

I argue that to better serve Students of Color, we as practitioners often need to make better decisions about how to apply the contributions of both pedagogies in our schools. These questions surfaced as a part of the literature review: How we merge culturally responsive teaching and critical race theory so that we can have practical applications in K-12 classrooms? What does it mean to create a critical pedagogy curriculum that goes beyond culturally responsive teaching to address race and power in schooling? How does the merging of culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy look in classrooms?

Chapter Summary

The narrative that the dominant racial group in society creates about Students of Color impacts the self-esteem, identity, and experiences for Youth of Color in the school system. The



Culturally Responsive Teaching & Critical Race Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Center culture in the context of the larger social, political, and economic conditions.
- Situated in the experiences of students. Values lived experience /counter-narratives/ testimonios/ platicas as forms of knowledge.
- Emphasizes culturally empowering praxis for Youth of Color.

How can we merge culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy?

Critical Race Pedagogy
- Center race and racism in the education of Students of Color.
- Focuses on the intersections of power and race in the society.
- Committed to equity and social justice. Liberatory education.

Critical Race Theory in Education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995)
Values lived experience /narrative/ *testimonio* as forms of knowledge.

The Foundation: Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970)
Liberatory, Transformative Education.
Center on the lives and experiences of students; inquiry and reflection; critical dialogue, and experiential knowledge.

The Foundation: Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1999; Delgado, 1989; Matsuda et al., 1993)
Examines and challenges systemic race/racism in the U.S. society.

Figure 3. Culturally responsive teaching and critical pedagogy.

Eurocentric U.S. curriculum and textbooks privilege White American values and purposefully ignore the stories of Communities of Color; and how Communities of Color counter the single narrative by engaging in counter-storytelling. Through sharing counter-stories, People of Color honor their own histories and experiences and, by doing so, they provide sources of knowledge that counter the majoritarian story that society holds of them. I presented the argument that oral storytelling is part of the cultures of Communities of Color. By telling their stories, People of Color create identity and knowledge. Finally, culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogy have been successful with Students of Color. These pedagogies, rooted in critical pedagogy, reject the single narratives of Youth of Color, dismiss the Eurocentric narratives often in place in classrooms, and build on the strengths, gifts, and stories of Students of Color.

The literature review presented in this chapter gives meaning and background to understand the PAR project's aim of bringing the counter-stories of students and their families into classrooms. Chapter Three is a description of the context of the study and the current situation at the school. Chapter Four presents the methodology for the PAR study in detail. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven describe the results of the three PAR cycles of inquiry in this study. Chapter Eight presents the findings and implications of the study.

CHAPTER THREE: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH SETTING

Prelude: You are Black like me, right? No, I am not Black. I am from Oakland.

James and John, 9-year-old twin brothers, third-grade students from Africa, were having an argument with two African American boys in the hallway of Rosa Parks Elementary School where I work as principal. The argument escalated into a physical altercation. James became upset and yelled at D'Angelo (an African American student), "Why are you calling me 'African scratch bootie'? You are black like me, right?" D'Angelo turned and charged at James, "I am not Black. I am from Oakland."

Teachers sent the students to my office, and I began the process of what we call "restorative practices." I asked the students to fill out the restorative practices reflection form. As I facilitated a restorative conversation between the students to reflect about their argument, I could feel the anger and disappointment in their voices. James was upset and could not participate in the process. He began to cry in anger and disbelief. While he was crying, he said "We look the same. We are Black."

James began talking to himself in Igbo, a language from Nigeria. He was rocking himself back and forth, crying and talking louder and louder. His language was home for him, a place of comfort. I could not understand what he was saying, but I could feel his disappointment and his disbelief. James immigrated from Nigeria four years ago when his mother died giving birth. D'Angelo is a 9-year-old African American boy who was born in Oakland, California, in the San Francisco Bay area and currently lives near Rosa Parks Elementary school. He was also crying. During the restorative process, he expressed that he felt insulted by James saying that he was "Black from Africa."

Although the skin color of D'Angelo and James look the same, their experiences have been vastly different. As a result, their understanding of their identities and how they fit into the school system varies greatly. As I facilitated the restorative practice process, different questions surfaced: What experiences had led D'Angelo to disregard/reject his roots? What did D'Angelo mean when he stated: “I am not Black. I am from Oakland”? My question became: What have we done at school to support our students to explore learning about who they are in their own ecologies (Gutiérrez, 2016a)? How have D'Angelo’s previous experiences at school and home enabled him to build his sense of self as an African American boy born in Oakland? What are we doing as a school to support immigrant students like James and John to reaffirm their cultures and identities? How do we nurture and develop the identities of the students at our school? The single narrative of Communities of Color is a persistent theme in U.S. schooling. Because most curricula and textbooks reflect the values of middle-class White America, Students of Color do not find their home culture and values represented in schools (Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2018; Jimenez, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Loewen, 1995). Communities of Color can engage in counter-storytelling by using stories of hope and aspirations to resist the single narrative. Counter-stories, often told outside of school, are an essential way that Communities of Color teach children about who they are and where they come from. The narratives inspire Youth of Color and their families and give them freedom in a society that insists on oppressing their voices.

In the Participatory Action Research (PAR) project and study, I sought to bring student voice into the curriculum. I argue that, as educators, it is our responsibility to create spaces to listen and honor the stories of the students like James, John, and D'Angelo who are sitting in our classrooms. I believe that it is our moral imperative to contest the negative stereotypes about Communities of Color that circulate in social media and television.

In the PAR project, I worked with a group of co-practitioner researchers (CPR) to explore how to bring the stories and histories of our Students of Color into the classrooms. We (the CPR group) co-designed a curriculum for critical storytelling with Youth of Color as a resistance pedagogy rooted in their historical and cultural communities and built on a foundation of critical pedagogy. In this chapter, I describe the context of the PAR project. In the first section of the chapter, I introduce the community, school district, and school where the PAR project took place. In the second section, I describe the four major groups of constituents: students, parents, teachers, and administrators who were part of the project. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the resources and challenges of the project and my role as researcher.

Rosa Parks Elementary School

I begin by looking at Rosa Parks' unique historical and social-political location at three levels: the macro, meso and micro. After an overview of the city history and policies toward Communities of Color, I present the history and demographics of the school district, followed by the demographics and resources of the school itself that inform the project.

Macro: A History of Exclusion

The Surfside area of California surrounding the San Francisco Bay historically has excluded Black families (Rothstein, 2017). Decision-makers in the Bohemian Unified School District established policies intended to exclude Families of Color. One policy in particular—red-lining—prevented People of Color from buying houses in certain neighborhoods. The practice resulted in the development of racially segregated neighborhoods with Families of Color restricted to specific areas of the community.

Bohemian Village was created in 1944 in response to the housing needs of White workers at naval shipyards, support factories, and the Ford Plant relocated in the nearby area of Bohemian. The state government used the Federal Housing Administration policy, which required that none of the houses be sold to African Americans. Bohemian Village became the nation's largest wartime government-insured project (Rothstein, 2017). According to Lacabe (2011), once the covenants were ruled unconstitutional by the Civil Rights Act in 1968, the White homeowners' association, the elected members of the Chamber of Commerce, and apartment owners agreed to prevent Black people from renting and buying property in Bohemian town in other ways. Realtors would not show houses to Black people, and owners would not sell to them.

In 1972, the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing called the Bohemian area a "racist bastion of White supremacy" (Copeland, 2014). The effects of the government policy of residential racial segregation of African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans has had lasting effects in the Rosa Parks community. Many families have vivid memories from their parents and relatives from the 1970s when the police stopped Black people on the street near the Bohemian village and arrested them if they got too close to the residential area. Even in 2020, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous families face unfair treatment when interacting with the Bohemian policy.

Bohemian has become more diverse as Families of Color have moved to the city; currently, 51% of the 23,452 residents are White, 43.3% Hispanic/Latinx, 23.5% Asian, 4.1% Black, 1.5%, American Indian, and 0.4% Native Hawaiian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Nonetheless, residential segregation persists in the city. Many Families of Color are concentrated in cluster areas of the city, east of the rail tracks and near the highway. The residential segregation “is not just a separation of particular groups of people from each other, but from opportunity and resources” (Menendian & Gambhir, 2018, p. 2). Appendix D is a county map of residential segregation where Bohemian City is located.

The residential segregation of the city illustrated in the map shows a concentration of Latinx and Black communities closest to the Ashley area of the city and a large concentration of Whites closer to Brennan road and Llano Grande. Thoughtful consideration of the history of residential segregation was fundamental for the research because it helped us to understand the actions, perceptions, and attitudes of the people living and working in Bohemian community. It provided lenses to understand the racial segregation of schools within the neighborhoods in the city. Next, I describe the meso level that includes the school district history and demographics.

Meso: Bohemian Unified School District

Established in 1859, the Bohemian Unified School District is one of the oldest operating school systems in the state of California. The district is comprised of parts of three cities in Doral County, California: Sunset, Bohemian, and Spring Valley. In 1970, the school district reached its peak size with 18,000 students and 28 schools. Currently, the school district serves approximately 10,500 students in 16 schools.

In the last 30 years, the city of Bohemian has become more diverse (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018; Urban Strategies Council, 2013), and the school district population has changed. Currently, Latinx students represent the largest group of students, comprising 56.3% of the total population, followed by Asian (14.5%), African American (10.7%), White (8.7%), and other ethnicities (2.7%). While the student population is rapidly changing in the school district, and White families are moving out of the town, the majority of the teaching staff, office managers, and district employees remain White.

The school district is small, and staff mobility is low. District employees and teaching staff have known each other for years. In some cases, whole families work for the school district in different capacities and departments. Because of this familial loyalty among employees and other factors that are still becoming clear, long-standing family and community ties influence departmental dynamics. Many district employees were or still are Bohemian residents and have witnessed the history of exclusion of Black and Latinx people. Unfortunately, these racialized experiences linger in the minds of many employees and have contributed to the creation of a deficit narrative about the students and families that the district serves.

For the last 10 years, school district leadership has recognized the disconnect between the district staff and local families and has engaged its district and site administrators in monthly professional development sessions to examine equity issues and their implications at school sites. However, the professional development has not yet been provided to the classroom teachers, office managers, or other support staff.

Micro: Rosa Parks Elementary School

Rosa Parks is one of the nine elementary schools in the Bohemian Unified School district. The school is located in an unincorporated area of Doral County in Sunset, California, and its neighborhood has been the city's largest African American community for the last 30 years. The neighborhood is racially segregated, and, despite the assets of our families and children, statistics often identify the neighborhood as a neighborhood with multiple issues. The area surrounding the school is considered a high violence zone (Urban Strategies Council, 2013). In response, the County Sheriff's headquarters was located a few blocks from the school. A large number of students and families have been victims of trauma, deportation, gang rivalry, and substance abuse. Yet, despite the difficult conditions, many of our students come to school every day ready to learn and play (85% of the students show satisfactory attendance).

Rosa Parks is racially diverse. The majority of the families whose children attend identify as People of Color. The school serves families who immigrated from at least ten different countries: Ghana, Afghanistan, Yemen, India, China, Ethiopia, Mexico, Peru, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Nearly half (48%) of students speak languages other than English at home. Table 2 illustrates the school demographics.

The school serves the city's poorest students, including the families-in-transition population (2.9% of the families are considered families in transition or homeless, and 0.2% are foster youth). Because Rosa Parks has a large concentration of low-income families, the school qualifies as a "Title I school." Title I schools receive supplemental funding from the federal government to address the needs of low-income students with the aim of improving educational outcomes. Most students (85%) qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. Many of Rosa Parks families receive housing assistance support and food stamps.

The school has been the recipient of much needed financial aid through welfare policies, including compensatory education, Title I (low performing students), Title III (supports for English Language Learners), and School Improvement grants (NCLB and Local Control Accountability Programs (LCAP). However, the educational outcomes for Students of Color have remained almost the same for years (see Appendix C). Despite the federal programs, the effects of poverty and the attitudes that were shaped under racist policies continue to outweigh any reform efforts in our schools.

Many students attending the school live in the neighborhood in single or multi-family homes and several federally funded apartment buildings. The closest supermarket is

Table 2

Rosa Parks Elementary School Demographics

School Demographics	Percentage of Students
Student Population	
Socioeconomically disadvantaged Free and Reduced Lunch	85%
Special Education	8.9%
English Learners	48.9%
Students Racial Breakdown	
Latinx	55.3%
Black/African American	25%
White	4.2%
Asian	2.4%
Pacific Islander	2.4%
Two or more races	5.3%
Teachers Racial Breakdown	
Latinx	25%
Black/African American	5%
White	65%
Asian	5%

Note. Source: [1]California Department of Education 2017; [2]Collected directly from school staff.

approximately 1.5 miles from the school as is Rich Ashley Youth Center, which helps residents access community resources. A non-profit organization called Timoteo Velasquez provides a range of health services. Village Connect, a local community-based organization, provides mentoring services for Black families and their children. A Chinese Christian church with its own private school is located near the school. The closest recreational areas for children to play are approximately four miles away from the community.

In this section, I outlined the historical and political context of the community where this PAR project took place. I presented the argument that historical oppressive policies and practices of racial segregation in the district in which the school is situated have had an impact on residential and school segregation. The segregation is not just racial isolation of people from each other but represents diminished resources and opportunities for Communities of Color. Finally, I described the demographics and resources at the school level. Next, I detail the demographics and cultural characteristics of the four major groups who are part of the school and the PAR project: students, parents, teachers and administrators.

Rosa Parks Community: People

The people of the Rosa Parks community are the major strength of the school and PAR project. In general, the majority of all constituents are committed to the school's vision and work to make the school a positive place for children and parents. Yet, cultural divides impact communication among constituencies. In this section, I describe the demographics and cultural characteristics of the four major groups of people: students, parents, teachers and administrators. I introduce the co-practitioner researcher group of the PAR project.

Students

Fifth-grade students range in age from 10 to 12. Over 85% of the fifth-grade students have been in the school since kindergarten, which provides welcome continuity. A group of 10 students have been with the same teacher for fourth and fifth grades as they currently are in a combination fourth- and fifth-grade class. The fact that half the students speak other languages at home is an asset for the PAR project.

Parents

The diversity of the parent community is another major asset of the school. As illustrated in Table 2, over 95% of the school are Students of Color. Most parents attend school-wide events such as back-to-school night, parent-teacher conferences, and classroom celebrations. Grandparents have a strong presence at school as many bring their grandchildren to school each day. There is a small group of energetic parents who are now involved in school governance meetings such as those of the Parent-Teacher Association, the School Site Council (school site plan decision-making committee) or the English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) that oversees programs for English language learners.

Many parents are English Language Learners (ELL), 40% of whom speak only their home language (40%). A large number of families speak Spanish (35%), followed by Arabic (5.3%) and Chinese (1.5%). Unsurprisingly, during parent meetings or school events, parents tend to socialize with parents who speak their home language. At times, the practice of choosing language affinity groups creates a communication divide among monolingual parents (English-only, Spanish-, Arabic- or Chinese-only). Although the school provides translation services during school events, translation alone is not enough to build community among linguistically diverse monolingual parents and monolingual teachers.

Teachers

Most of the school's 25 teachers are White (63.7%), followed by Latinx (25%). Only one teacher identifies as Asian. All teaching staff at the school identify as female and heterosexual. Faculty members range in age from late 20s to early 60s. Teachers tend to stay at the school for several years, and some have remained for more than 25 years. Generally, teachers commute to the school from surrounding East Bay cities such as San Mateo, Foster City, Oakland, and Berkeley. Only three teachers live in the Bohemian community.

A group of dedicated teachers often work and plan in their classrooms after hours. Although the school provides common planning time each Wednesday, teachers find themselves working longer hours to prepare for their lessons. Teachers have expressed that they feel supported by their colleagues and that there is a family atmosphere among the teaching staff since they have worked together for so long (M. Machado, reflective memo, August 27, 2019).

Administrators

For the purpose of the PAR project and study, I included the literacy coach and the counselor in the administrator category because they both are involved in planning and decision-making that impact students. The literacy coach and I met weekly to plan school-wide professional development regarding the implementation of the adopted curriculum, to organize coaching or demonstration lessons for staff, and to schedule literacy intervention for students. The counselor and I held weekly collaboration meetings with the support staff to address the school climate and the social and emotional learning of the students.

Racially, the literacy coach identifies as White, the counselor identifies as Black, and I identify as multiracial Latinx-Black. I am the only bilingual member of the group. As a group, we communicate well and share the same vision for student success. Although we hold separate meetings for literacy/instruction and school climate, we meet together when planning professional development on equity issues for teachers. Decisions within this group are shared with different leadership committees such as the Instructional Leadership team, the School Climate Team, and the School Operations Team.

Co-Practitioner Research Group

The co-participant researcher (CPR) group in the PAR project includes three 5th-grade classroom teachers, one counselor, one parent, and one member from a community-based organization. I sought to include one parent from the Black community and one from the Latinx community. However, several Black parents whom I approached about the project were unable to join the CPR group because the meetings happened during regular school hours when they were working. I invited a representative from a local community-based organization whose primary goal is to mentor Black students to succeed in schools.

Jessica has been at the school for 14 years, most of that time as an upper grade classroom teacher. She teaches a combination 4th/5th-grade classroom. Born and raised in Bohemian, she attended the public schools in the district as a student and did her student teaching training at Rosa Parks Elementary. After she graduated from the university, she decided that she wanted to be part of the Rosa Parks team, but there were no positions available at the time. She accepted a job at a different school in the district and taught in a lower grade classroom for a semester after which she joined Rosa Parks. Jessica has been an active member of the school's leadership team and represents the school at the district technology meetings. She believes in supporting students by providing a caring, rigorous, and engaging environment. Jessica identifies as a White, cisgender woman.

Alaina began her teaching career at Rosa Parks and has been teaching for 12 years, mostly as a fifth-grade teacher. Born and raised in Orinda, California, she identifies as a multiracial Asian and White, cisgender woman. She is an active member of the school climate team and serves as the Restorative Practices coordinator for the school. For the last three years, she has been a teacher leader in implementing circles and restorative practices in the classrooms and has modeled lessons for staff members during professional development meetings.

Adele is the newest member of the fifth-grade team. She moved from Los Angeles to attend college in northwest California. After finishing her credential program, she joined the Rosa Parks community. She has been teaching for 5 years, four of them as a fifth-grade teacher. She is an active member of the instructional leadership team and represents the school on the science district leadership team. Adele co-created a teacher-led professional learning community for all Rosa Parks staff that examined balanced-literacy practices. She believes in the concept of collectivism over individualism and teaches her students the importance of being a community of learners. Adele identifies as a White, cisgender woman.

Niajalah, the school counselor, was a teacher for 15 years before becoming a counselor. She joined the Rosa Parks community in 2010 and worked five years as a fifth-grade teacher before moving into her current position. She stated that she joined the Rosa Parks community when a counselor at her previous school called and said, “Niajalah, you have to come to this school. Our Black babies need people like you and me. They need people who look like them and love them” (M. Machado, reflective memo, September 15, 2019). She decided to visit the school and fell in love with the students. Niajalah is largely responsible for the robust counseling program and the wellness practices at the school and is responsible for providing direct services to students. Niajalah believes that relationships are essential in education and that the stronger the relationship is between the student and the teacher, the more likely it is that students get “on board.” Niajalah identifies as a Black, cisgender woman.

Esmeralda is a parent from the fifth-grade group. Born and raised in Mexico, she moved to California 10 years ago. She joined the Rosa Parks community in 2017. Her son Alex is in the fifth-grade classroom, and her daughter Alondra is entering the fourth grade. She volunteers at the local Catholic church. Esmeralda believes that education starts at home. She shared that her parents instilled in her values and good manners. Esmeralda's cultural knowledge is an asset for the school and this PAR project. Esmeralda identifies as a Latinx, cisgender woman.

Remy works for a CBO that mentors Black youth in the community. He moved to California from Louisiana to attend school and engage in community leadership work. He shared that the leader of the CBO that he works for saw in him a leader even when he couldn't see it himself. The leadership opportunity that the CBO offered to him changed his life. In his work with Black youth, he teaches Black males to be proud of their roots and their racial identity. He believes that we all have a story to tell and that we can rewrite and shape our narratives. He stated, "Your thoughts create your actions, your actions change your lifestyle, and your lifestyle creates your legacy" (M. Machado, reflective memo, September 15, 2019). He works with Black youth from different schools in the district where he provides mentoring support at school and over the weekends. He is currently writing a book of poetry. Remy identifies as a Black cisgender man.

In this section, I described the demographics and cultural characteristics of the four major groups of people who are part of the school and this PAR project: students, parents, teachers, and administrators. I introduced the co-practitioner researcher group as the direct collaborators of this project. I emphasized that the people are one of the major assets of the school and this PAR project; their rich and robust stories of their lived experiences are invaluable sources for this project. In the next section, I will detail the role of the researcher.

Role of Researcher

For the participatory action research (PAR) project, I adopted a facilitator role. Inspired by Freire (1970), my role was to facilitate reflective dialogue among the co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group. Through dialogue and reflection, we identified actions to take in each of the cycles of inquiry of the PAR project. For the PAR project to be successful, we worked to counteract the typical "banking" method of education that considers individuals as empty receptacles of knowledge. Instead, the PAR project must be collaborative and co-generated by the co-researcher group who are the people closest to the situation (Guajardo et al., 2016). One of my key goals in the PAR project was to learn to facilitate a process with a diverse group of people (teachers, parents, community-based organization leaders) in which the work is co-generated with the group and not imposed on the group or dominated by me as the primary driver. I envisioned creating a safe place to share individual and community stories, a place that fosters conversations, dialogue, and creativity, and a place where all participants feel that they have something to contribute to the PAR project.

Inspired by critical race scholars, I sought to engage in counter-storytelling with the CPR group and to create spaces to share our stories with each other within the CPR group and with parents and students (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Pérez Huber, 2009). For critical race scholars, experiential knowledge is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding the lived experiences of Youth of Color. In the PAR project, counter-storytelling and *testimonios* allowed the CPR group to draw from the forms of knowledge we have gained from our personal, academic, and/or professional experiences navigating within and outside the U.S. educational system. We aimed to use experiential knowledge during all stages of the PAR project. Next, I use counter-storytelling to share my leadership journey, which includes the role of storytelling in my family of origin and my leadership development.

Leadership Journey

My personal journey has helped me understand how counter-storytelling played a vital role in shaping my identity. I take to heart the Guajardo et al. (2016) approach of ecologies of knowing that include knowledge of self, organization (school), and community. I needed to understand myself first and then to understand my work in the organization in which I work. I used the ideas of Delgado Bernal (1998) regarding the use of cultural intuition: Our experiential knowledge is legitimate and can be brought to the research through our cultural intuition. In doing so, I inserted my cultural wealth as sources of knowledge in the PAR project. I begin this section with a description from my counter-storytelling and then described my leadership journey as a professional.

Family Counter-Storytelling

Knowing our roots helps to develop a strong sense of identity and purpose in life. Stories told in my house when I was growing up gave me the *Fortaleza*—strength and fortitude—to keep going when people around me did not believe in my abilities. I grew up in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Caracas, Venezuela, just 20 minutes by bus from downtown and close to the most important government building, the office of the president. My neighborhood was poor and plagued with substance abuse and crime. As a child I recall my mother, a single parent, working hard in a factory to raise her three kids. From the apartment building that we lived in, we could hear gunshots at night. Yet, despite our living conditions, family stories helped us to cope and be resilient.

As a child, my mom and auntie told me stories about their experiences and how they wanted a better future for their kids. For years, stories of resilience filled the space in my house after dinner time. My mom used to tell stories about her childhood in the late 1950s and how she walked one and a half hours every day to school. Those stories inspired me to dream and believe in the possibilities of a better life through education. Only recently did I realize that those stories helped me to create a strong sense of identity and purpose in my life.

Leadership Story

I am a former special education teacher and a former principal of a Spanish Immersion School. After 17 years working in Surfside Unified School District, I decided to work closer to where I live in Sunset. In 2016, I began working at Rosa Parks Elementary School in the Bohemian Unified School District. I am the first Latinx/Black woman, born and raised in a Latin American country, to lead a predominantly White staff in a district led by White administrators. All former principals at Rosa Parks were White women who grew professionally within the district and took leadership roles after serving the district as teachers.

In my first 2 months at the new school, I was appalled to learn that sending students to the office for minor infractions was the norm. Black students every day wasted their time sitting in my office as a matter of routine. I began to ask myself, where do we begin? How can I support the staff to begin acknowledging what seemed to me obvious, that these practices replicate a system of oppression of Black communities? How can I support staff to reflect on their implicit biases?

I decided to begin my leadership inquiry at my current site by revisiting my beliefs. My role as the instructional leader is to support the staff to challenge their assumptions. I know that challenging normalized behaviors would be uncomfortable for our predominantly White teaching staff and that I needed to explore deeply why I hesitated to address equity issues at my site and their implications for the community explicitly. I that believe it is not just my willingness, persistence, and passion, but more importantly the willingness and persistence of our White staff members to challenge their assumptions and open themselves to learning about their students. Challenging our implicit biases takes commitment and hard work.

The project was born from my interest in creating strength-based learning environments for Students of Color and their families. I engaged with a CPR group to co-design a critical pedagogy of storytelling that values where the students are coming from and supports them to find their inner strength, their *fortalezas*. I believe that if we know who our students and families are and where they came from, we will be better equipped to engage in learning from each other. I believe that a strong sense of identity is vital to challenge the stereotypes that impact Communities of Color.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the historical and political context that influences this PAR project. I presented the argument that historical, oppressive policies and practices of racial segregation in the district in which the school is situated have had an impact not only in the residential segregation of the city but in the segregation of the schools. I then described the diversity of the people of the Rosa Parks community as one of the major strengths of the school and this PAR project. I emphasized that the rich and robust stories of the Rosa Parks families of their lived experience are invaluable sources for this project. Finally, I shared my role as a researcher and my own leadership story. Drawing from my personal experience, I highlighted that counter-storytelling was essential for my family to teach us how to navigate hostile environments and be resilient.

Understanding the historical practices surrounding the Rosa Parks community as well as the seeds of hope that come from counter-storytelling in Communities of Color are critical for the PAR project. I aimed to encourage teachers and support staff to learn from the counter-stories of their students to shift our perceptions of Students of Color, their families, and their cultures from a deficit view to an asset-based view. I believe that only through a careful consideration of Rosa Parks's history and its staff's implicit biases about Communities of Color can we enact a theory of action to make changes in the school practices and transform them into a school community where students like James, John, and D'Angelo thrive.

The next chapter describes the proposed methodology for the project. I outline the steps that the CPR and I undertook to bring the voices and stories of our Students of Color into the curriculum.

CHAPTER FOUR: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A key issue in the education of Youth of Color is that teachers perceive them through the lens of the single narrative of Students of Color and teach them accordingly (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2009). To counteract the implicit and often unconscious bias, Communities of Color can engage in counter-storytelling to challenge the single narrative. These counter-narratives emphasize their hopes and aspirations for their children. We typically do not share counter-stories in schools or in popular media, and they are not known in schools. However, they are present in families and neighborhoods. These narratives can “inspire children and elders and move communities that have been mired in social and economic degradation toward a new and more enlightened existence” (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 15).

In the participatory action research (PAR) project, I sought to work with a group of co-practitioner researchers (CPR) to bring student voice into the curriculum because the voices of those most oppressed in society are essential to creating a new narrative of Students of Color in school communities (Delgado, 1989; Delgado Bernal et al., 2016; Solórzano &Yosso, 2002). I engaged teachers, families, and students in the process of uncovering their histories and stories. Our intention was to develop a curriculum of critical storytelling with Youth of Color as a resistance pedagogy rooted in historical and cultural communities and built on a foundation of critical pedagogy.

In this chapter, I outline the PAR methodology, how I chose the participants for the study including the Co-Participant Researchers (CPR), and the qualitative methods I used to answer the research questions. I then outline the three cycles of inquiry, data collection tools, methods, and processes for data analysis. Finally, I discuss my role, ethical considerations, and study limitations.

Research Design

The project draws from the contributions of critical race methodology, participatory action and activist research, and community learning exchanges (CLEs). I used qualitative methods to collect and code the data related to the teachers' understandings of the assets of Students of Color and changes in teacher practices. These data included: analyzing teacher-participant interviews, examining the process of our work as a CPR such as looking at artifacts produced during the CLEs, reflective memos of the CPR team, and analyzing the stories created during the implementation of the critical pedagogy of storytelling. We strove to make the CPR team meetings a safe place to share individual and community stories; a place that fostered conversations, dialogue, and creativity; and a place where all participants felt that they had something to contribute to the PAR project.

Methodologies

The choice of methodology needed to match the intended outcome of the project, which was equity for the voices of our students as an intrinsic part of the curriculum and instruction. To the more traditional action research process of engaging participants and myself as an observer participating in cycles of inquiry (Bryk et al., 2015; Herr & Anderson, 2014), I added activist participatory action research in which the researchers are dedicated to changing the way people work as social justice advocates. The methodological choice influenced the ways we collected, analyzed, and shared data (hunter et al., 2013). The central validity standard of activist research is its usefulness to the participants (Hale, 2017).

Three methodological approaches that respond to these requirements of participatory action research are critical race methodology, participatory action research from an activist perspective, and community learning exchange as both a process and methodology.

Critical Race Methodology

Critical race methodology explicitly forefronts issues of race in the research project by (1) focusing "on the racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of Students of Color and view[ing] these experiences as sources of strength" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 24); (2) encouraging the use of cultural intuition in the analysis of data; and (3) using storytelling to share research results. By using critical race theory (CRT), education researchers seek to examine and challenge the ways race and racism shape schooling structures, discourses, and practices (Yosso, 2006). CRT scholars bring attention to the stories of those who courageously resist racism and use counter-stories to document the persistence of racism from "the perspectives of those injured and victimized by its legacy" (Yosso, 2006). This type of investigation recognizes experiential knowledge as legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding the lived experiences of Youth of Color. Therefore, critical race researchers use storytelling and *testimonios* as the method to draw upon this experiential knowledge of the Communities of Color (Delgado Bernal et al., 2016; Prieto & Villenas, 2016; Yosso, 2006). The PAR project's use of storytelling as a critical pedagogy to bring the voices of our students into our classrooms is similar to the methodology outlined by Freire (1970) of listening to people in communities and using their stories to develop generative themes.

"Cultural intuition allows [co-practitioner researchers and participants] to theorize and construct knowledge from their own lived experiences" (Pérez Huber, 2009, p. 648), similar to the way that Gutiérrez (2016b) uses an intentional socio-cultural lens to listen to the stories of communities. In the PAR project, I relied on cultural intuition to provide a lens—a perspective from my own experiences as a member of Communities of Color—through which to analyze the stories, and I used a critical race lens in all aspects of the research project as we co-designed the curriculum and pedagogy. These lenses influenced how we were able to understand the realities that our Students of Color shared in their stories.

Finally, critical race methodology allows the researcher to share findings from the study in the form of storytelling. This was important to me to consider as a way to share stories because Communities of Color have used stories for generations to share their experiential knowledge. Therefore, the findings of the PAR project validated and elevated the status of these stories and enabled the CPR group to begin to write a counter-story of hope for our Students of Color.

Participatory Activist Research (PA^{1}R)

The participatory action research methodology that I use is termed PA^{1}R (hunter et al., 2013) because it employs an explicit focus on social change and has a community orientation. Through building relationships, hunter et al. (2013) that we can "respond to place-based problems through processes of collective learning and community capacity building" (p. 26). This type of research, where inquiry leads to action, has its foundations in the work of Paulo Freire (generative themes), Jurgen Habermas (social theory) and Stephen Kemmis (study of practice)— (as cited in Creswell & Guetterman, 2018). Participatory action researchers study social problems that constrain or repress the lives of oppressed populations (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018). By adding the activist element to the action research methodology, we were better able to collaborate with others, engage in dialogue to understand reality, and bring history and reflection to the research process with the goal of enacting change in our communities.

During the PAR project at an elementary school in northern California, the CPR group co-constructed a critical pedagogy for storytelling in the fifth-grade classrooms, and as the lead researcher I relied on the critical race theory lens. The group supported each other in addressing the need to bring the voices of students into the curriculum and provided opportunities to reflect upon our successes and challenges in creating a critical pedagogy that is strength-based and that embraces the idea of Students of Color as creators of knowledge. While we know that this type of action research is “messy, iterative, and generative…[it is] constantly being made and remade in specific place-based contexts” (hunter et al., 2013, p. 26). The PAR project in its PA^{1}R form relied on beliefs in critical pedagogy that critical inquiry generates action and transformation.

Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs)

The CLE offers both a set of processes designed to bring together people with diverse assets, strengths, concerns, and needs and a methodology for studying what happens when they do (Guajardo et al., 2016). By using CLEs, we highlight the value of relationships and human assets, which are foundational to work in schools. CLE pedagogies are built on the following five axioms: (1) leadership and learning are dynamic social processes; (2) conversations are critical and central pedagogical processes; (3) the people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns; (4) crossing boundaries enriches the development and educational process; and (5) hope and change are built on assets and dreams of local people and their communities. In the PAR project, we used CLE processes as a methodology during the three cycles of inquiry as we collected artifacts and coded them.

Research Questions

The PAR project and study aimed to answer one overarching question: How can schools use an asset frame that celebrates the backgrounds and histories of Students of Color to counteract deficit narratives and build trust between educators and Families of Color? A set of sub-questions aligned with the theory of action (see Chapter One) guided the work:

1. To what extent can a CPR team co-generate an asset-based curriculum of critical storytelling that validates student identity and history?
2. To what extent do school educators transform their practices to incorporate storytelling due to their participation in this project?
3. To what extent do teachers shift their perceptions of Students of Color as a result of engagement in this work?
4. How does my engagement in the PAR project transform my leadership practices?

Co-Participant Researchers and Study Participants

As Paulo Freire (1970) says in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* "I cannot think for others or without others, nor can others think for me … [I]t is only as they rethink their assumptions in action that they can change" (p. 108). I constructed the research study based on this idea, which is supported by Guajardo et al.'s (2016) axiom that "people closest to the issue are in the best position to solve it" (p. 25). Thus, we actively engaged the students and families in the implementation. We iteratively examined evidence from the project implementation to see how the engagement of the people— whose work was the focus of our intervention was essential to introducing new practices in our school (Bryk et al., 2015). Mintrop (2016) said that improvement design in schools "should be co-designed projects in which interventions are not done to people but done with people" (p. 13). To that end, I simultaneously brought forward the voices from parents, teachers, a school counselor, students, and one community-based organization and engaged them actively in the research process.

The co-practitioner researcher (CPR) team included three 5th-grade teachers, one school counselor, one parent, one community-based organization leader, and me as a veteran school leader. I invited a representative from a local community-based organization whose primary goal is to mentor Black students. I completed the IRB approval for the study, and all co-practitioner researchers signed consent forms with the proviso that they could decide to stop participation without penalty. The choice of participants followed a purposeful sampling method in which I selected individuals or groups of individuals who were especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

In the PAR study, I served as the co-practitioner research, co-participant, and co-observer. I acted as an insider working with other insiders (Herr & Anderson, 2014). As an insider, in my role as principal of the school and as a woman of color, I needed to be mindful of how I could reduce the influence of my position as a supervisor in the decision-making process of the group. To accomplish this goal, I used the CLE pedagogies during the three cycles of the PAR project. In providing an overview of the three cycles of inquiry, I present the timeline for implementation of the project and evidence collection from the implementation activities.

