CONTINUING THE WORK OF OUR ANCESTORS: BLACK RADICAL

LEADERSHIP AND DISRUPTIVE PEDAGOGIES IN AFFIRMING

THE WELL-BEING OF BLACK STUDENTS

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Using Black Feminist Thought and BlackCrit/Critical Race Theory frameworks, this qualitative study examined Black educators' practices in addressing the behavior of their students in an urban school district. It utilized counternarratives and storytelling to explore the cultural dynamics at play between Black educators and their Black students. The Black educators in this study operated under several behavior systems, including Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), socio-emotional learning (SEL), restorative practices (RPs), and zero tolerance policies (ZTPs). Such systems have been implemented based on research that they have the capacity to train Black students to make appropriate decisions regarding their behavior. These systems are also reinforced under the notion that they create learning spaces which promote academic achievement. Due to their own experiences and understanding about how institutional practices and disciplinary interventions result disproportionately in oppression and violence against Black students, these educators disrupted these practices and utilized cultural approaches that centered Black-ness. In doing so, they were able to address behavior and affirm Black students' well-being. The cultural approaches conceptualized as disruptive pedagogies include aspects of othermothering, otherfathering, critical caring, sermonizing, womanist caring, and Black Masculine Caring. An analysis of the stories and counternarratives illustrated that Black principals, counselors, and teachers draw from the long tradition of Black resistance and Black radical leadership to create educational spaces that support both emotional well-being and academic excellence. Implications, recommendations and future research are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

important their friendship would become through troubles of the job, times of loss and grief, and isolation. Though Zoom meet-ups couldn't begin to replace our get-togethers, I looked forward to them because they gave me good vibes, lots of laughter, and great memories. Thank you so much for your continued friendship and support.

Dr. Cynthia Madison, Cecil Banks, Drew Richardson, Teresa Riley, and Michael Christianson. Thank you for sharing your wisdom and knowledge with me. I know there were many times you were tired and dealing with uncertainty because of the pandemic, so I appreciate your patience and commitment to our work. Many people were impressed by your stories of Black radical leadership and resistance in doing what was best for Black students. You truly walk in the spirit of our ancestors.

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INTRODUCTION

"...why am I so insistent upon giving out to them that *Black*-ness, that *Black* power, that *Black* pushing them to identify with Black culture...I have no choice over it in the first place. To me, we are the most beautiful creatures in the whole world, Black people, and I mean that in every sense, outside and inside. And to me, we have a culture that is surpassed by no other civilization but we don't know anything about it...My job is to somehow make them curious enough or persuade them, by hook or crook, to get more aware of themselves and where they came from and what they are into and what is already there, and just to bring it out. This is what compels me to compel them, and I will do it by whatever means necessary.

So when I come, I feel a responsibility, they are so glad to see me, because I represent something to them, and I can't give them enough. They need me, they need me. And when I'm needed, I have to give. I curse myself afterwards for having no voice, usually being so exhausted that I can't do anything for myself, but when they need me, they need me. Or, the most important thing is, they are our future. It is an investment as far as I'm concerned. When I invest time in young people from colleges, I know that I'm going to get that bread back. You know that bread cast upon the water comes back? Because when I see them doing their thing one day, and I'm too old to do anything but sit and look at them, I can say that I was a part of that. I never intend for my children to look at me and be ashamed and say, 'Mom, why didn't you do something? I would have done mine'..."

Excerpt from Nina Simone interview
Insistent Black-ness, Black power, and Black culture
Morehouse College, June 1969

Calling on the Ancestors: Nina Simone & Toni Morrison

With that distinctive accent, the flavor of Black coffee, passion and revolution flowing out of every syllable, Ms. Nina Simone shared her thoughts on being compelled to nurture and empower Black college students who attended her concerts and on the time spent backstage tending to their grievances and emotional wounds, loving them on, them loving on her, despite her fatigue, because they needed her. This sense of responsibility underscored her activism which involved uplifting Black children and youth.   The song "To Be Young, Gifted, and Black" was her gift to them, their anthem, to make them feel good about themselves (King & Watson, 2019).

In 1963, six years before the Morehouse College interview, Ms. Simone had become enraged by the assassination of Medgar Evers in Mississippi and murders of Addie May, Carol Denise, Cynthia, and Carole Rosamond in the bombing of 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, (King & Watson, 2019). Her outrage stomped out of her mouth, planted its feet, crossed its arms, dared to be moved, exclaiming in the protest song, "Mississippi Goddam!" The unchecked violence against Black people in this country had moved many artists and entertainers, but Nina Simone used her voice, her body, and her music to speak power to *Black-ness* (as she pronounced it), *Black power*, and *Black culture*. In doing so, she sacrificed her career (Garbus, 2015) in order to proceed, uninhibited, against racial injustice. Black-ness is conceptual and means many things to different people. Here, Black-ness means all the ways of being Black, as rooted in African ancestry (caring, leading and teaching); it is also an expression of the endearing affirmations within Black culture.

Ms. Simone's songs breathe fire in this dissertation--standing at the entrance of most chapters and sections, escorting you in, sometimes whispering in your ears. The incomparable

Toni Morrison stops by too to drop some knowledge. I needed their help in revealing how anti-Black violence against Black children in public schools *still* demands action; that the desire to nurture resides within Black educators because the Black children in their classrooms need it; that Black educators know that their resistance against oppression is casting bread upon the waters[1].

More importantly, Simone's "protest" songs or *her productions of truth*, uplift me as a Black feminist scholar to be courageous and unrelentless, as Simone was, when she said that having "no fear" was what freedom meant to her. Therefore, without fear, I aim to share the truth about anti-Black violence in the United States, the oppressive policies and practices within the school system, and the counterstories that situate Black-ness at the center.   To learn how Black educators negotiate the oppressive infrastructure of school and the ways in which they disrupt it. To enter into this study, I reflect on and share my own truth.

<center>Who Else Hated Huckleberry Finn?</center>

It is called apparent death--the sudden stiffening of the body, the gapping of the mouth, the stillness of the eyes, the sensation of apnea. During a physical, psychological, or social threat, tonic immobility paralyzes the body but keeps the mind conscious, which is nature's defense mechanism.   Tonic immobility is activated when an organism encounters a predator; and while it's known to occur in animals, it also happens in humans (Lloyd, et. al., 2019). I would assume most Black people remember experiencing their first apparent death-- unable to move or speak, vacillating between shock and rage but avoiding any reaction in order to survive the encounter.

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[1] "Cast thy bread upon the waters" from Ecclesiastes 11:1 means a blessing upon others will return; doing good deeds for others without expecting anything in return.

My first apparent death at school, at least the one I can remember as first, lasted no more than a few seconds. I can still recall looking up from my social studies lesson, at my teacher, suddenly curious about her. Did she realize what she had just distributed to a room full of Black children? A worksheet about Harriet Tubman, a worksheet that I still have among my childhood mementos--because I couldn't let go of the words *short, Black, ugly*. I mouthed it again, "Harriet Tubman was a short, Black, ugly woman…" A grainy mimeographed picture distorted her face. I thought, *That had to be the reason for the description*. I had been taught how to rationalize or respond to such verbal violence by watching my mother and older siblings freeze or shrink during racist confrontations on the streets and in grocery stores in our mostly white[2] neighborhood in the 1980s. "Be still, be quiet," I would hear my mother say. So I moved on from those words and continued working.

My most memorable apparent death at school was a prolonged agony, a torturous execution, a deliberate ongoing slaughter. Mrs. Danson[3], eighth grade Honors English, 1982. Her red hair, freckled nose, and teeth with the slight overbite stick with me; the rest of her body is missing in my memories. The weapons used against us before we die are rarely forgotten. I remember Mrs. Danson distributing "our class novel," holding it in my hands, turning the pages, and listening. I recall the stiffening of my body, the gapping of my mouth, the stillness of my eyes, the loss of air in my lungs. "Nigger...nigger...nigger…" I remember thinking, *How can she read the n-word like that*? *I thought she liked me.*

I remember looking around the room and every white student's face hiding from me. I remember seeing Michelle (real name), the only other Black student in class, and she seemed

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[2] White, when related to race, will not be capitalized. There are several arguments, scholarly and journalistic, that illustrate why white should not be capitalized. Among them are "white" does not represent a shared culture or history; and capitalizing white speaks to white supremacy, nationalism and privilege (Bauder, 2020).

[3] Mrs. Danson is a pseudonym.

confused and mad too. I remember Mrs. Danson noticing my reaction, to which she responded, "If you don't like it, don't read it. Take the F." She pulled *Huck Finn* back toward her face and read on. *Weapons when we die.* I couldn't rationalize, just question: Why this book? Why was Mrs. Danson acting so cavalier? Why was it so easy for her to dismiss and reduce me? I shook my head and put *Huck Finn* under my desk, hating it for pushing my Black feelings out front to be mocked and discounted.

Apparent death is hard on the body, the mind, the spirit. Each day I hoped that something would happen and we wouldn't have to continue reading *Huck Finn*, each day I waited for an apology or at least an explanation, and each day I put my head down and bled out. Mrs. Danson's posturing before the class, the exercising of her privilege, my body stiffening, my loss of breath, my anger and inability to escape ceased only to come back again.

I have since learned that discussions and lessons on slavery in classrooms in the U.S. often prioritize white comfort but perpetuate psychological violence against Black students (King & Woodson, 2017). As noted by Leonardo and Porter (2010)-

> ...a form of educative-psychic violence in the form of racial discourses is also developed by the colonizer in order to keep the very consciousness of the colonized under control. (p. 142)

Yes, for her own comfort, Ms. Danson used the anti-Black language in *Huck Finn* to beat me and Michelle into submission.

These experiences (re)shaped me, forming the rhizomatic roots of this dissertation; for, based on a folder of essays from the last 35 years, I have never stopped reliving these moments and analyzing their causes. Those yellowing papers, full of clichés but nonetheless poignant, reflect investigations of race in society and in the school system, dissections of race and privilege

in these spaces, and an evolved understanding that the enacting of privilege in society results in the demise of those in the margins; but the demise has been socially justified.

The (In)visibility of Race

After the murder of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, in 2012, the lead investigator diminished his death by asserting that it was Trayvon's hoodie, not his race, that triggered his murderer's vigilantism (Dancy, 2014). Martin's murder prompted national conversations regarding his wearing of the hoodie, which had already been criminalized prior to this tragedy. Hoodie-wearers were already being surveilled or banned in public spaces in the United Kingdom because of their association with thuggery and aggression (Rahman, 2016). Despite the transference of guilt from Martin's murderer to Martin's hoodie, Black parents encouraged their sons to be careful about what they wore to avoid being viewed as dangerous or threatening by the police (Varela & Moore, 2014). It appeared that certain clothing types and styles, freely donned by others, only tended to exacerbate anti-Black violence when worn on the bodies of Black boys.

The revolutionary response in #BlackLivesMatter (Garza, et. al., 2020) to the acquittal of Martin's murderer was not without geographical-situational context. The history of lynching, murder, and extermination of Black men, women, and children in the (Deep) South is replete with occurrences where *white fear and suspicion triggered anti-Black violence* and Black communities' demands for justice and full protection under the law. Without meaningful, proactive dialogue about the (in)visibility of race in instigating surveillance and brutality, there are bound to be more unarmed Trayvon Martins killed by police and armed white citizens. And there have been. Michael Brown's murder in 2014 was followed by seven more young Black males shot and killed by white police officers, including 12-year-old Tamir Rice (Strochlic,

2014) because their bodies, their presence and actions in public spaces, their Black-ness made them look menacing.

Black-ness as a negative social uniform. Anti-Black messages are not lost on Black children who are well aware of why Martin, Brown, and countless others were murdered. Thus, the onus has been placed upon Black children to conform, self-police and lessen the threat supposedly inherent within their skin color. Frantz Fanon called Black-ness a social uniform--negatively constructed by the dominant culture--to impose on Black people and set them apart from mainstream society (Beaman, 2017; Fanon, 1952/2008). As Fanon (1952/2008) noted in *Black Skin, White Masks-*

> I was responsible not only for my body but also my race and my ancestors.
> I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic
> features; deafened by cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigmas…(p. 92)

Fanon was recounting his apparent death on a train, where he felt ostracized and othered, where he made himself an object (unable to speak or move), his skin peeling away, leaving him bloody. His experience served as experiential evidence as to how the *dominant culture* controls the creation and dissemination of negative social imagery that can affect how *dominated cultures* see themselves. The latter group then owns the responsibility to act contrary to what society expects of them, because if they do so, they put themselves in danger.

Fanon's conclusions illustrate that there is seldom a time when Black people do not consider their race or the color of their skin as a reason for their exemption, exclusion or inclusion in social spaces. Black people have had to (en)counter and challenge stereotypical and racist images found in American pop culture most of their lives. According to Lemons (1977) since 1880, negative Black imagery has appeared on everything from postcards to children's books to advertisements portraying Blacks as happy-go-lucky nonthreatening Mammies, Toms,

Coons, and subhumans with grotesque, ape-like features. This kind of marketing has been referred to as commodity racism (McClintock, 1994). According to Hund (2013)-

> Commodity racism was always more than the use of racist images and insinuations in advertising. From the beginning, it was a system of setting up mores as well as goods, hereby not only mediating between producers and consumers but also between classes...commodity racism not only implied the announcement of brands but also an enduring advertising of white supremacy. (p. 21)

And while commodity racism was far more evident and acceptable in the Jim Crow era, we can't ignore the fact that *Aunt Jemima* pancake mix, *Uncle Ben* rice, *Rastus* cream of wheat remained on grocery store shelves in the twenty-first century until recently[4]. Even after the modernization of these minstrel caricatures on product boxes, the subliminal message of anti-Blackness is not lost on the Black consumer.

The negative imagery and perceptions of Black-ness stem from the social construction of race (Omi & Winant, 1994), supported by the influence of science and religiopolitical ideologies. At one time, mythology and the (mis)interpretation of Christian doctrine were used to invent race and ultimately to defend Christian colonizers' enslavement and oppression of African people. But by the late nineteenth century, scientists, anthropologists, and eugenists employed craniometry, physical anthropology, and intelligence testing to validate the differences between Blacks and whites. These science-based measurements justified the continual oppression of Blacks by attesting to Black genetic and biological inferiority. For example, to prove the theory of separate creation and white supremacy, Louis Agassiz photographed several enslaved Black men, women, and children from Columbia, South Carolina, in 1850 and analyzed their

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[4] Due to Black Lives Matter Movement following the murder of George Floyd, pressure was put on Quaker Oats to phase out these products, admitting that they perpetuated racial stereotypes and were remnants of Black face minstrel shows after years of denying their appeal to white supremacy.

naked bodies to record physical differences--body shape, posture, and the shape of the head (Wallis, 1996)[5].

The resistance to the naturalistic, essentialized concept of race emerged in the early twentieth century from Marxists, Pan-Africanists and race theorists (Omi & Winant, 1994). Du Bois (1897) argued that institutions and practices of classical racialism in the modern West brought race and racial identities into being and that race was employed to biologically explain what he considered social and cultural differences between diverse populations. Nonetheless, after the Civil War and into the Jim Crow era, the argument that race was biologically unimportant, genetically inaccurate, and, as a social construction, could be rendered meaningless was quashed by politicians, economists, and Social Darwinists to ensure that white supremacy remained the law of the land. More specifically, they wanted to ensure that social and economic equality among Black and white citizens in the United States would not become a matter of fact.

The concept of race continues to be treated as real to reinforce the dangerous myth that genetic characteristics shape the behaviors of social groups (Donovan, 2013; Riss, 1994). The social construction of race continues to make room for racial stereotyping, the denial of equal treatment in social spaces, and the continued marginalization of Black people.

Black bodies on school property

For Black children, in particular, the implications for the social construction of race are serious. Childhood is a dangerous space for Black children in society and in school. The social construction of race has melded with the social construction of *Black childhood*, marking Black children as inferior, evil, dangerous and adult-like (S. Patton, 2014). These characteristics,

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[5] Tamara Lanier-- a descendant of Renty and Delia, two of the enslaved people in Agassiz's daguerreotypes--sued Harvard in March 2019, charging that the University continues to profit off the images that belong to her family (Hartocollis, 2019).

imposed on Black children, factor in why apparent death and spirit-murder become common, almost daily experiences in public schools. Spirit-murder, as argued by legal scholar Patricia Williams (1987), illustrates that racism is not just physical violence against the body; it is also psychological, emotional scarring, and dehumanizing.

Because of the social constructs of race and Black childhood, Black children are the most surveilled and disciplined student population in public schools in the United States (Blad & Mitchell, 2018; Green, 2018; Hackett, 2018; Lopez, 2018; Strauss, 2018). School policies and practices justify controlling Black bodies, and that the justification, in part, is permissible through consent (Gutman, 1980). That is, children, as do their parents, in some fashion, agree to assimilation and deculturalization, and accept behavioral castigation in exchange for the educational investment in their futures.

The justification is a facade because society, in itself, often does not seek consent from children whom it considers to be irrational human beings (Gutman, 1980). Thus, schools, as agents in society, presume children's consent without actually acquiring it. Furthermore, the notion that Black children would ever consent to their own spirit-murder is another dimension of the I or an outright fallacy; for Black children, perceived as the least rational and the least human in white society (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014), rarely are afforded the *right to consent* in white-constructed public spaces.

More specifically, the justification for controlling Black bodies on school property presumes that such control is essential for their academic achievement and, therefore, their ability to become productive, self-sufficient citizens and contributors to the economy. Black children's academic achievement continues to reflect a seemingly insurmountable educational debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006). This debt may explain why paternalistic disciplining is prevalent in

urban school districts where results on mathematics and reading state and national assessments tend to be historically low (Noguera, 2009; Obidah & Howard, 2005). In trying to determine the cause(s) of low academic performance, schools may point to the usual deficits—race, gender, behavior, socioeconomics, home environment, and even parenting—without scrutinizing or considering the practices, prejudices, and policies within the school system. How schools go about trying to discover which deficit has the most impact on achievement can be particularly harmful to Black children because the focus is usually on fixing what's broken with(in) them.

Rather than race or any of the other perceived deficits, research supports that disparities in educational resources are factors in Black student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Black children's educational debt is often used to reinforce the necessity of teachers and administrators adhering to oppressive behavior modification practices and zero tolerance policies (ZTPs). In order to produce better academic results, the implementation of paternalist disciplining has been encouraged in urban schools. Such an approach calls upon educators to use prescriptive interventions to teach Black children how to act so that they can learn (Baldridge, 2016; McDermott & Nygreen, 2013). The penalties for Black children not adhering to expectation can become progressively punitive and severe. In the world of work, individuals, including educators, act consciously to maintain and reproduce oppression but see themselves as simply doing their jobs, not as agents of oppression (Young, 2002). This dichotomy leaves us to contend over the *palpable* role and function of school(ing).

I assert that the conflicting images of school as both philanthropic/savior-like and oppressive/carceral harken back to slavery, where the domination of Africans was justified by the belief that slavery was a positive good and a benevolent institution. If Black-ness is viewed as disadvantageous or a deficit, schools can weapon curricula and discipline policies to strike it

out for the good. In this respect, schools can declare that Black children have "overcome their

disadvantages" and transformed into well-behaved learners. However, subjugating Black

children to paternalistic practices in order to acquire an abstract success can be traumatizing. It

compromises their physical and psychological freedom—in that the spirit-murdering of Black

children serves as a necessary casualty to their school-defined success.   Spirit-murdering is one

mechanism, among many anti-Black aggressions in the larger social context of anti-Black

violence, that is perpetrated against the Black body (Hines & Wilmot, 2018) and mind.

According to Dumas and ross 2016), it is against these aggressions that Black children resist but

become further penalized for doing so.

　　　According to Ladson-Billings (2009b) in her work on culturally relevant pedagogy,

teachers best serve Black children when they understand the role of Black culture (i.e., Black-

ness) in their daily lives. But while the use of Black culture has been used to increase or improve

Black children academic achievement (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Love, 2019; Nuri-

Robins, et. al., 2012; Paris, 2012), Black children's potential and humanness still require

protection for the dehumanizing effects of paternalistic disciplining used to acquire their

conformity and stimulate their academic achievement. Many schools implement character

education, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), socio-emotional learning

(SEL) programs or restorative practices (RPs) as more "affirmative" approaches to influencing

behavior and learning. However, critics of RPs suggest that they cause a second victimization or

retraumatization and turn conflicts into public drama (Hayes, 2006; Hopkins, 2004; O'Reilly,

2019). SEL programs are noted for being racially neutral and can be used as another of policing

(Jones, et. al., 2017; Kaler-Jones, 2020; Skiba, 2015). In addition, SEL programs tend to frame

the Black lived experience as trauma (Foster, 2020, 2021).   More importantly, traditional

classroom management strategies, which still underpin many of these programs, also ignore the value of culture and ethnicity (Brown, 2004). These strategies can be weaponized, especially by teachers who see the Black body as a threat.

Therefore, this study addresses the gap in the research literature regarding the use of Black-ness specifically to espouse the psychoeducational and socio-emotional well-being of Black children in the post-*Brown v Board of Education* (1954) era. It centers the narratives of Black educators who reject paternalism and call upon Black-ness to nurture and address the behaviors of the Black children. Of note, in the segregated school system, Black educators created nurturing, caring learning environments where they prioritized Black children's ability and potential (Walker, 1996), and contemporary Black educators walk in this tradition.

Overview of Theoretical Framework

> And now we got a revolution
> Cause I see the face of things to come
> Yeah, your Constitution
> Well, my friend, its gonna have to bend
> I'm here to tell you about destruction
> Of all the evil that will have to end.
>
> Nina Simone "Revolution" (1969)

Like Black abolitionists in the antebellum period, Black educators' work in the schoolhouse was born out of revolution and carved out pathways for physical freedom, Black consciousness, and decolonization. It still takes Black revolutionary thought, knowledge and behavior to bend and/or end an undemocratic public-school education that discriminates against Black children (Simone, 1969; Scott, 2002). In this study, in examining the ways in Black educators disrupt to preserve the humanness and potential of Black children, I will draw upon two theories, Black Feminist Thought and BlackCrit Theory (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Theoretical Frameworks
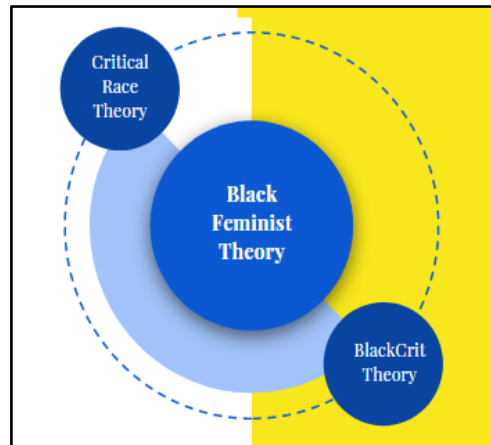
Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2009) stems from Black women's lived experiences with interlocking forms of oppression as related to their race, gender, and class. Because of these experiences, Black women serve as agents of knowledge to confront and resist oppression as well as empower other subjugated groups in their communities. According to Collins (2009), school systems replicate oppression through four domains (i.e., structural, hegemonic, disciplinary, and interpersonal) or a matrix of domination. Black educators in the role of othermothers and otherfathers can assist Black children in identifying and navigating these domains. Case in point, Collins (2009) acknowledged that empowerment emerges when domination is resisted; and when dehumanization and objectification are rejected. In this respect, Black educators resist the traditional roles as oppressors to offer their students an escape from the school-sanctioned violence that found in discipline, the curriculum, and even within the structure of the school itself.

BlackCrit (Dumas & ross, 2016) extends the research on education and Critical Race Theory conducted by Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006). Dumas and ross (2016) argued that the focus should not be on white supremacy but anti-Blackness. That is, anti-Blackness and Afro-

pessimism are perceptions that dismiss the humanity of Black people, that we are still property to

be manipulated according to the wants and needs of the dominant culture and its school system

(Young, 2005).   Henfield et. al. (2018) cited James Baldwin (1979 who stated, "The brutal truth

is that the bulk of white people in America never had any interest in educating Black people,

except as this could serve white purposes," (p. 8). Among these purposes was educating Black

people to establish a permanent working class bound to physical labor and service. Whites

believed in a Black education for the sake of work brought them salvation, but it also primarily

served to maintain a racial, socioeconomic hierarchy (Hochman, 2009; Litwack, 1998).

      BlackCrit, in this respect, centers Black-ness in analyzing the school policies and

practices that aim to harm and control Black children (Coles, 2018; Coles & Powell, 2020;

Dumas & ross, 2016). This position is key to exploring and examining how apparent death and

spirit murder are rationalized and even justified in the curriculum, state assessments, and

discipline policies. BlackCrit provides the lens through which to identify the sources of anti-

Blackness and to understand Black children's acts of resistance against constant surveillance and

punishment. Though the right of students to protest against school violations of their civil and

constitutional rights has been upheld by the United States Supreme Court (Tashman, 2017),

Dumas and ross (2016) theorized that Black children's protests and resistance have led to

mistaken perceptions that they are naturally disruptive, bad, loud, and threatening.   Black

children's literal fight to "getting knees off their necks"[6] (Sharpton, 2020) are muted by

oppressive, punitive consequences in ZTPs and racially-neutral programs that train them to

suppress warranted anger and frustration (Kaler-Jones, 2020). Thus, being forced to be silent

---

[6] "Get your knees off our necks!": The Reverend Al Sharpton uttered this phrase while delivering the eulogy at
George Floyd's memorial service on June 4, 2020. Floyd was murdered on May 25, 2020 by a Minneapolis police
officer who held his knee on Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. Sharpton used this phrase to illustrate the
story of Black people in America.

about their pain[7] bolsters the intensity of apparent death and damns recovering from spirt-murder.

And so by examining the narratives and counterstories of Black educators, I argue that Black educators are aware that discipline policies and practices are oppressive and can be ineffectual in addressing the underlying causes of behavior; therefore, they choose to utilize cultural approaches as a response. This research aims to demonstrate that Black educators understand the professional expectations to adhere to paternalism and behavior programs and feel compelled nonetheless to resist for the sake of Black children's potential and humanness. This study argues that these educators' own lived experiences with anti-Blackness in society and schools assist them in confronting oppression in order to nurture Black children.

Overview of Study Design

> Well the mountains they won't move no they don't
> And the people they won't dance and they won't
> I sing, I sing, I sing, I sing
> I sing just to know that I'm alive
>
> Nina Simone "I Sing Just to Know I'm Alive" (1982)

This study examined the narratives of Black educators and explored how their experiences within the school system informed their decisions to use cultural disruption when addressing behaviors and caring for their students. The research questions included the following:

1. How do Black educators understand and negotiate the oppressive infrastructure of schools and its impact on Black children?

2. In what way do Black educators disrupt paternalistic practices that are entrenched in the discipline policies of the urban school system?

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[7] Inspired by Zora Neale Hurston's quote: "If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it" from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937).

Study participants were recruited from two campuses in Morrison Independent School

District[8], a school district where I had been a Master Teacher and an elementary assistant

principal.   Purposeful sampling (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) was utilized to recruit three

participants who had been trained in paternalistic classroom management practices and were

responsible for implementing and monitoring the application of these practices on their

campuses. I also used snowball sampling (M. Patton, 2014) by calling upon school principals at

Morrison Middle School and Morrison Alternative School to identify five more participants who

worked in a variety of capacities within the school and had been trained in paternalistic

classroom management. After a series of voluntary withdrawals for personal reasons and

attrition, I had five participants in this study: A Black female principal, a Black male assistant

principal, a Black male counselor, a Black female science teacher, and a Black male math

teacher. The teachers incidentally had consecutive years of high passing percentages on the state

assessments.

Data in the form of talks, observations, and artifacts were collected online between spring

2020 and spring 2021 because of the COVID pandemic. The talks, artifacts and observation

field notes were analyzed in order to identify codes and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2008).   More

specially, this study utilized interview study (deMararris, 2004), bolstered by sister-to-sister/to-

brother talks (Few, et. al., 2003) (see Figure 2) to collect stories and counternarratives as

espoused by Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist qualitative research (Collins, 2009; Evans-

Winters, 2019; Matsuda, 1995). Storytelling within the Black culture is one of the primary

means in which we share or sing about our lived experiences. Because Black storytelling is

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[8] Morrison Independent School District (ISD) is a pseudonym.

context-laden, the narratives in this study were analyzed separately and together with threads of

data from different storytellers will tie all the narratives together.

Figure 2

Centering the Black Voice within an Interview Study
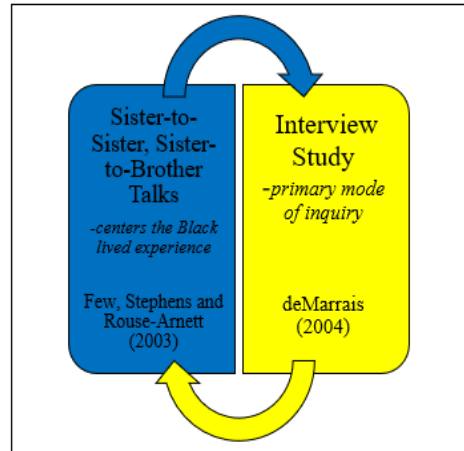
The analysis was written in three themed chapters that describe and explain how the participants

in this study drew from Black culture to address behavior and the socio-emotional well-being of

Black children.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

....If sometimes you see that I'm mad, don'tcha know that no one alive can always be an

angel? When everything goes wrong, you see some bad. But oh, I'm just a soul whose intentions

are good. Oh Lord, please don't let me be misunderstood.

-Nina Simone "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" (1964)

Serving the academic needs of Black children in American public schools has been complicated insomuch that thousands of research studies have been committed to the issue. According to Ladson-Billings (2009b), "No challenge has been more daunting than that of improving the academic achievement of African American students" (p. xv). This challenge can be attributed to historical obstacles that have derailed efforts to provide Black children with a quality education. Included in these obstacles are negative perceptions about Black-ness and Black identity. Between the 1960s and 1970s, research literature maintained that Black children possessed a cultural deficiency, which hindered their education (Ladson-Billings, 2009b)--but rarely acknowledged the fact that the school system understood little about the cultural background of Black students. Despite educational inequities and negative attitudes toward Black children during the 1960s and 1970s, Black children were often blamed and made to feel ashamed of their academic abilities in integrated public schools. The blame and shame resulted in what Kozol (1967) called pedagogic brainwashing when he wrote about his experiences in Boston public schools in the mid-1960s. Kozol recalled a Boston School Committee member saying, "We have no inferior education in our schools...What we have been getting is an inferior type of student" (p. 60). This sentiment was common among the anti-school desegregation crowd who believed that inferior Black students would impair the learning of white students in the same classroom.

As I reflect on schooling in the United States since the passing of *Brown v Board of Education* (1954), I often think of Black children who, like myself, just desired a quality education. An education that is their civil and human right to have. And I imagine how their behavior within the classroom is often misunderstood and how the ways in which Black people learn are misconstrued. I wonder how often Black children think or say to their teachers, "You

don't understand me." Or cry to their parents about being denied, disbelieved, or dismissed.

While I know it sounds as if I am referring to Black children's treatment in the post-*Brown*

school system as a misunderstanding, I am not. This is no attempt to absolve racist teachers,

racist practices, and racist infrastructure of the curricular, physical, and psychological violence

perpetrated upon Black children. However, I would be remiss if I did not make the connection

between school-sanctioned disciplinary violence and ignorance of some kind.

Due to cultural ignorance in particular, questions about the proper educating of Black

children have been a part of sociohistorical and racial inquiries that allude to Black children

coming to school without the intellect, character, and abilities to "succeed." Societal

perceptions tend to frame Black children in singular dimensions of existence (e.g. impoverished,

fatherless, at-risk) which demand specific standards of academic and behavioral care in order to

recover their wholeness, that is, to help them overcome their Black-ness. Bolstered by the belief

that a disadvantaged Black culture caused poor behavior and low academic achievement,

educational practices and policies in the 1960s and 1970s tended to champion school conditions

that decultured Black children as a means of improving their behavior and learning (Ladson-

Billings, 2009b). One consequence of this approach was that Black children incurred the burden

of acting white (Fordham & Obgu, 1986). As Fordham (2008) noted-

> In exchange for what is conventionally identified as success, racially
> defined Black bodies are compelled to perform a white identity by
> mimicking the cultural, linguistic, and economic practices historically
> affiliated with the hegemonic rule of Euro-Americans. (p. 227)

Obgu (2004) acknowledged the burden of acting white even occurred during enslavement when

the rules of social engagement for Black people were prescribed by whites who wanted them to

act in certain ways in their presence at the risk of brutality and death (see Frantz Fanon's *Black

Skin, White Masks*).

The concept of acting white gained attention in the 1980s even as research began to appear about the importance of culture. By the 1980s, resource pedagogies emerged, which elevated languages, literacies, and cultural practices as resources to be accessed when students of color encountered white, middle class ways of acting and being within schools (Paris, 2012). And within the last thirty years, educational research by Black scholars has buttressed the accentuation of culture in the classroom in order to improve academic achievement, and more recently, to address issues of social inequality and injustice. As the research now recognizes that the states of being and becoming for Black children are richly influenced by their culture, efforts to develop teachers' cultural competence has grown in teacher education programs in colleges, universities and professional training in schools. Culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally responsive (Gay, 2000), culturally proficient (Nuri-Robins, et. al., 2012), culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) pedagogies, and abolitionist teaching (Love, 2019) reflect the importance of culture in teaching and learning.

Each of these pedagogies promote and draw upon the strength of Black culture and history. For example, Ladson-Billings (2009b) researched and catalogued the practices of pre- and in-service Black and white teachers to inform others of what happens when they get it *right*, when they teach Black children to high levels of proficiency. The practices of the eight teachers in her study may not seem like acts of resistance, but they were. These teachers focused on student learning, which is expected, but they developed cultural competence and made Black students aware of the sociopolitical underpinnings of their schooling. Ladson-Billings realized that the teachers' interviews and observations tended to highlight culture relevance. Ladson-Billings (2009b) wrote-

> Thus culturally relevant teaching uses student culture in order to maintain
> it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture. The

negative effects are brought about, for example, by not seeing one's
history, culture, or background represented in the textbook or curriculum
or by seeing that history, culture, or background distorted.   (p. 19)

She presented an examination of culturally relevant teaching and found the need to focus on

literacy, as it has always been the process for consciousness-raising and aimed at human

liberation (Freire, 1970/2014; Freire, 1985; Harris, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1992). Literacy,

outlawed and punished as a weapon of rebellion, was now recognized and accepted as a

component to the academic achievement of Black students. Ladson-Billings (2009b) noted two

important factors that emerged from observing the practices of teachers who had spent several

years instructing Black students: 1) when Black children are treated as competent, they

demonstrate competence; and 2) a real education helps to augment Black students' thinking and

abilities. Ladson-Billings (2009b) stated, "These teachers provide intellectual challenges by

teaching to the higher standards and not to the lowest common denominator," (p. 134). That is,

teaching up to Black students has a positive impact on their psychoeducational well-being.

In addition, Love (2019) advocates for abolitionist teaching which focuses on lessons in

racial violence, oppression, resistance, and social change.   Love urges educators to teach these

concepts and virtues through radical civic initiatives, arguing against teaching Black children to

do more than just survive, that is, to endure and tolerate their oppression in the public school

system.   To be an abolitionist or a liberator, educators must move beyond teaching Black

children to master academic content; they must teach Black children to demand undisputed

dignity and recognition of their humanity.   As Love (2019) knows and understands, "The field

of education is anchored in white rage," (p. 22)[9]. In this respect, educators need to know that

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[9] white rage--see *White rage: The unspoken truth of our racial divide* by Carol Anderson (2016). Based on
Anderson's research, Black social power results in white rage and resentment. "Since 1865 and the passage of the
Thirteenth Amendment, every time African Americans have made advances towards full participation in our

anti-Black-ness and white supremacy in the school system is meant to continue dark suffering, and any acts of Black resistance, demands for equality, or Black progress itself will prompt rage and violence (Anderson, 2016; Love, 2019).

Reflecting upon her own experiences in FIST (Fighting Ignorance and Spreading Truth), a youth activism and empowerment program, Love shared that her success in school did not come through compliance but through political refusal and her love of Black-ness as an act of resistance. And these actions left her Black-ness intact. Love (2019) explained-

> I had to learn despite school, not because of it. School mattered because it provided the testing ground in which I learned ways to resist and navigate racism, low expectations, the stereotypes, the spirit-murdering, all forms of dark suffering, gender suffering, queer suffering, religious suffering, and class suffering. (p. 52)

Both Ladson-Billings' and Love's theoretical positions illustrate that Black culture is both a shield and a sword that can be utilized to protect Black children from educational violence. Black culture can also carve out space for resistance, rebellion, and disruption required to battle structural racism and oppressive structures that emotionally harm Black children.

While the space given to cultural pedagogies in public schools and academia is encouraging and much has been written about culture in the academic curriculum and its integration in academic content (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Love, 2019; Nuri-Robins, et. al., 2012; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014), more contributions to research regarding *Black culture as a notion of care, as an alternative to classroom management strategies* , and in the *socio-emotional curriculum* are warranted. Case in point, even though the benefits of socio-emotional learning (SEL) have been touted since the mid-1990s, the

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democracy, white reaction has fueled a deliberate, relentless rollback of their gains" (Anderson, n.d.)

interrelatedness of SEL and culture is in its nascent stages. Furthermore, recent studies on SEL

programs illustrate SEL strategies are racially and culturally neutral because they are universally

applied to all children (Jones et al, 2017).

Therefore, my research aims to situate the concept of Black-ness as a disruptive

pedagogy in which Black educators utilize culture approaches such as othermothering (Collins,

2009; Thompson, 1998) and otherfathering (hooks, 2004; Tafari, 2018) to in order to address

behavior and the socio-emotional well-being of Black children. They resist the traditional,

established systems that educators are expected to adhere to in order to maintain orderly

classrooms.   In these cultural approaches, the disruption is transformative, transferring from the

educator to the student. That is, disruptive students receive the support of disruptive educators

(Mills, 1997).   Disruption and resistance by Black educators is vital because there are schools,

even in urban areas, that neglect the benefits of culture and retain the practices of deficient

thinking.   Lastly, disruption in urban schools is significant they often endure heavy(ier)

accountability pressures around increasing student achievement.

In order to make the case for disruption, I begin my literature review with discussions on

the social constructions of race and childhood. The social construction of childhood developed

within and alongside the social construction of race in sixteenth century Europe (Kehily, 2008;

Smedley, 1999). In essence, childhood acted as a subclass in which the perceptions of race

settled and helped establish the notion of binary opposites in the perceptions of children (Hall,

1988) such as good and bad (Jenks, 2005), civilized and uncivilized (Vargas & James, 2012),

and subjects and agents (Fanon, 1952/2008).   Exploring these constructs first aids in

understanding the implications that have impacted the treatment of Black children in school.

The Construction of Race

But that's just the trouble
'Do it slow'
Desegregation
'Do it slow'
Mass participation
'Do it slow'
Reunification
'Do it slow'
Do things gradually
'Do it slow'
But bring more tragedy
'Do it slow'
Why don't you see it
Why don't you feel it
I don't know

-Nina Simone "Mississippi Goddam" (1964)

While the social constructions of race and childhood developed around the same time in the sixteenth century (Kehily, 2008; Smedley, 1999), race has had far greater implications on practices and policies that impact Black children in public spaces. According to Kendi (2019)-

> There is no such thing as a nonracist or race-neutral policy. Every policy
> in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or
> sustaining either racial inequity or equity between racial groups. (p. 18)

Despite the oppression and slaughter committed because of race in the last four centuries in America, the implications of race tend to get downplayed. The racial progress that has occurred in the United States in the twenty-first century has much to do with it. The election of the first Black president Barack Obama in 2008 *appeared* to suggest that race was no longer a hindrance. Of note, a century before Obama, in 1904, George Edwin Taylor became the first Black man to run for president of this country. Given its historical significance, in that it came a mere 39 years after the Civil War, Taylor's nomination on a third-party ticket[10] was not treated seriously.

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[10] The National Negro Liberty Party or the National Liberty Party, active between 1897-1904

Taylor knew this but used his run to bring attention to growing Black political and economic power (Hill, 2020). Shirley Chisholm's bid for the presidency as a Democratic Party candidate 68 years later in 1972 signified some racial and gender progress. It not only showed that it was possible for a Black woman to run for the highest office in the land (Chisholm 1970/2009) but it also swung open the door of opportunity for Obama (Brazile, 2009; Lynch, 2009). However, to assume with Obama's presidency meant that a post-racial America had arrived is a dangerous and naive position. Based on a study by Love and Tosolt (2010)-

> ...the findings illustrate that the public's views of race and racism are fluid and may be dependent on the race of our leaders. As our leaders change racially, so does the public's views of race and racism. Unprecedented events that shape history, like the election of Obama, create a conflict within thought process, which creates dissonance as expressed by our participants. Society appears to be experiencing confusion about the continued existence of racism. This confusion stems from the existence of clear inequalities in social outcomes, on one hand, and the election of an African American to the White House, on the other. (p. 33)

That is to say, there is enough social and empirical evidence to complicate the post-racial proclamations of race blindness and race deafness. Both of these conditions are symptomatic of race paralysis, which are, in actuality, efforts to reduce cognitive dissonance with willful ignorance or skepticism about the essence of race. The problem is, Americans seem tired of talking about race. Any public discussion of race in this current sociopolitical climate tends to evoke white fragility and silence (Jones & Norwood, 2017). We tiptoe around the subject in order to preserve the comfort of our audience. We gingerly confront the consequences of the social construction of race because white people don't see it and they don't feel it.

Race was invented and substantiated by the dominant culture, but it now appears that they are the least comfortable confronting the ramifications (Sue, et. al., 2009). White people can live their entire lives avoiding the social burden of race (DiAngelo, 2018). The issue of race

is unavoidable for Black children because of the paradoxical weight it carries in this country. Race is a biological condition that is about 400 years old but affects everything in the United States--because it has been *created* to touch every entity in every space. The United States is so racialized that to reject a racial identity leaves one in danger of having no identity at all (Omi & Winant, 1994). According to Omi and Winant (1994), to have no identity, that is, "[t]o be raceless is akin to being genderless. It is to be invisible or ghostly," (p. 6, brackets added). That is, to be non-existent is to not matter.

The concept of race: Inventing Black

Race as a social construct remains controversial; historical records do not document the concept of race before the seventeenth century (Smedley, 1999). According to Kendi (2017), the origins of racist ideas was nearly two centuries old before being weaponized by colonists to legalize New England slavery. There are many polarizing definitions of race that reflect the influence of myth, science, and religiopolitical ideologies. For Omi and Winant (1994), the concept was born in Europe and spread throughout the world following Eurocentric imperialism. Kendi (2017) wrote that anti-Black racism began with Portugal's involvement in African slave-trading around the mid-1400s. When, where, and how the concept of race began might be debatable, but as Montagu (1942) noted, race is man's most dangerous myth and the greatest and most tragic error in our time.

The Problematization of Complexion. The racialization of skin color occurred in the sixteenth century when color and physical appearance became fraught with meaning. Ancient philosophers had surmised that having a physical deformity placed a person in a subcategory of human, and Judeo-Christianity implied disability was a reflection of a defect in the soul (Blair, 2008). Similarly, the Europeans attached great symbolic meaning to various colors. *Black*

became a loaded word in the English language. The *Oxford English Dictionary* noted that long before the 1500s, black was used to mean soiled, foul, deadly, and wicked. The color black, as related to race, underwent a harsh deconstructing and demonizing in the sixteenth century, when skin color became equated with slave status. That is, the racialization of complexion helped to establish an immovable color line that still exists today.

When Europeans first encountered Africans, they concluded that their skin color reflected their character, linking barbarity and blackness (Jordan, 1968/2012). Ethnocentrism prevented the Europeans from believing that human beings had been created in any skin color other than their own and thus began to problematize complexion. Also, noted by Jordan (1968/2012), questions surrounding the cause, significance and utility of blackness were ultimately reduced to pseudo-scientific inquiries and sociomythological beliefs about causation itself, which, if discovered, would explain both its nature and significance.

These attempts to cement the causes of Black skin had a specific purpose--as Europeans expanded their authority through colonialism, they needed *justifications* for the enslavement and subjugation of Africans and Indigenous Peoples around the world. According to Omi and Winant (1994), the concept of race as well as the continued oppression of Black people appeared "first in religious terms, but soon enough in scientific and political ones…" (p. 62). Each justification either reinforced or replaced another one as social scientists, scholars, and researchers broke down, debunked, or challenged the notion of biological race in public forums.

Religion. The Euro-American interpretation of Genesis 9:18-25, or the curse of Ham, became the foundation of the belief that Black skin and servitude were sanctioned by God (Jordan 1968/2012). Using biblical verses about filial dishonor to justify (or make sense of) the enslavement of Africans as Ham's conduct was consistent with the West's conceptualization of

black, or the belief that human blackness was the result of wrongdoing and was an eternal

damnation. Thus religion served as one of the earliest attempts to explain human differences and

supported racist doctrine that Black people descended from sin and thereby "endowed with both

certain physiognomical attributes and an undesirable character" (Sanders, 1969, p. 522). It did

not appear to matter that this religious understanding of race is based on a misinterpretation of

scripture.

Omi and Winant (1994) argued that Christian Europeans relied upon this religious

concept of race to fit their colonialist ideology.   They found it effective in reconciling slavery

and freedom.   Furthermore, when Europeans invaded different lands, their pre-existing

conceptions about humans were challenged and ultimately factored into the exploitation,

enslavement and death of African and Indigenous peoples. On the most basic level, Christianity

provided the righteous justification for the European colonialist greed and wealth gained through

conquest and extermination. Religious justification eventually gave way to science when

conquest lead to nation-building, expansion, and the natural rights of white men. The shift from

religion to science was needed to "demonstrate the 'natural' basis of racial hierarchy as both a

logical consequence" of knowledge as well as an attempt to offer a subtle account of human

complexity during the Age of Enlightenment (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 63). Thus, politicians

called upon science to provide the evidence that race was real and to affirm racial hierarchy and

white supremacy.

Science. Prior to 1859, God's creation explained racial hierarchy but after 1859, it was

natural selection (Haller, 1970). Science was utilized to provide evidence that race explained

human differences, using the same evidence as religion (i.e., physical features and behavior)

(Smedley, 1999). The work of anthropologists determined that race was biological, genetic, and

fixed. Researchers, philosophers, sociologists, and race skeptics contested the idea of biological

race, even now. For instance, eliminativists such as K. Anthony Appiah and Naomi Zack

suggest that one way to eradicate racism is to prove that race is biologically unimportant and

genetically inaccurate. In published lectures on human values, Appiah (1994) argued in the

nineteenth century that race was a scientific term used in everyday life. "That is, with the

increasing prestige of science, people began to use words whose exact meanings they did not

need to know, because their exact meanings were left to the relevant scientific experts" (p. 65).

It can be argued that scientific racism created space for the ordinary person to become

comfortable in their racial and cultural ignorance.

The prestige of science is an accurate description of the influence that anthropologists

commanded into the nineteenth century. According to Smay and Armelagos (2000), racists were

able misuse and exploit the field of anthropology in its early development to support the notion

that the differential evolution of races explained variations in behavior and culture. These

differences explained the inequality of the races and were utilized to classify groups of people

according to skin color and skull size (Armelagos & Goodman, 1998). Scientists in

anthropology and medicine were engaged to prove racial inferiority. This arrangement

demonstrated the commitment to racism within the scientific intellectual community (Haller,

1970). Hogben (1931/1932) remarked-

> Geneticists believe that anthropologists have decided what a race is.
> Ethnologists assume that their classifications embody principles which
> genetic science has proved correct. Politicians believe that their prejudices
> have the sanction of genetic laws and the findings of physical anthropology
> to sustain them. (p. 122)

This situation illustrates that one field of science colluded with another, at the behest of

politicians, to ensure that racial inferiority was maintained. Perhaps, this reflects the panic,

anxiety, and fragility, and surely *a race against time*. Establishing racial inferiority as a justification for the oppression of Black people was especially crucial by the 1850s as the institution of slavery came under fire in the northern United States and was being abolished in most industrialized nations in the West. The publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) provided "scientific legitimacy and credence to racial inferiority and superiority" and was promoted by politicians in the United States (Dennis, 1995).

Social Darwinists applied Darwin's theory to humans even though his work focused on animals and did not address the cultural or social consequences of human evolution (Jackson & Weidman, 2004). Nonetheless, during the Social Darwinism era, scientists, anthropologists, and eugenists employed craniometry, physical anthropology, and intelligence testing to validate the differences between Blacks and whites (Dennis, 1995; Odom, 1967). These science-based measurements justified the continual oppression of Blacks by attesting to Black genetic and biological inferiority. The argument about cultural bias in state assessments and college entrance exams stem from constructs established during this time period.

Similar to the shift from religion to science, the shift from science to politics reflected a sense of urgency with the changing of the times. Despite the inherent negativity of Blackness and Black inferiority cemented into society by the actions of Social Darwinists, the racial advancement of the Negro as property to citizen was imminent and would upset the natural social order between whites and Blacks.

Politics. Even after slavery "legally declared abolished" and theories of biological race were debunked or challenged at the turn of the century by W.E.B. Du Bois, Franz Boas, Robert E. Park and Alain Locke (Omi & Winant, 1994), the lust for racial hierarchy and the social

control of Black bodies never ceased. The rules for creating this system just changed.

Alexander (2010) explained in *The New Jim Crow-*

> Following the collapse of each system of control, there has been a period of
> confusion--transition--in which those who are most committed to racial
> hierarchy search for new means to achieve their goals within the rules of the
> games as currently defined.   It is during this period of uncertainty that the
> backlash intensifies and a new form of racialized social control begins to take
> hold. (pp. 21-22)

From religion to science to political, concepts of race and racial hierarchy have had dire

implications for Black people in the United States. While post-slavery social conflict and

economic competition between Blacks and whites drove the establishment of de jure racism, race

was always a political enterprise--since or before the founding of the Union (Baker, 1998). In

the early colonial era, the idea of race supported the legal positioning of whites over American

Indians and Africans as the demand for land and an ideal laboring class grew (Alexander, 2010).

After American Indians were deemed unsuitable and targeted for extermination, enslaved

Africans and English indentured servants labored alongside one another and even intermarried.

Racial categories were fluid during this time because slavery was not yet law (Takaki, 2008).

However, it was the unification of Africans and the white indentured against the colonial elite

during Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 that prompted the necessity of social and racial categories

(Kendi, 2017; Roediger, 2008; Tyack, 1974). By 1680, colonial laws began to separate Africans

and Europeans, setting into motion the eventual elimination of indentured servitude and the

elevation of slavery as the primary system of labor. These laws awarded poor whites with social

and economic mobility; but Blacks were permanently fixed in slavery. The legal policy *partus*

sequitur ventrem or the *progeny follows the womb* linked slave status to maternal identity or

based on the condition of the mother, effectively making slavery inheritable (Roediger, 2008;

Takaki, 2008).

The legal establishment of race was reinforced by slave codes that lasted from 1640 to 1865, regarding what Black people could and could not do in public spaces among whites. For example, the codes reduced Blacks to property for white plantation owners, restricted their movement outside the plantation to stand on the permission of their "masters," prevented them from marrying because their marriage may result in a change of ownership, and protected the brutality, violence, and murdering of the enslaved from legal consequences. These codes were vital in cementing racial hierarchy throughout the United States for two hundred years.

The politics of racial math

By 1790, the government census consisted of three racial categories: Black, white, and other, but by the 1890 census, the language to identify Blacks had changed nine times, prompted by social events such as Emancipation (Karklis & Badger, 2015). The census language evolved to establish and maintain the racial differences between Blacks and whites that had been complicated by mulattoes, quadroons, and octoroons or persons of mixed heritage. The slave system ignored the mathematics of parentage and treated any fractional admixture of Black blood as the dominant and decisive determination of race (Arbery, 2000). The permanent establishment of a Negro race was made clear with the uniquely American one-drop rule that defined who was Black, an important distinction "to buttress the castelike Jim Crow system of segregation" (Davis, 1991). The one-drop rule is unique to American because having a parent of Black or African ancestry does not automatically code a person as Black in other countries. Case in point, according to Cowell (1985) in South Africa, biracial children are neither Black or white, but colored, because these individuals do not conveniently fit in either racial category.

During the Emancipation years 1865-1866, the Black Codes continued oppression and subjugation of Black people. These codes eventually became laws that limited the freedoms of

freed Blacks. They reflected the larger goal of using white political dominance to maintain

control of the economic and political systems to which Blacks would eventually have access

(voting, education, and legal presentation in court). However, the true nature of the Black

Codes/Laws revealed itself in the passing of vagrancy laws designed to penalize freed Black men

and women's physical freedom and return to slavery in the penal system. Miller (2013), citing

Gorman (1997) on race and hyper-incarceration, cited by-

>Conviction as a vagrant means lengthy terms of imprisonment under the
>chain gangs and convict leasing system. As a result, by the end of the
>19th century, Blacks comprised more than 90 percent of the convict leasing
>system in a still agricultural but industrializing south. (p. 578)

The mass incarceration of Black men, and eventually Black women, has done long-term

damage to the Black community. Unfortunately, for many Black boys and girls in the United

States growing up and "going to prison" may seem like a given.   Despite the legal battles during

the Civil Rights Movement to restore freedom and equality to Black citizens, mass incarceration

remains a crisis as America incarcerates more people than in any other country in the world

(Weiss & Mackenzie, 2010).

From Jim Crow to Post-Racialism

Even after Emancipation, Jim Crow laws--from the Reconstruction to the 1960s--were

designed to maintain racial separation between Blacks and whites and establish two societies in

the United States, separate but equal everything from hospital, stores, theaters, and schools.

Despite great strides toward racial advancement, social mobility, and economic opportunity,

many promises remain unfulfilled. Martin Luther King's dream to have his children judged by

the content of their character, not the color of their skin, is a noble sentiment toward moving

away from race (Glasgow, 2010); but removing racial-thinking from every aspect of public,

private, and political life and discourse will not make an ideal post-racial world nor is it the only

viable and ethical response to right historical wrongs that post-racialists believe (Gilroy, 2000).

Alexander (2011) noted-

> We have entered into the era of "post-racialism," it is said, the promised land of colorblindness. Not just in America, but around the world, President Obama's election has been touted as the final nail in the coffin of Jim Crow, the bookend placed on the history of racial caste in America. This triumphant notion of post-racialism is, in my view, nothing more than fiction-a type of Orwellian doublespeak made no less sinister by virtue of the fact that the people saying it may actually believe it. Racial caste is not dead; it is alive and well in America. The mass incarceration of poor people of color in the United States amounts to a new caste system-one specifically tailored to the political, economic, and social challenges of our time. It is the moral equivalent of Jim Crow. (p. 7)

Ignoring race to eliminate racism is a simple idea but would not combat racism because people's different shapes and colors are *real* (Hardimon, 2003) and racist practices are deeply rooted in the social infrastructure. More importantly, post-racialism does nothing for Black children. Because the social construction of race and all its residual attributions present obstacles and barriers for Black children every day of their lives in public spaces.

In sum, the evolving theories of race proved what is real and true: societies are responsible for creating and giving character and identity to different groups of people. That race is a social construct intended to keep people divided along color lines, to sustain notions of superiority and inferiority, a continuum of top to bottom, a construct in which Black children have markedly borne the burden (Clark & Clark, 1950). By age three, they understand how their race makes others feel, already have a profound knowledge of "racial" differences between Black and white and can articulate them in extremely stereotypical language (Clark & Clark, 1950), which indicates that childhood is a phase of life in which Black children discover what being Black means in the United States.

The Construction of Childhood

<div align="right">
Old Jim Crow
What's wrong with you
It ain't your name
It's the things you do

--Nina Simone "Old Jim Crow" (1964)
</div>

Black children in many spaces do not receive the consideration of being children in the ways that Western societies have come to socially constructed children or childhood (S. Patton, 2014). "Childhood is not universal; rather, it is a product of culture and as such will vary across time and place" (Kehily, 2008, p.7). Case in point, child-as-adult and child-as-evil were two common constructs in European culture during the Middle Ages, based on the beliefs that children behaved or thought no differently than adults and were born with a sinful nature inherited by Adam in Judeo-Christian theology (Bunge, 2001; Gittins, 2008). Emerging views of race impacted child-as-adult and child-as-evil constructions and have affected the larger concept of childhood. In this respect, childhood is another version of Jim Crow, a caste system that dehumanizes and harms Black children.

Childhood itself--as a phase of life *protected for the safety and future needs of the state*-- emerged in the 1800s as economic development in the Western world allowed a shift away from the concept of the child-as-adult (Cunningham, 2014). Industrial capitalism contributed to the sacralization or the sentimentalization of white children (Olson & Rampaul, 2013). While the white child became economically useless, they became emotionally priceless, special and sacred (Zelier, 1985). Industrialized, colonialist societies then began to extend the benefit of innocence and vulnerability to white children. With a growing white middle class, the Apollonian (after the Greek god Apollo) childhood emerged (Jenks, 2005) with the constructs of child-as-good and

child-as-innocent. In the Apollonian childhood, white children were tabula rasae (i.e., blank slates) who should not be held accountable for their misbehavior because they did not know any better; they must be corrupted by adults to lose their goodness and innocence (Smith, 2011). As a result, Western societies designed social policies that centered the white child's physical and emotional well-being and protected them from the consequences of societal ills and corruption. White childhood became the gold standard or the romanticized ideal of purity, essentialized through such representations like *Dick and Jane* (Kismaric & Heiferman, 2004). In the same way, the caricatures of *Little Black Sambo* and *Topsy* reinforced the social imagery of Black children as incorrigible, the watercolor portrayals of characters *Dick* and *Jane* from basal readers from the 1930s signified that white children were middle-class and innocent.