Cycles of Inquiry

A principle of action research is that to bring about change in the way schools work, practitioners need to approach the task as an inquiry process to learn what enacting a new practice will require (Bryk et al., 2015). For the PAR project, I engaged with the CPR group in three cycles of inquiry of planning a change, implementing the idea to bring the voices of Students of Color into the curriculum, and reflecting on the process at the end of each cycle to review and refine plans for the next cycle.

In PAR methodology, researchers collaborate with others to investigate their own practices (Herr & Anderson, 2014). The process is reflexive and requires multiple cycles of inquiry as researchers need time to plan, act, and reflect on the evolution in their own practices. The timeline was based on the improvement sciences Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) inquiry cycle.

The CPR group engaged in three cycles of inquiry in which we gathered data from reflections and actions taken to bring the voices of our Students of Color into the curriculum. Each cycle built on what we learned from prior cycles (Bryk et al., 2015) through the use of pragmatic evidence that gave us what is termed “street data” to make decisions (Cobb et al., 2018; Safir, 2017). In the PAR project, the CPR group reflected on the curriculum planning process and curriculum implementation and made informed decisions about how to modify or adjust subsequent actions. Next, I describe the three cycles of inquiry.

The first of the PDSA cycles was a pre-cycle designed to provide opportunities for the co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group to get to know each other and develop a common understanding of the evolving research. I engaged the CPR team in exploring the focus of practice. We used a fishbone diagram (Bryk et al., 2015) to assist us in identifying the key factors at play in addressing the challenge of bringing the voices of Students of Color into the curriculum.

In PAR Cycle One, we established the CPR group to include three teachers, one counselor, one parent, a community member, and myself. Our first task was to implement a Families of Color Community Learning Exchange (CLE) in which families shared stories to teach others about their histories. The CPR group designed the CLE agenda to highlight families’ counter-stories of hope, their strengths, and their aspirations. We decided that teachers in the CPR group would not facilitate the CLE so that they could concentrate fully on the families’ stories.

In PAR Cycle Two, the CPR group engaged in reflective dialogue to co-analyze the learning from the family stories and then used the stories to design the storytelling curriculum for the fifth-grade students. I presented preliminary categories that emerged from the evidence collected in PAR Cycle One to the CPR group to member check if the categories seemed accurate (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). CPR members reviewed them and shared insights about what they learned from the stories. We combined those insights with what we learned from teachers and community members as well as a literature review of storytelling projects. Teachers piloted one unit of the storytelling curriculum in the virtual fifth-grade classrooms in PAR Cycle Two (Spring 2020). In PAR Cycle Three (Fall 2020), the CPR group built on that experience, and teachers implemented the storytelling curriculum in the new fifth-grade virtual classrooms. Students interviewed their parents and grandparents to write “I Am Coming From" poems, narratives of their own stories.

The members of the CPR group then engaged in a process of reflective dialogue about the implications of the PAR project on ourselves. Some questions for CPR members were: Are we continuing to do storytelling in the classrooms? How does that change the way that we think about teaching and learning? How has participation in this PAR project changed our practice?

Data Collection and Analysis

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), action researchers conduct research in a natural setting and collect qualitative data from multiple sources. In addition, the qualitative researcher engages in self-reflection/reflexivity and includes comments about their role, biases, values, and personal background—areas that “shape their interpretation formed during the study” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 183). In the PAR project, I observed and documented the inquiry process and reflected on my role as an insider working with other insiders.

Data Collection

Qualitative researchers also may collect data to gain a better understanding of the process of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The action research process is itself a social and educational process (Kemmis et al., 2014), in which people in collaboration with others try to understand how to change their own practices. The qualitative data that we collected was consistent with the research questions in terms of primary and secondary data sources and is listed in Table 3. The sources of data for the PAR project included CPR meeting agendas and notes, CLE artifacts, documents observations, memos, interviews, and focus groups.

Throughout the PAR project and study, I collected CPR meeting agendas and notes from the monthly CPR meetings. As the school leader, I co-constructed the agenda with the CPR team, took the notes, and conducted member checks on the analysis. The CPR group also gathered artifacts from the CLE meeting with families. The artifacts from the CLEs helped us to shape the curriculum innovation. CLE artifacts included drawings, stories, journey lines, and other artifacts created by participants. During the project, I collected CPR group members' journey lines, written poems, and digital stories. In addition, we used lesson plans as a data source. At the CPR meetings, we developed lesson plans using a shared Google document. We collaborated to create the lessons for the storytelling, and I collected information from these documents on how the plans incorporated student voice. I conducted formal and informal classroom observations to see the results firsthand (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For the PAR project, I listened deeply and kept notes to document formal and informal meetings that I observed and held with the teachers, the school counselor, and parents.

I found memos essential to the PAR project as they represent the importance of *praxis* or reflect in order to act in ways that interrogate and transform schooling (Freire, 1970). As Guajardo et al. (2016) emphasize, taking time to reflect on the process and lessons learned is important when working in schools and doing community work. For the PAR project, I wrote analytic memos using a first-person perspective to document my reflections about the process of

Table 3

Research Questions and Data Sources

Research Question (sub-question)	Data Source (Metrics)	Triangulated With
How can schools use an asset frame that celebrates the backgrounds and histories of Students of Color to counteract deficit narratives and build trust between educators and Families of Color?		
To what extent can a CPR team co-generate an asset-based curriculum of critical storytelling that validates student identity and history?	• CPR meeting agendas • CPR meeting notes • Observations • Unit plans	• Memos • Journey lines
To what extent do school educators transform their practices to incorporate storytelling due to their participation in this project?	• CPR meeting notes • Observations • Implementation of units	• Memos • Focus group interviews
To what extent do teachers shift their perceptions of Students of Color as a result of the engagement in this work?	• CLE artifacts • Observations • CPR meeting notes • CPR group artifacts	• Memos • Journey lines • Focus group interviews
How does engagement in this work transform my own leadership practices?	• Practitioner researcher observations • CPR meeting notes	• Analytic Memos • Journey lines

generating a strength-based curriculum and its impact on the CPR participants and the students. I collected memos during the three cycles of inquiry as well as the pre-cycle of the PAR project.

At the end of PAR Cycle Two, I conducted a focus group debrief with teachers and the CPR group to reflect on the impact of the project on their experiences at the school. The interviews were audio recorded and stored digitally in my secure Dropbox. As Patton (1990) notes, "The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in someone else's mind. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Thus, while these were termed "interviews," I used a dialogical process that corresponded to Freire's concept that we are simultaneously teachers and students, students and teachers.

Data Analysis

Action researchers analyze qualitative data in an iterative process that requires multiple steps at the same time as they are implementing other changes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the PAR project, I collaborated with the CPR group to analyze our work throughout the entire process. We examined the process that the CPR group undertook as we designed, piloted, and implemented the critical pedagogy of storytelling and the impact of the process on the group. After I coded the qualitative data, we looked for general patterns and themes (Saldaña, 2016). I used an open coding technique (Saldaña, 2016) in which I read the documents collected, the interview transcripts, artifacts, and memos and identified emerging codes. I then highlighted the data to note repetitive patterns and clustered the codes for each research question. Then, I arranged those patterns into emerging categories and preliminary themes. In Freire's (1970) words, we looked for the "generative themes" through praxis, self-reflection, and action, which occurs only when people engage in dialogue and reflect critically about their findings. I conducted member checks with the CPR team at the conclusion of each cycle. Member checking allows the researcher to check the accuracy of findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

At the end of PAR Cycles One, Two, and Three, the CPR group collected and analyzed the CLE artifacts— stories from the families—and stories from the students to reflect on "the general ideas that the participants are saying" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 192). In each cycle, we used the open coding technique in which each teacher read three or four stories from their students, and then the CPR group looked for statements that represented student identities; we used the data to create preliminary codes (Saldaña, 2016). The coding process encompassed the following sequence: from codes to categories to pattern identification to themes. Then, I triangulated the themes by comparing what we learned from listening to family and students' stories with themes that arose from focus group interviews and CPR members' journey lines. We used the most common themes and patterns to create the emergent themes, which informed the next cycle of inquiry. At the end of PAR Cycle Three, we identified the study findings and made claims in response to the research questions.

Role of Researcher

Action and reflection occur simultaneously (Freire, 1970). Participatory action researchers, especially those who put themselves in the activist camp of action research, engage in critical reflection about the lessons learned from their inquiries (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; hunter et al., 2013). In the PAR project, I continuously reflected upon how my positionality as an insider working with other insiders informed the project. I was a co-practitioner insider researcher because I work in the school where this project took place. In addition, I am an insider in Communities of Color. In the PAR study, I drew from my cultural intuitions (Pérez-Huber,

2010) and my tacit and felt knowledge in interpreting the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I continually wrote reflective and analytic memos from the beginning to the end of the project. As co-practitioner researchers, we engaged in reflection at the end of each CPR meeting. As Guajardo et al. (2016) indicate, “Reflection must be intentional, and it must be understood as not only a summative or evaluative strategy but also a critical element of understanding, listening, and learning” (p. 82).

Study Limitations

Qualitative researchers consider the issues involved in collecting and analyzing data and purposefully incorporate validity procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Indicators of trustworthiness include establishing credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the PAR project, we addressed the construct validity and credibility by the multiple sources of evidenced collected, by a prolonged engagement in the field, through the analysis of patterns in the data, and through member checks of findings. The PAR study took place in three cycles of inquiries over 18 months. The extended time provided an opportunity to collect detailed data, analyze it with the CPR team, adjust it, and write a narrative account that reflects our understanding of the FoP and research questions. The classroom teachers collected the stories from the students, and I collected most of the data from the CPR team meetings, CLEs, and observations. Thus, not all of the data collected was processed as a team. Yet, member checks and reflection during our CPR meetings ensured validity of the data collection and analysis as we (CPR) engaged in dialogue, reflection of praxis, and collaborative data analysis meetings throughout the study.

The project was developed within the Bohemian Unified School District. The study may be generalized to the scope of work within the Bohemian district, but caution should be taken when using the results of the study in other schools or districts as issues of transferability and external validity may arise. This is only one study in one school in a relatively small district. The process followed in the study could be replicated in other schools or districts, but the outcomes may not be applicable to other contexts.

A potential limitation of the study that might affect the validity of the results is my position within the school and the implications of my position of power. There are implicit hierarchies in the school as I have a role in evaluating teachers. Teachers might feel that they cannot speak their truth because of the power dynamics within the school or due to fears of being vulnerable with colleagues. To safeguard against this, I utilized CLEs protocols to explicitly emphasize that the project was built on the belief that the participants are the closest to the issue and have wisdom to share and that together we would find answers. Findings from the PAR project underscored that we as a CPR engaged in horizontal relationships and authentic dialogue during the study.

Another potential limitation of the study is that researchers might fall into the temptation of generalizing the experiences of the Students of Color to all students as well as generalizing the findings of the study to other similar situations. As described in Chapter Two, although there are similarities in the experiences of Students of Color, there are specific unique challenges that Latinx and Asian students experience due to language, immigration, or refugee status that other Students of Color might not face. In the project, we recognized that our epistemologies (how knowledge comes to be understood) influenced how can understand the realities that our Students of Color bring in their stories. As a CPR team, we engaged in authentic dialogue to reflect about our epistemological differences and consider the impact of those differences on the analytic work and coding process we undertook. As a CPR group we developed the awareness that, among Students of Color, there are matters specific to the ways the different groups (Asian American, Latinx, Black, and Native American) confront the dominant narrative in the educational system. For example, Latinx immigrants face a specific form of subordination due to language and immigration status. While the study is limited to one elementary school and is a small study, I believe that the process we undertook is generalizable to other contexts.

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality of participants and the security of the data were important in the study. Prior to initiating the study, I obtained all appropriate consent to participate in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018): I asked all adult participants to give their written consent to participate in the study. I asked all children and parents who participated at the Community Learning Exchanges for their consent to participate in the PAR project. I used pseudonyms to protect the identities of all participants, including that of the school itself. I maintained all transcripts and recordings of meetings in a secure, locked location; the transcripts will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of the study. No materials will be disseminated or replicated in any way.

A formal application was submitted and approved by the district leadership cabinet and my direct supervisor. I completed Institutional Review Board Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (IRB CITI) certification in January 2019 to comply with the ethical requirements governing human research (see Appendix B). Although these safeguards were established prior the beginning of the project, individual participants could withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the methodologies that inform this study and outlined the three cycles of inquiry from the improvement science model of Plan, Do, Study, Act. I explained how we utilized the community learning exchange processes, participatory activist research (PA^{1}R), and critical race methodology. I then presented the data collection tools, methods, and processes for analysis of the qualitative data. In the next chapter, I describe the actions we took in the first cycle and the results of our initial coding process in which we developed a coding system of categories that support the entire PAR study.

CHAPTER FIVE: PAR CYCLE ONE

The goal of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) project was to include the voices, stories, and histories of Students and Families of Color in the fifth-grade curriculum. Historically, dominant narratives in education that recount the experiences and perspectives of those with social (especially racial) privilege have been the core of the curriculum (Delgado, 1989; Delgado Bernal et al., 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2006). The current school curriculum centers largely on White voices, stories, and histories and excludes representations of the histories, ancestral knowledge, and voices of Students of Color.

The chapter describes the PAR Cycle One. In the first cycle, we established a co-practitioner research (CPR) group comprising three teachers, one counselor, one parent, a community member, and myself. The first task of the CPR group was to plan for and invite Families of Color to a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) in which families shared stories about their histories. The stories were used as the foundation of our new fifth-grade curriculum. In the chapter, I discuss the importance of building capacity to learn from families, including developing the CPR group through five meetings that we held to plan for the December CLE with families. Then, I describe how I documented the events of the cycle and analyzed the data. Finally, I discuss the implications of the PAR project for the focus of practice, my role as a leader, and the plan for the second PAR cycle.

Overview of Cycle One: Building the Capacity to Learn from Families

Our core goal in the project was to collaborate with teachers and Families and Students of Color to co-design and implement a strength-based, critical pedagogy of storytelling. This unfolded in two stages during the first cycle. We first established a CPR group to build the storytelling curriculum. Then we created opportunities for Families of Color to begin sharing their stories, which would then become the foundation for the storytelling curriculum.

The first cycle of the project took place over the course of a semester in the fall of 2019 (see Table 4 and Figure 4 for an overview of the first cycle). After setting up the CPR, the group planned and co-facilitated a Community Learning Exchange (CLE). A CLE is a process designed to bring together people with diverse assets (see Chapter Four for more detail). On this occasion, we designed the CLE to enable the CPR group and Students and Parents of Color to share their family stories. In the section, after describing the formation of the CPR group, I detail the activities that took place during our fall 2019 CPR group meetings (many of which were devoted to the planning of the CLE) and conclude with a detailed account of the CLE.

Creation of the Co-Practitioner Research (CPR) Group

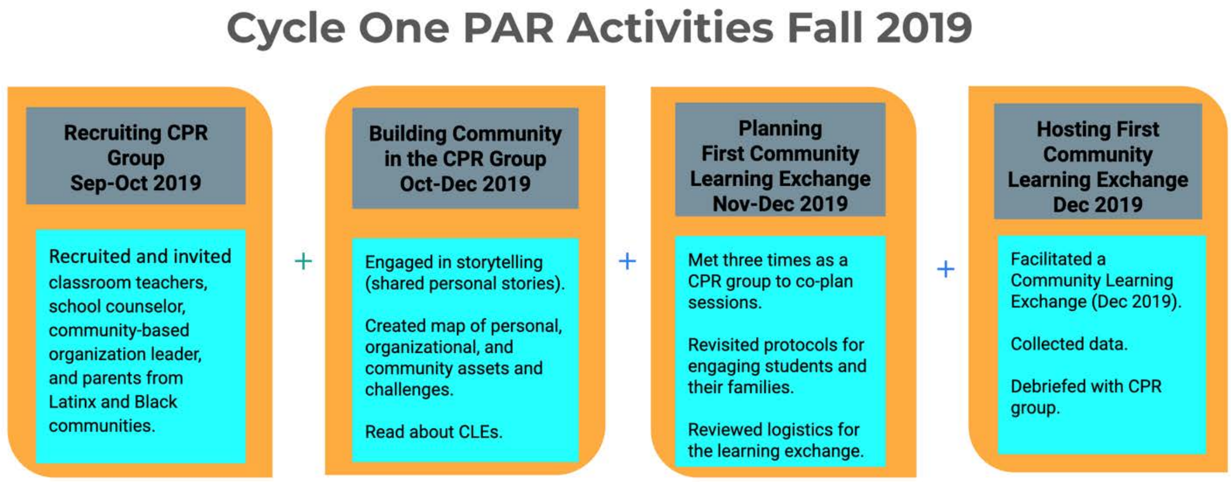
At the start of the PAR project, I invited school and community members to join me in a CPR group committed to collaborating over the next year to co-develop a critical pedagogy of storytelling. I contacted the fifth-grade teachers, parents of eight of their 75 students, and one of the two counselors who work with the fifth-grade students. I included one mentor from a local community-based organization who works with Black students at our school. I decided to recruit from the fifth-grade classes because students at that level are on the verge of a major transition to middle school at another campus. The CPR group now includes 3 fifth-grade teachers, one Latinx parent, one school counselor, one leader from a local community-based organization, and me as a veteran school leader.

The teacher participants (Adele Diamond, Alaina Lee, and Jessica Brown) and the participating school counselor (Niajalah Black) were site-based practitioners who voluntarily joined the CPR out of a desire to find new ways to teach and interact with Students of Color. I invited all three Grade 5 teachers and the school counselor to a meeting during after-school hours

Table 4

PAR Plan Cycle One

Activities	Key Personnel	Timeline	Data Collection
Recruiting CPR group	CPR group	September-October 2019	• Memo • Meeting invites • Memos of CPR
CPR Meeting #1: Establish CPR group. Building Community.	CPR group	October 23, 2019	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo • Artifacts: Poems.
CPR Meeting #2: Building community in the CPR group. Storytelling.	CPR group	October 30, 2019	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo • Artifacts
CPR Meeting #3: CLE planning. Storytelling prompts.	CPR group	November 13, 2019	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
CPR Meeting #4: CLE planning. CLE pedagogies.	CPR group	November 27, 2019	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
CPR Meeting #5: CLE planning. Meeting logistics.	CPR group	December 4, 2019	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
CLE: Families, students, and staff sharing family stories.	CPR group	December 6, 2019	• Agenda • CLE notes • Observations • CLE artifacts • Memo
CPR Meeting #6: Debrief CLE and reflect Cycle One.	CPR group	January 8, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo



Cycle One PAR Activities Fall 2019

Recruiting CPR Group Sep-Oct 2019

Recruited and invited classroom teachers, school counselor, community-based organization leader, and parents from Latinx and Black communities.

+

Building Community in the CPR Group Oct-Dec 2019

Engaged in storytelling (shared personal stories).

Created map of personal, organizational, and community assets and challenges.

Read about CLEs.

+

Planning First Community Learning Exchange Nov-Dec 2019

Met three times as a CPR group to co-plan sessions.

Revisited protocols for engaging students and their families.

Reviewed logistics for the learning exchange.

+

Hosting First Community Learning Exchange Dec 2019

Facilitated a Community Learning Exchange (Dec 2019).

Collected data.

Debriefed with CPR group.

Figure 4. Cycle One activities, fall 2019.

in which I explained the research project and discussed the possibility of collaborating with them. The teachers and the school counselor were enthusiastic; the project interested them because it focused on student voice.

To identify parents, I asked the fifth-grade teachers to nominate Parents of Color. I contacted Latinx and Black parents whom I knew to be leaders in the school and in the community. Two Black parents expressed interest in the project but were unable to participate because the CPR group meeting time was scheduled during their work hours. We could not change the meeting times because the school staff members were not available to meet after their contractual work hours. One Latinx parent (Esmeralda Mendoza) was able to participate in the CPR group.

The participating community member (Remy Harris-Herron) works for a community-based organization (CBO) called Village Connect, which provides mentoring services to Black youth in the school and has worked with our students for the past four years. The mentor agreed to participate as the aim of the project aligned with the vision of their organization. Table 5 describes the CPR group in more detail.

CPR Group Meetings

During the CPR meetings, we sought to create a trusting community of researchers. The CPR group members needed to function as a cohesive team; the participants had not previously worked together. I facilitated these meetings and decided on which activities I felt would best facilitate the creation of community within the CPR group. I used storytelling to encourage CPR members to tell their stories as a way of sharing their lives and exploring the assets in our families, our community, and our school. We held discussions and created artifact such as poems

Table 5

Co-Practitioner Research (CPR) Group

Name	Role	Number of years with the school	Racial Identity	Gender Identity	Has children	Additional
Adele Diamond	Teacher	6	White	Cisgender woman	No	Went to school in Southern California.
Alaina Lee	Teacher	15	Asian	Cisgender woman	No	Went to school in a nearby district.
Jessica Brown	Teacher	15	White	Cisgender woman	Yes	Went to school in the district where the school is located.
Niajalah Black	Counselor	9	Black	Cisgender woman	Yes	Taught for 15 years prior to becoming a counselor. Went to school in a nearby district.
Esmeralda Mendoza	Parent	3	Latinx	Cisgender woman	Yes	Went to school in Mexico.
Remy Harris-Herron	Community-based leader	4	Black	Cisgender man	Yes	Mentor Black students in schools. Went to school in Louisiana.
Moraima Machado	Principal	4	Latinx	Cisgender woman	Yes	Worked as a principal for 10 years at a nearby district. Went to school in Venezuela.

Note. All names are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

and assets maps as another way to share our stories. The community-building process, while most concentrated at the first meetings, was on-going.

At subsequent CPR group meetings, we collaboratively planned a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) to draw on the cultural wealth of our families through their stories (Yosso, 2005). These stories carry a sense of family history, memory, strength, and hope. At our CPR group meetings, we determined how to invite families to the CLE, what questions or prompts to pose at the CLE, and how to pose those questions.

Inviting Families to the Community Learning Exchange (CLE)

We used the two CPR group meetings in November to plan the CLE meeting time and content as well as to consider how to invite families to come to it. I understood from my cultural intuition and my professional readings that we needed to hear directly from families about logistics such as a convenient time for the community meeting instead of blaming them for lack of interest or involvement if they do not show up (Yosso, 2006). Therefore, my first action was to ask Esmeralda and Remy, the parent and community members, when the CLE should be held. They suggested a Saturday meeting so that working families could attend.

However, two classroom teachers and the school counselor objected that Saturday was their own family day (M. Machado, reflective memo, November 13, 2019). After discussing the suggested ideas over two CPR group meetings, we decided to plan the meetings for Friday evenings.

We agreed upon two ways to invite families: personal outreach from teachers and a CLE invitational flyer. For the personal outreach, Adele Diamond, a fifth-grade teacher, suggested making personal calls to all fifth-grade families and engaging the students in the process. Adele Diamond stated, “As classroom teachers, we need to invite the families personally and make it celebratory" (M. Machado, meeting notes, November 13, 2019). We acknowledged that students' participation in family outreach was important because motivated students would communicate their enthusiasm to their families and encourage them to attend. All three teachers made personal phone calls to their students and families.

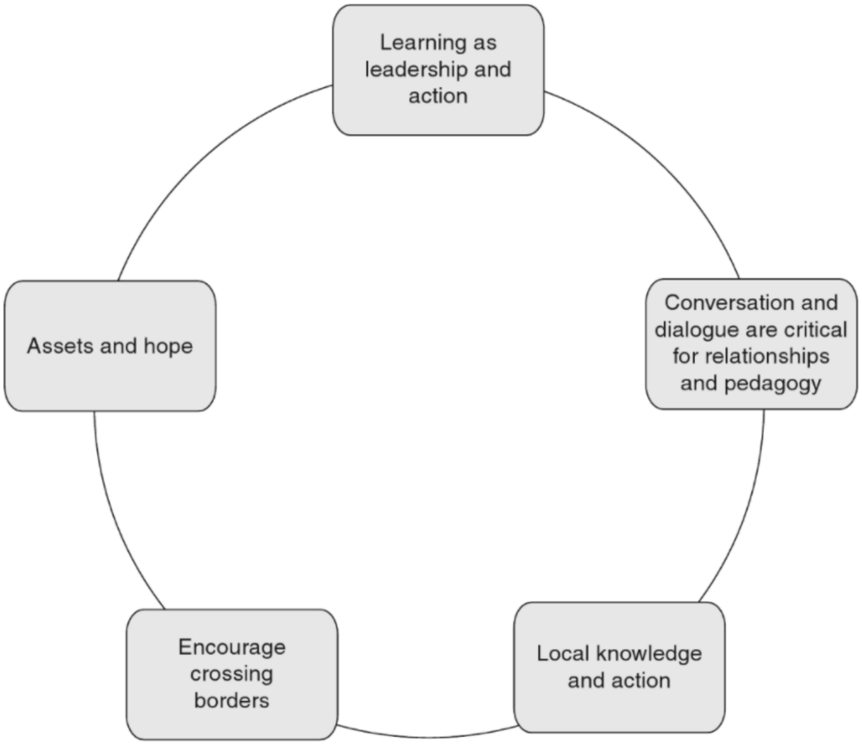
The CPR group collaboratively determined what information and images to use in the flyer. A critical point was emphasizing the intention of bringing the student and family voices into the school. The invitational flyer read: "A Special Invitation for 5th Graders and their Families as We Build Community through Student Voices" (see Appendix E).

Collaborative Planning CLE Content and Pedagogies

I designed the CPR group meeting agendas in the belief that participants needed to experience storytelling themselves before planning a storytelling curriculum for students. For example, in our first CPR group meeting, we shared personal stories about family struggles and sources of pride. At another meeting, we created an asset and challenge map and shared stories about our personal lives, our school, and our communities.

For the next CPR group meetings, we read and discussed articles about CLE axioms. The axioms are guiding values that lead the CLE work (Guajardo et al., 2016). The CPR group could better plan a CLE for our fifth-grade families if they understood the underlying theory of action (see Figure 5; Guajardo et al., 2016). Additionally, we reviewed the CLE as a set of processes designed to bring together people with diverse assets and strengths.

After several rounds of storytelling and discussions of the CLE axioms, the CPR group designed the CLE agenda to highlight families' counter-stories of hope, strengths, and aspirations. We decided that teachers in the CPR group would not facilitate the CLE so that they could concentrate fully on the families' stories. I then invited three experienced facilitators to co-


Learning as leadership and action
Conversation and dialogue are critical for relationships and pedagogy
Local knowledge and action
Encourage crossing borders
Assets and hope

Note. Reprinted from *Reframing community partnerships in education: Uniting the power of place and wisdom of people* (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 23)

Figure 5. CLE Axioms.

facilitate: Remy, the mentor and member of the CPR; Elena, a colleague who had experience in facilitation of meetings using mindfulness; and Zoe, the district teacher on special assignment for restorative practices in the district.

In discussing which stories would most engage the parents and what prompts to use for the storytelling, we decided to focus on family gatherings. We incorporated the pedagogical techniques of opening and closing circles, dynamic mindfulness, storytelling with prompts, and sharing stories using the Inner-circle and Outer-circle protocol (Guajardo et al., 2016). We addressed logistics for the CLE, including how to create a welcoming space for families, timing of the meeting, room set up, and when to serve food.

Community Learning Exchange (CLE)

In December 2019, 36 people attended our CLE, included 11 parents, 10 students, six younger siblings, one additional_teacher, one parent liaison and the seven members of our CPR group. Teachers and the school counselor greeted participants at the door, gave each family a color card to use during the evening, offered interpretation services in Spanish, and invited participants to introduce themselves to other families. The 2-hour evening CLE started with an opening circle to welcome families into the learning exchange space. Then, participants made drawings of family gatherings and shared their family stories with other families. At the end of the CLE, participants debriefed the learning exchange experience in a closing circle (see Appendix F for the agenda we used at the CLE).

I began the opening circle by honoring the native people who used to live on the land where the school is located. Then, I explained the meeting purpose, the essential question of the CLE: What are assets, the positive characteristics that you see, in families and in our community? What about those stories do we want our children to know more deeply? We invited families to introduce themselves to other families during the family-style dinner in which home-cooked food was served at cafeteria tables so that families could sit together for their meal. After dinner, my ECU colleague Elena facilitated a dynamic mindfulness activity and explained the benefits of the practice to cultivate moment-to-moment awareness and to reduce stress.

Remy and I co-facilitated the first set of activities. Participants drew pictures of their family gatherings. The activity prompts were: What food brings your family together? What traditions do you honor and celebrate with your family? (see Appendix F). Remy and I modeled the activity using drawings of our family gatherings and shared our stories with participants. (Figure 6 shows some examples of the family drawings created by CLE participants.)
I co-facilitated the inner-circle and outer-circle with the other CLE co-facilitators. I invited participants to meet with others using the color card provided by the teachers at the entrance. I then asked participants to form three circles of six participants each and introduced the facilitator for each of the three circles. I invited participants to use the family pictures that they created in the story-making activity to tell their stories with other families. Then, the three CLE co-facilitators prompted them to share family stories. The facilitator's role was to make sure each family shared its story and heard each other family's story in turn; that is, each participant shared their story three times to three different families. Figure 7 shows CLE participants sharing their stories using their family drawings.

Zoe facilitated the closing circle. Each participant wrote on a card a sentence or phrase to describe what they had heard at the meeting. After sharing, we asked them to use two words to describe what they felt in telling their story and upon hearing someone else's story. I closed the meeting by sharing an appreciation for the families and staff.

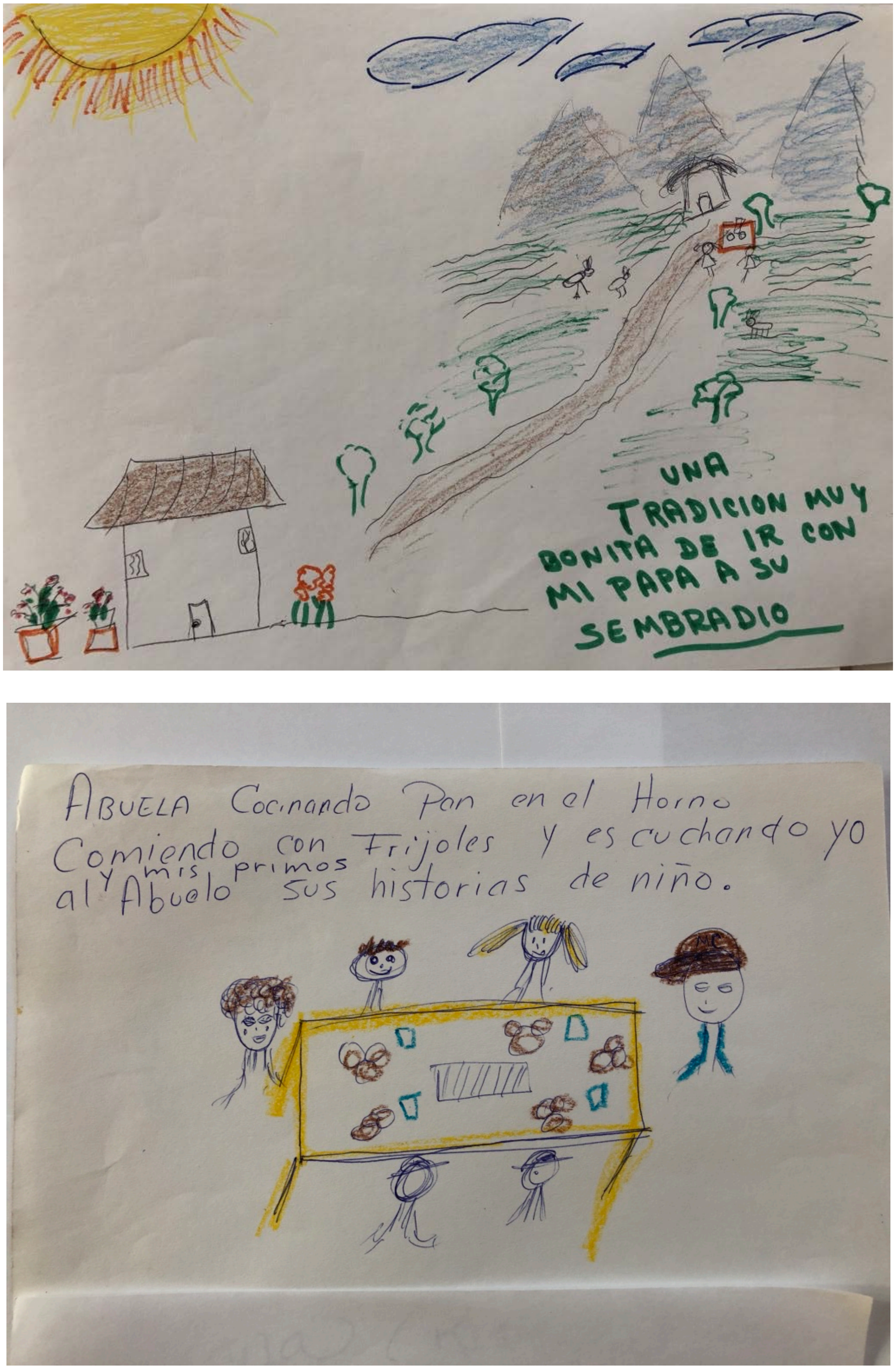

UNA TRADICION MUY BONITA DE IR CON MI PAPA A SU SEMBRADIO
ABUELA Cocinando Pan en el Horno
Comiendo con Frijoles y escuchando yo y mis primos
al Abuelo sus historias de niño.
MC

Figure 6. Story-making: Family gatherings.

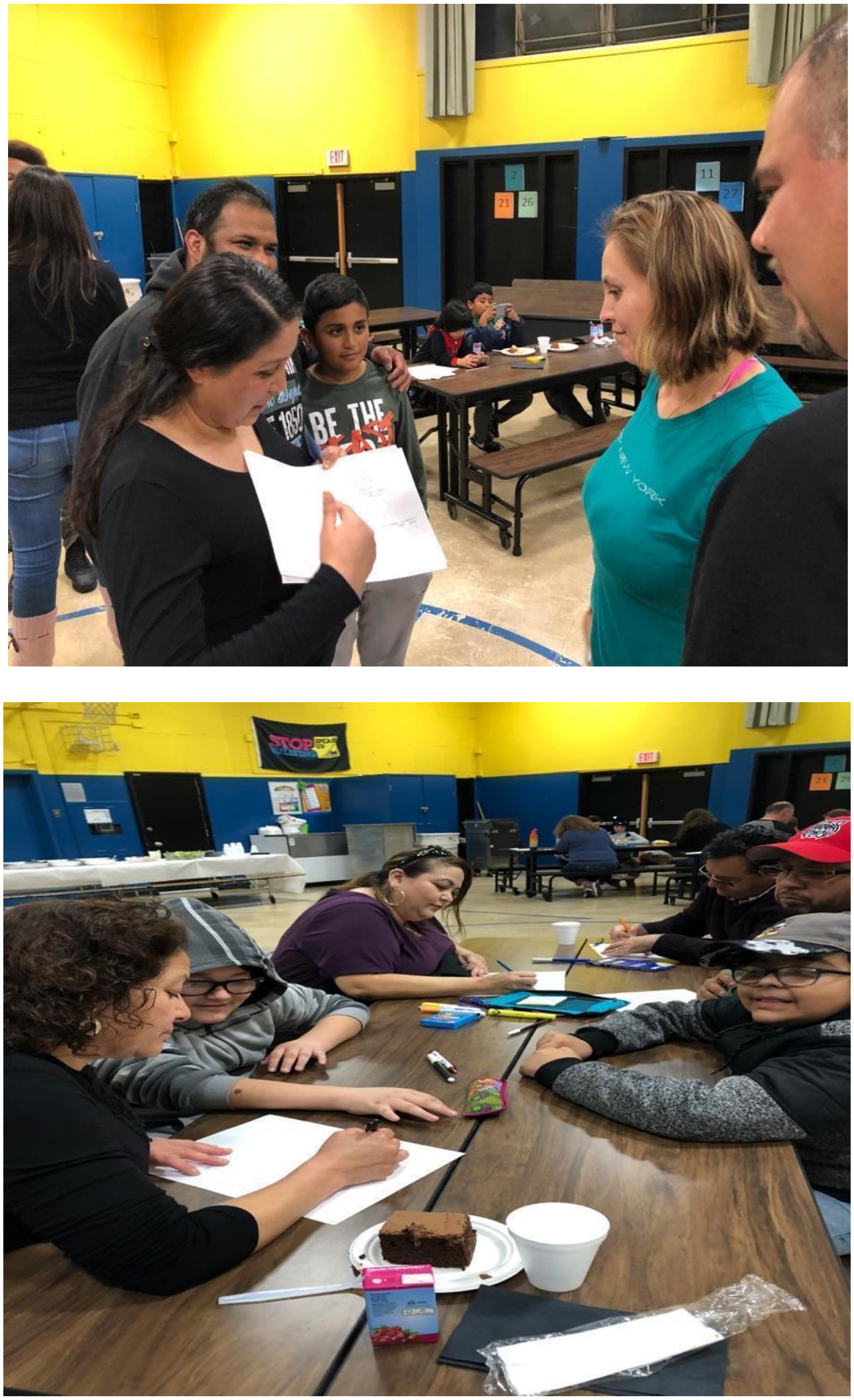

EXIT
2
21
26
11
27
BE THE
NEW YORK
STOP
EXIT

Figure 7. Storytelling: Family gathering.

Evidence

Throughout PAR Cycle One, I collected multiple pieces of evidence to examine what happened in the cycle. I first wrote reflective memos to myself to document my initial thoughts and reflections after meetings or discussions with the CPR group or others about the PAR project. The reflective memos served as a tool to record the learning process and as a way to link practice and reflection. I collected CPR group meeting agendas, CPR meeting notes, and artifacts created by participants.

We collected the drawings from the family gatherings, cards written by parents about what they heard at the meeting, and a list of the closing words expressed by parents at the CLE closing circle (see Figure 7). I then began the iterative coding process we carried out in PAR Cycle One to interpret the data sources.

Coding was an iterative process that continued throughout PAR Cycle One. I first printed all memos, meeting agendas, and meeting notes. Then, I used inductive or In Vivo coding to look for patterns (Saldaña, 2016). I coded the material in three steps: I first assigned each CPR participant a color to understand how a racially diverse group of participants made sense of the learning experience. Then, I reviewed the data for how participants described their lived experiences and family histories and for the CPR group's interpretations of these descriptions. In the third round of coding, I reviewed the preliminary codes and organized them based on concepts from the CLE axioms and the storytelling literature review.

Yosso (2006) asserts, "Data cannot speak without interpretation" (p. 11). Data interpretation is neither neutral nor objective. I recognize that as a qualitative co-practitioner researcher, I must be aware of my biases and critically reflect on my role as a participant as well as the impact of my biases in the process of research. Although I need to be aware of potential bias, I acknowledge that my cultural intuition influences the way that I interpreted the data. "Cultural intuition allows [co-practitioner researchers and participants] to theorize and construct knowledge from their own lived experiences" (Pérez-Huber, 2009, p. 648). I acknowledge the ideas and motivations I come with and make them explicit throughout the project proposal. My cultural intuition was necessary during the coding process and analysis because it provided a lens through which to analyze the stories and influenced the meaning making sense of the coding process.

Emerging Categories

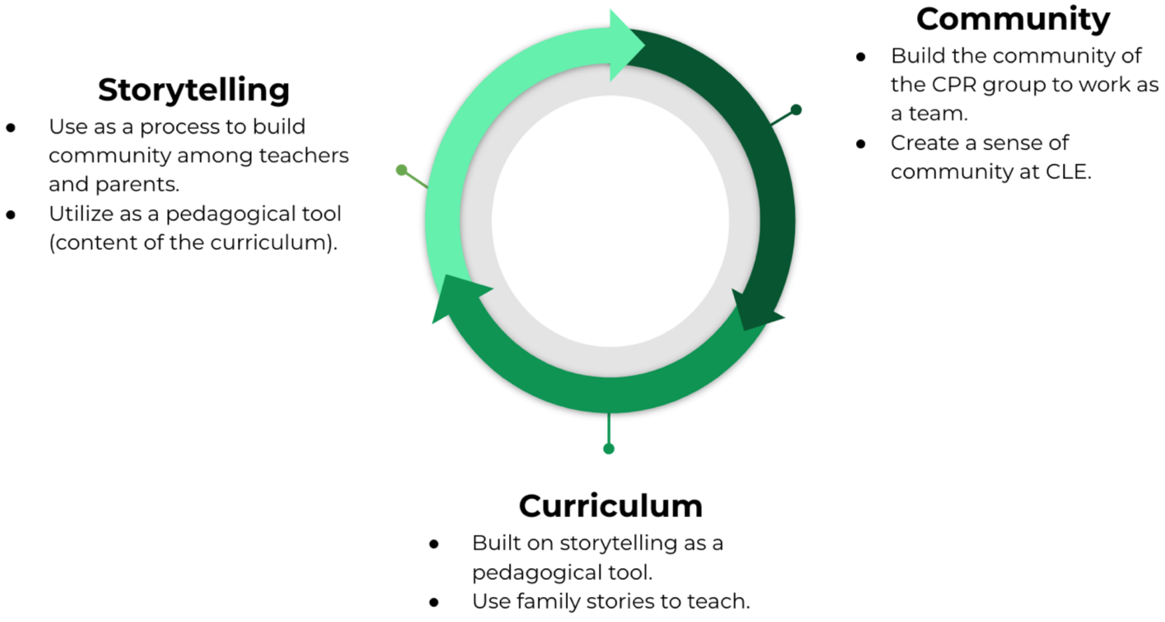
I developed five categories that emerged from the data that we collected at Co-Practitioner Research (CPR) group meetings, in reflective memos, and in interactions during the first cycle of the study: family as the original learning exchange, vulnerability, connectedness, storytelling evokes emotions, and love. We saw strong evidence that engaging in storytelling during CPR group meetings and the CLE was meaningful for participants. Storytelling served both as a process to build community among CPR group participants and as a source of content for the curriculum we aimed to create.

Storytelling Builds Community Across Differences

At the beginning of the first cycle, I thought the project was about designing a storytelling curriculum for fifth-grade students. Later, I realized that an essential aspect of the PAR Cycle One included the process that participants were experiencing during the cycle. Prior to the project, we knew that storytelling was important for Communities of Color. Researchers outlined at least four functions of stories: (1) Stories can oppress by privileging the views and experiences of dominant groups in society (Delgado, 1989). (2) Stories can resist and challenge perceived notions of Communities of Color (Delgado Bernal, 1998). (3) Stories can teach others to co-construct a more just world (Delgado Bernal, 1998). (4) Stories can build community (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Guajardo et al., 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2006).

Over the course of the first cycle of the study, I learned how storytelling can build community across differences. Telling personal and family stories enabled the CPR group to understand perspectives from people with whom they usually do not interact. For example, teachers expressed that they appreciated the stories shared by parents at the CLE and CPR group meetings. Parents and community members also shared that they felt honored to be invited to share their stories with school staff and other parents (M. Machado, reflective memo, December 6, 2019). The storytelling allowed CPR group members to build a community so that they could function as a team and take on the hard work of co-designing a critical pedagogy of storytelling for the students (see Figure 8).

In storytelling, people build and rebuild community because they show care and concern through telling their stories, leading to a deep sense of belonging. When telling counter-stories "one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 36). As I analyzed the data from various sources, evidence from participants' responses fell into the following subsections. First, in the CLE, participants shared that family is the original place where learning and histories are born. Second, participants expressed that storytelling is personal and made them feel vulnerable. Third, participants felt a sense of connectedness with others as they shared their family stories as the stories evoked emotions from the participants. Finally, in storytelling, participants expressed love as a basic tenet. In Figure 9, I diagram the emergent categories I developed in PAR Cycle One. The figure illustrates the number of times the categories showed in the data collected.



Storytelling

- Use as a process to build community among teachers and parents.
- Utilize as a pedagogical tool (content of the curriculum).

Community

- Build the community of the CPR group to work as a team.
- Create a sense of community at CLE.

Curriculum

- Built on storytelling as a pedagogical tool.
- Use family stories to teach.

Figure 8. Cycle One: Storytelling as a process and a pedagogical tool.

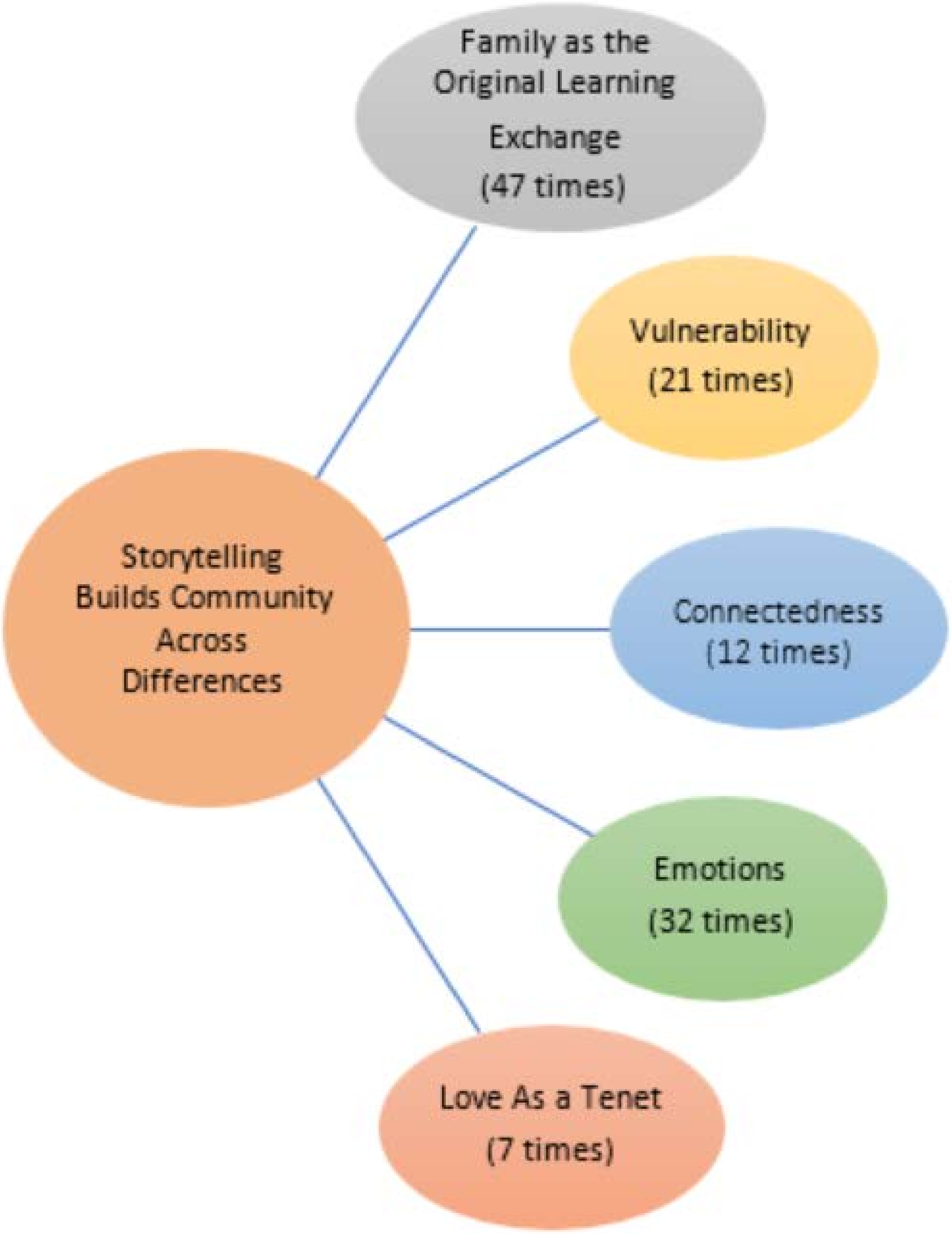

Family as the Original Learning Exchange (47 times)
Vulnerability (21 times)
Storytelling Builds Community Across Differences
Connectedness (12 times)
Emotions (32 times)
Love As a Tenet (7 times)

Figure 9. Theme: Storytelling builds community across differences.

Family as the Original Learning Exchange

Guajardo et al. (2016) introduce the concept of family as the original learning exchange (p. 29). It is within families that stories are told, and meaningful learning happens. In PAR Cycle One, participants illustrated the concept through the storytelling process. As demonstrated in Table 6, participants told family stories that incorporated memories of family traditions, gatherings, and histories.

During the CLE a parent wrote, "*Abuela cocinando pan en el horno, comiendo con frijoles con mis primos y escuchando yo al abuelo sus historias de nino*" ["Grandma baking bread in the oven, eating beans with my cousins, and listening to Grandpa's stories of when he was a child"] (Participant 4, CLE artifact, December 6, 2019). At a CPR group meeting, Esmeralda, a parent and CPR group participant, shared, "*Vengo de la educación de la familia con valores y costumbres*" ["My family taught me proper values and customs"] (E. Mendoza, meeting notes, October 23, 2019). These comments reflect participants' belief that the family is where deeper and meaningful learning happens. Grandparents and parents use storytelling to teach their children about their histories and values.

Another finding that supports family as the original learning exchange emerged from data collected at CPR group meetings in which I asked participants to create a map of assets and challenges. As shown in Table 6, participants' responses under the category "family as an asset" illustrate that they learned from elders about family values and how to be part of their communities. For example, Jessica, a teacher and CPR group participant, shared: "Mom worked as a Resource Specialist paraprofessional at César Chávez Elementary and always talked about the community she served. My parents were always involved in the community" (J. Brown, asset and challenges map artifact, October 23, 2019). Another teacher, a member of the CPR group,

Table 6

Family Codes

Code	Sub-Code	Number of Instances
Family Memories	Gathering	11
	Traditions	9
	Pride	2
	Values	2
	History	5
Family as asset	Role Model-Community	4
	Teach Values/Pedagogy of home	2
Family Composition	Multigeneration	4
	Present Parents	5
	Absent Father	1
	Values	1

shared, “I come from a strong family unit that valued the concept of collectivism over individualism” (A. Diamond, asset and challenges map artifact, October 23, 2019).

Being Vulnerable

Participants had to take risks and show vulnerability to share personal family stories. However, when stories are told, a sense of connectedness to others emerges. The storytelling allowed participants to see each other as people, not just as professionals working at a school. I tabulated 21 instances in which CPR group participants, CLE participants, and I recognized or referred to feelings of vulnerability (see Appendix G). The most common descriptors of vulnerability were self-doubt, fragility, and being perceived by others as intimidating due to their racial identity.

At CPR group meetings, I invited participants to share stories that explore themselves as individuals growing up and stories that delve into their role in the community and the school. During the CLE, we (CPR group) invited participants to tell family stories about their traditions and celebrations. Most commonly, participants acknowledged that sharing something personal with others made them feel vulnerable. In other instances, I asked participants to describe what they had heard at the meeting, and participants often mentioned the participants’ vulnerability related to the content shared.

For example, in one CPR group meeting a member shared, “I heard vulnerability, determination, perseverance, all driven by the force of love” (M. Machado, meeting notes, October 23, 2019). Being vulnerable allowed participants to see the humanity in each other. Listening and sharing personal stories allowed CPR group participants to show care for each other in public, which led to strengthened feelings of being part of a community.

Connectedness

As I analyzed data from various sources, evidence of where participants drew a sense of connectedness from the storytelling fell into three types. First, participants stated that when they listened to other family stories, they felt connected to others. Second, participants expressed that stories they heard at the CLE and CPR group meetings reflected connectedness to family. Third, staff members stated that after participating in storytelling at the CLE, they felt connected to the families of their students.

At the CLE closing circle, several participants commented that they felt connected to others. They stated that the connection arose from commonalities that they discovered as they listened to other families' stories. For example, one participant wrote, *"Escuchamos algo similar a nuestra historia de caminos lejanos para llevar comida a nuestros familiares que es la fuerza de la vida diaria"* [We hear something similar to our story of covering long distances to bring food to our relatives that is the force of daily life"] (Participant 6, CLE artifact, December 6, 2020). Table 7 illustrates the most common feelings that participants expressed at the CLE closing circle.

Participants indicated that a feeling of connectedness to the family emerged from stories they heard at meetings or from the content of the story shared. Descriptors used by CLE participants were togetherness and *familia unida* [family together]. I tabulated instances in which CLE participants, CPR group members, and I recognized or referenced a feeling of connectedness to family (see Appendix G).

During a CPR group meeting debrief, participants expressed that, as result of their participation in the CLE, they built connections with families with whom they had not been in contact before the event. For example, Adele Diamond, a fifth-grade teacher and CPR group

Table 7

Community Learning Exchange Closing Circle Feelings

Activity	Code	Tally Inventory
Sharing family stories	Feeling excited	7
	Brings happiness	5
	Special	2
	Feeling vulnerable	3
Listening to other family's story	Connected to others	3
	Grateful	2
	Honored	3
	Special	4
	Brings memories	2

participant, shared, “After the CLE, I was able to connect with one family that I had been unable to reach since the beginning of the school year” (A. Diamond, meeting notes, January 8, 2020). In PAR Cycle Two, we continued exploring where participants draw the meaning of connectedness in more detail.

Storytelling Evokes Emotions

Data from participants during the CLE and CPR group meetings support the conclusion that storytelling elicited comfortable and uncomfortable emotions. Comfortable emotions in the stories shared were related to joyful memories of fun family gatherings as described by seven CLE participants. Participants named the stories as happy memories with their families. During the closing circle of the CLE, we asked parents to share two words to describe how they felt upon having their story heard and upon hearing someone’s story. As shown in Table 7, participants said they felt vulnerable and special. Sharing stories brought happiness, excitement, and gratefulness to CLE participants. Participants expressed that listening to other family stories made them feel connected to others, honored, proud, and thankful.

Uncomfortable emotions in stories shared were connected either to memories of suffering because their relatives live in another country or to sadness and pain associated with memories of growing up. For example, at a CPR group meeting, Esmeralda began speaking of her childhood and the stories that her grandfather used to tell her. This memory brought up a sense of loss and isolation. She expressed feeling alone in the US. Perhaps another barrier to sharing our culture with our children is that we want to distance ourselves from the pain and loss associated with leaving family behind (M. Machado, reflective memo, October 30, 2019). At CPR group meetings, participants used descriptors such as frustration, self-doubt, and disappointment when telling stories about challenges in their communities.

Generally, the comfortable emotions collected in memos, CLE stories, CPR group meetings, and the CLE debrief were more frequent than the uncomfortable emotions. In fact, the majority of the uncomfortable emotions from memos came from me as the leader, especially I was worry of the resistance that the project might encounter from the teachers.

Love as a Tenet

As I analyzed data from diverse sources, I noticed that stories shared by People of Color expressed the feeling of love for their family members and love from their parents as their assets. Given the potential importance of this finding for designing a curriculum of storytelling, we continued to explore the topic in PAR Cycle Two.

Implications

Evidence collected from participants' interactions during the CLE and the follow-up debrief meeting with the CPR group shows that members of the school community would like to have CLEs at the school. Participants seemed to find value in sharing their own family stories and connecting with people from different constituencies (teachers, students, and parents).

Implications for the PAR Research Questions

As I reflected on the research questions and theory of action of the PAR project, I started to identify key categories related to the questions the project aimed to answer. In particular, the section headings presented below relate to the following research sub-questions: (1) To what extent can a CPR group co-generate a curriculum of critical storytelling that validates student identity and history? (2) To what extent do school educators transform their practices and pedagogies to incorporate storytelling due to their participation? (3) To what extent do teachers shift their perceptions of Students of Color as a result of their engagement in this work? (4) How does my engagement in the PAR project transform my leadership practices?

I am learning from evidence collected from participants that storytelling can build community across differences. Storytelling is both the process and the content of the critical pedagogy that we aim to design. Storytelling allowed participants to begin building community among CPR group members and CLE participants. Stories shared during CPR group meetings allowed participants to find commonalities in their stories and histories. I learned that it takes vulnerability to share personal family stories. However, when stories are told, a sense of connectedness to others emerges. Sharing stories allowed participants to be part of meaningful communities that they were not part of before. Participants valued having the opportunity to engage in conversations with others who were different from the people they usually talk to. CPR group meetings and the CLE provided a space for meaningful conversations. When participants told their stories, it validated their identity and history. The emerging categories of family as the original learning exchange, vulnerability, and connectedness supported the idea of critical storytelling as a way to validate student identity and history.

Being Part of Meaningful Communities

"I don't believe in community. I don't care what people think about me." One CPR group participant, a teacher, shared these thoughts in the context of a staff meeting. However, after participating in the CLE with parents and her students, the teacher manifested a different attitude: "We need to do CLEs every year. This is much better than parent-teacher conferences or Back to School Night where I don't really get to know my families and students" (M. Machado, reflective memo, December 6, 2020). In addition, Remy, a CPR community participant, expressed in a CPR group meeting, "I feel so lucky to be part of these meetings" (M. Machado, reflective memo, October 30, 2019).

The CLE and CPR group meetings provided participants an opportunity to experience a sense of connectedness and togetherness that they were not experiencing at the school before. Teachers and parents valued interacting with people with whom they usually normally wouldn't have the opportunity to connect. At the CLE debrief, parents expressed that they felt connected and honored by having their stories heard. Participants in PAR Cycle One said that parent-teacher conferences, parent engagement workshops, and Back to School Night do not invite connectedness or togetherness. Therefore, an implication from PAR Cycle One is to revisit the traditional family and parent engagement activities often utilized in the school.

Guajardo et al. (2016) suggest that "community is a process … It is a stage of mind, a metaphorical expression of how people can be together" (p. 5). As I described in the previous section, storytelling arose as the key process that allowed participants to open themselves to others and as a result encouraged participants to begin a new way of being in community with each other.

Value Diverse Voices to Shift Participants' Perceptions

A key part of the research is to see to what extent teachers shifted their perceptions of the Students of Color as a result of their engagement in this work. In PAR Cycle One, preliminary evidence shows that teachers valued the family stories shared at the CLE meeting. We realized that the CLE allowed teachers to find commonalities with their students and their families. The teachers' recommendations of further CLEs to learn more about their students and families might indicate that teachers are beginning to shift their perceptions about their Students of Color.

In PAR Cycle One, we gained understanding of the importance of explicitly creating the space at school for diverse voices to be heard. We learned that bringing the voices of Families of Color into the school required purposeful planning. Throughout the PAR Cycle, we (CPR group) were very strategic about how to engage participants in sharing and listening to stories with each other. At the CLE debrief, we discussed how we explicitly created a space for "border-crossing," allowing participants from different races, ages, cultures, faiths, and abilities to engage in dialogue and storytelling. The concept of border-crossing refers to the ability to experience a world that is outside our comfort zone. "This process happens when the meeting place and space and the teaching are shifted to a mode that is dialogical, experiential, collaborative, and engaged" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 26).

At CPR group meetings, we shifted the meeting place and space by inviting teachers to engage in conversations with parents and community members. We found that teachers and community members appreciated the diversity of voices at the meetings. The parent representative and the community learning exchanged led to a new understanding of each other as people, not just as professionals and parents in a school setting. Conversations with people with different perspectives allowed teachers and CPR group members to begin to shift their views about Communities of Color. Adele Diamond, a fifth-grade teacher, commented about the contributions from the community member at the CPR meeting: "Remy has a lot to offer to us, a lot to learn from" (A. Diamond, meeting notes, October 30, 2019). For his part, Remy appreciated the unusual invitation: "This is the only school reaching out to us as community members to work together. In my organization, we dream of working with schools, but it doesn't happen. I think we should do more of this, schools and community organizations coming together" (R. Harris-Herron, meeting notes, October 30, 2019).

Racial Identity Emerges from Storytelling

Another key lesson from PAR Cycle One is that racial identity appears in the stories shared by People of Color. Evidence collected in memos and CPR group meetings indicates that People of Color use racial identity descriptors when telling their stories. For example, during the storytelling process in a CPR group meeting, Remy expressed, "I am a strong, black man" (R. Remy, asset and challenges map artifact, October 23, 2019). At another CPR group meeting, Alaina, a teacher and CPR group participant, expressed, "Being mixed presented some challenges to fit in the group. Fighting to be seen" (A. Lee, Ecologies of Self artifact, October 30, 2019). The comments presented above could be interpreted as the initial stages of group bonding based on the recognition that CPR group participants were going through similar struggles. As Delgado (1989) explains, telling counter-stories brings People of Color together and creates group solidarity (p. 2,437).

The absence of racial descriptors in the stories told by CPR group participants who identified as White could be interpreted as a manifestation of Whiteness as a norm. The questions that surfaced are how White participants interpret their own racial identity and what it would mean for designing a curriculum of storytelling for Youth of Color. In the next PAR Cycle, I explore racial identity in more detail.

In CPR group meetings, identity emerged as an asset. Evidence collected in memos and in CPR group meeting's notes shows that participants identified their gender identities and character traits as assets of self. For example, Niajalah, a CPR member, shared: "I am a strong woman" (N. Black, meeting notes, October 30, 2019). Another CPR group participant expressed "I am outspoken and brave" (A. Lee, meeting notes, October 30, 2019).

Pedagogies of the Home

Another key takeaway that emerged from PAR Cycle One is the idea that values and beliefs are learned home. Parents shared, "*Venimos de la education de la casa, de buenas costumbres*" [We come from the education of the home of good customs] (M. Machado, reflective memo, December 7, 2019). In her research, Delgado Bernal (2002) explains that family cultural resources and funds of knowledge such as “myths, folktales, *dichos, consejos*, kitchen talk, autobiographical stories, and pedagogies of the home are indeed educational strengths and strategies found in communities of color” (p. 120). The question that surfaced for us in PAR Cycle One was, How can we bring the pedagogies of the home into the classrooms? If family is the first learning exchange and stories and memories are created at home, then how can schools tap into the wisdom that families use at home and bring it to school? In PAR Cycle Two, I continue exploring these questions in more detail.

Implications for Leadership

Throughout PAR Cycle One, my ECU coaches encouraged me to carve time from the day-to-day operations of the school to engage in reflection. Although as school leaders we are frequently asked to reflect on data about our students' performance or data about implementation of district-adopted curriculums, we are rarely asked to set aside time to reflect on our own leadership actions. Reflective memos allowed me to think about what happened at meetings as well as to interpret the responses from teachers, parents, and community members during the PAR process. I found myself listening attentively to the stories that parents, teachers, and students expressed at different meetings. I realized that we have limited knowledge about each other as people working together in the school.

Next, I describe three important key learnings as a leader: my learning during the coding process; how I am learning to trust my cultural intuitions when looking at data; and my ability to create a meaningful space for conversations.

Coding is a Deep Process

The coding process of the first cycle led to new lessons learned. Coding the reflective memos and stories shared at meetings was a rich, intriguing, and iterative process that allowed me to uncover leadership patterns that I would not have seen before. I learned that when I am the facilitator of a CLE or CPR group meeting, I only have a peripheral view of what is going on. My analysis of the situation is blurry because the facilitation involves staying focused on creating the space for the learning exchange.

However, when I took the time to step back and let the data collected to speak for itself, I was able to begin making sense of what the teachers were expressing at meetings. The sense-making was an iterative process that allowed me to draw an important lesson: "When analyzing data, your first interpretation is not necessarily the only interpretation" (M. Machado, reflective memo, January 7, 2020). Coding allowed me to learn to ask deeper questions, such us what a specific piece of evidence is telling me. What is the story behind the data?

As documented in my memos, I began utilizing the coding process at other meetings at the school. For example, at the school Culture and Climate meeting, I asked teachers to analyze posters created by their colleagues about the community. I utilized prompting questions such as, what is the evidence is telling us? What is the story behind the data? As a group, we engaged in a sense-making process that was different from the data analysis I had conducted before. The analysis was more collaborative and inductive as we together—as a collective group of professionals—came up with a way to group the responses by themes and color-code the themes to make sense of the data. At the end of the meeting, we grouped the responses of the staff and coded the artifacts. I am learning that to influence the work at our site, I need to engage others in collecting more meaningful data. I need to hear the stories that we are telling and hearing about our school, and I need to engage the staff in collaborative sense-making.

Trust in my Cultural Intuition

PAR Cycle One allowed me to reflect on my own emotions and their connection with my leadership actions. Leading up to the PAR Cycle One, I often acted out of fear. As described in the *storytelling evokes emotions* subsection, a majority of the uncomfortable emotions about the project came from me as the leader. The emotions were a part of my leadership growth because leadership involves risk-taking. I learned that I was fearful of the resistance that the project might encounter from the teachers, fearful that teachers wouldn't allocate the time to meet with the parents and community members, and fearful that the project would stall. However, participants' engagement in the project showed that they valued the opportunity to engage in a learning exchange with people they usually didn't have the opportunity to meet.

As documented in my memos, I felt empowered to share my own story through the PAR process, and, by sharing it, I began conquering my fears and trusting my cultural intuition. I utilized my cultural knowledge when designing the learning exchanges. I emphasized that establishing relationships was the focus for the CPR group in the PAR Cycle One. Intuitively, I knew that the CPR group participants needed to build the collective relationship first by being vulnerable and experiencing the storytelling process several times before engaging in the hard work of creating a curriculum of critical storytelling.

I realized that the process of establishing the relationships took time. For the majority of PAR Cycle One project's timeline, I was behind the ECU schedule. However, an essential learning emerged: to trust my intuition. I realized that by creating the space for participants to engage in storytelling, I was creating the conditions for them to learn from each other and to draw value from the learning exchange.

Creating a Space for Meaningful Conversations

"Relationships are the first point of contact in the learning process, and storytelling and conversations are the mediating tools" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 24). In their work, Guajardo et al. describe conversations as a CLE axiom and emphasize the need to create safe spaces for participants to share their stories. In the PAR project, we saw how the storytelling process created a safe space for challenging conversations to happen. I learned that when participants involved in storytelling as an ongoing process—not just one time—they began sharing stories that presented critical viewpoints about the school. For example, at one CPR meeting, participants shared that the school was not serving the Students of Color. Teachers and parents openly discussed that “the school does not have teachers of color teaching the students” (M. Machado, reflective memo, October 30, 2019).

At another CPR group meeting, teachers advocated for planning the CLE meeting with parents at a time that was within the working hours of the school. In that meeting, a parent and the community representative candidly expressed, “As parents we can meet on Saturdays; we are always here. Meetings don't have to be during school hours” (M. Machado, reflective memo, November 11, 2019). At one CPR meeting a community member shared, “You have to do more of this work with families. You are the only principal doing this work in the district. Schools don’t work with their community partners to their full potential, and the community organizations don’t necessarily know how to work collaboratively with the schools” (R. Harris-Herron, meeting notes, October 30, 2019).

As a school leader I learned that a majority of the parent meetings such as Back to School Night, Open House, and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that I have held at school are using a traditional lecture mode. The engagement in PAR Cycle One showed that there is a different way to engage parents and that as a leader I have influence on how the space is created. During PAR Cycle One, I learned that for meaningful conversations among parents and teachers to happen, I needed to be vulnerable and share my own personal stories. Parents and teachers needed to see the human side of the leader—which means seeing the leader as a person, not just a professional in the role of principal. I needed to strategically shift the meeting place, space, and teaching style. The safe space is created by the members of the group honestly showing that each story shared has a value. In the next cycle, I continued exploring how to shift meeting spaces to support meaningful conversations.

Implications for the PAR Cycle Two

From the evidence collected in the PAR Cycle One, we learned how the storytelling process can build meaningful communities across differences. At CPR group meetings, we uncovered that telling stories created a bond among participants. Members of each constituent group expressed feelings of connection to others. At the CLE, the stories that parents shared created a sense of connectedness with other parents and helped teachers to understand the cultural wealth and assets of the parent community. Now, we understand that the storytelling process led to two important lessons learned.

First, storytelling allowed the CPR group participants to build relationships. These relationships would support them to function as a team to take on the hard work of designing a curriculum. Second, storytelling is the content of the curriculum that we designed in the PAR Cycle Two of the project.

An important part of the action and reflection from the PAR process was to take the learnings from PAR Cycle One to review and refine plans for the next cycle. Therefore, as I anticipated Cycle Two of the project, I planned on using what we heard from the stories shared by families at the CLE meeting as the foundation for the design of the curriculum of storytelling for our fifth-grade students. The CPR group and I planned on continuing to meet to design the curriculum. We planned for a second CLE in which we would invite parents to see how the family stories shared at the CLE informed the curriculum that the CPR group designed. At the second CLE, we would ask parents for their feedback about the storytelling curriculum that we aim to implement at the school.

In addition, in PAR Cycle Two I planned to bring to the attention of the CPR group participants that when designing the storytelling curriculum, we needed to place emphasis on storytelling as a process that builds community across differences. I planned to draw attention to the teachers to change the CPR group meeting time to allow for more parents to join the meetings.

Based on the learning from the cycle, I planned to refine the research codes and continue reflecting about the implications of the PAR project on my leadership growth. In PAR Cycle One, I used inductive coding and ended the cycle with more than 100 codes. While the inductive process helped me to identify one emerging theme, I needed to collapse some codes and look for codes that overlapped. In PAR Cycle Two, I plan on refining the research codes identified in Cycle One and on organizing the categories into emerging themes.

Lastly, one unanticipated occurrence at the CLE was that several families brought all their children, from toddlers to fifth-graders. The finding is important for planning logistics for future CLEs. For parents, family includes more than the traditional nuclear concept of just the fifth-grade student and parents. They used the family meeting to include not just the immediate family but also younger brothers and sisters and grandparents. This was a demonstration of familial capital (Yosso, 2006).

Chapter Summary

The chapter described the process, the emerging categories, the emerging theme, and implications of the results of PAR Cycle One. I detailed the story of the process through which the CPR group and I began our work. I described how, through participating in the storytelling process, CPR members were able to establish relationships and a sense of community among the members. I then shared the emerging theme of storytelling to build community across differences and the categories that explain how the process works. Data and emerging categories had implications for three of my research questions, implications for my leadership growth, and implications that guided me to refine the action plan for PAR Cycle Two.

In the next chapter, I describe the process that we (CPR group) engaged in to co-develop a curriculum of storytelling for our fifth-grade students.

CHAPTER SIX: PAR CYCLE TWO

CO-PRACTITIONER RESEARCHER (CPR) MEETINGS AND CURRICULUM DESIGN

The goal of the participatory action research (PAR) project and study is to center the voices of Students of Color in the fifth-grade classrooms. To address this goal, the co-practitioner research (CPR) group engaged in cycles of inquiry to learn how to co-design a curriculum that brings the history and stories of Students of Color into the classrooms. In the first cycle of the PAR project, we established a co-practitioner research (CPR) group and co-planned a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) that brought together Families of Color and teachers to tell family stories.