Black Childhood

The social perceptions of the Black child-as-adult and child-as-evil in the United States remain immovable and fixed in sixteenth century Europe. As a result, the Black child is seldomly being perceived, described, or depicted as innocent or vulnerable. Black children possess a Dionysian childhood (after the Greek god Dionysus) childhood which, according to Jenks (2005), is wild, willful, and sensual. In addition, Black childhood is deemed inferior, dangerous, and indistinguishable from Black adulthood (Patton, S., 2014). Because of these social perceptions of Black childhood, there was/is little consideration for the Black child from enslavement to lynchings to police shootings. Black girls (Crenshaw, 2015; Morris, 2016) and Black boys (Ferguson, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2011) serve as the convenient suspect/scapegoat profiled, convicted, and even murdered for being where they don't belong, acting in ways that they shouldn't, or engaging in a myriad of affairs that children do in their juvenility.

When accusation finds the Black child in society, the justice system affords them no protection and may become complicit in their demise. Case in point, in 1944, fourteen-year-old George Stinney, Jr. is *the youngest human being* sentenced to death and executed in the United States in the twentieth century (Bever, 2014).   According to a report by Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative (2020), George and his little sister Aimé were believed to be the last people who saw two young white girls who had stopped to ask about wildflowers near the Stinney home, in Alcolu, South Carolina. Despite the lack of physical evidence linking him to the murders, he was arrested and questioned without an attorney. He reportedly confessed. Nonetheless, in the span of 81 days, George Stinney, Jr. was charged with first-degree murder, tried in court in just two hours, convicted in ten minutes and died after eight minutes in the electric chair (Bishop, 2020; Johnson, et. al., 2017; Equal Justice Initiative, 2020).

There was Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old Chicagoan on a summer visit to Mississippi, brutally lynched, his body mutilated beyond recognition, for allegedly interacting inappropriately with a white woman in a grocery store in 1955.   The details of what exactly happened between Emmett and his accuser are conflicting. Whether or not he spoke, wolf-whistled, or made unwanted advances, his accuser singled him out to be kidnapped from his great-uncle's home, beaten, tortured, and shot, his body weighed down in the Tallahatchie River by a fan blade.   His murderers, who later confessed in a magazine interview, were acquitted after a 67-minute jury deliberation, which according to one juror, was that long only because they had stopped to drink soda pop (Raymond, 2018).

Both Stinney's and Till's murders stand out as cases that reflect how Black childhood is not a phase of life protected by the state but that the state is complicit in violence against Black childhood (Garza, 2014; Hooker, 2016). Their murders (and countless others) demonstrate that

the innocence of Black children is immaterial and that punishment and/or severe discipline are swift reactions because in industrialized capitalist societies, the sacralization of Black childhood does not exist.

Black child-as-adult/as-evil. The adage "Nothing changes if nothing changes" feels apropos to denote how the civic value of Black childhood remains insignificant despite the passage of time. The distancing of American society away from its dark past still offers little to no guarantee of freedom from physical hostility and harm for the Black child. The Black child-as-evil and Black child-as-adult remain social constructions that threaten Western democracy. Within this constructed reality, it is impossible for Black children to *grow up* as protected or legitimate citizens of society (Vargas & James, 2013). So even now, when they are in the midst of walking home with a bag of Skittles like Trayvon Martin or playing outside with toys like Tamir Rice or attending a party pool like Dajerria Becton--Black children, their actions, and their bodies are seen as menacing. The perceived threat inherent in Black children ensures that they live on borrowed time (Vargas & James, 2013).

In writing about the construction of childhood, Jenks (2005) used the terms Dionysian and Apollonian to designate the different ways in which we talk about and treat children. Dionysian denotes a wild, evil child who needs rules and punishment in order to become socialized. Apollonian alludes to an innocent child who has internalized social control and expectations and is moved by that internalization to self-manage (i.e., behave according to social standards) (Jenks, 2005). As Black childhood is considered dangerous and inferior, Black children are more likely to be treated more punitively and less humanely within all social infrastructure, particularly the school system. On one hand, schools, by design, ensure the production of the responsible, governable subject, with children as the raw material (Smith,

2011). This production requires a degree of social control and disciplining by adults (Jenks,

2005). On the other hand, schools also champion the child-centered approach where the child is

a partner or a collaborator with adults, participating in and exercising autonomy in their

socialization and learning experiences.   But the child-centered approach tends to flourish in the

Apollonian childhood because the child is considered good and innocent but capable of

individualism and self-management. Due to the social construction of Black childhood, agency

and freedom are withheld because the Black child has to be *made* innocent and good first.

According to Smith (2011), those with a Dionysian childhood must acquire innocence through

socialization where virtues are inculcated through external discipline. That is, innocence comes

with controlling bodies and training minds.

As Vargas and James (2013) noted, "The ordinary [N]egro is never without sin" (p. 194,

brackets added).   For the Black child-as-adult and Black child-as-evil to become angelic or

sinless (i.e., innocent, not ordinary), within the school system, the cultural "baggage" they bring

to the classroom must get stripped away through discipline. This baggage, contained in their

Blackness, has to be vanquished so that Black children can be redeemed. They must be "broken"

and "remade" so that they can develop the values and virtues for the good of the white society.

More importantly, the notion that Black children can be made good and innocent through

discipline normalizes and regularizes the spirit-murdering of Black children.

Infra-and superhuman. Integration is possible only when Black children become *non-

black* or demonstrate infra- and superhuman qualities (Vargas & James, 2013).   Based on my

experience as a teacher and administrator, trained to be a disciplinarian by the school system, the

infrahumanization of Black children is a common "solution" because it reduces their potential

threat. The Black child-as-adult and as-evil in the classroom is subtly and overtly relegated to an

animal or subhuman through discretionary and severe disciplining, which results in the denial of their humanness and humanity (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). According to Haslam and Loughnan (2014)-

> ...This punitiveness is driven not by a perception that the punished are morally responsible for their actions, but rather by perceived dangerousness and threat. Punitive treatment of animalistically dehumanized people may reflect a judgment that they are not moral agents: Coercive treatment is required precisely because they are not amenable to reasoning or capable of controlling themselves. (p. 416)

When I was a K-12 educator, I was fully aware why certain children were put out of class, sent to the office, or completely forgotten in the back of the room. For some educators, including myself, the need to create as much distance between themselves and these children was a daily concern, as their appearance (size, color, behavior, and even learning ability) presented a threat that we did not want to confront.

Also, in my experience, I found superhumanization to occur in specific cases, instances where my colleagues perceived certain Black children to be different from their peers, already good and innocent, model students who did not need disciplining. Superhumanization allowed these particular Black children the ability to transcend their Blackness, appear "magical" or "mystical," and use their powers to benefit others (Waytz, et. al., 2015), such as being used or signaled out by teachers as a positive influence.   In this phenomenon, their Blackness was forgotten, overlooked, erased because their goodness was evidenced through innocent behavior, intelligence, athletic prowess and/or impressive talents.

However, superhumanization, though seemingly positive and complimentary, comes with negative consequences, such as the notion that superhuman Blacks experience less pain than whites (Waytz, et. al., 2015). This notion is particularly alarming in interactions between Black children and law enforcement. Based on their study on police killings of unarmed Black men

and boys, Hall, et. Al. (2016) found, "If officers perceive Black male civilians as superhuman, they may also more easily justify extreme physical acts against Black male targets in alignment with a 'superhero' versus 'villain' narrative" (p. 179). Furthermore, police brutality against Black males can exist before and after death. For instance, Hunn and Bell (2014) reported that Mike Brown's body lay in the street for hours reflects the normalized indifference to the physical agony (of Black victims) and emotional pain (of Black families).

Furthermore, the superhumanization of Black girls (Morris, 2016) is even more disturbing because the level of brutality directed at them does not align with the socially accepted belief that physical violence against females is inexcusable, avoidable, and cowardly. Nonetheless, Black women are deemed unrapeable because they don't feel pain (Willoughby-Herard, 2018). Black women receive less empathy as victims of domestic violence because they can supposedly handle the pain of abuse (Medina, 2019). Black girls are often de-feminized or masculinized in instances of physical violence in schools (Crenshaw, 2015; Hines-Datiri & Andrews, 2017; Morris & Perry, 2017). "The masculinization and defeminization of African American women and girls is one form of implicit bias that contributes to social approval of violence against them" (Tonnesen, 2013, p. 21). For example, in September 2016, a white school resource officer in South Carolina threw a Black female student from her desk, dragged her across the room, and arrested her after her teacher called for assistance when the student protested giving up her cellphone as a matter of unfairness (Jarvie, 2015). In the video that went viral, other Black students sat there, motionless, emotionless, on-task, during the assault. While some students claimed that the incident looked worse on the video than it actually was, the girl's attorney confirmed that she sustained both physical and emotional scars (Love, 2015). I argue that their rationalization of the officer's actions is a product of schools normalizing violence

against students and their bodies. In addition, in schools where police officers have been

charged with handling discipline issues that teachers cannot or will not handle, such brutal and

aggressive encounters should not be unexpected.

All these examples demonstrate that the compounded constructs of race and childhood

influence how Black children are perceived and received in public spaces. What I presented in

the previous paragraphs provide a broad context of the discipline and violence aimed at Black

children within and beyond the schoolhouse. However, the manner in which these constructs

play out in school and its policies and practices are by no means generic.   There are at least three

specific forms that schools take where Black children are disproportionately and repeatedly

harmed.

Spirit-Murder in Three Acts

I wish I knew how
It would feel to be free
I wish I could break
All the chains holding me
I wish I could say
All the things that I should say
Say 'em loud say 'em clear
For the whole round world to hear

Nina Simone "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free" (1967)

Guided by Simone's words about the desire to feel free, I specifically address the lack of

physical, psychoeducational, and emotional freedom that Black children experience in public

schools, where their spirit-murder is reinforced by school structure, policies, and practices (see

Figure 3). This section on spirit-murder is divided three acts: *Act I* describes school as social

order to control Black children; *Act II* examines school as carceral space to oppress and punish

Black children; and *Act III* explores school as savior designed to fix, repair, and rescue Black

children from their circumstances and their Black-ness.

Figure 3

School Structures, Their Characteristics, and Aims

I. School as social order

political, social, economic objectives:
School reproduces societal expectations, values, and fears

II. *School as carceral space*
rules, surveillance, discipline:
School mirrors a prison

III. *School as savior*
"educational" care and philanthropic economy
School pathologizes Blackness

Source: Foster (2021). Dissertation.
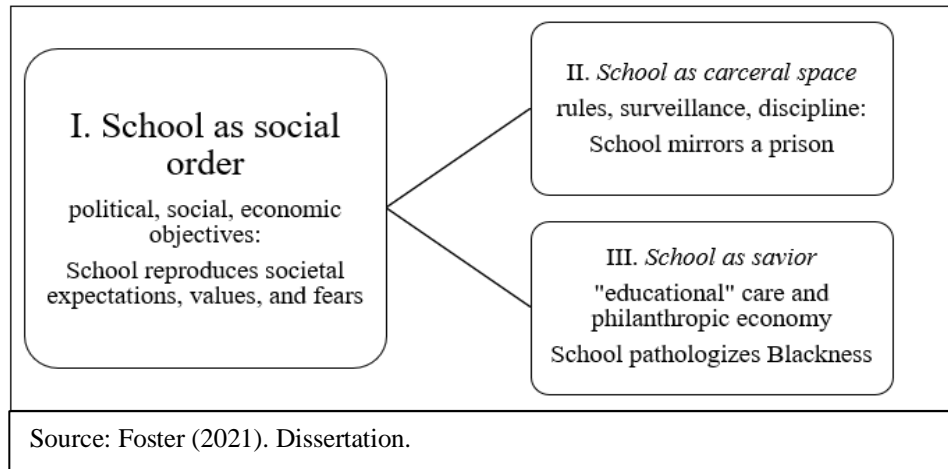
The American school system was never designed to espouse anything other than Western, Judeo-Christian values and democratic ideals. The Europeans who designed and built the American school system wanted to ensure that everyone in the colonies was inducted in a common culture buttressed by Christianity and English civilization; thus, assimilating and deculturating the immigrant, the enslaved, and the indigenous person became a principal hallmark of the American educational system (Fraser, 2014).

However, despite good intentions and motives, the one best system of education has poorly served a pluralistic America since the eighteenth century. According to Tyack (1974), "...to say that institutionalized racism, or unequal treatment of the poor, or cultural chauvinism were unconscious or unintentional does not erase their effects on children" (p. 12). The assumption that the public school system has always been a social good is discredited by the fact that politicians and interest groups have used the public school to advance causes not meant to improve the conditions of all human beings (Spring, 2010). Black children have always been

considered infrahuman or subhuman, and public school was not intended for their advancement, but their containment.

It is relative to what Myrdal (1944) called the American dilemma, or the moral conflict between the national belief in justice and equality for all and the committing of racial prejudice and discrimination primarily against Black people.   This dilemma brings to mind "separate but unequal" schooling challenged by *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). I find it applicable to how Black children's behavior is treated differently by the school system. Even though school policies and objectives appear to be racially-neutral, they reflect societal perceptions and constructs that create separate, hostile, and unequal conditions for Black children. It is under these conditions that the spirit-murder of Black children takes shape. For these reasons, school as social order is the first structure that Black children encounter when they begin their educational careers.

School as social order

School as social order can be viewed as the umbrella or macrostructure under which other school structures fall. School as social order could stand alone as the principal, oppressive structure of schooling, so I introduce it as a launching point for a discussion on other school structures that limit Black children's physical freedom or pathologizes their emotional well-being. This structure makes me think of Nina singing, "I wish I could break all the chains holding me."

Act I. The operations and perspectives of public institutions often reflect societal expectations, values, or fears. As public institutions, schools often share many characteristics of the society in which they are situated (Noguera, 2003). Schools have always been the pathway through which public officials have ushered their political, social, and economic objectives. In

the late nineteenth century, education leaders and sociologists saw school as the key to social

improvement and the mechanism for social control (Spring, 2010). In Durkheim's view, the aim

of education was socialization through which punishment was necessary to reinforce society's

moral identity and to pursue deterrence over rehabilitation. School and society had

symbolically entered into a social contract based on maintaining order (Noguera, 2003). In this

respect, students were made to relinquish some of their personal freedom and conform to the

social expectations of school, which aimed at preparing them for adulthood and steering them

toward moral values and social responsibility (Noguera, 2003; Spring, 2010).

Educating Black children has always been a grave public concern as it allegedly put the

safety and liberty of white Americans at risk. Seventeenth century enslaved uprisings all but

guaranteed an external control of Black education by white supervisors or architects (Tyack &

Lowe, 1986). Thus, the primary sociopolitical objective of educating Black children, even

under the direction of abolitionists and other white liberals, aimed at controlling Black physical

bodies, intellect and spaces (Anderson, 1988; McPherson, 1970) to aid in the emotional and

physical comfort of society *in general*.

This sociopolitical objective has allowed for the creation of a hostile school system in

which an oppressor-oppressed relationship develops between the teacher and the student. It is

telling that behavior management is an integral part of pre-and in-service teacher professional

development as it foregrounds for the teacher what their role in the concept of social order is and

preordains the student as someone *needing* to be controlled from the onset. In this hostile school

system, Black children are characterized as problems whose behaviors must be addressed

immediately, consistently, and even aggressively. As Noguera (2003) explained-

> When children are presumed to be wild, uncontrollable, and potentially
> dangerous, it is not surprising that antagonistic relations with the adults

who are assigned to control them develop. (p. 345)

In school as social order, controlling Black children is systematic, even calculating, reinforced by what is called the hidden curriculum.

Hidden curriculum. Philip Jackson (1968) coined the term "hidden curriculum" to explain how *crowds*, *praise*, and *power* combine to make a distinctive flavor in the classroom that each student must master in order to make their way successfully through the school. He found that schools were places where the division of power was clearly outlined, making a student (a member of the crowd) subject to either praise or punishment. By nature and design, praise and punishment are outcome-based--to change children's thinking and actions in the direction of authority. Jackson (1968) noted-

> Indeed, many of the rewards and punishments that sound as if they are
> being dispensed on the basis of academic success and failure are really
> more closed related to the mastery of the hidden curriculum. (p. 34)

As a statement of fact, Jackson (1968) maintained that the relationship to the hidden curriculum is more pronounced in cases of student difficulties than in their successes, particularly when adherence to institutional expectations is involved. In the classroom and within the school system, the child is often blamed for their own difficulties, which normally defaults to their reluctance or inability to adapt to being socialized into dominant culture norms and values. As Giroux and Penna (1979) pointed out in their study on hidden curriculum in social education, schools do not function in isolation but serve the interests of the larger society. That is, if social infrastructure works against Black children and childhood, then the school system will as well.

While the hidden curriculum is considered unintended, it often enables social reproduction (Kentli, 2009). Based on Bourdieu's (1973/2018) theory of social reproduction, a school system controlled by the dominant classes, at least advancing the values of the dominant culture, will perceive children who possess the habitus (skills or dispositions) of the *dominated*

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classes as evidence of deficiency in the children themselves and their homes rather than as an indication of the school's deficiency in responding to the needs of the children (Nash, 1990). Therefore, in this respect, the hidden curriculum is not at all unintended because school itself, as an institution and as an investor in social reproduction, does not provide equality; it reinforces the inequality of the social structure and cultural order of our society (J. Collins, 2009).

School as carceral space

School as carceral space extends the objectives of school as social order. The big ideas remain--hidden curriculum, social reproduction, and control; but school policies and practices blatantly and overtly exercise their intentions. Ironically, school as carceral space takes shape in schools where strict adherence to paternalistic rules, character education and behavior modification programs is designed to promote school safety and increase academic achievement (Noguera, 2003). But in these schools, the social constructs of race and childhood are most evident as Black children, their bodies and their behavior often face overt scrutiny and punishment, turning their spirit-murder into a schoolwide display of anti-Blackness.

Act II. The get-tough approach of disciplining Black children in schools mirrors the treatment of prisoners in the criminal justice system (Wald & Losen, 2003). For example, school supervision works like a panopticon (Bentham, 1791) where teachers are on duty as guards watching children in the hallways and at classroom entrances. Black children endure constant surveillance by teachers who are trained to anticipate misbehavior as well as to celebrate those "caught being good." Schools with such practices are prison-like because they employ tactics like surveillance to precipitate obedience (Foucault, 1975). According to Foucault (1975), this type of non-physical discipline produces docile bodies because "surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action…" (p. 201). That is, constant surveillance

coerces the individual to believe they are always being observed, even when they are not, which

makes them less likely to break rules.

Foucault's theory has been buttressed by the work of researchers, education reformers,

and social scientists, including Noguera (2003) who found schools mimicked prisons when they

used extreme forms of control such as police officers, metal detectors, surveillance cameras,

rules and restrictions; and Schlechty (2005) who proposed that schools operated like prisons

when their core business was containment, monitoring, corrective action, and dispensing

negative sanctions. Most of all, discipline policies, school resource officers, and cameras are

essentially mechanisms carceral schools utilize that reflect their zero tolerance for anti-Western,

anti-middle-class behavior.

Zero Tolerance Policies. According to Skiba and Williams (2014), zero tolerance

emerged from state and federal drug enforcement policies during the War on Drugs in the 1980s.

By 1994, with the Gun-Free School Act, zero tolerance made its way into the school system as a

way to address serious violence and crimes such as weapon and drug possession, gang activity,

and "super-predators" (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). Eventually, it would encompass any behavior

that caused classroom and/or campus disruption like fighting, disrespect, or insubordination

(Martinez, 2009).

With the purpose of removing disruptors from the learning environment, teachers

reported behavior and school administrators exacted punishment from suspension to expulsion.

As districts across the nation tightened up on their zero tolerance policies, students, particularly

those Black and of color, were suspended and expelled at astronomical rates (American Civil

Liberties Union, 2008).   In an extensive study of ZTPs in the United States, Black (2004), citing

Cross (2001) noted that "...racial profiling of students of color operates within the boundaries of

accepted 'normal' practices in our public education system…"   Based on the social

constructions of race and childhood, racial profiling and punishments are actions that have been

regularized to control the allegedly danger and evil within Black children. In this respect, zero

tolerance policies (ZTPs) then have permitted school officials to sanction "incarceration" over

education.

Pushing out and piping in. American students on average spend between 175-180 days in

school, 6.8 hours per day (Center for Public Education, 2019; National Center on Education and

the Economy, 2019).   That can translate into over 1100 hours per year in instructional minutes

(DeSilver, 2014; Woods, 2015). Based on the time spent in U.S. schools, Black students could

possibly endure thousands of hours in carceral spaces during their entire K-12 educational

experience. Black students represent 15 percent of public-school enrollment (National Center

for Education Statistics, 2019a), and they face out-of-school suspension up to 3.5 times more

than students of other races or ethnic groups (Arcia, 2007a, 2007b; Hinojosa, 2006; Skiba &

Williams, 2014; U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). The racial

disproportionality in school disciplinary data across the United States, particularly in Southern

states (Smith & Harper, 2015), reflect that those 1100 hours of instructional minutes can be

particularly oppressive for marginalized Black children in urban public schools (Skiba, et. al.,

2000).

More specifically, in Texas, the organization Texans Care for Kids (2018) produced a

report of school suspensions of elementary children in the state. They found that-

> During the 2015-2016 school year, districts meted out over 101,248
> suspensions to students in pre-k through second grade: 64,773 in-school
> suspensions and 36,475 out-of-school suspensions. Texas schools issued
> 2,147 in-school suspensions and 2,544 out-of-school suspensions to pre-k
> students. (p. 3)

Based on their findings, the majority of children receiving these suspensions were male, Black, and receiving special education services. These statistics prompted Texas education officials to encourage the implementation of socio-emotional learning (SEL) programs, restorative practices (RPs) and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) to address the behavior needs of students. However, the programs, as designed, are problematic because they ignore race as well as the role of anti-Blackness in school disciplinary suspensions.

Numerous studies on the high suspension rates of Black students point to multiple, contributing factors such as gender, socioeconomic status and special education classification (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Mendez & Knoff, 2003), which happen to be circumstances most often impacted by zero tolerance policies. Despite the intention of these policies to limit or restrict administrator discretion, they play a major role in Black students' behaviors becoming hypervisible, overly punished, and physically controlled (Capatosto, 2015; McIntosh, et. al., 2014; Nance, 2017; Rocque, 2010). Black students' behaviors are surveilled, even surreptitiously, and categorized along a "trouble matrix" which leads to negative sanctions— even for actions that are age-appropriate and "raceless." A number of studies (Kinsler, 2011; Skiba, et. al., 2000; Skiba & Williams, 2014) report that Black students are disciplined more often than white students for committing the exact "violations" as their white classmates and for behaviors that require subjective judgment such as excessive noise.

Most importantly, the residual effects of suspension or expulsion are dire because these consequences do not deter future (perceived) misconduct (Arcia, 2007a, 2007b; Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Mendez, 2003). The likelihood that a Black student will reoffend or re-violate a zero tolerance policy increases once he or she has been labeled by school staff as a troublemaker (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Skiba, et. al., 2000). The revolving door of violation-disciplinary

referral-corrective action becomes a routine for many Black students after certain negative

sanctions lead to them being identified as dangerous and/or disruptive to the learning

environment in the classroom or campus.

The discipline matrices, which administrators utilize to assign the severity and duration

of punishment, work similarly to penal codes and become stiffer with each violation.   Clearly

severe or menacing misbehaviors trigger automatic mandatory consequences; however, research

shows that administrators at times act upon their own discretion to determine *which* behaviors

require heavy punishment, especially in regard to sending Black students to alternative school

(Booker & Mitchell, 2011). This means that a Black student could repeatedly receive the

maximum punishment based on the administrator's perception of the gravity of the offense. For

example, on studies of disciplinary alternative educational placement (DAEP) in Texas, the

recidivism rate for Black students was higher than white students for noncriminal, discretionary

offenses such as disobedience and disrespect (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Hilberth & Slate, 2012;

Tajalli & Garba, 2014). Based on my experience as an assistant principal, it was difficult for

some children to live down the label of troublemaker or bad kid. I argue that being labeled a

troublemaker or a problem (DuBois, 1903/2015) was a part of the reason some children

continued to find themselves in the disciplinary office. They were basically living up to the

reputation that had been given to them.

These educational disciplinary assignments work conspicuously similar to convictions

under the get-tough initiative "Three Strikes Law" (Gregory, 1995, 1997). For example, in the

penal system, the Black-white conviction gap is disproportionately greater for wobbler offenses,

which are crimes that can be classified as either felonies or misdemeanors, based on

prosecutorial discretion (Barr, 1995; Chen, 2008). Wobbler offenses occur in schools as well in

which teachers and administrators use their own discretion to turn minor violations like dress code into major infractions.

Dress codes and Black bodies. Studies on the stereotyping of Black boys' bodies in school are extensive, but research on Black girls' bodies deserves as much attention and space so I will only provide a brief review of the literature on Black boys and a longer discussion on the issues Black girls face with dress code enforcement in public school.

The court case *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) established that students had the right to freedom of expression, given by the First Amendment in the U.S. Constitution, unless that right interfered with the safety of others. Dress codes, having gained popularity in the 1980s, meant to curb in-school, gang-related violence (i.e., control Black and Brown bodies) and create a positive, more equal learning environment (Alvez, 1994; Lane & Richardson, 1992). Additionally, schools implemented dress code policies to prepare students for the work force and future success (DaCosta, 2006; Morris, 2005). While standardized dress *might* conceal students' socioeconomic status and promote school safety, it also is disproportionately leveled against Black children and exacts extreme consequences for perceived violators.

Like other ZTPs, dress codes appear to be racially neutral but can be applied subjectively (Keleher, 2000). Schools that predominantly serve Black children are more likely to have strict dress code practices (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b) that penalize their natural bodies. Bound up in dress codes is that violators disrupt the school setting by not acting white (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) or lady-like (Morris, 2016). They also inform the public as to which bodies matter (Retallack et. al., 2016). Dress code violations are often "in the eyes of the beholder," leaving the school system to judge what is appropriate and acceptable (Morris, 2016). Enforced dress code policies trigger implicit biases and racial profiling, hypersexualizing Black

girls' bodies or labeling Black boys as thugs.   In his study on race, gender, class and discipline

in an urban school in Texas, Edward W. Morris (2005) discussed a familiar reaction to Black

children and dress code-

> Disciplinary action differed according to how perceptions of race and class
> interacted with perceptions of masculinity and femininity....First, educators
> were concerned with "ladylike" behavior and dress, especially for African
> American girls. Second, educators were concerned with threatening and
> oppositional behavior and dress, especially for African American
> and Latino boys… (p. 33)

The monitoring, supervising, and judging of Black children's clothing puts them under a

microscope, under constant surveillance. Thus, Black children are not only targeted for the

shapes and sizes of their bodies but also what they put on their bodies.

According to Ferguson (2002) Black boys are simply seen as criminals and rule breakers,

never naughty by nature like white males. The perception reflects the social constructs of race

and Black child-as evil/as-adult in which the Black male in "public spaces has come to signify

danger and a threat to personal safety" (p. 78) but white boys' mischievousness reflects the

dominant culture image of "boys will be boys" (p. 85). A Black boy's choice of clothing

furthers situates his threat, heightening suspicions about his behavior and his intentions. For

example, the hoodie has become a garment that both emits and attracts threat for Black boys.

Trayvon Martin's murder sparked a public debate in this country around race, identity, clothing

(Rahman, 2016) and privilege (Casanova & Webb, 2017) as hoodies did not denote criminality

unless they were worn by Black bodies (Parker, 2017).   In this respect, clothing styles and ways

in which they are worn can be an extension of Black children's threat as well as their

criminalization.

Black girls' bodies. Black women's bodies have been policed, controlled, and subject to

spectacle (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010; Morris, 2007), when colonialism ushered in the

exploitation and commodification of Black bodies (Parkinson, 2016). In addition to being

objectified for sexual use, Black female bodies were ridiculed as freakish, such as the case of

Sarah (Saartjie) Baartman (Gordon-Chipembere, 2011). Between 1810 and 1815, Baartman was

marketed as the Hottentot Venus in European freak shows where she became a symbol of

deviant sexuality because of her large buttocks (Ruiz, 2013).   Her treatment on stage in which

she was forced to dance like a wild savage helped create the sexualized Black Jezebel stereotype

who were naturally thick and curvy.

　In the same vein, Black girls' bodies are viewed stereotypically sexualized in the school

system where dress codes are strictly enforced against them (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010;

Evans-Winters, 2017). Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010) expressed that "Black girls' psyches

and bodies are being subjected to subjugation in the media [and] racist and sexist school

policies" (p. 22). Dress codes slut-shame Black girls, are grounded in respectability politics, but

also reflect biases about Black femininity, marking Black girls as Jezebels in the classroom,

according to Monique Morris (2016) who found-

> The educational domain today is infused with the prevailing stigma of
> "jezebel"--primarily in the form of concerns among school officials about
> the moral decency of girls. The regulation of this so-called decency often
> happens through dress codes and other comments and behaviors that
> sexualize Black girls in schools. (p. 116)

The Jezebel label denotes that Black girls are never innocent or virginal, which relates to the

belief that they cannot be raped or sexually assaulted. This stigma reduces any possibility that

Black girls are believed when they are molested or sexually violated. It perpetuates the

stereotypes that Black girls are aggressive, strong, and sexually experienced. As a result of

ZTPs, Black girls are disproportionately suspended and expelled more than white girls, often two

to three times more for the same minor offenses, including disrespect and inappropriate dress

(Hines-Datiri & Andrews, 2017; Morris & Perry, 2017). And it is disturbing how soon Black

girls' bodies are labeled and stigmatized. In my last year as an elementary assistant principal, I

witnessed Black girls as young as six being shamed out loud by their teachers for having

"booties" and "hips." When their teachers were addressed for discussing the girls in this manner,

they felt justified because, in their opinion, the girls looked and acted "grown."

Black children's hair. Dress code policies even include classifying Black children's

cultural or natural hairstyles as inappropriate, unattractive, and distracting. "Racially conscious

school dress codes that prohibit Black hairstyles are becoming increasingly prevalent" (Macon,

2015, p. 1256). Since Emancipation, straight hair has been deemed the key to open doors to

social and professional opportunities (Byrd & Tharps, 2014) as having straight hair reflected

European standards of beauty (Patton, 2012).

Black children in these cases have been humiliated into compliance and have faced

threats to their academic or athletic careers. Buena Regional High School wrestler Andrew

Johnson was forced to have his dreads cut off or forfeit his match (Keneally, 2018). Faith

Fennidy was *sent home* (i.e. suspended) from Christ the King Parish School for having braided

extensions; she was told that she could return after she modified her "faddish" hairstyle (Jacobs

& Levin, 2018). Juelz Trice acquiesced in letting school officials at Berry Miller Junior High

use a Black sharpie to color in his hair design rather than go to in-school suspension and hurt his

track team eligibility (Almasy & Johnson, 2019). And Michael Trimble, a four-year-old at

Tatum Primary, endured both gender and racial discrimination when his natural hair violated his

school's length policy for male students. The Tatum ISD superintendent insulted his guardian by

telling her if she wanted Michael to continue to wear his natural hair, that she should send him to

school in a dress and say he was a female because transgender students are protected by law (Barton, 2019).

Instances of schools blatantly discriminating against Black hair frequently appear on the news and social media, sparking enough outrage to prompt legislation in two states. The CROWN Act, which protects against natural hair discrimination in the workplace and schools, has been submitted into law in New York and California (Whilon & Diaz, 2019). For Black people, these hairstyles, including wigs and extensions, often reflect pride in their Afrocentric identity, which was initiated in the 1960s during the Black Power Movement. Most notably, Malcolm X (1962) was instrumental in encouraging Black people to value the beauty, worth, and distinctiveness of Blackness (Van Deburg, 1993), as illustrated in one of his most memorable speeches to Black women and girls--whom, he had surmised, were the most disrespected group in America:

> Who taught you to hate the texture of your hair? Who taught you to hate
> the color of your skin? Who taught you to hate the shape of your nose and
> the shape of your lips? Who taught you to hate yourself from the top of
> your head to the soles of your feet?

Malcolm X and other leaders of the Black Power Movement like Angela Davis, Kathleen Cleaver, Elaine Brown, and Ericka Huggins empowered Black people to accept their natural hair as beautiful. As a result, hair became a tool that Blacks could use to confront racist beauty standards and assimilation (Patton, 2012). When the "Black is beautiful" phrase caught fire in the 1960s, it not only became a sociopolitical campaign but also a part of the cultural revolution that began to establish Black body types and Black hair as new standards of beauty.

Dress code is a major example of school policies that target Black bodies and result in the suppression and shaming of Black children. It represents the overbearing control schools exert over Black children, restricting their physical freedom to be themselves. It is a harmful tactic in

school as carceral space, working in concert with surveillance and hostile consequences, which buttresses the case for protecting the socio-emotional well-being of Black children whose Blackness is constantly under attack.

School as savior

School as savior is the third school structure; and while it seems like the diametrical opposite of school as carceral space, it parallels the carceral treatment of Black children because it still involves controlling Black bodies and minds. However, control resembles educational care and concern as the emphasis of school policies and practices is on repairing Black children and making them emotionally and psychologically well. The language and actions of these policies and practices can sound clinical, diagnostic, and prescriptive.

School as savior reflects the social perception that Black children are suffering and need intervention to recover from their cultural and socioeconomic circumstances and dysfunctional families, which, somehow, has left them "traumatized" and endangered.   School officials may come to view themselves as saviors as they take on the responsibilities of providing services to address the supposed shortcomings and disadvantages in the lives of Black children.

More importantly, school as savior has historical underpinnings as it harkens back to slavery and colonization when Europeans saw their actions in Africa as moral because it brought about "civilization" and Christianity. The white savior complex is associated with Rudyard Kipling's (1899/1998) poem "The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippines Islands." The first stanza explains that white men had an obligation to conquer Africans and other people of color:

> Take up the white Man's burden
> Send forth the best ye breed
> Go bind your sons to exile
> To serve your captives' need;

To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child

The poem reflects the social construct of race (half-devil and half-child) and reinforces the notion of saving non-whites (from themselves) that has been expressed through Western literature, television shows, and film, especially in stories about white teachers and Black students. Books like *Sounder* (Armstrong, 1969) and *Dangerous Minds* (Smith, 1995) reinforce the belief that obtaining and internalizing whiteness saves Black lives. Aronson (2017) found that such films, including the popular *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese, 2007), illustrated "how 'big-hearted' white teachers...embody the save the day mentality that will lead Black and Brown children and youth to obtain a 'successful' academic career and upward social mobility" (p. 38). In this respect, school as savior appears less dehumanizing because it provides Black children with chances to make it in life.

Act III. School as savior is often reflected in policies and practices that target Black children with certain life experiences by identifying them as "at-risk." The educational definition of at-risk refers to students who are in danger of completing their education without the necessary skills to succeed in society (Kauchak & Eggen, 2017). According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), a child can be at-risk for being homeless, in the custody of Child Protective Services, or having attended an alternative educational program (AEP) during the preceding or current school year (TEA, 2019a). Public school systems often rely on specialized services that focus on helping at-risk children to attain their academic and social goals (Webb & Metha, 2017).

In addition to academic interventions, which are usually required by state and federal law, schools also employ counseling, social skills training, and mentoring. In this vein, they seek

out the services of mentors and role models for Black children from outside organizations but most likely from Black male and female teachers. The irony is that Black manhood and Black womanhood, as a result of the social construct of race, are deemed dangerous and threatening. To be role models in the public school system, they must represent *safe versions of Black manhood and Black womanhood*, that is, representations of the behaviors and values of the dominant culture. Thus, role models assist in making Black children less "ethnic" and more acceptable in Western, white middle-class social environments. The assumption is ever-present that Black children need to be taught how to behave well to secure their own salvation.

Saving the endangered species and the menace. The use of social imagery and media have been influential in painting a picture of the Black male child as an endangered species, focusing disproportionately about the violence between Black boys and men, their mass incarceration, their high unemployment, and incomplete schooling (Wright, 1991). In addition, Howard, et. Al (2012) found an evolution of characterizations of Black males over the last two centuries:

> We have also witnessed the depiction of Black males as the Sambo or
> minstrel character, who only sought to entertain their superiors. Many
> of the twentieth century depictions painted Black males as pimps,
> thugs, hustlers, and law-breaking slicksters who were not to be trusted,
> were not worthy of equal treatment, and needed to be marginalized
> because they were a "menace to society"... (p. 89)

Because such social imagery enters schools, research shows that schools consistently utilize role models and mentors as a specialized service to support Black children, especially Black boys, in overcoming their perceived shortcomings.   The question remains whether Black boys are endangered or ignored in the educational system as they are overrepresented in discipline and special education and underrepresented in gifted and talented programs and Advanced Placement courses (Jackson & Moore, 2006).

The concept of the endangered Black boys is perpetuated by the types of solutions, services, and programs promoted in schools for Black boys for decades. For example, Project 2000, an educational mentoring and academic support model for Black boys in urban schools, represented a large scale mentoring program in the late 1980s. It claimed that Black boys faced an epidemic of academic failure and that intervention strategies in schools came too late; what was needed were preventive strategies that taught Black boys how to listen, develop self-control, and assume responsibility. Its primary objective was to provide positive adult male role models, especially Black men, in the daily school life of Black boys (Holland, 1996). According to Holland (1996), the Black family has failed them, stating that-

> Within the African American community, it is widely accepted that many, if not most, of the single-parent, female-headed, poor households from which today's inner-city Black male youth come have not and perhaps cannot provide them with the psychosocial skills these youth need to avoid involvement in violent activity, much less to succeed in society's mainstream. (p. 315)

This perspective assumes that there is nothing redeeming, beneficial, and sustaining in Black culture, that Black culture itself is a detriment and requires something outside of it to save the children within it. Therefore, two of the most common educational policy "solutions" focus on rites of passage and manhood programs as well as all-male academies and classrooms where Black boys can develop healthy self-images, improved academics and social outcomes (Asante, 1991). These programs are designed to provide Black boys direct instruction and mentoring from positive Black male role models. While there is no question that Black boys face severe challenges in school because of social conditions in their neighborhoods, we need to address why these conditions exist in the first place. The structural racism and oppression in society have led to a lack of opportunity and resources in urban areas where many Black families predominantly live (Dreier, 1996).

Nonetheless, the use of Black adult males as role models presents a problem in schools where there are few to no Black male educators. Since the election of Barack Obama, there has been refocused attention to address the shortage of Black male teachers (Brown, 2012) who represent only two percent of today's teaching force (Goings & Bianco, 2016). The reasons for the shortage appear to be many, including the low pay, inadequate working conditions, or the availability of better paying professions. However, Goings and Bianco (2016) found, "One particular challenge that impacts Black males' entry into the teaching profession is the failure of the education system to adequately prepare them for collegiate studies," (p. 630). Other researchers suggest that Black boys' own negative experiences with education deter them from wanting to pursue teaching as a career (Harper & Davis, 2012). This may be an (un)conscious decision on their part to not want to enact on other Black children the same type of violence and brutality that had been perpetrated upon them.

A study by Shreffler (1998) offered white male teachers as suitable role models and mentors to fill the void of too few Black male teachers in urban schools. It repeated the very old narrative of the white savior who feels compelled to help poor Black kids by showing them how the white way works. In return, the white savior becomes comfortable with diversity and gets redeemed by overcoming his beliefs of racist stereotypes about Black men and boys. Shreffler (1998) believed-

> White male teachers have within their grasps the power to offer an
> alternative to the prevailing images and life destinations of many at-risk
> Black males. We must, however, set good and meaningful examples for
> these students. (p. 92)

What was problematic about Shreffler's offer was that his own experience suggested that "his way" (of being, thinking, acting) was "the way." Worse yet, it puts the burden on the Black child for helping a white adult overcome their racism.

Rescuing the "lady" within. While the extensive research exists detailing the objectives of role model and mentoring programs for Black boys to save them from extinction or reduce their threat level, the literature shows that mentoring programs for Black girls attempt to address the complexity of their lives because of the intersectionality of race and gender (Lindsay-Dennis, et. al., 2011; Morris, 2007). Nyachae and Ohito (2019) conducted a study of one such program in which the discourses and activities were centered on respectability politics and the concept of the ideal Black girl. They noted that language in the discourses-

> First shames the individual Black girl for her appearance, and blames her
> for her behavior, and second, aims to discipline the Black girl's body, and
> third, promotes moral (self) policing and sexual propriety as pertinent to the
> attainment of proper Black girlhood, which is a precursor to proper Black
> womanhood. (p. 16)

Their findings demonstrate how Black girls face both racism and sexism in the school system, where the negative perceptions of Black womanhood is often reinforced. Schools tend to view Black girls are as loud, sassy, ghetto, ratchet or masculine (Fordham, 1993; Morris, 2007), which, according to Collins (2009), the idea of the assertive Black mother linked unfeminine, assertive behavior in Black girls to female-headed families and poverty. Thus, the social objective of school mentoring programs for Black girls often aims at making them more lady-like and softening their demeanor with such interventions as etiquette training, grooming habits, and character building. I argue that etiquette involves the controlling and manipulating bodies until they fit or conform to an ideal (e.g., learning to walk like a lady).

Like Black adult males, Black female teachers and other professionals are often recruited as positive role models in schools where they are charged with reinforcing the dominant culture's constructed ideas of girlhood. Case in point, predominantly Black school district Morrison ISD[11]

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[11] Morrison ISD a pseudonym.

created a mentoring program for Black girls in high school in which the ultimate objective is

turning them into debutantes. Debutante has its roots in upper-class European society and refers

to a young woman making her entrance into proper society at a formal debut (Merriam-Webster,

2019). Morrison's program offered lessons on good posture, skincare/make-up, waltz dancing,

fitness and nutrition. According to Morrison's program coordinator-

> The Mission of *Act Like a Lady; Think Like a Boss* is to provide mentorship
> and guidance for young ladies looking to become their best selves. By giving
> young ladies an avenue to discuss important issues and experience new things,
> the lives of each of them will be enriched and empowered. Character building
> is at the crux of the holistic development of our students, and in its absence our
> lady's lack the skills to maximize their citizenship in our community.
> (Morrison ISD, 2018)

What is interesting about Morrison's debutante program is its integration of the traditional,

dominant culture focus on femininity as well as a Black-centered focus on empowerment. This

integration comes with the criticism that it should be more Afrocentric in nature; but nonetheless,

it is a very popular program among the Black girls and women in the Morrison school district.

According to Lindsay-Dennis, et. Al. (2011), mentoring programs for Black girls should

be gender and culturally responsive and safe spaces for Black girls to use their voices: Black

girls' "loudness" seems to have developed as a way to assert themselves against their

infrahumanization in spaces within society (Fordham 1993). Equally as important, Black women

in culturally driven mentoring serve as "sisterfriends and othermothers" (p. 77) who understand

the complexity of the lived experiences of Black women and girls. In this respect,   "[t]he

existence of positive African American female role models offers African American girls a

counternarrative that helps them develop an alternative ideal of black womanhood" (Lindsay-

Dennis, et. al., 2011, p. 71). In essence, the "sisterfriend" or "othermother" role model does not

follow dominant culture expectations for Black children.

Finally, school as savior is problematic on many fronts.   First, using Black men and women as role models makes cultural sense, but it comes with the risk of reducing them to the muscle (Brown, 2012), disciplinarians, and representatives of dominant culture values. That is, role entrapment (Mabokela & Madsen, 2000). Role entrapment not only puts the burden of Black teachers to control Black children but it also suggests to them that they are racial tokens. Second, the proliferation of school mentoring programs for Black children makes it apparent that teacher education programs that don't address misconceptions about race and racism likely contribute to white self-images as role models and saviors (Marx, 2006). Third, Black children *have* acceptable Black role models and mentors in their communities; therefore, "trained surrogates" cannot replace or surpass the influence of Black parents, othermothers (Collins, 2009), and otherfathers (hooks 2004; Tafari, 2018).

Models of Disruption: The Work of Our Ancestors

> "You give me second class houses
> And second class schools
> Do you think that all the colored folks
> Are just second class fools
> Mr. Backlash, I'm gonna leave you
> With the backlash blues."

Nina Simone "Backlash Blues" (1967)

Europeans invented and designed the education system in the colonies, with specific instructions to limit the knowledge and to tier the social class of non-Europeans as means to induct them into society (Fraser, 2014). Based on the socially constructed notion of racial inferiority, English governors in the colonies established that Bible literacy, for the purposes of conversion to Christianity, was the singular, most appropriate form of education for Black men, women, and children. Literacy, in many instances, was limited to reading; for teaching the

enslaved to write was thought to disrupt social order (Cornelius, 1983). The purpose of Black education in America at the onset focused on subjugation and indoctrination.

Nonetheless, acts of resistance always followed efforts to control Black intellectual determination and supplant it with white knowledge. The literature of Black resistance provides several worthy models of educational disruption, which reflect the backlash against white supremacy, and illustrate how Black feminists (Collins, 2009) and race leaders attacked constructs of Black inferiority. And while all the models attached themselves to academic needs of Black children within the educational system after the Civil War, there is no question for me that the social-emotional and physical well-being of Black children drove these models, to alleviate the murdering of their spirit, evidenced by the objectives of racial pride and uplift, self-consciousness, self-determination, and empowerment as noted outcomes of Black education, especially for Black girls.

Resisting white knowledge

The invasion of the Europeans during colonization injected Western knowledge systems into African societies (Mosweunyane, 2013), on the continent and in the American colonies. Western bastardizing of the African intellect remains, to this day, in our cultural memory preserved through visual representations, narratives, and film. There was a *deliberate* invention of the inhuman African with the distribution of derogatory images of Africa used to defend the slave trade and colonization (Achebe, 1978). Part of this invention relied on the characterization of Africans as poor creatures who would benefit from their interactions with civilized, Christian Europeans (Wolf, 2006). In other words, Europeans supposedly saved Africans from their savagery.

European narratives about their encounters with African tongues reduced them to the mere mumblings and grunts of beasts. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899/2014), a still-popular Eurocentric commentary on imperialism and civilization, presented Africans as a savage race who made violent babble from uncouth mouths. The novel dehumanized and depersonalized a portion of the human race. Achebe (1978) found that "*Heart of Darkness* projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality" (p. 3). These descriptions degraded African intellect because it seemed to verify two things: 1) 18th century anthropologists had established a relationship between language-speaking and human intelligence based on the anatomical evidence of skull structure and brain size in our hominid ancestors (Gibson, 1991); and 2) speech style or dialect has been associated with culture, sophistication, and social class (Garrett, 2010). Furthermore, language was capital controlled by people who had the power to wield alienation and domination upon others (Fanon, 1963/2005). When European languages and cultures were imposed on people of color, there were psychological ramifications--the acceptance of the oppressors' culture and worldview (Mazrui, 1993). That is, the transmission and edification of white knowledge as *truth*. White knowledge carried the myth that Black history began with slavery and predestination of Blacks to be enslaved.

However, contrary to the belief that colonial rule stripped all enslaved Blacks of their languages, many of them were functionally multilingual, as evidenced in "runaway slave" advertisements from the mid-1700s. Some may have been bilingual or trilingual during enslavement where they picked up some of the languages of their capturers (Mintz & Price, 2013). Though multilingualism was met with suspicion, it was tolerated or exploited if it

provided an advantage to enslavers (Laversuch, 2006). Multilingualism, gained from being

drilled to respond to the verbal commands of their European slavers, made Blacks equally

dangerous. While a multilingual enslaved man or woman was of value, s/he was also a liability:

deemed "intelligent," a polyglot had a greater chance of escaping, alluding capture, and

liberating others (Laversuch 2006; Waldstreicher, 1999). Over time, as the colonies grew, Black

multilingualism fell out of power, due to disuse or lack of a common speech community (Mintz

& Price, 2013) and the threat of physical punishment.

Literacy as a pathway to resistance

Literacy became another pathway to resist white knowledge. An intangible weapon, an

abstract power, it also was a pathway from *physical* slavery to *intellectual* freedom. Just as

enslavers had inadvertently engineered Black resistance by forcing some of them to learn

European languages, they were equally responsible for planting the seeds of resistance by

teaching many Blacks to read and some of them to write. People who were enslaved and literate

were known to escape by writing their own passes or freedom papers (Laversuch 2006). When

Black children and adults were not being openly taught by well-meaning Christians, they were

huddled in secrecy to learn from each other or teach themselves. Frederick Douglass, who was

taught to read by his enslaver's wife, came to see the link between literacy and freedom. Though

the wife eventually turned on him because she felt that education and slavery were not

compatible (Douglass, 1845/2018), reading had already begun to form his liberated

consciousness (Williams, 2009), as it would for countless Black men, women, and children on

plantations in the American south. Douglass confirmed that, "Knowledge makes a man unfit to

be a slave." Once liberated through education and learning, Douglass was cognizant of the

injustice and hypocrisy that had kept him subjugated, and he would not turn back in his efforts to obtain his freedom.

Stono Rebellion. The lingering fear that literacy promoted rebellious thinking and behavior had very deep attachments to slave insurrections. Du Bois (1903/2015) stated, "The opposition to Negro education in the South was at first bitter...for the South believed an educated Negro to be a dangerous Negro" (p.29). After the Stono Rebellion, the Negro Act on 1740 was passed, stating-

> Whereas, the having slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed
> in writing, may be attended with great inconveniences; ...that all and every
> Person and Persons whatsoever, who shall hereafter teach or cause any
> slave to be taught to write, or shall use to employ any slave as a Scribe in
> any Manner of Writing whatsoever...every such offense forfeit the Sum of
> One Hundred Pounds current Money. (Rasmussen, 2010, p. 201)

The Negro Act all but guaranteed the compliance of white citizens and plantation owners to maintain the subjugation and miseducation of Black people. The Stono Rebellion, similar to Bacon's Rebellion, had an enduring impact on racial hierarchy and anti-multiculturalism in this country. The Africans, who had been exposed to Portuguese and Catholicism, decided to rebel, but the South Carolinians blamed Catholic Spaniards for instigating the rebellion (Shuler, 2009). It was rumored that Spanish priests traveled to South Carolina and offered protection to those who could escape to St. Augustine, Florida. On the morning of September 9, 1739, 20 or more Congolese men, armed with weapons, killed at least 23 slave-owners and their families and recruited others to join them by playing drums. They were defeated and later slaughtered by a militia, but their rebellion made white citizens anxious for retribution and deterrence. The South Carolinian government decided to go after two forms of communication: literacy and drums. There were stories circulating that the Africans could read *The South Carolina Gazette* and used their drums to mobilize, to call upon others to rebel. The objectives of the Negro Act lasted until

the Civil War: the penalization of Black literacy, the illegal assembly of Black people, and the division of Black and white people. Shuler (2009) explained that "The ultimate goal of the Negro Act was to prohibit any narrative emanating from the African American community that posited alternatives to the slave regime, to racism, to violations of human rights" (p. 263).   That is, to lay out the master narrative that Africans were willing, submissive and happy. This master narrative was perpetuated in novels and films such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Stowe, 1852*), The Littlest Rebel* (Butler, 1935), and *Gone With the Wind* (Fleming, 1940).

The concept of the dangerous Negro was in stark contrast of the happy and loyal slave who understood their condition and seemed to be unbothered by the brutality and dehumanization.   Proslavery writers would eventually create the narratives about the happy-go-lucky slave who could not achieve citizenship or the right to vote because they were still brutal savages (Roth, 2010). The caricatures of the Black Mammy, the Coon, Little Black Sambo, and Topsy were utilized, in a sense, as racist propaganda to prove that Black people were entertaining and loyal but nonetheless irresponsible and untrustworthy of citizenship or freedom to be self-governed.

David Walker's Appeal. A free Black man, by partus sequitur ventrem*,* Walker had written and published the anti-slavery pamphlet *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829/2011), which encouraged Black liberation through violence, if necessary. Living in Boston and witnessing similar legal restrictions and fears about Black education, as were prominent in the South, Walker called for Black unity against oppression in his *Appeal*.   He saw literacy and education as ways in which all Blacks could disprove their inferiority, and he urged literate Blacks to read the *Appeal* to those who could not in order to inspire all to resistance. Walker (1829/2011) asserted that Black knowledge was powerful, more than prayer, because

"the bare name of educating colored people, scares our cruel oppressors to death" (p. 25).

Article II from Walker's *Appeal* is devoted to the consequences of forced ignorance of Black

people by depriving them of enlightenment and education. Walker (1829/2011) wrote-

> It is a notorious fact, that the major part of the white Americans, have,
> ever since we have been among them, tried to keep us ignorant, and make
> us believe that God made us and our children to be slaves to them and
> theirs. *Oh! my God, have mercy on Christian Americans!!!* (p. 36)

In Walker's opinion, keeping Blacks ignorant and using harsh physical cruelties lessened the fear

of white citizens. These conditions served the purpose of racial hierarchy within society but

there would come a day when Black people in this country would have had enough of white

folks.

Nat Turner's Rebellion. The influence of Walker's *Appeal* upon Turner's Rebellion

remains speculative. Much has been written about Nat Turner that his "story" seems like

folklore; and, depending on the source, it has been fictionalized, mythicized, canonized, and

demonized. What is evident--the combination of his literacy and religious training made him an

influential leader who was able to unite both free and enslaved Blacks and send the message that

violence begat violence (Bisson, 2005). In several colonies, enslavers believed that it was their

righteous duty to provide teaching to the enslaved because literacy was a part of catechism,

which was key Christianization (Watson, 2009). They were unconcerned by and even

encouraged Bible literacy as long as it did not make Blacks eligible for freedom (Cornelius,

1983; Fraser, 2014). Whether educated at the behest of enslavers or by his own divine will, Nat

Turner possessed what white eyewitnesses later called a natural intelligence. He employed

prophesy and biblical knowledge about slavery to convince at least 60 others to plan and execute

the deadliest rebellion in U.S. history.

Aftermath. Slavery uprisings were not uncommon; however, many were thwarted due to informants and suspicion. Turner's Rebellion in Southampton County on August 21, 1831, caused such widespread panic across the *entire southern United States* that state legislatures passed restrictive laws exacting the most punitive effect on Black education and emancipation movement—for at least three decades (Albanese, 1976). The Rebellion impacted the trajectory and structure of Black education in the South that was to come.

In addition to limitations on traveling and assembly, reading was prohibited because literate Blacks could receive rebellious notions from the Bible, abolitionist pamphlets, newspapers and anti-slavery propaganda. The Virginian government, along with several Southern states, outlawed literacy for religious instruction and restricted the Christianizing of Blacks to white ministers in religious gatherings (Cornelius, 1983). The South hoped that by controlling all forms of Black education, it could disrupt Black literacy and thereby deter more rebellion and demand for equal rights (Anderson, 1988).

Between 1780 and 1804, New England and Middle Atlantic states debated the future of slavery and the means to end it (Omi & Winant, 1994). The question of emancipation had hinged on whether it would be *immediate* favored by abolitionists or *gradual* favored by moderate anti-slavery advocates. Though it did not inspire other rebellions as Turner wanted, his insurrection caused a sense of urgency among lawmakers, benevolent societies, and abolitionists regarding immediate abolition paired with colonization or the resettlement of Blacks outside of the States. The American Colonization Society, founded in 1816, had already proposed efforts to remove freed Blacks from the north to the western coast of Africa where they could bring Christianity and civilization (Yarema, 2006). The Back-to-Africa Movement was not popular originally as some Blacks felt that they had a stake in America as their birthplace.

By the 1830s, the country as well as anti-slavery societies remained divided on which course of action would bring the most desired result: the restoration of white citizens' physical and emotional well-being in public spaces. The incorporationists or anti-colonizationists, such as Frederick Douglass, still demanded and urged preparation for assimilating Blacks into society as full citizens with equal rights. However, the colonizationists believed sending Blacks back to Africa was a better solution because their intellectual inferiority did not make them suited to live as free people in America (Guyatt, 2009). Removing and resettling all Blacks, even by force, was part and parcel of the national debate. Colonization was popular but proved impractical. The deportation of four million Blacks would cause logistical and financial quandaries, not to mention fears about how the country would fare economically if it transported all of the skilled labor back to Africa (Escott, 2009). This is similar to the current argument about the immigrant labor force and the possibility of mass deportation.

Ultimately, incorporation or assimilation would win out, but a dilemma remained regarding Black citizenship. The Supreme Court's decision in *Dred Scott v Sanford* (1857) had affirmed that no Black person-- born free, formerly enslaved, or still enslaved-- would ever become a citizen of the United States under the Constitution.   Chief Justice Taney based his decision on race, merging it with slavery, and thereby illustrating that citizenship excluded Blacks because they had not descended from a citizenship group (Chambers, 2007). Taney (1857/2012) delivered his opinion in Court-

> They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an
> inferior order; and altogether unfit to associate with the white race,
> either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had
> no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the
> negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. (p. 488)

Nevertheless, as the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War became inevitable outcomes, so did the possibility of Black citizenship and the guarantee of rights and liberty.