In PAR Cycle Two (January-early May, 2020), we focused on how to use the CLE stories as a the foundation for designing of a storytelling curriculum for fifth-grade students and ensuring that teachers had experiences that would prepare them to design and facilitate the curriculum in their classrooms at the start of the third cycle. By the conclusion of the second cycle, the CPR group developed a storytelling curriculum by analyzing what we had learned from the family stories and using them to inform the curriculum design.

I provide an overview of the cycle by detailing the interruptions from COVID-19 and our actions during the cycle to design the curriculum. Then, I present emerging themes and use organizational theory to analyze stories as elements of the organizational culture. Lastly, I explain how the evidence from this cycle informed the research questions, the storytelling curriculum design, and our plans for PAR Cycle Three.

Participatory Action Research: Cycle Two Activities

In the middle of PAR Cycle Two, the world was hit with the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). In a matter of hours, the city issued a shelter-in-place order. All schools closed. Central office administrators required principals to get students and teachers ready for distance learning. The pandemic temporarily affected the PAR project activities and CPR group member participation. Before the pandemic, we planned to have five monthly CPR group meetings (in person), a week of a trial run of the curriculum units, and a second CLE with parents and students. We moved all PAR activities online. Although some members were not able to attend, the CPR continued to meet and collected and analyzed data (see Table 8). Because the pandemic affected Communities of Color the most and exacerbated the historic inequalities in educational access that Students of Color already faced (Bautista, 2020), we shifted our attention to supporting them. For example, during the first three weeks of the closure, the school district located the food distribution site three miles away from the community that needed it the most, forcing families to walk there daily to acquire food. Only after two weeks of advocacy, the superintendent opened a food space near us. With a small group of volunteers, I had the daunting task of dismantling Chromebook carts and distributing them to students, but many families did not have internet access, which complicated virtual learning. As we attended to these family and student needs, we did have monthly CPR meetings, in person in January and February and virtually until early May (see Table 8 and Figure 10).

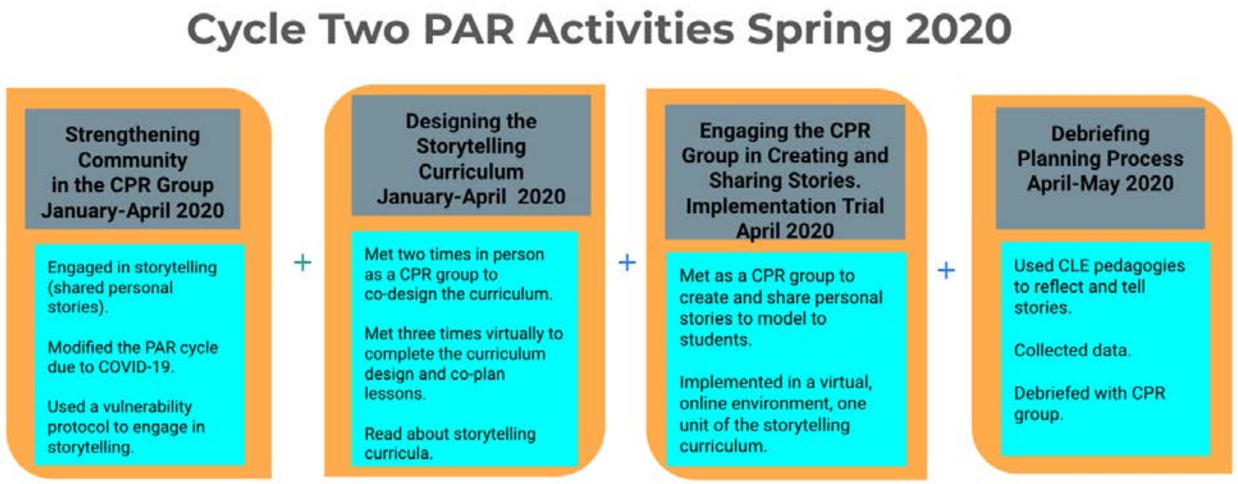
CPR Meetings

In PAR Cycle Two, I intentionally planned the meeting agendas to engage the members consistently in sharing personal stories to strengthen our sense of community (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In responding to COVID-19, we were committed to reframing the experience from

Table 8

PAR Plan Cycle Two

Activities	Key Personnel	Timeline	Data Collection
CPR Meeting #1: CPR group identified CLE learning.	CPR group	January 27, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
CPR Meeting #2: Planning. Identified themes for the curriculum.	CPR group	February 27, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
CPR Meeting #3 (virtual): Building community in the CPR group. COVID-19. Storytelling.	CPR group	March 27, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
CPR Meeting #4-5 (virtual): Curriculum design and lesson planning.	CPR group	April 1 & April 8, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo • Lesson plans (Google document)
CPR Meeting #6 (virtual): Lesson plan. CPR group shared written stories to be share with students.	CPR group	April 20, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo • Artifact: CPR digital stories
Trial run of the curriculum in virtual classrooms.	CPR group	April 21-27, 2020	• Observations Memo
CPR Meeting #7 (virtual): CPR group debriefed lesson implementation	CPR group	April 27, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
CPR Meeting #8 (virtual): CPR group reflected on Cycle Two process.	CPR group	May 4, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo • Artifact: journey lines



Cycle Two PAR Activities Spring 2020

Strengthening Community in the CPR Group January-April 2020

Engaged in storytelling (shared personal stories).

Modified the PAR cycle due to COVID-19.

Used a vulnerability protocol to engage in storytelling.

+

Designing the Storytelling Curriculum January-April 2020

Met two times in person as a CPR group to co-design the curriculum.

Met three times virtually to complete the curriculum design and co-plan lessons.

Read about storytelling curricula.

+

Engaging the CPR Group in Creating and Sharing Stories. Implementation Trial April 2020

Met as a CPR group to create and share personal stories to model to students.

Implemented in a virtual, online environment, one unit of the storytelling curriculum.

+

Debriefing Planning Process April-May 2020

Used CLE pedagogies to reflect and tell stories.

Collected data.

Debriefed with CPR group.

Figure 10. Cycle Two activities, spring 2020.

crisis to opportunity, and as a CPR group we gained experience, built stronger relational trust, and developed our facilitation skills as a result of virtual meetings. Dewey (1938) states that every experience should be a moving force for change. In designing the activities for participants, I emphasized that CPR agendas should always include meaningful experiences. I integrated CLE protocols to continue building trust among CPR members. The stories created a sense of belonging to the CPR group and strengthened their relationships as school colleagues.

Data Collection

Throughout PAR Cycle Two, I collected and examined several forms of data: (1) transcriptions of meetings; (2) CLE artifacts; and (3) reflective memos to record my thoughts after CPR meetings. The memos served as a memory tool to collect my reflections, assumptions, misconceptions, and insights. To analyze the evidence collected, I used open coding (Saldaña, 2016). I read the documents collected, the CPR transcripts, written stories, journey lines, and memos to identify emerging codes. I clustered the codes for each research question. Next, I compared those patterns to the codes identified in PAR Cycle One and arranged those patterns into emerging categories and preliminary themes. At the end of the cycle, I conducted a member check with the CPR team to examine the preliminary findings of the cycle (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Next, I describe the process by which the CPR team engaged in curricular design.

Engaging the Co-Practitioner Group (CPR) in the Curriculum Design

Guajardo et al. (2016) explain that the CLE process must be taught and learned. Through actively participating in CLE processes, learning and action occur. In the work of designing the storytelling curriculum, I engaged the CPR members in learning CLE practices and methods by experiencing storytelling during the meetings and by engaging CPR members in conversation and reflection afterwards. Using a constructivist approach in which participants shared their insights and perspectives, the CPR group first engaged in a process of reflection about the family stories. We used the six virtual meetings to unpack the lessons from the CLE and to use what we learned from the families, the Learning Exchange pedagogies, and the literature regarding critical storytelling. Figure 11 illustrates the curriculum design cycle's four steps, learning from the families, analyzing the storytelling process; lesson design; and creating stories.

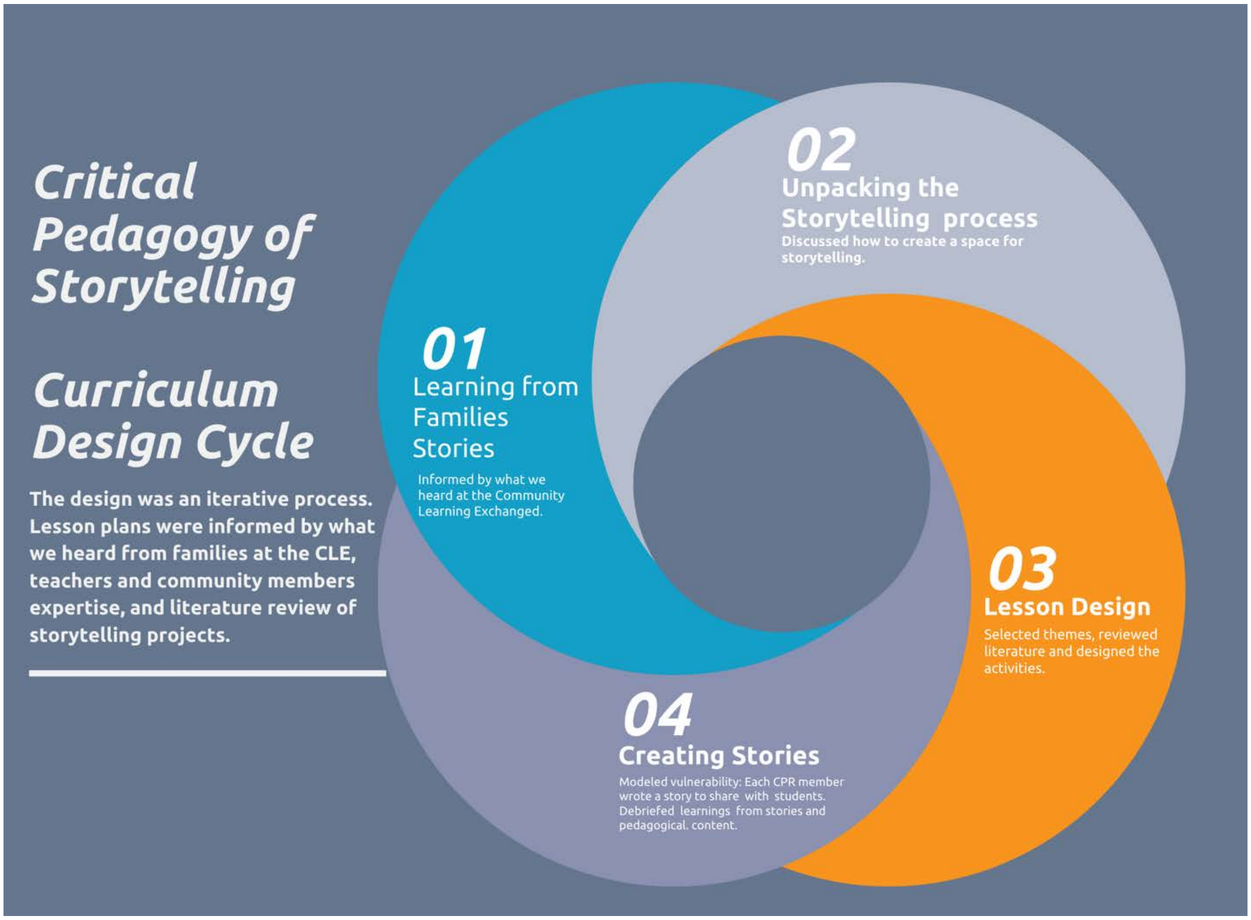
Learning from Families' Stories

CPR members engaged in conversations to reflect on what we learned from the family stories. Taking a closer look at the artifacts (drawings and stories) that families shared at the CLE, we engaged in collective analysis by holding circles and recording our conversations. For one of the circles, we asked two questions: What is a story that you heard at the CLE that you hold in your heart? What stories did you hear from families that were important to you?

As the facilitator of the CPR group meeting, I modeled interpreting family stories that were reflected in the drawings from the CLE. After each CPR member shared their insights, we co-analyzed what we learned from the stories. At subsequent CPR meetings, CPR members reviewed the preliminary categories from PAR Cycle One and compared them with the CPR group insights. These conversations led to the identification of the following themes for the Critical Pedagogy of Storytelling curriculum: family, connectedness, identity, resilience; and traditions and food. Instead of rushing ahead to the curriculum implementation, the CPR members engaged in collective, qualitative analysis, and we deepened our relational trust and our resolve for the project through these actions.

Unpacking the Storytelling Process: Creating a Space for Storytelling

Storytelling is more than a telling a story; "[i]t is the space that we created for participants to tell their stories" (M. Machado, 2020, reflective memo, January 8, 2020).



Critical Pedagogy of Storytelling

Curriculum Design Cycle

The design was an iterative process. Lesson plans were informed by what we heard from families at the CLE, teachers and community members expertise, and literature review of storytelling projects.

01
Learning from Families Stories

Informed by what we heard at the Community Learning Exchanged.

02
Unpacking the Storytelling process

Discussed how to create a space for storytelling.

03
Lesson Design

Selected themes, reviewed literature and designed the activities.

04
Creating Stories

Modeled vulnerability: Each CPR member wrote a story to share with students. Debriefed learnings from stories and pedagogical. content.

Figure 11. Critical pedagogy of storytelling. Curriculum Design Cycle.

Guajardo et al. (2016) explain that "at the core of the social learning theory is the need to create safe spaces and healthy relationships for participants, learners, and teachers alike to share their stories" (p. 24), including modeling vulnerability so that participants feel comfortable enough to share personal stories in public. CPR members reflected on what a safe and welcoming environment to share stories meant and how we created safe space for families that could be replicated in classrooms. For example, we altered the physical space at the CLE to make participants feel welcome to the meeting by creating circles, playing music, and offering dinner. We then discussed how to create "invitational space" in our classrooms by incorporating the same conditions of the inviting space for our families at the CLE into our classrooms.

At another CPR meeting, we reflected on the emotional aspect of creating a safe space at the CLE by modeling vulnerability. For example, Remi and I shared family stories, which allowed CLE participants to be vulnerable in return. After reflecting, the CPR group decided that to create a safe space in each classroom for the students to tell their stories, we needed to model the vulnerability that telling this type of story would require. Only after these collaborative experiences were we ready to design lessons.

Lesson Design

As we began to design the lesson, the COVID-19 pandemic intervened, but we persevered. We reviewed the list of themes that we previously had agreed on for the curriculum and selected the first theme of "connectedness" to begin the detailed lesson planning. Since the pandemic caused our city to impose a shelter-in-place mandate, we felt that this isolation made us appreciate our relationships with family, friends, and loved ones and that we needed to emphasize connectedness. At each lesson design meeting, I used the following prompting questions: (1) How can we utilize the learning from the CLE when lesson planning? (2) How can we replicate the safe space that we created with families in the fifth-grade classrooms so students can open up and tell their stories?

We agreed on these guiding principles for the storytelling curriculum:

- Our work is grounded in the beliefs that the histories and voices of the students and their families are missing in the curriculum and are essential to creating a new narrative of Students of Color in school communities.
- Teaching and learning must honor the cultural wealth that families bring into schools (Gutiérrez, 2013).
- Stories from the students teach all of us.
- Stories can teach others to co-construct a more just world (Delgado Bernal, 1998).
- Stories build and rebuild community because people show care and concern through telling their stories.
- Storytelling builds community across differences.
- Engaging in storytelling before creating the activities for our students builds trust.

The group decided that we would gather stories about how we were relating in new ways with family and friends due to the mandated shelter-in-place. We agreed on creating the space for storytelling by first modeling vulnerability for the students. We decided to include a debrief after each lesson to ask students how the participation in the storytelling process made them feel.

Creating Stories to Model Vulnerability Virtually

In PAR Cycle One, we learned that when we modeled the process of vulnerable storytelling by sharing our stories, we created a space where others could share with similar vulnerability. We learned that when the CPR group members told stories to each other during meetings, a sense of belonging and connectedness resulted. When families told each other stories, the same sense of belonging and connectedness occurred. Now in PAR Cycle Two, the CPR team discussed how to apply the learning about modeling vulnerability to our students. We wrote stories about connectedness during the shelter-in-place as we were having the pandemic experience together. We discussed how storytelling humanizes everybody. As Remy stated, "We all have a story, and stories give us a sense of connection with others" (R. Heron, CPR meeting notes, February 27, 2020).

To plan for modeling vulnerability virtually, members told the stories to each other virtually and received feedback from CPR group members before sharing them with the students. When planning the meeting agenda for the CPR group team to tell their connectedness stories, I followed the same lesson format as the one we planned for the students. I began with a poem and an image to create the space for storytelling. Then, I invited participants to tell their stories. At the end of the meeting, I invited participants to debrief about how listening to the story made them feel. We provided feedback to each other about the stories shared.

Debriefing the Planning Process

Dewey (1938) emphasized the importance of genuine reflection to support the quality and meaning-making of an experience. Throughout CPR meetings, I incorporated various CLE pedagogies and reflection prompts. At the end of the cycle, I used journey lines to reflect on the process of designing the curriculum (Guajardo et al., 2016). The journey line prompts were: How was this planning process different for you? When was it difficult? When did you get some clarity? What was an opportunity? At the next CPR meeting, participants spoke about their experiences and analyzed each other's journey lines reflecting on what they heard in stories shared. As a result of these activities and data analysis, I describe the emerging themes based on the data from the CPR group meetings, reflective memos, and interactions.

Emerging Themes

Evidence offers a strong indication that engaging in the process of co-designing a curriculum of storytelling was meaningful for the CPR group—both as a process to learn from the students and their families and as a process to understand the importance of storytelling. Three emergent themes from this cycle of inquiry include: (1) stories teach (2) teachers modeling vulnerability by sharing their stories, and (3) authentic dialogue. Figure 12 shows the emergent themes and categories from Cycle Two.

Stories Teach: Aha Moments

Throughout PAR Cycle Two, we engaged in reflection using circles and journey lines. Through discussing our experiences, we identified instances during the cycle that we refer to as “aha moments” when the project made sense for the participants and the importance of listening to the voices of students through their stories became clear. These moments occurred at the Fall 2019 Community Learning Exchange (CLE) and during the week of the trial run in Spring 2020.

Through listening to the stories at the CLE, teachers began to learn about the cultural wealth of families (Yosso, 2006). For example, at the CLE debrief, Jessica, a fifth-grade teacher, said, “The families were talking about traditional food, and it was passed on from generations and generations ... it was like traditional generational food” (J. Brown, CPR meeting notes, January 8, 2020). Adele, a fifth-grade teacher, shared that she learned about some parents’ lands and regional food. She stated, “I was thinking about how, like, a regional or not even regional, but like you know there's Samoan, and so much of the food that they told me about and that was on their dinner table. There were fruits I don't know because they don't grow here” (A. Diamond, CPR meeting notes, January 27, 2020).

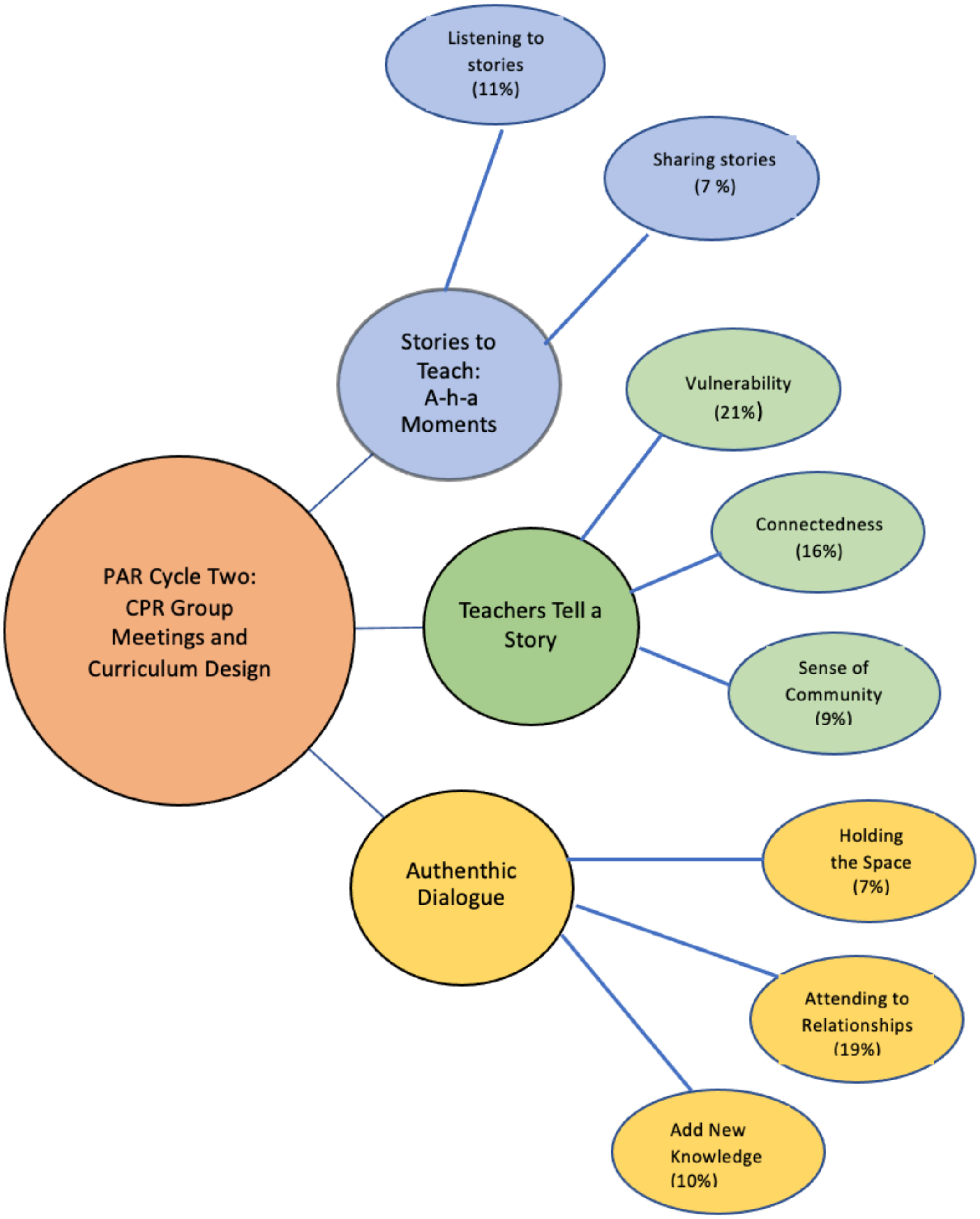

Listening to stories (11%)
Sharing stories (7 %)
Stories to Teach: A-h-a Moments
Vulnerability (21%)
Connectedness (16%)
PAR Cycle Two: CPR Group Meetings and Curriculum Design
Teachers Tell a Story
Sense of Community (9%)
Holding the Space (7%)
Authenthic Dialogue
Attending to Relationships (19%)
Add New Knowledge (10%)

Figure 12. PAR Cycle Two emergent themes.

When we heard the family stories, we had what I call “aha” moments. Adele captured hers using a journey line. Referring to her experience at the CLE with one of her fifth-grade students, Adele wrote:

> Seeing her explaining her family’s food-related traditions to other people, seeing her connect with other students over shared traditions, seeing other families’ excited reactions to her family’s traditions, as well as asking questions about new traditions of her classmates, seeing her and her mom sharing together and listening together as a team and with a huge grin on her face the entire time, that was so special. It really helped me understand why this project was so critical for our school community as a whole (A. Diamond, Journey line, May 4, 2020).

Jessica reflected that the stories heard at the CLE allowed her to make connections with others. She stated that for her the aha moment came as a result of finding connections with her students’ families. “Despite our differences, we found connections. That’s when it all clicked on my head where this project was going” (J. Brown, Journey Line, May 4, 2020).

Listening to the stories of the students during a trial run of the curriculum in Spring 2020 created another aha moment for CPR members. The week-long trial happened during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order. During this time, we were all going through an unprecedented experience, and each of us had a story to tell. As I reviewed my reflective memos from that week, similar codes emerged related to aha moments that previously had occurred about stories. For example, Jessica expressed:

> When the shelter-in-place order came, I could see this storytelling project fit into the needs of our community and our classrooms. We were all going through this confusing experience together, and [it] somehow broke down some of the connection barriers I was

> having with our families.... My students were open and honest in their stories and in their comments to each other (J. Brown, Journey line, May 4, 2020).

Alaina expressed that the high point of clarity in the project was the heart connection she felt by listening to the stories. While several participants recognized that it was hard for the students to communicate and connect through the virtual platform (Zoom), they felt that listening to their students' stories was so compelling that they worked out the logistics required to hear the stories virtually.

Teachers Tell a Story

During planning sessions, CPR members discussed how to create a space for storytelling for our fifth-grade grade students by modeling vulnerability. We had learned that, by being open and sharing personal stories, we created conditions for families to engage and share. We decided to incorporate those conditions in the storytelling curriculum by having teachers and CPR members tell their stories to students. Connectedness was the topic about which the CPR team decided to engage the students during the pandemic since it provided a common experience for everyone. Participants expressed that they connected with students by modeling vulnerability and crossing boundaries. In addition, they acknowledged that a sense of community allowed them to be vulnerable. Table 9 illustrates the categories of the emergent theme "teachers tell a story."

Vulnerability

In PAR Cycle One, we learned that vulnerability is critical to sharing personal stories in public. We uncovered two aspects of vulnerability, selective and equal vulnerability. Selective vulnerability refers to the idea that CPR participants gauge their level of comfort about what to share in their stories and what to leave out. Equal vulnerability occurs when CPR participants experienced storytelling in the same way as their students.

Table 9

Emergent Theme: Teachers Tell a Story

Emergent Category	Codes	CPR Meeting	Memos	Journey Lines	Written Stories	Total
Selective Vulnerability	Teller chose story	3	3	4	4	14
	Teller chose content	2	2	4	5	13
Equal Vulnerability	Seeing as a person	3	2	2	1	8
	Feel supported	4	1	1	0	6
Connectedness	Crossing. B: Open-up to other people	3	2	3	1	9
	Crossing. B: Take risk to tell a story	2	1	3	0	6
	Connect to each other story shared	2	4	3	0	9
	Feeling connected to students	4	1	3	0	8
Sense of Community	Feeling safe	3	2	0	0	5
	Feeling comfortable	2	1	1	0	4
	Safe space/ container	3	1	1	0	4
	Going deep	4	1	0	0	5

Hammond (2015) describes selective vulnerability as a trust generator. "People respect and connect with others who share their own vulnerable moments" (p. 79). Many factors go into deciding what story to share. "Are you in public or at home? Are you feeling self-consciousness about it? Have you reflected about it yourself? Is this the true story?" (C. Cann, personal communication, April 26, 2020). In PAR Cycle Two of the study, CPR members experienced selective vulnerability when sharing stories with each other and with the students.

When the shelter-in-place order came, we all felt vulnerable. During our CPR debrief meetings and journey line presentations, participants spoke frequently about selective vulnerability when sharing their stories. For example, Niajalah, a CPR member and school counselor, stated:

> I'm a person who processes things that happen in my experience. So sharing a story about something that I'm currently going through is not probably something I would typically do. I need to be comfortable with my story. I need to be comfortable with what I'm feeling and my emotions and how I'm, you know, making sense of what's happening before I can offer that to someone. And because this is something that we're doing based on, like, right now, I haven't had a chance to do that" (N. Black, CPR meeting notes, April 27, 2020).

Another participant, sharing her experience about COVID-19 and the impact that the pandemic had on her family, expressed selective vulnerability: "I don't really want to put my family struggles with the pandemic in stories I share with the kids" (A. Lee, CPR group meeting notes, April 27, 2020). At another CPR meeting, I shared with the CPR members that I felt comfortable sharing my story with them but that I was not open enough to share pictures of my family with the students because it was something I hadn’t done before. I was being cautious about what to share (M. Machado, reflective memo, April 27, 2020).

Equal vulnerability “refers to the feelings that teachers, students, and parents want to be seen as people. It is the feeling of seeing me as a person” (C. Cann, personnel communication, April 26, 2020). When teachers tell a story to their students, they are themselves experiencing the process of storytelling and the vulnerability that accompanies the revelations. In the lesson plan, teachers shared a personal story with students in the same way that students shared stories with them. Equal vulnerability is a two-way street; participants need to engage in both roles, to be listeners and storytellers. For example, when I asked CPR participants how sharing your story with each other and students made them feel, participants expressed that they felt heard by the CPR group and they felt seen as people.

Alaina expressed, “It definitely feels good to share about myself and feel supported by the group” (A. Lee, CPR group meeting notes, February 27, 2020). Later in the project during the curriculum implementation trial week, she wrote a powerful story about connectedness during the COVID-19 to share with her students, which turned out to be her greatest contribution to the curriculum design. She had forgotten the logistics of teaching in her deep engagement with storytelling. Responses from participants indicated that to be open and vulnerable with the students and their peers, they needed to move from the role of listener to the role of storyteller. For example, Jessica shared, “My first thought was me listening to people storytelling, not me storytelling … which is not something I love to do” (J. Brown, CPR group meeting notes, February 27, 2020).

Connectedness

In PAR Cycle One we learned that listening to other people's stories made participants feel connected. In PAR Cycle Two, discussions with the CPR group members gave us insights to other emerging categories related to connectedness. Most commonly, we discussed crossing boundaries and a sense of connectedness to each other's stories.

During CPR planning lessons, journey line presentations and debrief meetings, CPR members spoke multiple times about crossing boundaries to connect with the students. The concept of border-crossing comes from Guajardo et al. (2016) and refers to "the ability and willingness to experience a world that is outside our daily comfort zone" (p. 26). Participants reflected that telling their stories to others required a willingness to let their guards down and open themselves to the students. For example, Jessica expressed, "I needed to break down those walls so I can really connect with my families" (M. Machado, reflective memo, May 4, 2020). When discussing the walls, Jessica said, "I am not a feeling-driven person. Expressing my feelings is not something I think about when I think about the work of coworkers" (J. Brown, CPR group meeting notes, May 4, 2020).

Participants drew on feelings of connectedness from two places: sharing stories with each other and sharing stories with students. For example, at a CPR meeting, Adele shared:

> The Community Learning Exchange and the connectedness unit were opportunities to not just learn more about our students, but to be open and vulnerable with them and for them to practice this and to have moments of real connection— connection because of our shared traditions and/or means of connection during this time, but also because hearing and learning about our differences allowed for what I think was an even deeper connection (A. Diamond, CPR meeting notes May 4, 2020).

At another meeting, Remy expressed, “Sharing stories humanize everybody; we all have a story…. [that we] can recreate and validate … then we can rewrite narratives that are playing in our heads as we tell our story” (Remy, CPR group meeting notes, February 27, 2020).

Alaina shared that listening to CPR members stories allows her to write her own story. She expressed,

> I’ve listened to your stories. I really realized that my experience was different than yours. Like, everyone else in this group has people they're sheltering with, and I don’t. Because of the connections I made, I was able to dig deep and figure out what made me feel and how that made this situation different for me than you guys and definitely for the kids. (A. Lee, CPR group meeting notes, April 27, 2020).

Sense of Community as the Container to Tell a Story

For the CPR group members to tell their stories, they needed to establish a “container” for sharing, meaning a safe space. During the lesson planning and debrief meetings, participants said that a sense of community allowed them to be vulnerable. Teachers spoke about feeling safe telling their stories to each other at CPR meetings and telling the story to their students. For example, Alaina told us, “The container matters so you can go deep. I enjoy going as deep as people are able to take” (A. Lee, CPR group meeting notes, February 27, 2020).

Adele expressed, “I think we have the benefit of already having communities in our three classrooms. Students feel comfortable being vulnerable” (Adele, CPR group meeting notes, January 27, 2020). At another meeting, Alaina shared, “I found sharing my story was easy to do with us [CPR members] and easy to do with the kids because the container is already there with my kids, and even though we’re in a different space [due to COVID-19], I still feel close to the kids" (A. Lee, CPR group meeting notes, April 27, 2020). These stories and reflections set the stage for all feeling as if their dialogical interactions are authentic and generative.

Authentic Dialogue

Freire (1970) emphasized that dialogue requires both reflection and action. When people engage in authentic dialogue, they reflect not simply internally but to influence change. The CPR meetings allowed for authentic dialogue with others. Rather than the traditional hierarchical approach in which information is presented to teachers, students, and parents using a banking method of depositing, we employed a Freirean approach to our collaborative work. The CPR members and I were co-learners of the curriculum design. At CPR meetings, the members reflected on what they learned from the parents at the fall CLE meeting and engaged in reflective dialogue about how to take action and incorporate the learning into the curriculum. As I reflected in my memos, CPR agendas, and meeting notes, evidence from where participants and I drew meaning from authentic dialogue fell into three overarching categories: holding space, attending to relationships, and adding new stories. In the evidence on relationships, tensions surfaced, and I discuss those in relation to using the tensions to deepen our collective spirit.

Holding the Space

For authentic dialogue to occur, a facilitator needs to move beyond creating a container and to actively hold space for discussion during meetings. Early in the PAR cycle, each of my memos referred to my goal of ensuring that the voices of the parents and community members be included and honored in the curriculum design and at the CPR meetings. For example, at the first CPR meeting of the second cycle, we discussed the learning from the family stories. The conversations then led to identifying themes for the critical pedagogy of storytelling curriculum. Through opportunities for dialogue and reflection, we ensured that individual preferences of the

CPR group members did not drive the curriculum choices. Instead, we drew from the collective knowledge of all CPR members—teachers, parents, school counselor, and community members.

At CPR meetings, authentic dialogue occurred when CPR members were not competing for or debating their ideas but rather trying to understand each other. We sought to draw from the collective knowledge. For example, I reminded participants of our agreements to listen to and learn from each other and the families, to center the voices that are more marginalized in society, to value reciprocity and co-learning, to work from assets to address challenges, to speak from their hearts and truths, and to build and sustain trust. The efforts were successful as participants expressed the feeling that there was a place for everyone to contribute. At the end of the PAR Cycle Two debrief, Adele shared:

> The planning process was different in that it was much more collaborative than normal, especially in regard to the different perspectives and voices that were represented during the planning process, because we had people of different roles collaborating together, and there were different races and genders represented. I feel like we are able to create tasks that were that much more meaningful and authentic for our students. I really appreciated and thought it was pretty amazing how at every meeting, whether it was virtual or in person, every voice was heard, respected, and considered (A, Diamond, CPR group meeting notes, May 4, 2020).

Attending to the Relationships in the CPR Group

Attending to the relationships in the CPR group emerged as important category of authentic dialogue. Guajardo et al. (2016) explained that "the essential parts of a conversation are the relationship(s) between or among the participants and the important moments in a conversation that stimulate the persons participating in the conversation to reflect and act" (p.

88). In the PAR study, attending to the relationships means instances where I as a meeting facilitator explicitly reminded participants about the equal participation of parents in conversations and instances when tensions arose in meetings. Throughout the project, my memos referenced instances where I reflected about equity in what voices were heard at the CPR planning sessions.

I named the tensions that arose at the meetings. The CPR meeting minutes included ten references to reflecting on and explicitly naming the tensions and then brainstorming how to proceed at the next meeting. For example, at the second CPR meeting of the cycle, we discussed that in the project we were learners and that our students' stories would teach us. I drew participants' attention to the tension created by each of them having their own individual ideas about what to include in the curriculum. I then reminded CPR members that the project aimed to bring student voices into the school. I reminded teachers about our privilege and the power we hold as teachers and administrators.

I identified three types of tensions that surfaced at CPR meetings: logistics of the meetings, relinquishing control to allow for collaboration to occur, and infusing the content of the curriculum with the voices of Communities of Color. During PAR Cycle Two, I tabulated instances in which moments of tension regarding meeting logistics. Participants spoke about the number of meetings (eight times), time and location of the meetings (nine times), and how to utilize Zoom as the virtual platform for the meetings (eight times). Teachers felt that there were other projects happening at the school at the same time and that it was difficult for them to manage the competing demands. Teachers felt overloaded by the need to participate in rolling out the new literacy curriculum; attend school and district meetings; restorative practices; and the PAR project. For example, Jessica shared, “I began to feel like I was spreading too thin, and I was having trouble giving my attention to yet another project, this identity project" (J. Brown, Journey line, May 4, 2020).

Tensions about the time of the meetings involved adjusting the time to allow for parents and community members to participate. At the CPR end of the PAR Cycle Two debrief, participants still spoke about tensions from December 2019 about planning the Community Learning Exchange. They recounted that the team needed to consider the busy holiday schedule as well as which day of the week and what time to hold the event to allow for parents to participate. We acknowledged that similar logistical tensions arose in deciding on the time and date of the Zoom meetings after the pandemic forced the school to close.

At the CPR debrief at the end of the PAR Cycle Two, participants spoke eleven times about how different it felt to participate in the PAR process because educators are used to being in control of planning. Alaina stated, "I have to plan everything out for me to think that it works" (A. Lee, CPR group meeting notes, May 4, 2020). Participants expressed that in their classrooms they felt in control of their lessons. According to participants, the PAR project presented the opportunity to learn different ways to plan and that one person does not have to control the whole process. Alaina expressed her discovery by stating, "We don't have to control everything for it to be really nice … And I felt that everyone was participating" (A. Lee, CPR group meeting notes, May 4, 2020). Niajalah added, "You just need to be open to other ways of doing things. When you become more open, you realize that it can be more than what you would think" (N. Black, CPR group meeting notes, May 4, 2020).

Teachers usually make curricular decisions, plan lessons, and deliver instruction without engaging with the community they serve. Planning lessons with parent input was new for teachers, and as a result tensions surfaced. Evidence from my memos, interviews, and CPR meetings minutes indicate eight instances of tensions during the lesson planning process about informing the curriculum choices with the voices and wisdom of the Communities of Color. Early in the PAR Cycle Two process, my memos referenced tensions at meetings related to the curriculum planning process. For example, at our second CPR meeting, we had a conversation about which storytelling prompts to use for the family as a theme for the curriculum. CPR members discussed prompts like: What are my family traditions? Niajalah asked, “When I think about what are my family traditions, how are we in relation to others? I think about whether we have a positive relationship, or it is a hot mess?” (N. Black, CPR group meeting notes, February 27, 2020). Then she added, “We might take for granted the value of family. Not every kid has a happy story. I want to make sure we have something that even people with a messed-up family can engage in a safe way” (N. Black, CPR group meeting notes, February 27, 2020). The temptation that we have as educators to use the dominant narrative to plan for our lessons was challenged by Niajalah’s counter-story. Collaborating with families invites real life with its glorious tensions which teach us about resilience, inspiration, and hope.

Tensions are part of the process of change, and explicitly naming and reflecting about them with CPR members provided opportunities for learning. As Adele stated: “Those difficulties yielded the most opportunities and moments of clarity” (A. Diamond, Journey line, May 5, 2020). Freire (1970) emphasizes that in dialogical education, facilitators present new knowledge only after people identify a problem and link the information or theory to the patterns that people have identified. As I analyzed data from the CPR meeting agendas, meeting notes, and memos to better understand the emergent theme of authentic dialogue, the category of adding new information at CPR meetings arose. In CPR group meetings, I introduced participants to new information by sharing the emerging categories of the PAR Cycle One, by telling stories, and by using literature related to our project. For example, at the second meeting of the PAR Cycle Two, I presented the coded data from Cycle One in charts and tables for the CPR members to discuss. I wanted members to consider if the categories represented what we heard from families at the CLE meetings. The information shared led to the identification of the themes of the curriculum.

In the CPR meeting minutes and memos, I had recorded 10 instances in which CPR members or I myself as the facilitator shared stories with the participants, not in response to a storytelling prompt but as a contribution to the dialogue. I presented counter-stories during the conversations as a vehicle to share cultural wealth, to learn from each other's wisdom, and to challenge other participants' ideas and perspectives. For example, at one CPR meeting participants were discussing including migration stories into the curriculum. There was a moment of tension and disagreement as some pointed out that not every racial group can trace its journey back in history as the majoritarian stories created a distorted story of Black migration. Remy then entered the dialogue to share a counter-story:

> The world migration is a hot button issue …How we as Black people got here. We will need to go back to Egypt... It is important to know what was going on in Africa at that time…In Africa, they were experiencing a golden period. It was an illustrious time there… And to understand that they did not take slaves from Africa. Right. They took, you know, genius, scientists, you know, people that with, you know, a specific knowledge and that, you know, help lay this land out. And then you could understand it from this area of Africa, which people were taken (R. Harris-Herron, CPR group meeting notes, February 27, 2020).

Remy's counter-story led teachers to engage in the conversation differently and opened a meaningful dialogue about how majoritarian stories prevail in history books. It allowed participants to reflect on how the PAR project was revolutionary as we would bring the stories missing in the history books, the counter-stories of the Communities of Color.

At another lesson planning meeting, the CPR team discussed how to create a safe space for students when sharing stories of traditional food. I shared a story about how I did not talk about my favorite food, black beans, because I thought it might leave me open to microaggressions. The story provided an insight in rethinking the lesson planning to incorporate children's literature before engaging students in sharing their traditional food stories.

We used literature during CPR meetings five times. The CPR team read excerpts from texts (Ahmed, 2018; Bell & Roberts, 2010; Guajardo et al., 2016). I selected these texts because they had an impact on my development as a professional and researcher and because they had connections to storytelling and classroom practice. As we discussed the texts, I pointed to the conceptual framework of the CLEs, and we discussed its key tenets. I discussed what defines a majoritarian story, who enables it, and who benefits from it. We engaged in conversations about the four functions of stories:

- Stories can oppress by privileging the views and experiences of dominant groups in society (Delgado,1989);
- Stories can resist and challenge perceived notions of Communities of Color (Delgado Bernal, 1998);
- Stories can teach others to co-construct a more just world (Delgado Bernal, 1998);
- Stories can build community (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Guajardo et al., 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

The literature review provided an opportunity to expand on participants' ideas and provided insights into why we needed to bring the voices of Students of Color into the curriculum.

In describing the three emerging themes from PAR Cycle Two, we learned that stories can teach and provide moments of insight. We understood better how participants in the storytelling sessions learned about their families' cultural wealth, and we incorporated material from the families' stories to create a storytelling curriculum. To ensure authentic dialogue, participants acknowledged that a safe space, a container, was necessary for dialogue among diverse groups of people. In the next section, I review theories of organizational culture and how stories are elements of the culture of the organization.

Stories as Elements of the Culture of an Organization

In Chapter Two of the PAR Project, I introduced the theory that stories have a function in society, that the dominant group creates its stories and uses those stories to achieve its goals, maintain its power, and reproduce the relationship of the oppressor and the oppressed (van Dijk, 1989). In this section, I review organizational culture literature to explain stories as elements of culture in the organization where the PAR project takes place. I describe how the culture of the school adheres to the values and beliefs of the White dominant group. I then describe how the school district tells a story to brand itself with certain values. Then I detail the tension between those values and the beliefs of members of the organization.

Stories as Key Cultural Manifestations

According to Martin (2002), the culture of an organization consists of "in-depth, subjective interpretations of a wide range of cultural manifestations" (p. 120). Stories, rituals, jargons, and humor are cultural manifestations that represent aspects of the culture of the organization. In the author's view, stories function in an organizational context and should be interpreted using broad perspectives taking into consideration how stories relate to other cultural manifestations, to the organization's shared beliefs, and to the organization's formal and informal practices.

For Bolman and Deal (2017), the culture of an organization is announced and communicated through its symbols, which can take many forms, including myths, vision, values, logos, heroes and heroines, rituals, ceremonies, metaphors, humor, stories, and fairy tales. Myths, vision, and values help to inspire an organization with purpose and determination. Heroes and heroines are human or living icons that exemplify the organization's core values. Rituals and ceremonies serve to offer faith and hope. Metaphors, humor, and play help to integrate complex ideas within the organization, establish solidarity among members, and draw people together. Stories and fairy tales communicate the organization's values and beliefs, unite its members, and resolve dilemmas (Cohen, 1969, as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2017). For the purpose of this PAR project, I concentrate on how organizations use stories to communicate a narrative of what the organization is and what it values.

The Function of Stories

People within organizations tell stories to convey a message to the community about their values, purpose, mission, and belief system. Bolman and Deal (2017) call these stories myths or sagas, the stories behind the stories. "They explain, express, legitimize, and maintain solidarity and cohesion. They communicate unconscious wishes and conflicts" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 254). Denning (2005) explicates that stories serve these functions: sparking action, communicating identity, transmitting values; fostering collaboration; quieting gossip, sharing knowledge; and leading people into the future.

An organization's stories are often encoded in mission statements. The stories as symbols maintain the narrative the organization wants to convey to the community. The Bohemian

Unified School District tells a story of itself as an equity-oriented organization in its vision: *As a result of their education, all students will become compassionate, collaborative, and creative problem solvers who are resilient, well-informed, civically engaged advocates for equity and social justice*. The organization prides itself on its commitment to creating a sustained, districtwide, restorative climate with a racial equity lens that increases access to education, holistic love, and support for students and families. To that end, the district's vision communicates that the organization prioritizes educational success and transformation for all students.

Another prominent story that the organization uses to brand itself and attract educators is the equity story encoded in the Anti-Bias Guiding Principles. This document was created by the District Assistant Superintendent with all nine elementary school administrators. The principles are a symbol for the organization; they guide professional development and the recruitment of new hires:

> We, the educators of the Bohemian Unified School District, are committed to working daily to interrupt, disrupt, and dismantle systems that act to replicate historical inequalities and commit to examining systemic, institutional, and individual biases that make us complicit in that replication. As a result, students will become creative, collaborative, compassionate, resilient, well-informed, and socially responsible advocates for equity and social justice as a result of their education, experience, and support from educators, families, and the community.

While the vision and principles are visible symbols, the question is what Bolman and Deal (2017) explain: "the values that count are those an organization lives, regardless of what it articulates in mission statements or formal documents" (p. 255). Although the Bohemian Unified

School District has codified its values formally, its implementation of those values is fraught with tension and inconsistencies. The findings from PAR Cycle Two reflect conflict between the stories told by the organization regarding its values and the beliefs held by members of the organization, especially in how to educate and what to expect from Students of Color. To understand the tension and inconsistencies within the organization, I use a differentiation theory of culture to describe the ambiguity regarding the implementation of the vision and mission statements.

Differentiation Culture

Martin (2002) describes differentiation as a focus on "cultural manifestations that have inconsistent interpretations, such as when top executives announce a policy and then behave in a policy-inconsistent manner" (p. 94). Ambiguity within the organization occurs when there are multiple, coexisting cultural values and beliefs. Figure 13 illustrates the differentiation perspective of cultures in organizations. It represents the perspective of culture on three levels: the macro (community/society), meso (district as an organization), and micro (school).

Organizations exist in the context of the society they serve. According to Mills (1997), we live in a world built on White domination, which permeates all aspects of life including economic, political, social, and educational dimensions. I concur that the educational system in our society is built on White culture (Emdin, 2016; Freire, 1970; Jimenez, 2010): as a result tensions and different interpretations exist in the educational system between democratic values of educating all students and the actions to address the needs of the Communities of Color.

Drawing from the work of Martin (2002) to analyze the culture of the district as an organization, we can see that there are inconsistent interpretations of the mission, vision, and district anti-bias framework. Inconsistencies abound as central office management leaders' well-

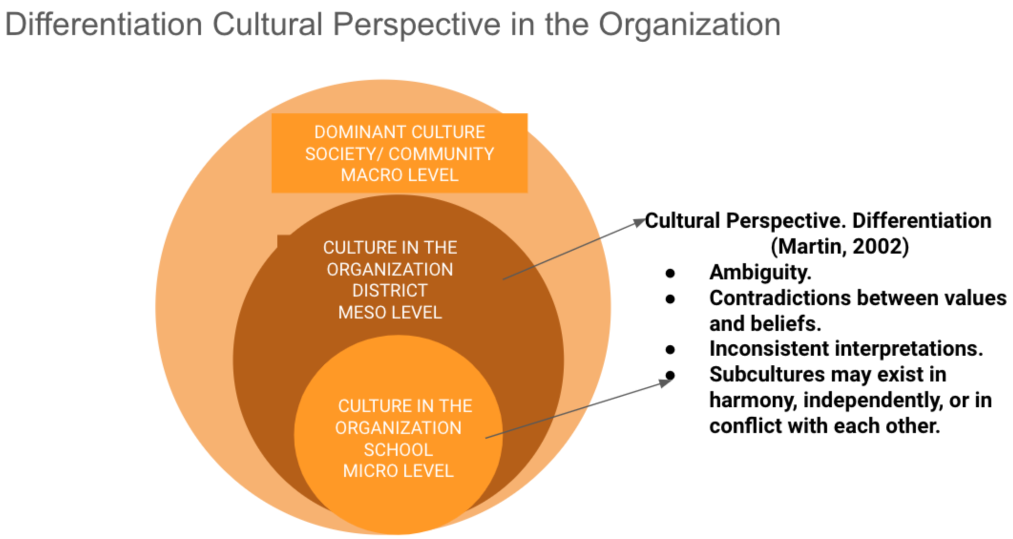

Differentiation Cultural Perspective in the Organization
DOMINANT CULTURE
SOCIETY/ COMMUNITY
MACRO LEVEL
CULTURE IN THE
ORGANIZATION
DISTRICT
MESO LEVEL
CULTURE IN THE
ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL
MICRO LEVEL
Cultural Perspective. Differentiation
(Martin, 2002)
Ambiguity.
Contradictions between values and beliefs.
Inconsistent interpretations.
Subcultures may exist in harmony, independently, or in conflict with each other.

Figure 13. Differentiation cultural perspective in the organization.

intentioned pronouncements about equity are not consistently translated into actions. A variety of subcultures in the organization form groups to share their perspectives on how to interpret the organization equity-oriented values. For example, the district top management team, the middle managers, and the district department heads each come from separate subcultures that coexist in conflict with each other within the district.

According to Martin (2002), novice subcultures differ from the more experienced cultures because the members bond based on similar beliefs and values instead of their position in the district. In the case of the district commitment to equity, one novice subculture develops the capacity of the educators to act upon the equity-oriented mission and vision of the organization. However, another novice subculture operates nearly independently and organizes around the work of the restorative practitioner coordinator, the director of Student Support Services, social workers, and the wellness coordinator. These professionals are the dissenting voices within the central office administration as their work focuses primarily on teaching the staff to examine their practices and to interrupt, disrupt, and dismantle systems that replicate historical inequalities. No matter how dedicated they are, at times they are marginalized because they are not fully a part of the larger experienced and identified leadership culture of the district.

Similar to the district, we find inconsistencies in the interpretation of the mission and equity vision and its implementation at the school level. Values and personal belief systems are often in conflict, especially in terms of how to utilize a restorative approach to discipline with Students of Color. For example, during staff meetings educators can engage in deep conversations about race, presenting arguments in support of disrupting and dismantling systems that replicate historical inequalities; however, when conflict arises with Students of Color, many educators fall back onto stereotypes, describing Students of Color as manipulators, out of control, or violent.

The subcultures in the school among teachers create groups to exchange their ideas on how to interpret and apply the organization's equity-oriented values. The group of fifth-grade teachers, the counselor, and parents who are participating in the PAR project can be seen as a subculture that aims to be a pocket of hope in the school organization by making the voices of the families and Students of Color heard in the school and in the current curriculum.

In drawing on the work of Martin (2002) and Bolman and Deal (2017) to describe stories as symbols that maintain the narrative the organization wants to convey, I describe several levels of addressing questions of equity in the district and school culture (see Figure 13). While the organizational stories are encoded in mission and vision statements, they are enacted in differing ways and do not offer a coherent direction for the district or the schools. However, at the school level this manifests as ambiguity and tension between values and beliefs in the organization. We are a small group creating a subculture within the school that we would like to extend to other colleagues and build cohesion among teachers as well as address our connection to parents and students. However, given the micropolitical climate replete in schools and districts, that is a tall order (Ball, 1987).

Implications

As I turn to larger implications of the PAR Cycle Two, I consider the research questions, implications for leadership, and implications for the PAR Cycle Three. During the second cycle, listening and learning from family stories surfaced as the most notable learning participants experienced in CPR group meetings.

Implications for the PAR Research Questions

As I reflected on my research questions and theory of action, I identified key categories related to the questions PAR study aimed to answer: (1) To what extent can a CPR team co-generate an asset-based curriculum of critical storytelling that validates student identity and history? (2) To what extent do school educators transform their practices and pedagogies to incorporate storytelling due to their participation? (3) To what extent do teachers shift their perceptions of Students of Color as a result of their engagement in this work? (4) How does my engagement in the PAR project transform my leadership practices? Two key lessons from PAR Cycle Two relate to the research questions: storytelling leads to learning and we can use our learning to develop the curriculum.

Storytelling led to insightful aha moments for the CPR group. Participants learned from the stories of their students and families and used the learning to plan one unit of the storytelling curriculum. They gained an understanding of the importance of stories to know more about themselves and others in the CPR team. This might indicate that teachers are shifting their perceptions of Students of Color. In addition, we learned the importance of CPR participants experiencing storytelling themselves. Our stories are not anecdotes but can be forces for change. Dewey (1938) emphasizes that “every experience is a moving force” (p. 38). He states that if an experience is meaningful for the participants, it will carry people through difficult places. The findings from PAR Cycle Two suggest that stories can be the moving force for the changes we

The PAR Cycle Two research helped to answer to what extent a CPR team can co-generate an asset-based curriculum of critical storytelling that validates student identity and history. When teachers experience the storytelling process themselves, they can co-create a curriculum. The lesson planning process included creating safe spaces for storytelling to occur.

Because storytelling is not an activity added to the work that teachers do in their classrooms, but rather a process that allows people to learn and connect with one another, teachers could see its benefits and uses for literacy instruction.

Implications for Leadership

Throughout Cycle Two, I continued the praxis of reflection that I had started in Cycle One and found myself listening attentively to the stories that we wrote for the fifth-grade students at the CPR meetings. At meetings I asked myself, what do I need to learn about myself as a leader to facilitate meaningful experiential learning at the CPR meetings? How can I facilitate authentic dialogue (Freire, 1970) during the process of designing the curriculum? Below, I describe three key lessons I gained as a leader from the process of co-designing the Critical Pedagogy Curriculum: how to maintain the space for meaningful conversations; being vulnerable as a leader; and facilitating complex conversations during the planning process.

Maintaining the Space for Meaningful Conversations

As a leader, I learned that maintaining the space for meaningful conversations is crucial. Before engaging in this PAR project, I planned for one powerful storytelling activity at the beginning of the school year and then, if time permitted, one at mid-year and one at the end. Through the PAR project, I learned how storytelling can build communities across differences. I found that to sustain practices and to promote this change, I needed to expand storytelling to be a regular activity for all staff and all meetings.

The safe space supported participant growth and provided space to express critical points of view. For example, during the end of the cycle reflection process, one teacher expressed, “I felt so comfortable sharing my stories with all of you. I don't know if I can do this with other people in the school” (A. Lee, CPR group meeting notes, May 4, 2020). As a leader, I gained understanding of my role in maintaining the relational safe space that invites honest conversations. For example, a counselor expressed at one of the virtual CPR meetings, “We can be completely honest here, right? I am not in a storytelling mood at this time (after the coronavirus). I think that this has been such a scary time for me and my family” (N. Black, CPR meeting notes, April 27, 2020). At another meeting, I shared with the participants that by listening to their stories of connectedness for the first unit, I learned that I needed to open myself up to the students during the curricular implementation.

From Selectively to Equally Vulnerable

Principals carry power in school organizations and rarely do principals allow themselves to be vulnerable within the organization. However, in PAR Cycle Two, I learned to be vulnerable with the teachers and students. When I told my story with the CPR members, I learned that I felt very comfortable sharing my family pictures and stories with the CPR members; however, I was feeling uncomfortable sharing personal details with the students. Therefore, the story that I wrote to share with the students omitted personal details. Instead of modeling vulnerability, I was modeling selective vulnerability. After I listened to the stories that the teachers wrote for their students, I was inspired to include personal details in my story. I included (real images of my family) so the students could see me as the mother of my twin teens, the daughter, the sister, the wife, and not just the principal of the school.

Conversations Are Critical and Central Pedagogical Processes

Freire (1970) emphasized that reflection and authentic dialogue are necessary to bring change into communities. Inspired by Freire’s work and Guajardo et al. (2016), I highlighted the importance of conversations as critical and central pedagogical processes. In the PAR project, I engaged in learning about how to facilitate authentic dialogue during the CPR curriculum design meetings. Through discussions, dialogue, and lesson planning meetings, the CPR group was able to take critical pedagogy ideas from theory to practice. When planning the curriculum, we found that although conversations are critical, the process can be frustrating for teachers. Generating curriculum from conversations was new to the teachers. For example, at one CPR meeting Jessica, a classroom teacher, expressed, “I just want someone to tell me what to do, and I will do it. Think and think doesn't work for me” (J. Brown, CPR meeting notes, May 4, 2020).

The creation of a curriculum and selection of themes by incorporating ideas from families was new for the teachers. The PAR project in its activist methodology form stands on beliefs in critical pedagogy, that critical inquiry generates action and transformation. In PAR Cycle Two, I found that the generative approach impacts the process as it requires sufficient time to engage in dialogue. The process itself might feel too long for the participants. For example, Niajalah, the counselor, expressed, “I felt like we spent so much time on trying to figure out what we were going to do in terms of building this curriculum. It was not this thing that we plan [individually], but really using all of this information from the families to decide the direction of the project” (N. Black, CPR meeting notes, May 4, 2020). As the facilitator of the meetings, I learned that it is crucial to take time to reflect as a group at the end of meetings. I realized that I needed to refine my skills to pause and when sensing frustration from the participants to ask reflective questions such as, What is coming up for you?

As a leader, I consistently made sure that all voices were heard at the CPR group meetings. I balanced the participation of teachers and community members. I wrote reflective memos at the end of each meeting noticing the patterns of participation during the planning sessions. I learned from Cycle Two the importance of naming the tensions about equity of voice at meetings. The role of the facilitator in holding participants accountable for listening to all voices is essential in meetings, especially for our parents and community members to experience the value and importance of their stories and contributions.

Implications as a Researcher

The participatory action research methodology that I used is a form participatory action research called activist research because it employs an explicit focus on social change and has a community orientation (hunter et al., 2013). Through building relationships, hunter et al. (2013) assert that we can "respond to place-based problems through processes of collective learning and community capacity building" (p. 26). This type of action research is "messy, iterative, and generative. [It is] constantly being made and remade in specific place-based contexts" (hunter et al., 2013, p. 26).

During the PAR Cycle Two process, I learned how messy and iterative this process can be. At the end of Cycle One, I envisioned a clear timeline that followed certain steps: CLE and learning from families; curriculum design; and implementation of the curriculum. Over the course of Cycle Two, I realized that the process of collaborating with participants from different constituencies was rich and nonlinear. For example, in the beginning of the project, I assumed that we would be able to write the curriculum in four CPR meetings and that there were three clear stages in the PA^{1}R Project. However, I learned that in the actual practice of designing a curriculum, the clear stages of the process become blurry. When participants engage in conversations, one idea leads to another, and the generation of ideas can take several meetings. In PA^{1}R Cycle Two, the CPR team met five times to plan the curriculum design and once to write the activities for the first unit of the curriculum. We then modified the project to continue the planning process of the rest of the units for the curriculum in PA^{1}R Cycle Three.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the process, the emerging themes, and implications of the results of PAR Cycle Two. In detailing the story of the process through which the CPR and I began our work of co-designing a curriculum for critical storytelling for fifth-grade students, I came to understand the importance of an iterative process of authentic dialogue to reflect and act. The emerging themes of stories taught us and now it was time to share fully with students what we had learned from families and not internally in this cycle. In the next chapter, I describe the process and findings that emerged from PAR Cycle Three in which our project culminates with implementation of the curriculum.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PAR CYCLE THREE

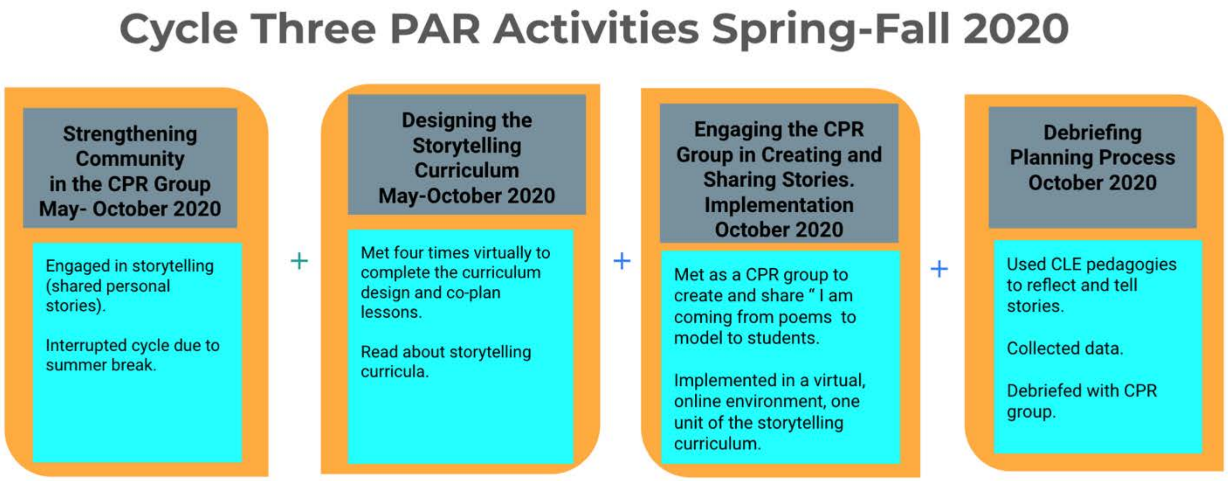
STORYTELLING CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The goal of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) project was to incorporate the voices, stories, and histories of Students and Families of Color in the fifth-grade curriculum. Using critical race theory, culturally responsive teaching, and critical race pedagogy as theoretical frameworks, the co-practitioner researchers (CPRs) engaged in three cycles of inquiry to learn how to co-design a storytelling curriculum aimed at bringing the stories and history of Students of Color into classrooms. In the first cycle, we formed a CPR group; through the Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs), we engaged Families of Color and teachers in sharing family stories. In the second cycle, we co-planned a storytelling curriculum that incorporated what we heard from families and learned from teachers, parents, and community members' expertise. In PAR Cycle Three, we built on the learning from PAR Cycle Two and implemented the storytelling curriculum in three 5th-grade virtual classrooms in Spring 2020 and Fall 2020.

In detailing the actions we took, I analyze how we enacted the storytelling curriculum in three 5th-grade classrooms in late spring and early fall 2020. As I explain the themes from this cycle, I then report three findings about how authentic dialogue in CPR meetings and in classrooms created conditions for learning and resulted in a critical literacy curriculum for students.

PAR Cycle Three Activities

PAR Cycle Three (April and October 2020) included activities organized to implement a storytelling curriculum in the fifth-grade classrooms (see Figure 14 and Table 10). First, we incorporated what we had learned about storytelling into a curricular design. Then, we implemented a virtual, online curricular unit (one in the spring with one fifth-grade class and one



Cycle Three PAR Activities Spring-Fall 2020

Strengthening Community in the CPR Group May- October 2020

Engaged in storytelling (shared personal stories).

Interrupted cycle due to summer break.

+

Designing the Storytelling Curriculum May-October 2020

Met four times virtually to complete the curriculum design and co-plan lessons.

Read about storytelling curricula.

+

Engaging the CPR Group in Creating and Sharing Stories. Implementation October 2020

Met as a CPR group to create and share " I am coming from poems to model to students.

Implemented in a virtual, online environment, one unit of the storytelling curriculum.

+

Debriefing Planning Process October 2020

Used CLE pedagogies to reflect and tell stories.

Collected data.

Debriefed with CPR group.

Figure 14. Cycle Three activities spring–fall 2020.

Table 10

PAR Plan Cycle Three

Activities	Key Personnel	Timeline	Data Collection
CPR Meeting #1: Lesson planning Theme 2	CPR group	May 11, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
CPR Meeting #2: Lesson planning Theme 3	CPR group	May 19, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
CPR Meeting #3: Lesson planning Theme 3	CPR group	May 27, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo
Fifth-grade teachers invited students to write stories. Jolia's story read at the fifth-grade promotion.	CPR group	May 28-Jun 9, 2020	• Artifact: Jolia's story
June Board of Education Meeting. Superintendent read Jolia's story.	CPR group	June 16, 2020	• Board meeting agenda
CPR Meeting #4: Building community in the CPR group. Storytelling. Lesson planning. CPR group shared written stories (poems) to be shared with students.	CPR group	September 21, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo • Lesson plans (Google document) • Artifact: CPR poems
Curriculum implementation "I Am Coming From" poems.	Teachers	September 22-October 13, 2020	• Artifacts: Digital stories • Observations • Memo
CPR Meeting #5: CPR group debriefed lesson implementation.	CPR group	October 13, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo • Artifact: CPR digital stories

Table 10 (continued)

Activities	Key Personnel	Timeline	Data Collection
CPR Meeting #6: CPR group reflected on Cycle Three process.	CPR group	October 27, 2020	• Agenda • CPR meeting notes • Memo • Artifact: Journey lines
Individual Meetings CPR group members.	CPR group	November 2-November 6, 2020	• Agenda • Interview meeting notes • Memo

in the fall with a new group of fifth-graders). As we strengthened community within the CPR group and in the planning and implementation of the curricular unit, teachers grew more confident in their ability to amplify students' voices in and beyond the school community.

Strengthening Community in the Co-Practitioner Group (CPR)

Storytelling builds community across differences (Delgado Bernal et al., 2016; Pérez-Huber & Cueva, 2012). Throughout PAR Cycles One and Two, I emphasized how CPR agendas needed to include meaningful experiences—meaning experiences where all participants could contribute and reflect. By integrating the CLE protocols to sustain trust among CPR members, we strengthened our adult storytelling processes. Due to changes in the fifth-grade teaching staff in Fall 2020, we welcomed Cerise, a new fifth-grade teacher. Because members of the CPR group had the experience of being vulnerable and sharing personal experiences, Cerise was able to engage in storytelling and stated that she felt a sense of belonging to the CPR group despite being a new member (C. Rose, CPR meeting notes, October 27, 2020).

Freire (1970) says that in problem-posing education, learners become critical co-investigators. In this case, the CPR group members were co-learners of critical pedagogies and co-investigators of how to plan a storytelling curriculum. To achieve our goal, we engaged in four virtual thematic planning meetings, which were conversational, informal, and filled with stories, laughter, and heartfelt conversations. We co-constructed the units from each other's ideas and developed activities for creating the virtual storytelling, modeled vulnerability, and relied on the students' lived experiences.

To build on what we had learned, we utilized the guiding principles for the storytelling curriculum and lesson design that we created in PAR Cycle Two to develop thematic units on family, identity, and racial awareness. We planned for the entire semester even though the official cycle of inquiry ended in October 2020. Finally, we applied the learning from PAR Cycle Two about modeling vulnerability to our students. We wrote “I Am Coming From” poems to share our identities with our students. To plan for modeling vulnerability virtually, I began by sharing examples of “I Am Coming From” poems. Then, I invited CPR participants to reflect. CPR members wrote poems, told stories to each other virtually, and received feedback from other members before sharing them with the students. After implementing the identity unit in the classrooms, teachers brought five “I Am Coming From” poems from their students to the CPR meeting. We listened to the stories and tried out the same prompts that teachers had utilized in their classrooms.

A notable example of how teachers support student stories and amplify student voice occurred at the end of the 2019–2020 school year. Adele Diamond, a CPR member and a fifth-grade teacher, shared that one student had written a story based on a teacher prompt. The story, entitled “My Skin is Not a Threat,” was written as a response to the George Floyd murder. I shared the story with the CPR group, the teaching staff, my supervisor, and the superintendent. We invited Jolia, the student author, to share her story at the fifth-grade promotion. Then, the superintendent asked permission to read her story at the June Board of Education meeting. Over the summer, Adele contacted Vox Media Production; they animated the story and shared it online. Jolia’s story had a vivid impact on the teachers, students, our school, the district and the project. CPR team members and teachers expressed that they were inspired by Jolia’s story and shared the story with their students. Jolia’s story and her teacher’s advocacy for the students’ stories were indicative of how important the children’s and families’ stories can be.

At the conclusion of the third cycle, we used journey lines, group interviews, and individual meetings to reflect on the process of designing the storytelling curriculum. I conducted focus group interviews and had individual meetings with CPR group members, which provided an opportunity to reflect about the changes in *praxis*. We discussed our transformation in the ways we perceive Students of Color and their families. As co-researchers, we engaged in dialogue about changes we noticed in our practices over the course of the PAR Cycles. (Appendix H provides the protocol we used for the focus group interview.)

Data Collection and Analysis

Throughout PAR Cycle Three, I analyzed these forms of data: meeting transcriptions, CPR group meeting artifacts, transcripts from focus group interviews and individual follow-up meetings with CPR members, and reflective memos. I read the documents, the transcripts, and poems from CPR members. I analyzed the journey lines, focus group interviews, and individual meetings with memos to identify emerging codes. I clustered the codes for each research question. Then, I compared the patterns to the codes identified in PAR Cycle One and PAR Cycle Two and arranged those patterns into categories and preliminary themes (see Table 11). I then analyzed the themes which resulted in findings (Saldaña, 2016).

PAR Cycle Three: Themes

We had strong evidence that the process for authentic dialogue that we had followed during CPR meetings transferred to the classrooms. Engaging in authentic dialogue at CPR group meetings was essential for teachers to lead their students in storytelling. Four themes emerged from the data: (1) stories teach; (2) students listen to each other through authentic dialogue in the classroom; (3) teachers and students tell stories; and (4) teachers sustain authentic dialogue in CPR meetings.

Stories Teach

PAR Cycle Three consisted of the implementation of the storytelling curriculum by

Table 11

PAR Cycle Three: Themes

Themes	Categories	CPR Group Meetings	Memos	Journey Lines	Written poems	Interviews	Total
Stories Teach	Aha moment listening to stories	34	11	8	19	13	85
	Aha moment sharing stories	7	2	0	5	5	19
Authentic Dialogue in Classrooms	Holding the space	4	3	0	0	6	13
	Attending to the relationships	3	2	3	0	4	12
	Adding new knowledge	18	3	0	0	5	26
Teachers and Students Share Stories	Vulnerability	16	10	5	3	10	44
	Connectedness	10	4	5	6	6	31
	Sense of Community	10	7	5	0	5	27
Authentic Dialogue at CPR Meetings	Holding the space	6	5	6	0	9	26
	Attending to the relationships	11	4	2	0	4	21
	Adding new knowledge	56	27	0	4	1	88

teachers. As a result, teachers understood how stories teach both by both listening to others' stories and sharing their own. This category had a high incidence of evidence (26%, see Figure 15). Teachers explained that they could observe how their students connected to each other as they listened to one another's stories. As Cerise, our new fifth-grade teacher and CPR group member, shared, "The most exciting part about the project was definitely the community that was built and the questions they were asking each other—an indication that students were not just listening to stories; they were being a witness for each other's stories" (C. Rose, CPR meeting notes, October 27, 2020).