The destruction of Black literacy had been deliberate and violent because literacy, an expression of intellectual ability, rang contrary to the social construction of the Blacks as inferior. When Blacks were able to control their own knowledge sources and the mechanisms by which they gained skills, they employed them for their own deliverance, empowerment, and enlightenment. Thus, the threat of Black intelligence had not been forgotten. Black literacy would eventually become an entitlement, albeit theoretically because the act of reading was still associated with autonomy and social mobility; and this association with images of Black readership was more powerful after slavery (Hochman, 2011). Therefore, it was not surprising that after the Civil War, the controlling of Black bodies and intellect transferred from the supervision of the slavocracy to an education system molded by white supremacy.

Reconstruction as the pathway to Black education

Congress created the Freedmen's Bureau to help with food, housing, medical care, and education for freed Blacks. Of the four million freed Blacks in 1870, approximately one million were school age (Peirce, 1904). Booker T. Washington (1901/2013) wrote in his autobiography *Up from Slavery-*

> This experience of a whole race beginning to go to school for the first time, presents one of the most interesting studies that has ever occurred in connection with the development of any race. Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race showed for an education. As I have stated, it was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn. (pp. 29-30)

While Washington showed an optimism for Black education, he also had reservations about what type of education was appropriate for Black people after enslavement. The education, he

preferred, was one that utilized and built on the skills that Black people already possessed. This perception would put him against his contemporaries who felt that he was asking Black people to give up too much in order to fit into white society or be deemed safe for white spaces.

Illiteracy among Blacks had grown exponentially since Nat Turner's Rebellion. Now freedom and citizenship were at hand.   An estimated nine percent of freed Blacks by the War's end possessed a marginal capacity to read and write Genovese (1976).   The Federal Writers Project, which interviewed former slaves about their literacy processes, maintained that the extent of literacy was difficult to measure (Cornelius, 1983, p. 173). Nonetheless, this quote from a former slave might have echoed the anger of millions deprived of learning, "There is one sin that slavery committed against me, which I will never forgive. It robbed me of my education" (Anderson, 1988, p. 5). The Reconstruction era became the political pathway for newly freed Blacks to pursue universal schooling for themselves and their children (Brandt, 2001). To this fact, Du Bois wrote in *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935) that public education for all at public expense in the South was a Negro idea. As noted by Fraser (2014), Black people were as essential and involved in building the public school system as northern philanthropists and missionaries.

Tiered personhood. American reaction to Black access to white democracy was much more than hypocritical. As champions of independence and the self-appointed standard-bearers of democratic ideals, white politicians were not willing to grant full political rights and liberties to a Black citizenry, establishing, instead, the road to the tiered personhood (Chambers, 2007). That is, the limiting or outright exclusion of Blacks to exercise their civic duties, especially voting. Southern whites, in particular, knew that with voting came representation, the redistribution of power, and access to public goods. Voter disenfranchisement laws, through poll

tax and literacy tests, were marked responses equally responsible for attempting to restrict the political power of the Republican Party as well as denying Blacks an equitable, well-funded public education (Naidu, 2012). However, Black parents resisted and they migrated in search of school quality. "Although Black parents could not vote at the ballot box, they could and did, vote with their feet in search of schools for their children" (Foner & Lewis, 1980, p. 241). The search for good schools was partly responsible for the Great Migration of Blacks to the northern states like Illinois and New York in the mid-1900s.

Universal control. The assimilation of Blacks, their citizenship, and their participation in democracy correlated with their access to schooling. Even though Reconstruction brought about the promise of Black education, it also led to debates about its long-term goals, maintenance, and governance. Questions about curriculum, teachers, and even the site of Black learning intensified social fears and political agendas. Harkening back to old racist tropes about Black inherent unintelligence and laziness, whites now believed that an education could civilize Blacks and relieve them of their moral and intellectual inferiority (Anderson, 1988; Hochman, 2009; Litwack, 1998).

Many white politicians and educators hoped to lay the foundation of Black education under the right conditions, where literacy would help produce vocational skills such as carpentry and mechanics (Hochman, 2009) because salvation was in their labor (Litwack, 1998). These politicians could stand behind Black education as long as Blacks used that learning to become self-sufficient in *work*. Black education, as the right to it, became a matter of interest-convergence as white policymakers would eventually benefit from it (Bell, 2004). According to Bell (1980), in discussing the Brown decision, that interest-convergence occurs when "the rights of whites not to associate with Blacks in favor of the rights of Blacks to associate with whites"

(p. 518). In essence, there is the *appearance* of equal rights and freedom, but the truth is far different.

In reality, universal schooling existed under universal white control and was undermined by white opposition. The edification of Black intellect brought about the fear of the ambitious Black who would achieve mobility and socioeconomic equality with whites (Hochman, 2009; Litwack, 1998). The public school system, constructed and maintained by whites, needed to indoctrinate Black children with tenets that would not disrupt social order, such as proper deference for authority, respect for property, and industry (Litwack, 1998). Black schools and colleges employed white superintendents or sponsors who ensured that appropriate and acceptable subject matters for the Black mind and condition were a part of the curriculum (Fairclough, 2000). As noted by Litwack (1998), a white major told students at a Black college in Georgia that the state needed intelligent "Negroes" but "we must educate the Negro to be the best possible Negro and not a bad imitation of the white man." That is, Black knowledge needed to be designed by white architects to ensure that it was the right kind of education.

The controlled internalization of white knowledge stood as evidence of being educated. What Black children should learn in the classroom and what they aspire to in adulthood sparked debate and friction between leading Black scholars at the turn of the century. While these leaders may have disagreed, they offered Black learners different pathways to advancement and resistance.

Formation of a Black-centered curriculum

The term "New Negro" has been around since 1895 but was immortalized in an essay by Howard University Professor of Philosophy Alain Locke in 1925. Locke (1925) spoke of the embracement of a new psychology and new spirit, stating "The Younger Generation comes,

bringing its gifts. They are the first fruits of the Negro Renaissance. Youth speaks, and the voice

of the New Negro is heard," (p. 47)   Essential to Locke's prescription was the demand that the

'New Negro' destroy the racial, social and psychological obstacles that had obstructed Black

achievement" (Powell, 1997). The New Negro had to cast off the stereotypical image of the

intellectually inferior ex-slave, bumbling about, unsophisticated, dull to enterprise and ingenuity.

Du Bois (1903/2015) wrote that Black people needed a re-education to address the double

consciousness that plagued them. As people once in bondage, they tended to see themselves-

> through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world
> that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—
> an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings;
> two warring ideals in one dark body…   (p. 9)

They should pursue and form new social and geographical identities to distance themselves from

those created in bondage. They would be creative, educated and entrepreneurial.   The New

Negro longed to merge their double identity in one true self, one that value both their

Americanism and African-ness. A new education, buttressed by Black history, would heal the

divided wound and bring self-consciousness, self-realization, and self-respect to the fore.

Much has been written about the contrast between Du Bois' classical education and

Washington's industrial education. These educational models added to the development of

Black scholarship and allowed for the advancement of Blacks in the American educational

system, even if Black progress was aligned with or modeled after white standards.   However,

the space for Black intelligentsia and scholarship had real political and economic implications,

pushing grander and even more controversial possibilities for the re/constructing Black

education: Black-centered curriculum that included the empowerment of Black girls and women.

The contributions of Black males as race leaders and revolutionaries during slavery and

post-Emancipation are prolific in the literature.   We remain largely unaware, or at best

marginally informed, of the influence of Black women, even those with impressive biographies. Their exclusion from the literature and discourse tends to reflect the intersectionality of race, class, and gender (Crenshaw, 1990). It was their marginalization by the Black male contemporaries that motivated Black women to push for the empowerment of Black girls in education.

Nannie Helen Burroughs. Once called the Black Goddess of Liberty, Nannie Helen Burroughs was educator, institution and organization-builder, and major figure in the Black church and secular feminist movements" during the early twentieth century (Harley, 1996, p. 62). According to Harley (1996), some scholars believe the reason for Burroughs' exclusion from the discourse on Black education may be because of her focus on the working class, Black feminism and the dignity of manual labor. However, it was her commitment to Black female wage laborer that offered another opportunity to uplift the Black race[12].

Burroughs became nationally recognized after her speech "How Sisters are Hindered from Helping" at the National Baptist Convention in 1900 (Burroughs, 2019; Higginbotham, 1992; Johnson, 2000), in which she stated-

> It has ever been from the time of Miriam, that most remarkable woman, the sister of Moses, that most remarkable man, down to the courageous women that in very recent years have carried the Gospel into Thibet and Africa and proclaimed and taught the truth where no man has been allowed to enter. Surely, women somehow have had a very important part in the work of saving this redeemed earth. (para 2)

While the speech was a response to the lack of Black women's input on decision-making in the Baptist church, it touched on the issue of the exclusion of Black women in the role of leadership and the lack of opportunity in society.

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[12] "Lifting as We Climb" was the motto of the National Association of Colored Women, whose members included Mary Church Terrell, Harriet Tubman, and Ida B. Wells.

Believing that she had been denied a teaching position at a school in Washington, D.C. because of her dark skin, she declared that she would open her own school. In 1908, she founded the National Training School for Women and Girls and built it with the financial support of the community (Taylor, 2002). The school encouraged the three B's "the Bible, the bath, and the broom," which referred to morality, cleanliness, and work. With the realization that her mission was to elevate the concerns and needs of Black women, she crafted "We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible" as her school's motto (McCluskey, 1997).   Burroughs' major contributions to the establishment of Black-centered curriculum would give emphasis to racial uplift and Black womanhood. Taylor (2002) cited Burroughs (1925/2019) as stating, "We keep in close touch with the masses, study their condition and needs, and shape our curriculum to meet the actual needs of the race." In doing so, Burroughs sought to glorify and redefine Black womanhood.

First, she desired to challenge the negative narrative of Black women as incompetent; so she focused on improving their work skills (i.e., their employability and earning power), which reflected positively on Black women as a labor group and whole race (Harley, 1996). In her view, Black women's image had to be raised to a level of respectability because they were the guardians of the race (Wolcott, 1997). In this respect, Black women as childbearers, mothers, and othermothers were responsible for the progress of the race and deserved to be centered in the racial movements and discussions which were often fronted by Black men.

Secondly, Burroughs designed her own history curriculum that focused on teaching Black women about the achievements of Black people in society. Black excellence had been erased or whitewashed from any historical text as a way of devaluing Black intelligence.   The National Training School had a Department of Negro History that offered a course on Black past

achievements and struggles: To bring attention to their oppression as well as demonstrate that

the race was not inferior and had made contributions to world history and culture (Harley, 1999;

Higginbotham, 1992). Burroughs (1925/2019) encouraged racial pride and justice, with the

understanding that Black oppression could be overcome with knowledge and consciousness:

> When the Negro learns what manner of man he is spiritually, he will wake
> up all over. He will stop playing white even on stage...He will glorify the
> beauty of his own brown skin… (n.p.)

The beautifying of the brown skin was a literal challenge to the shame and embarrassment that

Black people had been made to feel about their Blackness. The sentiment of loving the Black

self and seeing Black as beautiful would arise during the Black Power Movement during the

1960s.

Burroughs' school and curriculum were significant in three respects: 1) they attended to

the needs of Black women and girls at a time when no other organization or school system dared

or cared to do so; 2) they centered Black women and girls' humanity and overall well-being;

and 3) they utilized Black history as a source of empowerment.   Furthermore, Burroughs

remained committed to their intellectual growth, academic achievement and economic viability;

and she was insistent that Black girls, in particular, were cared for and had opportunities to

enhance their personal, physical, and moral development (Taylor, 2002). Burroughs' uplifting

of Black girls is reflective of othermothering practices that Collins (2009) and Thompson (1998)

would later detail in their work.

Anna Julia Cooper. As the mother of Black feminism, Cooper was Burroughs' colleague

and mentor, their paths crossing at M High Street High School where Cooper had been a teacher

and Burroughs a student. At the age of 67, she earned her PhD in history at the University of

Paris in 1925 and became the fourth Black women to earn a doctorate in post-slavery America

(Johnson, 2000). Cooper is perhaps best-known work *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*, which has been called the cornerstone of Black feminist and political theory (Neary, 2016, p. iii).   Corner (1892/2016) wrote the preface of Cooper's popular work-

> The 'other side' has not been represented by one who 'lives there.' And not
> Many can more sensibly realize and more accurately tell the weight and the
> fret of the 'long dull pain' than the open-eyed but hitherto voiceless Black
> Woman of America. (p. xi)

Reflecting on society's ideal of woman, Cooper (1892/2016) advocated for and unapologetically gave voice to the role of Black womanhood in the regeneration and progress of a race that had been left in the hands by Black clergymen. She begged, without submission or weakness-

> to add [her] plea for the Colored Girls of the South—that large, bright, promising
> fatally beautiful class that stand shivering like a delicate plantlet before the fury
> of tempestuous elements, so full of promise and possibilities, yet so sure of
> destruction. (pp. 8-9, brackets added)

Like Burroughs, she wanted to center the needs of Black women who had either been ignored or deemed irrelevant not only by some Black men in race leadership but also by white feminists in the suffrage movement.

Cooper supported a classical education and believed that educating Black women promoted the social uplift of the race as well as the intellectual edification of other Black women (Grant, et. al., 2016). Cooper (1892/2016) wrote-

> Only the BLACK WOMAN can say "when and where I enter, in the quiet,
> undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing
> or special patronage, then and there the whole *Negro race enters with me.* (p. 63)

This statement is a response to Black male patriarchy of the era, for Cooper believed that no man could represent the Black race; for as Cooper saw it, it was womanhood that was a vital element in the regeneration and progress of the race.

She intertwined political activism and education as vehicles to transform society and defeat notions of Black inferiority (Johnson, 2000). More importantly, Cooper called out for

strong, brave Black women to utilize their motherly instincts to teach and love, care, and have

mercy for those in need; she maintained that their maternal advocacy could lead the race to a

higher level of civilization (Alridge, 2007). While the concept of maternal care and support also

occurs in the work of white feminists, Black maternalism always centers care(ing) as a political

and transformative act.

Like Burroughs, Cooper advocated for a Black-centered curriculum that would prepare

Black women to uplift their race and communities. Slavery had undermined the intellectual

abilities and imaginations of Black people and convinced them that they were fit for roles that

white society had destinated and reserved for them. An education offered at the primary,

secondary and collegiate level could and would enlighten Black people at all levels of the social

stratus, from the intellectual to the wage laborer (Alridge, 2007). The curriculum had to include

Black history to inform Blacks, for the same reasons that Burroughs and the Garveys would

assert, to dismiss the disinformation about Black inferiority.

Amy and Marcus Garvey. The second wife of Marcus Garvey, Amy Garvey worked

alongside him and promoted the ideals of Pan-Africanism. According to Ula Taylor (1995),

Amy Garvey stood in her own right as a political activist, calling upon other Black women to

participate in the "race first" movement and publishing Black feminist editorials in *Negro

World*, the newspaper for Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).   Her page "Our

Women and What We Think" in *Negro World* "promoted the notion that it was essential for

Black women to develop a political consciousness to 'uplift' the race and ultimately 'redeem'

Africa" (Taylor, 1995, p. 89). Much like Anna Julia Cooper, Amy Garvey believed that Black

women could make Black liberation a success in the United States, as women knew how to set

the world right (Guy-Sheftall, 1995). For decades, Black women had supported Black men and

their husbands in the fight for Black liberation, but they had always been an integral part of race movements.

Marcus Garvey stood apart from other Black race leaders of the time because he advocated for neither an industrial nor a classical education. He recognized that even in the 20th century, the education system was deliberately designed to control others for the benefit of the majority (Fraser, 2014). To empower Black learners, there needed to be Black schools run by Black people, with Black-centered textbooks. All Black students would learn within white-controlled, white-constructed school systems was how to continue their enslavement and singular usefulness to servicing white society (Garvey, 1937/2012). This perspective put Garvey at odds with Washington and Du Bois, both of whom in some respects designed their ideas around Black education with whiteness in mind.

Garvey encouraged Black nationalism, rejected integration and promoted an eventual return to Africa. This position was not popular among Black leaders who remembered the racist motives of colonializations prior to Emancipation. However, Garvey believed that Blacks would never achieve equality and the right to self-determination in the United States, as the violent treatment and discrimination of Black soldiers who defended democracy in World War I would prove (Clarke, 1974). At the UNIA convention, Garvey (1920/2004) put forth the "Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World," in which he demanded five rights aimed at the educating of Black children, namely:

30. We demand the right of unlimited and unprejudiced education for ourselves and our posterity forever.

31. We declare that the teaching in any school by alien teachers to our boys and girls, that the alien race is superior to the Negro race, is an insult to the Negro people of the world.

49. We demand that instructions given Negro children in schools include

the subject of "Negro history," to their benefit. (pp. 20-23)

Of note, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense Ten-Point Platform and Program created by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in 1966 echoes some of the same demands in Garvey's manifesto. Without question, one of the most important aims of Black education was to create a postcolonial identity for/in Black people in the United States.

In sum, regardless of which stance on Black scholarship and curriculum Black race leaders upheld, it was clear that the success and effectiveness of any initiative relied on the training and dedication of Black educators. Their presence would not only ensure the knowledge construction of Black children but also ensure their self-esteem and physical well-being because it was feared that white teachers in Black schools would reinforce biases and notions of Black inferiority (Chapman, 2004). The current teaching force is mostly white, middle class females who may have limited knowledge about the Black culture. As a teaching fellow, I have had to disrupt the deficit thinking and stereotypical labeling of white pre-service students in my courses, and thus, for me, the fear is real.

Reclaiming Resistance for the Culture

"Dragonfly out in the sun you know what I mean, don't you know
Butterflies all havin' fun, you know what I mean
Sleep in peace when day is done, that's what I mean
And this old world, is a new world
And a bold world for me
Stars when you shine, you know how I feel
Scent of the pine, you know how I feel
Oh freedom is mine
And I know how I feel
It's a new dawn
It's a new day
It's a new life
For me"

Nina Simone "Feeling Good" (1965)

In the song "Feeling Good," Simone (1965) spoke of a peace and a freedom in a time and place where the old world is now new and bold.   I believe that it is important to be reminded of the time and place when the feelings of Black children were prioritized and nurtured as a part of their education. Case in point, Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996), in *Their Highest Potential,* explored the history of Caswell County Training School (1949-1969), a segregated Black school in North Carolina; it captured "the special circumstances of a particular time and place in history to understand the type of schooling that was created in response" (p. 11). The type of schooling provided by Black teachers and principals resembled a family in which interactions were nurturing. The principal N.L. Dillard conducted "hall counseling" and knew everyone by name. Whether about education or life, there was a balance between warnings and praise, both intentional and meaningful, that served to provide guidance and elevate the spirits of Black children at Caswell. Former student Nellie Williamson recalled her English teacher-

> ...She would always tell you wherever you went, always feel that you are important, that you are somebody. And she made every child in that room feel that way. (p. 122)

Such affirmations were necessary for Black children in the hostile segregated South that told them every day that their lives and futures were worthless.   Since the end of Reconstruction, Black teachers and principals were the primary educators for Black children and maintained many important functional roles in the Black community (Cole, 1986; Walker, 1996).   They were fierce advocates for Black children, instilling them with racial pride and girding them up to endure racism and oppression. It was Black teachers and principals whose determination and commitment held Black, poorly resourced schools together. The philosophies of Burroughs, Cooper, and Garvey unforgotten.

Integration, though a political and legal victory, destroyed the all-Black school, but more importantly, ended the dominance of the Black teacher in the lives of Black children as well as reduced their position in the Black community (Echols, 2006; Tillman, 2004). The merits and faults of integration and *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) have been debated, but it is indisputable that hundreds of qualified, well-educated Black teachers lost their positions, and protecting of Black children's socio-emotional and physical well-being diminished as Black culture contrasted with the values and beliefs of an integrated school system. However, we must reclaim disruption for Black children as the universal standards of educational care are not working. These standards are grounded in social constructs of race and childhood and white supremacy regardless of how racially neutral and innocuous they may seem. We must insist on Black approaches that carry cultural significance for Black children.

Insistent Blackness

The concept of school as family is often advocated and promoted, even in schools that practice strict zero tolerance policies and justify the controlling of Black children. In administrator and teacher preparation programs, the school as family approach is treated as a way to improve school culture and to make school relationships feel natural and intuitive to the needs of students. This idea is that by cultivating and even mimicking the familial functions, students feel at home, loved, cared for, and connected within and beyond school parameters. However, school as family is problematic when it primarily serves school needs; that is, it utilizes the teacher-student relationship as a pathway to achievement success; and when it attempts to supplant the Black family unit.

The Black family is *still* an integral part of what forms Black children's identities and what girds them with survival mechanisms honed after generations of struggle and oppression.

The interconnectedness or extendedness of the Black family unit includes all persons who contribute to its survival. In this case, the structure of the Black family is complex, interwoven with both blood relatives and "adopted" non-blood members who assume relations as "play" brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles. This collective kinship is similar to the African heritage where a classificatory system allows all brothers of the father to be called "father", all sisters of the mother to be "mother", all their children to be "brother" and "sister" and the father's sister's daughters (cross-cousins) to be cousins (Tembo, 2019). Black people find themselves integrally related to other Black people who undertake shared responsibilities and destinies (June, 1991). According to Wolf (1983), this practice makes space for fictive or non-related kin to encourage support in the extended network.

Educational care and school-family connections without Blackness represent dominant culture notions of care. For example, Nel Noddings' (2010) work is foundational in promoting that educational systems use care as an ethical and moral practice. She touches upon several relevant topics, namely that caring should be natural as it satisfies a basic human need; caring-for must evolve into the more instrumental and productive caring-about; and the home makes specific contributions to the development of children (home as the primary educator). Noddings' belief that school is maternal aligns closely with the concept of the Black Mother Figure. This figure can be biological or adopted and serves as a communal source of nurturance. Noddings' (2010) work sees caring as a maternal experience as in the way a mother cares for her child—without making a judgment about the approaches of the fathers or male teachers.

However, though Noddings' work is groundbreaking and has made invaluable contributions to theories of care, it has limitations because it does not attend to one important element—race. Race cannot be disregarded when addressing the sociocultural and educational

needs of marginalized Black children. The ethics of care theories maintain that race is a non-

issue and colorblindness is preferable. It asserts values that work for whites and are given to

Western ideals. It is rooted in white feminists' racial obliviousness, as Thompson (1998) argued-

> Among the objections that leftists have raised to the ethics of care are the
> inadequate attention given to issues of power within caring relationships;
> the deficit assumptions informing educational theories of care that offer to
> provide children of color with the kind of support supposedly not found in
> their homes. (p. 527)

Similar to SEL programs, PBIS, or RPs, ethics of care, as Noddings defined it, tend to see the

needs of Black as colorblind and raceless. As with the school as savior form of schooling, white

feminist approaches to care may advocate for a relationship between teacher and student but they

promote such in pursuit of mastering academic knowledge, skills and the social behaviors and

values associated with white, middle-class America.

  Collins (2009) argued that Black feminism centers the Black woman's emerging powers,

noting, "...the overarching purpose of Black feminism is to also to resist oppression, both its

practices and the ideas that justify it" (p. 22). Black feminist theory, in response, provides the

lens through which we can understand the nurturing mechanisms in the Black family and the

oppression inherent in larger social systems that suppress Black cultural practices. This

Afrocentric approach sees a deeper intrinsic motivation to learning and behavior that bypasses

the peripheral affirmation of being a successful test-taker with good citizenship. Because

oppression can reveal itself as racism, even in the practices in Black urban public schools,

Thompson (1998) noted that Black feminism envelopes educational caring with empowerment,

survival, and justice for the next generation.

  The ultimate contribution of Black feminism is the application of Black women's

knowledge and consciousness to activate social change in political and economic institutions

(Collins, 2009). Black women employ this knowledge to empower themselves and other

subjugated groups in their space.   It accounts for race, class, and gender being aspects

significant to the lived experiences of Black women. Not only are these three classifications

susceptible to oppression, but they are also levels in which Black women can become a fortified

threat to Eurocentric masculinity and perspectives. Black feminism calls for Black women to

define ourselves and control our own image to thwart the continuance of negative stereotypes

about our complexities and uniqueness. According to Collins (2009), "As members of an

oppressed group, U.S. Black women have generated alternative practices and knowledges that

have been designed to foster U.S. Black women's group empowerment," (p. 33-34). In this

respect, Black women can identify and confront oppression, which is empowering, and allows

for the empowerment of others.

Collins' matrix of domination illustrates how oppression is organized within social

systems in these four domains—structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal—which

all are exemplified in the operations and policies of Western-style schooling. Collins (2009)

explained-

> Domination operates by seducing, pressuring, or forcing African American
> women and members of subordinated groups to replace individual and cultural
> ways of knowing with the dominant group's specialized thought. (p. 558)

The Black woman's emerging powers, in turn, benefit her community far deeper and longer than

the Eurocentric principles and objectives of the American public school education.

Othermothers. Black feminism theory reconceptualizes the notions of motherhood and

family. The image of the controlling, self-sacrificing Black supermother is both historically

glorified and problematic because it is analogous to the mammy caricature and happy slave in

the throes of violence and subjugation (Collins, 2009).   The work of mothering is not an isolated

venture, particularly within the Black community in which the relationships between Black

women encourage empowerment and support. Collins (2009) stated-

> ...African American communities have also recognized that vesting one
> person with the full responsibility of mothering a child may not be wise or
> possible. As a result, othermothers...assist bloodmothers. (p. 192)

Black women's experiences as *bloodmothers* and *othermothers* form a network of *community*

mothers. These experiences illustrate that the mythical form of the nuclear family is not natural,

universal, or preferred. Othermothering emerged not as a result of birth mothers being

unavailable or as a second-best approximation of mothering; it is an honored and respected West

African tradition of shared childrearing by adults, including the birth mother (Thompson, 1998).

Furthermore, Angela Davis (1983) suggested that a Black woman's role as mother might

have been more important than her role of wife. The Black mother is a pivotal figure in the

Black community because she serves as a caretaker as well as a strategist for change and

empowerment, her caring activities tied to emotional, political, physical, and intellectual

(educational) labor (Thompson, 1998). Therefore, her role in othermothering positively and

exponentially affects the community exponentially.

According to Thompson (1998), Black women may not always demonstrate caring as

affection but as a commitment to her children and her otherchilden's survival. This commitment

goes further than mentorship; it mushrooms into maternal advocacy. A mission to love, nurture,

spiritually guide, and defend against educational, social, and carceral injustices. For the

marginalized Black student in the educational system, teacher as othermother is more intuitive

than the traditional teacher-student relationship. According to Guiffrida (2005), "As

othermothers, Black teachers learned that they have the spiritual and moral obligation to uplift

the Black community by catering to the academic, social, and psychological needs of students"

(p. 716). While the objectives of othermothering resemble the "educating the whole child" position often advocated in school, Black teachers as othermothers center the humanity and well-being of Black children to attend to and heal the wounds caused by school policies and practices.

Finally, Dr. Hale-Benson's *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles* (1982) was one of the first pieces of research to shed light on the influence of Africanity, African heritage and culture in the lives of Black children. Hale-Benson (1982) portrayed the Black woman as strong and responsible for the survival of the Black family and cited the work of Dr. Robert Hill. Dr. Hill affirmed that the Black family display five strengths: "strong kinship bonds, strong achievement orientation, adaptability of family roles, strong religious orientation, and strong work orientation" (p. 47). Of all the strengths, achievement orientation was connected to the aspirations of the Black mother. Hale-Benson discussed an investigation by Norma Ragin in which the relationship between maternal practices observed in the home and the cognitive development of poor children. Though it was only one study, it found that Black mothers' use of reinforcement, consultation, and sensitivity to children's feelings appeared to be conducive to intellectual growth (Hale-Benson, 1982). Hale-Benson also noted that Radin (1971) recognized that reform focused on curriculum and restructuring the school system would benefit from considering the implementation of maternal practices.

Otherfathers. Akin to othermothering, otherfathering looks upon Black educators as surrogates who empower Black children (Brooms, 2017; Tafari, 2018). Through otherfathering, Black men do not mentor in the dominant culture perspective (hooks, 2004) because it is justice-oriented response to racism and gendered oppression (Tafari, 2018). And it goes far beyond the concept of training Black boys how to respond to white standards of respect and achievement. Otherfathering allows Black men who have survived America to teach Black boys how to

navigate the racism and sexism in schools and society (hooks, 2004; Tafari, 2018). Case in point, Brooms (2017) studied otherfathering in a single-sex urban high school and found that Black male students expressed a desire for Black male teachers-otherfathers who could contribute to their development and enhance their critical consciousness. Brooms stated, "Students attributed much of their success and personal development to how Black male teachers engaged in otherfathering—expressed as holistic care, support, parenting, modeling, and life coaching" (p. 1). These aspects express more than the traditional mentoring objectives for preparing Black boys to present themselves to society, to see an oppressive school system as a social entity designed for their good or to see their teachers as the best models to follow and emulate.

While few studies exist in the literature to provide evidence about the supportive nature of otherfathering, it deserves space in research in order to influence change in school policies and practices regarding the treatment of Black boys. The socio-emotional attributes of otherfathering outweigh salvation-driven role model and mentoring programs that primarily focus on Black boys as dangerous and endangered. More importantly, otherfathering honors Black culture as it bridges and extends the strong kinship network of Black men who come together to protect the humanity of Black boys.

Communities of care. Community othermothering extends into communities of care. These communities are multifaceted because they could be groups of mothers in close proximity, extended families with non-blood adopted relatives, or clusters of institutional guardians and partners. It is vital that the educational system acknowledge and accept that many "family members" are involved with Black children instead of applying a Western perspective of community structured fundamentally by competition and domination (Collins, 1990). All these communities of care, acting as one large family, collaborate to create a vast network of support

for Black children. Together, they comprise the Black family who uphold Afrocentric beliefs and practices. Collins (2009) found-

> This community othermother tradition also explains the 'mothering the mind' relationships that can develop between African American women teachers and their Black female and male students. Unlike traditional mentoring so widely reported in educational literature, this relationship goes far beyond that of providing either technical skills or a network of academic and professional contacts. (p. 207)

This network of bonding aims at identifying and protecting the Black child from the hostilities and dehumanization within and outside of the school system. Aside from the "it takes a village" perspective, community othermothering shares common goals and interests that supports Black children and the Black community.

Communities of care are reciprocal in nature (Collins, 2009). Black children come to understand that their success is predicated on the belief that they will in due time help someone else in the community. Therefore, Black children are contributing members in these communities, not mere beneficiaries. Like their mothers and othermothers, they come to take on the shared responsibility of nurturance in the extended family. They learn from their Black mothers that their creative power is to be used for the good of community (Collins, 2009). Zero tolerance policies, classroom management strategies and other culturally-deficit programs do not accomplish this long-term goal because they promote independence over community and reserve power and influence for the teacher and the administrator. It is important to understand why these practices and policies remain the standard despite the evidence from Black scholars and researchers that cultural approaches are less punitive and more emotionally beneficial. Without question, the influence and whiteness of university educator programs carry much of the responsibility.

Old Jim Crow
You've been around too long
Gotta work the devil
'Til your dead and gone

--Nina Simone "Old Jim Crow" (1964)
5th stanza

In subsequent chapters, I speak in detail about educator preparation but will use this space to briefly review the literature about educator preparation in academia. According to Brunsma et. al. (2012), there are spatial, curricular and ideological walls of whiteness that protect white supremacy, privilege, and ways of addressing race and racism. As a result, theories and curricula rarely touch on Black ways of leading, teaching or caring.

Development of the school principal

The principal role and the training and/or preparation for that position were constructed by white men for white men (see Table 1) for an educational system meant to secure a quality education for white children. With the introduction of the graded school system[13] by Horace Mann, campus leadership began taking shape with a noticeable gender-based hierarchy. The principalship evolved from the teaching position (Cuban, 1988; Spring, 2010); but despite the fact that most teachers were female, the principal teacher was almost always categorically male (Kafka, 2009). According to Tyack (1974), a "pedagogical harem" existed, which consisted solely of male leadership and a female teaching force. Even in today's school systems, manifestations of the pedagogical harem remain. According to the National Center for

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[13] Prior to the graded school, the single school design or the one-room classroom was the norm, where one teacher with the help of assistants taught large numbers of "ungraded" students from varying age groups. The separation of students by grade level was a hallmark of the Prussian method of classification.

Education Statistics, using the most recent data, 78 percent of public school principals were white in 2017-2018; and 81 percent of them were white men in 2015-2016.

Table 1

Historical Eras and the Roles of School Administrators[14]

Eras	Role of School Administrator	
*1820-1899 Ideological Era	*1865-1900 Philosopher-Educator	
*1900-1946 Prescriptive Era	*1900-1912 Educator-Capitalist	
	*1913-1915 Business Manager	
	*1915-1919 School Executive	
		*1930-1950 Social Agent
*1947-1985 Scientific Era	*1950-1985 Behavioral Scientist	
Source: Murphy (1992, 1998); see footnote		

Ng (2014) research adds to Murphy's timeline by including the school administrator as instructional leader (circa 1985) and describing the current era as Complexity Theory in which the school principal is viewed as a transformational or servant leader.   Even though instructional leadership fell out of favor by the mid-1990s when transformational leadership began the model of choice, it has made a comeback (Ng, 2014).   It now exists in tandem or is integrated with transformational leadership with some significant differences (Hallinger, 2003). The principal alone is no longer expected to be responsible for creating an effective school but their leadership is supposed to be distributed among the teaching staff. According to Leithwood (1994), "people effects" (i.e., being people-oriented) is the linchpin of transformational leadership. The principal is more inclined to support school conditions that influence changes in teacher behavior (i.e.,

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[14] This is an abbreviated version of Murphy's (1998) work. The full version is found in *School Leadership & Management, 18*(3), 359-372.

motivation) instead of instructional practices (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

Traditional university and alternative PPPs are tasked with training emerging school leaders on the how-to's of five transformational leadership practices: inspiring a shared vision, modeling the way, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart (Quin, et. al., 2015). While these are improvements, principal as transformational leader is very much an instructional leader because accountability is stronger than ever.   According to Shatzer, et. al. (2014), although the transformational leadership style can improve faculty and staff relations and teacher motivation, it is a less substantial effect on academic success.

The 2012 case study by Davis and Darling-Hammond examined the key features of innovative university PPPs, focusing on five of them that prepare school leaders and promote teaching and learning. Since the primary measure of effective school leadership is associated with high student achievement on a variety of instruments, namely state assessments, it is not surprising that university PPPs that are considered "innovative" contain design elements, such as "active instructional strategies that link theory and practice… and standards-based curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management" (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 25).   None of the design elements or results of their study illustrated attention or an interest in addressing students' social-emotional well-being to increase their learning, keep them from dropping out, or make them college and career ready. Nor do these programs mention Black ways of leading, such as womanist caring (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002), Black Masculine Caring (Bass & Alston, 2018), or culturally responsive school leadership (Khalifa, 2018). The prevailing belief in university principal preparation programs is that race and gender are neutral matters (Boske, 2010; Weiner, et. al., 2019), so Black principals are trained just the same as white ones.

Development of teachers and counselors

Walls of whiteness surround teacher and counseling education programs because much like the principalship, the majority of these school professionals are white and middle class, and approximately 75% are female--who will be employed in urban schools (Dee, 2004). Specifically, as related to teaching, there still remains a problem-oriented construction around urban education in university programs. As a result of decades of municipal interference and neglect, urban school districts usually contend financial and social woes (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Lipman, et. al., 1996). University teacher education programs reinforce the deficit thinking model and perpetuate negative imagery about the behavior and learning of urban Black children and children of color. These programs also fail to provide authentic experiences with cultural and anti-racist pedagogies (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Love, 2019; (Nuri-Robins, et. al., 2002; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014) because of white discomfort. White professors and teacher-educators either co-opt these pedagogies or strip them of their radical theories (Matias, 2015); or they teach them in such ways that they actually reinforce whiteness (Matias & Mackey, 2015). More importantly, research tends to leave Black pre-service teachers (PSTs) out of the conversation. What experiences Black PSTs get in their programs prepare them to teach and care in the same ways as white teachers, does not prepare them at all, or assumes that they already know how. We can see the impact on Black children in urban schools.

As related to school counseling, the research literature reflects a depth of whiteness from the professional to practice. Census data show that 62 percent of U.S. school counselors are white and 73.3% of counselors are female. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) notes that 11% of its members are Black (ASCA, 2020). However, 16% of school counselors are

Black (Data USA, 2020). A national survey of counselors from the College Board found Black counselors were more likely to work at the secondary level urban school district (Hart Research Associates, 2011). The same as the principalship and teacher education, school counseling preparation inside and outside of the university centers theories, practices, and curricula by white academics and intellectuals (e.g., Piaget, Maslow and Rogers). The ASCA, which offers training and resources, prescribes a national model to guide the practices of school counselors and has recently promoted SEL, multiculturalism and social justice advocacy in counseling. There is profound void in the research about Black ways of framing these initiatives. However, the work of Ahmad Washington (2018) and Malik Henfield (2018) around the cultural work of Black male counselors are valuable contributions.

In sum, the importance of being honest about America's treatment of Black students and the disenchanting shortsightedness of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) cannot be underestimated. The American educational system has allowed misdiagnoses and Eurocentric doctoring on urban public schools so that they remain paternalistic, prescriptive institutions that focus on student compliance, behavior management systems of reward and punishment, and drill and kill test preparation. An undercurrent of bigotry and oppression also underlies the reason traditional education and paternalism continue to dominate in urban public schools.

Black educators are in the unique position to disrupt oppressive policies and practices by engaging in cultural practices that mirror the communal bonding, uplifting, guiding, nurturing and caring embraced by the Black family. More importantly, they offer a support system that may be a more effective model for the well-being and the academic potential of Black students.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"You are your own stories and therefore free to imagine and experience what it means to be human without wealth. What it feels like to be human without domination over others, without reckless arrogance, without fear of others unlike you, without rotating, rehearsing and reinventing the hatreds you learned in the sandbox. And although you don't have complete control over the narrative (no author does, I can tell you), you could nevertheless create it.

Although you will never fully know or successfully manipulate the characters who surface or disrupt your plot, you can respect the ones who do by paying them close attention and doing them justice. The theme you choose may change or simply elude you, but being your own story means you can always choose the tone. It also means that you can invent the language to say who you are and how you mean. But then, I am a teller of stories and therefore an optimist, a believer in the ethical bend of the human heart, a believer in the mind's disgust with fraud and its appetite for truth, a believer in the ferocity of beauty. So, from my point of view, which is that of a storyteller, I see your life as already artful, waiting, just waiting and ready for you to make it art."

Excerpt from Toni Morrison's Commencement Speech at Wellesley College
Be Your Own Story
May 28, 2004

Purpose of the Study

        The purpose of this study is to explore how Black educators resist paternalistic disciplining, that is often reflected in traditional classroom management strategies, character education, zero tolerance policies (ZTPs), and even affirming methods such as SEL and restorative practices (RPs); to learn about their use of cultural practices that address behavior, nurture Black children's well-being in urban public schools, and attend to their potential.   Since the 1990s, schools in the United States have employed paternalistic approaches to academic instruction and character education, especially in schools that predominantly serve marginalized Black and Brown children (McDermott & Nygreen, 2013). I argue that Black educators--who resist utilizing systems aimed at controlling Black bodies and/or increasing Black children's academic ability--understand the importance of prioritizing Black children's humanity and humanness, and that nurturing their well-being positively influences their behavior and learning potential.

        Therefore, by examining the narratives of Black educators, I seek to reveal how they normalize culturally meaningful nurturing practices in the classroom. As expressed in the excerpt from Toni Morrison's commencement speech, I aim to present storytelling as a liberating experience, one in which Black educators feel free to produce their truth. To effect justice for themselves and their students. To counter the master narratives of the Black teacher-as-disciplinarian and the Black child-as adult/evil. These portrayals are often constructed and reinforced by the media and even academic research. In addition, my study seeks to examine Black educators' narratives for their understanding of the racist and oppressive infrastructure within the school system, their expected roles within the system, and the risks they take in challenging the status quo. In doing so, I seek to reveal how Black educators become conscious

of social objectives of schooling; and how they invoke Black culture to heal and nurture the well-being of Black children in their schools.

In this chapter, I discuss the following: 1) my researcher positionality; 2) research paradigm; 3) theoretical frameworks; 4) interview study and storytelling methodology; 5) context of the research study; 6) data collection and issues of trustworthiness; 7) data organization and analysis; 8) and my pilot study. This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do Black educators understand and negotiate the oppressive infrastructure of schools and its impact on Black children?

2. In what ways do Black educators disrupt the paternalistic practices that are entrenched in the discipline policies of the urban school system?

For a moment, I step away from citing Nina Simone and allow Toni Morrison to be my guide. As Morrison is the ultimate storyteller and wordsmith of the lived Black experience, it only seemed appropriate to permit her words to introduce this chapter and some sections within.

Researcher Positionality

I wanted to read that book
And I couldn't find it
I thought maybe if I looked hard enough
somebody had written a story about those things
And about putting a young black child in center stage
Without making fun of her
She's not Topsy,
She's not any of these other sorts of cliched things
And I thought somebody was probably writing that book
Or would write it
And no one did
I was eager, eager to read that book
And I didn't think I could read it
Unless I wrote it.

-Toni Morrison on *The Bluest Eye*

My positionality in this dissertation study has been difficult to write about because of my own experiences as a Black teacher who began her career controlling and dehumanizing Black children in the classroom. I had, unknowingly, internalized the social constructions of race and childhood as a Black student in the Texas school system, in teacher education and principal preparation programs steeped in whiteness and also as an educator trained in school districts. AND. For these reasons, not only am I very sensitive to this research but also feel immense pressure to redeem Black educators by sharing their efforts to be protectors of Black children. Thus, I understand the biases that I am bringing to my dissertation study and how my experiences shape my interpretations of events, artifacts, and talks with participants in the field.

Secondly, I am conducting research with individuals and in a site where I am known both personally and professionally. I worked alongside some of the participants when I was an assistant principal. Therefore, I hold both an insider and outsider status (Collins, 1986). These relationships will affect how I view their actions toward Black children and how I listen to their stories. I realize that I was an educator who came late to understanding the harm that I was doing to Black children in the classroom; therefore, the challenge would be negotiating and balancing my research goals without making judgments about my participants' actions.

Third, my experiences in Morrison ISD were not overwhelmingly positive because there was a culture which I found difficult to navigate. The school system supported principles, initiatives, and programs that, while had a positive impact on school achievement, could be weaponized to harm Black children. These initiatives included character education and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). On one hand, these issues helped bring about my awareness to the issues that Black educators face in resisting the practices and policies that harm Black children in a predominantly Black school district. On the other hand, I remember how

ingrained, how deeply entrenched these issues ran in the school system and how challenging they were to defy.   In this respect, I understand the disadvantages that this situation might create for my dissertation study, but I also know the stories of Black educators in Morrison ISD need to be told because they have stories I want to hear. These are the stories that I want to write.

More importantly, because of my insider/outsider status as a Black feminist researcher (Collins, 2009), talking with Black educators, I must always remain aware of race, gender, class (Crenshaw, 1990) and skin color and power (Merriam, et. al., 2010). I cannot assume that our shared demographics or even my previous working relationships with some of the participants automatically gives me their trust. I must make every effort to be collaborative and transparent with the participants in order to secure their ongoing participation.

Qualitative Research: Problematic and Promising

> "I didn't want to speak for Black people
> I wanted to speak to and be among
> It's us
> So, the first thing I had to do was eliminate the white gaze
> Jimmy Baldwin used to talk about that
> The little white man
> That sits on your shoulder and checks out
> Everything you do and say
> So, I wanted to knock him off
> And you're free
> Now I own the world."
>
> -Toni Morrison on
> "Eliminating the white gaze"

It is important to understand the long-standing association of qualitative research with colonialism; for in its earliest uses of interviews and observations, it served as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, truth and power (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).   Research in itself requires an intrusion, an encroachment into a space usually different, foreign, or contrary to one's own. Qualitative research, particularly in the social sciences, grew from a desire to understand the

other (Vidich & Lyman, 2000), the outsider, the savage. From the very beginning, qualitative research was implicated in a racist project (Marcuse, 2013). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), colonizers needed a way to represent the dark-skinned Other to the white world, noting that-

> The agenda was clear-cut: The observer went to a foreign setting to study the culture, customs, and habits of another human group. Often this was a group that stood in the way of white settlers. Ethnographic records of these groups were incorporated into colonizing strategies, ways of controlling the foreign, deviant, or troublesome Other. Soon, qualitative research would be employed in other social and behavioral disciplines… (p. 2)

While cultural anthropologists were writing about their adventures and encounters in exotic places, colonizers utilized their biased and racist knowledge to justify the extermination and domination of African and Indigenous Peoples throughout the world.

By design, qualitative research has been used to assist in accessing a culture, which involves investigating the practices and behaviors of a certain group of people in a particular setting (Ormston, et. al., 2014). The means by which one investigates or explores a culture involves particularly delicate entryways in order to gain access to knowledge. While etic and emic views both have value, the emic account grants the researcher an understanding and appreciation of the nuances within the culture (Morris, et. al., 1999). The narratives, observations, and artifacts of a culture may reveal deeply sensitive and intricate personal schema and cultural wealth, and it is important to report and discuss such matters accurately. According to Silverman (2015), "The worst thing that contemporary qualitative research can imply is that, in this post-modern age, anything goes. The trick is to produce intelligent, disciplined work on the very edge of the abyss" (p. 211). It is my responsibility as a Black feminist qualitative researcher taking an emic perspective to remain cognizant of the pitfalls that can lead to, reinforce, or substantiate the pathologizing of Black people to a white research audience.

Thus, I realize that qualitative research has traditionally been utilized to mischaracterize or misrepresent Black participants and continues to do in the twenty-first century. Case in point, Alice Goffman's *On the Run: Life in an American City* (2014), an ethnographic dissertation on a poor Black community in West Philadelphia, was originally met with praise by such scholars as Cornel West for its riveting description of the marginalized lives of the 6th Street Boys (a pseudonym) as they avoided interactions with police while deeply entrenched in committing crimes. Goffman (2014) especially made note of the police brutality against Black bodies, wishing to expose the "more hidden practices of policing and surveillance as young people living in one relatively poor Black neighborhood" (p. xvi). On the surface, the commentary on police brutality served as validation that physical control and violence are a part of the lived experience of Black bodies at the margins of society.

However, according to Lubet (2015), critics not only questioned Goffman's flawed methodology and ethics but also believed that she exploited her Black subjects and focused overwhelmingly on Black criminality, presented a truncated version of Black urban life (via Dwayne Betts) and perpetuated the belief that the Black boys created their own problems because they purposely broke the law (via Heather MacDonald). Goffman's research is just one of many examples about who should/should not conduct research on Black people. While there are some researchers who believe that there should be no barrier to who can conduct research on "others," Milner (2007) noted that, "it is important that researchers possess or are pursuing deeper racial and cultural knowledge about themselves and the community or people under study" (p. 388). That is, researchers conducting studies on Black participants must be cognizant of their privilege, which can influence the lens through which they produce knowledge about the Black lived experience and that production can be flawed, stereotypical, or racist.

Even though qualitative research has been misused by uninformed or misguided scholars, I am encouraged it has also been transformed in the hands of Black feminist scholars. Black feminists contend that research is *for* Black women rather than *about* them, buttressed by an activist point of view to invoke their knowledge, consciousness, and empowerment (Few, et. al., 2003). I extend this assertion and maintain that my study is *for* Black educators rather than *about* Black educators. Those aforementioned forms of qualitative research that once gave space to colonialism will serve the knowledge, expose the truths, and affirm the power of Black disruptive educators in urban classrooms.

Qualitative Research Paradigms

Paradigm refers to a worldview "of beliefs, values, and methods for collecting and interpreting data" (Grbich, 2012). There are four research paradigms within which the qualitative researcher may work: realism/post-positivism, critical theory, interpretivism/constructionism, postmodernism/ post-structuralism. These paradigms guide researchers' actions by assisting in answering ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions, to discover "how things really are" and "how things really work" (Guba, 1990). Because the work as a Black feminist qualitative researcher is culturally grounded, it may not always "fit" within the parameters of traditional research (Evans-Winter, 2019). The participants, the field site and research answers may add another layer to fit for purpose. This is part of the legitimation debate about qualitative research "fitting into the conventional notions of social science" (Lather, 1992, p. 87). The "un-fit-ness" is the beauty of Black feminist research: It cannot be contained or limited by the positivistic bounds of research (*it eliminates the white gaze*). It is its own thing.

More important than adhering to a particular theoretical perspective, the Black feminist qualitative researcher must ensure the complexities of Black lived experiences are fully understood and crystallized for a wider audience. It might take multiple lenses and alternative methods to explore and explain the daily conscious and subconscious negotiations Black identities have to make when responding to ordinary matters that the dominant culture has the privilege to take for granted. These types of complexities make space for Black researchers to integrate perspectives in order to center and "legitimize" Black knowledge and realities. As Dillard (2008) noted, citing Palmer (1983), regarding the relationship between the researcher and the researched-

> While much has been written on the virtues and pitfalls of positivistic quantitative social science, one could argue that much qualitative work also rests on similar conceptions of ''truth.'' I would further add that, regardless of research paradigm, if educational research is to truly change or transform, it will only be because we are in the midst of a ''far-reaching intellectual and spiritual revisioning [and articulation] of reality and how we know it." In other words, a transformation at the epistemological level. (p. 663)

Whenever the production of truth is centered in the Black experience, there is a question of legitimacy and validity in qualitative research. Creating awareness of Black reality has been a challenge for Black researchers because the concepts of knowledge and truth are recognized and legitimized in research only when they represent European conceptions of reality (the knowledge of Black people looks the same as white people) (Bakari, 1997). Therefore, multiple paradigms and lenses are needed to capture our truth, grounded in our lived experiences, as representations of knowledge and wisdom.

Critical theory and feminist research

My qualitative study is situated in critical theory and feminist research paradigms for several reasons: a) the focus on class, power, and the site and reduction of oppression (Grbich,

2012); b) the critique of oppressive historical and structural conditions and attempts to change

those conditions (Collins, 2009); c) the inclusion of feminist research theories, in which

storytelling is a common methodology (Evans-Winters, 2019). In feminist research,

understanding, emancipating, and deconstructing (Lather, 1992) approaches all transpire; and the

goal is to create collaborative and nonexploitative relationships, to put oneself in the study to

avoid objectification and to conduct transformative research (Collins, 1986). In Black feminist

research, the research subjects most likely endure power imbalance in their lived experiences;

therefore, securing their trust through collaboration helps them retain their humanity and centers

their ways of knowing.

Critical theory is most associated with the Frankfurt School in Germany where theorists

drew upon the critical methods of Karl Marx as related to power imbalances in society,

economics and politics. It also includes the philosophical works of Weber and Marcuse, and

researchers Foucault and Lather. As Marx (1888/2002) noted in regard to power-

> Freedman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master
> and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant
> opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now
> open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary
> reconstitution of society at large, or in a common ruin of the contending
> classes. (p. 219)

Marx believed that even as society evolved and old regimes gave away to new ones, what always

remained was the subjugation of one social class over another.   Therefore, critical theorists see

reality as produced to keep knowledge controlled, and they seek out the "powerless" to tell their

realities in order to affect change "through an active process of emancipation through

knowledge-sharing" (Grbich, 2012, p. 7). The knowledge-sharing is cathartic, especially for

Black educators who may be doing the work of disruption and resistance alone on their

campuses and do not experience the validation or the collaboration of their colleagues to support their actions.

It is through the stories of Black educators that I can explore their realities, how they combat structural oppression within their schools and how they address the inequities in how Black children are treated. While the Black educators in my study are not wholly powerless, they often wrestle covertly with an oppressive system that aims to strip them of their cultural and communal practices toward nurturing and empowering Black children (Vickery, 2015). It is my hope that the narratives of Black educators expose not only their determination to reduce the spirit-murder of Black children, even in academically successful urban schools, but also authenticate that cultural models of care can positively and effectively address behavior and students' emotional well-being.

Thus, given the school systems' historical expressions of oppression, anti-Blackness, sexism, and social injustice, I needed a conceptual framework that addresses marginalization, race, class, gender, and justice. The framework needed to center Black educators who understand the historical contexts of racism and slavery, recognize their overt and hidden manifestations in the curriculum and the discipline policies, and challenge these systems in order to develop a new consciousness for Black children. Therefore, I drew upon Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2009) and BlackCrit/Critical Race (Bell, 1995; Dumas & ross, 2016) as theoretical frameworks to buttress an understanding of the need for Black educators to engage in disruption in order to nurture and address the behavior of Black children in urban public schools.

Theoretical Frameworks

> She is a friend of mind.
> She gather me, man.
> The pieces I am,
> she gather them

and give them back to me
in all the right order.
It's good, you know,
when you got a woman
who is a friend of your mind.

Toni Morrison *The Pieces I Am* (2019)

In my review of the relevant research literature, I make the argument that the spirit-murder of Black children in public school is based on race and childhood as social constructs. These constructions do not recognize Black people as human and justify their subjugation and dehumanization as property in white supremacist culture. I explored counterstories, the counter-histories of resistance and resistors who disrupted their domination through literacy, constructed ideals of Black education and scholarships, established Black-centered models of disruption, including othermothering, otherfathering, and communities of care. I now discuss the theoretical frameworks that guided my dissertation study.

According to Grant and Osanloo (2014) selecting the appropriate theoretical framework is one of the most important aspects of the dissertation because it provides the blueprint for how the researcher will approach their study. It provides a clear vision of the knowledge that the researcher is seeking to create or build through the research process. They argue that a theoretical framework-

> consists of the selected theory (or theories) that undergirds your thinking
> with regards to how you understand and plan to research your topic, as
> well as the concepts and definitions from that theory that are relevant to
> your topic. (p. 13)

That is, the theoretical framework is the researcher's lens through which to see the world (Merriam, 2001). There are two theories (see Figure 1) that guide my dissertation. Black Critical Theory or BlackCrit (Dumas & ross, 2016) is one of the theories that serves as a companion to its predecessor Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1995). Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2009) is

another theory that is rather significant to me for several reasons, mainly because of its focus on empowerment of Black women, the intersections of race, class, and gender, and conceptualizations of (other)mothering. I draw from Collins a great deal throughout this study because she has become a friend of my mind, giving me the intellectual, theoretical and spiritual framework that sustains me and my work. Like Toni Morrison (2019) said in the opening quote to this section, "She gather me, the pieces I am…and give them back to me in all the right order."

Figure 1

Theoretical Frameworks
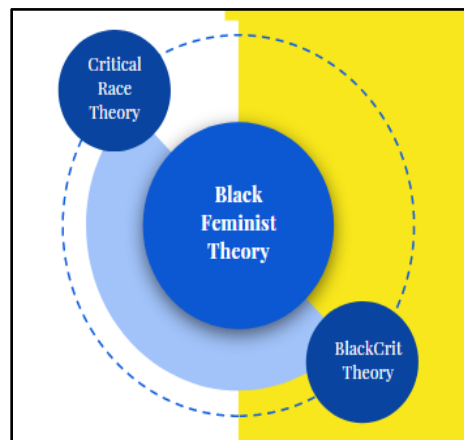
Black Feminist Thought

      Black Feminist Thought is an essential theory for my dissertation study because it centers of the lived experiences of Black educators and Black children and considers the context of their intersectionalities. Within these principles of concrete experience, use of dialogue, an ethic of caring, and an ethic of responsibility (Collins, 2009), Black Feminist Thought allows for empowerment through self-defined standpoint and collectiveness through Black culture, lived experience, and mothering. According to Lindsay-Dennis (2015), Black Feminist Thought "invites researchers to view their research on a continuum rather than isolated acts of data

collection" (p. 512). This view is important because the everyday experiences of Black children and Black educators are impacted by oppression, their intersectionalities, and other worldviews.

Black Feminist Thought emerges from Black women's act of resistance within social spaces and against structural oppression. It serves to challenge the notion that oppressed people identify with their oppressors, accept their infrahumanization, and are unable to articulate their own standpoint (Collins, 2009). Collins (2009) noted that Black women are not passive or willing victims of oppression and *do have a standpoint*: as a result of experiencing a different reality, they develop "a self-defined standpoint on that experience and resistance" (p. 749). Collins (2009) wrote-

> The long-term and widely shared resistance among African-American
> women can only have been sustained by an enduring and shared
> standpoint among Black women about the meaning of oppression
> and the actions that Black women can and should take to resist. (p. 746)

Thus, Black women, independently and collectively, act against social order and bring consciousness to their own value, knowledge, and truth. Black Feminist Thought maintains that Black educators resist the roles that schools have constructed for them (e.g., the muscle, disciplinarian, and instrument of social control) and self-define their positions or roles in serving the needs of Black children in their schools.

Collins (2009) argued that Black Feminist Thought is critical social theory because the knowledge gained from the intersectionality of race, class, and gender (and the oppression that comes within each of these) creates the thought and knowledge on how to resist oppression. She wrote, "Social theories emerging from and/or on the behalf of U.S. Black women and other historically oppressed groups aim to find ways to escape from, survive in, and/or oppose" (p. 9) all forms of insubordination and injustice. Collins (2009) explained that Black women's oppression as a group shaped their worldview and enabled them to construct oppositional

knowledges as mothers, othermothers and teachers, centering Black womanhood and controlling her image. This worldview is important in my research as it illustrates that Black educators not only have the knowledge that can disrupt their negative image within the system but also the negative social constructions of Black children.

Within Black Feminist Thought, the use of dialogue (talks, storytelling) is acknowledged as because it if roots within the African oral tradition. Collins (2009) acknowledged that dialogue is a means for Black women to share and validate their knowledge. From the slave narrative to the modern day novel, Black women writers and scholars use dialogue to center lived experiences. In contrast to visual metaphors (i.e., knowing with seeing), Collins (2009) wrote, "women tend to ground their epistemological premises in metaphors suggesting speaking and listening" (p. 765). As I discuss in detail later, the use of stories is ideal for my dissertation study as it is rooted in African tradition, Black culture, and Black feminism. The stories of Black educators serve to validate their oppositional knowledge and to center the manner in which Black educators produce their truth.

Finally, there are seven core themes of Black Feminist Thoughts, which all provide a foundation for my dissertation study; however, the theme of Black women and motherhood speaks power to my research. Collins (2009) argued that slavery offered no social context for privatized motherhood, in that motherhood became a communal arrangement. This arrangement invokes images of Black women as bloodmothers, othermothers, and community mothers engaged to teach, nurture and care for Black children. In *Chapter Two*, I explained how othermothering, otherfathering, and communities of care are important in protecting Black children from the structural racism and oppression within school policies and practices. According to Collins (2009), Black motherhood is about "talking with the heart" as an ethic of

caring whereupon personal expressiveness, emotions, and empathy are key. Black educators, within an oppressive school system, understand how critical their roles are as othermothers and otherfathers when addressing the well-being of Black children. They realize that talking "at" children about their choices or assigning a reprimand without talking at all works against the Black cultural practices of talking *with* their hearts. That is, gaining understanding and demonstrating empathy are also possible when providing culturally meaningful consequences.

BlackCrit/Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT), introduced to the field of education by Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006), has utilized race extensively as a theoretical lens to understand and explain social inequities (Dumas & ross, 2016). In the 1970s, Derrick Bell began utilizing CRT in response to critical legal theory in order to situate the social construction of race as central to the oppression experienced by Black people in the social, economic, and political contexts. Starting out in the legal realm, CRT eventually moved into education by Ladson-Billings (2009a) and William Tate with these propositions:

1) Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States;

2) U.S. society is based in property rights; and

3) the intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and consequently, school) inequity. (p. 114)

Over the last three decades, Ladson-Billings' and Tate's work with CRT and education has influenced research on the impact of race on the curriculum, instruction, assessment, funding, and discipline. CRT has called upon counternarratives and counter-storytelling to provide a vehicle to speak against racism and all forms of inquiry (Ladson-Billings, 2009a).

And while it is still practical to draw upon CRT, Dumas and ross (2016) have expressed that CRT "functions more of a critique of white supremacy but does not address how anti-Blackness informs and facilitates racist ideology and institutional practice" (p. 417). The concept of anti-Blackness is crucial in my study because it situates the violence against Black children's bodies and minds in America's postcolonial legacy. As Dancy et. al. (2018) argued-

> Anti-Blackness is reproduced through two specific institutional arrange-
> ments that enable Black subjugation (enslavements): the extraction of
> labor from the Black body without engaging the body as a laborer, but as
> property, and the mechanisms (e.g., stereotypical narratives) that institutions
> use to police, control, imprison, and kill.   (p. 180)

Rather than focusing on the white supremacy embedded in the school system, it is vital that we center the narratives of Black educators who identify with the circumstances that Black children face because they themselves were formerly oppressed students in the racist and oppressive education system.   Dumas and ross (2016) noted, the counterstories contain the language "to richly capture how anti-blackness constructs Black subjects" (p. 417). It is these perspectives that Black educators can describe how Black-ness as disruption is needed to expose and diminish the structural racism and oppression harming Black children in paternalistic urban public schools.

While Dumas and ross did <u>not</u> devalue the work of Ladson-Billings and Tate for bringing CRT into education, they charged that CRT was not expansive enough. Dumas and ross (2016) argued-

> [CRT] is a theory of race, or more precisely, racism based on analysis
> of the curious administration of laws and policies intended to subjugate
> Black people in the United States. (p. 416)

Dumas and ross (2016) believed that this was an important distinction between CRT and BlackCrit because "the critical theorization of Blackness confronts the specificity of anti-

Blackness as a social construction, as lived experience of social suffering and resistance" (p. 416), and as an antagonism in which Black people aren't even human.

Dumas and ross make the case for BlackCrit in education by sharing the cruel and demeaning stories of Black children who have endured dehumanization in society and public schools.   What BlackCrit in education promises to do is help analyze how social and education policies inform anti-Blackness and how these policies tend to legitimize violence against Black children (Dumas, 2014) in classrooms across America every day. Dumas and ross end their article by addressing school discipline and the control of the Black body. It is this section that appeals to my dissertation study because there are educators who stand on the premise that Black children require more discipline due to their negative perspectives of Black family structure, Black parenting, and Black intelligence.

Finally, Dumas and ross (2016) believed that BlackCrit can effectively theorize why Black children are resisting in these schools--because their bodies are constantly under surveillance, strict policing, and severe disciplinary consequences. They wrote-

> ...the discipling of Black children must be understood in the context of larger systems of repression. This is necessary to begin thinking about the strategies to combat the failure of public schools to educate Black children, and their success in reproducing dominant racial ideology and repression of the Black body. (p. 435)

These theories provide the frameworks for exploring the lived experiences of Black educators and Black children in the public school system, illustrating how the social construction of race, childhood, anti-Blackness and white supremacy still have implications in social infrastructure, particularly the school system.   These frameworks are necessary in centering the counternarratives of Black educators who disrupt the systems of oppression and white supremacy as evidenced in school policies and practices.

Interview Study and Storytelling as Methodologies

My dissertation study was conducted using the interview study in order to collect the

stories of Black educators engaged in disruption and resistance. Due to the impact of the

COVID pandemic on face-to-face interactions with the participants, I utilized from deMarrais'

(2004) work on qualitative interview study because of its flexibility. I found that the in-depth,

unstructured, and conversational nature of the interview study ideal in "remote research." In

explaining other characteristics and benefits of the interview study, deMarrais (2004) wrote-

> Although there are specific types of interviews based in different theoretical
> frameworks and academic disciplines, I use the label *qualitative interviews*
> as an umbrella term for those methods in which researchers learn from partici-
> pants through long, focused conversations. Qualitative interviews are used
> when researchers want to gain in-depth knowledge from participants about
> particular phenomena, experiences, or sets of experiences. Using interview
> questions and follow-up questions, or probes, based on what the participant
> has already described, the goal is to construct as complete a picture as
> possible from the words and experiences of the participant. This can only
> be accomplished when the qualitative interview is open ended enough for
> the participant to provide a depth of knowledge on the research topic.
> The intent is to discover that person's view of an experience or phenomenon
> of study. (p. 52)

The interview study involves multiple lengthy conversations and does not necessarily follow a

protocol or guide; even though they can be "somewhat" semi-structured. The open-endedness

of the conversations allows for each, unique participant to participate in a unique interview

experience (deMarrais, 2004).

Furthermore, the interview study fits in critical theory frameworks, which is pertinent to my use of Black Feminist Thought and BlackCrit/Critical Race theories. And in keeping with the spirit of these critical theories, I am also centering the Black voice in my dissertation with a conversational approach called sister-to-sister (and sister-to-brother) talk (Few, et. al., 2003) (see Figure 2). It is rooted in Black culture and diminishes the power dynamic that can be a barrier between the research and participants.   Despite having to change my data collection methods, I was still able to collect very powerful stories.

Figure 2

Centering the Black Voice within an Interview Study
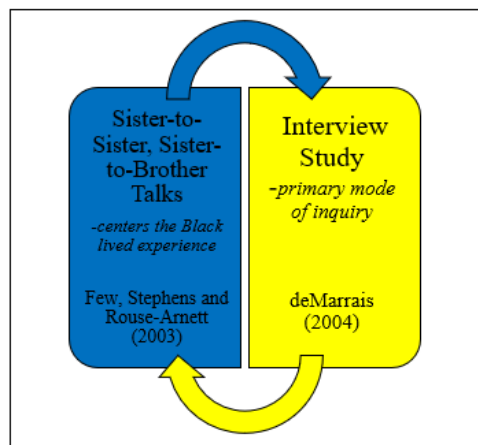
In addition, "talks" merge well with the principles of the interview study because they both emphasize the participant as the storyteller, the research as the listening and probing learner, and the collaborative nature of research. I discuss sister-to-sister/sister-to-brother talks in detail later in this chapter, and explain in the following section the significance of storytelling in research with Black participants.

Storytelling in research

Discovering knowledge through stories sparked paradigm wars between quantitative and qualitative in the 1980s. The narrative revolution interrupted the prominence of the positivist paradigm for social science research in the mid-1990's (Lieblich, et. al., 1998). The challenge to positivist epistemologies came from feminists, post-structuralists, critical psychologists, anthropologists, and ethnographers because of the opposition to neutral knowledge, the inadequacy of black/white thinking, and movements for social change (Ryan, 2006). These groups criticized reductionist positivist epistemologies because they saw that there was knowledge and 'truth' lost when the power of the story was ignored or when the human historical record of others was silenced because it was not scientific or evidence-based. However, it is one of the most natural means to arrive at certain truths and realities because humans are storytellers.

Telling a story about lived experiences, common and extraordinary outcomes, and with cautionary and inspirational themes is natural and intuitive. A story not only belongs to the speaker but also to the listener whose own existence can be altered as if through literal osmosis. "The story" has been pursued, wooed, elevated, internalized, and even trampled and gutted on expressive platforms across the world because of its capacity to guide knowledge into agency. Toni Morrison often spoke in interviews about the importance of storytelling. In the documentary *The Pieces I Am* (Greenfield-Sanders, 2019a), Morrison shared the story of her grandfather's bragging about reading the Bible at the time when it was illegal for Black people to read. This experience ultimately taught her that "words meant power." The arrangement of words in a sentence or the selection of certain nouns and verbs over others possess the ability to

reveal the intimacy of lived experiences, especially of those whose stories are rarely told. When

speaking about her novel *Beloved* in the documentary, Morrison said-

> I don't mean that there were no narratives that slave women told, and there
> was no information about it. I mean, it wasn't the narrative in literature.
> My effort in, say, in *Beloved* [was] to do that, to talk about a woman who
> had to make some choices about slavery, about motherhood, about love,
> about parenting. That had nothing to do with being a victim. A real woman,
> a historical figure as a matter of fact, who was anything but a victim…

In the same documentary, Angela Davis was interviewed, and she asserted that *Beloved* was a

turning point in the history of the world because it encouraged us to imagine the enslaved as

human beings, as people with feelings, who loved and exercised their imagination "even as they

were subjected to the most brutal modes of oppression" (Greenfield-Sanders, 2019b).   To

imagine something, someone from other than the traditional perspectives is what Black Feminist

Thought and BlackCrit/Critical Race Theory accomplish. They illustrate that storytelling is an

appropriate method in research.

According to Hendry (2010), *all research is narrative*, beginning with oral storytelling

which answered questions about meaning and knowing. Hendry (2010) believed that narrative

research required a deeper understanding of epistemological diversity to rethink the boundaries

and barriers between narrative and science. I understand how narratives and storytelling can be

seen as problematic as a research method. To positivists, narratives are not as credible and

reliable as hard data because they do not seek a *scientific truth* but avail the *quest for meaning*

(Rhodes & Brown, 2005). I once had a professor tell me that only hard data would make my

study valid because, otherwise, I was just telling stories.

Seeking scientific truth over meaning seems to center the tradition of the research process

rather than finding out other ways of knowing (i.e., how things really work, how things really

are). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) addressed the concerns with narratives, explaining that

positivists argue stories do not impart knowledge that cannot be interpreted through reason or certified through truth; they also believe stories exemplify the flaws in qualitative research because of the possibility for multiple interpretations of a phenomenon. However, we know that human thinking and acting and interacting are far more complex than generalizations or hypotheses.

It is important to note that my dissertation study originally employed narrative inquiry as a method because it also centers the story; however, as my competence and confidence with selecting the most appropriate theoretical frameworks emerged, storytelling or counterstorytelling was because it aligned both methodology and theory. More specifically, as defined by CRT, counterstorytelling or counter-narratives challenge the perceptions and beliefs of Black children as constructed by the dominant culture. White privilege often maintains the single story about the lived experiences of Black people and people of color (Adichie, 2009), while counter-narratives center the complexities of these groups and shatter the dominant discourse on race, gender, and class (Matsuda, et. al., 1993; Collins, 2009; Takaki, 2012).

 Storytelling as an African tradition

In addition, using storytelling to learn about disruptive practices satisfies two important aspects of my study: a) storytelling as an African tradition (Banks-Wallace, 2002) and b) the functions of the griot in the oral tradition (Banks, 2011; Hale, 1998). Black narratives tend to be context-laden, which is a cultural marker, and cannot be reduced or isolated from their interconnectedness and complexities. Therefore, stories are layered with detailed plot structures,

principal characters who may even appear in a minor role and conflicts are resolved with "mother wit"[15].

According to Okpewho (1992), the characteristics of Afrocentric storytelling involve repetition because words are like music to the ears. There are often departures in the story to discuss something remotely connected. There are few simple, linear stories. One narrative may be situationally and/or thematically paired with another, sometimes told in non-sequential order that, if untwisted, can weaken the significance of the related events. Hale-Benson (1982) described one aspect about the fascinating conversational-style of Black narrators/speakers as "topic-chaining." This way of sharing can be difficult to follow for non-Black listeners because it can come across as rambling. She noted when analyzing the conversation of Black girls that-

> [It is a] loosely structured talk that moves from topic to topic, dealing primarily with accounts of personal relations…[does not] focus on a single topic...-[gives] the impression of having no beginning, middle, or end… (p. 83)

Because of these characteristics, Black narratives are not only rich and informative sources of their experiences but also powerful educational tools for studying and discovering the effects of social structures on their actions and identities. These narratives can provide the answers to the *so what* and *who cares* questions concerning the use of disruption as a mechanism of care for Black students. Black educators answer the questions of "so what" and "who cares" as they tell their stories about their experiences. That is, they act in the Afrocentric roles of griots and griottes.

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[15] mother wit: according to *Webster's*, mother wit is defined as common sense or having the natural ability to cope with and handle conflict or difficulties. Also, used in Black culture to refer a Black mothers and grandmothers who employ cultural wisdom and knowledge in child rearing.

Functions of griots/griottes

      Griots/griottes, or oral storytellers, are historically integral to the narrative in West Africa societies. They retain the memories or histories of their communities because they serve as "genealogists, historians, spokespeople, ambassadors, musicians, teachers, warriors, interpreters…advisors and more" (Hale, 1998, p. 19).   Griots/griottes activate the power of the story. *It's why they tell their stories.* Their knowledge and understanding of their worlds are birthed through their verbal and physical languages so we are compelled by them. They make us want to act, discover, investigate, love and even hate. While they may also entertain, griots/griottes perform so that their experiences are remembered and stored by the listener(s). *It's how they tell their stories.* Their use of idioms, figurative language as well as their facial expressions or imitations of characters' voices and gestures replay dramatics, feelings, conversations, and conclusions. The freshness of the reenactment is present regardless if the experiences are recent or in the distant past.

      In respect to research, according to Stoller (1994), ethnographers act like griots because they spend a long time in the field, learn cultural knowledge, share it with others in writing or discussions. Within the Black community, deejays (music), ministers (sermons), teachers (content), and even standup comedians (jokes) are griots. They construct community knowledge that reflects on everyday lived experiences (Banks, 2011). More specifically, Black educators are griots whose narratives can be educative, instructive, and reflective. These educators are the only ones who have the right, the privilege, and the cultural expertise to gather us around them to sit awhile and listen to their truths as inside/outside members of the American educational system.

Intertwining stories and Black Feminism

Stories can provoke action or change which is why a Black feminist stance makes theoretical sense. Black feminists' productions of consciousness-raising and empowerment, their acts of resistance, and their pushback on gendered, racial, and class oppression reveal themselves in *their stories*. The sociohistorical origins of Black feminism can be tracked through the narratives of Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, Zora Neale Morrison, Elaine Brown, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Toni Morrison, and many more. Beginning with the Black female slave narrative, the legacy of Black feminist writings and oral storytelling has carved out a space for Black women as a formidable identity that could not hindered for long. Michelle Cliff (1990) stated that these women, through their stories, "Work against the odds to claim the 'I'."

Venus Evans-Winters (2019) has written about Black feminism and its usefulness as both theory and praxis to qualitative researchers, often "underutilized and theorized in educational research and practice" (p. 132). Evans-Winters (2019) wrote about the dialogical voices that Black women have, that is, the ability to listen, write, and converse are grounded in a cultural point of view. In speaking specifically about Black feminism and the narrative, she said-

> The narrative approach is not simply a qualitative research technique but a research strategy. Accordingly, narrative voice in all of its multifacetedness (i.e., oral history, storytelling, biography, etc.) sets out to paint a picture of Black women's perceptions of the social world order and how they might choose to respond to such (dis)order. (p. 136-137)

Evans-Winters (2019) argued that Black feminists' use of the narrative voice permits the acceptance of emotion in acquiring and claiming knowledge. This sentiment was echoed by Dillard (2000) who stated that, " developing the capacity for empathy in research is critical, for attempting to recognize the value of another's perspective, whether or not one agrees with that

perspective" (p. 674). Dillard (2000) argued that emotions were appropriate in research and that perspectives have merit and value, which educational researchers should recognize and embrace.

Furthermore, Amoah (1997) wrote, "the practice of the narrative functions to allow traditionally marginalized and disempowered groups, such as women and people of color, to reclaim their voices" (p. 85). In this fashion, I am giving a platform for Black educators to share their stories about a school system that not only subjugates Black children but also expects Black adults to be complicit as academic overseers. This version of Black educator life may not be known or valued, as they represent what Amoah (1997) called stories from the margin. She cited CRT scholar Richard Delgado who advocated for stories because they reflect outgroups shared experiences and served as counter-realities. Amoah (1997) wrote that "[t]his practice of storytelling has enabled marginalized people to understand more about societal positioning than those who have imposed it" (p. 86). Amoah believed that stories allowed oppressed groups— and the case can be made that teachers are within this group—to liberate themselves from the spaces to which they have relegated by dominant society; and by sharing their stories, they create networks (of stories and storytellers) that know that human experience is the basis for the narrative and the narrative is the basis for theory. It is her view that this is the method of Black Feminist Thought.

Context of Research Study

My dissertation study was conducted at two schools in the community of Morrison[16], described as suburban on its website but could also boast its ability to retain much of its rural flair. It may be accurate to describe it as a community with urban characteristics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). There are goat farms alongside sprawling subdivisions. It is not unusual to see

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[16] Morrison is a pseudonym.

Black cowboys on horseback trotting down Main Street. Even though it has a population of

38,000 (Morrison, 2019), it feels comfortably smaller like a town where neighbors stop and talk

in the grocery stores, gather together for Friday night football, and watch each other's property

from their front porches and windows.

Morrison, established in the 1840s, was once an agrarian community with wheat, cotton,

and sweet potato farms. Between 1900 and 1940, the community grew from several hundred to a

little over 1,000. By the 1960s, there were over 7,000 citizens in Morrison, enough to go from a

small town to a suburb.   During the 1980s, Morrison's business sector expanded, making space

for a hospital, shopping centers, apartment complexes, and a movie theater (Morrison, 2019).

Like many of the suburbs in the 1980s, Morrison grew fast and prompted white flight--

white citizens moving away from a growing minority population in close proximity to more

secluded and/or restricted suburban or rural areas (see Table 2).

Table 2

Morrison City Racial Census Statistics 1980-2010

Race/Ethnicity	2010	2000	1990	1980
Black	24,997 (68.75%)	13,725 (53%)	6536 (29.6%)	876 (5.9%)
White	7409 (20.3%)	9744 (37.6%)	14,377 (65%)	13,290 (89.7%)
Hispanic/Latino	6164 (16.9%)	3001 (11.6%	1770 (8.0%)	1020 (6.9%)
Native Amer	128 (0.35%)	126 (0.49%)	115 (0.05%)	58 (0.03%)
Asian	106 (0.29%)	100 (0.39%)	121 (0.05%)	30 (0.03%
Pacific Islander	13 (0.04%)	14 (0.05%)	14 (0.006%)	2 (0.001%)
Two/more races	757 (2.08%)	480 (1.85%)	--*	--*
Note. *Two or more races category was not available; the category of "Other" was used in census reports. U.S. Census Reports (1980-2010).				

Between 1980 and 1990, Morrison's white population decreased by 24%, continuing a steady

decline for the next twenty years. During the same time period, Morrison's Black population

increased by 24%, increasing by 24,000 between 1980 and 2010.

In Morrison ISD, there is one high school, an early college high school, a ninth grade

center, a sixth grade center, a middle school, an alternative school, and six elementary campuses

in Morrison, serving the needs of approximately 7400 students. The schools' student

demographics are made up of largely three racial groups: 5591 (76%) Black, 1451 (20%)

Hispanic/Latino, and 119 (1.6%) white children and youth (Texas Education Agency [TEA],

2019b). The growing Latine population has led to one elementary campus being designated as

bilingual-serving: Roberto Clemente Elementary[17] houses the bilingual program for grades PK

through 5th grade. Of Morrison's 7400 students, 6470 (88%) are identified as economically

disadvantaged and 4324 (59%) are considered at risk of dropping out based on TEA criteria,

such as English language proficiency, homelessness, poor school readiness, or assignment at an

alternative education program (TEA, 2019a).

Morrison has received praise and recognition for maintaining high student achievement

even though 88% of Morrison's students are identified as economically disadvantaged. This

characteristic is typically viewed as having a negative impact on academic performance.

According to TEA (2019c), Morrison earned a B rating for overall student success in preparing

children in school and for after high school during 2018-2019. Its rating improved from a C in

2017-2018 to a B in 2018-2019. While Morrison has done well in addressing the educational

debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006) of Black children, it still struggles to provide for the academic

needs of its English Learners (ELs) (TEA, 2019d). Part of the issue with meeting needs of

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[17] Roberto Clemente Elementary is a pseudonym.

ELs in the district has been inconsistent leadership or absence of a district-level bilingual coordinator to monitor and support the Bilingual and English as a Second Language (B/ESL) programs across the district.

Finally, based on racial demographic data reported by TEA (2019b), there were 434 teachers employed at schools in Morrison ISD: 348 (80%) were identified as African-American, 22 (5%) as Hispanic/Latino, 60 (14%) as white, 2 (0.5%) as American Indian, and 3 (0.7%) as two or more races. While the race/ethnicity of campus leadership was not provided by TEA, all administrators, including assistant principals, during my tenure in 2018 were Black or African-American. Based on the racial and ethnic demographics of the faculty and students, Morrison represents one of two predominantly Black school districts south of the Diamond/Forest Metroplex[18].

Morrison's staff and teachers work diligently to keep State Math And Reading Test (SMART) results in the 80th to 90th percentile where they are comparable to a nearby mostly white affluent school district. In 2018, all campuses in Morrison earned at least one academic distinction as a result of their students' scores on the reading, math, writing, science SMART tests, and some schools also were awarded a distinction for "closing the achievement gap" or college, career and military readiness (TEA, 2019d). Based on the Teacher Appraisal Performance (TAP) evaluation and compensation guide (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching [NIET], 2019), the faculty and staff in Morrison ISD receive performance pay based on their own individual student results and their schools' overall performance on SMART, in which elective teachers can receive $750, core teachers $1,000, , assistant principals $1,500, and principals $2,000.

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[18] Diamond/Forest Metroplex is a pseudonym. Details about Diamond ISD will be discussed in Chapter 6.

At Morrison's annual convocation in the fall, the Superintendent's Address reaffirms the district's commitment to disproving the perception that Black and Brown children are underachievers by recognizing and celebrating the academic distinctions and student growth at every campus (Morrison ISD, 2020). During my six years in the district as a Master Teacher and assistant principal, I witnessed and participated in meetings, discussions, and trainings dedicated to student achievement. District leadership met with campus instructional leadership teams frequently to discuss and support the research, designing, and implementing academic programs in order to increase student performance. For example, the early childhood education programs, starting with PK3, are faithful to balanced literacy initiatives so that by the time the children enter the PK4 program, they have an impressive foundation for reading (Morrison ISD, 2020); and the district's goal is that PK4 students are independent readers by the time they leave kindergarten. Several principals credited this initiative with positively impacting 3rd grade reading results of those children who started their educational careers in Morrison schools.

Morrison is one of the few districts in the state that has a well- funded STEM pipeline from PK through twelfth grade. The district has partnered with tech giants in the state, acquiring funding, grants, scholarships, mentoring, instructional materials, and other resources to ensure that all its campuses participate in at least two Problem-based Learning (PBL) projects during the school year (Morrison ISD, 2020). These projects are showcased every spring in a grand exhibition where family, friends, and members of the community are invited to view the PBL projects and hear the students, even those at young as four-years-old, discuss their learning experiences.

Morrison spends approximately $11,600 per student, nearly $2000 more than the fiscal peer minimum (Morrison ISD, 2020). The school district receives Title I and Title III funds for

their low SES and bilingual student populations. These funds are utilized by school

administrators to provide teachers with training in the latest research-based practices, hire

additional staff such as instructional paraprofessionals or reading interventionists, and acquire

current technologies for both students and teachers. In addition, teachers who participate in the

district's educational funding grant initiative, can receive up to $500 to be used according to the

specifications of the grant (Morrison ISD, 2020).

Finally, the district leadership has collaborated with a local community college and

public university. The community college hosts a dual credit program where high school

students can earn an associate degree by the time they graduate. The district has also created

pathways for professional growth with the public university by offering tuition scholarships so

that the teachers can pursue their Masters in math, science, and curriculum instruction. These

teachers must commit to remain in Morrison ISD for three years after the completion of their

degree so that Morrison students can benefit from their knowledge and expertise (Morrison ISD,

2020). District leadership often refers to these two programs when highlighting student college

and career readiness and teacher effectiveness on the district website and in job fairs.

As a former educator in Morrison ISD, I deliberately elected to conduct my study at the

middle school which holds over 1,000 7th and 8th grade students; and the district's alternative

education program (DAEP) which enrolls students from kindergarten[19] to twelfth grade between

10 to 90 days, depending on their age, their ability status, and the type of code of conduct

violation committed (see Table 4).   Having had access to both schools during my time in the

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[19] Assigning children under the age of 10 to an alternative education program is subject to discretion. Per Texas
Association of School Boards (2021): "Students younger than 10 must receive services in a DAEP if they engage in
expellable conduct [TEC 37.007(e)(3), (h). Students younger than 6 may not be sent to DAEP unless the student
brings a firearm under TEC 37.006(e)(2). TEC 37.006(l).

district, I am well acquainted with behavior expectations and the consequences of not following established school-wide classroom management policies.

Just as grounded as their academic initiatives, Morrison' district leadership is devoted to maintaining structure and order on its campuses. As the campus behavior specialists, assistant principals are charged with training their faculty and staff on the proper use of the online behavior management database, UpSide Down Management System. This system requires faculty and staff to become familiar with the district's discipline steps and matrices (see Appendices A and B). These matrices reflect the student code of conduct and discretionary or mandatory consequences for student violations. For example, if a teacher witnesses a student vandalizing school property, they are instructed to take charge of the student, ask questions about their conduct, and write a discipline in the UpSide Down Management System. The system is calibrated to classify entered violations as Level I, II, or III infractions. The level of the infraction determines the severity of the consequence. Once the school administrator, usually the assistant principal, receives the referral, they may refer to the discipline matrices to assign punishment. This process remains the same if the teacher writes referral for dress code, classroom disruption, or other violations of the code of conduct. Based on the end of the year report from UpSide Down, faculty and staff in Morrison ISD overwhelmingly write referrals that result in out-of-school suspensions (OSS) for elementary students and OSS and AEP students in secondary school, and the majority of the students receiving these consequences are African-American males from Pre-kindergarten to 5th grade. For a cumulative report of discipline actions and student demographics (see Table 3).

Table 3

Discipline Actions by Student Groups

Student Group	No. of Students	ISS	OSS	DAEP
All Students	8199	667 (8.14%	799 (9.75%)	185 (2.26%)
Black	6244	557 (8.92%)	666 (10.67%)	149 (2.39%)
White	137	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic	1616	87 (5.38%)	106 (6.56%)	31 (1.92%)
Female	3950	252 (6.38%)	281 (7.11%)	64 (1.62%)
Male	4249	415 (9.77%)	518 (12.19%)	121 (2.85%)
Econ Dis	7325	612 (8.35%)	709 (9.68%)	164 (2.24%)
Spec Ed	769	80 (10.40%)	108 (14.04%)	25 (3.25%)
At-risk	4668	398 (8.53%)	552 (11.83%)	147 (3.15%)

Note. N/A indicates counts/percentages not available (i.e., masked) in compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Texas Education Agency PEIMS Data (2019b)

The disciplinary data reported by Morrison to TEA reflects that the student groups receiving the most negative consequences are Black, male, economically disadvantaged and in special education. This information aligns with the statistical data regarding school suspensions and other discretionary disciplinary data reported in the study's literature review.

Table 4

Characteristics of Research Sites

Morrison Middle School (MMS)	Morrison Alternative School (MAS)
2018-2019 Accountability Rating B Academic Distinctions: Academic Achievement in Mathematics Academic Achievement in Social Studies Top 25 Percent: Comparative Academic Growth Top 25 Percent: Comparative Closing the Gaps Postsecondary Readiness Student Pop: 1,027 (77% Black, 18% Hispanic & 2% White) 54 students (5.3%) were placed at DAEP/MAS ; 103 in OSS, and 165 in ISS Teachers: 59 (85% Black, 2% Hispanic & 12% White) Administrators: 4 (100% Black) Counselors: 2 (100% Black)	1. Students attend MAS due to behavior or to recover credits 2. According to the district website, MAS offers: ★ A caring learning environment & sensitive staff ★ Prescriptive interventions and resources to develop social skills ★ Interventions to develop confidence and respectful character traits 3. MAS accepts grades 3 through 12; children younger than 8 at the principal's discretion Teachers: 7 (100% Black) Administrators: 1 (100% Black) Counselor/Co-Counselor: 2 (100% Black)
Source: Morrison Independent School District website (2020); Texas Education Agency, PEIMS Data (2019b); Texas Academic Performance Report (2019d)	

Of note, campus leadership at Morrison Middle School (MMS) was inconsistent for several years. Within an eight-year period, the principalship changed eight times due to resignations as well as promotions. This inconsistency had a negative impact on teacher satisfaction, school climate and culture and student behavior. However, since 2016, MMS has remained strong, influential leadership with a Black female principal, Mrs. Williams[20]. Morrison Alternative

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[20] Mrs. Williams is a pseudonym.

School (MAS) underwent a change in leadership in 2017. Prior to new leadership, MAS was maintained like traditional district alternative education programs (DAEPs) as a carceral site with high recidivism.

Research site rationale

While conducting research in Morrison may appear to be a matter of convenience because of my connections to the district, it was more about conducting research about/with/for Black educators in a predominantly Black urban district. I found in my literature search that there is a vast amount of research about the experiences, challenges, and successes of Black educators in predominantly white suburban school districts. I did not wish to replicate their results and findings. For me, it was important to situate the work of resistance and disruption in a Black school district to illustrate that these actions are required in these places too. Because, as stated before, Black educators, regardless of the geography (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural), work in an educational infrastructure designed for and by the dominant culture and is still driven by policies and practices that benefit white educators and children. But more importantly, I desired to add more research about Black academic excellence and Black notions of care in a predominantly Black school system.

Participant recruitment, selection, and profiles

As a former colleague and administrator in Morrison ISD, I have ongoing relationships with educators at five schools in the district. I utilized email to contact school administrators to inform them about the dissertation study and ask for their participation. I employed purposeful sampling (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) to recruit three educators whom I knew had explicit paternalistic classroom management training in urban schools. Purposeful sampling is useful when researchers want a great detail of information from a few representative participants who

share similar characteristics, as related to the research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). I also utilized snowball sampling (Patton, 2015), another type of purposeful sampling, which allows for participants (and administrators) to identify and/or recruit potential, representative participants as valuable sources of information. From snowball sampling, I was able to recruit five participants. Of the original eight participants recruited, two of them withdrew for personal reasons (e.g., left the school district) and two were lost to attrition (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). I recruited the fifth and final participant after observing her caring, mothering work with Black children on her campus. I eventually recruited and engaged five Black educators who worked in a variety of capacities (classroom teacher, counselor, administrator, etc.) and whose educational careers have been predominantly in urban public schools (see Table 5).

Table 5

Participants' Profiles

Name	Position	Yrs. of Experience	Campus
Dr. Cynthia Madison	Principal	20	Morrison AS
Cecil Banks	Counselor	11	Morrison AS
Drew Richardson	Asst. Principal	19	Morrison MS
Teresa Riley	8th Science Teacher	12	Morrison MS
Michael Christianson	8th Math Teacher	14	Morrison MS

The following individuals were not participants in the dissertation study but they were mentioned because they were mentioned in the talks: Mrs. Williams, the principal at Morrison MS; and Kathy Nutters[21], the elementary counselor at Morrison AS. Mrs. Nutters was a participant in my pilot, began this dissertation study but had to withdraw for personal reasons.

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[21] Kathy Nutters is a pseudonym.

Data Collection and Trustworthiness

Narrative research uses stories, autobiographies, field notes, conversations, interviews, and even photos as units of analysis. For any qualitative researcher who chooses to employ qualitative narrative research, the matter of trustworthiness is always at hand. The researcher must demonstrate to their audience that credibility has been established so that both are confident in the observations and interpretations. Employing triangulation, member checking, thick descriptions, audit trails, and even a reflexive journal will improve the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of my data and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Merriam, 1995). More importantly, for me, because I am proposing Black-ness as a disruptive pedagogy, I used a host of strategies to ensure that this study had quality.

There are four criteria in qualitative research that researchers must pursue in order to meet the standard of trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1986) argued that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in trustworthiness. While transferability is a factor that researchers consider highly, what is learned within the context of a particular setting or among a particular group is a researcher's ultimate concern. Replication of results may be problematic in qualitative research but Lincoln and Guba (1986) stressed that the dependability of the results relies on the credibility of the research methods as well as investigator integrity. As Merriam (1995) noted, "...studying people and human behavior is not the same as studying inanimate matter. Human behavior is never static" (p. 55). And finally, triangulation promotes confirmability because it reduces the effect of researcher bias as they employ a variety of data sources, theories, and methods to cross-check interpretations (Denzin, 2007). Maintaining validity and reliability in this dissertation study influences the confidence that other scholars and researchers feel in referring to and/or utilizing the results of this study.

Because of COVID's impact on face-to-face research and interactions with participants, I collected all research data online from a few different platforms, such as Zoom, Google Meets, and email. Even though these platforms felt limiting at times, I was still able to collect three sources of data for this study.

Artifacts

Denizen and Lincoln (2008) counted collecting artifacts as a part of the methods of collection and analysis. They argued that the study of artifacts deserves attention because artifacts are understood, used, and interpreted every day by social actors, and that artifacts "are used to document and record the past and indeed construct the past" (p. 292). Artifacts and other texts help tell the story from many perspectives and represent not only an organizational knowledge but a social knowledge as well.

As I am researching Black educators, I collected traditional school-related artifacts (e.g., lesson plans, training PowerPoints, PBIS charts, and discipline policies) in order to understand the school system's expectations of their roles and responsibilities, but I also collected artifacts from the cultural landscape as defined by Black Feminist Archaeology (Battle-Baptiste, 2011). Like cultural anthropology, the field of archaeology has been dominated by white men controlling and labeling the Black past, but Black Feminist Thought has been instrumental in centering Black women's lives in historical archaeology, focusing on the complexities of their existence in social space as a condition of their intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990). Guided by Black Feminist perspective, the concept of artifact does not entirely rest on the collection of "things" because the landscape itself serves as the location of meaningful Black cultural production, as noted by Battle-Baptiste (2011) who wrote-

> Within Black Feminist Archaeology is an emphasis on the cultural landscape
> and the importance of how the use and meaning of space is directly connected

to culture and people...Artifacts are never just material.   (p. 71)

In this respect, how the participants treated space within their classrooms or offices (i.e., its ambience and design) served as artifacts that reflect their understanding, sensibilities, and intentions about empowerment and nurturing Black children. In contrast to the school-related documents and school-constructed landscape, the cultural landscape represented a transformation from social control and carceral space to disruption and resistance. Prior to COVID-related closure of schools in March 2020, I was able to go onto both research sites, take pictures of classrooms and offices, and walk around and take notes about the atmosphere and design of these spaces. After data collection moved online, between April 2020 and January 2021, I was able to collect documents, make notes about the participants' digital cultural landscapes and count them as artifacts.

Talks

In traditional qualitative research, three types of interviews are possible: structured, semi-structures, and unstructured (Merriam, 2001). Of all qualitative data collection methods, interviews are the most common; they permit the exploration of meaning as constructed by the participants and allow the researcher to achieve perspective and understanding of the participants' realities (Kendall, 2008). Interviews are dialogic in nature in the pursuit of self-disclosure, which is important in establishing the rules of decorum between the researcher and the participant. According to Fontana and Frey (2005), "We live in an interview society" (p. 646); however, this does not mean that researchers can approach interviewing "as seen on TV." As mentioned earlier in this chapter, COVID restrictions led to my conducting lengthy interview study incorporating the conversational approach called sister-to-sister (and sister-to-brother) talk. According to Few et. al. (2003), "Sister-to-sister talk is Afrocentric slang to describe congenial

conversations or positive relating on which life lessons might be shared between Black women"
(p. 205). I believed framing researcher-participant dialogues as talks instead of interviews not
only honors Black culture but also established a safe space for Black participants to get real.

Furthermore, Few et. al (2003) learned in conversations with experienced Black feminist
researchers and faculty that negotiating the insider status when talking with Black women is
culturally sensitive, and therefore "issues of race, color, class, gender, sexuality, nationality and
power" (p. 207) are ever-present. Nothing can be assumed in relation to Black researcher-
participants interactions. In other words, I could not presume that my shared racial identity with
the participants automatically grants me trust and acceptance. I had to enter the participants'
space with respect and remain conscious of how my speech, my clothing, and even my skin color
could create intimacy as well as distance with the participants (Few, et. al., 2003).

Even though these scholars were discussing recommendations for talking with Black
women on sensitive topics, I found these suggestions applicable to all forms of data collection on
Black participants because they consider the historical misrepresentations of Black subjects in
qualitative research and seek ways to empower Black subjects. I utilized the recommendations
provided by Few et. al. (2003) when conducting my talks:

1. Contextualizing research (e.g., make research empowering)

2. Contextualizing self (e.g., monitor my own position)

3. Monitoring symbolic power (e.g., be reflexive in the use of language)

4. Triangulation (e.g., collect nontraditional sources of data)

5. Caring in the research process (e.g., provide closure at the end
   of interview. (p. 209)

As a Black feminist researcher, I understand that the talks are essential, if not the most important,
part of my research as they are the counter-stories that disrupt the myopic portrayals of Black

children and Black teachers by the media and in educational research (Evans-Winters, 2005). But more importantly, I had to make sure that I did not come across as a colonizer instead of a collaborator.

For this study, I had three talks and two follow-up talks with each participant, with each talk lasting between one hour and 1.5 hours mostly between May 2020 and October 2020. I continued talks with Richardson, Banks, and Christianson between January and February 2021. The first talk involved conversations about their own welfare during COVID, their students' feelings about online learning and COVID, their personal and educational backgrounds, and their perceptions of Black children and how they were treated in the school system. In qualitative research, it is critical to explore participants' backgrounds and lived experiences for at least two principal reasons. First, according to Dennis (2014), we have an ethical obligation to do no harm against our human subjects, and thus knowing their life histories help us design research experiences that protect them from reliving trauma. And secondly, as related to this study, teacher life histories and backgrounds have been widely studied in association with their impact on student achievement and teaching practices (Palardy & Rumberger, 2008), but exploring educators' backgrounds also helps explain their perceptions and management of student behavior (Moore & Cooper, 1984).

In the subsequent talks, we discussed their education preparation, the ways in which they address student behavior, the reasons about their decisions, their feelings about classroom management and behavior programs (e.g., SEL), and their overall feelings about being Black educators in an urban school district. The talks were recorded and transcribed using Zoom software and copies were given to the participants for member checking.

Observations

 My dissertation study was designed to observe the participants in their natural

environment over a prolonged period of time. According to Creswell and Miller (2000),

prolonged engagement lends validity to research as it helps build trust and rapport between

researcher and participants and provides the evidence to support interview data. The primary

advantage of naturalistic research is that data cannot be manipulated as a matter of ethics

(Brown, 1984): behaviors and interactions are real, authentic, naturally occurring, aligned with

what is expected to happen in a specific environment. An obvious disadvantage, however, is that

when people know they are being observed, they may behave differently either positively or

negatively, either restricting or overemphasizing behaviors. Reactivity occurs when subjects

know they are being observed. Weber and Cook (1972) identified four subject roles: 1) the good

subject, 2) the faithful subject, 3) the negativistic subject, and 4) the apprehensive subject role.

The good subject tries to validate the experiment results, the faithful subject tries to be as honest

in his or her actions as possible, the negativistic subject produces behavior that is opposite the

anticipated result, and the apprehensive subject will only give socially acceptable responses

(Weber & Cook, 1972).

 It is important to note that naturalistic observations of Black subjects harkens back to

anthropological research by white men, which reinforced generalizations and misinterpretations

of their behavior. Therefore, I wanted to utilized observations from a Black feminist perspective.

Observations are made meaningful within the context of theory (Kuhn, 1962). That is, within

Black feminism, observations center lived experiences and reaffirm the humanity of the Black

subjects. Collins (1986) noted that Black feminists see generalizations as problematic and add to

the invisibility of Black participants. She wrote-

It should come as no surprise that much of Black feminist thought aims
to counter this invisibility by presenting sociological analyses of Black
women as fully human subjects. For example, the growing research
describing Black women's historical and contemporary behavior as
mothers, community workers, church leaders, teachers, and employed
workers, and Black women's ideas about themselves and their opportunities,
reflects an effort to respond to the omission of facts about Afro-American
women. (pp. 527-528)

Furthermore, the interpretations of observations of Black educators must account not only for

issues of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1990) but also the oppression within the school system in

shaping their attitudes and decision-making or risk becoming suspect and incomplete (Collins,

1986). More importantly, these interpretations must aid in countering the narratives that Black

educators' race and racial background are essential components in simply controlling Black

children.

However, COVID restrictions impacted my ability to conduct observations in the manner

that I had planned, which was disappointing. I had planned to conduct at least five face-to-face

observations but was able to secure one, 45-minute to one hour observations for Banks, Riley,

and Christianson. Because of the unknown, panic, and confusion of school openings, it was

difficult to reach school principals who had to approve online observations. When I requested

permission in August 2020, I did not receive approval until November 2020. By that time, my

participants' schedules were complicated with benchmark testing and a school closure due to

COVID exposure on campus. Despite all the issues and delays, I was able to observe, take notes,

and obtain useful data about how each participant cared for their students and taught to their

potential.

Data Analysis

An analysis of these data sources provided quality insight on the identification of patterns

and themes. The incorporation of thematic analysis during this process was useful in acquiring a

more in-depth explanation of word usage in specific discourses. According to Braun and Clarke (2008), thematic analysis can be described as determining what "patterns" or "themes" emerge from the data and is concluded the following phases are necessary for adequate thematic analysis: familiarizing myself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the findings. I read and reread the transcripts and artifacts, reviewing them multiple times in order to highlight themes and patterns. I read them through the transcripts for the first time to edit and revise, clarifying language and descriptions, making sure to retain the participants' original language and vocabulary. Subsequent readings were done to ensure coherence before analyzing for themes and assigning the appropriate codes.

Talks and artifacts were analyzed, and their findings were combined with the observation data to offer complementary interpretations and explanations. I looked for key words and statements that were associated with Black culture notions of care, disruption and institutional classroom management strategies (see Table 6). I noted or highlighted references to the nurturing mechanisms in the Black family that build endurance against the oppression inherent in larger social systems. These keywords are often linked to caring, empowerment, survival, and fairness.

When I was looking for keywords regarding institutional strategies, I highlighted and noted the behavior management language taught in educator preparation programs and enforced in schools, such as proximity control, rules, directions, and warning. I repeated this process with the observation notes and artifacts, looking for key actions, words, and phrases that reflected notions of care, disruption, and/or paternalistic leanings. For example, when I was analyzing

data from Dr. Cynthia Madison about her early teaching experiences in an urban school, she

said-

> And I will tell you it was my first teaching experience. And it was kind of
> horrifying because there was a Caucasian white-haired male that was older
> and who walked around with this big paddle that he had, and it was, almost
> put me in the mind of like he was the overseer of all these--. You know
> because he walked around and the way that he talked to kids and his whole
> demeanor. You know, it was my very first experience, which was like, wow,
> and this was at a high school. And then I went to another campus where the
> students were predominantly Hispanic and so now I went from Black to Brown
> students. But the principals that were in place were really passive and so they
> allowed certain behaviors that in that African American school, kids were being
> paddled, kids were being sent to the office. That was unacceptable.
> (Madison Talk, 5/12/2020)

This experience was coded under "traditional white leadership," but it also fit under "negative

perceptions," and "selective disciplinary violence." Because of the comparison between the

"Caucasian white-haired male" and the "passive principals," it was coded under "leadership styles"

where I had placed other data related to how and where Dr. Madison and Mr. Richardson learned

their leadership styles and practices and how they constructed their own.

Table 6

Data Analysis Process

Ms. Riley (8th science)	Mr. Richardson (AP)	Mr. Banks (Counselor)
Communities of care; "talking with the heart" warm demander pedagogy; sermonizing	"Talking with the heart;" Black Masculine Caring	Empowerment, holistic care, life coaching; critical care, collective resistance; Black body as a nation
Collins, 2009; Kleinfeld, 1975; Niles, 1984	Collins, 2009; Bass, 2020; Bass & Alston, 2018	hooks, 2004; Tafari, 2018; Foster, 2021; Ogorchukwu, 2020; Thompson, 1998
Triangulated: Student letters, student responses about behavior, "put out" list as artifacts	Triangulated: Discipline steps and matrix; "put out" list as artifacts	Triangulated: Online observation; classroom photo and student letter as artifacts

This table is an example of my data analysis process. The text in Black represents my initial analysis where I first gathered data about their personal backgrounds, their views of the school system, and their response to student behavior. The text in red represents my analysis of subsequent talks, as I learned more about their approaches that specifically addressed behavior as well as centered the well-being of their students. I reviewed the literature that supported my interpretations and triangulated my findings with artifacts. This process ensured that my analyses were rich, coherent and well-developed.

Finally, in analyzing and coding data, I found that certain themes ran across the three different educator groups (i.e., administrators, counselors, and teachers). I found it useful in supporting themes and findings to "thread" data from different storytellers into multiple chapters. The "threading process" allowed for complementary explanations and interpretations of experiences, resulting in rich, insightful conversations. It imitated the casual ways in which Black people sit together and share their experiences. In addition, the threading of narratives is aligned with the context-laden interconnectedness of traditional Black storytelling.

Pilot Study

To test my knowledge and skills as an interviewer, to practice coding, but more importantly, to begin seeking knowledge about the Black educator experience in urban schools in the age of SMART testing, I conducted a pilot study with Black educators from the metroplex in 2019. As this study involved collecting data from human subjects, I developed study protocols and procedures, which were approved by the University's IRB Review Board. All potential participants were approached personally in January 2019 in a location of their choice, and the purpose of the study was described to them. I provided the potential participants with information regarding the procedures, risks, and benefits; informed them they could withdraw

from the study at any time; and obtained written informed consent before seeking out any additional questions and/or concerns as well as providing assurances about privacy and confidentiality.

My previous role as assistant principal factored in my gaining access to current Black educators in the Diamond/Forest Metroplex. To collect these stories, I employed purposeful sampling to recruit five teachers who have worked their entire professional careers with Black children in urban schools. Snowball sampling increased the total number of participants to 11 who also have had experiences with Black children but not all as teachers in urban schools. There were four Black male and seven Black female educators who currently worked in a variety of capacities (classroom teacher, counselor, or administrator) in either urban public or charter schools. These 11 participants were divided into two separate studies on Black educators. I decided to conduct phase one of my pilot study between May and July 2019.

Prior to the interview, each participant agreed to complete a pre-study screener that required them to identify three recent interactions that they had with Black children. The 11 participants responded to the 30-minute pre-screener criteria in writing. The purpose of the pre-study screener was to learn how these participants responded to student behaviors and what the outcomes were of these responses. I used the pre-study screener results to select the four participants as their characteristics, experiences, and responses were similar. Finally, I scheduled interviews with the four participants to be conducted in the location of their choice, with the exception of school grounds or personal homes. I designed semi-structured interviews with a list of close- and open-ended questions.

The phase one participants were: two Black male and two Black female elementary classroom teachers. They were given the pseudonyms Paula, Nancy, Fred and Peter. They had

between 5 and 15 years of teaching experience. Three of these participants were employed in a predominantly Black public school, and one teacher, a Black male, worked 10 years in a predominantly Black public school but currently worked in a predominantly Black charter school. Their schools were located in major urban cities in the southwest United States and were identified as Title I, which allowed them to receive additional funding to meet the educational needs of their low-income students. According to participants, their primary points of contact when addressing student behavioral needs were their assistant principals and the children's mothers.   At each of their schools, the school counselors assisted in Response to Intervention (RtI) procedures (identification, intervention, and evaluation) and provided teachers with information and documentation about special education services (IEPs, Section 504, and gifted and talented).

Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The participants' interviews revealed the extent that they had internalized, accepted, or rejected the social constructions of race and gender. These constructions factored in their perceptions of educating and nurturing Black children. When analyzing the participants' responses to why they became teachers, Paula, Nancy, and Fred stated that their decisions were based on the desire to support Black children, see them become successful, and cultivate a love of learning and determination in them. For Peter, becoming a teacher was a career choice based on his ability to do it well. However, Peter found his passion for teaching Black children and felt that they had taught him more than he had taught them.

When they spoke about their obligations, they all agreed that Black teachers have a different, if not culturally moral obligation when serving Black children. For example, Peter felt that Black teachers who did not add cultural and socio-emotional components in their lessons

were doing Black children a disservice. Fred believed that Black teachers related to their own experiences (what they missed and what they needed) when nurturing Black children and they felt the need to give back. Paula and Nancy felt that it was their obligation to provide Black children with love and understanding, as they knew that they were surrogate mothers (othermothers) standing in for working parents.

All the participants' beliefs remained high and positive when they focused on their obligations and desires to be involved in the lives of Black children; however, those beliefs were challenged by what they actually experienced when teaching. These challenges referred to the insistence of supervising and monitoring behaviors for long blocks of time while also trying to cover required academic standards in preparation for local, district, and state testing. Elementary master schedules can set math and reading blocks between 90 and 120 minutes of instructional time with one designated restroom break. In these teachers' schools, local testing occurred every Friday unless there was staff development and holiday. District testing, such as benchmarks, occurred every nine weeks, usually over four days, with a core subject tested each day. State testing was scheduled by the state and occurred between April and May; however, these teachers informed me that their schools began *preparing* for the state testing in January.

The pilot study's findings reflected what had been found in previous studies on Black teachers, and the school system. First, their schools treated Black teachers as if they had a responsibility to *repair* Black children before educating them. Paula stated that the profession expected them to know how to deal with Black children because they were both Black; and therefore, they had an obligation to fix problems common or unique to Black communities. Paula noted-

> Black teachers have different obligations when we serve Black students because of someone else's lack of understanding…These obligations come

from everyone, everywhere due to historical, cultural assumptions and
expectations both in and outside of Black communities. (Paula Interview, 5/23/19)

Fred's experience illustrated the school system's deficit and stereotypical thinking of

Black families and Black fathers. He shared-

If there is not a dad "involved," I know at some point they (the school) are
going to make me be the "Daddy." To lay down the law. Make them
 (Black kids) act right because they think they don't have support at home.
Administrators are more sensitive to Black kids' behavior than their
academics (parentheses and quotation marks added).   (Fred Interview, 5/22/2019)

The school expectation of Black teachers as "the muscle" or disciplinarian aligns with the

concept of role entrapment (Mabokela & Madsen, 2000), or the pigeon-holing of Black teachers

in race-specific roles. Though role entrapment is seen in predominantly white schools with few

Black teachers on staff, my pilot study illustrated that role entrapment can occur in

predominantly Black schools that tend to reinforce the values and beliefs of the dominant

culture. In addition, the notion that Black children need a "daddy at school" (i.e., mentor or role

model) because there is allegedly no "daddy at home" may hinge on what society (thus, school)

accepts as "involved" parenting. There are a variety of reasons why Black fathers' involvement

is questioned and questionable, if considered through traditional lenses of family structure. A

recent study by Josh Levs (2015) noted more Black fathers, married and unmarried, lived with

their children more than apart from them, and National Center for Health Statistics (2013) found

that Black fathers were involved and doing more than fathers of any other race, especially in

regards to feeding, caring for and playing with their children--even when they did not live with

their children. Nonetheless, the saving of Black children seems to rest on the belief that their

home environments are deficit and unsupportive due to the myth of the absentee Black father.

Second, the participants felt that the "repairing" had very little to do with ensuring Black

children grew up healthy, whole, self-confident, and motivated. The participants saw the

administrators' directives as a continued means of informing Black children that they were bad and needed to be controlled from the time they entered the building to the time they were dismissed. The Black teachers resented the imposition of their time and energy (to do the work of controlling) and felt that their own knowledge and skills for teaching were not effectively put to use. Their experiences reflect how schools, guided by the social constructions of race and childhood, reproduce social order (Anderson, 1988; McPherson, 1970; Noguera, 2003; Spring, 2010) and carceral space centered on treating Black children like criminals (Wald & Losen, 2003) controlling Black bodies (Foucault, 1975; Noguera, 2003).

However, despite their feelings about the current state of education, the overbearing focus on state testing and behavior management, all the participants spoke of Black children as a whole, in generally positive terms such as *striving*, *intelligent*, *beautiful*, and *genius*. They loved their "kids." "These are my kids. I take it personally when it comes to anything about my kids, good or bad," Paula stated at the beginning of her interview. While many teachers use the expression "my kids" when referring to their students, Paula's remark about "taking it personally" reflects a deeper sense of obligation, a strong bond, and caring that Black teachers possess as othermothers (Collins, 2009; Guiffrida, 2005; Hale-Benson, 1982; Thompson, 1988).

For my dissertation, my goal was to conduct a study in order to explore how, in what ways, these Black educators nurture and address the behavior of their students. How do Black educators disrupt oppressive disciplining in the classroom? What makes them continue to disrupt and resist in spite of the risks these actions could bring? In addition, prior to my dissertation, I believed that teacher interviews alone were sufficient for my research. And while I found the findings of the pilot study interviews significant, I realize that observations in the field would have supported, clarified, and confirmed what these teachers *actually did* in

addressing the behavior and learning of Black children. M. Patton (2014) noted about the benefit

of conducting naturalistic observation-

> ...Firsthand experience with a setting and the people in the setting allows
> an inquirer to be open, discovery oriented, and inductive because, by
> being on-site, the observer has less need to rely on prior conceptualizations
> of the setting, whether those prior conceptualizations were from written
> documents or verbal reports.   (p. 262)

Finally, conducting interviews for the pilot study reminded me of my training as a teacher

evaluator, which forced me to strive at not being critical and evaluative as I listened to the

participants. While these are necessary skills to have in conducting pre- and post-conferences

with teachers for classroom observations, they are not appropriate for Black feminist research.

However, I believe that prolonged engagement in the field and frequent self-reflection would

help me gradually shed that judgmental perspective and mindset.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed and explained researcher positionality, research paradigms,

theoretical frameworks, research methodologies, context of the research study, participant

recruitment and selection, data collection and analysis, and my pilot. I also explained the impact

of COVID on data collection but how I was still able to complete a thorough and high quality

study using standard practices and Black feminist creativity. In the next chapters, I present

participants' profiles in detail, describe their personal backgrounds, their current positions, their

understanding of school's oppressive infrastructure and their modes of disruption. Collaborating

with my research participants over the past year brings to mind a quote by Ella Baker who said,

"We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes." As noted by Ransby (2003), Baker

assumed many titles in her lifetime, but the most enduring ones were master teacher and griot

during the Black Freedom Movement. As an intellectual presence within the Student Nonviolent

Coordinating Committee (SNCC), she created for young activists a "classroom without walls...a very different kind of classroom, indeed, one infused with radical pedagogy, epistemology, and worldview" (Ransby, 2003, p. 357). The participants' commitment to and compassion for Black children not only rings of activism and social justice but it also illustrates that, like Ella Baker, they are worthy to be called 'Fundi,'[22] a Swahili word for someone who empowers the next generation by teaching a skill or a craft.