Authentic Dialogue in the Classrooms

We defined authentic dialogue as instances in which we reflect to influence a situation and bring about change. These data about how stories teach both students and teachers are corroborated by the incidence of authentic dialogue in classrooms (34% of the data). As teachers enacted their facilitator roles, students drew meaning from authentic dialogue in the classrooms, which included three key practices: holding space, attending to relationships, and adding new knowledge. Teachers held space by making sure that everyone could contribute, attended to the relationships of participants by ensuring all voices were heard in their classrooms, and recognized that their students added new knowledge by sharing their cultural wealth.

In classrooms, authentic dialogue occurred when teachers created the "container," a safe space, for students to share their stories. Holding space has these features: "recognizing and confirming the person…pushing appropriately to ask the person to challenge or stretch… and [be a place] where a person can grow into new ways of knowing" (Drago-Severson, 2012, p. 47). These factors are as important for adult learning as they are for students. By asking two reflective questions—how sharing your story made you feel and how listening to the story shared

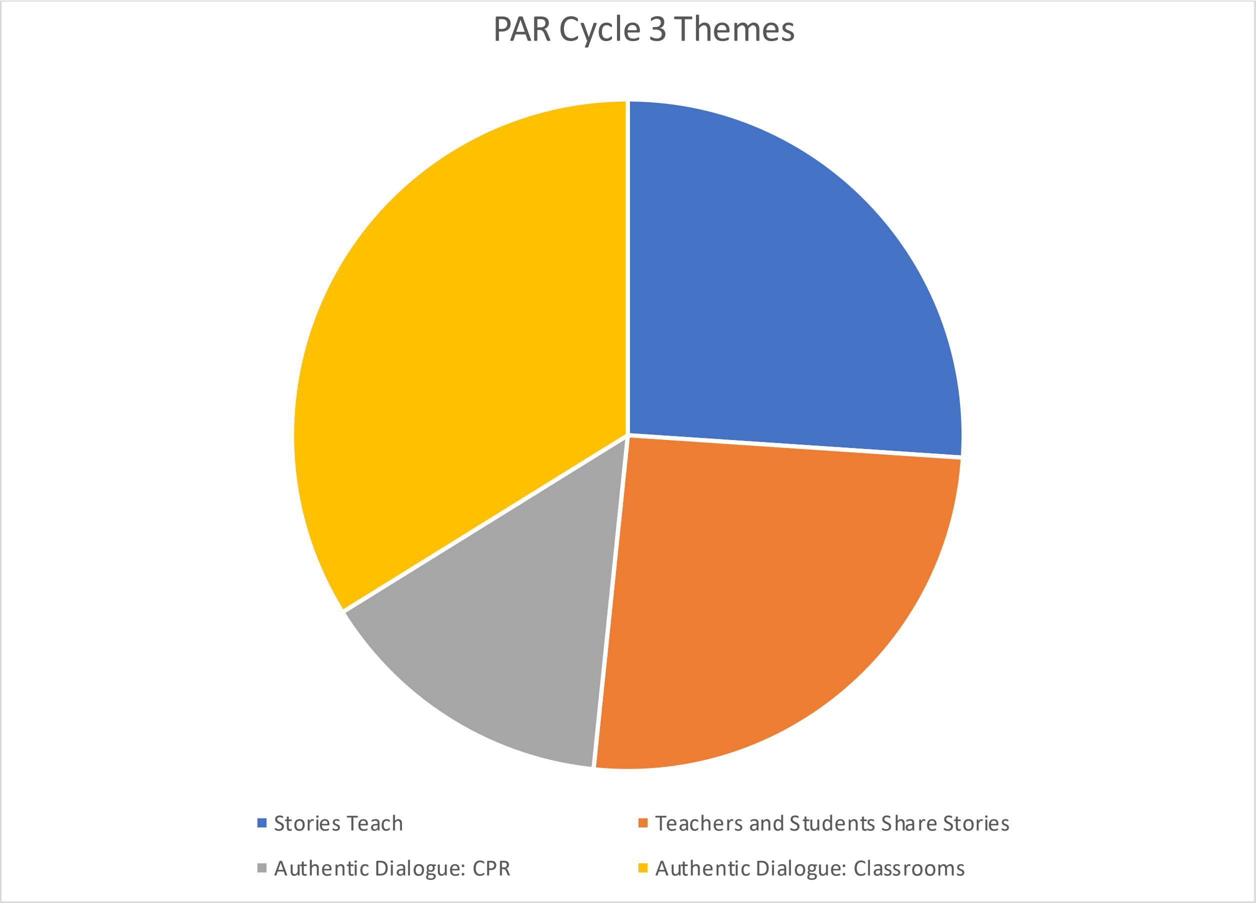


Figure 15. PAR Cycle Three themes.

by your classmates made you feel—the teachers held the space by confirming each student and gradually pushing them to be more vulnerable. Authentic dialogue occurred when students were not competing for or debating their ideas but rather seeking to understand each other's stories. For example, Alaina, a fifth-grade teacher and CPR group member, shared, "We facilitated a great class where people felt heard and respected. The kids were very supportive, like every time someone shared their story, they were very respectful and amazing to each other" (A. Lee, CPR meeting notes, October 13, 2020). The teacher's example showed that the students felt responsible for the space and each other and were learning in new ways.

Teachers attending to the relationships with their students—ensuring all voices are equally heard and valued—emerged as critical for authentic dialogue. Teachers redefined their roles as the holders of knowledge and located themselves in the role of learners in their classrooms. As shown in Table 11, evidence from CPR meeting minutes and focus group interviews all included references to instances of attending to the relationships with their students by relinquishing power, that is, engaging in horizontal relationships with the students in which both students and teachers are learning from each other. As Freire (1970) says, teachers are students and students are teachers, and reciprocal learning is critical for the process.

Yosso (2006) explains that Students of Color have cultural wealth, a set of assets and resources learned at home, that carry a sense of history and memory. These funds of knowledge offer a new way of knowing and being in classrooms (Moll et al., 1992). Evidence from CPR meeting minutes and reflective memos indicated that CPR members referenced knowledge that they learned from the counter-stories of the fifth-grade students. The knowledge because a new source of content for the classroom, exemplifying what critical literacy can be.

Teachers and Students Share Stories

In PAR Cycle Three, we verified that teachers and students sharing stories was critical for the future of the project; this category of story sharing comprised 26% of the evidence (see Figure 15). As teachers demonstrated and modeled vulnerability for students, they created the conditions for connectedness and a strong sense of the classroom and school as a community.

Teachers recognized that modeling vulnerability motivated their students to "open themselves up." In PAR Cycle Two, we distinguished two aspects of vulnerability, namely selective and equal vulnerability. In selective vulnerability, CPR participants decided what to share in their stories and what to leave out. Equal vulnerability means that CPR participants experienced storytelling in the same way as their students; their role changed to that of a storyteller, not just a listener of their students' stories. As Jessica, a fifth-grade teacher and CPR group member, shared, "This year, by allowing myself to be more vulnerable and presenting my own poem to the students, and talking about [my story] with my kids, and having the kids to know me [as a person], I think we all are more vulnerable [in class], and it opened up a door for them to be vulnerable" (J. Brown, journey lines debrief meeting, October 27, 2020). Thus, the authentic dialogue in the CPR meetings (14% of the evidence.) transferred to their vulnerability in working with students.

The categories of connectedness and sense of community described in detail in the previous two cycles continued in PAR Cycle Three. Participants identified a sense of connectedness emerging through sharing and listening to stories. For example, at a CPR meeting, Cerise shared, "When I heard my student Eli share her story with the class, we connected. In her story she described a pinkie dance, where families hold pinkies and then you dance in big circles. I thought it is the same dance we did with my family from Armenia" (C. Rose, CPR meeting transcript, October 13, 2020). The sense of community extended in PAR Cycle Three into the classroom.

Authentic Dialogue: CPR Group

Authentic dialogue within the CPR group was the foundation of the curriculum development. The codes for student dialogue and the CPR group are the same: holding the space, relationships, and new knowledge. An environment that holds adults well and fosters growth has these characteristics: affirming each person, assessing readiness and letting go when ready, and finally, being ready for new ways of acting, due to new knowledge (Drago-Severson, 2012). Thus, if teachers experience support, have strong relationships with the school leader and the group, learn together, and see this modeled on the CPR team, they will be more ready to take risks with their new knowledge in classrooms.

Guided by these four themes, we begin to see that we not only were adding new knowledge about each other but also creating knowledge about how to engage in more authentic teaching and learning. Evidence from CPR meeting minutes and memos indicates that teachers or other CPR members mentioned knowledge that they learned from the counter-stories of the fifth-grade students. Teachers learned a new way of teaching that felt authentic to students, demonstrated critical literacy, and offered us a new way to work together in community. These themes from three cycles of inquiry support three key findings of the study.

Stories of Practice and Transfer

Teachers, parents, community members, and I co-developed a storytelling curriculum using stories, histories, and experiences of Students of Color in fifth-grade classrooms. Our collective work required engaging in authentic dialogue and redefining the roles of teachers and leaders in school. Authentic dialogue required holding the space, attending to the relationships, legitimizing new knowledge from Communities of Color, and witnessing each other's stories. We intentionally used a parallel process during CPR meetings in which teachers experienced authentic dialogue in meetings with parents and community members before they engaged their students in storytelling (Mehta & Fine, 2015).

We exposed an additional finding in critical race pedagogy, which I termed "parallel critical race pedagogy for teachers." This finding amplifies the notion of the importance of experiencing storytelling and authentic dialogue before we ask educators to implement a critical race pedagogy curriculum in classrooms.

In Figure 16, I show the relationship between the experiences of authentic dialogue that we as a CPR group enacted in meetings and the transfer of authentic dialogue to classrooms. As the principal, I established conditions for deep learning by intentionally engaging in dialogue with a diverse group of people—parents, teachers, and community members—and by modeling the components of authentic dialogue in meetings. The image marked "principal facilitator's role" represents what participants reported to me and others about their experience in dialogue during CPR meetings. The "teachers share stories" oval represents what participants felt from engaging in storytelling. The dash lines represent the transfer of learning from the CPR meetings to the teachers' classrooms.

Storytelling necessitated changing relationships from hierarchical to horizontal. Because authentic dialogue requires listening differently, participants had to shift from listening—just hearing a story—to witnessing. I played a key role in the parallel process experience we enacted in CPR meetings.

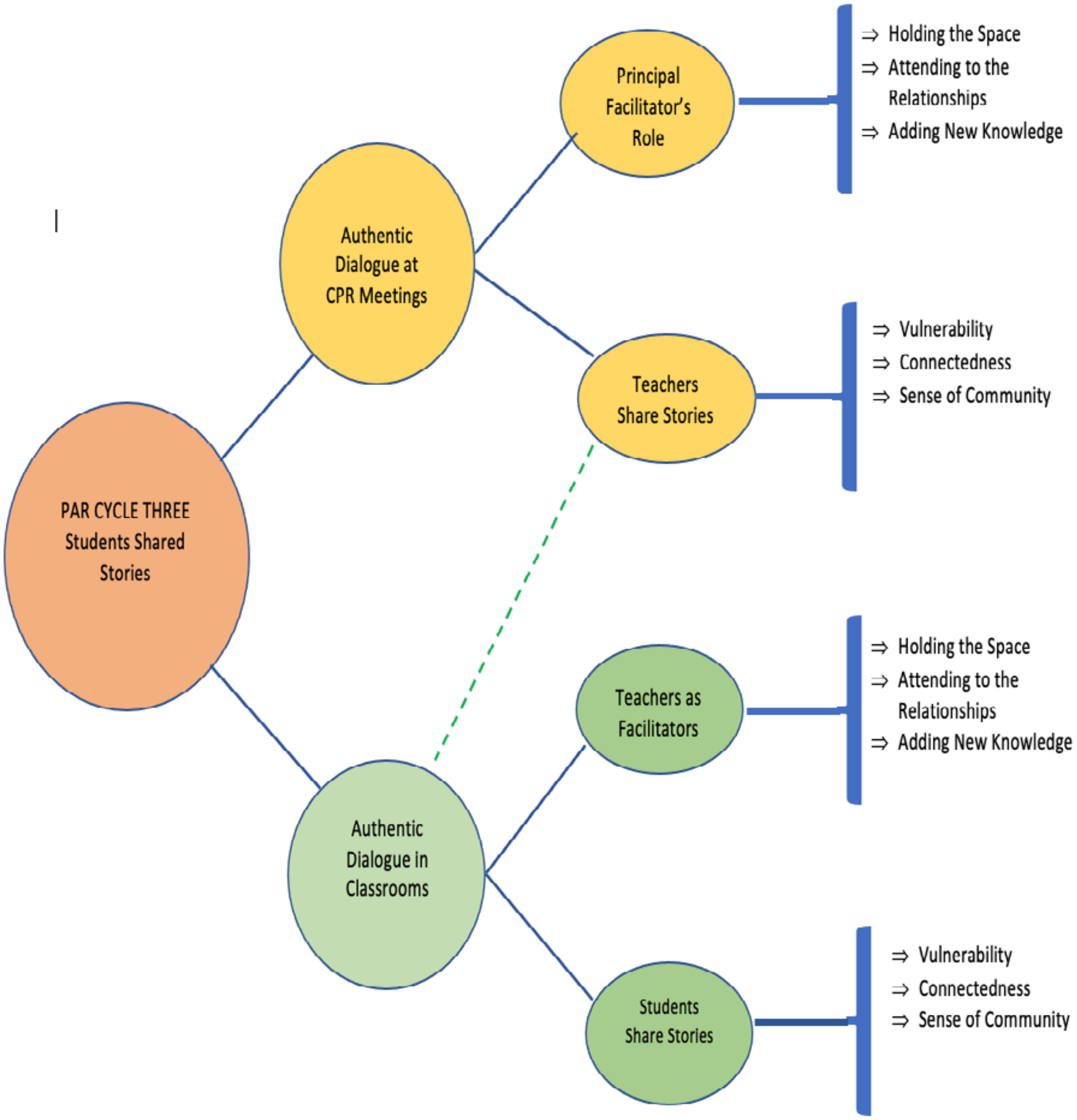

PAR CYCLE THREE Students Shared Stories
Authentic Dialogue at CPR Meetings
Principal Facilitator's Role
⇒ Holding the Space
⇒ Attending to the Relationships
⇒ Adding New Knowledge
Teachers Share Stories
⇒ Vulnerability
⇒ Connectedness
⇒ Sense of Community
Authentic Dialogue in Classrooms
Teachers as Facilitators
⇒ Holding the Space
⇒ Attending to the Relationships
⇒ Adding New Knowledge
Students Share Stories
⇒ Vulnerability
⇒ Connectedness
⇒ Sense of Community

Figure 16. Parallel process: Critical race pedagogy.

Storytelling Requires Shift in Power Relationships

The process of storytelling required redefining roles from hierarchical to horizontal relationships among participants. Data from the PAR cycles confirmed that when implementing the storytelling curriculum, teachers gradually shifted their role to that of holding the space for listening and witnessing counter-stories, and they attended to the relationships with their students. As a result, students experienced vulnerability in their classrooms and shared their family stories, and a sense of community emerged (Delgado Bernal et al., 2016; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2013; Prieto & Villenas, 2016).

Holding the space in classrooms for storytelling required teachers to shift from soliciting stories as an assignment to listening and witnessing counter-stories. A notable change occurred in PAR Cycle Three regarding how teachers encouraged stories from the students. During CPR meetings, we engaged in conversations about storytelling as a process of witnessing. In the second cycle of the PAR project, we reflected on how storytelling was not an assignment to complete; instead, storytelling was the process in which we committed ourselves to listen and learn. Through reflections and conversations with teachers and in meetings, we saw that teachers have begun to shift their practices as a result of these new ways of doing and knowing.

In previous years, they asked students to write stories about themselves as an assignment to be graded. Some of them posted the story assignment on walls as a gallery walk. Now, as a result of their engagement in the PAR project, teachers listened to and then witnessed the stories with the end goal of sustaining a community of student learners. In reflecting about the how teachers changed to listening and witnessing stories, Jessica, one of the CPR group members, shared:

I think what changed for me—and like I've mentioned before, I've done this lesson a

> million times for the last 15 years, and I've never done it where we've had, like, deep discussions afterwards. We kind of always just shared, and by having them posted on the wall, and kids can go around and just kind of like do like a museum tour. We've never actually had the discussions. I think, for me, what I learned from this is that it's really important to have that student voice, not just student voice on paper, but student voice in the classroom and have them be proud and be vulnerable and be willing to share their life with us, and for us to appreciate and enjoy it and interact with it in our questions and comments (J. Brown, individual meeting notes, November 6, 2020).

Teachers attending to the relationships with their students surfaced as an essential component of storytelling and authentic dialogue in classrooms. Teachers defined attending to relationships in their classrooms as redefining their roles from hierarchical-power relationships to horizontal. In this relationship, teachers are no longer the only one who teaches; instead, students and teachers are both teachers and learners. The following excerpt from Jessica’s interview illustrates the feeling of engaging in horizontal relationships:

> I think what changed is our roles. I think that know me as their teacher and the kids as the students. I think it starts to blur a little bit because we're both sharing, and we're both being vulnerable, and we're both learning and teaching each other. There is a blurred line between the roles. They have ownership in themselves, and they're proud, and they're confident, and they want to share it. But at the same time, we're learning from them, and we're gaining insight to what similarities we might have. Differences, family dynamics, struggle, struggle, pain, love, trauma, oppression, anything. We're learning that from them. So they're becoming the teacher. They're like teaching us about their family

> dynamics and their history and their themselves (J. Brown, individual meeting, November 13, 2020).

As a result of our work together or the relationships we built in the CPR group meetings, teachers held the space for students to be vulnerable, and students began sharing in their family stories. The change in teachers' foci from listening to witnessing counter-stories was crucial in shifting the power relationships in classrooms.

From Listening to Witnessing Stories

Witnessing a story is more than just hearing it. It means positioning the listeners for self-reflection. It means listening to move beyond empathy to traveling to each other's worlds, which requires the listener to connect on human terms as equals. Witnessing a story means listening with non-judgment, listening with love, listening to be fully present and to be vulnerable (Cruz, 2016).

In reflecting about how teachers began to start listening as witnesses of the stories, the work affirmed the importance of modeling. In PAR Cycle One, parents, community members, and I first modeled vulnerability by sharing counter-stories. Then, in PAR Cycle Two, the project teachers became gradually more vulnerable with their students in their classrooms. For example, Jessica, a fifth-grade teacher and CPR group member, shared her reflections,

> As I listened to the parents so excited to share their stories and so excited to share their little window into their world, and I thought, How cool is that? But then at the same time, I was like, wow, there's so much that I haven't shared with my kids about me. That I certainly could, and I feel that they would know me better and appreciate me better as their teacher (J. Brown, individual meeting, November 13, 2020).

This reveals how the teacher's recognition of the importance of her vulnerability with students increased by listening to the parents being vulnerable. As teachers experienced listening to witness, they began to see their experiences and the power of story as a moving force for change (Dewey, 1938). As they transferred the knowledge of how to maintain the space for sharing stories, they attended to relationships differently, honored and valued stories in their classrooms, and became fully witnesses.

Parallel Process: Critical Race Pedagogy

For teachers to transfer authentic dialogue to the classroom, they needed deep experiences in critical pedagogy (Mahiri, 2008; Perry, 2012). In other words, adult and student experiences needed to be symmetrical. Thus, in the process of implementing the storytelling curriculum, we used a parallel process for teachers first so that they had the necessary experience and dialogue before implementing the storytelling in classrooms (Dewey, 1938). Figure 16 illustrates the parallel process.

Teachers transferred the learning from the experiences they had during 2 years of participating in authentic dialogue with CPR group members and parents of their students. The parallel process—teacher experience and reflection and then transferring to student experiences—defines the principal as the facilitator of adult learning who models for teachers the process of how to listen to be a witness and how to engage in dialogue differently with parents, teachers, and community members (Meyers, 2019). While we would not expect complete transfer of authentic dialogue across content areas, yet we saw that learning does occur when we engage in authentic dialogue—meaning, reflection, and action. In addition, the parallel process emphasized experiential learning. Sharing information at meetings was not enough as learners and teachers needed to experience storytelling and authentic dialogue themselves as participants before they engaged in the task of creating and implementing a curriculum of storytelling for their students.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the process, themes, and findings of PAR Cycle Three, the final cycle of the PAR project. The story begins with detailing the process through which the co-practitioner researchers (CPR) and I co-developed and implemented a storytelling curriculum for storytelling in fifth-grade classrooms. We engaged in authentic dialogue in CPR meetings and then in classrooms. These themes emerged from the data: (1) stories teach; (2) students listen to each other through authentic dialogue in the classroom; (3) teachers and students tell stories; and (4) teachers had authentic dialogue in CPR meetings.

The three key findings indicate that the storytelling process requires changing relationships from hierarchical to horizontal. The power relationship become horizontal as both teachers and students are teachers and learners of each other stories. Secondly, authentic dialogue requires listening differently as participants shift from listening to witnessing. Witnessing a story entails listening with non-judgment and listening to connect with each other's stories. Finally, as principal in the role of facilitator of learning experiences, I ensured that a parallel process was enacted in CPR meetings before teachers used the process in classrooms. The study underscored that educators need to experience storytelling and the components of authentic dialogue themselves before applying the theories of culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogies in their classrooms. In the final chapter, I present reviews of the PAR inquiry cycles and examine the claims I made as a result of the process.

CHAPTER EIGHT: A STORY OF CHANGE IN ACTION

To address our focus of practice—centering the voices of People of Color—we imported Freire’s (1970) principles to a participatory action *and activist* research project and study (hunter et al., 2013). Activist research employs an explicit focus on social change and community orientation, and methodological rigor is embedded in its design (Hale, 2017). The validity of our study depended on formulating research goals with the participants that resulted in useful participant experiences and learning throughout the three cycles of inquiry. We operated from a community-based ontological point of view to co-construct knowledge through *testimonios* and to develop an epistemological stance that was useful to all participants, a key criterion for this type of participatory research. Nabudere (2008) and Hale (2017) call this approach a people-centered research methodology:

> [A]ctivist scholarship is a matter of critique, not just advocacy. It is part of a project of producing new knowledge, of integrating more abstract and universal sorts of knowledge with concrete and particular sorts of knowledge, and of keeping action and its possibilities at the center of attention. (p. xxv)

Using this form of participatory action research, the co-practitioner researchers (CPR) and I engaged in three cycles of inquiry to co-design a curriculum aimed to bring the history and stories of Students of Color into classrooms.

In my role as a principal in an elementary school in a small urban district, I partnered with three fifth-grade classroom teachers, one school counselor, parents, and community members to learn how to effectively center the voices of Students of Color in the fifth-grade classrooms. At the outset of the study, I observed classrooms in which we utilized a Eurocentric curriculum that dismisses the funds of knowledge of the students and their families (Gonzalez et al., 2005; Yosso, 2005). Our operating theory of action was: If a school leader and teachers engage in a process of co-creating a critical pedagogy that encourages Students of Color to bring their counter-stories into the classroom, (1) the stories of Students of Color can take a prominent place in the curriculum; (2) teachers can learn the counter-stories of Families of Color and shift their perceptions of Students of Color; (3) teachers can change their practices more widely to incorporate storytelling into their practice more regularly; and (4) students have a more positive classroom experience. As this project and study demonstrates, when the stories of Students of Color are valued and included in the curriculum, the students are fully engaged and the teachers' perceptions of their students change.

This chapter summarizes the key results in which the fifth-grade teachers, parents, community members, and I engaged in counter-narrative storytelling to re-design the fifth-grade curriculum. The key findings support and add to the research literature. Finally, this project and study reinforced my values about the importance of student and family voices in our school and added to my repertoire of leadership skills; I now know how to engage others in *praxis* to address the moral imperative of better serving Students and Families of Color. As discussed in the implications and recommendations for future practice, policy, and research, I am more certain of the directions we need to go in school reform.

Key Actions

As the school principal and principal researcher in a participatory action research project and study, we used the community exchange protocols to center the voices of Students of Color in fifth-grade classrooms. I supported teachers to co-design a strength-based critical pedagogy of storytelling that honored the voices and histories of Students of Color and their families. As a result, we more fully understand how the stories of the families are critical; those stories need to become an intrinsic part of the curriculum and a learning experience for the students. Like the Foxfire stories on using the experiences of students and families in Appalachian region of Georgia (Wigginton, 1972), the oral histories of all families are a foundation of critical literacy that we too often ignore in school curricula. Our purpose was to counteract the narrative that Students of Color are deficient and unable to succeed that dominates schools and society. We were able to redefine our curricular and pedagogical approaches by focusing on three socio-cultural aspects of literacy: literacy as a social practice, the value of multiple literacies, and addressing power relationships (Perry, 2012).

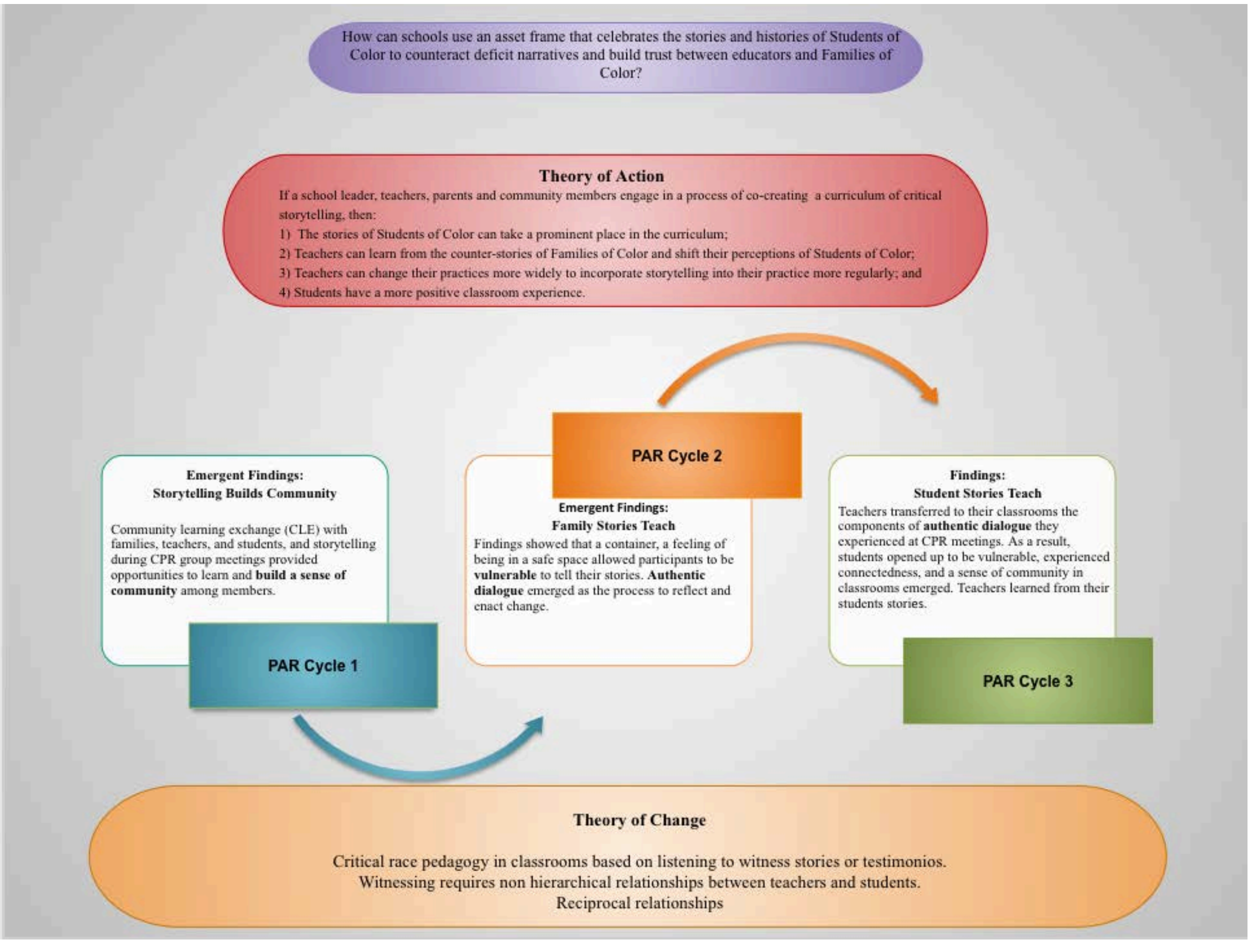
In enlisting a co-practitioner research (CPR) group, we acted as a networked improvement community for the duration of the PAR inquiry cycles, using Plan Do and Study (PDS) short cycles of inquiry to concentrate on our final action to develop the curriculum for fifth grade. In the first cycle of inquiry, we brought together families to understand the power of their stories and, in the second cycle, co-designed and implemented a pilot fifth-grade curriculum based on student and family storytelling that we fully implemented in the third PAR Cycle. The curriculum uses the critical pedagogy of storytelling and brings the counter-stories of the Youth of Color and their families into the classrooms—the stories of resilience, hopes, and aspirations that families typically shared at their dinner tables.

In each PAR cycle of inquiry, we collected and analyzed evidence to ensure that we were clear about next steps and the pace of implementation, including learning together how to use qualitative evidence to improve our practice (Bryk et al., 2015). Through careful use of the learning exchange protocols and evidence-based, iterative cycles of inquiry, we created a revised curriculum that centered the experiences of families and youth into the classrooms. We were able to share that curriculum widely with the school community and other district colleagues.

Discussion

Critical pedagogy, critical race theory in education, critical race pedagogy, and culturally responsive education all advocates an approach to learning that re-centers the voices of Students of Color—a kind of education that invokes our lived experiences, cultural knowledge, ancestral wisdom, and relationships (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lynn et al., 2013; Perry, 2012). These theoretical tools show us why this is essential; less often do we learn how to apply the contributions of these pedagogies in our classrooms. The PAR study is an examination of the process a group of co-researchers engaged in learning how to bridge this gap. The CPR team used an initial theory of action to inform a change project; we now have a theory of change that we term "storytelling through *testimonio*: a path to witnessing." In this section, I review the themes and findings from the three research cycles and make three key claims that emerged from the evidence. Then I connect those claims to the extant literature.

In investigating how to create a critical pedagogy curriculum responsive to the funds of knowledge and lived experiences of the Students of Color and their families, we learned how the stories of the families could become an intrinsic part of the curriculum and a learning experience for the teachers and students (Bell, 1999; Bell & Roberts 2010; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2013; Pérez Huber, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). We started by listening to and sharing stories to build community across differences in PAR Cycle One. The critical learning in PAR Cycle Two arose from my role as principal in facilitating dialogue among teachers, parents, and community members. In the last cycle of the study, detailed in Chapter Seven, we saw the importance of parallel experiences for teachers and students. Teachers needed to experience storytelling and authentic dialogue themselves before engaging their students in storytelling in their classrooms. Figure 17 illustrates an overview of the PAR project.



How can schools use an asset frame that celebrates the stories and histories of Students of Color to counteract deficit narratives and build trust between educators and Families of Color?

Theory of Action

If a school leader, teachers, parents and community members engage in a process of co-creating a curriculum of critical storytelling, then:

1) The stories of Students of Color can take a prominent place in the curriculum;
2) Teachers can learn from the counter-stories of Families of Color and shift their perceptions of Students of Color;
3) Teachers can change their practices more widely to incorporate storytelling into their practice more regularly; and
4) Students have a more positive classroom experience.

Emergent Findings:
Storytelling Builds Community

Community learning exchange (CLE) with families, teachers, and students, and storytelling during CPR group meetings provided opportunities to learn and **build a sense of community** among members.

PAR Cycle 1

PAR Cycle 2

Emergent Findings:
Family Stories Teach

Findings showed that a container, a feeling of being in a safe space allowed participants to be **vulnerable** to tell their stories. **Authentic dialogue** emerged as the process to reflect and enact change.

Findings:
Student Stories Teach

Teachers transferred to their classrooms the components of **authentic dialogue** they experienced at CPR meetings. As a result, students opened up to be vulnerable, experienced connectedness, and a sense of community in classrooms emerged. Teachers learned from their students stories.

PAR Cycle 3

Theory of Change

Critical race pedagogy in classrooms based on listening to witness stories or testimonios.
Witnessing requires non hierarchical relationships between teachers and students.
Reciprocal relationships

Figure 17. Overview of PAR Cycle findings.

We drew attention to stories that represent counter-narratives to the standard curriculum. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) cite various reasons for storytelling of this type: challenging dominant narratives, building community among People of Color and opening windows of opportunities for them, and teaching others. In addition, we saw that storytelling builds community among not only People of Color but also people with different backgrounds and experiences (Guajardo et al., 2016). Our study uncovered how the vulnerability and connection necessary to shift from listening to stories to witnessing stories of others allow a sense of community to emerge. In our study, this new sense of community emerged in the first cycle and accompanied the CPR team throughout the project. Stories became the foundation of the community at CPR group meetings and in the fifth-grade classrooms and gradually permeated the entire school. Mahiri (2008) exhorts us to use critical literacy for youth so that we involve the stories they typically do not hear in school; we are committed to using these stories as a foundation of learning for our students so that their stories become our stories and the water nourishing our classrooms, curriculum, and pedagogy. As the poem by Rumi (Washington, 2006, p. 85) states, we can see what is hidden, can study the stories, and find the secrets within them:

STORY WATER
A story is like water
that you heat for your bath.
It takes messages between the fire
and your skin. It lets them meet,
and it cleans you!
Very few can sit down
in the middle of the fire itself
like a salamander or Abraham.
We need intermediaries.
A feeling of fullness comes,
but usually it takes some bread
to bring it.
Beauty surrounds us,
but usually we need to be walking
in a garden to know it.

The body itself is a screen
to shield and partially reveal
to light that's blazing
inside your presence.
Water, stories, the body,
all the things we do, are mediums
that hide and show what's hidden.
Study them,
and enjoy this being washed
with a secret we sometimes know,
and then not.

How Storytelling Builds Community

The storytelling process required changing relationships among participants from hierarchical to horizontal. As a result, participants experienced vulnerability, connectedness, and a sense of community (Delgado Bernal et al., 2016; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2013). Storytelling is more than a factual narrative; “[i]t is the space that we created for participants to tell their stories” (M. Machado, 2020, reflective memo, January 8, 2020). As co-practitioner researchers, we had to think about how to create the conditions for teachers to listen to family stories. At the first Community Learning Exchange (CLE), teachers were not facilitators of the meeting; they were participants. Parents shared their stories of cultural knowledge with school staff, and the families’ vulnerabilities and humility taught us educators important lessons.

For teachers and administrators to learn from Families of Color, we first needed to be vulnerable, to let down the walls that separate us from the parent community, and practice deep listening. As a result of using CLEs and protocols, we were able to create a gracious space for deeper listening with our parent community (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2013; Hughes & Grace, 2010). Intertwined in the process of sharing and listening to each other’s stories, we were able to see each other not just as professionals and parents interacting in a school setting but as costorytellers and listeners. This process humanizes the experience for everyone and sustains relationships in our work (San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017).