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[22] Fundi was a nickname given to Ella Baker for the role she played in shaping the Civil Rights Movement as well as for being the godmother of SNCC (Ransby, 2003).

CHAPTER 4

DISRUPTING ANTI-BLACK PRAXIS ON AN URBAN CAMPUS

Interviewer: And your music says this, and it speaks to Black people. I want you to tell me what your gut feeling is about.

Nina Simone: Well, look, off the top of my head, as far as I'm concerned, thousands and thousands of years ago, we were, for lack of a better expression, "on top." If there were oppressors, they were me and you. We were not being oppressed, we had kings and queens. We had civilizations that we don't know very much about. So as far as I'm concerned, my music is addressed to my people, especially to make them more curious about where they came from and their own identity and pride in that identity. That's why in my songs I try to make them as powerful as possible... And my songs are deliberately to provoke this feeling of like "who am I and where did I come from? Do I really like me, and why do I like me? And, if I am Black and beautiful, I really am and I know it, and I don't care who cares/says what."

Interviewer: I don't think that an artist should be involved in these kinds of things.

Nina Simone: An artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times. I think that is true of painters, sculptors, poets, musicians. As far as I'm concerned, it's their choice, but I choose to reflect the times and situations in which I find myself. That, to me, is my duty. And at this crucial time in our lives, when everything is so desperate, when every day is a matter of survival, I don't think you can help but be involved. Young people, Black and white, know this. That's why they're so involved in politics. We will shape and mold this country or it will not be molded and shaped at all anymore. So I don't think you have a choice. How can you be an artist and NOT reflect the times? That, to me, is the definition of an artist.

Excerpt from *Nina Simone: Great Performances--Live College Concerts & Interviews*
Circa 1969

Introduction

The research questions that guided this chapter sought to learn how Black educators understood and negotiated the oppressive infrastructure of schools and its impact of Black children as well as ways in which they disrupted paternalistic practices entrenched in the discipline policies of an urban school system. In order to ascertain the sustainability of Blackness as a disruptive pedagogy on an urban campus, I felt that it was crucial to explore the perspectives of Black school leaders who are charged with implementing and monitoring school-sanctioned policies and practices. Therefore, this chapter explored principals Dr. Madison's and Mr. Richardson's experiences, behaviors and decision-making related to discipline policies and practices as administrators in Morrison ISD.

The school principal, like the artist in the Simone quote, has a responsibility to reflect the times in which they lead-- to be a steward, a facilitator providing guidance and resources in matters that impact the school system, from sociopolitical movements to economic crises to global pandemics. Much of the empirical research on the principalship addresses how the position has evolved as society's needs have changed and how the manner in which the principal leads has become key to teacher efficacy, job satisfaction, student achievement, campus morale and positive culture. As noted by Louis et. al. (2010), "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 2). Unfortunately, the studies on the principal effectiveness are overwhelmingly associated with student learning, not student psychological or physical well-being. Research on school leadership is often framed in whiteness (Walker & Snarey, 2004). Most importantly, given the current popularity of resource pedagogies in teacher education (Paris, 2012), Black ways of leading, culturally caring, and advocating for social justice at the intersection of race and gender within

the framework of educational leadership are either neglected or rudimentary at best (Witherspoon & Arnold, 2010). Therefore, the humanity and humanness of Black children bound up in their academic potential may not be given priority unless they have principals who understand the traditional ways of schooling are oppressive and anti-Black. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2003), by 2020 principals will lead schools where only 49 percent of the children are white. The evolving racial, ethnic and cultural composition of school children in the United States demands that principals' behavior and decision-making practices toward Black children reflect authentic efforts to attend not only their academic progress but also their well-being, especially in a school system that continues to see them as inferior.

In the following section, I review the literature regarding the Black principalship that developed under HBCUs. An examination of the development of the Black principal and its relation to cultural and communal expectations was needed to situate the significance of Dr. Madison and Mr. Richardson's disruptive advocacy in their schools. Following the literature review, I present Madison's and Richardson's narratives, respectively, and discuss the themes that emerged through data analysis.

Definition of an Artist

The golden era of Black school leadership that existed prior to *Brown* positioned the Black principal as an individual exponentially connected to the Black community (Walker, 1996). The Black principalship was an all-encompassing, multi-faceted position, respected in the Black community, connected to the Black church, and rooted in cultural norms. For most of the Reconstruction era and into Jim Crow, Black educational leaders fought to create and maintain independent or private school systems to avoid being governed or supervised by white male superintendents or school boards (Anderson, 1988; Rousmaniere, 2013). According to

Allen et. al. (2007), at the inception of HBCUs, white benefactors controlled the curriculum and educational goals that focused mostly on vocational training; but as HBCUs became more established, they also undertook a liberal arts education. A liberal arts curriculum exposed Black college students to academic knowledge which made them question their oppression and seek equality for themselves and others (Allen, et. al., 2007; Anderson, 1988; Ballard, 1973; DuBois 1903/2005). Most importantly, as noted by Foster (2001)-

> The cultivation and attainment of academic achievement by African American students within a concerned, caring, focused, and success-oriented community remains a defining mark of the work of HBCUs and their administrators and faculties. (p. 615)

The notion that achievement and care were integrated and dependent on each other bolstered the understanding that it was the mission and vision of Black HBCU administrators (now and then) to nurture the Black student as a whole person.

Most information about pre-*Brown* Black principals is based on archival interviews, oral histories, newspapers, government documents (Ramsey, 2012) and revisited in the work of Vanessa Siddle Walker, James Anderson, and Adam Fairclough. They all note that Black principals were able to sustain student excellence and build school cultures that prioritized the social-emotional and psychological well-being of Black children (Echols, 2006). For example, according to Walker (1996), former Black students at Caswell County Training School recounted how their principal N.L. Dillard modeled the aspect of caring, stating-

> Like the teachers, the principal also assumed a counseling role with students. He was not removed from student life and available only as a chapel speaker or disciplinarian. Rather, Dillard sought opportunities to be actively involved in getting to know students as individuals and influencing the directions of their lives. He did the same for teachers. (p. 120)

The reciprocity of care was the norm. Black female teachers carried on the tradition in their classrooms and into the principal's office. Case in point, Black principals Kathleen Crosby and

Bertha Maxwell-Roddey became renowned for their teaching and leadership in segregated and desegregated Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Schools from 1946 to 1986. Their efforts to educate and nurture Black children were buttressed by the womanist view of caring. Both educators centered children's emotional and psychological well-being within their educational philosophies, utilizing nurturing and forceful activist leadership (Ramsey, 2012). Black principals were cognizant that they served entire communities, were committed to racial uplift and empowerment, and devoted to challenging the beliefs of Black intellectual inferiority.

And finally, similar to HBCU administrators taking ownership of their curriculum, Black principals and their teachers also fought to restructure limited and narrowly defined curricula because they did not align with the ambitions of the Black community; this meant rejecting an education designed to prepare Black children to work for white people (Anderson, 1978). In this respect, Black school leaders were progressive. Tillman (2004) explained-

> Black principals...were models of servant leadership and were professional role models for teachers and other staff members. As instructional leaders in segregated schools, Black principals provided vision and direction for the school staff [and] helped to insure the inclusion of relevant curriculum… (p. 283)

Black principals demonstrated a culturally responsive instructional and transformational leadership unlike the models of choice that would eventually be taught at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) starting in the mid-1980s. We know from multiple sources that in segregated schools Black educators centered Black children's potential and built on their strengths (Echols, 2006; Tillman, 2004; Walker, 1996). In integrated schools, the instructional and transformational leadership models placed heavy emphasis on teaching practices, testing, and the "achievement gap" between white and Black children. The difference in how these leadership styles were operationalized came from how white and Black principals viewed their roles and responsibilities in the school and the community. More specifically, Black principals

tended to lead differently than white principals because of their connections to and cultural

understanding of the Black community (Khalifa, 2012; Lomotey, 1987).

Brown (1954) decision reshapes the Black principalship

We often focus our attention on how the *Brown* decision impacted elementary and

secondary education, but it also negatively affected HBCUs (Harvey, et. al., 2004), where Black

educators had received preparation from other Black educators for nearly 100 years (Anderson &

Byrne, 2004; Esters & Strayhorn, 2013). The communal nature of HBCUs had nourished an

established network of Black professors and their peers who shared a common culture,

experiences with oppression, visions for addressing racial inequities, and desires to cultivate

student potential (Walker, 2009). By the early 1970s, with *Brown* and other Civil Rights

legislation showing more disappointment than promise, a panel of Black leaders, including

Angela Davis and Fannie Lou Hamer, convened to discuss the feasibility of our physical and

cultural survival. Representing perspectives on Black education, Dr. James E. Cheeks (1972),

then-president of Howard University, stated-

> One of the major issues facing our nation in this decade is the issue of quality
> education. Many Americans, Black and white, assume that quality education
> can occur only through integration-- where integration has come to mean the
> destruction or closing of Black colleges and institutions of learning and Black
> students enrolling in predominantly white institutions at the level of higher
> education that is beyond high school. This attitude enacted into public policy
> has resulted in the continuous deterioration of one of the nation's most
> important most strategic and most essential groups of institutions... America's
> Black population will be deprived of a major resource that is essential in
> our efforts to achieve for ourselves and the nation as a whole through
> social justice. (Cheeks, 1972, 8:06)

Dr. Cheeks' reflections appeared to measure as well as foreshadow the eventual siphoning off of

Black intellectual talent from HBCUs that had built a very successful Black middle-class filled

with doctors, lawyers, and educators. Even though Black enrollment at HBCUs increased after

Brown, it began to fall by 1976 along with the number of degrees conferred and has continued to

do so; between 1976 and 2016, the percentage of Black students enrolled at an HBCU fell to nine

percent, bachelor degrees to 13%, and masters to six percent (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2020c).

As a result of *Brown*, Black school leadership was all but decimated or funneled

sparingly into integrated, urban schools (Tillman, 2004). A harsher fate would befall Black

principals who were no longer allowed to lead campuses. According to Bell (2004)-

> ...the action usually resulted in closing Black schools, dismissing Black
> teachers, and demoting (and often) degrading Black principals. I heard
> too often of respected principal of Black schools who, in order to keep
> their pensions, had to accept janitorial positions in mainly white schools.
> There they could be seen by all picking up paper on school lawns.   (p. 124)

The nurturing that Black children needed and Black school leaders provided was weakened.

Between 1954 and 1965 (Ethridge, 1979; Tillman, 2004), more than 38,000 Black teachers and

principals lost their jobs in 17 Southern states (Echols, 2006), 90% of Black high school

principals lost positions in 13 Southern states, and in some states, the Black principalship

dropped from the high 100s to the low teens (Hooker, 1971). Their absence came at a critical

time when Black children needed their protection from what was coming.

 Furthermore, while 50% of Black teachers were still able to receive their bachelor's

degree at HBCUs, Black principals would have to obtain their Master degrees at PWIs because

such programs were no longer available at HBCUs (Fenwick, 2016; U.S. Department of

Education, 1991).   After the displacement of HBCUs, Black school children not only lost their

greatest advocates in public schools but the subsequent preparation of Black principals would

fall into different hands--the traditional, Eurocentric educational leadership programs at white

institutions with white professors-- and would later be governed by Reagan-era, anti-Black

educational reforms.

The Black principalship at risk

By the late 1980s, the impact of *A Nation at Risk* and ensuing federal mandates on academic standards and accountability shaped university principal preparation programs (PPPs), and changed the administrator's role to instructional leader (Pannell, et. al., 2015; Reames, 2010). By 2001, with the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the instructional leader was the model of choice (Hallinger, 2005). Though the principal as *transformational leader* or *servant leader*[23] would become a part of the paradigm shift in the next decade, the instructional leader era remained steadfast and polarizing. It had much to do with increased pressures to improve student achievement, especially for Black males, children of color, Black males, and children with special needs. Also, instructional leadership tended to put heavy emphasis on classroom management (Hess & Kelly, 2007). Consequently, the attention on student achievement increased simultaneously with the oppressive crackdown student behavior via zero tolerance policies (ZTPs). Klehr (2009) noted-

> As a result of federal laws such as No Child Left Behind Act, as well as state and school district laws and policies, schools and districts are under enormous pressure. Administrators are expected to produce data that shows students are achieving. At the same time, these administrators are subject to social and political pressure to remove disruptive students from school entirely. Given these dual pressures, many states and school districts have adopted zero tolerance policies, under which students are suspended or expelled for misbehavior without taking into account individual or mitigating circumstances. (p. 585)

The instructional leadership model, high-stakes testing, and zero tolerance combined to be a perfect storm of trouble for Black children, especially those in historically challenged urban districts. Though this model was designed to position the principal as the lone hero capable of

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[23] These leadership styles and roles appear in business management and leadership studies in the 1970s before having influence in the educational field and educational administration.

turning around these kinds of schools (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger, 2005), state assessments and ZTPs turned their schools into hostile and alienating environments where Black children were routinely tested, punished and pushed out (Advancement Project, 2010). The instructional leadership role ushered in a different kind of principal behavior: data-driven, goal-oriented, and direct, which promoted the relentless pursuit of efficient systems, progress monitoring and performance evaluations. The value placed on individuals within the system, top-down, was associated with their ability to meet goals, follow directives, and acquire success; and their value was substantiated by incentives, rewards, and consequences (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Poplin, 1992; Reitzug, et. al., 2008).

Black principals were not exempt from these pressures, expectations, and behaviors; they were perhaps even more so under pressure to increase student achievement in urban school districts that had experienced extreme challenges for decades. As noted by Davis and Darling-Hammond (2012), due to the accountability era, principal effectiveness and the quality of PPPs had never experienced such a level of intensity and the stakes had never been higher to sustain continuous academic growth; in fact, the principal's job was on the line. The pressure to improve test scores and increase student achievement has intensified because the 2015 federal law Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) still preserves the spirit of No Child Left Behind (Korte, 2015). The over-reliance on standardized testing, no matter how flexible ESSA maintains that it can be, still positions the transformational principal to enact ZTPs and other punitive consequences to decrease disruptions to the learning environment. For Black principals, the high expectations to increase test scores and implement punitive policies to decrease disruptions can trigger the dilemma of double consciousness (DuBois, 1903/2015). DuBois described this phenomenon as a situation in which Black people experience a dichotomy in how they see

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themselves and/or seen by others. In the case of education, Black principals are employees of

the school system and have specific obligations to fulfill, obligations that may be oppressive and

historically anti-Black. But they are also Black mothers, fathers, and citizens who recognize the

need to disrupt the impact of oppression and anti-Blackness on their communities.

Recapturing the legacy

However, on a positive note, the research of Lomotey and Lowery (2014) on 31 studies

about the relationship between Black principals and Black students, much of it coming from

dissertations, illustrate that some Black principals in urban schools are relying on culturally

responsive educational experiences while contending with the overwhelming task of dismantling

disenfranchisement and racism within public policy, school policy and educational operations.

An overview of these studies include Berry's (2008) dissertation on Black female elementary

principals and critical spirituality; Bloom and Erlandson's (2003) journal of Black secondary

principals and cultural consciousness; and Case's (1997) article on a Black female principal's

use of othermothering. They found that these Black principals valued the legacy of tight-knit

Black communities, parental involvement, the collective consciousness for advocacy, cultural

responsiveness, ethic of caring, nurturing, and commitment to academic achievement.

Furthermore, they concluded, whether Black principals were men or women, in elementary or

secondary, there was a particular characteristic important in the interactions between Black

principals and Black students in urban schools. They noted-

> [These administrators] place a priority on their ethno-humanist[24] role
> identity. They do this first by offering a nurturing/caring environment
> for their students, believing that such a focus benefits students in their
> efforts to overcome their disenfranchisement and underachievement. (p. 345)

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[24] Lomotey (1993) coined the term ethno-humanist to identify the role that encompasses "commitment to the education of all students; confidence in the ability all students to do well; and compassion for, and understanding of, all students and the communities in which they live" (p. 396).

Lomotey and Lowery's research findings align with Witherspoon and Arnold's (2010) work on the pastoral notions of care found in Black female principals; Beauboeuf-Lafontant's (2002) research on Black female principals' embodiment of womanist caring; Bass and Alston's (2018) studies on Black Masculine Caring (BMC) of Black male principals; and Khalifa's (2018) work on culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL). These studies demonstrate Black principals are striving to care for Black children by drawing upon elements of Black-ness and Black culture.

In this study, Dr. Cynthia Madison and Drew Richardson represent contemporary Black principalship in Morrison ISD, a predominantly Black school district in North Texas. All school leaders in Morrison are Black, and what is especially unique is that eight out ten head principals are Black women. Dr. Madison is the Black female head principal at Morrison Alternative School (MAS), and Mr. Richardson is a Black male assistant principal at Morrison Middle School (MMS). Morrison ISD maintains high expectations for student achievement and has earned high marks and distinctions from Texas Education Agency (TEA) based on results on state assessments. These high expectations have impacted Morrison ISD principals in that they must be strong instructional and transformational leaders and create rigorous systems and initiatives that support teaching, learning, and behavior. From the analysis of their stories, four themes emerged involving the ethic of risk, overt and covert ways of disrupting, the Black lived experience, and awareness.

<div align="center">When Every Day is a Matter of Survival</div>

Much of the challenge to the ethic of caring in Morrison ISD arises from the infrastructure maintaining some oppressive processes, such as the white ways of leading taught in university PPPs (e.g., the instructional leadership model), zero tolerance policies, and a focus

on character education. By fall 2019, however, SEL and restorative practices were in a nascent but noticeably inconsistent implementation in Morrison ISD but there was little buy-in; the determining factor (for implementation) was an administrator's initiative and belief that children's emotional well-being should be valued (Madison Talk, 5/12/20). The following narrative explores the experiences of Dr. Cynthia Madison.

Cynthia Madison: "Okay, we're not going to scream and yell and holler at children."

Dr. Cynthia Madison is a Black woman with 20 years of service in education, 14 of which have been in Morrison ISD in several leadership roles, such as a curriculum specialist, assistant principal, coordinator of STEM, and director of professional development. I first met Dr. Madison in 2013 when I became an elementary assistant principal and often saw her during her visits to my campus to support science teachers and monitor their implementation of STEM and PBLs. Three years later, I had several opportunities to work with her when I assigned students to Morrison Alternative School (MAS). Each time I visited MAS to check on my students, I noticed a shift or an evolution in its archaeological landscape (Battle-Baptiste, 2011). The changes were both physical and spiritual.   Under her leadership, MAS was becoming a carceral space in name only.

Upon entering MAS in spring 2020, I was greeted by the lively and personable secretary "Ms. Betty"[25] in a main office decorated in bright colors, greenery, and inspirational words. Kathy Nutters, MAS's elementary counselor[26] has an office that sits directly behind Ms. Betty's desk and it is perhaps the prettiest space in the whole building, with wall-to-wall pink and green Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) sorority decor, jars filled with candy, teddy bears, paintings, and

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[25] Ms. Betty is a pseudonym.

[26] Kathy Nutters was a participant in the pilot study and this dissertation study but withdrew in April 2020 for personal reasons. She was replaced by Cecil Banks who serves as a socio-emotional learning counselor and a parent liaison.

empowering statements (e.g., "THIS GIRL CAN" meets you at the threshold). Across from the counselor, about six feet away, is Dr. Madison's office. Her door remains open unless she is having private conversations. Inside, I see shelves filled with binders, but two artifacts caught my eye: a portrait of Harriet Tubman on the wall and a bust of Nefertiti next to Dr. Madison in her cap and gown on one of her file cabinets.

It is important to note that Dr. Madison was not initially sought after to participate in this study. But after I visited MAS twice in early March 2020, it became apparent that I could not move toward without recruiting her because she was a fascinating study in Black Feminist Leadership (BFL). With her crown of braids swooped into a bun or cascading down her shoulders, Dr. Madison exuded a commanding but caring presence, one that took up the whole room and sustained your attention. Her manner of speaking to you, behind one of the brightest smiles I have ever seen, and even her smooth and deliberate stride down the hall or into the main office suggested a "traditional, omnipotent" principal who wielded a big stick; yet, Dr. Madison, as the mother of four children, three of whom are boys, exemplified the Black woman as the agent of knowledge, the resistor of oppression, the architect of empowerment (Collins, 2009). I talked and listened to Dr. Madison over the last seven months, delightfully consumed with her topic-chaining conversational style. Her experiences were rich and impressive, and I believe the following poem by Lucille Clifton (1992/2015) truly exemplifies her struggles and resilience.

won't you celebrate with me

won't you celebrate with me
what i have shaped into
a kind of life? i had no model.
born in babylon
both nonwhite and woman
what did i see to be except myself?
i made it up
here on this bridge between

starshine and clay,
my one hand holding tight
my other hand; come celebrate
with me that everyday
something has tried to kill me
and has failed.

Dr. Madison has had to break down many walls and obstacles in order to change mindsets about

the potential of Black children, especially those receiving special education services. Her stance

on such issues involving the potential and humanity of Black children in the education system is

immovable.

On the conduct of understanding[27]

Awareness of the oppressive nature of schooling in the United States was critically

central to my dissertation study.   Therefore, I asked Dr. Madison about her awareness that the

school system reflected societal values and anti-Black racism. She replied-

> I would like to think that I'm very aware. That is a conversation that I have
> all the time. [And] personally at home with my own children. They have a
> right to learn and a right to learn in a way that's best for them. They have a
> right for their needs to be met and that if we are in a school system and we
> want to value and take care of the whole child, then it is our responsibility, in
> fact, to do that. I am very keenly aware that the system and the way that the
> system was designed has not changed in all of these years. We're asking kids
> to sit down and conform to a policy, a method, a way of thought, or way of
> teaching.   (Madison Talk, 5/12/2020)

Conformity in school is associated with adapting a dominant culture mindset and is treated as

essential for learning to take place (Noguera, 2003; Spring, 2010). To sustain conformity,

schools have a moral obligation to produce docile, self-regulating students (Ferguson, 2002). Dr.

Madison (2020) believed, "Their [school faculty] intentions are always good, they're pure, they

want students to be successful, but they're trying to make a square peg fit into a circle." She

recognized that some educators had not arrived at this understanding because she could see it in

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[27] From a lecture by Sydney Smith (1771-1845), origin of the expression "square peg in a round hole"

the numbers of Black students assigned to MAS for minor misbehavior such as talking too much

and insubordination (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020). More specifically, campus principals were

(over)utilizing discretionary consequences to send students to DAEP for their failure to conform

and Dr. Madison made these principals and even district personnel aware. She explained-

> Once I showed them [the data], you know, you have 625 discretionaries[28]
> and let's look at the length of time. They were all over the place. [Two]
> student[s] could get sent to the DAEP for the exact same reason. And one
> campus may send them for 30 days; another campus may send them for 45.
> If this was maybe the second time, you might get 60. (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020)

After she provided evidence that discretionary consequences were being discriminately applied,

the district responded by calling for a district level hearing officer to review cases to determine if

students needed to go to DAEP[29]. She believed that bringing awareness to this issue highlighted

the oppressive methods that harmed Black children.

Furthermore, Dr. Madison viewed the culture of conformity as having racist overtones

because she saw it in its historical context as a weapon to control Black people. She noted-

> ...That is the method that was used from day one when our ancestors were
> brought over here. It was conformity. You must conform. And if you don't,
> I'm going to whip you, beat you... And so that mentality has just continued
> generation after generation and in every facet of everything that we do. So,
> not only, you know, in the workplace, it has continued in education. So if
> you do not conform to the rules that I have set, then here's what will happen
> to you. And because it's been so many years of that happening, it has been
> allowed to happen. So when punishments are given, it doesn't seem like
> there's anything wrong because it's the norm. That's what we do.
> (Madison Talk, 5/12/2020)

By this, normalizing punishment within an oppressive school infrastructure makes it a part of the

hidden curriculum and rather difficult to negotiate.

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[28] This means that 625 students over a period of time were assigned to DAEP based on the principals' use of
discretionary consequences.   They are not for serious offenses (Texas Education Code, Chapter 37).

[29] This process was postponed when the spread of COVID-19 resulted in school closures in March 2020. However,
there is a plan to roll out the process in the upcoming school year.

Barriers to understanding

It is important to note that Dr. Madison did not always recognize the oppressive

infrastructure of school, especially when she was an assistant principal. It took several years

before she saw what was happening to students all over the district, not just the ones on her

campus. She explained that it was as a director that she witnessed the structural inequities in a

major, well-funded academic program within the district, and it helped to change her mindset

"on what students can and can't do and the environment that we have to create in order for them

to be able to be successful" (Madison Talk, 4/28/20). I found it interesting that it was her

experiences and not her principal preparation that made her awareness. She noted-

> So, to be honest, I will tell you that I believe, I truly believe it wasn't so
> much as my training that I received when I went through my principal
> program. Even the time that I served as an assistant principal. I truly
> believe that the training was on the job training (Madison Talk, 4/28/20).

Her experiences as director of STEAM gave her a broader perspective and understanding about

the type of mindset and behavior the school system was cultivating in teachers and principals on

campuses. Dr. Madison and I talked about what happens to educators' attitudes after they have

been on campuses for a while, and she said-

> It is a form of institutionalization, just like in prisons. People become
> institutionalized the longer that they stay in prison. They follow those
> norms and rules or procedures...It's the same thing with teaching.
> (Madison Talk, 9/21/2020).

Institutionalization can also be framed as upholding organizational thinking or absorbing the

views of an organization. This assertion can be problematic because of the uncomfortable notion

that Black teachers become institutionalized and harm Black children without objecting or

resisting. This is also the dilemma of double consciousness (DuBois, 1903/2015). Furthermore,

this circumstance should always be considered with how the school system provides teachers *in*

general more opportunities to learn and use behavior management strategies rooted in deficit-

thinking models, anti-Black-ness and less time and space in the master schedule to nurture their

students and their humanity. For example, when SEL or restorative practices were implemented

in Morrison, they had to compete with instructional time, testing and monitoring academic

progress. It is important to note that Texas has only adopted SEL guidelines in early childhood

education, not K-12 (Texas Education Agency[TEA], 2020). Dr. Madison described this

situation as an unfortunate choice both teachers and principals have to make:

> You want the whole child to be addressed and you want what's best for
> them. But in that moment when you're on those comprehensive[30] campuses,
> the drive is really state assessments. The drive is making sure that students
> are able to be successful on those assessments because that's where your
> accountability is at the district level, at the state level. As an administrator,
> that's how you receive your evaluation, on academics and how students are
> scoring. And so you really start trying to figure out how quickly you can
> resolve the behavior issue with the students and not necessarily thinking
> that it needs to be through some social-emotional things that may take time.
> They've got to come out of classes in order to go to the social-emotional,
> but I need them working this math and this reading and this science for this
> SMART test, you know? (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020)

Now that she is the principal at the alternative school, she can see the results of the quick

behavior fix and not investing the time in students' emotional well-being (Madison Talk,

4/28/2020)--increased student disenfranchisement and normalized educative-psychic violence.

Negotiating and taking the hit[31]

For Dr. Madison, being aware and becoming an advocate was how she negotiated the

oppressive infrastructure; and in some cases, her advocacy was not well-received. For example,

her attempts to restructure MAS as a place of healing caused friction between her and some

campus principals who disliked her questioning the reasons behind some student placements.

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[30] *Comprehensive* refers to public elementary and secondary schools that do not have strict selective criteria for
admissions.

[31] Meant here: to willingly incur criticism or draw the anger of someone for the greater good

She primarily objected when a DAEP assignment appeared to be an extreme or inappropriate consequence. She described one conversation:

> I was saying, "Look, wait a minute, no, don't send this baby for this reason, or this student shouldn't be coming for this." And they were kind of feeling like, "Well, this is my campus and I should have the discretion to say if the student goes." (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020)

After many courageous conversations (Singleton, 2014) with the principals, they agreed to follow state guidelines. Nonetheless, it was still challenging to disrupt the perception of MAS because it had been the one constant that campuses had for dealing with "bad kids," but she felt compelled to disrupt the cycle of punishment. She elaborated-

> It's not working. It's definitely not working for our African American students. And if I don't, I'm in a position to change it, so if I don't do something different, then who else is going to do it? (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020)

Because of her insight, she decided to create policies and practices that would differentiate MAS from home campuses where, in many instances, students' socio-emotional and academic needs were not being met. She composed a three-year vision to restructure MAS in addition to a 30-60-90 day plan to take action toward any behaviors that she found immediately distressing and detrimental to students' self-esteem. She shared how MAS was different from home campuses when it came to helping students-

> If we never give opportunities to practice making better choices, then when will they do it? They will never do it. So we were expecting them to do something that they've never been taught, or they've never been given an opportunity to practice. And that's the thing, the conversation that I have with the principals from the home campus is that we are expecting children to respond, either in a way that they've never been taught at home or on the home campus. (Madison Talk, 5/12/2020)

Helping students to practice making better choices was key but she also needed to make sure MAS teachers were not approaching students in negative ways as students were learning to improve their decision-making.

First and foremost, Madison explained that MAS teachers had to stop yelling and talking crazy[32] to students. Teachers frustrated with student behavior can resort to name-calling, body shaming, and slurs, which is a hidden trauma that happens to Black children to a significant degree in the alternative school setting (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow, et. al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2007). She recalled that she cringed when she first arrived and heard teachers hollering:

> Oh my god, I would not want someone screaming and yelling at my own child
> like this, you know, in a school setting. So those things I had to address
> immediately like, "Okay, look, we're not going to scream and yell and
> holler children. You cannot raise your voice at them and I'm in the front
> office and you're all the way at the back of the building and I can hear you.
> Like that is unacceptable." (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020)

Dr. Madison made it clear that any talk that dehumanized Black children and made them feel like prisoners was unacceptable and no longer, such as using penal terms or language (e.g., "You need to have good behavior to earn time off to get an early release.") (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020). She used one particular exercise to deinstitutionalize her staff so that they could begin to see the students as humans: having them look at pictures of their own children or grandchildren and imagine someone talking harshly to them (Madison Talk 5/12/2020). This activity brought it "home" to teachers because it put a human face on their students.

It was very important to Dr. Madison that MAS teachers wrote lesson plans, attended weekly PLCs, and participated in data digs of local assessments. Her teachers resisted because investing in meaningful instruction was not something they had to be fully committed to before Madison arrived. Knowing this, Madison modeled for them during faculty meetings, in Cluster, (PLCs), and in the classroom because the expectation was all teachers need to improve their knowledge and skill so that when students went back to their home campuses, they weren't

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[32] "Talking crazy" is not synonymous with crazy talk, which is an English idiom used to describe talk that is as senseless, illogical or ridiculous. In Black communities, "talking crazy" denotes a combative style of speaking because the language is antagonistic, demeaning, insulting, personal, and unacceptable.

behind their peers (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020). What was not being understood was that having effective teachers and learning experiences were also important to Black students' emotional and psychological well-being. If their academic needs were not met while at MAS, then returning them to their home campuses unprepared produced a pattern of recidivism and profound emotional disenfranchisement.

Finally, Dr. Madison assumed a great deal of risk to restructure MAS, wrestling with hostility, resistance, and doubt. After three years, resistance has begun to fade because teachers could see the results of caring about students' learning and emotional growth. She reflected-

> I know it was uncomfortable to make those changes. But what I had to become comfortable with was knowing that I might not be the most popular principal, you know, I might not get principal of the year and those kinds of things. But if we're doing what we need to do for students and we know that we're doing what is best for kids and their parents, and that the impact that we are having is saving or changing students' lives, then I'm okay with that. I can accept not being, you know, voted principal of the year, what have you. Because really and truly, at that point, when they get sent to DAEP, we are the last stop. If we don't impact them and do something, then the only other place they're going to get it is when they get into juvenile justice or the prison system. I just can't. I couldn't go to sleep at night knowing that… (Madison Talk 4/28/2020).

To be clear, this type of resistance is not rooted in the Black revolutionary struggle. Her teachers' resistance reflects the impact that being in an oppressive, non-caring school environment over time can have on educators. Madison's actions toward their resistance also reflects the work that Black feminist leaders do to help others *unlearn or decolonize* their thinking or behavior (Collins, 2009).

Breathing life into a murdered spirit

The lesson in the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" comes with a subsequent caution in another African proverb: "A child who is not embraced by its village will burn it down to feel its warmth." These proverbs reminded me of Dr. Madison's saying "We

have to connect before we can correct" (Madison Talk, 5/12/2020). The fact is that Black

children arrive at MAS angry, disillusioned and wounded, and she knows that she has to connect

with them at their emotional core first. While she has implemented SEL programs *Boys Town*

and *Move This World* to engage these students in their healing in the classroom, I wanted to

know what cultural practices Dr. Madison draws on. She played gospel and hip-hop music,

explaining-

> I have to make sure that everything that [the students] hear from when
> [they] walk through the do and when [they] are in the classes with the
> teachers, when I interact with [them] is those things that will breathe
> life into [them] including playing uplifting music in the mornings as students
> enter the building (Madison Talk, 5/12/2020).

Research on the healing power of music is vast in that there does not seem to have permanence

or connection to any particular culture. However, music, from gospels or spirituals to R & B to

hip-hop, has a history of healing in the Black community. As a way of tending to the spirit

(Hobbs & Baity, 2006), gospel music, like the Black church, uplifts the Black spirit with hope,

praise, and can help soothe from racial trauma. More recently, the healing power of hip-hop has

been studied. Travis (2016) stated, "Hip Hop changes lives. It brings into expression the soul's

yearning for meaning and connection" (p. xvii). Hip hop has a particularly positive emotional

impact on Black boys (Harper, et. al., 2009). It has the ability to give hope against the sources of

pain and trauma that Black boys negotiate and challenge in their daily lives (Bridges, 2011).

Dr. Madison makes talking to students as another way to address their healing. In

Collins' (2009) work on the ethic of caring, she referred to this as "talking with the heart," as it is

rooted in American enslavement, possessing parallels to the polyrhythms in Black music and

Black women's quilting. Talking and listening to the students is something that Dr. Madison has

made time for, which is an amazing feat because she does not have an assistant principal. The

task of running the school, communicating with parents, monitoring the instruction, evaluating

teachers, and delivering professional development fall on her shoulders alone. Dr. Madison noted that her day is scheduled to the tee but makes sure she uses the beginning of the day and lunch time to interact with the students (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020). When she talks with students, she often asks them: "How can I help you? What helps you? What can we do differently? What works best?" (Madison Talk, 5/12/2020).

These talks are most powerful when something is not working (e.g., the instructional program) and Madison approaches the students to discuss how they can be successful. When she notices that a student's behavior is a stumbling block, which encourages a cycle of violence and punishment in school and the penal system. Conversations about poor decisions impact their future. Madison believes that every student has some type of greatness in them and reaches back into Black history to remind them of what they are capable of accomplishing. When students come to her office to address some "trouble" that might be in, she draws their attention to the portrait of Harriet Tubman (see Figure 4) on her wall. It is not just a history lesson but a way of centering the possibilities of overcoming, recovering, and healing from setbacks. She told me-

> I have a picture in my office of Harriet Tubman and she has these slaves and they're on the Underground Railroad, and she's helping them through a swamp. I'll ask them to turn around and ask them, "Do you know who that is? Do you know what she did? Do you know what this picture is depicting? Tell me a little bit about it." And sometimes I'm really amazed at how many students have surface level information just because of what they have been taught. But when I began to talk to them about here is the history of what has occurred. And so are you going to continue this history and pattern, are you going to do something different? (Madison Talk, 5/12/20)

Figure 4

Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad by Paul Collins (1978)

Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad
— Paul Collins —

<div align="right">(Madison Artifact, 9/17/20)</div>

The fact that Dr. Madison has this portrait on her wall and refers to it with her talks with her students illustrates the importance of the emancipatory lessons in Black history. Black revolutionary histories are often neglected or whitewashed in schools in the United States. Furthermore, when she shared this artifact, it represented the work of our ancestors Anna Julia Cooper, Nannie Helen Burroughs, Amy Garvey, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Harriet Tubman herself who used Black history to inspire, motivate and uplift a/the Black community.

Finally, Dr. Madison noted that students track her down or come to her office regularly to talk to her. It is healing and empowering because it is the first time that someone in the school system has ever listened to them.   In fact, all the changes at MAS are getting attention of the school board members who talk of creating another campus or a smaller school setting with the same culture. Dr. Madison believes it's possible at larger campuses too if other administrators have the desire to create a culture of healing and caring (recall: MAS is described as having a "caring learning environment" on the district website (see Table 4). She concluded by saying,

"Once the administrator says that's what they want, it's going to happen because it's their campus" (Madison Talk, 5/12/2020).

Situation In Which I Find Myself

Morrison Middle School (MMS) has a complicated history in terms of school leadership. It has endured inconsistent leadership for more than a decade, and the lack of consistency has made it a difficult place for faculty, staff, and students. Prior to my employment in the district, MMS had eight principals in eight years, with various reasons given for each leader leaving but each principal struggled with establishing systems, raising test scores or building a positive, support culture.   Since 2012, the principalship has changed four times due to promotions. This history is important because it situates a contrasting perception of the oppressive infrastructure of school. The following narrative explores the experiences of Drew Richardson, one of the assistant principals at Morrison Middle School.

Drew Richardson: "We're not dealing with robots. We're dealing with humans."

Drew Richardson[33] is an administrator who was also a participant in my pilot study. He has worked in education for nineteen years, thirteen years in Morrison. I first met Mr. Richardson in 2013 at a summer leadership conference for new and returning administrators to Morrison ISD. Prior to his becoming an assistant principal, Mr. Richardson was a coach, which has always remained an essential part of his educator identity. That is, when he is not dressed to the nines[34] in a business suit, he wears athletic shorts or pants, a district T-shirt, and sneakers.

Mr. Richardson shows his southern roots not only his drawl but also in the way he greets you every time: "Hey, howya doin'?" He is what some people would call a "transplanted Texan"

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[33] Drew Richardson is a pseudonym.
[34] "To the nines" is an English/Scottish expression, meaning "to perfection" or "to the highest degree."

because he is not a native but hails from a state in the definitional Deep South[35]. Nonetheless, his upbringing and educational experiences in a southern city of 7000 people have certainly shaped his understanding of the importance of community and schooling. For example, his favorite teacher's husband "was also *the town dentist*" (Richardson Talk, 4/12/2020), which created a familiar and caring relationship within and outside of the classroom. And most of his Black teachers also lived in his neighborhood and knew students' parents. According to Siddle Walker (1996), this kind of circumstance serves as *school and community outreach* in which Black teachers may visit homes, churches, and even local grocery stores to engage parents in matters of student academic progress as well as discipline issues.

As a Black male with a muscular, athletic build, Mr. Richardson has to counter stereotypical reactions to his appearance every day. He is often viewed as the "heavy" or the "mentor" by parents and teachers (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020). These perceptions are common about Black male educators usually because there are so few of them. And while the notion of Black males as mentors and role models is rooted in Black culture and makes good cultural sense, these cultural ways of caring and empowering become stereotypes and role entrapment in the school system (Brown, 2012; Mabokela & Madsen, 2000). Of note, he does not feel compelled to accept either role.

On March 4, 2020, I went to MMS to talk with the principal Mrs. Williams to recruit teachers for this study. After meeting with Mrs. Williams, I was escorted to Mr. Richardson's office to chat with him as he was already a participant. We ended up walking the walls together because he had to monitor the halls during the passing period. Having been at MMS for one year

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[35] Texas and Florida are sometimes considered geographically a part of the Deep South, but historically Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina make up this subregion due to their dependence on the pre-Civil War slavery economy and plantation system.

as an instructional coach, I had forgotten how wide the halls were when empty but completely inadequate when full with students, nearly 1000 of them at the same time.

I followed Mr. Richardson to the 500 Hall, which is usually a gathering spot for social time between classes but it is also logistically a nightmare. It is the only part of the building with stairs, splintering students in two different directions and levels, which often means pushing and shoving to go up or down. As I stood in the corner watching, Mr. Richardson encouraged the students to move along and not block the stairs. I laughed because I remember that I used to have duty in this same area, and the task remains a daunting one. Within four minutes, most of the hallway was clear, a few students sprinting here and there to get to their classes before the tardy bell, braking behind requests to "slow down" or "stop running." After the tardy bell, Mr. Richardson and I returned to his office, where three Black boys sat, waiting on him. I did not ask why they were there. I just understood. Sometimes students come on their own, sometimes they're sent. There is a non-stop revolving door between the classroom and the AP's office. Negotiating and understanding the need for order

I asked Mr. Richardson some of the same questions that I asked Madison, tailoring many of the questions relevant to their positions and years of leadership experience in Morrison. I found that unlike Dr. Madison who did not see the oppressive infrastructure when she was an AP, Mr. Richardson was aware but placed it in the school's historical and situational contexts. He saw a difference between reinforcing oppression and maintaining order and explained-

> I know it could be but I don't see it like that because I guess maybe I've
> worked in middle school for a few years and I can really understand why
> some systems are in place. I feel like they come to school because it's
> probably the safest place for them... As far as making them feel like
> somebody is always watching them, that's not why our systems are there.
> They are in place, first of all, to keep [them] safe. Second of all, to make
> sure you do what you're supposed to be doing. And then again, you know,
> you always still have things happen. We are constantly trying to make it

better, but you will get parents saying that sometimes. "Y'all treat them like
they're in jail." I have to sometimes sit them down and make them realize
that if some of the systems weren't in place, it would be so chaotic, it would
be so that nobody could teach because everybody is doing what they want
to do. (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020)

On one hand, in Mr. Richardson's role as assistant principal, safety was a major priority, so there

had to be policies and practices for keeping students safe. In the world of school administrators,

safety is a prominent obligation and has grown increasingly significant due to recent school

shootings. On the other hand, the work of Black male school leaders views safety in the ethic of

care (Bass, 2020). Richardson's undertaking of safety is reflective of Black Masculine Caring

(BMC) where safety and caring lead to corrective action (Bass, 2009, 2012) in order to ensure

that learning can take place.

Furthermore, he was aware that school policies and practices can become oppressive and

punitive when weaponized by teachers who don't understand students' backgrounds. He said-

It shouldn't get to the point where the time somebody says or the time
somebody does something, you [the teachers] want to put them out.
I shouldn't have to deal with that all day long. So teachers have to be
able to be restorative in some fashion. And just know that all students
are different. So you have to be able to deal with different personalities
or different beliefs, because you know, they're not raised with you. They
have been raised with other folks. (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, SEL and restorative practices have been implemented in

Morrison but the buy-in is still an issue (Madison Talk, 5/12/2020). For the most part, teachers

at Morrison Middle School still rely on traditional classroom management methods. Or they

disrupt. When asked how he responded to teachers whose only reaction to behavior in the

classroom was punishment or negative consequences, he shared that he understood the response

because some teachers are under pressure to perform and feel as though they must remove

disruptive students from class (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020). But similar to Dr. Madison, he

believed that one way to prevent or reduce such oppressive practices was to raise teachers'

awareness through conversations and to stand firm on his decisions not to punish students

according to teachers' requests or demands.   He stated-

> And a lot of times it's people in the heat of the moment. You may have a
> teacher, you may know the teacher. That's part of the reason I talked to
> them. Because I do know the teachers also and some teachers' tolerance
> level is not where it should be. They may not feel like the next day should
> be a new day, so they hold on to that [what the student did]...And yeah, you
> get teachers who want to give their opinion of what the punishment should
> be. And those are teachers that I don't always accommodate, you know,
> because I'm talking to the child and if it's something petty, then you know,
> I'm going to dismiss it. I'm still gonna talk to the child. And I'll ask them,
> "Why are you doing this, you know, that's wrong? Or, you know, why are
> you doing her like that? Now you know that's not right. Now would you
> want someone to treat your mother like that if she was to teach you? Why,
> you know?"
> So I try to nip that in the bud but the teacher says she wants the kid gone.
> I tell them, "No, I've talked to him. He's coming back [to class]."
> (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020).

Mr. Richardson stated that it took time for some teachers to latch on to his way of addressing

behaviors because they were so used to punitive behavior management practices, which was why

he always preached that "order" and "safety" were valid concerns, not indiscriminate

punishments for minor or petty offenses that would keep his office full of students (Richardson

Talk, 5/17/2020; 1/20/2021).

Part of Mr. Richardson's responsibilities involved creating and/or enforcing discipline

steps (see Figure 5) for teachers to follow. Most, if not all, assistant principals are discipline

gatekeepers (Williams, et. al., 2020) and are required to manage these kinds of steps. He

admitted that he had to repeatedly remind teachers to use these steps because "some of them will

do whatever they want and send students to the office anyway," (Richardson Talk, 1/10/2021).

Mr. Richardson felt that the steps were another way to maintain order and prevent or reduce

excessive punishments. If and when they are used properly, they build capacity for teachers to

create orderly classrooms and put some space between their emotional reactions to student

behavior.

Figure 5

Morrison Middle School Discipline Steps

This is a reminder to please follow the discipline steps. Please make sure that you are calling parents and documenting. Documentation helps whenever you have a parent conference because they can see how many times you have contacted them, referrals that have been written and consequences that have been given. Do not send a student immediately to the office for minor infractions that can be handled in class. Please follow the steps below.
- Warning
- Remove a Privilege (also call parent)
- Refocus, use teacher buddy next door, etc. (also call parent)
- Call Parent
- Parent Conference
- Referral

Once you have followed the steps please put in a referral for administrative review and a consequence will be assigned. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Source: Richardson Artifact (5/20/2020)

I can recall providing the teachers in my school similar discipline steps, and what Mr.

Richardson shared sounds very familiar. We realize as the campus behavior specialists that any

program given to educators can be weaponized because the school system is designed around

social control and educators are trained to manage and supervise (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020).

Despite these expectations, he must put up barriers (like these steps) between teachers and the

rush to discipline, so that students aren't punished needlessly.   He explained-

> If we didn't have the steps, you'll [the teachers] be sending kids to the
> office all day. So I have to make them stop and think: Did you follow the
> steps? Did you give them a warning? What was the warning? Did you
> remove a privilege? Did you call the parents? Did you document it? Did
> you assign lunch detention? Did you set up a parent conference? Did you
> follow these steps before you sent them to me?

Without question, Mr. Richardson's day is an ongoing battle between supporting the teacher and doing what is fair and right for students (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020), and it speaks to how the oppressive nature of school has become normalized and it is a daily struggle to bring attention to its impact on students.

Mediating between institutional goals and cultural caring

Mr. Richardson admitted that he was not professionally prepared for the unique challenges of being an assistant principal. The assistant principalship is often understudied in research, undeveloped in the field, or shaped by school culture to be authoritarian (Allen & Weaver, 2014; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski, et. al., 2011). Richardson stated that he learned on the job or "on the fly," trying to take tidbits of what he learned for some situations (e.g., school operations) but using his own lived experiences for others (e.g., relating to students' needs). When asked if his principal preparation program (PPP) addressed ethics of care, he responded with a definitive "no" and added neither did his teacher preparation program. He shared-

> I found that when you first start, you are just trying to soak up everything and learn, and you follow everything straight by the book. And then you come to realize that we are not dealing with robots. We're dealing with humans (Richardson Talk, 9/20/2020).

By "we," Richardson meant himself, students *and* their teachers, explaining, "I have bad days too but I still have to show people that I care" (Richardson Talk, 9/20/2020); and he learned how to mediate between institutional goals and cultural notions of care. Mediating was also a way in which he attended to the double consciousness phenomenon because he saw that teachers want to be more caring but there was also the heavy expectations to control for the sake of learning.

It is important to note that both Dr. Madison and Mr. Richardson explained that the pressures of standardized testing have factored in principals and teachers having little time to use

meaningful practices to attend to students' socio-emotional needs. It has become easier to rely

on school-sanctioned quick fixes such as writing referrals or putting students in the hallway.

Teachers are expected to meet the instructional needs of all students and prepare them for

SMART.   He noted-

> I know we're trying to evolve from *No Child Left Behind*, but that takes me
> back to my pet peeve and a lot of people don't see it the way I see it. But it's
> kind of hard for a teacher to teach a classroom full of different levels. For me,
> that's a lot for a teacher. For some of the teachers who come in, they're not
> necessarily trained well to teach all that in one class. So for me, it's a "over
> my head thing." (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020)

He explained that since he understood the tremendous pressure teachers were under, he was

deliberate in how he responded to referrals and requests to remove students.   He realized

teachers and students were both reacting to the pressures in the school environment. He had to

find alternative ways of addressing behavior to disrupt the institutional consequences that

weren't always productive or appropriate. Like Dr. Madison, Richardson turned to the cultural

practice of "talking with the heart" (Collins, 2009). He shared-

> As an administrator, I may talk to you. Lot of times, it's about listening or
> them feeling like you're listening. When opposed to, they may be used to
> someone, because of their behavior, [teachers] don't want to hear anything
> that they're saying. Because it's been the same-old same-old for the last
> three months and today ain't happening. "I don't want to hear anything you
> saying. I'm going to write you off as soon as you walk through the door.
> Even when they're sent to the office, we'll have a conversation. And if it's a
> situation where I can help or do something to change behavior, I will.
> Toward the end of the conversation, [students] may realize, "Okay, that's
> something I should not have done."   (Richardson Talk, 4/12/2020)

Richardson recognized that teachers were frustrated when they sent students to the office but felt

students should have the opportunity to tell their side of the story.

After these conversations, Richardson found that he often needed to mediate conflicts

between teachers and students. He explained-

I dismiss [some things which] means I'm giving them an alternative

consequence, and I'm going to have some type of restorative conversation. And yeah, you get those [teachers]that will write a referral and check to see what kind of consequence that they [the kids] get. And I might tell them [the kids], "You know what, come see me during lunch. When you get your lunch, you come see me." And he might have lunch detention instead of ISS at that particular time. (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020)

Richardson acknowledged that most behaviors were minor (see Table 7), such as dress code but he still had conversations with them 75-80% of time.

Table 7

Student Behaviors Resulting in "Put Outs"[36] or Disciplinary Referrals

Top Five Reported by Teachers
1. Students violating the dress code (e.g., no ID Badge, sagging, no belt) 2. Students not doing their work (considered a classroom disruption) 3. Students talking back to the teacher (classified as defiance or disrespect) 4. Students calling classmates' names (e.g., insults or slurs) 5. Students not bringing materials to/for class
Source: Richardson Artifact (1/19/2021)

Though Mr. Richardson considered many behaviors on this list "minor," they can result in severe formal consequences for students. Formal consequences are found in the discipline matrix (see Appendices A and B).   The ways in which he disrupted formal consequences varied, depending on the infraction. If a student received referrals for not doing their work, Mr. Richardson talked to the teachers and reminded them to follow the discipline steps (e.g., call parents). Whenever he received multiple referrals for a student for the same behavior, he found the need to investigate the reasons. For example, dress code violations, especially for Black students, often result in some kind of negative consequence, especially in the secondary setting. If dress code is written

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[36] "Put outs" are instances when students are put out of class for disrupting. They may or may not be sent to the office or receive a referral. "Put outs" are frowned upon by administrators because it becomes a safety issue if "put out" students end up roaming the halls.

up as a disruption, it could mean a trip to in-school suspension (ISS) for three days or even a

two-day out of school suspension (OSS) (see Appendix A). This was why he always chose to

investigate first. He told me, "Yeah, I can follow the [discipline] matrix but I make exceptions, a

lot of times" (Richardson Talk, 4/12/2020). He described a common scenario with students who

were out of dress code:

> Richardson: "You know what? You going to class today."
> Student: "Well, I don't have an [ID] badge."
> Richardson: "I know. Imma get you one. You're going to class."

After talking to students, Richardson learned that they were usually avoiding class for a variety

of reasons. The goal of returning students to class was so that they could continue to learn

(Richardson Talk, 4/12/2020).

Because some children were constantly violating the code of conduct, they were being

labeled troublemakers and some teachers felt justified in sending them to office or writing

referrals. Mr. Richardson disagreed that punishment should be the only response. He said-

> Yeah, you hear that quite often, especially working in Title I[37] that the kids are
> bad...It's a very small percentage that you really have to work with because
> you might not have that parent support. (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020)

To work with such students, Richardson still utilized "talking with the heart" first. He applied

institutional consequences once he felt he had no other options. While he cared for students and

found alternative ways to give them meaningful consequences, he also needed to attend to the

concerns of teachers and students who felt the learning environment was hindered by persistent

misbehavior. He shared-

> Now, I give everybody a chance. And even when it's persistent, I will
> still try, but after so long, then I just give you what you get. Because, you
> know, like I tell them when they come in, I'm going to be probably the
> easiest person to get along with on this campus and if you can't get along

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[37] Title I is a federal classification that identifies the funding schools receive to support the education and needs of
students who are from low-income families.

with me, then you got an issue so--.   And you know, I tell them that, and
someone will agree, "Yeah, you right, Mr. Richardson." (Richardson Talk, 4/12/2020)

He also informed me-

> Ultimately you come to that decision sometimes, what do you do? It's
> February. We're getting ready for SMART camps, getting ready for this.
> We're getting ready for that. I gave this particular student every opportunity,
> every chance. I made a way, went out of my way and tried to curb
> behavior. Now, do I keep you here to wreak havoc where teachers can't
> teach, where the students can't learn? When you're not trying to learn?
> Do I keep you here? Or do I send you somewhere where it may be best
> for you because now you're in a smaller setting. (Richardson Talk, 4/12/2020)

In these situations, he did not feel as though ISS, OSS or DAEP were punishments. "I try to

work with them all but some, you know, they just got to get that tough love" (Richardson Talk,

4/12/2020). More importantly, he had to show teachers tough love also. He believed that

teachers needed to share in responsibility for what occurred in their classrooms. He shared-

> You're the teacher, you have to have some management yourself. It's not
> just send them to the office because you're mad or they did something you
> didn't like. It's kinda--. You gotta balance it somehow because they're
> coming back to class.   (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020)

At the beginning of the school year and throughout the semesters, Richardson continued to

support teachers with restorative training and one-on-conversations, especially new teachers, and

showing them to use both institutional and interpersonal care because "a well-managed

classroom just doesn't happen" (Richardson Talk, 9/20/2020).

Discussion

I drew upon Critical Race/BlackCrit and Black Feminist Thought as theoretical

frameworks to guide this dissertation study. These frameworks assisted me in learning how the

participants understood and negotiated the oppressive infrastructure schools and ways in which

they disrupted paternalistic practices in order to elevate Black-ness as a disruptive pedagogy. Dr.

Madison and Mr. Richardson's actions illustrate that they use Black ways of leading and caring

to provide culturally meaningful responses to student behavior and attend to their potential.

After analyzing their narratives, I have generated four themes.

Theme 1: Embracing the ethic of risk.

Like in these segregated schools of the past, Black principals saw Black children's potential, were committed to their academic success, and cared about their social-emotional well-being (Echols, 2006; Tillman, 2004; Walker, 1996). Understanding and navigating the oppressive school structures for contemporary principals is complex. They are obligated by hierarchy standards and higher authority to follow the expectations of the district, the top-down from superintendent to principal. It is important for principals to carry the mission and vision of the district. Unless a principal is successful at doing their own thing, they are usually seen as bucking the system. They have to work with this system, represent this system, but challenge it at the same time. Dr. Madison shared-

> ...you can be as competent and capable and have all of the data to show,
> but there's still-. You know sometimes people don't necessarily want
> to listen to what you have to say because you're a female. And when
> you come across as--, if you are direct, if you know what you want, if
> you're very particular, you can come across as not being a team player.
> You can come across, like, oh, she's aggressive. (Madison Talk, 9/21/2020)

Dr. Madison's reflections have all the hallmarks of gender hostility (e.g., aggression and timidity) and disempowerment (e.g., not a team player) that Black women endure in their principalships, especially when taking risks to change the culture of their campuses.

For Mr. Richardson, assuming risks was akin to undermining his principal's authority when it came maintaining order and following established discipline policies. For example, when students committed major offenses, ones that disrupt the learning environment, he could not respond culturally, even if the students were "A or top-tier" students or there were mitigating circumstances. He had to send them to DAEP. He explained-

This is something they have to learn from, but I'm gonna have to send
them. You know, I know there is no way around that. If I don't send
them, then my boss is going to say, "Hey, what happened?"
(Richardson Talk, 9/20/20)

Principals rely heavily on their APs to maintain campus law and order; teachers depend on them

to remove disruptive students and provide punitive consequences that reduce misbehaviors.

Theme 2: Engaging in covert and overt disruption.

Dr. Madison was able to overhaul an entire discipline system at DAEP. Though she faced

opposition and hostility, her years of service in various leadership roles in the district also

insulated her. She could be more radical in her actions and disruptive advocacy because the trust

and currency she carried as a long time member in administration.

On the other hand, Mr. Richardson had to walk a very fine line between compliance and

resistance because of his principal's directives and the expectations that he would serve as the

traditional discipline gatekeeper (Williams, et. al., 2020). APs are highly visible due to their

surveillance, behavior intervention and campus safety duties, so by design, they have the most

potential to inflict physical and emotional harm on students. While Mr. Richardson's use of

institutional consequences may rarely be questioned or overturned, his use of cultural practices

and alternative disciplining certainly would be.

Theme 3: Caring through the Black lived experience.

 "Following everything straight by the book" [the way leadership is taught in university

principal programs] did not align with the needs of their students because it was not based in

Black reality. Dr. Madison and Mr. Richardson stated that while they tried to implement the

academic knowledge to guide their own behaviors and decision-making practices, their lived

experiences had greater influence.   Madison's decision-making mindset reflects womanist

caring. Alice Walker (1983) coined womanism[7] to define a Black feminist who-

appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility
(values tears as a natural counter-balance of laughter) and women's
strength… Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people...(p. xii).

Womanist caring specifically embraces the maternal, political clarity, and the ethic of risk

(Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002). Womanist caring situates Black-ness within teaching, learning,

and behaving.

Mr. Richardson's decision-making mindset reflects Black Masculine Caring (BMC).

There is so much negative, diametrically opposing mythology around Black men: as

unsupportive, emotionally absent, and negligent in the needs of Black children, especially their

own or as emasculated, dominated by women, and with poor self-esteem (Staples, 1978).

Stereotypes and gendered racism impact Black male educators' ability to reconcile societal

notions of Black masculinity and caring in the feminized field of education (Bass, 2020; Bass &

Alston, 2018; Wingfield et. al., 2010).

In their research on Black men in principalships, Bass and Alston (2018) examined how

Black male principals practice both interpersonal and institutional care and the impact of their

caring on students and school culture and climate.   They noted-

> In their demonstration of institutional care, principals can incorporate the
> principles of Black Masculine Caring in order to create schools with
> positive school cultures and climates where all students can thrive. The
> BMC framework posits that Black men express care as nurturing fathers,
> providers, counselors, and even disciplinarians when necessary. They
> must also balance the incorporation of the ethic of community, considering
> the communal over the individual (Furman, 2004), while rules, policies
> and procedures that do no harm to vulnerable populations.   (p. 783)

Of all the tenets of BMC, Richardson's handling of policies, as related to discipline, is the most

evident because he utilizes flexibility in order to pursue fairness. This is very significant because

as an assistant principal, Richardson takes direction from his principal whose perspectives and

goals may override his own. In pursuing care for students, Richardson must balance his

obligations to his principal and teachers as well as his obligations to his students.

Theme 4: Bringing awareness to unfair paternalistic practices.

Dr. Madison and Mr. Richardson are both aware that student persistent misbehavior is

not indicative of being a "bad Black kid," that some behavior is a response to environmental

stress (Allen, et. al., 2013) or the oppressive infrastructure, and that some discipline procedures

are necessary to avoid chaos and promote safety. Because of their awareness, they make efforts

to pursue fairness and justice when they operationalized cultural notions of care.   Additionally,

they work with teachers to adopt alternative ways of responding to behavior so that caring,

understanding, and healing become a normal part of the school and classroom culture.

She had to show her staff that some students face many oppressive and dehumanizing

interactions at school and at home; therefore, there is a need to attend to their social-emotional

well-being. She showed her staff a video about a crumpled dollar that is stretched, flattened and

manipulated various ways in order to fit in a vending machine. No matter what happened to the

dollar, the vending machine would not accept it. The video asks teachers to equate students to

that dollar. She told them-

> Them actually getting into school and learning is that vending machine. So
> how many times are we going to work with them and give them a second
> chance and teach them and to get them in there, or do we just say the first
> time that the machine spits it out, "Oh, well, okay, I need to go find another
> dollar"? You know, and so when he equated that and I started to see that, I
> talked to my teachers and we did professional development. So I had
> dollars in each of theirs and some of them had fresh, crisp dollar bills in
> an envelope and some people had just, I mean, crumpled up and I showed
> them the video and when they opened up their envelope (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020).

Dr. Madison said that the staff were impacted by the lesson and came to understand that even

students at MAS want to learn and that they need a safe space while there to do so. She is very

clear about her intentions to make MAS a place of education, not incarceration, "and so if [they]

can't get on board with these things, then, you know, let me know and I'll help [them] find somewhere else, because this is what, this is the direction we're going in" (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020).

Mr. Richardson often had to have courageous conversations (Singleton, 2014) with teachers who wrote referrals or had issues with students when no other teacher was. He shared-

> You know, I would take that route with it. If it's with the same teacher, I
> would talk to the teacher and ask "Hey, what's going on because he's only
> getting referrals from you? What's going on in your class?"
> (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020)

In these cases, he would go on fact-finding missions to discover what was going on so that he could help those teachers that their actions may not be fair, they could be responded trivially or they were not giving students a chance. He had to show them the bigger picture. For example, he described a common issue caused by a lack of awareness:

> Maybe you may get somebody in the office that didn't have a pencil or
> didn't have whatever they needed. And the teacher may have come to the
> point where if students don't come prepared, then they can't come in. So,
> after having that conversation with Mr. Mr. So and So, [I tell them], we got
> pencils, we got notebooks [in the office]. I'll give them a pencil or give them
> a notebook. And I try to get them to understand that they are to have some
> students that don't come with nothing. We got this stuff in office, you may
> have some of your class. Just give it to them (Richardson Talk, 9/20/2020).

Mr. Richardson tried to explain or get teachers to understand that there may be a variety of reasons why students did not have their school supplies, but putting them out of class for it is unacceptable because it pushed students out of the learning environment as well as put students' safety at-risk. Once he made them understand through more courageous conversations (Singleton, 2014), he stated that such teacher behavior usually stopped.

CHAPTER 5

REVIVING THE BLACK BODY ALONG THE PERIPHERY

My folks got nothing and they need inspiration twenty-four hours a day. That's why I'm here.

Excerpt from *Nina Simone Speech*
Morehouse College, June 1969

Introduction

In the school discipline complex[38], counselors historically have played a less integral role than teachers and administrators. Reinforcing order and obedience is not often seen as one of the functions of a counselor, though they may become involved in some aspects of the discipline process (Stickell, et. al., 1991).   The experiences of counselors on comprehensive campuses[39] around corrective actions might be best described as casual engagements. When counselors happen to become involved in discipline, it often arises from teachers' referring "disruptive students" to them as an alternative to administrators (Bryan, et. al., 2011). For the most part, school counselors apply a different set of training and knowledge when interacting with students. They are called upon not only as emotional support on campus but also as liaisons who initiate wraparound services. Eber, et. al. (2002) noted that the wraparound process in school-

> brings teachers, families, and community representatives together to commit unconditionally to a way of conducting problem solving and planning that gives equal importance and support to the child and his or her family, teachers, and other caregivers (p. 173).

Their responsibilities align with improving student outcomes either through traditional responsive services or, as Eber, et. al. (2002) suggested, integrated with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Inside the classroom, counselors can provide activities that identify behavioral issues and assist with strategies to create and maintain a safe learning environment for all students.   For marginalized students, those who may feel disconnected from the schooling experiences (e.g., *folks who got nothing to lose*), the counselor is one of the few

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[38]*Complex* refers to the individuals with interrelated responsibilities to manage, correct or punish student misbehavior.

[39] *Comprehensive* refers to public elementary and secondary schools that do not have strict selective criteria for admissions.

educators in the building who do not represent punishment and can provide positive assistance with behavior and learning (Moore, et. al., 2008).

However, the influence of counselors on comprehensive campuses has declined while simultaneously *national* attention on student behavior and emotional health has increased in the education system (American Civil Liberties Union, 2020).   According to the U.S. Department of Education from 2015-2016, 1.7 million American children go to schools that have police officers but no counselors, and 14 million attend schools that have police but no counselor, nurse, school psychologist, or social worker. In Texas, 41% or 2.2 million students attend schools with police but no counselor, nurse, psychologist or social worker (Kinder Institute for Urban Research, 2019). When broken down by race and grade level, it becomes evident that Black and Brown students are more likely to encounter a cop than a counselor (see Table 8).

Table 8

Prevalence of SROs by School Classification and Black and Brown Student Enrollment

Grade Level	Percent of Police/SROs Present	*Percentage of High Schools with SROs when Black and Brown	
Elementary	19	Less than 10%	53%
Middle School	45	10-25%	68%
*High School	61	25-50%	76%
		50-75%	73%
		75-90%	72%
		More than 90%	68%
Source: Lindsay, Lee & Lloyd (2018); U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2013-2014)			

With the heightened deployment of school resource officers (SROs), combined with the overuse of zero tolerance policies (ZTPs), schools are more likely to criminalize student

behavior, particularly Black children's actions (Maddox, 2016; Merkwae, 2015; Nance, 2016) and push them out of the classroom into in-school suspension (ISS), out of school suspension (OSS), and alternative education programs (AEPs). Because of this campaign toward criminalization, isolation and incarceration, I was interested in learning about the functions of duties of counselors at AEPs. More specifically, I wanted to examine Black AEP counselors and their relationship to discipline policies and practices (i.e., how they responded to anti-Black-ness within the disciplinary nature and degree of their carceral environment). Therefore, the research question that guided this chapter sought to learn the ways in Black educators disrupted the paternalistic practices entrenched in the discipline policies in an urban public school system. I explored the experiences and actions of Cecil Banks[40], a Black male counselor at Morrison Alternative School (MAS) .

It is important to note that Mr. Banks' position as a Black male counselor makes him a unicorn[41] in the field. Though national data on school counselors are not collected with the same frequency and depth as teachers and administrators, as of 2018, sixty-one percent of school counselors are white and 73% are female while 19.4% are Black with both Black female and male counselors comprising this percentage (Cloudt, et. al., 1994; Data USA, 2020). In 2017, nationwide, white and Latino college students acquired more masters' degrees in school counseling and guidance than Black females with 1175 degrees earned and Black males with an estimated 485 counseling degrees (Data USA, 2020). According to American School Counselor Association (2020), Black female and male counselors represent just 11% of their membership. Given that Black males make up approximately two percent of the teaching force and even fewer in post-secondary counseling education programs, the chances of Black students having a Black

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[40] Pseudonym
[41] Unicorn refers something or someone rare, unique, or unusual

male counselor on a comprehensive campus or at an AEP are extremely low (Miller, 2020).

Therefore, exploring Mr. Banks' experiences at an urban AEP is foundational, in that it will add

to a profoundly understudied and untapped source of knowledge in educational research.

In the following section, I review literature regarding Black contributions to psychology

and school counseling that centered the emotional needs of Black children as well as the current

trends and elements of the school counseling program, including counseling at AEPs.

Following the literature review, I present Mr. Banks' narrative, supported by remarks from Dr.

Madison, the principal at MAS. I conclude by discussing the themes that emerged in analysis.

The Erasure of Black-ness and the Black Emotional Self

Similar to the development of other key educational positions, the school counselor

position began taking shape in the early 1900s, with a primary focus on vocational guidance and

supporting students' transition from school to work (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Between the

1920s and 1950s, the position underwent paradigm shifts away from guidance, planning, and

academic testing to mental hygiene, that is, "interpreting and diagnosing behaviors and

inappropriate habits of students" and treating with therapeutic interventions (Wright, 2011, p.

11). The rise of humanistic psychology followed WWII and ushered in person-oriented

counseling. Wright (2011) stated-

> This new school of thought was not focused on how a counselor could fix
> a problem experienced by a child or other client, but rather on the capacity
> of individuals to become self-directing and psychologically whole. They
> described the task of counselors as removing the obstacles that prevented
> individuals from making progress toward their personal life goals. (p. 13)

Most notable from this paradigm shift has been Abraham Maslow's five tiers of hierarchical

system of human needs and Carl Rogers's child-centered counseling (Wright, 2011). Their

approaches became widely popular in education and remain associated with examining students'

basic needs in the classroom and promoting their academic success.

There is very little historical information on Black counselors, which is not unusual as many schools lacked a formal counseling program during this time period. However, contributions from Inez Beverly Prosser, Vanessa Siddle-Walker and Yevonne Jones' recent dissertation provide significant historical knowledge around psychological research and school counseling that focused on nurturing and care of Black children in the American school system. Non-academic needs of Black children

Once a teacher in Black schools and colleges in Texas and Mississippi, Inez Beverly Prosser received a PhD in psychology from University of Cincinnati in 1933 (Benjamin, et. al., 2005). Her dissertation *Non-Academic Development of Negro Children in Mixed and Segregated Schools* studied the effects of non-academic social and psychological factors on Black schoolchildren against the presumed benefits of integrated education (Kareem, 2020). As research had already been completed on the academic attainment of Black children in segregated and mixed schools, Prosser's (1933) work sought to answer questions about their non-academic needs. She wrote-

> It would of interest to parents, school people, and all persons who direct the training of the young to know if differences exist in the mixed and segregated schools with regard to the development of well-integrated personality. Proper adjustment to one's environment, healthy attitude toward life, happiness in school relationships as well as those of the larger environment are generally believed to be of infinitely more worth in building character than academic training. Mere knowledge of books, however profound, cannot compensate for a warped, maladjusted personality embittered by unhealthy contacts. (p. 15)

Her research supported that Black public schools and historical Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) provided nurturing environments and were essential to the emotional well-being and psyche of Black students. Prosser (1933) believed any schooling that pursued Black academic achievement, without also tending to psychological health, was a flawed approach. She reported

that these segregated settings protected Black children from white abuse as well as feelings of

intellectual inferiority that they would encounter in integrated schools.

Furthermore, she noted that Black children who benefited from attending mixed schools

had specific characteristics, such as not being overly sensitive to racial microaggressions or

racial hatred and having the ability to assimilate into the dominant culture. Prosser (1933) found

that the Black teacher-student relationship in segregated schools was key:

> This represents one of the opportunities of a segregated school manned
> by teachers capable from both an academic and personality standpoint.
> Such a segregated school would partake of the nature of a social
> service institution, training in citizenship, mores, customs of American
> life, race pride, and willingness to cooperate with members of its own
> group as well as with others, and developing a wholesome healthy
> outlook on life. Such a school to realize its potentiality should not be
> stigmatized as a sort of reformatory or home of the wretched, but
> every means to prevent such should be brought into play. (p. 182)

Ironically, her findings, some two decades later, would be utilized in the debates around the

Brown v Board of Education (1954) decision. According to Freeman (2011), by the 1950s, the

research on racial prejudice, namely by Kenneth and Mamie Clark, suggested that enduring

segregation contributed more to psychological damage and feelings of inferiority in Black

children.

Nonetheless, Walker's research actualized Prosser's argument regarding the non-

academic needs of Black children by illustrating that nurturing the Black psyche was given

priority by Black teachers and administrators who served on guidance committees. These

committees had daily contact with students, learned immediately about any problems that they

faced, and offered solutions, including financial ones (Walker, 1996). At the Caswell County

Training School, when a guidance counselor was eventually hired, Walker (1996) learned that

"both before and after the institution of a counseling program, great value was placed on the

interpersonal relationships between teachers and students" (p. 120).

While segregated schools often could not afford trained guidance counselors, they realized the need of having them in order to help Black children reach their potential and address their aspirations (Walker, 2009). Therefore, Prosser's (1933) proposal that a community of "school people and all persons who direct the training of the young," was evidenced by a teacher-administrator-counselor nexus. They represented a triumvirate of emotional support for Black children in the segregated schoolhouse.

Furthermore, Jones' dissertation detailed the lived experiences of four Black counselors in predominantly white public schools. Jones' research sought to raise consciousness about Black school counselors post-*Brown* as few historical perspectives on this group exist. In sharing her own personal experiences in an integrated high school, Jones (2019) stated-

> The comfort and confidence in knowing that my school counselor was a
> Black female who knew and worked with my sisters created a familial
> link by extension towards me. There are several memories that I have of
> my high school counselor more than 20 years later. The memories that
> I am going to share shape my personal perspective that my Black female
> school counselor mattered to my overall development, both personally
> and professionally. (p. 16)

As expected, the counselors were the only Black faculty in the building. Having suffered the same fate as Black teachers and administrators, Black counselors either lost employment and were assigned to white schools where they faced racism from white colleagues, parents and students. Despite this, they walked in the tradition of being emotional support for Black children. Jones (2019) wrote-

> Safety was an important concept, as it addressed the perceived and real
> feelings of safety experienced from the Black counselors' points of view
> of their positionality with their Black students. The participants described
> times where it was an indirect feeling of providing safety or security for
> Black students, while at other times needing to provide a direct physical
> stance to keep their students safe in the building. (p. 116)

Not only did these counselors provide safe spaces, but they also addressed inequities in discipline referrals of Black males that went unnoticed and ensured that deserving Black students received scholarships and were exposed to information about HBCUs.

Association of Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance

It is important to note that as a response to the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, the Association of Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance (ANWC) was formed as the ninth division of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) (Parker & Myers, 1991). Black psychologists and counselors comprised the largest minority membership in APGA. After controversy over whether ANWC was a Black or multiethnic organization, ANWC changed its name to the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) to reflect the counseling needs of culturally diverse groups (Parker, 1988).

AMCD remains an active professional counseling organization, with charters throughout the United States. According to the AMCD (2020) website, they continue to make efforts to improve their members' abilities as behavioral change agents by focusing on the impact of racial oppression and discrimination. Most recently, they released a statement condemning the murder of George Floyd and racist bullying of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities around COVID-19. They also support the Black Lives Matter movement.

A (white) national model

Two years before the *Brown* decision, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) formed and has since provided school counselors with training, strategies and resources. Education reform efforts did not influence school counseling programs until the 1990s when the era of school accountability involved the position in addressing the "achievement gap" (Wright, 2011). No Child Left Behind (NCBL) caused significant changes in school counseling, which

resulted in ASCA creating national standards for student learning and a model for school

counseling programs (Carey & Martin, 2015). In 2003, ASCA published a framework, a

national model that "brings school counselors together with one vision and one voice" around

improving student achievement (ASCA, 2005, p. 1). Mullen and Lambie (2013) noted that the

national model is for all school counseling programs across the country. The "one vision and

one voice" perspective is limiting and narrowing as it could not possibly speak to visions and

voices of Black counselors and the Black children they serve in urban schools.   The model

constitutes the following:

❏ ensures equitable access to a rigorous education for all students

❏ identifies the knowledge and skills all students will acquire as a
   result of the K-12 comprehensive counseling program

❏ is delivered to all students in a systematic fashion

❏ is based on data-driven decision making

❏ is provided by a state-credentialed school counselor (ASCA, 2005)

This model refers to the K-12 comprehensive counseling program (see 2nd bullet), which

appears to confirm that it is outside of the counseling at AEPs. This is problematic for several

reasons, particularly its applicability for counselors who transition from comprehensive

campuses to AEPs.

Finally, ASCA has endorsed school counselors as test administrators, but not without

significant consequences (Wright, 2011). Because counselors have state testing responsibilities,

they find themselves under the same stresses as teachers, stretched too thin to actually counsel

students and treated as co-conspirators of the high-staking testing machine (Dollarhide &

Lemberger, 2006; Wright, 2011).   While ASCA supports counselors as test administrators

because they need to be able to disaggregate in decision-making, this additional responsibility is

taxing for Black counselors who are essential in healing and attending to the well-being of Black children.

Trends in school counseling

While there has been a heavy focus on the counselor's role in testing and academic achievement, ASCA (2005) also guides counseling programs on social-emotional learning (SEL) and considers counseling students with disciplinary problems as an appropriate activity. In addition, school counselors are now called upon to be culturally responsive and advocate for social justice in order to address educational inequities for an increasing culturally and linguistically diverse student population (Schulz, et. al., 2014). Bryan, et. al. (2011) explained-

> If teachers are referring students disproportionately to counselors for disruptive behaviors, then school counselors would be well served to know about many of the culturally relevant strategies suggested to address disproportionate referrals in schools, including building partnerships with families, developing culturally inclusive curricula, and implementing positive behavior support as proactive strategies for addressing disciplinary problems in schools. (p. 180)

While multiculturalism, cultural competence, and social justice advocacy are significant signs, I found no literature that refers to confronting anti-Blackness in educational practices and policies.

There is promising research from Malik Henfield and Ahmad Washington, two Black male professors in higher education counselor programs in the U.S. In addition to addressing the challenging experiences of Black doctoral students in counselor education in the programs at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), Henfield, along with Washington, LaRue and Byrd (2018) also criticize common leadership models that may not be appropriate for Black male school counselors because these models tend to emphasize "individual achievement, for example, which is diametrically opposed to the collectivist and cooperate approach often found among marginalized groups, such as Black Americans" (p. 8). They advocate for a multicultural

leadership model that would allow Black male counselors to express their context and personal identities.

Washington and Henfield (2018) have also addressed social justice in counseling in connection with the Black Lives Matter movement, advocating for a commitment to oppressed people and centering intersectionalities in their narratives. Furthermore, Washington (2018) advocates for using hip-hop in social justice counseling as a therapeutic intervention with stigmatized and hypercriminalized Black males. Washington (2018), citing Love (2013) noted-

> Through Hip-Hop culture and rap music, social justice counselors could examine, for example, how converging social and political apparatuses—the disproportionate impact of zero-tolerance pre-K–12 disciplinary policies, the hyperpolicing of Black neighborhoods, the school-to-prison pipeline, the prison industrial complex, and mass incarceration—impinge on the life chances of Black males. (p. 96)

While rap and hip-hop in pedagogy is well-known, Washington's research illustrates how the music genre can be useful in the healing from racial oppression and social injustices.

Finally, counselors are charged with implementing restorative practices (RPs), such as circle process, peer mediation, peer juries, and preventative and post-conflict resolution. RPs in schools advocate approaches for preventing infractions and promote social and emotional learning (SEL). They can be reactive responses to misbehaviors or proactive responses that emphasize relationships and attend to cultural responsiveness. Within the school context, restorative justice is broadly defined as an approach to discipline that engages all parties impacted by an issue or behavior. It allows teachers, families, schools and communities to resolve conflict, promote academic achievement, and address school safety (Gonzales, 2012). However, according to Hayes (2006), Hopkins (2004), and O'Reilly (2019), the manner in which schools implement RPs can lead to the injured party facing a second victimization, retraumatized by reliving their harm, and going through a public healing process that should be private.

Marginal counseling for marginalized students?

There is an extensive gap in the literature about school counselors at AEPs and a virtual chasm exists in peer-reviewed work about Black counselors in these alternative, carceral settings. Mullen and Lambie (2013) conducted a literature search on counselors and located just 13 articles on professional school counseling and alternative education--none of which provided any information or characteristics about school counselors at AEPs. Many of the publications from state education agencies around the best practices in AEPs refer to *counseling in general* without elaborating on individuals responsible for counseling services.

In Texas in 1995, as a part of the Safe Schools law, the 74th Legislature required school districts to create district alternative education programs (DAEPs) to house students who committed criminal offenses or demonstrated serious and persistent misconduct. According to Levin (2005), state requirements for DAEP responsibilities to students were marginal. He noted-

Under Education Code Section 37.008, the state requires only that DAEPs:

*focus on English language arts, mathematics, science, history and self-discipline

*provide for students' educational and behavioral needs

*provide supervision and counseling (p. 1).

Counseling, in many cases, referred to providing services that addressed the incidents or problems that led to students' placements at DAEPs, such as drug counseling, or recommendations to outside agencies that deal with family discord or parenting "training."

By 2007, Texas Education Agency (TEA) released a policy research report on best practices that gave more attention to counseling. For example, it cited several studies, including McCreight, AIM and Moore and King, but they all focused on community and state counseling programs for students and their families. The policy report mentioned counselors in that-

to foster the successful return of students to mainstream education

> programs, students often receive counseling to help them cope with the
> emotional and social effects of reentering their home schools. Further, a
> comprehensive approach to student transition is said to include follow-up
> services by teachers, counselors, and social workers. (p. 12)

It is apparent from these sources that students at DAEPs all exhibited some kind of pathological behavior that required psychological, therapeutic and even medicalized approaches. The idea that some children were in these carceral spaces due to overzealous applications of ZTPs was not considered. Even in Mullen and Lambie's study (2013), which was foundational in its pursuit to address the role of school counselors at DAEPs, the focus was still on pathologies. They noted-

> Counselors need to tailor their service delivery to match their specific students.
> Our recommended school-based interventions and support mechanisms are for
> counselors to use in their ongoing work with students in DAEPs. (p. 22)

There are no perspectives where children in AEPs do not have behavioral problems, and there does not appear to be any AEP best practices that attempt to address the feelings of children in isolation, pushed off their campuses, in the prison pipeline.

The research on Black psychology and school counseling was considered in the context of Morrison Alternative School (MAS) in Morrison ISD, an urban predominantly Black school district in the North Texas metroplex that serves approximately 7400 students. Based on 2018-2019 state assessment results, Morrison ISD is a high performing district with an accountability rating of B (Texas Education Agency, 2019c).   MAS houses the education program for students in grades third through twelfth who are assigned for disciplinary intervention.

MAS' principal Dr. Cynthia Madison has already begun the work of removing oppressive infrastructure and restructuring the school as a place of healing. As part of her initiatives, she has crafted a space in which Mr. Cecil Banks as counselor could be innovative. For these reasons, the research question about disruption of paternalistic practices had to be viewed from a different angle--disruption of the *impact* of paternalistic practices on Black children. From the

analysis of data, two themes emerged: the first theme focused on involving the counselor in collective resistance and disruption; and the second theme pertained to reviving the Black body in a state of hypermarginalization, pain and invisibility. This is his story.

<p align="center">Cecil Banks: "How can I make your day better?"</p>

Mr. Banks is hard to miss in a crowd. If his towering height doesn't catch your attention, his baritone voice will. He has a distinct slide, which is probably attributable to his passion as a swing dance instructor.   A transplanted Texan, Mr. Banks grew up in a large city in Washington, a city with a historically low Black population, a city that sits outside of Portland, "the whitest city in America" (Semuels, 2016). His childhood memories of his mother walking to work, even in the rain, with neighbors passing her by made him a determined Black man who feels compelled to attend to human suffering when he sees it (Banks Talk, 3/4/20).

I met Mr. Banks in 2013 when he and other district officials arrived at my campus to escort the children and their parents into the building during the Red Carpet Welcome on the first day of school. He was serving as a counselor then on one of the elementary campuses but later transferred to MAS to be its counselor. At the time of this study, he was in his tenth year in the district, eleven years overall in education. His current role at MAS is multifaceted: secondary counselor, parent liaison, and socio-emotional advocate. Mr. Banks works in a few spaces throughout the building but his main "classroom" is down the hall from the main office.   He was assigned a classroom in order to have the space for counseling and healing students. It looks rather utilitarian except for a sixteen foot whiteboard covered in black butcher paper. At the top of the whiteboard, bright orange die cut letters read: IN THIS CLASSROOM YOU ARE…, and placed neatly below at different angles, bright orange placards shout out words such as STRONG, WORTHY, VALUED, BEAUTIFUL, COURAGEOUS, BLESSED (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Mr. Banks' Classroom

(Banks Artifact, 3/4/2020)

I found it interesting that there was only one word on the whiteboard related to behavior:

RESPECTFUL. In my March 4, 2020 talk with Mr. Banks, I saw that he was aware of the

emotional and psychological beating students take on their home campuses because of their

"disrespectful" behavior; but he was committed, along with Dr. Madison, to making MAS a safe

space where students could learn to feel good about themselves. Over the course of the several

months, I would come to view Mr. Banks and Dr. Madison as juggernauts for their collaborative

efforts to heal Black children assigned to MAS and bring attention to the oppressive discipline

policies and practices at home campuses.

Speak truth to the people [42] (on the real)

Mr. Banks has a very honest opinion of school-sanctioned programs and initiatives that

are supposed to address students' emotional well-being. His topic-chaining conversations

proved how passionate he was about having programs with no cultural value. I talked to him

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[42] Taken from Henfield et al (2018), defined as "in practical terms, speaking truth to the people means a refusal to acquiesce to conventional wisdom about the conditions that constrain Black communities."

longer than anyone because he had so much to say! He was clear that it was one thing to say

these approaches existed, but it was another thing to put them effectively and consistently into

action, especially on home campuses. This is not a blame game. Home campuses may be

missing key actors that can help support these programs; and in his experience, that actor is not

always the counselor because they can be distracted by principals who control the agenda. Case

in point, despite ASCA student competencies for counseling programs over the last 15 years, Mr.

Banks stated-

> there was a period where there was no such thing as social emotional, no
> such thing as restorative or no such thing at all on that level. We [Counselors]
> were just basically being used like a holding tank. It was almost kind of
> like an ISS. If there was a disciplinary issue going on, you just made sure
> that the student was within the guidelines as required by the state for
> documentation. It was never anything above that. You just kept the students
> there, kept them occupied until you could get them back into the classroom
> (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020).

His experiences sounded similar to what some assistant principals encounter, the concept of

holding students and waiting out the behavior without addressing the underlying issues.

Now that social-emotional learning (SEL) and restorative practices (RPs) have

intentionally been initiated at all the home campuses in Morrison ISD, Mr. Banks still sees the

obstacles facing both counselors and teachers that render them ineffective in being able to

support students with these programs. He explained-

> I'm gonna tell you what's happening on the real, why teachers check out
> because we're shoving this brand-new initiative down their throats that we
> ain't trained them to do. We're giving them a one-hour professional develop-
> ment on this new initiative and think they are supposed to be experts but
> they're [still] required to do lesson plans, modeling, and get ready for "the
> test." The teachers begin to feel overwhelmed. (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020)

Counselors at home campuses in Morrison ISD are often tapped to be state test coordinators and

test administrators, which is a policy endorsed by ASCA (Wright, 2011); but this responsibility

can interrupt counselors' schedules for many months, especially in the spring testing season.

Understanding that campus counselors and teachers may be limited or restricted by principal-led

initiatives or the demands of state testing, Mr. Banks reiterated that the lack of additional people,

what he called coordinators, factored in why students' needs are overlooked, under-addressed,

criminalized on home campuses (Banks Talk, 4/14/2020). "They need coordinators on every

campus... They [district personnel] see that it works on our campus" (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020).

As Mr. Banks continued sharing, it became evident that he was describing the "coordinated

effort" to disrupt practices that harm Black children and the "coordinator" can also be the

process of disruption and resistance.

At MAS, the coordinated effort to undo the effects of oppressive disciplinary violence on

Black students' minds, spirits and bodies is evidenced by the empowerment that Dr. Madison has

given her counselors. She admitted that she had "to fight to get [her] counselors" because she

did not have an assistant principal and she needed help in supporting faculty, students and their

families (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020). Dr. Madison created a three-member coalition that included

herself, Mr. Banks and another counselor, Kathy Nutters.[43] They collaborate and plan weekly to

work on their team and individual responsibilities. For example, they all attend the checking-in

orientation with students and their parents/guardians on the first day students are assigned to

MAS. Even though Nutters is the elementary counselor and Mr. Banks as secondary counselor,

it is important for them to be knowledgeable and in contact with all students daily in order to

counsel everyone on their emotional or academic needs (Banks Talk, 4/14/2020; Madison Talk,

4/28/2020). This produces a layering effect in which students know they have multiple people

who know their story and can support them when they experience problems. Dr. Madison's

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[43] Ms. Nutters is a pseudonym. Ms. Nutters participated in the pilot study and was a part of this dissertation study but had to withdraw for personal reasons.

team also designs parent engagement forums where guest speakers and resources are offered to

support children, especially during COVID. Mr. Banks explained that their collaboration works

"because there are no competing agendas. They are all focused on the same goals and use their

different levels of expertise" (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020).

More importantly, the team recognized that MAS could not continue along the same vein

as home campuses or utilize the "best practices" of other Texas AEPs because the psychological

harm done to Black students would not be disrupted on a *systemic or organizational level*. Mr.

Banks noted, "Some of the things that we're even doing now on our campus could really be

model by other campuses" (Banks Talk, 4/14/2020), but-

> until connections and relationships are adopted district-wide, we will always
> flow on the model of punitive. So until we can get past zero tolerance, we
> will never understand the importance of relationships and connections and
> being trauma informed. So we're right now working on a whole pilot
> approach to the alternative school... Dr. Madison pulled me to the side and
> said, "Mr. Banks, we have got to be the torch for the district. When these
> kids start going back better, they're going to understand that they've got to
> put that torch on each campus so they can address those kids before they
> even come here…" [But] we've got to accumulate data to show the difference
> that we're making. I know through my time at the alternative school that it
> does make a difference. But I could be preaching to the choir until it reaches
> the decision makers over at central office. (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020)

Dr. Madison shared below what she and Mr. Banks have done to be "the torch for the district," to

heal Black children, and give them the support that they did not get on their home campuses.

She explained-

> So [the students] will get, you know, 125 minutes every day of social and
> emotional help [from the counselors] . A lot of times, that right there, as
> soon as I start telling [the parents] that your child is going to have at least
> 125 minutes every day and they're going to address emotions, they're going
> to address a character development, they're going to look at resiliency. A
> lot of times you'll just see the parents begin to relax because it's not being
> addressed on the home campus. So they're not getting that, so immediately,
> some of them will now say, "Okay, they're going to address some things that
> I know my child needs." (Madison Talk, 4/28/2020)

Mr. Banks also echoed that parents see that their children are being given the attention that they need to heal and be restored, even during COVID.   He shared-

> On my campus, we have to be available from eight to four o'clock to support
> students. Then I do a social emotional learning class twice a week with the
> students and so I'm really excited about that.   I even had a parent that caught
> wind of some of the outtakes of the class and so they wanted to sit in on the
> session. And so that kind of made my heart kind of happy there because I
> believe--the thing that I was sharing with Dr. Madison, and I hope it goes
> up the chain is that we should not wait until middle school and high school
> to support students from a social emotional learning standpoint. When we do
> that, we're doing a disservice because we're trying to capture drips after the
> dam has started to erode. When we need to be impressing upon them that this level
> of support when they're in middle school and definitely at the third grade.
> (Banks Talk, 4/14/2020)

Mr. Banks' experiences substantiate between the ideal and the reality that some school counselors in urban districts face. It is important to reiterate that Mr. Banks and Dr. Madison work together to improve student outcomes and resist or disrupt practices that do not benefit children--and that relationship is empowering. Wingfield, et. al. (2010) noted-

> When school counselors are provided the autonomy to engage in activities
> that they have been well trained to perform, they will enhance the educational
> experience of all students. By partnering with principals, school counselors
> can seize the voice and agency required to impact more students with
> greater significance. (p. 126)

Because of empowerment, Mr. Banks has contributed significantly to Dr. Madison's vision as a Black feminist leader determined to create geographies of resistance (Isoke, 2013) that dismantle the oppressive infrastructure at MAS and restructure it as a site of healing.

"My folks got nothing and that's why I'm here"

Collective resistance is the broader framework at MAS, but there are also individual acts of disruption focused on healing, restoring and building students up before they return to their home campuses. Mr. Banks stated, "We need to build up healthy, mentally prepared,

emotionally prepared, socially prepared kids. And then we know that healthy people don't hurt

other people" (Banks Talk, 4/14/2020). The goal is to raise students' consciousness to the

sources and expressions of their own pain or trauma (if this has been established in the

orientation process), and how certain policies and practices within the school system trigger

them. Mr. Banks realizes that many students will return to home campuses that do not support

their psychological well-being. Thus, it is crucial to empower them to resist being triggered and

being sent back for the same behaviors (called "repeaters" or "frequent flyers" because of their

high level of recidivism). Mr. Banks shared-

> I can read these scenarios over and over and over again. And when
> these campuses send these kids, instead of making a statement, they're
> just providing us good job security because it's not making a difference
> These kids are doing the same thing. And the campuses are just rubber-
> stamping the kids right back to us. So it's great job security, but are we
> really doing all we can from a school perspective? (Banks Talks, 9/27/2020).

More importantly**,** because there are substantial reasons why many students are assigned to

MAS, Mr. Banks recognizes, after working with these students, that some of their actions

represent a longing to be heard or seen. He shared, "By the time they hit my doorstep at DAEP,

it is a recognized outcry" (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020). He has tried to impress upon central office

the need to move with the times. He explained-

> Why should it even get to that point? Why is it that they're only being
> identified now as needing additional support? Those kids have fallen
> through the cracks way before it gets to that. all that documentation
> for them to get to that point has no other interventions in it. A little
> sprinkle of AEP here and there but that was it. (Banks Talk, 4/14/2020)

Upon being assigned to MAS, students go through orientation with their parents in which their

personal histories and needs are noted. They all share characteristics that can be defined as

marginalizing (see Figure 7) and become trapped in the revolving door of punishment with few

faculty on home campuses having the time to explore the mitigating circumstances. When asked

to describe the students who are assigned to MAS, Mr. Banks made sure to inform me that many

"were smart kids who were just followers" and-

> they may be students who did not want to follow rules from their teachers
> and administrators. Students who want out of class. Students who smoke.
> Students who sold drugs at school. Students who got into fights. Of course,
> students who were dealing with a lot of sexual issues. They are the students
> that the other campuses say, "If you remove this student, I can teach."
> (Banks, 9/27/2020).

Figure 7

Normalized, Marginalized and Hypermarginalized Descriptors

hypermarginalized	marginalized	normalized
• trapped in the constant cycle of disciplinary actions (labeled a recidivist) • pushed out to "othered" school systems such as AEPs and JJAEPs	• Black, Indigenous, of color • lower to middle social class • physically, cognitively or intellectually diverse • nonbinary, LGBTQ+ (also heterosexual, cisgender) • academically at-risk	• white • upper to middle social class • able-bodied • heterosexual, cisgender • academically on or above grade level

Source: Banks Talk, (9/27/2020); Sue (2010)

Marginalization has been discussed extensively in research on Black people as a minoritized

group in American society (Anderson, 2020; Khalifa, 2020; Marable, 2007; Noguera, 1996,

1997; Yancy, 2017). Other than race, the intersectionality of specific characteristics Blacks have

(social class, gender, sexuality identity, etc.) are used by the dominant culture to exclude them

from the social, political and economic domains. According to Sue (2010),

Groups that are marginalized in our society exist on the lower or outer limits of social desirability and consciousness. Whether racial/ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, LGBTs, or women, these groups are perceived negatively, given less status in society, and confined to existing on the margins of our social, cultural, political, and economic systems. The result is often exclusion from the mainstream of life in Our society, unequal treatment, and social injustice. (p. 7)

In the school system, Black students enter already marginalized, discriminated against, and criminalized. As noted by Annamma (2018), their surveillance and punishment result as a function of *hyper-labeling,* that is,

formal /informal naming of student's undesired identity (e.g., race, gender, dis/ability) and the addition of other unwanted identities, had an impact upon an eventual construction as criminal. (p. 14)

Of significance, Black children know that the school system works against their interests (Collins, 2009b). They see it in the unfair ways in which discipline policies are applied and how they are singled out, called out, and left out. Mr. Banks agreed, stating "Teachers need to know everything is just not a disciplinary issue" (Banks Talk, 4/14/2020). According to Dumas & ross (2016), Black children's reactions to unfairness, surveillance, and policing in the classroom are acts of resistance. Resisters get labeled troublemakers and become confined to the margins on their home campuses due to in-school suspension (ISS), out of school suspension (OSS), classroom evictions, or isolated corners throughout the building, including the cafeteria. They become hypermarginalized when they are pushed off their campuses into AEPs or the juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEPs) and endure social exclusion, oppression, lack of intellectual stimulation, and depreciation. These are his folks to whom he's committed because of his own painful childhood restored by caring teachers (Banks Talk, 3/4/2020).

Banks' healing work with Black children at MAS has deep reverberations, in that it brings some relief to emotional pain, starts students on their journey of resilience, and inspires students to reclaim their potential. He shared the following letter written by a Black female

student who spoke to the impact that he made her life--still felt two years after her placement at

Morrison Alternative School.

> Hi, [m]y name is Tamran[44]. I am 13 years old, and I am an 8th grader at
> MMS. When I was 11 years old, at 6th grader, I was sent to MAS. I was
> sent for 30 days for 3 fights, over 10 suspensions, and referrals, also a lot
> of ISS. I know right? [H]orrible! I just never stayed out of trouble, but
> I was smart. When I went to MAS I met a man named Mr. Banks. Mr.
> Banks is an awesome staff member at MAS[.] Although we were sent
> there for poor choices, he never really looked at us bad. He didn't think
> we were bad child[ren]. He thought we were smart kids that made a bad
> choice. Mr. Banks told us [our] rights and wrongs, help[ed] us, and
> motivat[ed] us. He would have conversations with us, and ask us what
> we want[ed] to be in life. Mr. Banks sitting down talking to me made
> me become a better person. Mr. Banks made me who I am today with
> the words he spoke to me[.] I was once an A, B, C student with a bad
> discipline record [.] I am now an A/B student, with no discipline record
> from the 7th grade, and now the 8th grade. I highly recommend Mr. Banks[.]
> He is a wise, encouraging man. (Banks Artifact, 1/26/2021)

Mr. Banks expressed that the letter touched his heart. I can clearly see in Tamran's words the

Black body speaking out in pain, ignored by the school system and criminalized by discipline

policies. Tamran's using "now" and "I am" illustrate a recovering, a restoring and a returning of

the Black body. More importantly, it summons the beautiful Ubuntu proverb: I am because we

are. That is to say, Tamran's humanity was bound up in Mr. Bank's humanity.

Understanding the Black body as a nation

When Mr. Banks was asked to describe his practices in helping Black students heal, he

stated that he did not apply SEL and RPs as prescribed. Because his students have been

wounded within and outside the school system, these programs alone weren't going to have the

desired effect because they centered white ways of healing and did not give respect to the Black

lived experience. He stated that he had to add some "Black-ness" to the programs that were

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[44] Tamran is a pseudonym.

purchased for the alternative school. By far, his decisions to change the design and delivery of their SEL materials reflected not only Black-ness as a disruptive pedagogy but an outright example of his sense of empowerment to do what he needed to do to support Black children at MAS. He explained-

> These programs aren't relative. Those topics I teach were just the tip of the iceberg. I teach was what is relative, what I see from a connection standpoint as to what our kids need. And I think God that Dr. Madison has given me that freedom. I am able to identify where they [the students] are, how socially connected they are, [even in terms of] social media and technology, and I plug those very things into the class. And I make it [culturally] relevant. That's why they stay engaged. And the takeaway is profound...When I talk to my kids, I have to break it down on a cultural level, something that they can relate to, not stuff like Little Johnny[45] jumped in front of them at the water fountain. (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020)

In this respect, his practices reflected that he approached the Black body as a nation (see Figure 8), which is a phrase that I created to describe a multidimensional realm that responses to spirituality, physicality, psychological stimulation and emotional affection. My thoughts behind the Black body as a nation is associated with the concept of the four bodies that are affected when coping holistically with racial trauma (Ogorchukwu, 2020). Mr. Banks approaches disrupted the concept of the Black body as property as evidenced by SEL and RP programs that tend to rely on deficit thinking about Black-ness or treat the Black body as collectible, manipulable and displayed as transformed by eurocentric processes (e.g., SEL, RPs, mentoring, character education, etc.). According to Young (2005), notions of Black body as "souvenirs" are historical, grounded in racist violence, explaining-

> lynching souvenirs embody the past in the present. They not only fix the black body within a historical moment, but also transform it into a captive object to be owned, displayed, and, quite possibly, traded. (p. 646)

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[45] Little Johnny is an often-referred to fictional child in examples of inappropriate behavior. He is depicted as white.

Many SEL lessons purchased by the district come from white resources, Mr. Banks makes his

activities as Black as possible (Banks Talks, 9/27/2020).

Figure 8

Black Body as a Nation

Source: Foster (2021). Dissertation; Ogorchukwu (2020)
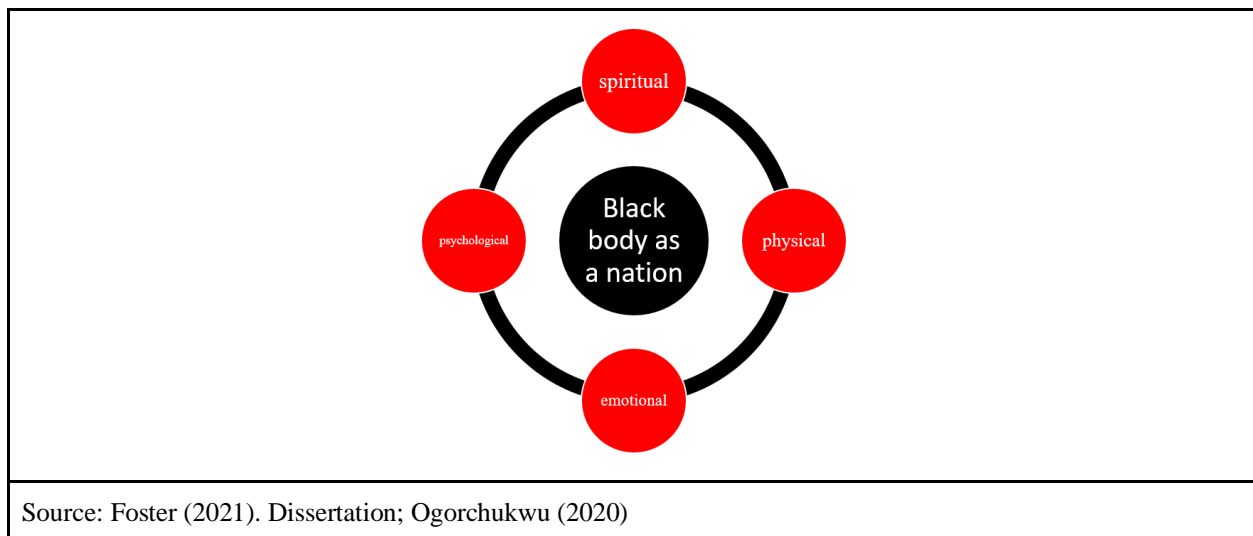
Furthermore, the Black body as property, killing the Black body, lynching the Black body all

amplify discourses that tether the Black body to violence. They all speak to the Black body

under attack but do not inform the ways in which to liberate, resurrect, and restore it. This is

traumatizing and preaches a theology of hopelessness. I wanted to reframe that Black body as a

nation with a history, geography, language, and natural resources--which are strengths that can

be drawn from in the healing process.

In approaching the needs of the Black body as a nation, I asked him about his class and

how students responded to it. He explained-

> I teach a social emotional learning class, and we cover everything. Let
> me give you some examples of some of the things that we cover. I cover
> managing worry, bullying, building empathy, conflict resolution, goal
> setting, active listening, health and wellness, mindfulness, meditation,
> choosing a career and journaling. These [activities] give students tools
> outside of their academic needs to be supported and addresses needs that

have long been neglected. Matter of fact, I have students who will say when they come[through] our program to get them back on their regular campus, that my class is their favorite... [because] I see them every day 45 minutes and an hour each class. And when you connect with students and they understand that you have no agenda other than to help them become better, it makes a world of difference (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020).

Next, I was able to secure a virtual observation to see his practices in action. On October 5, 2020, I logged at 1:45 into his class on Google Meet. At this time, Mr. Banks had only one student, a Black female named Michelle[46]. As this was the fall semester, most of the students who had been assigned to MAS in the spring 2020 had completed their placements and were attending their home campuses virtually.

There was a slight delay in starting his class because the student had not logged on at the assigned time. Worried, Mr. Banks called another teacher in the building to see if the student had attended their class that day. She had not. Mr. Banks quickly used his cell phone to call the student at home to check on her. The student answered and, within minutes, logged in.

> Mr. Banks: Hello, Michelle. How are you? Are you okay?
> Michelle: Yes, sir.
> Banks: Well, let's check in. Tell me, how did your weekend go? Did you do anything?
> Michelle: Nothing really. I stayed at home. Oh, I went out to eat.
> Banks: What's your favorite thing to eat, your favorite place?
> Michelle: Seafood. There is a good restaurant in Diamond.
> Banks: Good, good. Well, ready to listen?
> Michelle: Ready to learn.
> Banks: Ready to rock?
> Michelle: Ready to roll.

Mr. Banks shares his screen with Michelle so that they can view a seven-minute video from Black, hip-hop artist JusTme who uses rap music, beats, and rhymes to teach mindfulness (Center for Healthy Minds, 2020). Today's JusTme mindful moment lesson begins with his rapping to his song "I'm Inspired," followed by his modeling a full body stretch and finger

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[46] Michelle is a pseudonym.

tracing. In this exercise, children or adults trace the outline of their fingers in rhythm with deep

breathing. Michelle is encouraged to practice breathing and finger tracing before Mr. Banks

begins the SEL lesson on managing frustration.

> Banks: Tell me about a time when you were frustrated.
> Michelle: Yesterday, I didn't get no food. I just closed my door.
> Banks: How did anyone know you were mad?
> Michelle: I just slammed my door.

Mr. Banks used that response to segue into a presentation from Flocabulary, a Brooklyn-

based company that centers the hip-hop cultural movement and uses rap to reach students

(Flocabulary, 2020). The video presentation contains a multicultural cast of cartoon characters

who provide four steps for dealing with frustrations. Mr. Banks plays the video twice and

engages Michelle in reading the steps from the screen and discussing them. It becomes an

interactive, back-and-forth dialogue between them.

> Michelle (reads): You don't have to do it right the first time.
> Banks: That's right. You have to forgive yourself when you get frustrated or mad and
> don't handle the matter the right way the first time.
> Michelle (reads): Take small steps. You're not fully grown.
> Banks: You're going to make mistakes. Break goals into small steps.
> Michelle (reads): Be patient with yourself and others too.
> Banks: This is huge. People have to put themselves in others' shoes.
> Michelle (reads): Take a deep breath and relax.
> Banks: You can ask for cool down periods at school instead of walking out of class or
> getting into fights.

Michelle reads all the steps again before Mr. Banks engages her in written student reflection in

Google classroom. Mr. Banks concludes class with Michelle repeating this daily affirmation:

> I am great. I am awesome.
> When I work hard and put my mind to it, I can do it.
> I can be my best, and I can do my best. Because I am my best.

In debriefing after the observation, I noted the things that Mr. Banks explained earlier about

using Black-ness in his lessons, such as the call-and-response often heard in Black churches

(Hale-Benson, 1982) and tending to the entire nation within the Black body through talking,

writing, moving, and meditating. Mr. Banks stated-

>understanding that church and school were my only havens of thriving
>and growing. That and the grace of God. So when I'm working one-on-
>one with a student, first of all, I teach them how to forgive themselves.
>I want them to understand that you're not perfect. Every one of my classes
>starts out with mindfulness. I started out with what I call a mindful minute
>and once we go to that mindful minute where you connect with yourself
>and you realign yourself and you're aware of your surroundings, then
>I go through a call out. At the end of class, we have a class reflection.
>I believe it's important for us to go through daily affirmations with these
>kids because even if the buy in isn't there right now, if they catch it every
>single day, they're still going to take it with them.... So it's about building
>them into better students. In order to build them in better students, they
>got to first of all know who they are and that's where I started.
>That's what I love to do. I like to start from scratch. Bringing them to a
>level of awareness, where they begin to recognize who they are because
>once they see that extension carries over to school, then they'll be more
>aware of how that accountability [to who they are] must be maintained
>when they walk back through those school doors (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020).

While it has COVID has made it challenging for Mr. Banks and his students to engage as deeply

as they had before, Michelle confirmed before leaving the session that his class works and she

practices what she learns at home.

Discussion

Utilizing Critical Race/BlackCrit and Black Feminist Thought as theoretical frameworks

assisted me in learning through narratives how Mr. Banks, with the support of his principal,

disrupted the impact and effects paternalistic practices committed on home campuses and

resulted in Black students' being pushed in alternative education programs or AEPs. After

analyzing Mr. Banks' stories, two themes emerged.

Theme 1: Engaging in collective resistance and disruption.

As mentioned earlier, collective resistance is historical in the Black community,

dismantling and deconstructing obstacles that hinder Black progress in society and education. In

this respect, Madison, perhaps unknowingly, designed a three-person model of resistance, as noted in Siddle Walker's research, that empowered her counselors to focus on undoing the harm caused by discipline policies that disproportionately assign Black children to alternative education programs (AEPs). As noted by Alvarez (2020), "Healing from trauma requires an act of collective, critical resistance." Mr. Banks acknowledged that that collective support is necessary, stating-

> When my feet hit the floor every morning. I am charged to have an impact and make a difference in the lives of the students that I support...I'm just blessed to be able to have different avenues, different resources, different educational support ones that I can call on because of established relation- ships in order to help support students (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020).

This is especially significant for students at AEPs as well as the AEP staff itself. If Black students in AEPs, whether sent for "valid" reasons as defined by the state or making poor decisions, the carceral nature of alternative education further damages their psyche. This circumstance demands that AEP staff disrupt in order to build up their students' resistance. Annamma (2018) states that "(re)conceptualizing student resistance demands educator resistance as well. Educators must resist the role prison nation has laid out for them" (p. 146).

Theme 2: Restoring and returning the Black body whole.

While Mr. Banks was not aware of the Black body as a nation, as theorized here, he did understand the Black body within the concept of enslavement to an institution (Henderson, 2002). He understood from history and his own experiences how the Black body speaks out in pain. Just as noted by Ogorchukwu (2020),

> Our ancestors knew that our health was more than just about the physical, that our bodies are made up of four distinct parts: the mental body, the emotional body, the physical body and the spiritual body. Trauma can be stored in these different parts of our being, and so by working with our four bodies, we remind ourselves of our full humanity.

Though some of his actions reflect ASCA expectations of the school counseling program, he

realizes that he had to center Black ways of healing, using Black faces and voices like JusTme

and hip-hop (Washington, 2018). Mr. Banks noted that he acknowledged that his students have

to receive consequences to a particular consequence, so-

> we're going to make the best of that but I always tell them, don't allow
> this setback to keep you back. Because this placement here at the alternative
> school doesn't define you. Don't you allow your placement at this alternative
> school to speak [for] you either. So if your school don't forget you, check
> them. That's okay. You forgive yourself first. And we can build off of that
> forgiveness. If you don't forgive yourself, then you get that recidivism.
> Then there you go inflicting all that stuff on yourself over and over
> and time and time again. Even though this is our culture, you know, forgive
> yourself. (Banks Talk, 9/27/2020)

Mr. Banks' honest conversations with his students actualize Prosser's arguments about the non-

academic needs of Black children and the importance of teacher-student relationships because he

is helping them build a healthy attitude toward life and a well-integrated personality, even in a

digital, safe place.

CHAPTER 6

FOOLISHNESS, FUSSING & LEARNING

Young, gifted and black
Oh what a lovely precious dream
To be young, gifted and black
Open your heart to what I mean
In the whole world you know
There's a million boys and girls
Who are young, gifted and black
And that's a fact
You are young, gifted and black
We must begin to tell our young
There's a world waiting for you
Yours is a quest that's just begun
When you're feeling really low
Yeah, there's a great truth that you should know
When you're young, gifted and black
Your soul's intact
How to be young, gifted and black
Oh how I long to know the truth
There are times when I look back
And I am haunted by my youth
Oh but my joy of today
Is that we can all be proud to say
To be young, gifted and black

Nina Simone "Young, Gifted and Black" (1969)

Introduction

To be young, gifted, and Black and… a problem? (DuBois, 1903/2005; Simone, 1969). While social commentary and research often apply this sentiment to Black students, it is also the manner in which they have viewed the Black teacher.   There may not be any other group of professionals who has been sent diametrically opposing messages regarding their value to the school system than Black teachers. Subsequently rejected and in demand. Throughout the complex history of Black teachers in the United States, they have been framed as insurrectionists who weaponized literacy for their murderous designs during enslavement (Bisson, 2005; Hinks, 2000); as inferior non-white educators in Reconstruction era schoolhouses (Jackson, 1923); and as failures incapable of providing a quality education during Jim Crow (Woodson, 1933). The gift of Black teachers may have gone untold were it not for counternarratives that showed Black teachers as agents of empowerment (Collins, 2009), dreamkeepers (Ladson-Billings, 2009b), community liaisons and builders (Fairclough, 2007); advocates of Black potential (Walker, 1996), and strongholds of Black resistance (Anderson, 1988). For approximately 100 years, Black teachers were the primary educators for Black children. They fulfilled many important functional roles in the lives of Black children, including instilling them with racial pride and girding them up to navigate racist and oppressive social structures (Echols, 2006; Tillman, 2004; Walker, 1996). It was Black teachers' determination and commitment that made Black schools hubs of academic excellence, communal care, and empowerment.

Current studies, particularly from Black scholars and researchers, continue the positive narratives around Black teachers' use of cultural approaches to improve Black students' academic progress (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Love, 2019; Nuri-Robins, et. al., 2002; Paris, 2012). Because of these cultural approaches, Black giftedness and achievement can thrive

against the deficit thinking, problem-oriented, anti-Black mindset in U.S. schools. However, as cultural pedagogies have gained popularity, more studies are needed to fill in the gap around Black teachers' use of Black-ness as a disruptive pedagogy in nurturing and addressing student behavior within a paternalistic education system. Therefore, the research questions that guide this chapter seek to learn how Black educators understand and negotiate the oppressive infrastructure of schools, its impact of Black children and in the ways that they disrupt practices that view Black children as problems. To answer these questions, this chapter explored Teresa Riley's and Michael Christianson's[47] experiences and practices as Black teachers at Morrison Middle School in Morrison ISD.

Of note, this dissertation study is *not* another inquiry attempting to validate the race match or role model effect, which argues that Black children perform better or at higher levels when they have at least one Black teacher (Dee, 2004; Egalite, et. al., 2013; Gershenson, et. al., 2015; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017). Nowhere is the role model narrative more dominant than in urban school districts which tend to have greater numbers of Black students. This narrative is also a consistent staple in research examining "problematic Black children." The basis of my dissertation study contends that many problems associated with Black children reflect racist policies and practices supported by and within social infrastructure, which has not been a position undertaken in race match/role model effect studies.