Second, educators need to experience the components of authentic dialogue themselves before applying the theories of culturally responsive teaching and critical race pedagogies in their classrooms. We began to know how to do what the deeper learning practices recommend: adult and student experiences needed to be symmetrical—teachers needed to engage first to be able to transfer this to classrooms. We began to see how transfer of authentic dialogue and storytelling to classrooms could only occur when the adult learning experiences and students experience were similar and symmetrical (Mehta & Fine, 2015). Finally, the experiences reinforced my principal role as the facilitator of learning, not just by transmitting the content of what storytelling meant but by setting up experiences so that the teachers, in particular, could learn how to later teach to students (Meyers, 2019). Participants stated that they would shift their practices to adapt to their classrooms what they observed at CPR meetings.

Authentic dialogue and storytelling were complementary in that they offered us processes in which we could draw from our funds of knowledge to collaborate in centering the voices of Students of Color in the school (Moll et al., 1992). Recasting the study findings in light of the research literature related to the use of critical race pedagogy or culturally responsive teaching helped reveal the places where we utilized a hybrid of both pedagogies in the study.

While much has been written about how the storytelling process and *testimonios* build community among Communities of Color (Delgado Bernal et al., 2016; Pérez-Huber & Cueva, 2012; Prieto & Villenas, 2016), few have described how can this be accomplished in K-5 classrooms with Students and Families of Color. The PAR study reveals that by teachers and the administrator listening to stories, sharing stories, and being vulnerable with the students and their families, we were able to create the welcoming space needed for fifth-grade Students of Color and their parents to share their cultural knowledge in a school setting (Hughes & Grace, 2010; Guajardo et al., 2016; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2013).

While scholars from critical race pedagogies and culturally responsive teaching recommend that school leaders and teachers learn from the funds of knowledge of Communities of Color (Khalifa, 2018; Moll et al., 1992), we did the hard work of supporting relationships in the CLE experience so that teachers could transfer their learning to building more authentic relationships in the classrooms (Gay, 2018). While these normative statements appear in the research, what this project adds to the research literature is a specific example of how practitioners in K-5 classrooms unpacked and applied the research recommendations.

Witnessing: An Essential Component of Authentic Dialogue

"Critical dialogue is essential for education and creates horizontal relationships between students and teachers, a horizontal relationship built on love, hope, humility, and trust" (Freire, 1970, p. 91). Authentic dialogue requires listening differently; instead of just hearing a story, participants must shift from listening to witnessing. Witnessing a story means listening from a place of non-judgment, listening to bear witness, and listening to connect deeply with each other's stories. Non-judgmental listening requires resisting the temptation to judge the experience using our cultural lenses (Haig-Brown, 2003; Howard, 2016). Instead, witnesses need to remain open to new knowledge and stories beyond their experiences. By positioning the listener or audience as non-judgmental, the listeners form horizontal and reciprocal relationships (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1970). Through sharing, the listeners bear witness to each other's experiences because the stories shared are not just those of one individual, but rather the stories of an individual who is part of a community (Haig-Brown, 2003).

As teachers experienced listening to witness a story, they gradually transferred the knowledge of how to sustain the space for sharing stories, how to attend to relationships, and how to value and honor stories in their teaching practice. For teachers to facilitate authentic dialogue, they needed to relinquish power in the classrooms over who holds the knowledge and to recognize students as creators and holders of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Witnessing in the classrooms occurred when teachers made space for students to share family stories and asked students to reflect on how the stories made them feel. Students listened from a place of joy and non-judgment. They found affinity with others based on their shared lived experiences. For example, immigrant students from different Communities of Color were able to connect because they discovered a shared similar experience coming to the US. Through their stories and *testimonios,* students offered a window into their lives (Cervantes-Soon, 2016). As a result, students bore witness to each other's stories; they listened with joy and curiosity. This changed the classroom tenor (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Delgado Bernal et al., 2016; Cervantes-Soon, 2016; Pérez-Huber & Cueva, 2012; Prieto & Villenas, 2016; San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017).

Teachers began to recognize themselves as learners; they were taking a different ontological stance and coming to know differently. Khalifa (2018) asks us to interrogate how "*community-based* epistemologies and perceptions have often been historically different than *school-based* or school-centric epistemologies" (p. 40) and work to make the epistemologies more synchronous. As both students and teachers became learners of each other's stories, the stories become *testimonios,* a stronger word in Spanish for bearing witness, similar to what Emdin (2016) recommends in pedagogical approaches to replicate the cultural experience of the Black church. By testifying, the parents and families laid claim to stories of their power and gained a different kind of agency in the learning exchanges and classrooms. The relationship between teachers and students changed from hierarchical to horizontal, and the stories of the students became the foundation of the classroom community.

The teachers and I realized that asking students to write stories about where they were coming from was not new for the teachers. In fact, they shared that in their classrooms they had used "Where I Am Coming From?" poems for the last 15 years. What was different? We identified that the difference was the way that teachers understood that student *testimonios* as a process of witnessing—meaning public listening and relating to the stories— builds stronger community. In the PAR project, teachers asked for stories from their students with the end goal of building community and not an assignment to be graded. Alaina, a fifth-grade teacher reflected on this shift:

> Instead of this is an assignment where you're bringing your story and you're teaching us about you. This identity project was more like we're creating the community. You are part of this. You're bringing your story and bringing it into the classroom where the story is like the bonds that we're having. And I mean, the stories are who we are as a class. (A. Lee, individual meeting notes, December 5, 2020).

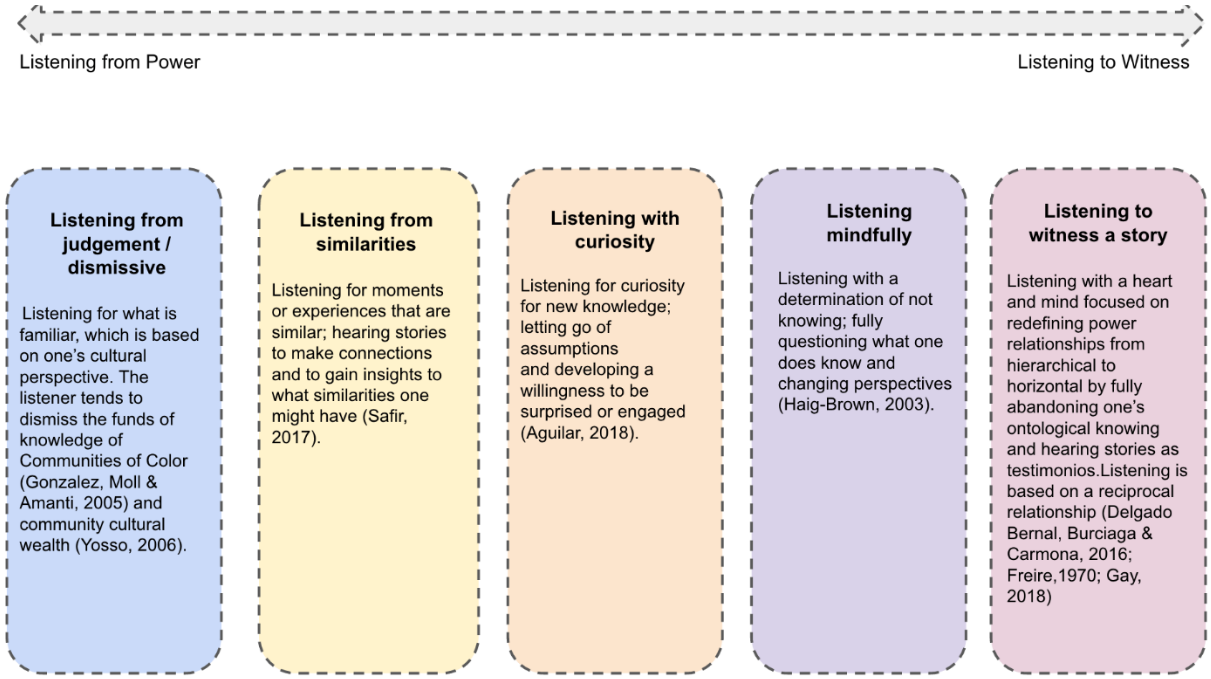
Authentic dialogue in the school community requires holding the space for people to listen and to be witnesses of stories, cultivating humility that allows for relinquishing the hierarchical power in relationships with students and parents, and finally sharing counter-stories —stories of resistance, oppression, hopes and aspirations.

Parallel Process: Critical Race Pedagogy

Finally, parallel to the storytelling process, the teachers and I devoted our learning to a deeper understanding of critical literacy (Mahiri, 2008; Perry, 2012). Using a constructivist approach, together we investigated critical literacy, critical race pedagogies, and culturally responsive teaching. In addition to the CPR group, I engaged all teachers in sharing stories and centering our daily experiences at meetings as a way to learn from each other. In this way, we developed relationships and experienced not only the value of listening but being witnesses to each other's experiences as educators (San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017). While the literature on critical race pedagogy assumes that transmitting the content information about the importance of *testimonios* and stories is sufficient for educators to center the voices of Students of Color in their classrooms, we found that experiential learning (Dewey, 1938) was essential for teachers to facilitate authentic dialogue and storytelling in their classrooms.

Storytelling through Testimonios: The Path to Witnessing

Our study underscored that learning to witness a story is a central pedagogical practice to center the voices of Students of Color in classrooms. The path to witnessing stories requires redefining power relationships in classrooms and in schools. The CRP team gradually moved from listening with judgement—when teachers assume power roles and fail to fully listen to the students—to listening with a sense of curiosity and finally toward listening with determination to know differently and their open hearts and minds to student stories and a new way to teach that inspired them to redefine literacy (Gutiérrez, 2016b). In the process of implementing the curriculum, we developed a continuum of listening from judgement to witnessing a story that describes a path from listening from power to listening to witness (see Figure 18). On the judgment side of the continuum, the listener rests on a hierarchical power relationship, only hears what is familiar, and fails to recognize the funds of knowledge of Communities of Color. On the witnessing end, the listener engages in horizontal relationships with the storyteller. What I had



Listening from judgement / dismissive

Listening for what is familiar, which is based on one's cultural perspective. The listener tends to dismiss the funds of knowledge of Communities of Color (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2006).

Listening from similarities

Listening for moments or experiences that are similar; hearing stories to make connections and to gain insights to what similarities one might have (Safir, 2017).

Listening with curiosity

Listening for curiosity for new knowledge; letting go of assumptions and developing a willingness to be surprised or engaged (Aguilar, 2018).

Listening mindfully

Listening with a determination of not knowing; fully questioning what one does know and changing perspectives (Haig-Brown, 2003).

Listening to witness a story

Listening with a heart and mind focused on redefining power relationships from hierarchical to horizontal by fully abandoning one's ontological knowing and hearing stories as testimonios.Listening is based on a reciprocal relationship (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga & Carmona, 2016; Freire,1970; Gay, 2018)

Figure 18. Storytelling through testimonies: The path to witnessing.

come to understand at the end of the third cycle is that power influences the way we listen to stories, and participants sometimes oscillate among various points along the listening continuum.

Those listening from judgment tend to dismiss the funds of knowledge and community cultural wealth of People of Color (Yosso, 2006) and concentrate on comparing one's own story to what is heard instead of listening with full attention. In listening to witness, the listener becomes open to redefining power relationships from hierarchical to horizontal; students, teachers and administrators are both simultaneously teachers and learners of each other stories (Freire, 1970; Gay, 2018; Howard, 2016).

Witnessing requires "breaking down the walls" that separate schools from Communities of Color and being vulnerable in the moment of sharing your story (Guajardo et al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018). Witnessing is what Gutiérrez (2016b) calls the third space of cultural literacy, which adds to physical and cognitive developmental learning space and the second space of learning from peers in formal and informal learning spaces of school and home. This broadens our concept of learning to include sociocritical spaces for bringing students' socio-historical lives into the formal learning space of school. Witnessing entails being open to new knowledge and stories beyond our experiences (Haig-Brown, 2003). The listener of the *testimonio* or story takes on the responsibility for self-reflection with an open heart and mind in an effort to understand the story from the storyteller's point of view. If listeners and speakers are open to bear witness to each other's *testimonios,* then they give a gift to the listener (Delgado Bernal et al., 2016). As a result of listening without judgement, participants experienced vulnerability and connectedness, and a different sense of community emerged. In this way, our collaborative definition of witnessing contributes to the literature on culturally responsive pedagogy, critical race pedagogy, and critical literacy.

Critical pedagogy/literacy that involves listening to the stories and testimonios of Students of Color in classrooms can be enacted in different ways (Benmayor, 2016; Cervantes-Soon, 2016; Cruz, 2016; Jimenez, 2010). By giving teachers parallel opportunities to learn, they acquired new ways to support student learning (Mehta & Fine, 2015). If the teachers do not have sufficient experiences in telling their own stories, they cannot confidently facilitate dialogue and storytelling in student-student interactions. And if they rarely engage in the necessary reflection to decide on subsequent actions, they do not use the principles of reflective inquiry to inform their actions (Freire, 1970; hunter et al., 2013).

We caution that to move from listening with judgement to listening as witnesses requires reflection and action from teachers and school leaders—Freire's (1970) *praxis*. If asking Students of Color for their familial stories becomes instrumental, such as quick assignments to be graded by the teacher, without developing a genuine interest in listening to each other's stories as witnesses, storytelling may result in more harm to Students of Color, who would feel that their experiences and cultural knowledge are not valued by educators (Prieto & Villenas, 2016). They would experience story extraction instead of witnessing (Khalifa, 2018). While we emphasize the idea that listening as witness is central to the curricula for Students of Color, no matter what form a story or testimonio takes (Delgado Bernal et al., 2016), we know that anyone deciding to use the processes we have used has to be quite careful to scale up the practice in thoughtful ways (Morel et al., 2019).

Concurrently, we found the process of witnessing *testimonios* and stories was essential for educational experiences in general, not just for the critical pedagogy of storytelling. Education as a process of witnessing rather than merely hearing is a revolutionary concept. This kind of education requires educators and school leaders to engage in a process of reflection and action guided by strong feelings of love for students and communities. Teachers and school leaders have to begin by breaking down walls and acknowledging that their stories of power are the other side of the coin of the stories of oppression of the Families of Color. To truly witness the stories of Communities of Color, educators need to be willing to unmask privilege and recognize that their power is the oppression of others. To be a witness, an educator would need to share with students their story as an oppressor. Then, and only then, would a community begin to heal from the wounds that systemic oppression has created and to see each other as fellows where the stories become the foundation of our communities. It is our moral imperative to redefine relationships with our students and parents so that we can create more equitable opportunities and outcomes for our students.

We acted upon these beliefs and practices as activist researchers (Hale, 2017; hunter et al., 2013). By redefining relationships as horizontal and reciprocal, the CPR group became researchers of our experiences and then witnesses to the experiences in ways that supported more authenticity in the curriculum, deeper relationships, and student learning. The research itself is not a process of extracting but of listening for the moments of epiphany that we can tether to a larger focus on storytelling as an act of critical literacy (McDonald, 1996; Perry, 2012; Velasco, 2009). We drew on the assets of the students and the group at the micro level to design the curriculum, but in the process, we built a stronger community that is now sharing our learning with the others who want to adapt this process to their own contexts.

Finally, as I reflected on my research questions and theory of action, I identified that findings from the study helped to answer the overarching questions of how can schools use an asset frame that celebrates the backgrounds and histories of Students of Color to counteract deficit narratives and build trust between educators and Families of Color? Through engaging in storytelling, authentic dialogue and reflection with teachers, parents and community members during CPR meetings, we created opportunities for learning for all CPR members and generated opportunities for transferring of experiences to classrooms.

Implications

The PAR project has several implications for research, policy, and practice. First, the research is limited in its scope—a principal inquiring how to collaborate with teachers, parents, and community members to counteract deficit narratives of Students of Color and their families in schools. The study used participatory activist research (PA^{1}R) with co-practitioner researchers, a methodology that employs an explicit focus on social change and has a community orientation (hunter et al., 2013). The study provided an opportunity for me as the lead researcher to take a look at my work as a leader seeking to change the way we traditionally engage our students and families in schooling and to enlist a group of co-researchers to participate in processes of collective learning and action.

Research Implications

There is limited research on how principals study progress while engaging teachers and parents as co-researchers to enact change in their communities. Research on learning with people by engaging in authentic dialogue and deep listening rather than imposing techniques and procedures peremptorily is a “complex, time-consuming, and risk-taking process that requires a critical openness to dialogue and learning on the part of all participants or stakeholders” (hunter et al., 2013, p. 20). For others to consider this work, I recommend that they think about using a scaling model of adaptation because context is critical (Morel et al., 2019).

Most of the research literature on critical race pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching focuses on the theoretical foundation for understanding the role of counter-stories in centering the voices of People of Color in schools (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn et al., 2013). Though the field is growing, more empirical research about critical applications in K-12 classroom are needed. In particular research on how school leaders partner with families and teacher to center family and student stories exposes an underexplored field. Insider researchers working with other insiders (Herr & Anderson, 2014; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007), and add to research understandings because we are able to generate processes for bringing in the voices of students and families.

As we saw in this project, we can use particular processes that help us engage students, families and teachers; by utilizing the CLE protocols, we have specific tools to mediate the learning experiences (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2013, 2016). The study partially answers Gutiérrez's (2016b) question about what a third space for sociocritical literacy can look like: "What role can education play in advancing a more expansive social and pedagogical imagination for all youth across all schools and communities…?" (p. 195). We, as co-researchers, provided evidence that family stories can be the basis of literacy learning. What the study did not do was delve into to the extent that critical storytelling affects the experiences of Students of Color. The perspective of the students during the planning and implementation of the curriculum is a critical lens that warrants a study unto itself. Such a study could explore how the voice and identity of students of color grow through their participation in the research. Future research could explore ways in which school leaders and teachers can partner with the community to use the stories and wisdom from the community experiences as the basis of learning, reading, and writing in the schools. This might mean researching how to shift literacy practices from traditional Eurocentric strategies to literacy as social practice.

To further generalize the findings of this work, additional participant action research cycles could explore how to transfer the storytelling and authentic dialogue processes across the school and across content areas. The implication for future research suggests that we would need to continue the process for five years to see full transfer at the site.

Practice Implications

Through the study we discovered the importance of shifting school relationships from hierarchical to horizontal. If leaders and teachers continue perceiving that we are the holders of knowledge and that our students and parents know very little, then we will be unable to listen and learn from the voices of our Students of Color (Jimenez, 2010). The PAR process illuminated incremental shifts school leaders and teachers can deploy to position ourselves as listeners and learners instead of depositors of knowledge. School leaders (both principal and teachers) could begin by revisiting our values and experiencing what it actually means to be in horizontal relationships with parents at meetings in which both parties learn from the other’s stories and community values.

However, in order for administrators to do this work, they must be willing to move from selective vulnerability and only telling part of their stories to more open vulnerability. Being open to one another and sharing family stories are key starting points for this productive work. We caution that each school community would need to find what works in their own particular context though the CLEs utilized in the PAR study would provide the protocols and pedagogies to begin this work.

School leaders and teachers also need to experience listening differently to Students of Color and their families and take time to reflect on the experience with colleagues before they attempt to engage in critical storytelling with their students in their classrooms. By listening differently to the authentic life experiences (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2016), I mean a type of listening that is not crowded with their own thoughts and experiences. It is not easy to listen without judgment because our normal way of listening is shaped by our own experiences; however, the stories of People of Color call for a listener who travels with the story (Cruz, 2016). A skillful listener would be able to recognize when they are making judgments based on their own experiences and be humble enough to acknowledge that we don't know it all. While it might feel obvious to recommend the practice of listening to school practitioners, I have witnessed in my 30 years in the field that school educators are more inclined to judgmental listening to Students of Color and their families. To change this practice, educators at all levels and from all races, but specifically White educators teaching Students of Color, should be required to do the hard work of acknowledging how race and power plays out in their interactions with Families and Students of Color. Disrupting the barriers that make listening harder would engender a different relationship with Families of Color, a relationship based on reciprocity, non-judgment, and love—yes, love for the People of Color and the community we serve.

Finally, site leaders and teachers need to trust that the people closest to the issues have the wisdom and expertise to create meaningful schooling experiences for Students of Color—a key tenet of the CLE philosophy and methodology (Guajardo et al., 2016). To begin the change, we must acknowledge that we are stuck with a Eurocentric curriculum that omits the histories of the Communities of Color and dehumanizes their experiences through White-centric historic timelines and meaningless chronologies of events (Jimenez, 2010; Loewen, 1995). We need to invite parents and community members to work alongside educators to envision what it would be like if we re-created schools where the voices of Students of Color were to drive the curriculum.

What would we learn as educators and parents if we did that? This is our invitation to school communities.

As school leaders, we have the power —due to our positionality to change the dominant narrative if we so choose. To do this work, school leaders, would need to need to have a commitment to equity, a willingness to listen deeply to the stories of families, and the confidence to be equally vulnerable with their teachers, students and parents. As leaders, we can open the school to celebrate the richness of each story that passes through our doors. Unpacking with families the *sueños of generaciones*, the aspiration, dreams, wisdom and knowledge handed down through generations, each of us carries deep within. No longer letting families to experience that they need to leave their culture, language, and history at the school door, but proudly inviting their history as a new beginning of a rich beautiful narrative. These liberatory practices from the dominant narrative and standardized curriculum are what we envision for all our students and families.

Policy Implications

In his call for us to be antiracist educators, Kendi (2019) makes the point that we all must engage in changing policies. According to Yosso et al. (2001), critical race policy "challenges traditional policies and legislation affecting education from a perspective that humanizes People of Color and draws on their experiences as strengths to learn from, not deficits to correct" (p. 97). To affect change in schools, it is not enough to use culturally responsive teaching pedagogies or critical race pedagogies in the classrooms; first, we must take a look at policy and the intersections among policy, pedagogy, curriculum, methodology, and epistemologies at the three levels: micro, meso, and macro.

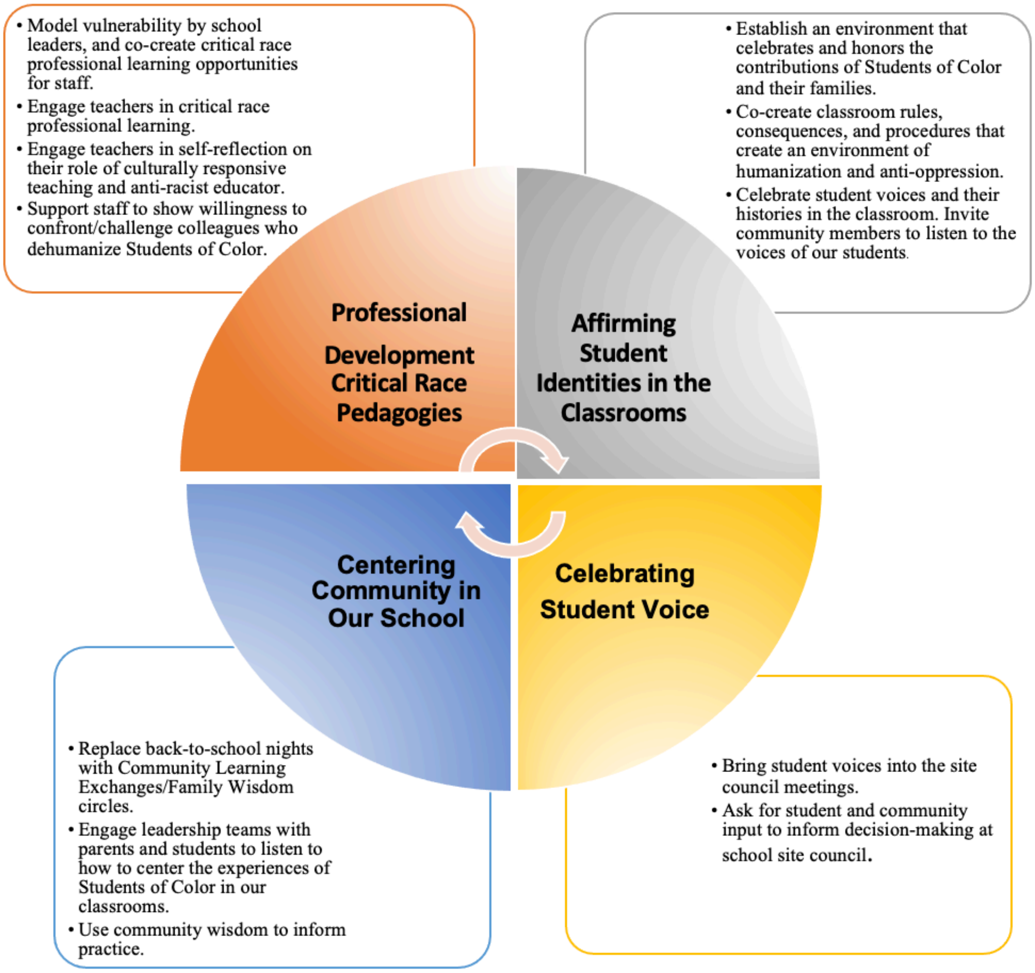
Micro Level

I decided to begin with policy recommendations at the micro level because I believe that the grassroots work we do as leaders at the school can have a direct impact on the experiences of the students we serve. Change that begins at the micro level has stronger roots than change that comes as a top-down mandate. To bring the voices of our Communities of Color into schools, we educators must change school policies regarding discipline, curriculum, and pedagogy and to engage teachers in deep study of critical race theory in education.

At the school level, it is not enough for educators to engage in storytelling with students and families as just another activity or curriculum. We need to dig deeper and truly understand why we are using the critical race pedagogy of storytelling in our classrooms, and we need to connect with other educators who are doing similar work. As a leader, I need to engage with the shared leadership team in interrogating school policies that oppress Students of Color and to create policies that honor and celebrate the students. In Figure 19, I offer recommendations from the PAR study at the site level.

Meso and Macro Levels

The findings from the PAR study have implications at the meso and macro levels. At the district level, the study findings highlight implications in several areas including professional development for all staff, parent-community partnerships, and data and assessments. We demonstrated how central office leaders can adopt a different way of listening to the stories and *testimonios* of Parents of Color. Moving away from judgement towards listening to be a witness of the stories could repair the harm that for generations the educational systems has caused to Communities of Color and could create a different relationship between districts and the communities they serve. In other words, when professionals take responsibility for personally


Professional Development Critical Race Pedagogies
Affirming Student Identities in the Classrooms
Centering Community in Our School
Celebrating Student Voice

- Model vulnerability by school leaders, and co-create critical race professional learning opportunities for staff.
- Engage teachers in critical race professional learning.
- Engage teachers in self-reflection on their role of culturally responsive teaching and anti-racist educator.
- Support staff to show willingness to confront/challenge colleagues who dehumanize Students of Color.

- Establish an environment that celebrates and honors the contributions of Students of Color and their families.
- Co-create classroom rules, consequences, and procedures that create an environment of humanization and anti-oppression.
- Celebrate student voices and their histories in the classroom. Invite community members to listen to the voices of our students.

- Replace back-to-school nights with Community Learning Exchanges/Family Wisdom circles.
- Engage leadership teams with parents and students to listen to how to center the experiences of Students of Color in our classrooms.
- Use community wisdom to inform practice.

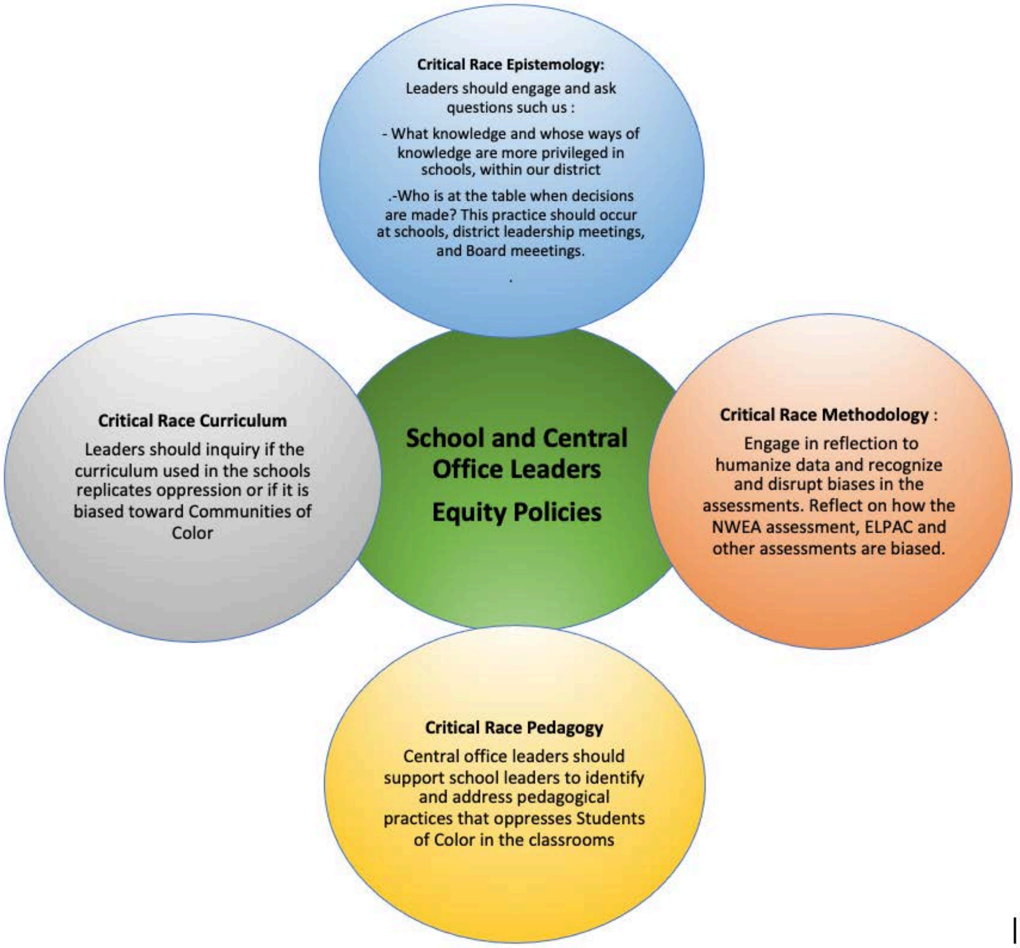
- Bring student voices into the site council meetings.
- Ask for student and community input to inform decision-making at school site council.

Figure 19. Policy recommendations at the school level.

modeling how to listen closely to the community, a trusting relationship emerges. Central office administrators and the superintendent should also engage in a process parallel to the one described for school sites and revisit the policies that currently oppress Students of Color in the classrooms (see Figure 20). Humanizing the experiences of Students of Color in all schools in the district as well as providing support for leaders to re-center Communities of Color funds of knowledge in schooling should be the priority of the anti-racist work of central office leaders.At the state level (macro) in California, policymakers have recognized the need for educational reform for Students of Color. In August 2020, the state enacted Bill AB–331 to mandate ethnic studies for high school students. This measure is the first step to bring the histories of Students of Color into the classrooms. However, the law does not include policies that specifically address critical race theory in teacher preparation (in service) programs for professionals or for pre-service educators. Policymakers at the state level can support anti-racist work by listening to the practitioners who are doing this work at the school level and by publicizing successful experiences. Centering the voices of Students of Color and their families in schooling requires critical policy changes for school districts that are daring enough to lead (Aguilar, 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Theoharis, 2009).

Leadership Development

Throughout the PAR cycles, I engaged in self-reflection praxis. I utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Education and Critical Race Pedagogy (CRP) as the theoretical frameworks to analyze my experience of co-designing a curriculum of storytelling for fifth-grade students along with teachers and parents. As I now move to analyze my leadership practices, I have decided to utilize Critical Race Theory as the theoretical framework to support the analysis of my leadership growth.


Critical Race Epistemology:
Leaders should engage and ask questions such us :
- What knowledge and whose ways of knowledge are more privileged in schools, within our district
.-Who is at the table when decisions are made? This practice should occur at schools, district leadership meetings, and Board meeetings.
.
Critical Race Curriculum
Leaders should inquiry if the curriculum used in the schools replicates oppression or if it is biased toward Communities of Color
School and Central Office Leaders
Equity Policies
Critical Race Methodology :
Engage in reflection to humanize data and recognize and disrupt biases in the assessments. Reflect on how the NWEA assessment, ELPAC and other assessments are biased.
Critical Race Pedagogy
Central office leaders should support school leaders to identify and address pedagogical practices that oppresses Students of Color in the classrooms

Note. (Adapted from Yosso et al., 2001).

Figure 20. Policy recommendations at the central office and site level using the Intersections of Critical Race Theory and Policy in Education.

Three of the five central tenets of CRT are relevant to my experience: CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of People of Color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding; CRT centralizes race and racism in education by examining them in the historical context of U. S. society; and CRT acknowledges schools as political places and teaching as a political act (Yosso, 2006). These concepts helped me illuminate my experiential knowledge and understand how I maintained the space for meaningful conversations and humanized the workspace in schools and how the experience changed me as a leader.

Centralizing Experiential Knowledge: Counter-Story *Testimonios* Matter

The writing of this dissertation allowed me to revisit and reflect on my practice using the theoretical lens of Critical Race Theory. As a leader, I learned that my experiential knowledge was legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding my leadership actions. I realized that prior to engaging in the ECU graduate program, I, as a principal, left part of my experiences as a Black/Latinx woman “at the door” to fit the Whiteness of the school and district organization. I assumed that I needed to assimilate to “fit in” and maintain my job. I felt that I needed to avoid sharing my struggles with the oppressive practices of the organization toward People of Color (M. Machado, reflective memo, October 23, 2019). For example, I led staff meetings that replicated the majoritarian story by only analyzing the high rate of discipline office referrals for Latinx and Black students without presenting a counter-narrative. I hesitated to address how the implicit biases of the staff might contribute to the disproportionality in the discipline data (M. Machado, reflective memo, January 30, 2019).

I struggled to openly advocate for meeting the needs of the parent community over the needs of the teaching staff (M. Machado, reflective memo, October 23, 2019). For example, at a CPR group meeting, many parents said, “We can meet on Saturdays. The community does not have hours like the school; we can meet at any time. We have been waiting for schools to consider us as part of their work" (M. Machado, reflective memo, November 19, 2019). I have to admit that as a school leader, I didn't support the staff to make sense of the recommendations given by the parents. Instead, I decided to accommodate the needs of the staff by holding meetings only during their contractual work hours. Therefore, the recommendation I truly thought best was not the one we decided on. The CPR group ended holding meetings only during the staff contractual hours.

Over time, I learned how to begin centralizing race and racism in education by presenting "difficult equity-related topics to a majoritarian White staff without feeling that I needed to soften the language or the data" (M. Machado, reflective memo, November 11, 2019). I shared counter-narratives from the PAR project literature review during staff meetings and district meetings. I realized that as I gained confidence sharing counter-stories, "my voice as a leader grew and my leadership actions got stronger" (M. Machado, reflective memo, November 11, 2019). I learned that as I learned to listen as a witness, the racialized conversations that occurred at the CPR group meetings about how to bring the voices of Students of Color in the school allowed me as a leader to develop a stronger voice as a Black/Latinx principal. I learned how to use my ontology (self-identity personal stories) to teach about how I, as a Black/ Latinx woman, experience race and racism in the society.