Race match/role model effect studies often emphasize stereotype threat and the differences between Black and white teachers' expectations as significant reasons for higher Black achievement (Fox, 2016; Gershenson, et. al, 2015; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Stewart, et. al, 1989). While these studies have placed Black teachers back in the circle of influence for Black

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[47] Teresa Riley and Michael Christianson are pseudonyms.

children, they appear, however, to simplify the matter of race. To recruit Black teachers just because they are Black is an erroneous and myopically flawed policy move. Taking historical and socio-political aspects into account, being Black is more complex than having and sharing distinguishable shades of skin color. Capturing Black teachers' perceptions would add value to the discussion about how Black teachers view their roles and responsibilities in educating and nurturing Black children in urban public schools.

In the following section, I review the literature regarding the aftermath of the *Brown* v *Board of Education* (1954) and its impact on the urban school district. Given the current state and perceptions of urban schools, I also decided to review research about how education programs are preparing teachers for urban schooling. Of special interest is how these programs address classroom management. Following the literature review, I present Ms. Riley's and Mr. Christianson's narratives, respectively. Some of their experiences are bolstered by narratives and artifacts from Drew Richardson, their assistant principal, and Cecil Banks, the counselor from Morrison Alternative School. I conclude by discussing the themes that emerged through data analysis.

<div align="center">More Symbolic than Real</div>

Brown (1954), while one of the most significant pieces of reform legislation in United States history, is simultaneously a solid example of primum non-nocere[48] scholastic malpractice. Even a subsequent decision, known as *Brown II* (1955), meant to address the *all deliberate speed* instruction in the first ruling, signaled that *Brown* (1954) had been more symbolic than real (Bell, 2004). The decisions put the fate of Black students squarely under the control of historically

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[48] From the Latin, translated as "first, do no harm."

racist judicial, social and educational systems, underpinned by hard-hearted ideologies and white

resistance.   Bell (2004) noted-

> Its advocates expected the *Brown* decision would cut through the dark years
> of segregation with laserlike intensity. The resistance, though, was open and
> determined. At best, the *Brown* precedent did no more than cast a half-light
> on that resistance, enough to encourage its supporters but not bright enough
> to reveal just how long and difficult the road to equal educational opportunity
> would prove to be. Contending with the resistance made it unlikely that any
> of those trying to implement *Brown*, including myself, would stop to consider
> that we might be on the wrong road. (p. 19)

Brown (1954) was a manufactured legal victory, and much like the Emancipation Proclamation,

has become a romanticized event in media, film and history/social studies curriculum. In fact,

the underlying cause for this decision was due to interest-convergence (Bell, 1980). That is, Bell

argued, that in the *Brown* (1954) decision, Black people got something, such as rights, *and* white

interests got served in return. Case in point, a significant motivation for the *Brown* (1954)

decision was associated with the U.S. government's desire to remain the bastion of democracy

and to counter the growing popularity of Communism (Bell, 2004; Milner, et. al., 2013).   After

World War II, racial violence in the South was broadcast on the international stage and proved to

be an embarrassing antithesis of the ideal of America (Bell, 2004; Dudziak, 2000; Skrentny,

1998). According to Bell (2004)-

> Looking back to that time, it is likely that not since the Civil War had the
> need to remedy racial injustice been so firmly aligned with the country's
> vital interests at home and abroad... This [decision] provided a symbolic
> victory to petitioners and the class of blacks they represented while, in fact,
> giving a new, improved face to the nation's foreign policy and responding
> to charges of blatant racial bias at home. (p. 67, brackets added)

While the U.S. government was cleaning up its image, the Black community, in exchange for

school integration, suffered the loss of the all-Black school and the Black teacher as a dominant,

caring influence in their lives of Black children.

"I'll take my stand to live and die in Dixie"[49]

It is important to understand the domino effect that the *Brown* (1954) decision would have on the urban public school (UPS): Hundreds of Black schools were closed and their children were pushed into white neighborhood schools; or many Black schools were subsumed by white school boards and white teachers replaced the Black faculty (Fairclough, 2006; Tillman, 2004).   Both circumstances resulted in a mass exodus of white teachers into the suburbs and negatively impacted the perception of the integrated UPS (Porter, et. al., 2014). More importantly, the American system of apartheid (Massey & Denton, 1993)--created by whites to keep urban Blacks and their schools in isolated, poor and disenfranchised "ghettos"-- reinforced the belief that integrated UPSs were full of undereducated, incorrigible Black children. *Urban* had already become synonymous with Black and undesirable. Billingham and Kimelberg (2018) noted-

> [urban] is used to refer not only to places, but also to people (namely, those of certain racial or socioeconomic backgrounds), to problems believed to be associated with those people (e.g., urban crime, urban poverty), and to the institutions that serve those people (e.g., urban schools). In all cases, the term "urban" acts not simply as a modifier denoting a specific geographic space, but also as a proxy for a perceived set of negative characteristics. (p. 860)

Of note, these negative characteristics were first associated with the dysphemism *inner city*, which was popularized by American sociologists in the 1960s to describe urban migration, stagnation, and decay (Charity, 2016).   Federal housing policies (e.g., redlining) from the 1930s had already pushed Black families into certain parts of the city (Bouie, 2015), and the decline in those areas was precipitated by political and economic policies that eventually affected educational funding and race relations with city schools.

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[49] A line from the blackface minstrel song "Dixie," which became the national anthem of the Confederacy during the Civil War. This song has come to symbolize southern white identity, defiance, and resentment.

White defiance. According to Porter et. al. (2014), the large Black racial composition of UPSs encouraged white teachers to flee the city school. When white teachers were assigned to schools with predominantly Black student populations, many quit to work at segregation academies (SAs). Melnick (1985) described an SA as "a private school which operates on a racially segregated basis as an alternative for white students seeking to avoid desegregated public schools" (p. 947). SAs were in direct defiance of the school desegregation order. According to Kruse (2005) in his work on white flight, the Klan opened an SA in Atlanta for all the city's white sons and daughters with segregationist suburbanites following suit. What happened in Atlanta was replicated in white communities all across the country.

White teachers fled to SAs, taking their own children with them, which resulted in court cases over parents' rights. For example, in *Stough* v. *Crenshaw County Board of Education* (1984), which involved two white teachers who enrolled their children at SAs, the court ultimately ruled that while they had the constitutional rights to guide their children's education, this right should not be extended to them to further educational segregation or segregated school systems (Melnick, 1985). This ruling seemed to be a moot point, for, by the 1970s, there were already approximately 3500 segregation academies in operation that served between 530,000 and 750,000 white students (Porter, et. al., 2014; *Wright v Miller*, 1979; Yale Law Journal, 1972). One hundred and forty SAs exist today, three of which are in Texas.

White resentment. More importantly, with qualified white teachers fleeing UPSs, the less qualified ones were left behind, the ones who could not afford to quit or obtain transfers to the "better schools;" high teacher turnover and transfers gave the impression that UPSs were "unattractive" workplaces (Irvine & Irvine, 1983). It should be noted that one of the major

reasons urban schools were difficult for those left behind was white flight. Neckerman (2007)

explained-

> ...the simplest explanation for the troubles of inner-city schooling: less
> money and more needy students. Based on well-known economic and
> demographic changes of the period after World War II, this explanation
> posits that school resources declined because the tax base eroded as
> industry and middle-class families moved out of the city. (p. 11)

Within these ill-funded urban schools, white teachers complained about their struggles to

understand and provide for the academic needs of Black children.   But by and large, their

attitudes about the undesirability of urban schools and Black children reflected the resentment of

the greater white society over forced integration and potentiality of Black racial progress (Bell,

1974; Patterson, 1997; Swain, 2002). Unmatched, however, was the resentment of Black

educators who were no longer employed in the very schools that white teachers wanted to flee.

Urban school stigma (by virtue of location)

It is indisputable that real social conditions and disadvantages exist in urban areas.

Lipman et. al. (1996) explained that urban schools are challenged by their location and

conditions within the city that become evident in the school system, such as poverty. For these

reasons, unfavorable opinions are more likely to be assigned to urban schools, even when high

achievement, innovative programs and resources are present. On the flipside, suburban schools

are considered successful by virtue of their location, although they may have some of the same

issues as urban areas (e.g., poverty, crime, or drugs) (Billingham & Kimelberg, 2018).

Furthermore, political, social and educational reforms continue to hurt cities in tangible and

ideological ways.   Duncan-Andrade (2009) noted-

> In the past three decades... there has been an assault on hope, particularly
> in our nation's urban centers. This attack has taken place on numerous
> fronts, including disinvestment in schools and overinvestment in a prison
> industrial complex. (pp. 11-12)

These bureaucratic attacks do not happen in a vacuum but often destabilize families and exacerbate marginalization. Nonetheless, the blame for urban failure gets shifted to communities and households. "Urban-ness" drudges up racist social imagery of crime, poverty and Blackness. And as Boutte (2012), explained "...because of enduring, endemic, and generative racism, the tale of urban schools has not been a "happily ever after" storyline" (p. 516).   Rather, the mythology of the failing urban school remains a dominant discourse.

Due to stigmas, the urban school system continues to be a challenging place in terms of staffing. Because well-prepared pre-service teachers (PSTs) find it is less desirable to become educators in urban schools, researchers found that less qualified candidates end up serving in urban districts (Jacob, 2007; Lankord, et. al., 2002; Lomotey & Lowery, 2014).   On the other hand, there are many qualified Black PSTs who are drawn to urban settings because of their desire to teach their own (Griffin & Tackie, 2017; Lynn, 2006). Many universities have increasingly become more "urban-leaning" to meet the demands of a growing culturally diverse student population and due to their increased efforts to recruit more Black and pre-service teachers of color (Ukpokodu, 2017). Evans and Leonard (2013) noted that the ways in which these programs prepare urban educators influences teaching styles and classroom management practices.

"Old times there are not forgotten"[50]

Since *Brown* (1954), traditional and alternative teacher education programs have been complicit in maintaining the status quo and failing to prepare teacher candidates to be effective in urban schools (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Ladson-Billing, 2000). This is especially true of alternative certification programs. According to Freeman et. al. (2014), who

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[50] Second line from the confederate anthem "Dixie." It denotes a sense of longing for the past.

examined both traditional and alternative tracks in all 50 states, found alternative programs were less likely to have coursework related to evidence-based classroom management practices and well-informed instructional pedagogies. Their failure is a critical factor in the unpreparedness and high teacher turnover of Black teachers who are more likely to be recruited into alternative programs and hired by urban districts (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2017; Evans & Leonard, 2013; Madkins, 2011).

University-based teacher preparation programs fare somewhat better because they have started to shift in one of the following directions: *urban-focused, urban option, or urban values* (Walcott, 2019b). Walcott (2019b) defined these distinctions as:

➔ urban-focused: clearly stated urban focus throughout program, including field service, committed to urban classrooms and cultural pedagogies

➔ urban option: urban education not the focus, optional participation in study of urban education, placement, or cohort, committed to cultural pedagogies;

➔ urban values: reflect values associated with urban teacher preparation, commitment to social justice, diversity, and multicultural education. (p. 12)

Walcott (2019b) conducted a content analysis of 128 teacher preparation programs at liberal arts colleges and universities throughout the United States and found that 16% of these institutions had values aligned with urban teacher preparation and 10% were either urban-focused or urban option. What is revealing is that 68% of these institutions offered nothing in regard to urban education, values, placement, or commitment to cultural pedagogies (Walcott, 2019b). Therefore, it is more likely that Black PSTs may enter programs that are not committed to urban preparation at all.

When looking at these distinctions separately, there are still concerns. For example, in the last decade, research around urban-focused teacher education has grown and emphasizes the need to connect with urban school districts, provide a framework for understanding lived

experiences, engage in social justice and equity, and meet the needs of diverse learners (Howard

& Milner, 2014; Walcott, 2019a). Unfortunately, for Black PSTs, these programs are still

driven by whiteness. Whiteness is defined as a preference of white culture, experiences,

emotions, and behaviors (Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, Tandon, & Galindo, 2014). Matias,

Montoya and Nishi (2016) noted that whiteness shapes what Black PSTs learn or don't learn in

their programs. They explained-

> This lack of diversity and critical perspectives allow dominant ideologies,
> especially those of Whiteness, to center itself as the core of curriculum,
> pedagogy, ethics, and teaching emotions—a process that renders
> this hegemonic operation seemingly invisible, yet in plain sight. (p. 2)

Thus, whiteness and white ways of learning and caring are allowed to dominate. When topics

such as (anti)racism occur in coursework, white professors tend to frame them around the

receptiveness of white PSTs and their own comfort, or, as they claim, to avoid racial tension and

confusion (Sue, et. al, 2009; Sue, et. al., 2011). Furthermore, Bristol and Goings (2019) found-

> TOCs[51] attending certification programs in these (white) institutions described
> feeling that their ethnoracial experiences are not reflected in the curriculum,
> and predominantly, white faculty in these spaces do not push their white peers
> to develop a critical perspective on the ecological factors that influence the
> outcomes for children of color. (pp. 52-53)

In these instances, white PSTs have their culture, values and beliefs validated. Black PSTs learn

to adopt whiteness, adhere to white expectations and reject their own cultural knowledge

(Matias, et. al. 2016). Rejecting their race or heritage is called "passing," which professors and

education programs reward (Matias, et. al. 2016; Yoshino, 2002). Broughton (2020) found that

non-white PSTs accept cultural genocide (Love, 2019) to be seen as competent to teach.

Because university programs reinforce whiteness, it should not be difficult to understand why

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[51] Teachers of color (TOCs)

some Black pre- and in-service teachers experience double consciousness (DuBois 1903/2015) in which they are torn between their jobs and viewing their jobs through the Black lived experience.

While it is promising that a commitment to cultural pedagogies, particularly culturally relevant teaching, has been made in these urban-leaning teacher preparation programs, research shows that these methods in the hands of white faculty get whitewashed. Matias (2015) noted-

> some white teachers and teacher educators co-opt and redefine theories first conceptualized by scholars of color who were resisting the hegemonic oppression of Whiteness; in using their white ocular to filter out the most radical parts of these theories to fit within white color-blind comforts, the essence of their conception is lost. (p. 201)

Matias and Mackey (2015) found that anti-racist education in a university teacher preparation program have undergone a similar reframing; in their study, teacher candidates were taught racially-just terminology that was used later to refute anti-racism and reinforce whiteness.

And finally, as related to classroom management, research shows university teacher education programs address this issue in a variety of ways: classroom management is often embedded within the curriculum of foundational education courses; in a multicultural or diversity education course that focuses on the cultural or ethnic needs of children of color; and/or as a part of field service where there are opportunities to practice and develop discipline strategies (Caldera, et. al., 2018; Milner, 2016; Monroe, et. al, 2010). Classroom management reflects a wide range of interventionist[52] and/or non-interventionist[53] procedures and can largely rest on teachers' attitudes and actions toward children in their care (Doyle, 2006; Ünal & Ünal, 2012). In this respect, the manner in which these programs frame classroom management in urban settings for "urban"[54] students can either reinforce anti-Black-ness or cultivate space for

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[52] Interventionist procedures are rule-driven, behavioral approaches (Martin, et. al., 2006)
[53] Non-interventionist procedures are less controlling; allows for children's self-agency (Martin, et. al., 2006)
[54] "urban" as coded language meaning Black

Black-ness. Case in point, the following information (see Table 9 and Table 10) comes from

textbooks used in a foundational education course at a large Predominantly White Institution

(PWI) in Texas. Both textbooks reflect deficit-thinking about Black children and reinforce the

urban school stigma. They clearly draw a picture that Black children in urban schools are at-risk

and are more familiar with authoritarian relationships (i.e., oppressive interactions with adults).

Table 9

School Violence, Parent Involvement and At-risk Students

School violence	Influence of SES on Learning	At-risk
Q. Where is school violence most likely to occur—in a rural school, a suburban school, or an urban school? A. Violence is most likely to occur in urban schools. Q. What can we do to make a difference? A1. We can ensure that all students are learning and feel part of the school community. A2. They must also feel that we care about them as people and are committed to their learning.	Parental involvement High SES *High parental involvement *High levels of interaction between parents and children *Elaborate interaction, such as parents explaining causes of events, and demonstrating authoritative parenting styles Parent Involvement Low SES *Lower parental involvement *Less interaction between parents and children *Less elaborate interaction; more authoritarian parenting styles	Characteristics associated with students at-risk: *Low socioeconomic status (SES) and particularly poverty *Member of cultural minority *Non-native English speaker *Urban *Transient or homelessness *Divorced families *Families with a history of alcohol and drug abuse *Neighborhoods with high rates of criminal activity
Source: Kauchak, D. & Eggen, P. (2017). *Introduction to Teaching: Becoming a Professional*		

While Table 9 mentions "care," care is not defined or described in any meaningful way but is

only connected to student learning. Without a definition or detailed explanation, the word care

is left up to the reader to interpret, and their interpretations may include *coercion* (Noddings,

2001). Also, without mentioning race, this text plays on every racist aspect of the word "urban."

Table 10

The Diverse Student Population—African American Students

The Diverse Student Population

44.5 million African Americans
     ❏ Experience lower socioeconomic status and parental education
     ❏ High levels of single-mother households
     ❏ 46% attend schools with high Black enrollments
     ❏ 40% attend school with high poverty enrollments

Source: Webb. L. D., & Metha, A. (2017). *Foundations of American Education* (8th ed.)

It is important to note that in the Webb and Metha (2017) text, not only are Black students defined in negative stereotypical terms but also Indigenous, Latino and Asian students are portrayed in a deficit manner. Notably absent were references to or demographic information about white students. This omission sends the message that something is wrong with BIPOC and other students of color and may impact PSTs attitudes and actions toward them.

In addition to the anti-Black perspectives in curricula, Milner (2016) explained that there are few programs that focus on urban classroom management or center cultural approaches to discipline. Monroe and Obidah (2004) found teacher preparation programs fail to acknowledge the effectiveness of culturally responsive classroom management practices with Black children in urban schools. Graham (2017) noted-

> When classroom management is addressed in university teacher preparation
> programs, preservice teachers may view the democratic methods advocated
> in their classes as impractical, unrealistic, or unrelated to the realities of
> diverse urban schools, ultimately discarding them for a more authoritative—
> or authoritarian—approach. (p. 3)

What I find telling is that much of literature about classroom management practices for urban districts centers the experiences of white, middle-class female PSTs who want to work in urban schools and require support in teacher preparation programs. Particular studies included

discussions about white fear (i.e., teaching scared), discomfort and racial stress related to coping with Black and Latino students (Bentley-Edwards, et. al., 2020; Brown, 2004; Graham, 2017). Interestingly enough, Foster (1994) questioned if it was even possible to teach white PSTs the characteristics, skills and dispositions found in culturally responsive Black educators who work largely with Black children in urban schools. From these studies, there seems to be an assumption that Black PSTs do not need support with behavior in urban classrooms. This assumption reflects a bias in viewing Black educators as a monolithic group, who, by virtue of race, are already deemed more culturally responsive (Milner, 2006) or by their sense of cultural solidarity (Foster, 1994). My observation is not intended to cast any negativity on Black teachers but to acknowledge that *all teachers* need support in their preparation programs.

Finally and more importantly, there is a disturbing gap in the literature about Black PSTs in regards to their development and preparation in education programs as well as how their lived experiences impact how they teach and care for their students. Their knowledge is important to explore because we know from research about effective experienced Black teachers, but studies on Black PSTs would assist in learning how they *become* effective educators, nurturers, othermothers (Collins, 2009) or otherfathers (hooks, 2004; Tafari, 2018). Uncovering this journey of the Black teacher is a key factor in this study: to find out about their pre-service preparation for classroom management; to learn whether this preparation was aligned with the oppressive nature of schooling and paternalistic discipline; and to examine what experiences led to their drawing upon Black-ness to address behavior and attend to the well-being of their students.

Morrison, What A Lovely Precious Dream

The research about the urban school stigma and the preparation for urban teaching was considered within the context of Morrison Middle School (MMS) in Morrison ISD. Morrison ISD fits the description of a school district that has urban characteristics--that is, it is not located in a large city but a rural or suburban area but has urban contexts such as racial demographics (U.S. Census, 2020). For example, out of approximately 7400 students, 76 % are Black. According to Top Districts (2020), Morrison ISD ranks in the top 20 (out of 50) of the best districts in the state of Texas; the school districts ahead of it in the rankings are in rural areas and suburbs. High performing and school as social order, as carceral space, and as savior (see Figure 3).

At Morrison MS (MMS), maintaining a consistently positive culture and climate has been a challenge for at least a decade due constant changes in leadership on the campus. For the last four years, however, the school has been led by Mrs. Williams[55], a Black female principal. According to Texas Education Agency [TEA] (2019), MMS rates as a high-performing school, having earned five distinctions for the 2018-2019 academic school year in: math, social studies, top 25 % for comparative academic growth, top 25 % for comparative closing the gaps, and postsecondary readiness. It is important to note that MMS has an impressive record in 8th grade math: since 2013, between 99-100% of the Black students enrolled in EOC Algebra I passed the State Math And Reading Test (SMART).

Morrison MS (MMS), indeed, is a lovely dream, a remnant of the post-*Brown* past, as it is a predominantly Black school with not only high performing students but also highly qualified faculty. The four administrators and two counselors at MMS are Black. Eighty-six percent of

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[55] Mrs. Williams is a pseudonym.

the teachers are Black. The majority of teachers are experienced and hold multiple degrees (see

Table 11).   When compared to the district or the state, MMS had more teachers with either a

Masters and/or a Doctorate.

When it came to discipline data reported to the state in 2018-2019, MMS received an

alert from TEA to implement ways to decrease its suspension rate, which was not surprising

(Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020). High performing urban schools often have a high number of

suspensions (Black, 2016).   Of note, there may be a correlation between years of teaching and

discipline rates (see Table 12) but the findings are not consistent. In Ünal and Ünal's (2012)

study, which did not mention race, stated that veteran teachers tend to opt for more controlling

and punitive practices, but in another study found that less experienced teachers are more

reactive and controlling (Martin, et. al., 2006). However, there is no ethical manner of tracking

which MMS teachers write discipline referrals that result in suspensions or alternative education

placement (AEP). The majority of students were disciplined for violating the code of conduct or

fighting.

Table 11

Teachers by Years of Experience and Degrees Held

Years of Experience		Degrees Held	
Beginning Teachers	9. 6 or 16.0%	No Degree	1.0 or 1.7%
1-5 Years Experience	18.4 or 30.7%	Bachelors	21.2 or 35.3%
6-10 Years Experience	8.0 or 13.2%	Masters	35.8 or 59.7%
11-20 Years Experience	18.5 or 30.9%	Doctorate	2.0 or 3.3%
Over 20 Years Experience	5.5 or 9.2%		
Source: Texas Academic Performance Report for Morrison MS (Texas Education Agency, 2019d)			

Table 12

Discipline Actions and Number of Students Impacted

Discipline Data Trends	Number of Students
Students Removed to DAEP Students Suspended in School Students Suspended Out of School Students Violated Code of Conduct Student Fights/Mutual Combat	54 165 103 368 11
Source: Discipline Data Trends for Morrison MS (Texas Education Agency PEIMS Data, 2019b)	

Despite the academic successes, qualified experienced faculty and consistent Black female leadership, MMS still contends with its "urban-ness" and reputation for disruptive student misconduct. This latter issue was not always reflected in the discipline data numbers but was evident in numbers of students put out of class into the hallway, sent to other teachers' for refocusing or sent to the office without disciplinary referrals (Richardson Talk, 4/12/2020).

I have spent over seven months talking to Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson, two of the highest-performing teachers in science and math, respectively. From the analysis of the data as related to negotiating the oppressive infrastructure of school and disrupting paternalistic discipline practices, two themes emerged: the teacher's role in oppressive infrastructure of school and Black ways of addressing foolishness.[56] These stories belong to Teresa Riley and Michael Christianson. Some of their experiences are bolstered by artifacts and stories from Mr. Richardson, the assistant principal at Morrison Middle School, and Mr. Banks, the counselor from Morrison Alternative School.

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[56] In the Black community, foolishness defines behavior that can range from mild to severe. Once behavior is recognized as foolishness, there are different levels or ways to address it. It does not always involve punishment.

Teresa Riley

Ms. Riley is a transplanted Texan, hailing from the Deep South. A statuesque Black woman with a slightly dimpled chin and a generous smile, she has taught twelve years, four of them in Morrison. My immediate impression was that she was "old school."[57] In the Black community, being called "old school" is a compliment, a term of endearment, and a sign of respect. Such an individual who acquires that description is direct, no-nonsense, for real, about their business, and *they do not play*. When I stepped into Ms. Riley's classroom to introduce myself and explain the study in March 2020, I could tell that she was old school just by the organization of her room. It is extremely neat, everything had its place, science tables were parallel to one another and every chair was pushed in. After interviewing her, I learned that she favors designing systems that hold students accountable and make classroom procedures flow smoothly. This penchant for systems possibly stems from her coaching background (Riley Talk, 4/15/2020).

Ms. Riley is an engaging storyteller (the best topic-chainer in the bunch!) She acts out every emotion in her face and taps on the table with her hands when she's making a point. I was enthralled by her memories of coming from a family of teachers but not wanting to be one, choosing the medical field instead (Riley Talk, 4/15/2020). The way Ms. Riley tells it, her becoming a teacher sounds like happenstance but it very well might have been fate. Her old school demeanor and tenacity transmit so effectively that most of her students exhibit academic excellence. But more importantly, she rarely writes referrals unless she's asked to do so by administrators (Riley Talk, 4/15/2020). Ms. Riley's approach to behavior may come across as

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[57] *Webster's Dictionary* defines "old school" as adhering to traditional policies and practices; characteristic of an earlier or original style, form, or manner.

tough but her students thrive under it, so much so that they will do for her what they will not do for any of their other teachers (Riley Talk, 4/15/2020; 5/21/2020).

Michael Christianson

Michael Christianson is a Black man, Texas-born, who grew up in one of the largest cities in the metroplex. He knows the racial dynamics and politics of this area well, which provides him the awareness and motivation to bolster his math instruction beyond the typical "teachable moments."[58] That is, Mr. Christianson teaches a type of cultural mathematics, in which he utilizes Black culture to bolster his students' academic mathematical knowledge. D'Ambrosio (2001) described this type of cultural pedagogy as ethnomathematics. He wrote-

> The term ethno describes all of the ingredients that make up the cultural
> identity of a group: language, codes, values, jargon, beliefs, food and
> dress, habits, and physical traits. (p. 308)

Cultural mathematics was not an approach that Mr. Christianson *learned* in his education program but something he figured out on his own in dealing with students and their parents' anxieties and confusion around math. He stated, "A lot of issues that young people have with math is they don't understand how it connects to them in real life." For example, he stated that he used to cultural artifacts to teach perimeter and slope and rate of change, and it worked well. (Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020).

At first glance, Mr. Christianson seems quiet, observing the world through bespectacled eyes--until you hear him laugh. It's a hearty laugh that is as deep as his historical knowledge of the Black social condition. Born into a family of ministers, Mr. Christianson exudes a caring and patient spirit that makes his students want to protect *him*, warning in advance of upcoming trouble within and outside of the school (Christianson Talk, 4/9/2020). Like many men in

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[58] In education, "teachable moments" are unexpected opportunities that teachers seize when they see moments to reiterate or clarify information or share new insights with students.

education, Mr. Christianson encounters students seeing him as a father figure (hooks, 2004; Tafari, 2018), but it does not bother him because he possesses a paternal love for all his students. It is amazing that his presence attracts everyone in his classroom, regardless of gender, race or ethnicity. He shared with me that he had one of the toughest Latino students in the school who became his fiercest protector. "If any kids try to do anything, he'll say, 'Hey, don't mess with Uncle Chris" (Christianson Talk, 4/9/2020).

Mr. Christianson has taught for fourteen years, seven non-consecutive years in Morrison ISD. He has aspirations to be an administrator, and I believe that, like Dr. Madison or Mr. Banks, Mr. Christianson can not only improve students' mindsets but also heal their spirits. I agree with him that "God places us where we really should be, where He really needs us most" (Christianson Talk, 4/9/2020).

There Are Times When I Look Back

Based on their own educational backgrounds, lived experiences and years of teaching, Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson were aware that the system school was not designed for the needs of Black children, including from the curriculum and instruction (Christianson Talk, 10/23/2020; Riley Talk, 10/9/2020). Mr. Christianson recalled being bussed from a predominantly Black school to an integrated one and "had to adapt, you know, quickly" (4/9/2020). When he became a teacher in the same school system where he had had been a student, he continued to see that the school system did not value the fact that Black students:

> A lot of the system is set up, you know, to get the kids you know where they want them to be, let me say it like that. Where they want them to be. And I just, it's my thought that you have to allow kids to be uniquely who they are (Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020).

Getting Black children to "where *they* want them to be" means stripping them of their culture or punishing them for acting in cultural ways.

For Ms. Riley, society's perception of Black children followed them into the school system. She observed firsthand the impact of the urban school stigma when she was a teacher in Diamond ISD[59].   In 2019, Diamond ISD, based primarily on academic progress, was poised to be the best urban district in the country. Even though its students have performed at or near the same level of proficiency as its mostly white suburban neighbors, Diamond ISD is often criticized by the media and maintains a negative reputation (Mundinger, 2018). Ms. Riley reflected on what she experienced in Diamond and what people thought about the school where she taught:

> I'll tell you like this. People think that Diamond High School is really a bad place. I loved it because we never had issues with dress code. None of that stuff. Kids came to school, did what they were supposed to do. I never had an issue with my kids at Diamond High School. I never had an issue at Diamond High School period. (Riley Talk, 4/15/2020)

Prior to Morrison ISD, both Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson taught at schools located in some of the most economically disenfranchised neighborhoods in Diamond. Their time there provided them a heightened perspective on the physical, psychological and emotional needs of Black children and the failure of the school system to do anything other than control and punish them. Ms. Riley said-

> I can say that these are the kids who are truly underprivileged kids. I taught some kids who slept in cars at night. Some kids whose mom was a prostitute. They had to walk their little brother to whatever hotel their mom was at. (Riley Talk, 4/15/2020)

To Riley, the students in Morrison might have disruptive behaviors but their personal issues are not nearly as severe as her students in Diamond; yet people view the students in Diamond and Morrison in the same ways.

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[59] Diamond ISD is a large urban school district neighboring Morrison ISD.

Mr. Christianson witnessed similar circumstances with his Diamond students who came from two warring apartment complexes.   He shared-

> Those kids, like those kids are, you know, they are a different kind of kid.
> They're a different kind of kid. Like, it's not that some of my students don't
> go through poverty and stuff in Morrison I say, but at Kennedy [Middle
> School][60], that's a whole different situation. I mean those kids, they have
> apartments called the Yellows and the Blues[61] over there. I don't know
> whether you're familiar with St. Peter's College[62]. Yeah, that's the area where
> St. Peter's is. Kennedy is in that area. Yeah. So, you know, we get kids
> with a lot of baggage over there. Yeah. A lot of baggage. (Christianson Talk,
> 4/9/2020).

While not surprising, as the research confirms this, neither Ms. Riley or Mr. Christianson learned anything much about addressing students' needs in their alternative certification teacher education programs. For example, Riley explained that she taught "the basics" about instruction but did not recall "anything about the caring, nurturing or empowering students."   She elaborated-

> I mean, it [the program] was nothing about the classroom. I mean,
> you know, it was kind of like you read the Harry Wong books, stuff
> like that. Maybe how to model something, but it was nothing
> compared to when you actually get in a classroom. (Riley Talk,
> 10/9/2020)

Ms. Riley's experience reminded me of when I was a teacher mentor who gave out Harry Wong's *First Days of School* (1998) to new and veteran teachers as a guide to improving their classroom management practices. Wong, at that time, was the go-to guru and his advice seemed relevant in penetrating the realities of teaching middle school students. When I look back at this book now, I can see his universal, culturally-neutral perspectives. Wong wrote-

> *The First Days of School* is a guidebook that my wife, Rosemary,
> and I wrote to help teachers everywhere be as efficient and effective
> as they can, regardless of their teaching style or level of experience.

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[60] Kennedy Middle School is a pseudonym.
[61] Yellows and Blues are pseudonyms.
[62] St. Peter's College is a pseudonym.

> We have devoted a whole unit of the book to each important quality
> of an effective teacher. Of all these things, the principles of successful
> classroom management are probably the most important. Every student
> and teacher will be more successful in a well-managed classroom. (Introduction)

These statements clearly frame that only classroom management is vital to student achievement. However, in my experience, good classroom management does not always produce success. I have seen the frustration of many teachers when they utilized these kinds of resources that tend to promise "success" when implemented with fidelity. And I have also witnessed principals use books like *First Days* with teachers who have been on growth plans because of their "poor classroom management." Evidence of their improvement was often tied to the renewal of their employment contracts.   In my 20-plus years in education, I have yet seen this book, or any other for that matter, help struggling teachers become "effective and efficient."

Mr. Christianson's response echoed Ms. Riley's experiences with alternative education preparation. He shared a common approach to classroom management that even I heard when I first became a teacher:

> They [his program] didn't actually teach us a particular system. A lot of
> us, I'll be honest, a lot of what they prepped us for was the test. I'll be
> honest, you know, how to answer the questions for the test because the
> biggest thing that they told us is we had to look at it from a perfect world.
> I learned about classroom management from talking to the [people] who
> were already teaching or the teachers who were in my family. I knew that,
> you know, teaching you had to really go in with a--. You had to be really
> strict when you went in initially. And that was kind of what I was taught is
> that you go in and you really don't let them see you smile. You just kind of
> go in and be hard-nosed with them for the first month or so, you know?
> And then after that, you know, after you kind of get things set, you kind of
> pump the brakes a little bit and kind of ease back a little. And so that was
> kind of the biggest thing that I was taught about classroom management,
> you know? Have your systems in place, get to know the kids, but at the
> same time, you know, kind of be distant, I guess you could say.
> (Christianson Talk, 10/23/2020)

These details are significant in that their experiences in their teacher education programs and in Diamond helped to shape their cultural approaches with teaching, addressing behavior, and attending to the well-being of Black children. Having been Black children in schools during both segregation and integration, they understood that the education system was not meant to protect and value Black children, especially with real issues at home. This understanding factored in their decision to avoid being a part of the oppressive infrastructure schools, and they had specific ways of getting around it. Of note, though Morrison MS has implemented SEL and restorative practices, many teachers still rely on traditional classroom management practices. Ms. Riley and Ms. Christianson used neither behavior system. More importantly, Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson just did what was in the best interest of their children, which is, in and of itself, a radical undertaking.

Teresa Riley: "I think that's what a lot of people expect of our kids."

In asking Ms. Riley about her experiences in urban schools and the relationship between the perception of Black children and zero tolerance policies, her responses illustrated that she has seen the teacher's role in the oppressive infrastructure of school. By nature of their positions, teachers are expected to reinforce discipline policies and practices to maintain orderly classrooms; but, in Ms. Riley's experience, teachers who struggle with building relationships and providing meaningful learning experiences are the ones who weaponize classroom management practices, label Black children as troublemakers, and constantly threaten them with referrals (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020). These teachers' actions can contribute to the ongoing cycle of disproportionate disciplinary interventions that eventually push children from the classroom. Ms. Riley noted-

> I think that's what a lot of people expect of our kids. Like some of the other teachers, be it Black teachers or white teachers--. If it gets to a point and

they're like, "I'm tired of dealing with you. You're just gonna fail." The kid
already knows that. The kids probably heard that before. So it's like, why
am I even gonna try? (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020)

The students realize when their teachers give up on them; and many times their behavior

worsens. In Riley's experience, administrators did not address these teachers or even try to give

them support. Instead, principals enlisted other teachers, usually the ones who demonstrated that

they could manage students, to take over classes and use oppressive disciplinary actions to

restore order and learning. Ms. Riley recalled one incident-

> I [tried] them accountable on everything that they did...those kids were
> not even used to doing work [at all] and then I was like their fifth teacher
> that school year. So it was like, "Now y'all want me to come and fix the
> mess that everybody else has made with these kids." You know, it was
> kind of like, I'm being the Tasmanian devil coming in there, turning every-
> thing around for them, getting them to participate. Like they threw a
> book at the last teacher. So I mean, those kids, they ended up being the
> best kids ever. I mean, but before then, they were giving them the blues.
> Yeah, this one lady, she was like, she almost lost her mind behind these
> kids. Now did I want to teach them? No, I didn't. I didn't sign up for
> this. I'm the department chair. I'm supposed to have two or three classes.
> This wasn't one of them. So when they asked, I was like, I decided I don't
> want to do it. The principal was like, you pretty much have no choice.
> We've already switched it (Riley Talk, 4/15/2020).

Her way of being a Tasmanian devil was to focus on and support student potential, and it

worked. The behaviors exhibited with ineffective teachers ceased under Ms. Riley. The desire

and thirst for learning grew. She noted-

> You know, and I'm teaching them and one kid was like, "Coach, I've never
> heard that before. This is the only class I've ever learned anything in." He
> used to only come to school--. He played football. He used to only come to
> school to come to my class.
> I'm like, "What are you doing?
> [The student said], "I just got here. I just came for your class. [After your
> class], I'm going back home." (Riley Talk, 4/15/2020)

 For teachers who understand the negative impact of oppression on Black children, they have to

be conscientious about which policies or practices that do the most damage and what to do about

them. For example, when asked about following MMS' discipline expectations, Ms. Riley

stated, " I don't necessarily follow. I mean, I do and I don't. You know, it just depends on what

it is." She clarified that she ensured that students followed the dress code, such as wearing IDs,

but she did not enforce this policy during critical periods (e.g., SMART review weeks) because

she needed and wanted them in class (Talk, 5/21/2020; 1/25/2021). This stands as a clear

example of Ms. Riley's placing her attention on student potential and learning, with the

understanding that dress code violations can lead to missing class.

To be clear, Ms. Riley reinforced dress code for the most part because she saw it as

preparation for the world of work, and she wanted her students to learn to be responsible, but she

also considered mitigating circumstances to keep her students in class. She shared-

> It's not very often that I have to say, hey, pull your pants up. Like the one
> kid who transferred from the teacher. I can see him in the hall and he's
> sagging. [And I tell him,] "If you don't pull your pants up. It applies all
> day long. Pull your pants up. Where's your belt?"
> He said, "I don't have a belt."
> I said, "Well, you know, you have to wear a belt so go get you some rope
> or bring your belt."
> Now, I had a kid in my first period, and I slacked off on him. Sometimes, I
> have to realize that it's not always the kid's fault, you know? And when I
> really looked at this kid, this kid wears this hoodie, you know, that has the
> pocket in the front. The pocket is torn. The kid has tied it in a knot and his
> pants are always at least two or three sizes too big regardless of what type
> of pants they are. So you know it was like, where's your belt?
> He said, "I forgot it." He's a good kid. Not a bad kid.
> "Okay, well, go get you a rope." After so many days of this, you know, I
> kind of stopped checking for it. Okay, like, I know his hoodie was so long
> that it covered, you know, the top of his pants. It actually was long. It came
> way past his thighs. So I just stopped asking him because I'm like, you know,
> maybe this kid just doesn't have a belt period, you know? And I know he's
> supposed to have one on but when I look at his appearance, this kid is just
> thankful to be coming to school according to what I'm seeing. There would
> be days when he would come and he'd have his shirt already tucked to show
> me that he's got his belt on, but on the days that he didn't do that, I didn't
> stop him. [I told him,] "Just go sit down." (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020

When I asked Ms. Riley if she was aware that she was doing something different than her colleagues, she stated that she was aware, explaining that "I don't want to see my kids fail. I think all of my kids can be successful" (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020).

"Don't come in my room with that foolishness."

Ms. Riley knows sometimes students' behavior can be problematic, but she has developed a sense for recognizing foolishness, which is how she disrupts punitive practices. Foolish behaviors are often viewed through a Black cultural lens, so Black children understand what Black teachers mean when they call out particular behaviors. Case in point, Ms. Riley stated examples of foolishness-

> I want you to put me out of your classroom. Then I have an excuse for not having to do the work. I want you to write me up so they can come get me and I don't have to be in your class. I want to do something crazy so you can tell me to get out and I don't have to do anything. I don't have to participate. I don't have to do my homework. I can say I wasn't in class because you put me out. Okay, I'm across the hall from a seventh grade science teacher. Some kids that I got this year, I would always see in the hall because they were constantly put out of class. So the first thing when I see them, I [say] I need you to stay right here. I didn't know the kid's name. I just remember their faces. [I say," "Let me tell you something. My room is nothing like this room right here. So I'ma let you know, right now, I'm not putting you out of my classroom. Don't come in my room with this foolishness. You going to do your work and we going to keep it moving." And they looking like--. [I say," "Yeah, I saw you in the hall every day. Every day I saw you in the hall. It's not gonna happen over here. You going to do your work. I'm not putting you out of class, and you gonna act like you have some sense." (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020)

Some teachers can get annoyed with foolish behaviors, especially if they are persistent, and it is not that Ms. Riley does not get annoyed. She just responds differently. When asked about some teachers' paternalistic reactions to such behaviors, Riley remarked, "The thing is, what did you allow the kid to do from August to January? This kid is probably doing the same things that they have always been doing and now all of a sudden, it's a problem" (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020).

Instead of reacting or putting students out of her room, Ms. Riley held them accountable for their

behavior and let students know they were not going to escape the responsibility of learning.

Mr. Banks, who often visited MMS as SEL support, corroborated Ms. Riley's

identification of foolish but nonetheless disruptive behavior. At my request, he asked students

who had been put out of class what that they had gotten in trouble for (see Table 13), and they

composed a "top five" list. Mr. Banks added, "Teachers believe that if you remove the weed,

then classroom management will be achieved," (Banks Talk, 1/20/21).

Table 13

Student Responses to Questions About Their Behavior

Top Five Reported by Students
1. *"I was having emotional issues and I started acting out."* 2. *"I was seeking attention and acting out to be put out."* 3. *"My teacher told me that she was putting me out to send a message to the class."* 4. *"I was talking and clowning[63]."* 5. *"I didn't want to do my work."*
Source: Banks Artifact (1/20/2021)

These situations provide student voices to the list of behaviors (see Table 7) Mr. Richardson

shared in Chapter 4. Whether they are labeled minor (Richardson Talk, 5/17/2020; 1/19/2021) or

foolish (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020), they are treated as punishable offenses that result in in school

suspension (ISS), out of school suspension (OSS), and alternative education programs (AEP)

consequences (see Appendix A). From the student list (see Table 13), it is clear that the

behaviors could interfere with learning, and it is understandable why students' exhibiting these

actions would be removed from class. However, Ms. Riley, in still holding her students'

accountable for the same actions, always considered what was behind them. This is what I found

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[63] "Clowning" defined as acting foolishly, playing around, or making fun of others

to be significant in teachers who turn to paternalistic practices and teachers who disrupt. Ms.

Riley said-

> You know, half of the time, I can't really fault the kid because the kids are
> just doing what they see. Every day they say what they hear. Every day.
> You know they act in the way they see other people around them act.
> Sometimes, I have to catch myself and I have to think about it, though it
> may not be this kid's fault. It may be all the kid knows (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020)

Table 7

Student Behaviors Resulting in "Put Outs" or Disciplinary Referrals

Top Five Reported by Teachers
1. Students violating the dress code (e.g., no ID Badge, sagging, no belt) 2. Students not doing their work (considered a classroom disruption) 3. Students talking back to the teacher (classified as defiance or disrespect) 4. Students calling classmates' names (e.g., insults or slurs) 5. Students not bringing materials to/for class
Source: Richardson Artifact (1/19/2021)

Ms. Riley's noticing that some students were being followers was also noticed by Mr. Banks

(9/27/2020) and Mr. Richardson (5/17/2020). Though they all recognized some students were

being followers, they did not excuse them. They called them out on it.

Case in point, when Ms. Riley heard about her students' acting foolishly in another

teacher's classroom, she confronted them because she wanted them to know that their behavior

mattered everywhere in the school, not just in her class. Also, confronting the students was

another way of helping to disrupt punitive consequences. She shared an incident about one of

her athletes:

> They [the kids] know who they can act a fool with, what they can do, what
> they can get away with. But for me, don't come up in my room with that
> foolishness. You already know that. In everybody else's class, she was off
> the chain. When I talked to her, I was like, "Hey, don't make me come sit in
> that class. I don't even know what period it is, but just that threat alone.
> The kid is like, "Oh, I don't want you to come in there." Yeah. Because I

will. If I had a free period and that's the class you're clowning, I will go in
and sit there (Riley Talk, 10/9/2020)

In instances such as these, Ms. Riley's actions are reminiscent of the old school Black mother

from the neighborhood who looked after everyone's children, did not tolerate any child acting

foolishly in public and intervened as if they were her own. Her actions were clear

demonstrations of othermothering (Collins, 2009; Guiffrida, 2005; Thompson, 1998). Her

actions are also reflective of the pre-*Brown* Black teachers and administrators who conducted

"hallway counseling," that is, pulling students aside and talking to them about their behavior

(Walker, 1996).

Ms. Riley also called upon a community of care (Collins, 2009) when she checked in on

students throughout the building. Whether or not other teachers asked for her assistance, she felt

compelled to let them know that she would help in any way that she could in order to address

and eliminate the foolishness that got in the way of learning. She shared-

I've had some kids who, I mean, just act a fool in other teachers'
classrooms. And I'm like, this kid doesn't act like that for me. If I get a
chance, I'm coming to your class. If I have time, I'm going to pop in on
you, to see what you got going on, and then I'm going to talk to you,
"Why are you acting like this in this man's room?"
[The student said], "I don't know."
I said, "Yeah, you know, what's going on"
So then they like, "Oh, man. So if I act like I don't have good sense over
here in his class, Coach gone still come over here and fuss at me."
And I'm gonna tell you, "Oh, I'm so disappointed because I was like, no,
I can't believe this kid is acting like this in your class." The kid barely says
two words in my class. How is this possible?
Then they're like, "Yes, ma'am."
So it was like if I can do that to help another teacher be successful with
this kid, I don't have a problem with it. Because if the kid can do it in my
class, they can do it in your class. (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020)

Ms. Riley's visiting other classrooms showed that she cared enough about her students to show

up and let them know that there was no time for playing when learning was involved. That sense

of caring is rooted in Black culture and has a positive effect on the emotional well-being of

Black children.

"Come here, let me talk to you."

Ms. Riley would tell you that her colleagues called her Sergeant Riley because of how

she operated in the classroom (Riley Talk, 10/9/2020). To be sure, she has high expectations of

all her students; and when she saw that they were not living up to their potential, she called upon

two cultural practices: sermonizing and warm demands. Sermonizing has its tradition in the

Black church, in which preaching/moralizing sounds like fussing (Niles, 1984). Sermonizing or

fussing is also another form of "talking with the heart" (Collins, 2009). The goal to make

individuals understand the consequences of their actions and make better decisions.

Warm demander was coined by Kleinfeld (1975) in explaining the actions of teachers

with Indigenous Children in Alaska. Bondy and Ross (2008) explained-

> In acting as a warm demander, "how you say it" matters, but who you
> are and what students believe about your intentions matter more. When
> students know that you believe in them, they will interpret even harsh-
> sounding comments as statements of care from someone with their best
> interests at heart. (p. 2)

Delpit (2012) added that while teachers from any race or ethnicity can be a warm demander, this

model works when teachers and students share the same cultural background. In this respect,

when Black teachers fuss at Black children for acting in ways that impact their learning or

reflects poorly on their behavior, it is viewed as caring. Delpit (2012) noted-

> Many researchers have identified successful teachers of African American
> students as "warm demander." James Vasquez used the term to teachers
> whom students of color said did not lower their standards and were willing
> to help them. Warm demanders expect a great deal of their students,
> convince them of their own brilliance, and help them to reach their
> potential in a disciplined and structured environment. (p. 77)

Ms. Riley used warm demander pedagogy and sermonizing with behaviors that should send

students to the discipline office. She chose to keep them in the classroom so that she could

attend to their learning.   She shared a time when she fussed at one her students:

> This kid every day, when I would come in from the high school, this kid
> would stop by my room. "Hey, Coach, how you doing?" You know, just
> talking. One day she came, she gave me a piece of paper.
> So I said, "What is this?"
> The student said, "I got written up."
> "For what?"
> She told me.
> I said, "This is unnecessary. I don't get it. So then I got to fuss at you. What
> is it going to take to get you to understand that you can't act like this?"
> She was like, "Yes, ma'am."
> So I said, "Now if you get in trouble, if you can't play, it's not going to be
> anything that I can really do. They have grounds for you not to play. You got
> written up. I don't know if you're going to be in ISS. I don't know if they
> are gonna suspend you. I don't know what's going to happen. But you got
> to make better decisions." (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020)

Sometimes she fussed so much that her students would have to tell her to stop. She stated that

her students say, "Oh, she's going to fuss at us. I don't want her to fuss today." To which she

responded "I don't want to fuss either." What fussing accomplished was that students understood

she fussed because she cared and wanted them to do better. Fussing took the place of writing

discipline referrals. That's where the warm demander aspect took over. She explained-

> I'm not going to write a kid up because they don't have a pencil, you know.
> Some teachers write them up because they don't have the supplies. I get
> it. Okay, I'm going to fuss if you come to me--.   You know I'm going to fuss
> at you for not having a pencil.   You know we have school today? That's my
> first question. That's every time you ask for a pencil. But when you come to
> me three and four days in a row for a pencil, then that's an issue. You know?
> I don't think I should write up a kid for not having their supplies.
>
> [Another time], I had some kids who exchanged some words before. I'm not
> going to write y'all up for being disruptive in class. I need you to step outside
> my door. We're about to take care of this and take care of it right here.
> (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020).

Of note, Ms. Riley's warm demanding was not contained inside the school. When

students did not live up to her high expectations for learning after school moved online due to

COVID, she phoned their home. She recalled a conversation that she had with a student and her

mother:

> I had a kid who--. She didn't do her homework so I called her mama. Her
> mama said that she said that she was doing her homework.
> I said, "Is she there?"
> [The mom said], "Yes, ma'am,"
> "Can I talk to her?"
> "Yes, ma'am."
> I said, "Why haven't you done your homework?" She didn't say nothing.
> I said, "You don't hear me talking to you? Why haven't you done your
> homework? I've sent you Reminds. You haven't responded."
> Her mom said, "Oh, I'm gonna take your phone."
> [The student said], "Mommy, you can't take my phone because that's how I
> get my Reminds."
> I said, "Well, let me say this. If you're not responding to my Reminds, if
> you're ignoring my Reminds, you don't need your phone anyway. So I
> need you to get this homework though. When can you get it done?
> [The student replied], "I'm gonna do it now."
> Her mom said, "I need you to come to my house. I have never heard her this quiet."
> I said because she knows I'm not playing with her. She's not just not going
> to do work and tell you she's doing it. I said, so I need you to log on and I
> need you to send me this work. I said, I'm gonna give you an hour to get it
> done. It was no excuse. You just sitting there chilling and telling your mom
> that you doing it…" (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020)

In sum, what Ms. Riley's actions told and showed me is: It is how teachers view Black children

and their potential that informs how they respond to their behavior and how they utilize or

disrupt discipline policies and practices. To be sure, Ms. Riley did not let her students get away

with anything. She admitted that she was hard on them and some students might even be afraid

of her (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020); but they also know that she cared very much for them and she

really wanted them to learn science and be successful (Riley Talk, 5/21/2020; 10/9/2020).

Her students wrote her letters at the end of the spring 2020 semester, after COVID had

interrupted their lives and the ways in which she taught and they learned, but it is clear from the

student notes how much they appreciated her.

> Dear Coach Riley,
> I honestly have no words. I have never had a teacher like you before. You
> really pushed us to work toward mastery and told us, "Go home and study"
> everyday! I can at least say I enjoyed going to your class because you always
> kept us engaged and gave us encouragement. Despite having to pull sticks
> and feeling anxious about my name being called, I had fun. Class wasn't
> hectic and chaotic, a true learning environment if I do say so myself. I wish
> I could express my gratitude more than writing a letter [but] thanks for
> everything.
>
> > Yours truly,
> > Aaliyah[64]
> > (Riley Artifact, 5/21/2020)

> Dear Coach Riley,
>
> Thank you for Being (sic) ALIVE!! Your energy and vibe in the class and
> outside of class is very chill and you just give off a lot of boss energy. You
> have done so many things and that just inspires me to push myself harder
> so that I can accomplish a lot as well. To me I see you as a queen because
> there is literally nothing no one can say they have done that you haven't
> done. In the classroom you move at a perfect pace and have a caring attitude
> you care as much as the student does for their work and that's how all teachers
> should be.
>
> > Jessica[65], 7th period
> > (Riley Artifact, 5/21/2020)

In all the letters of appreciation Ms. Riley received, there was the running theme of caring and

pushing them to be their best. She explicitly used elements of Black culture to address behavior

and nurture her students.

Michael Christianson: "Do y'all understand why they're building jails?"

Like Ms. Riley, Mr. Christianson recognized the oppressive infrastructure of school but

viewed society as having a bigger role in maintaining how Black children are treated in

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[64] Aaliyah is a pseudonym
[65] Jessica is a pseudonym

educational spaces.   He negotiated the oppressive nature of school by trying to raise his students'

awareness so that they could avoid falling to the trap of punishment in and outside of school. He

noted-

> One other thing that I share with them all the time is, and you know, I
> ask them, "Do y'all understand why they're building jails?"
> And they'll be like, "What?"
> I say, "Do y'all understand why they're building more jails?" And so I
> tell them, I say, when they come in, when you see these people coming
> to the school and they see y'all running around, y'all kind of acting
> unruly, they come into classes and you're unruly, I say, what they're
> saying is, in a few years, you're probably going to be in the system. I say
> that's what they're saying. I say, in a few years, they're going to make-. I
> say, they already said that you're going to be a failure. And I say, and it's
> up to you to prove them wrong. Now if you want to prove them right, you
> can do that by yourself, but I'm not going to help you prove them right.
> And so you know, like I said, the system sometimes within our school
> system, everything is so geared toward the test where we really don't
> deal with kids as individuals anymore. (Christianson Talk,5/22/2020)

Talking to Black children about prison, as if projecting their futures, may sound harsh and even

threatening, but as noted by Thompson (1998), such frank conversations with Black children is

associated with the Black feminist ethic of caring. Thompson (1998) called such frankness *a*

pragmatic orientation toward survival, explaining:

> In a hostile, racist society, Black families cannot risk having their children
> caught unaware by racism. One of the tasks of the Black family, therefore,
> to prepare children to cope: to face racism with resilience. What white
> children (not to mention adults) can afford to ignore, children of color
> may be forced to learn. For example, African American may be taught
> economic struggle, racial trouble, and their own history as props support-
> ing the American dream. Far from trying to project childish innocence,
> caring African American adults are intent on alerting young people to
> the various threats to their survival and flourishing… (p. 535)

In addition, because society, in general, does not see Black children as children or even human

(Haslam & Loughnan, 2014; S. Patton, 2014; Vargas & James, 2013), then the school system can

justify using punitive, oppressive consequences against them (Crenshaw, 2015; Ferguson, 2002;

Ladson-Billings, 2011; Morris, 2016). Mr. Christian stated-

> Because they know when I have a conversation with them, they're like, "Oh
> oh, you know, he's fixing to talk to us. Now we fixing to hear it." You know,
> and so they know, hey, but at the end of the day, like I say, they know that I care.
> And that's what I try to make them understand more than anything. I'm not
> telling you this to make you be somebody who you're not. I'm telling you
> this because this is the way that society has, you know, has basically said this
> is who you have to be, you know, and I want you to be who you are.
> (Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020)

Mr. Christianson understood how important it was to share this message with all students

but especially Black boys and girls who tended to push the limits at school. He wanted them to

know that they were not bad children but that is how they would be perceived. He continued-

> You know, sometimes they are loud. That's culture. They're loud. You know,
> that's just a part of them. You know, sometimes I try to tell them, you know,
> okay, I get that. That's how you do this out here. And I understand that. I
> understand it. When I see you in the street and you come up to me, I say, but
> we have to understand the difference. (Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020)

He explained that he used himself as an example and discussed that he had to use code-switching

in order to enter and survive certain spaces. And while code-switching is now rejected and

viewed from the frame of double consciousness, there was a time, especially for Black people

from an older generation, code-switching was called upon to survive and work in white spaces.

Mr. Christianson said that he wanted his students to be prepared for the reactions that they would

get from teachers and even police, as not to "change who they are" but to be aware

(Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020); and that his directness and honesty are borne out of his own

lived experience. Mr. Christianson stated-

> I have an actual love for, you know, our Black kids. You know, because I
> understand what they go through. Well, this is the one thing that I've always
> learned. The kids are not going to learn anything from you until you know how,
> until they know how much you really care for them. You can sit there and
> teach until you're blue in the face and you can have the best knowledge. But if

those kids don't think that you really care for them, they're not trying to hear
nothing that you have to say. (Christianson Talk, 4/9/2020).