I learned that racialized conversations about our experiences are helpful coping mechanisms to deal with race and racism in schools. For example, I noticed that after I had an equity focused staff meeting, I debriefed the meeting with my family or my ECU Colleagues who identified themselves as People of Color (M. Machado, reflective memo, September 7, 2020). I realized that debrief meetings helped me to make sense of the tensions and struggles that

I experienced when facilitating racialized conversations. Throughout the PAR process, I learned that to affect change I needed to open myself up to the staff and students and be selectively vulnerable. Knowing what personal stories to share at what moment has been a deep learning process for me. Stories can teach, and by sharing my story as a Black/Latinx woman with the CPR group and students, I have modeled to the CPR group that we all can step out of our comfort zone and break down the walls that separate us from our students and their families. It is my hope that the reflections presented here can add to the understanding of what it takes to do the principal's job with the complexities of race and gender.

Creating and Maintaining a Container for Teachers and Staff

Throughout the PAR Cycles, I found myself listening to witness the family stories of teachers and students. At the co-practitioner research (CPR) meetings, I asked myself, What do I need to learn about myself as a leader to facilitate meaningful experiential learning at the CPR meetings? How can I facilitate authentic dialogue (Freire, 1970) during the process of designing the curriculum?

As a leader, I learned that it is critical to plan for maintaining the space for meaningful conversations. Before engaging in this PAR project, I used to plan for one powerful storytelling activity at the beginning of the school year and then, if time permitted, one at the mid-year and one at the end. Through the PAR project, I learned how storytelling is a critical part of building communities across differences. I found that to sustain practices and to promote this change, I need to look beyond just creating the space for storytelling. I need to invest time to sustain the practice. The safe space created in the PAR project enabled participants to build relationships and to listen to critical points of view. As a leader, I gained an understanding of my role in maintaining the relational safe space that invites honest conversations.

The learning from the PAR project and study continues after the PAR project data collection ended in the fall 2020. In Fall 2020, the stories of the teachers, families and CPR group members who participated in the project reached 91 teachers from the school district where the school is located. The CPR members felt empowered to share their experiences about implementing the storytelling curriculum with their colleagues. Currently, three of the seven CPR group members joined me as Community Learning Exchange (CLE) co-facilitators as we began engaging students, teachers and families from a lower grade classroom in storytelling family stories. What I learned is that as a leader I have the role to uplift the voices of the CPR group members so they feel empower to lead—sharing their stories, alongside me. Their stories are the seed of hope and innovation for the critical literacy work we envision for the school.

Humanize the Space: Creating Healing Spaces for Staff and Students

As a leader, I learned that it is critical to humanize the school spaces. Teachers and students need to be seen as people, not just as professionals and students working in a building. It is crucial that we as leaders hear directly from the voices of our students, and it is equally important to hear the voices of the teachers. During this study, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated my learning about the need to create healing spaces in schools. Teachers are being harmed by the pandemic, and the majority of them are not attending to their own needs. As a leader, I created and sustained spaces for healing and radical self-care through the use of CLE protocols. For example, as documented in my memos, teachers reported to me that they were so close to quitting their jobs because they could not deal with the anxiety, stress, and pandemic battle fatigue caused by the shelter-in-place order as well as the unrealistic demands from the central office leaders regarding virtual instructional expectations (M. Machado, reflective memo. September 15, 2020). These expressions of vulnerability can create safe space and meaningful relationships among adults in schools.

Humanizing the space for students would have important implications for the work that we do in schools. I believe that relationships are important at work. If you take care of the people who work with you then staff will be more inclined to create welcoming spaces for families and students. Rhonda Magee (2019) states, "We don't always realize that we must work continuously to make real the promise of liberating human interrelationship. Even less often do we have the skills to do this work together" (p. 305)

An Invitation to Action

"The virtue of the Chickadee is to be able to spot what the successes and the wisdom of others are and to learn from them." –Jonathan Lear

As I close this PAR study, I think of Jonathan Lear (2006) and his observation in *Radical Hope*. Lear wrote the story of Plenty Coups, the leader of the Crow people when the tribe was forced onto a reservation; he led his people through the collapse of his culture holding a radical vision of hope, rebirth, and transformation. According to Lear, Plenty Coups found a new form of courage by learning to listen differently. To Plenty Coup, a chickadee represented the virtue of how people have the capacity to listen to others and to learn from them. They know that they lack wisdom but seek it. The capacity to act as a chickadee helped Plenty Coups to lead his people toward a new way of life that honored the past and yet remained open to radically different possibilities for the future.

As educational leaders, we are facing a unique moment in history. The endemic nature of racism has been unveiled in the U.S. society, and people are awakening to the idea that addressing inequalities is how we might survive and thrive in coming years. As school leaders, we have the opportunity to embrace a radical vision of hope, as Plenty Coups did for his people, embracing rebirth and transformation at all levels of society and leading schools away from practices that do not serve Communities of Color toward practices that humanizes the knowledge streaming from Students of Color and their families. School leaders and teachers need to listen to the Stories of People of Color in the way of the chickadee. Listening with the innocence of a child, without judgment, listening as a witness of the story to learn from the *testimonios* of the parent community might lead us to a more humane and peaceful world. This is an invitation we extend to the readers of this dissertation.

In our PAR study, the experiences and histories we shared with each other highlight the ways that we are all interconnected through stories and the important role that listening plays in research and in classrooms. We now understand that to bring the voices of the Students of Color into our classrooms, school leaders and teachers need to be willing to reframe the power relationships that exist in schools and in classrooms. When interacting with Communities of Color, we must have the courage to open ourselves to share our own stories—as people, not just as professionals—with our students and families.

Communities of Color have cultural wealth and wisdom to share with educators who are willing to listen; however, all Communities of Color, and in particular black people, "have been in a lot of pain, a lot of suffering, and they deserve healing" (N. Brown, interview meeting notes, November 6, 2020). We argue that only after we publicly acknowledge the harm we have caused in schools when we utilized power in our relationships with students and families will we be able to begin the necessary healing process. The community we envision is a healing community. A community of solidarity filled with joy, love for all people, and a sense of wonder for the richness of the stories—stories which not only represent the experiences of one individual in isolation, frozen in time, but rather *los sueños de generaciones*, the dreams and aspirations of generations, and the stories intertwined of an entire lineage of ancestors. This would be the rebirth and transformation we seek in education. You as a leader have the power to mold this narrative to a place of healing and joy for yourself and your community if you so choose. And we want kids and families to see they have that option.

“Get to know me, and you’ll find out who I am.”

Ahmar, 4th Grade Student. Rosa Parks Elementary School.

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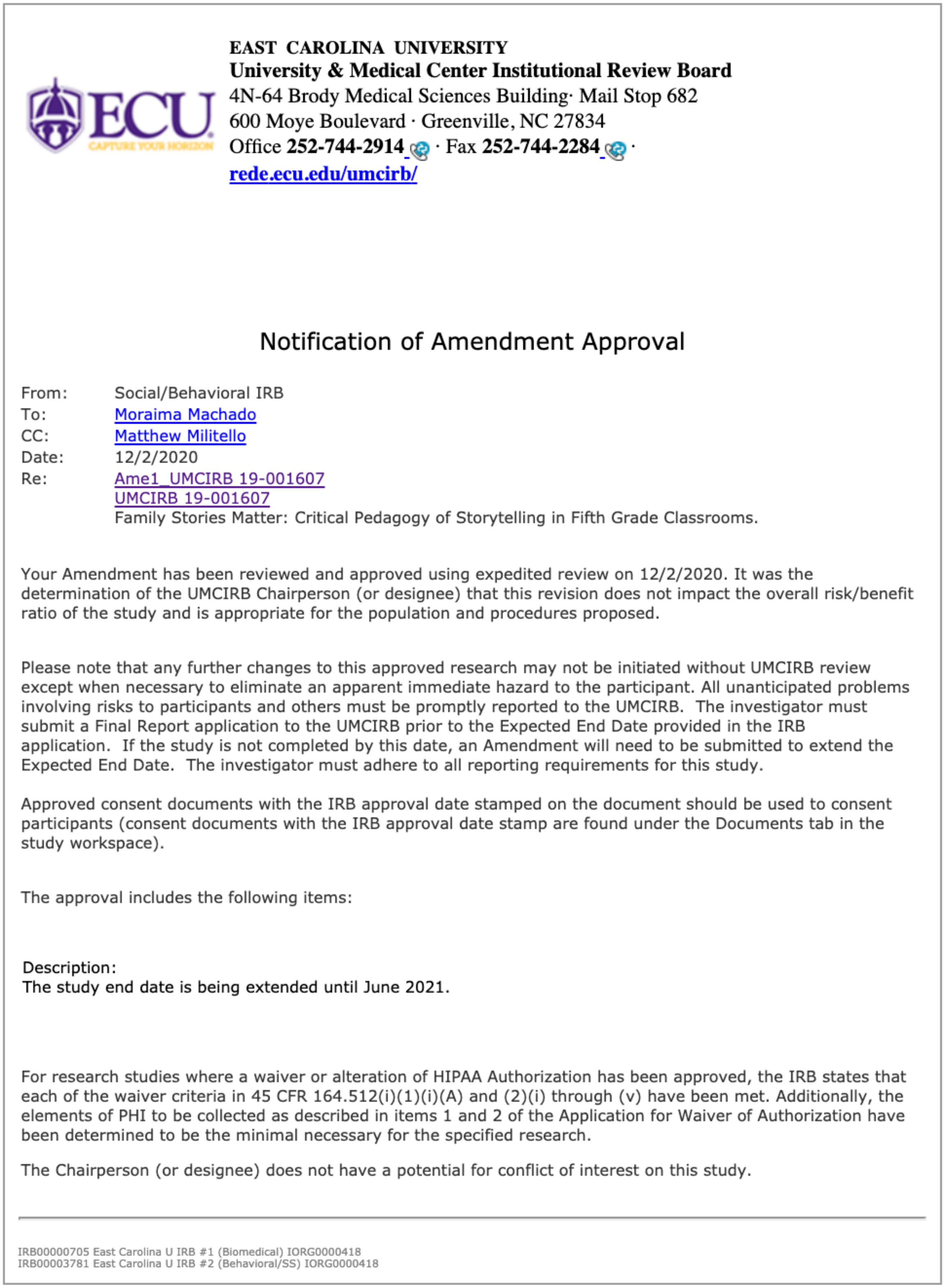
APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·
rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/

Notification of Amendment Approval

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Moraima Machado
CC: Matthew Militello
Date: 12/2/2020
Re: Ame1_UMCIRB 19-001607
UMCIRB 19-001607
Family Stories Matter: Critical Pedagogy of Storytelling in Fifth Grade Classrooms.

Your Amendment has been reviewed and approved using expedited review on 12/2/2020. It was the determination of the UMCIRB Chairperson (or designee) that this revision does not impact the overall risk/benefit ratio of the study and is appropriate for the population and procedures proposed.

Please note that any further changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a Final Report application to the UMCIRB prior to the Expected End Date provided in the IRB application. If the study is not completed by this date, an Amendment will need to be submitted to extend the Expected End Date. The investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

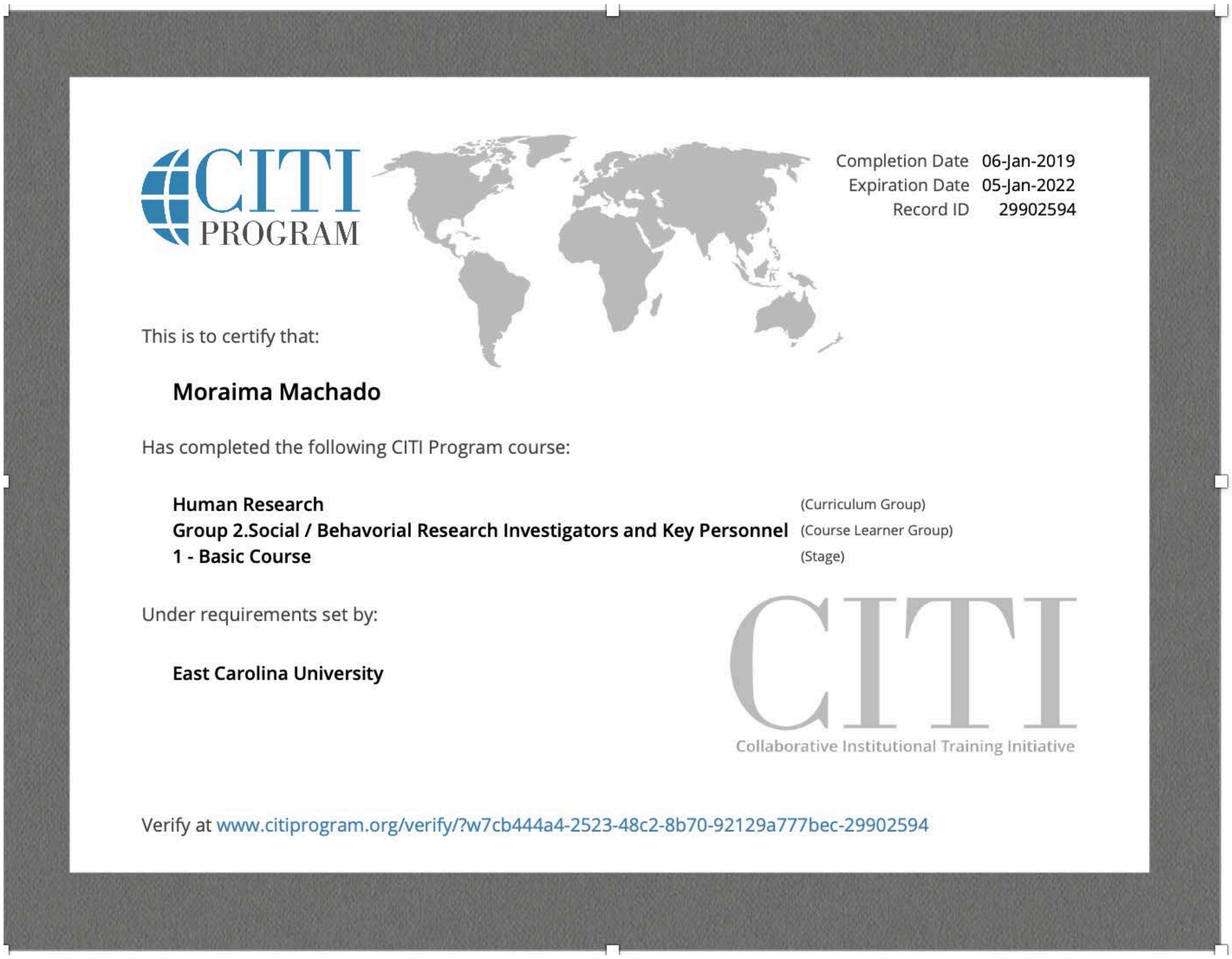
Description:
The study end date is being extended until June 2021.

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD CERTIFICATION



CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 06-Jan-2019
Expiration Date 05-Jan-2022
Record ID 29902594

This is to certify that:

Moraima Machado

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Research (Curriculum Group)
Group 2.Social / Behavorial Research Investigators and Key Personnel (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

East Carolina University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w7cb444a4-2523-48c2-8b70-92129a777bec-29902594

APPENDIX C: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA BY RACE AND ETHNICITY.

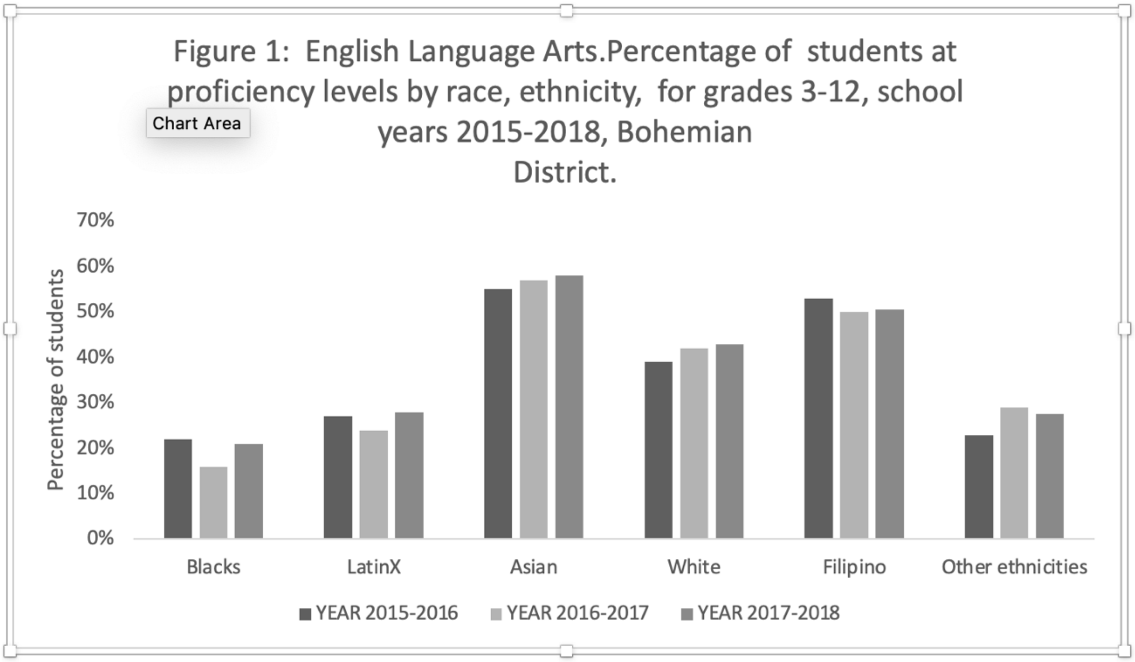


Figure 1: English Language Arts.Percentage of students at proficiency levels by race, ethnicity, for grades 3-12, school years 2015-2018, Bohemian District.

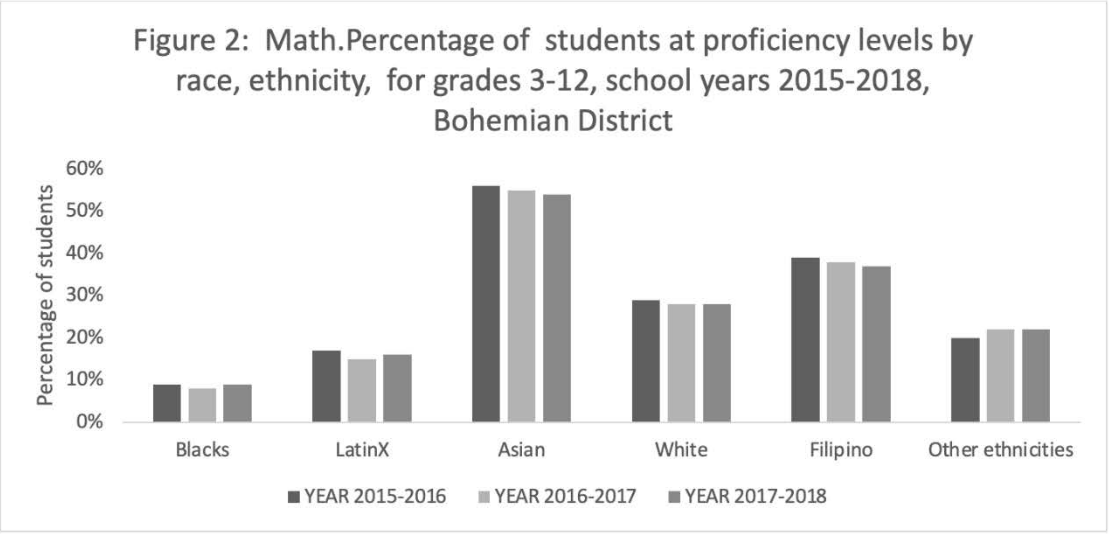


Figure 2: Math.Percentage of students at proficiency levels by race, ethnicity, for grades 3-12, school years 2015-2018, Bohemian District

Figure 3. Comparison between Bohemian District and Rosa Parks Elementary results in English Language Arts. Percentage of students at proficiency levels by race, ethnicity for grades 3-5, school year 2017-2018

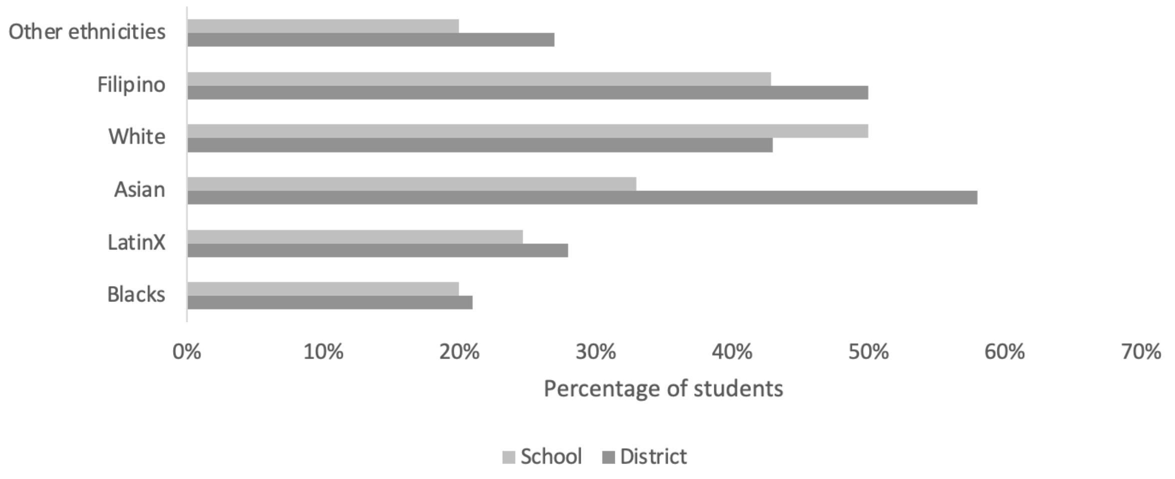
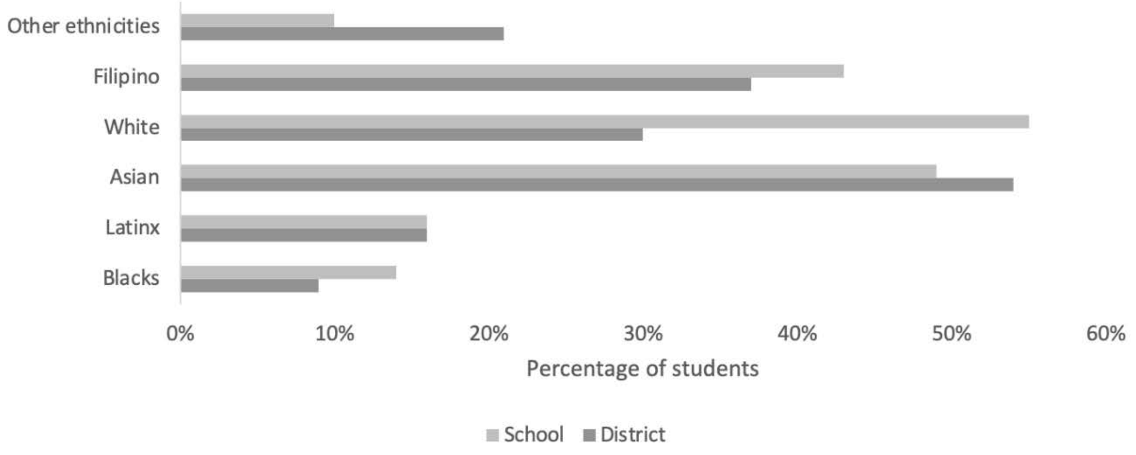
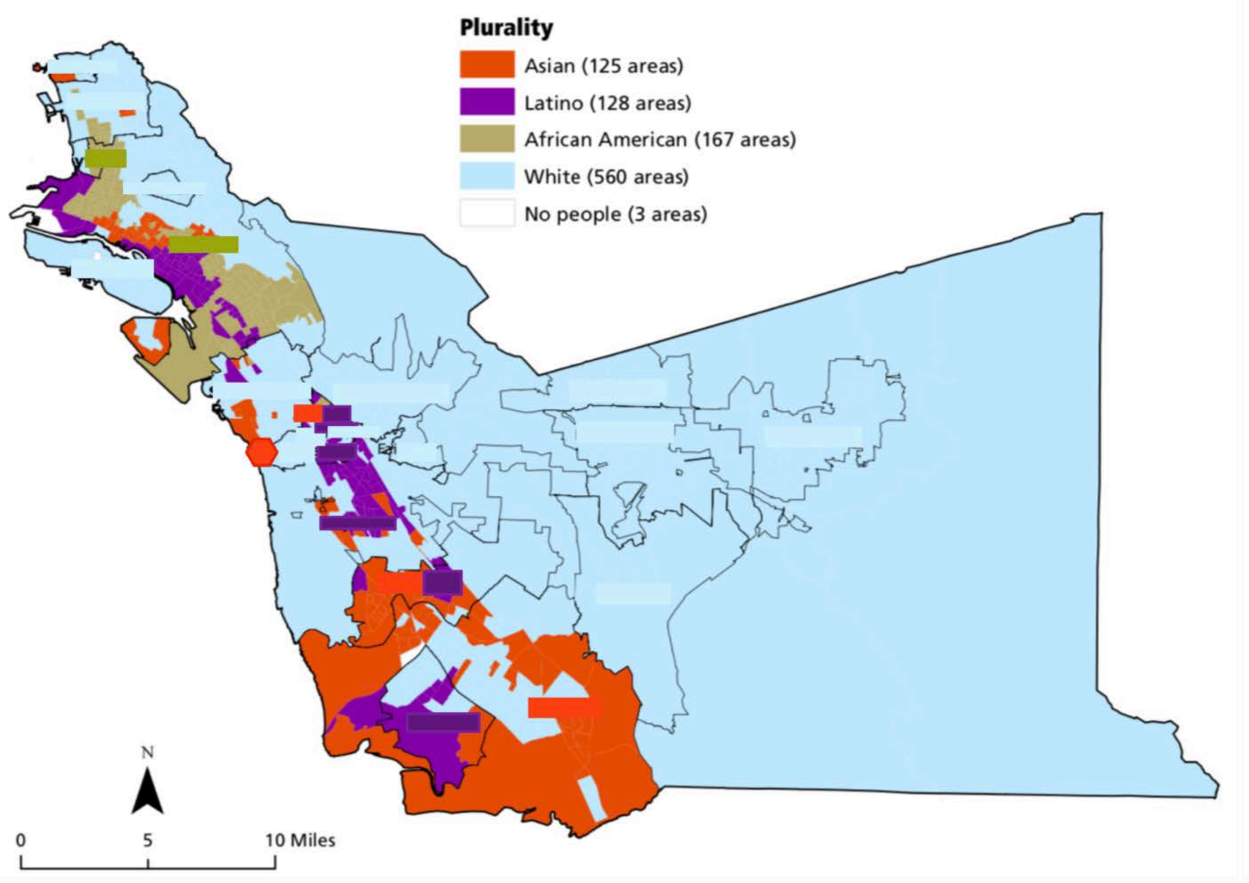


Figure 4. Comparison between Bohemian District and Rosa Parks Elementary results in Math. Percentage of students at proficiency levels by race, ethnicity for grades 3-5, school year 2017-2018



APPENDIX D: MAP OF RACIAL SEGREGATION


Plurality
🟧 Asian (125 areas)
🟪 Latino (128 areas)
🟫 African American (167 areas)
🟦 White (560 areas)
☐ No people (3 areas)
N
0
5
10 Miles

Map of Racial Segregation adapted from Menendian and Gambhir (2018), Map 3 Racial/ Ethnic Plurality, Alameda County.

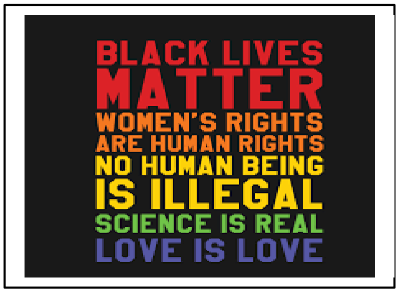
APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE FLYER

JOIN THE ROSA PARKS COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE (CLE)

Breathe Joy and Justice Into Schools and Communities:

Build Community through Student Voices

Listen to youth as we engage in storytelling and other pedagogies to develop a stronger sense of cultural and racial identity.


BLACK LIVES
MATTER
WOMEN'S RIGHTS
ARE HUMAN RIGHTS
NO HUMAN BEING
IS ILLEGAL
SCIENCE IS REAL
LOVE IS LOVE

UNISON
School
WE, TOO, ARE AMERICA
2017

WHEN:

Friday, December 6th 5:30-7:30 pm

(Dinner served)

PLACE:

Rosa Parks Elementary, Multi-purpose room

Bohemian Unified School District

Rosa Park's Fifth Grade Students and Parents

Hosts:

Ms. Diamond, Ms. Lee, Ms. Brown, Ms. Brown, Ms. Mendoza, Mr. Harris from Village Connect, and Principal Machado If you have questions, please email or call Moraima Machado.

APPENDIX F: AGENDA COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE

CLE for 5th grade youth, families and staff at Rosa Parks Elementary

Breathe Joy and Justice into our schools and Community

CLE title: **Breathe Joy and Justice Into Schools and Communities:**
Location: Rosa Parks Multi-Purpose Room
Date: December 6th, 2019
Time: 5:30-7:30 PM. (dinner begins at 5:30 pm)

Listen to youth as we engage in storytelling to develop a stronger sense of cultural and racial identity.

Hosts:

Adele Diamond, Teacher of Rosa Parks ES.
Jessica Brown, Teacher of Rosa Parks ES
Alaina Lee, Teacher, Rosa Parks ES.
Niajalah Black, Counselor, Rosa Parks MS,
Esmeralda Mendoza, parent at Rosa Parks ES.
Remy Harris, Village Connect Coordinator
Moraima Machado, Principal of Rosa Parks ES

Facilitator Agenda

Essential Question: What are assets, positive characteristics that you see, in families and in our community? What of those stories we want our children to know more deeply?

Time	Activity
5:30 pm	Sign in/ Snack and water Outcome: **How do we make the space to feel different from the moment the parents enter to the cafeteria?** Greeting at the door: Teachers gave parents the color card for seating Arrangements. (intentional pairing/ tags Color-coded. Mix languages. Welcome written in all different languages represented in the fifth-grade parent community Organize for Groups and IOC. Affirmations-Posters around the room and at the tables Identity Table clothes or decorations at each table.
5:30-	Dinner_ Family Gathering. Intentional pairing for families to go to the tables. Introduce to each other at tables.
5: 40. pm	Welcome and purpose. Invite to eat together dinner. Essential question for tonight's meeting: **What are assets, positive characteristics that you see, in families and in our community? What of those stories we want our children to know more deeply?** **Honoring the Place** Acknowledge the people who were here before us. Honoring the people that are at the table today with us. Introduce your family to other families at your table.
6:00 pm	**Centering Ourselves in the Space. Mindfulness.** WE would like to model and share with you the way that we would like for us to be together in this space. DMind mindfulness activity.
6:10. pm	**Story-making through drawing** Goal: Through the process of "story-making", participants will dive deeper into their Sites of Struggle, Sites of Strength, and Sites of Survivance to explore how culture influences how we learn.

	Activity: Draw your family gathering/dinner. (10 min) Question: What food brings the family together? **What memories it brings?** What traditions do you honor and celebrate with your family? Take note of the: a. "time", e.g., time of year, time of day", when you were a child – today, etc. b. "place", e.g., indoors/where, outdoors/where, elements of the environment. c. "who is there", e.g., family, extended family, friends, guests, etc. d. Clothing, food, drinks, activities, conversations.
6:20pm	**Opening Circle: Inner Circle- Outer Circle.** Storytelling-/ Testimonios **Inner Circle- Outer Circle. (40 min)** **Outcome**: democratizing voice, bringing reflection into the public sphere and eliciting and honoring collective wisdom. **Key features**: Create space for safety and trust, honor voice and hold stories sacred, share power among people, support honest dialogue about important issues and foster new relationships. **Facilitator:** As this project is about storytelling and hearing the stories of your children and families, we wanted to begin this process tonight. Using these pictures that you created, we are going to tell and hear stories tonight. * ***Ask participants to bring their family pictures to the inner circle -outer circle*** **Inner Circle- protocol**
7:00	**Debrief/ Reflection** **Facilitator:** I want you to now think about the true stories of our community, youth that you heard tonight. *What are assets, positive characteristics that you heard tonight.*
7:05	**Closing Circle** **Closing circle index card. Big circle** **Facilitator::** Please join us in the big closing circle. We'd like to thank you for coming. We are going to use these posters/ pictures to help us build a curriculum where your students get to tell stories based on the words of strength that you indicate on these posters.

7: 10	Closure: To close out the night, we'd like you to write on a pink post it a word to indicate how having your story heard made you feel. Now on a blue post it, write down how hearing someone's story made you feel. Please put your pink post it here and your blue post it here. I'll read some out. We will end by sharing one appreciation from your experience tonight. Something that you are grateful for. I'll start by sharing that I am grateful for the time and energy that families brought to this event tonight.

APPENDIX G: TABLE CATEGORIES PAR CYCLE ONE—VULNERABILITY & CONNECTEDNESS.

Table A

Categories: Vulnerability & Connectedness PAR Cycle One Fall 2019

Emergent Category	Codes	CPR Meeting	Memos	CLE Artifacts	CPR Mt. Artifacts	Total
Vulnerability	Separation	2	1	0	2	4
	Self-doubt	2	2	0	6	10
	Fragility	0	0	3	0	3
	Family Struggle	0	1	0	1	2
	Perceived as intimidating	2	0	0	0	2
Connectedness (Family)	Togetherness	1	0	0	5	6
	Love	0	0	2	0	2
	close/tight	1	0	0	1	2
	To other families	0	1	1	0	2

APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL INTERVIEW

Family Stories Matter: Critical Pedagogy of Storytelling in Fifth Grade Classrooms.
Focus Group Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for taking time to meet with me today. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this focus group interview and will limit the time to 45 minutes

My name is Moraima Machado. I will serve as the moderator for the interview. I am conducting research as a graduate student at East Carolina University. The interview is part of a study to assess the extent critical storytelling affect the experiences of students and their parents help to create identity as an asset.

Disclosures:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to participate and you may elect to stop participating in the interview at any time.
- The interview will be audio recorded in order to capture a comprehensive record of our conversation. All information collected will be kept confidential. Any information collected during the session that may identify any participant will only be disclosed with your prior permission. A coding system will be used in the management and analysis of the focus group data with no names or school identifiers associated with any of the recorded discussion.
- The interview will be conducted using a semi-structured and informal format. Several questions will be asked about both the individual knowledge and skills gained and the organization practices used. It is our hope that everyone will contribute to the conversation.
- The interview will last approximately forty five minutes.

Interview Questions

TURN RECORDER ON AND STATE THE FOLLOWING:
“This is Moraima Machado, interviewing (*Participant Code)* on *(Date)* for the PAR study: Family Stories Matter: Critical Pedagogy of Storytelling in Fifth Grade Classrooms.

Interview:

To begin the conversation, please introduce yourself. To begin the conversation, please introduce yourself and describe your role at the school and your initial reactions to participating in the

Question #1 – What made you agree to be a part of this process?

Question #2 – How did you feel about participating in the CLEs?

Question #3 – What, if anything, did you want to share but were unable to?

Question #4 - How, if at all, did your ideas or perceptions about your students change as a result of your experience of implementing storytelling in your classroom.

Question #5 – Was there anything or anyone that you think was missing from this process?

Question #6 – What did you see as valuable about this process, either for the school as a whole or in your own role in the school?