His mission to raise Black children's awareness about racism and oppression spoke to how he

positioned himself in the school system. He did not see himself as someone "inside" of it but as

someone who had the responsibility to inform Black children, particularly Black boys about their

potential. He shared-

I really spend a lot of time talking to them, pulling them to the side, trying
to help them to understand that really society really is not set up for you.
Let me help you understand that first of all, you know? You're already on
the outside looking in. I say, so when you do certain things, then it basically
magnifies the situation or magnifies the spotlight on you, whereas sometimes
if you just kind of do what you're supposed to do and handle your business--.
(Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020)

Mr. Christianson engaged in a type of life-coaching when he spoke to his students. The life-

coaching discussions refocused his students with tough love. His actions are common among

Black men who position themselves as otherfathers (hooks, 2004; Tafari, 2018). He felt as

though these tough conversations were necessary to help his students, particularly his Black boys

navigate the world. He said, "A lot of times our kids, especially our Black males, don't know

how to deal with society because we don't teach them how to deal and interact in society"

(Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020).

In our first talk, Mr. Christianson mentioned how he was very aware of racial politics and

civil rights during his youth. This experience was connected to his father and other male

members serving as pastors and ministers.   He used this background in his math classes. He

believed that calling upon the ancestors in Black history supported his students to not fall for

anti-Black social messages that they hear in school. He explained-

I was just telling [someone that] these young people are so far removed
from the Civil Rights Movement and all that. It was like where, really,
I mean, they hear about it, they know about it, but they really don't

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understand it because they're so far removed. You know, it's not something that we talk about. And so what I try to do is bridge that gap. You know, I try to meet where they are, but at the same time, let them know, "Hey, this is where you come from. This is what we come from. And this is what we are able to do. And if we were able to do it, you're able to do that." (Christianson Talk, 4/9/2020).

When he spoke of his students being far removed, it was in reference to the fact that many schools gloss over or totally ignore social studies and history to focus on the testing subjects (reading and math). McGuire (2007) has written about the consequences for urban schools and children of color when social studies and history are treated superficially:

> If educators continue to narrow the curriculum, reading and mathematics test scores may rise, but at what cost? If our young people, particularly children in poverty, do not understand or value our democracy and their role in such a society and do not believe that they can make a difference, why does school matter? (p. 624)

It is incumbent upon Black teachers to share the importance of history with Black children because the school system fails to do so, which is the same sentiment expressed by Dr. Madison at the Morrison Alternative School. In a speech in which she insisted on Black-ness for Black children, Nina Simone (1969) expressed the importance of teaching Black children about themselves and their history, stating, "…we have a culture that is surpassed by no other civilization but we don't know anything about it."

Schools do not teach Black children about their histories; but when they do, mainstream social studies and history curricula treat the Black lived experience in a stereotypical, deficit manner and present Black children with white supremacy. King (2014) wrote the following about early social studies text:

> Thus, to be a U.S. citizen, you had to adopt White values. Whiteness was considered the apex of civilization and early social studies textbooks created narratives that explained why Blackness was the lowest form of humanity. (p. 3)

For Mr. Christianson, the way in which Black history is treated in schools has not changed from

the perspectives in these early social studies textbooks. His students know about only slavery

from their history classes (because that era is tested on SMART), and this circumstance

perpetuates the belief that Black people came from nothing. When Black children feel

minimized, disregarded or invisible in school, their behavior and attitude reflect their feelings,

which winds up getting punished (Delpit, 2012; Dumas & ross, 2016). He has told them-

> The biggest thing I try to get them to understand is, really, contrary to what
> they teach you in school, who you are did not begin in slavery. It didn't
> begin in slavery. That's just what history wants you to know about. They
> don't go before slavery and tell you who you were, where our original
> origins come from. And I try to get them to go and look and study your
> origins. Really understand who you are and where you come from. And
> then we understand really where you come from and who you are, then
> you can begin to make changes. You can begin, you know, you can begin
> to do things better. That's what I tell them. If I don't change your mind--.
> I say, at the end of the day, if I don't change your mind, there's nothing
> that you are going to learn. I have to change your mindset, and so that's
> my focus. If, you know, in addition to teaching them, I change the way
> they think. Change their thought process, change not only the way they
> think about things, but the way they think about themselves. (Christianson
> Talk, 4/9/2020)

Speaking to his students about the negative perception of Black people in society, its impact on

how they are treated at school, and the counternarratives within Black history are ways in which

he empowered his students to make better decisions about their behavior.   He also used Black-

ness to address behavior and attend to the well-being of his students.

"They know I'm going to fuss."

Without question, Mr. Christianson understood the oppressive nature of school and

disrupted in two ways: sermonizing (Niles, 1984) and Black Masculine Caring (Bass, 2020).

His love and care for Black children was a message that reiterated many times during our

talks.   It was not surprising, because of his pastoral background, that Mr. Christianson used

sermonizing or fussing when students acted out in his class or other teachers' classes. And as

with Ms. Riley, his students were not turned off by fussing. They saw the love and concern

behind it. But fussing was not always his response. He told me-

> After about two or three years of fighting with them. After two or three years,
> you know, because you're like, "Okay, come in and be quiet. Be quiet!" And
> finally, I figured out one day that sometimes you just gotta let them be who they
> are and teach them that there is a different way than what they're doing, right?
> You know, sometimes they just want to know that they are heard. That you hear
> them. And once they know that you hear them, what they are going through,
> that you're listening, that you're paying attention to them, that other stuff will
> come. (Christianson Talk, 4/9/2020)

Mr. Christianson was the first (and only) participant in this study who spoke of once struggling

with student behavior. Given that his teacher education program failed to offer him much

preparation, it was not be unexpected to hear him say that he struggled. His situation reflects the

misconceptions that Black teachers, Black male teachers in particular, inherently know how to

"handle" Black children. What I found significant was his statement of learning to let his

students be "who they were," listening to them, but still holding them accountable. Hale (2001)

wrote about "letting go of the mantras" as related to Black children's behavior and learning. She

explained-

> To create a new modeling of schooling that fits the contemporary African
> American family, we as educators must let go of mantras we have been taught
> to receive, memorize, and repeat. These beliefs, treasured by educators, excuse
> us for the disparity in outcomes for African American children. (p. 44)

Instead of hollering at his students, he turned to fussing.   He noted-

> They know that I have a natural love for them. You know, no matter how
> much I fuss at them all day long, they're like, "Mr. Christianson, can I come
> and have lunch with you? Can I hang with you? You know, I got put out of
> this class. Can I come sit in your class?" You know, and so, you know, at the
> end of the day, they know that I have that heart and love for them. So, you
> know, no matter how crazy they act sometimes, they're like, "Okay, Mr. C.,
> I'm sorry." (Christianson Talk, 4/9/2020).

Sometimes, he had to explain that fussing may hurt their feelings but it kept them out of the principal's office and out of the behavior system. Like Ms. Riley, Mr. Christianson did not write referrals—*unless he had to*. Showing tough love and tougher love, if necessary, is reminiscent of the forceful activist leadership practiced by educators Kathleen Crosby and Bertha Maxwell-Roddey in segregated schools (Ramsey, 2012). Bass (2020) framed forcefulness around tough love as well. Furthermore, Mr. Christianson's tough love is bound up in sermonizing and caring. He stated-

> I say, I don't have to send you to the office. And I tell them, I say, you going to the office gonna be the last-- I mean, the last, last, last resort-- is me sending you to the office. So I say because, you know, it shouldn't take all that. You should have something within yourself that says, "You know what? Let me do what's right."
> That's definitely it because the one thing that you have to understand with kids, like I said, they want to know how much you care. You know, before they hear anything from you, if they don't sense that you have that type of caring, even if you're hard on them, they still have to understand that you care for them. And ultimately, the reason why you're hard on them is because you care for them. And, you know, even sometimes when I tell them, I was like, "What does it mean when I'm not talking to you? When I don't say anything to you?"
> And they're like, "That means that you don't--, you gave up. You don't care."
> And they know that and I tell them, "If I'm talking to you, if I'm fussing at you, that's not because I don't like you. That's not because I'm mad at you. That's because I know that you can do better." (Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020)

Mr. Christianson's perspectives and understanding of how Black students respond to care reflect the concept of Black Masculine Caring (BMC), which is the same stance held by Mr. Richardson, his assistant principal at Morrison MS. When I asked Mr. Richardson what was the difference between teachers who needed courageous conversations (Singleton, 2014) and the ones who did not, he echoed Mr. Christianson's sentiments on caring. Mr. Richardson said-

> [You have to] get to know the students and show that you care and it don't always have to be giving them something, but just conversation. Because you will have some students that feel like if you don't care for me, so you can't teach me (Richardson Talk, 9/20/2020).

Whether it is called "conversation" or "fussing," caring is at the center of it. Being fussed at in a

caring manner instead of being pushed out of the classroom is especially impactful in changing

behavior, especially for Black boys. There are very few Black males that students have caring

relationships with inside of school as Black male teachers represent approximately two percent

of the teaching force (Brown, 2012; Goings & Bianco, 2016).   Bass and Alston (2018)

addressed how Black Masculine Caring is essential to the emotional well-being of Black boys.

They wrote-

> The BMC framework posits that Black men express care as nurturing
> fathers, providers, counselors, and as disciplinarians when necessary.
> Furthermore, Black boys need caring teachers and administrators who
> treat them fairly, regard them positively, reject negative stereotypes, allow
> them opportunities, maintain high expectations but offer support when
> needed, and prioritize their success. Simply put, Black boys and men
> care, and they need care that meets their needs as dictated by their
> unique cultural and societal status. (p. 776).

Mr. Christianson explained to me that he felt compelled to care. He agreed with Ms. Riley that

many times students' foolishness got in the way of their learning. Taking the position of Black

Masculine Caring allowed him to maintain high expectations of his students and recognize when

they needed help. Even though he taught a type of cultural mathematics, many students still

suffered from anxiety.   Students' stressing about their mathematical capacity often erupted into

foolish, disruptive behaviors.   Mr. Christianson explained-

> You know, a lot of kids, they act out because they don't know and the
> pressure is there. And they feel the pressure just like we do. And so you
> know when we're teaching and they don't get something, a lot of times
> they distract because they don't want other children or other kids to know
> what they don't know. If they don't distract and then all of a sudden
> somebody asks them a question, then all of a sudden, now you're gonna find
> out what they don't know. And so now okay let me keep everybody off of me
> because if I do this, they're not going to be on me. You know, they're gonna
> be too busy laughing and playing to be thinking about what I don't know
> (Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020)

Even when some students may act out because they want attention, Mr. Christianson still attended to their learning, which had to be hard, especially in math where the stakes are always high. I asked Mr. Christianson, why he did what he did for his students, in the way that he did it? Was it because of his lived experiences or how he viewed Black children? He said-

> Well, it's a combination of all of that, but it's more so, you know, a core belief that, you know, I really believe that our kids can be better. They are better. And if we keep telling what they're not, of course, they're gonna, that's exactly what they're going to do. So at some point, we have to share with them what they're capable of, what their potential is… The love that I have for them and the love I have for working with them. I love seeing them do well. I love seeing them grow. I love when they come back and say, "Mr. C., you know, I didn't hear you then, but I understand what you were saying now." And so they come back and they tell me, "I know why you were fussing at me now." (Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020)

Mr. Christianson not only focused on potential but reassured students that he understood and that he was there to help. His students wrote him appreciation letters last year. The message of "being helped" was echoed repeatedly.

> Dear Mr. Christianson,
> Thanks for everything you have taught me in 8th grade math class. When you explained the things that the class didn't know, the work got easier. Thanks for being a great teacher and helping me do well. I wouldn't have gotten accepted into Early College if I didn't know half the stuff I know now. So I appreciate everything you've done, Mr. Christianson.
>   (Christianson Artifact, 6/9/2020)

> Dear favorite teacher,
> You are the most encouraging and amazing teacher EVER ! ! ! ! ! ! Thank you for everything you taught me. Thank you for always going over the things I didn't understand. Thank you for staying after school to help me with my homework. Thank you for always being there for me. Thank you for everything you do for me. I feel really lucky to have you as my teacher! You are special to me! I am going to miss you, Mr. Christianson. We love you. Stay safe.
>   (Christianson Artifact, 6/9/2020)

Because of his caring nature, love for his students and the way he responded to behavior and potential, he earned the endearments "Uncle Chris" and "Pops." Not only are the terms reflective of Black Masculine Caring but also fictive kinship, which is an honor-laden cultural

practice in the Black community where unrelated people form emotional bonds like family

members (Hale-Benson, 1982; Wolf, 1983). This is significant because Black men are often

seen in the school system as the muscle or the disciplinarian (Brown, 2012) and are recruited to

be mentors in programs often designed to instill dominant culture values and behaviors

(Mabokela & Madsen, 2003). While Mr. Christianson has been tapped to be a mentor, it is the

role of otherfather (hooks, 2004; Tafari, 2018) at Morrison MS has brought him a lot of joy. In

fact, he has a history of being claimed as a father at school. He shared-

> I've been told it because, you know they're like, okay, the way that your kids
> interact with you or the way your kids naturally gravitate to you. They were
> like, you know, you don't see that with most teachers. Even when I, because
> I taught sixth grade one year and I think that year they had, they let the kids
> vote on the awards. And I think one of them that year was, "Which teacher
> acts most like a father?" And all the kids voted on me (Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020)

Students gravitating toward him even happened when they were not a part of his class roster,

which I did not find unusual. When I was a teacher, I often formed relationships with students

who were not in my classes based on daily interactions throughout the building. He shared a

touching story about a female student who adopted him as her father:

> I had a young lady, she was not even in my class, but if she got in trouble or
> something, I would always get her. I say, come here. I talked to her, and I
> said, listen. She called me Pops. So when she saw me in the hall, she would
> say, "Hey, Pops, come here." You know, she talked to me and I, you know,
> would laugh.
> I would say, "What do you want, Daughter?"
> She said, "Pops, [this happened]."
> I'd say, "Are you doing what you're supposed to do?"
> [She said,] "Well, uh."
> "I don't want to hear 'well.'" I say, are you doing what you're supposed to do?
> "Okay. Alright. Okay, Pops. I'm going in there and--."
> And so one of the kids said, "Is that really your pops?"
> She's like, well, he may as well be because I really don't know who my real
> dad is. Wow. Oh wow, I was like, man, so that's where you really don't
> understand what kid is going through and why they really gravitate towards
> you. So what she was gravitating to was what she really didn't have. And so
> here I am standing there talking to her, like, okay, this is--. So in her mind, if

I had a dad, this is what my dad would do. (Christianson Talk, 5/22/2020)

I was almost moved to tears but the student's words reminded me of the countless conversations that I had with students when I was a teacher and an administrator. I became an othermother and saw the pain in students who just wanted to someone in the building to recognize their potential and care for them.

Discussion

Using Black Feminist Thought and BlackCrit as theoretical frameworks allowed me to learn from Ms. Riley's and Mr. Christianson's stories how they understood and negotiated the oppressive infrastructure of school and the ways in which they called upon Black-ness to disrupt punitive practices. After analyzing their stories, two themes emerged.

Theme 1: Understanding teacher's role in the oppressive nature of school

Black women and men in the United States daily confront a complex, difficult history, going back to enslavement, as related to the value and function of Black person's labor in a white society and within white institutions. The white world of work requires a commitment and adherence to dominant culture values and beliefs. And when Black people enter this world, there is internal conversation as to how to navigate and negotiate around infrastructures that were never meant to improve or enrich the Black community, that viewed Black labor only as service to white needs (Dancy, et. al., 2018), that retained the tenets of white supremacy and a deep hate of Black-ness. That internal conversation never ends because it is wrapped up in making a living and obligations to the family.

While Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson maintained their obligations as school employees, neither one of them seemed to struggle with double consciousness. They disrupted for the benefit of their students, and they were "successful" doing so. For the most part, teachers are

expected to work, not complain and to do more with less. For Black teachers in urban schools where the needs are sometimes greater, they are expected to be even more so committed to the oppressive infrastructure. Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson seemed to have made the decision not to engage with oppression. To disrupt and resist following or adhering to the oppressive expectations of the school system is a radical undertaking.

Theme 2: Utilizing Black ways of handling foolishness as modes of disruption

The emotional well-being of Black children has always been a priority of Black educators because it connected to their learning, which is an underpinning that I argue is often missed or not highlighted when educators utilize cultural pedagogies. Ladson-Billings (2009b) noted in her study that resulted in cultural relevant pedagogy that teachers showed care and nurtured their students. Caring is essential in the education of Black children. To be clear, schools are still able to get Black children to achieve high performance through paternalistic practices, but I contend that this is a type of coercive care (Noddings, 2001). There is enough research to support that oppression, punishment, surveillance and control are detrimental and harmful addressing Black children's behavior and learning.

Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson viewed behavior through a cultural lens to determine the underlying causes of their behaviors and the responses needed. The "why" is important. While this is not an attempt to say that the majority of student behavior has valid mitigating circumstances, what Ms. Riley's and Mr. Christianson's actions speak to is the ability to be culturally discerning. They provided consequences that are culturally meaningful. They exercised a deliberate ability to not punish Black children using draconian measures or criminalize their behavior.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

I'm just riding with the wind. You know, I was born here and nobody really wants to move from where their roots are. Whichever way it goes, though, I'll go. In a way, the fact that we are in trouble is a good sign. We recognize it now, at least. In order to clean up all the crap. You can't do that until you realize that—you—are—in—the—midst—of it. We got so much crap here. Wow! It tends to be obscured though. We bury it with intellectualism, with confusion. So much talk going on that it is hard to think clearly. And we hide, avoid the unpleasant things going on. I saw something yesterday. I was going to church on 54th and Lexington. There were some kids in the street playing football right on Lexington Ave. I'll tell you what hit me. What amazed me was the order of things—the fact that we wear clothes, that an office has to look a certain way, the whole bit. It's amazing how accustomed we have become to a certain order. And you become more aware of that order when you see something change it. Everybody turns around and stares. But why, really? Rules, orders. We have ordered things so long in a certain way, we are numb. Nobody dares question it. This is what is wrong, symbolically, with my country.

--Excerpt from Nina Simone interview
Down Beat Magazine, January 1968

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how Black educators understood and negotiated the oppressive infrastructure of school in order to disrupt discipline policies and practices that physically and psychologically harmed Black children. More specifically, this research sought to bring attention to the various ways in which Black administrators, counselors, and teachers navigated the traditional aims of social order and anti-Black-ness in the school system and called upon cultural approaches in caring, nurturing, and addressing Black children's behaviors. These educators shared their stories in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, and the findings in this section address the following research questions:

1. How do Black educators understand and negotiate the oppressive infrastructure of schools and its impact on Black children?

2. In what way do Black educators disrupt paternalistic practices that are entrenched in the discipline policies of the urban school system?

This study drew from the theoretical frameworks of Black Feminist Thought and Critical Race/BlackCrit theories. In Black Feminist Thought, Black women engage themselves and others in resistance against systems of oppression by utilizing their lived experiences at the intersections of race, gender and class. Also, in rejecting the notion of willing or passive victims, Black women (re)define themselves and assume the roles and responsibilities that better serve those in their communities. BlackCrit, a theoretical offshoot of Critical Race Theory, de-centers white supremacy and addresses how anti-Black-ness informs systems of oppression and institutional practices, particularly in schools where violence against Black children becomes justified. In addition, BlackCrit theorizes that Black children's behaviors resist systemic oppression and become criminalized. Both theories call upon counternarratives in exposing the social construction of race and anti-Blackness built around subjugating Black people.

Eight themes overall emerged from the chapters and highlighted the experiences of Dr.

Madison (a principal), Drew Richardson (an assistant principal), Cecil Banks (a counselor),

Teresa Riley (8th grade science teacher), and Michael Christianson (8th grade math teacher) in a

predominantly Black, high performing school district. The themes were:

(1) embracing the ethic of risk

(2) engaging in covert and overt disruption

(3) caring through the Black lived experience

(4) bringing awareness to unfair paternalistic practices

(5) engaging in collective resistance and disruption

(6) restoring and returning the Black body whole

(7) understanding teacher's role in the oppressive nature of school

(8) utilizing Black ways of handling foolishness

In each chapter, these educators shared their understanding of the oppressive nature of the

educational system and its impact on Black children. In negotiating this structure, they noted

covert and overt ways in which they were able to utilize Black-ness as an alternative to

established disciplinary practices and policies.

The first four themes are presented in Chapter 4, "Disrupting Anti-Black Praxis on an

Urban Campus," and involved how Madison and Richardson recognized that understanding,

navigating, and disrupting the school system were complex processes for administrators who are

representatives and agents of that system. They assumed a different level of professional risk

based on their levels of authority on their campuses, but nonetheless, they engaged in resistance

to center Black notions of care, such as "talking with the heart" (Collins, 2009), the power of

Black music (Bridges, 2011; Harper, et. al., 2009; Hobbs & Baity, 2006; Travis, 2016),

womanist caring (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Walker, 1983), Black feminist leadership

(Collins, 2009) and Black Masculine Caring (Bass, 2020). They also used their own awareness

to bring attention to the institutionalization of teachers, or the double consciousness phenomenon (DuBois, 1903/2015).   That is, established paternalistic classroom management norms are given more space throughout the instructional day and allow teachers to weaponize disciplinary policies as part of their official responsibilities. This situation challenges Black teachers' cultural ways of caring and addressing behavior. As noted by Meyer (1977) in discussing educational institutionalization-

> Mass education expands the number of persons seen as possessing human and citizenship responsibilities, capacities, and rights. It also expands the prevailing definitions of these roles and their associated qualities... It also, however, redefines individuals as responsible subordinate members (and agents) of the state organization, and opens them to new avenues of control and manipulation. (p. 70)

Because of this circumstance, Dr. Madison and Dr. Richardson as administrators serve on their perspective levels as the agents of empowerment in an education system that rewards control and normalizes punishment. Collins (2009) explained that Black women use their knowledge to empower themselves and others. Additionally, Fanon (1963) spoke of empowerment as having instrumental value: To raise the consciousness of people within an oppressive system in order to collectively resist and change conditions.

Chapter 5, "Reviving the Black Body Along the Periphery," presented two themes: When Dr. Madison absorbed the risk in dismantling the carceral and dehumanizing processes at Morrison Alternative School (MAS), she empowered her counselor (Collins, 2009; Fanon, 1963) Mr. Banks to implement Black ways of healing in order to address the social-emotional needs of Black students who had been pushed out of their schools by disciplinary interventions. Their collective resistance sought to disrupt the effects of school-sanctioned violence and provide students opportunities to build up their own resistance to being triggered by punitive disciplinary practices. In order to liberate, heal and empower students, Banks rejected school-funded, white-

centered SEL programs "as presented." He reframed them by utilizing Black-ness to speak to the Black body as a nation--emotionally, spiritually, psychologically and physically.

The last two themes in Chapter 6, "Foolishness, Fussing & Learning," highlighted the experiences of Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson whose years of teaching in urban schools helped them to see how the social perceptions of Black children have become reinforced in the school system. While Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson understood that teachers have to maintain orderly classrooms, teachers ultimately have to make the decision whether to engage in disciplinary violence (i.e., double consciousness). In this respect, teachers work in concert with administrators in exacting punishment against the most challenging students. Yet, Ms. Riley and Mr. Christianson centered students' potential and well-being. And while not ignoring any behavior, they disrupted paternalist disciplining by utilizing sermonizing/fussing (Niles, 1984), warm demander pedagogy (Delpit, 2012; Kleinfeld, 1975); Black Masculine Caring (Bass, 2020); otherfathering (hooks, 2004; Tafari, 2018), othermothering and community of care (Collins, 2009), fictive kinship (Wolf, 1983) and critical caring (Thompson, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). These approaches take mitigating circumstances into account and allow for meaningful consequences.

The participants' stories demonstrated multiple ways of negotiating the oppressive infrastructure of school and using meaningful Black culture approaches to disrupt paternalistic practices and policies on campuses and in classrooms. That is, the participants used Black-ness to disrupt systems, policies, practices and white notions of care. Black-ness as in Black ways of leading, Black ways of caring, and Black ways of addressing behavior. Given the depth and richness of the data, I am going to examine three major findings, one for each of the three chapters. The first finding maintains that Dr. Madison and Mr. Richardson negotiated the

oppressive nature of school and made space for Black-ness as a disruptive pedagogy by drawing upon Black radical leadership (BRL). The second finding illustrates that Mr. Banks' acts of healing in a carceral space requires collective resistance and rejects traditional white ways of caring and counseling. The third finding underscores how Ms. Riley's and Mr. Christianson's disruptive pedagogy walks in the tradition of Black resistance and is deeply rooted in Black feminist ethic of care, womanist caring, Black Masculine Caring, and critical caring (Bass, 2020; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Collins, 2006; Thompson, 1998; Walker, 1983). In the following sections, I speak to each of these findings in detail, examine the implications and limitations of this study, and finally make suggestions for future research.

<div align="center">Black Radical Leadership</div>

School leadership itself is a relatively new phenomenon, in that one individual was made the principal authority to oversee the daily operations on a campus (Kafka, 2009; Murphy, 1998; Rousmaniere, 2013). Since World War II, the function of the principal has evolved multiple times driven by leadership theories and the needs of industry (Hoffman, et. al., 2011; Murphy, 1998). Whether the responsibilities were supervisory/managerial, instructional or transformational, the principalship was built on white patriarchy, expected to operationalize the American dream and reproduce dominant culture values and beliefs about morality, social order, and racial superiority within the school system.

The Black principalship never fit into this paradigm as it has stood outside of the main structure of the American educational system. The Black principalship in and of itself was a radical enterprise prior to its displacement by the *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) decision. Given that educating Black people during and after enslavement incited white fears and deadly violence, it is extraordinary that the independent Black school system survived both

Reconstruction and Jim Crow (Anderson, 1988; Rousmaniere, 2013). The Black principal's work was radically important in fostering school cultures committed to Black students' educational excellence and psychological well-being; and instilling Black students with the tools to become socially mobile as well as navigate the racist infrastructures in society. Thus, Black-ness--Black ways of caring, leading and teaching--was integral and structural in the pre-*Brown* Black school.

In order for Black-ness as a *perspective, pedagogy, ecology* or *apparatus* to become the norm rather than a disruption, a return to Black radical leadership is critically essential. Black radical leadership is amalgamation of Black radicalism and Black feminism ethic of risk (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002) bound up in Black radical imagination (Kelley, 2002). In Bass' (2012) work, Black radical principals assume the ethic of risk in order to promote caring and reject reinforcing oppressive practices such as zero tolerance. Bass (2012) explained, based on her study of Black females in educational leadership-

> The ethic of risk often presses caring educators to implement nontraditional or creative teaching and leading strategies in order to effectively educate disenfranchised students. Therefore, caring teachers and administrators are willing to take radical measures to provide a secure, fair, and productive learning environment for their students. (p. 81)

This risk serves as open defiance and an intentional bucking of the system and can lead to reprimands and even demotions. However, the impetus behind the risk is the stronger passion to protect, love, and nurture Black children. And this passion is key to the Black radical imagination. As Kelley (2002) explained, the Black radical imagination was been born out of the activism of Harriet Tubman, Marcus Garvey, and W.E.B. DuBois; is tied to the community in struggle (Henfield, et. al., 2018) and the theology of Black resistance and solidarity; and is

bound up in "freedom dreams" to bring liberation from oppression and exploitation. To be able speak (out) and act (out) against antiracism and antisexism. To live freely.

As Black-ness is an exercise in intellectual, physical and psychological freedom that has yet to be evident the greater expanse of the contemporary schooling experiences of Black children or Black educators, Black radical leadership calls out to the tradition of Black radical imagination in order to push it forward. Black radical leadership dares to confront white ways in Black schools and embraces new possibilities, consciousness and worlds (Dache, 2019) that ground Black schools in Black life, Black love, Black joy, and Black resistance. In essence, Black radical leadership does not merely make space for Black-ness but supplants anti-Black educational policies and practices in a school infrastructure built upon racist, European ideologies. This approach is especially critical in urban schools that have continued to fail Black children by reinforcing inherently anti-Black pedagogies and disciplinary interventions.

More specifically, the choice models of school leadership, reinforced in university preparation programs, drive classroom management and reward-consequence systems in order to improve student achievement (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood & Poplin, 1992; Reitzug, West & Angel, 2008). However, Black radical leadership calls attention to the whiteness of traditional school leadership models that do not affirm student well-being (Branch, et. al., 2013) or express caring or nurturing as liberatory agents against structural oppression. Traditional white leadership frames caring is a matter of trust and relationship-building necessary to promote performance and compliance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). In this respect, traditional administrators encourage building trust and relationships while maintaining the status quo. Because this type of caring reaches the depth of *caring for* and *caring about* (Noddings, 2010), it is still oppression. It can serve as a persuasive tool that educators utilize to keep children from

questioning or resisting their own subjugation. In the words of Audre Lorde (1983), white

notions of caring are like the master's tools that-

> will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us to temporarily
> beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about
> genuine change. (p. 95)

As our ancestors have taught us, this country and its systems were not designed for us but

designed against us. And interest-convergence (Bell, 1980) will never work out in our favor.

That is why Black radical leadership is crucial because it pursues radical and critical care

to dismantle historically inequitable, anti-Black systems (Rivera-McCutchen, 2019; Witherspoon

& Arnold, 2010). Rivera-McCutchen (2020) noted-

> An ethic of radical care in school leadership requires an explicit focus on
> creating equitable and socially just learning environments for students
> and their communities, combined with a sense of urgency and a spirit of
> radical hope. (p. 7)

It is the sense of urgency that drives the cultivating of Black-centered approaches to care in order

to a) stem the spirit-murder of Black children, b) intercept the funneling of Black children into

carceral spaces, and c) heal Black children from school-sanctioned violence, and d) restore Black

children's humanness and humanity.

Black radical leadership does not mimic white leadership models that view the

administrators as the lone hero guiding change on campus (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger, 2005).

Because it requires *collaborative resistance* to disrupt structurally oppressive systems, Black

radical leadership positions teachers and counselors to be as instrumental as principals.   It is

particularly significant for Black teachers as "entry level" leaders/employees of the school

system who are mandated to implement and reinforce zero tolerance policies and other

paternalistic forms of discipline. Black radical school leaders understand that disrupting

oppressive practices involves empowering Black teachers to *unlearn* institutional violence and

reconnect with Black ways of nurturing and disciplining (Collins, 2009; Fanon, 1963). Empowerment leads to collective, collaborative resistance in which all school leaders disrupt and dismantle oppressive systems together. Black principals, Black counselors and Black teachers individually and collaboratively take on critical caring and radical leadership.

<div align="center">Rejecting Traditional White Ways of Caring and Counseling</div>

The historical contributions of Black school counselors is largely absent in research literature. Beyond a few Black narratives that speak specifically to counseling and caring in the school system (Jones, 2019; Walker, 1996), there is very little information about Black school counselors on comprehensive campuses and virtually nothing about Black school counselors in alternative education programs (AEPs). The work of Prosser (1933) still remains prominent in establishing that a nurturing school environment promotes the well-being of Black children and helps foster Black academic excellence. We know from Walker (1996; 2009) that this approach was undertaken by faculty and staff in segregated Black public schools and HBCUs, and, in fact, was a part of the school culture in ensuring Black children reached their highest potential.

As Black educators make up less than 20% of school counselors nationwide, research literature is composed of studies about cross-cultural challenges between white counselors and Black students, white counselors' consideration of the Black racial identity, and racial preferences for Black counselors (Helms, 1971; Moss & Singh, 2015). These studies focus on raising white counselors' consciousness and cultural sensitivities for working with children in urban schools. Concerned that I was doing a poor literature search, I reached out via email to my committee member Dr. Lindo and told her about my issue. She explained that the reason that there is so little research on Black public school counselors was, "Most of the recent literature related to Black school counselors focuses on higher education and counselor education." The

lack of research on Black public school counselors reflects a failure in the academic community to understand or value their cultural knowledge and ways of tending to the emotional needs of Black students.

What has become of the counseling profession in the integrated school system has been shaped by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) for nearly sixty years. ASCA has established a "national" model (i.e., a singular vision for counseling) and provides resources and training for school counselors to help support student achievement. Only recently, within the last decade or so, has ASCA advocated for social-emotional learning (SEL), restorative practices (RPs), cultural responsiveness and social justice (ASCA, 2005; Schulz, et. al., 2014). It is the expectation that school counselors would use these alternative strategies when working with "disruptive students." These strategies or perspectives, however, maintain white ways of caring and counseling because they do not consider the anti-Black-ness that Black children encounter in disciplinary practices and policies. For example, Jones et al (2017) examined how SEL programs stress racially neutral, color-blind, universal strategies. Kaler-Jones (2019) found that SEL programs in practice become another form of policing in which Black children's self-agency is suppressed, where self-regulation means accepting oppression and mistreatment by school adults. And schools that utilize SEL programs may view Black children's lived experiences as trauma and the causes of their behavior (Foster, 2020, 2021).

As noted by Washington and Henfield (2018), if counselors fail to understand the ecology of oppression in all its forms, they will replicate and fortify them. This understanding is especially crucial in educational spaces where the focus on pathology (i.e., the at-risk Black child) is the dominant construct or is sanctioned in counseling programs for comprehensive campuses and AEPs (Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2007). In this

respect, Black students removed from their home campuses and into district AEPs leave one framework of pathologization for another.

What needs to be further acknowledged in research is that the onus for understanding and challenging oppressive ecologies is not entirely within the purview of the school counselors. Principals possess the authority to set counseling activities and initiatives on their campuses, and their awareness is crucial in recognizing that the ASCA national model and popular social-emotional or restorative programs have been filtered through a white lens and shaped by white notions of educational care. Black radical leadership can promote radical changes that transform the type of counseling and healing Black students receive. Thus, it involves collective resistance to reject traditional white ways of caring and counseling and to center Black-ness in the social-emotional curriculum.

More specifically, rejecting the whiteness in counseling programs positions Black counselors, especially those at AEPs, to engage in conversations and practices with Black students that remove the *diagnostic white gaze*[66], and thereby, *the prescriptive nature of white healing*. As mentioned earlier, the historical contributions of Black psychology and Black educator practice point to nurturing Black students and their individual needs. Black ways of nurturing are not "programmable" and do not fit a prescribed system of "psychological treatment or therapeutic interventions." These terms speak to a master narrative regarding what constitutes emotional help in society. As Henfield et al (2018) noted-

> Relying on the insights of others rather than "the concrete experiences of
> [B]lack people in America" (Harding, 1974, p. 11) has reproduced pathological
> language and inefficacious interventions that have not been wholly fruitful
> for most Black people. Some of the most poignant conversations about the

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[66] "White gaze" is a reference to Toni Morrison's explanation of the prevailing thought that whiteness or white ways of seeing, thinking or being is or should be dominant even in the lives of Black people. Used here, as related to healing, maintains that school counseling, as is, a form of whiteness in which the Black lived experience is viewed through the white gaze, and as such, is pathologized.

truth of the here and now and the condition of Black people have occurred
in Black communities, typically around matters of schooling and education. (p. 8)

This is the power of the counternarrative, to show that not every Black child labeled at-risk for

receiving multiple disciplinary interventions has something wrong with them, such as a conduct

disorder, emotional disturbance, and trauma due to the lived experiences. Not every Black

student pushed into AEPs has behavioral problems and removing the diagnostic white gaze can

expose this common misconception.

Rejecting traditional white caring and counseling at AEPs is not only a move away from

pathology and victim-blaming but also assists in revealing Black students' criminalized behavior

could be acts of resistance against unfair disciplinary interventions (Dumas & ross, 2016). Black

educators understand the historical context in which the Black body becomes institutional

property (Yancy, 2005) and is subject to instruments of marginalization (i.e., surveillance,

control, and punishment). The best practices for AEP school counseling programs do not

consider the disproportionate use of zero tolerance policies (ZTPs) in triggering student

(mis)behavior.   A TEA (2007) policy report on best practices at AEPs noted a commitment to

ZTPs-

> Committee recommendations for addressing the behaviors of "seriously
> and habitually disruptive students" (p. 20) included establishment of a
> statewide zero-tolerance discipline policy that would provide schools and
> districts broader authority to remove students from regular education
> settings. To counter the trend of expelling disruptive students from school
> and sending them "to the streets" (p. 18), the committee also recommended
> that all districts provide access to alternative education settings for students
> removed from regular education settings. (p. 2)

Without considering Black students' resistance to oppression, AEPs are duty-bound to provide

"counseling that emphasizes behavior modification and life skills classes...self-esteem and

positive social skills" (p. 8). When Black students act out against or resist oppression, the

traditional and alternative schools tend to protect the institutional practices and systems that

cause that oppression (Johnson, et. al., 2001). This is particularly important in revealing how

traditional white ways of caring and counseling do not unearth the anti-Black, oppressive nature

of discipline policies but serve to validate the Black child is troubled and needs intervention.

Black ways of caring and counseling seek to heal Black children, not maintain the status

quo, because they respect the Black lived experience. It is true that many Black children struggle

in school because of struggles within the home; but there is also the understanding that the Black

lived experience is impacted by systemic issues that affect the Black communities, such as lack

of opportunity and under-employment (Bouie, 2015; Lipman et. al., 1996; Massey & Denton,

1993; Neckerman, 2007). As Henfield et al (2018) explained, applying Harding's work on the

Black scholar, there is a *community in struggle*:

> Seeing the oft-discussed blighted conditions of Black communities as
> symptomatic of a parasitic and racist colonial regime rather than the
> purported Black cultural pathologies or contrived myths of inherent racial
> deficiencies, Black scholars will inevitably, according to Harding,
> find themselves standing alongside Black people seeking liberation from
> these oppressive conditions. (p. 7)

The community in struggle speaks to the sociopolitical and economic ways in which Black

community has been pushed to the margins and beyond by white supremacy and white privilege

but the deliberate tendency to blame Black communities for the conditions under which they live

and are educated (Boutte, 2012; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Jackson, 1968; Kozol, 1967). To be

clear, the community struggle is an explanation; for under these circumstances, Black ways of

caring and counseling will still hold Black students accountable for their choices, help them

confront the root causes of misbehavior but do not impugn the Black community or the Black

lived experience. Black ways of caring and counseling address the spiritual, psychological,

physical and emotional because healing is multidimensional, communal in nature and draws from meaningful aspects of Black culture.

<center>Political Acts of Black Resistance and Caring</center>

Despite being an entry level leader in the "education business," the teacher has extraordinary capacity for creating and sustaining radical change. The development of the teacher identity situates it in a sociohistorical context, shifting in function based on political and social changes, as well as the needs of industry (Zembylas, 2003). Yet, the teacher identity and its ability for radical change have been subject to bureaucratic control. The teacher's identity has been shaped by research and theories that crafted its development as an instrument of the business, a professional, or a designer who essentially can control children and be controlled by their supervisors (Cooper & Olson, 1996). The Black teacher identity, however, has maintained its propensity for forging radical change since its 19th century "political space as a symbol of racial progress" (Brown, 2014, p. 180). The Black teacher and Black teaching have always been radical acts of leadership and political activism (Fairclough, 2007; Foster, 1994; Walker, 1996) in navigating and disrupting structural racism and oppression.

Black teachers understand that the industry of education is a racist, anti-Black enterprise. Having once been children in the American school system, Black teachers recognize the ways in which educational practices play on anti-Black racism, sexism and the social constructions of race; practices that perpetuate Black intellectual inferiority and the concept of the incorrigible Black child (Crenshaw, 2015; McKinney de Royston et. al., 2021; Ferguson, 2002; Morris, 2016; Omi & Winant, 1994; S. Patton, 2014). Black teachers endure the whiteness (or, better yet the nothingness) of teacher education programs that act as if Black teaching is a nonentity or inconsequential to traditional white pedagogies. Black teachers recognize how education tries to

exploit them for their knowledge, cultural ecologies and, in some cases, socioeconomic proximity to students in order to maintain social reproduction (Brown, 2012; Mabokela & Madsen, 2000). But more importantly, Black women and men continue to resist the social construction of *teacher* and utilize their labor to nurture Black children and foster their potential and intellectual knowledge.

In this respect, contemporary Black teachers walk in the long tradition of Black resistance and advocacy on the behalf of the Black learner. The radical work of contemporary Black teachers remain reminiscent of these times: when Black literacy was sought by any means despite the threat of white violence against the dangerous educated Negro (DuBois, 1903/2015; Muhammad, 2020). When Black feminists Nannie Helen Burroughs and Anna Julia Cooper founded schools for Black girls and women and created Afrocentric curriculum in the face of Black and white patriarchy (Alridge, 2007; Harley, 1996; Taylor, 2002). When Lucy Diggs Slowe broke barriers as the first Black female dean at HBCU and challenged structures that impeded the Black women's leadership in higher education and college training of Black women (Anderson, 1994). When Mary McLeod Bethune opened a school for Black girls, pushed Black interests at the federal level of government and championed racial and gender equality in spite of racist attacks (McCluskey, 1989). When Septima Clark stood firm against sexism and led citizenship schools that taught adult literacy and prepared Black citizens to vote (Brown-Nagin, 1999). When independent Black public school systems and HBCUs fought against white supervision and control of the curriculum in order to nurture Black potential and intellect in caring environments (Echols, 2006; Tillman, 2004; Walker, 1996). The long tradition of Black educator resistance values and continues the work of our ancestors.

Black teachers recognize the need to carry on the tradition of Black resistance because of how the integrated school system expects their compliance in its oppressive infrastructure. As employees and representatives of the school organization, teachers are functionally put in charge of implementing and maintaining disciplinary policies and practices. In this respect, school order and control rely on their adherence to rules and behavior standards. This circumstance makes the work of Black teachers so critical to the safety and well-being of Black children. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (1999) explained, in examining the actions and philosophies of politically relevant teachers, that-

> Although often unable to determine or influence school-wide policies for their students, politically relevant teachers are very much invested in their classrooms and in the possibilities they can encourage in those spaces. That is, aware of the lack of support that they face for their emancipatory practices and philosophies, many politically relevant teachers operate subversively. They view their classrooms as sites of resistance, where they take control not accorded to them in the school power hierarchy. (p. 706)

Therefore, instead of weaponizing classroom management practices to achieve order and conformity, Black teachers fulfill their obligations *to Black children* and provide them with caring attention and meaningful quality learning experiences that they expect and deserve. Furthermore, the classroom itself as a site of resistance reflects how many Black teachers close their doors and create a perimeter around their students in order to do what's in their best interest and block out what is not, such as ZTPs (Bass, 2012). There are potentially more Black teachers practicing radical resistance and leadership than we are ever capable of knowing because *they are choosing* to close their doors and resist inside the classroom.

There is always a sense of urgency behind Black teacher resistance not only because of their recruitment as agents of social control and subjugation, but also because they recognize that the school system expresses no issue or qualms with criminalizing Black behavior and pushing

Black children into white constructs of justice. As McKinney de Royston et. al. (2021)

explained-

> This political clarity shapes Black educators' understanding of racialized
> disparities and experiences in schools as having little or nothing to do
> with the inability or disinterest of individual or groups of Black children
> or families… Their relational work seeks to disrupt and counteract how
> race and racism get operationalized upon Black children's bodies to
> signal to Black children their inherent and infinite capacity and goodness. (p. 73)

Thus, Black teachers resist the violent means of discipline and utilize alternative approaches that

still hold their students accountable for their actions in an overly punitive, anti-Black discipline

system that does not view Black children as children.

These alternative approaches disrupt paternalistic practices and are rooted in Black-ness,

the Black feminist ethic of care (Bass, 2012; Collins, 2009; Thompson, 1998) and notions of

critical care (Valenzuela, 1999). Black-ness, as theorized in this study, is a deliberate approach

that centers the well-being of Black children not for the purpose of improving their academic

achievement but solely for the purposes of preventing their spirit-murder and psychological

damage. *Academic achievement or progress are potential results*. In Black feminist caring, the

concepts of mothering, othermothering, caring, and nurturing to protect Black children from

systemic oppression are radical measures because they are not a part of traditional educational

practices (Bass, 2012). And according to Rolon-Dow (2005), critical care places racism within

its educational context and -

> by acknowledging that, to care for students of color in the United States,
> we must seek to understand the role that race/ethnicity has played in shaping
> and defining the sociocultural and political conditions of their communities. (p. 104)

That is, critical care is crucial to Black children who have been marginalized and oppressed

within *all* (urban, suburban, and rural) communities and their school systems.   Notions of

critical care challenge the traditional teacher-student dynamic because the teacher understands

the need to move beyond the authority figure in the classroom and move toward liberatory, cultural practices.

For Black teachers, the practices are meaningful to them and Black students. This is important because so many school-sanctioned programs designed to impact student behavior (e.g., SEL programs, character education, and even ZTPs) are bounded up in whiteness, colorblindness, and the white, middle-class, heterosexual feminist ethic of caring (Thompson, 1998). The irony is that while culturally affirming/responsive/sustaining pedagogies have been accepted and widely encouraged, cultural approaches to addressing behavior have not. There appears to be the misconception that traditional behavior modification strategies work and not applying them may reinforce the belief that disruptive children are getting away with something or not receiving consequences for interrupting the learning environment.

However, Black teachers often view and filter their students' behavior through a cultural lens. The concept of the cultural lens is not unique to Black people but it is profoundly important in that it speaks to how we view many aspects of living through our cultural understandings, traditions, and histories. Just as almost every structure and system created in the United States has been viewed, filtered and designed by and through the white ocular--and makes sense to white people. When the cultural lens is used in relation to Black children's behavior, many things are considered-- such as the child's tone of voice, emotions, movements, intentions and motivations (Delpit, 2012)-- to help Black teachers make sense of the child's actions.

Therefore, in using their cultural lens, Black teachers can call upon on Black ways of handling behavior, which involves both caring and consequences. Case in point, fussing or sermonizing, based in the Black church, (Niles, 1984) is both a consequence and an insistence on

better decision-making. Warm demander pedagogy (Delpit, 2012; Kleinfeld, 1975) is a cultural approach that illustrates that Black teachers expect a great deal of their students in their classrooms and with other teachers. It reflects the historical, radical practices of Black teachers in the pre-*Brown* era, connect to the othermothering and otherfathering, and keep learning at the forefront.

Components of Black-ness as a Disruptive Pedagogy Framework

These three findings illustrate that Black-ness as a disruptive pedagogy involves three components to dismantle structures of oppressive and anti-Black disciplinary violence and center the well-being of Black children in the school system. The first component involves Black principals calling upon on Black radical leadership to reject traditional white ways of leading to elevate caring and nurturing practices of administrators, counselors and teachers. The second component involves the empowerment of Black principals, Black counselors, and Black teachers and their collective, collaborative resistance in rejecting traditional white ways of leading, caring and counseling in order to heal and restore Black children, especially those children pushed into alternative education programs (AEPs). The final component involves Black teachers utilizing the radical leadership and the framework of resistance to reject traditional classroom management practices and apply culturally meaningful Black ways of caring to address behavior in the classroom. The components show that the prioritizing Black-ness is an interconnected, global movement undertaken by Black educators at all levels.

Implications and Recommendations

As noted by Nina Simone (1968), "It's amazing how accustomed we have become to a certain order." And the order that we have grown accustomed to in the education system is in the manner in which whiteness, social reproduction, social constructions of race and childhood,

anti-Black-ness and sexism guide everything, from the university down to the classroom. The findings in this dissertation study reflect a desire and rationale for upsetting that order and have profound implications related to socio-emotional curriculum, educator preparation, discipline and alternative education programs. In relation to the socio-emotional curriculum, Black-ness and Black ways of caring and nurturing must be integrated with cultural pedagogies to address the needs of Black children. Secondly, educator preparation programs under-value the lived experiences of Black educators as well as the culturally meaningful ways that they interact with Black children. These programs need to include the contributions from Black scholars and educators to validate and establish the authenticity of Black ways of caring and in order to prepare Black teachers, principals and counselors from Black radical leadership. Third, the research literature supports zero tolerance policies and other behavior programs are still emotionally, physically, and psychologically harmful to Black children. Beyond the usual pretense of educational policy form, there must be a true rethinking and reframing of school discipline. Fourth, AEPs nationwide remain carceral spaces where punishment and pathologization remain the agenda. AEPs can and must undergo a paradigm shift in order to be situated as sites of healing.

Black-centered social-emotional curriculum

While research shows that ZTPs and oppressive disciplinary policies disproportionately affect Black children and push them out of schools, the most popular and common solutions that have been offered are SEL programs, character education or restorative practices that often do not even consider Black-ness and the value of Black culture in addressing behavior (Jones, et. al., 2017; Kaler-Jones, 2019). Those racially neutral approaches have been found to not be as effective with Black children as originally thought because they weaponize and perpetuate the

oppression of Black children. They have become "behavior modification programs" where the onus is on the Black children to change.

In the same spirit that culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally responsive (Gay, 2000), culturally proficient (Nuri-Robins, et. al., 2002), culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) pedagogies, and abolitionist teaching (Love, 2019) have been accepted in K-16 institutions, Black-ness and Black ways of caring deserve consideration and space. Black-ness is the natural bridge
between school and home and includes familiar and familial ways that support students, involves parents and uplifts the community. Schools in the United States are becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse, and traditional white ways of caring and classroom management do not attend to the emotional needs of these diverse groups.

Why aren't there more Black-centered socio-emotional curricula, based on research and practice, available as alternatives to behavior programs? The most popular and commonly used SEL programs have been monopolized and commodified by white educational foundations: CASEL, the Wallace Foundation, and Conscious Discipline, to name a few. These programs are expensive, cumbersome, and difficult to integrate within the instructional day (Foster, 2020). Furthermore, as learned from the participants in this study, there can be very little buy-in for these popular SEL programs because they are viewed as an additional responsibility; and if they are going to be useful to Black educators, they have to modify them to address the needs of Black children.

We know that Black notions of caring are radical and seek to disrupt oppression and structural racism (Rivera-McCutchen, 2019; Witherspoon & Arnold, 2010); but these notions also promote Black children's well-being and empower them to reach their highest potential

because they hold them accountable for their behavior and keep them out of the principal's office. These benefits matter but speak to the paradox of education, as described by Baldwin (1963):

> The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated. The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions, to say to himself this is black or this is white, to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity. (p. 7)

It is past time to admit that traditional classroom management practices are physically and psychologically harmful and do not work for many Black children. We cannot continue to conduct tomes of research on the school-to-prison pipeline, and not produce the same volume of research to advocate for and design a Black-centered socio-emotional curriculum that would complement the goals and benefits of already accepted cultural pedagogies. Without question, as a way to ensure that several Black-centered socio-emotional curricula come to fruition, it should be integrated with established cultural pedagogical research and literature. It is only logical that these rich aspects of Black culture which positively impact both learning and behavior emerge as a singular and multifaceted emancipatory curriculum.

Black educator knowledge and preparation

It is well-documented that the *Brown* decision was responsible for the decline in the number of Black educators across the nation (Bell, 2004; Echols, 2006; Tillman, 2004), but the irony remains that the contemporary education system laments over the loss and seeks answers to why there aren't enough qualified Black educators in classrooms, as counselors, and in campus leadership. The most common and logical response is simple: recruit and hire more

Black educators. But in terms of elevating Black ways of caring and leading, universities and/or school districts seem to reject or ignore this aspect (Boske, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Ladson-Billing, 2000; Marx, 2006; Weiner, et. al., 2019). Without question, the education system is more comfortable with recruiting and training Black people to reproduce dominant culture ways of teaching and learning as evidenced in the race match/role model studies (Dee, 2004. (Fox, 2016; Egalite, et. al., 2013; Gershenson, et. al, 2016; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Stewart, et. al, 1989;Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017).

This is evident in the learning objectives, selected curricula, theories, and even certification tests reinforced in both university-based and alternative educator preparation programs (Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, Tandon, & Galindo, 2014) They continued to emphasize the comfort, concerns and needs of white pre-service and in-service educators over Black educators (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Matias, et. al., 2014; Matias, et. al. 2016; Sue, et. al, 2009; Sue, et. al., 2011). As Ladson-Billings (2021) stated in a recent webinar on race in America, "We keep centering white people. We don't want to upset or offend them, so we stop talking about things that upset white folks." Even when the research and discussion is around urban education, it is disproportionately about how to prepare white educators to work in urban districts with Black children and children of color (Bentley-Edwards, et. al., 2020; Brown, 2004; Graham, 2017; Howard & Milner, 2014; Sleeter, 2001, 2008, 2016).

We must turn our attention to Black educator knowledge in these programs for three reasons. There is too much existing research from Black scholars and researchers that is not being drawn from, especially in relationship to race, anti-Blackness. notions of care, and Black leadership (Bass, 2012, 2020; Bass & Alston, 2018; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Boutte, 2012; Dancy, 2014; Evans-Winters, 2005; hooks, 2004; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2011; Love,

2019) This research is rich with counternarratives to debunk deficit thinking, raise awareness, and encourage courageous conversations (Singleton, 2014). This knowledge can authentically inform the practices of future educators in urban, suburban and rural school settings (Jackson & Kohli, 2016). It is critically important that research about the academic and emotional needs of Black children and children of color not predominantly reflect the perspectives, experiences or epistemologies of white professors, academics, or organizations.

Secondly, both white and Black pre-service teachers (PSTs) need developing to be effective and caring educators in the field. There is a large gap in the literature about the development and preparation of Black PSTs, which seems to send the erroneous assumption that Black educators are a monolithic group, sharing and understanding similar lived experiences and are inherently able to teach and address the behavior of Black children. The development of Black PSTs cannot be ignored, especially because they are likely to be hired in urban districts and teach Black children (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2017; Evans & Leonard, 2013; Madkins, 2011. Black PSTs must learn about othermothering, otherfathering, and other Black ways of caring and nurturing from Black-authored counternarratives, dissertations, and published research *so that they do not reject their own heritage in order to be viewed as competent* (Broughton, 2020; Love, 2019; Yoshino, 2002), or worse, replicate white notions of care.

Finally, I argue that educator programs help to sustain the double consciousness in some Black educators, but the work of Black researchers and scholars can be beneficial in empowering them, raising their consciousness and preparing them for Black radical leadership needed to dismantle structural oppression in their schools and classrooms. As it stands, traditional ways of leading, teaching and caring are still very much framed in whiteness in university and/or alternative educator programs. And these walls of whiteness in racial scholarship (Brunsma, et.

al., 2013) continue to be problematic and harmful. Black principals, teachers, and counselors

cannot serve under white traditional leadership, teaching, and counseling models and not expect

curricular and disciplinary violence, racism, and oppression because these models are historically

rooted in white supremacy and patriarchy. Educational reforms as related to accountability and

standardized testing in order to improve student achievement have negatively impacted the

manner in which all educators are prepared and how Black children are treated. The long

tradition of Black resistance and radical leadership in Black education has proven that academic

excellence and potential do not have to be gained at the expense of Black children's well-being.

Rethinking school discipline

        Discussions and educational reforms around rethinking school discipline are nothing

new. The pushback comes from school leaders who argue that strong discipline policies and

practices help maintain orderly schools and support student achievement. According to Black

(2016)-

> All things being equal, schools that manage student behavior through means
> other than suspension produce the highest achieving students. In this respect,
> the quality of education a school provides is closely connected to its discipline
> policies. (p. 1)

However, the research is available to show that zero tolerance policies (ZTPs) and even

supposedly affirming programs like SEL and restorative practices (RPs) continue to control,

surveil, punish, and criminalize Black children (Foster, 2020; Hines-Datiri & Andrews, 2017;

Kaler-Jones, 2020; Keleher, 2000; Johnson, et. al., 2001; Skiba, 2015; Skiba, et. al., 2000; Skiba

& Williams, 2014; Smith & Harper, 2015). In rethinking school discipline, I argue that we have

to be transparent about the fear of disrupting "tried and true" policies and practices that can

improve student learning. Bush's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Obama's Race to the Top

incentivized as well as penalized (lack of) academic progress and growth. That fear is driven by

the fact that educators can lose their jobs as a result of low student performance on state assessments (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). Dismantling the school discipline framework, at any level, is/would be insurmountable. However, I am hopeful that Black radical leadership can begin to reframe discipline and caring for the benefit of Black children and children of color, although it may do so at microlevels. Part of the Black radical imagination, in imagining new worlds and possibilities, is that Black radical leaders can dismantle systems and thereby create their own policies and practices in spaces that they serve.

Counseling in Alternative Education Programs

It is an honest observation that the ASCA national model is a white product. Given that less than 20% of school counselors are Black and fewer than one percent of them are Black males (Cloudt, et. al., 1994; Data USA, 2020; Miller, 2020), it is highly likely that the formation of this model had very little Black intellectual input or considered the gendered and raced experiences of non-white counselors.   Though it is the expectation that *all* school counseling programs follow the national model (Mullen & Lambie, 2013), based on the data and findings in this study, it had little value for addressing the caring and counseling needs of Black children at an alternative education program (AEP) for the following reasons:

Many campus administrators and teachers want AEPs to be places of punishment where disruptive and persistently misbehaving students are assigned to receive consequences for their actions. Counseling in AEPs in the 1980s and 1990s was not even a concern; but by the 2000s, the national model was created and reformers recommended counseling to address student pathologies, emotional problems, and even family dysfunction. Taken together, the model and function of the AEP are problematic because they do not consider educator overuse of ZTPs and unfair disciplinary practices against Black children on comprehensive campuses.

Therefore, we must pursue a new counseling model to address not only valid behavior assignments but also the ones resulting for disproportionate punishment. This new model should frame the AEP as a site of healing where students can receive consequences, caring and nurturing. We already know that RP and SEL programs are not always adequate because they are racially neutral and/or perpetuate pathologization. In urban districts, where the majority of the students are AEPs are Black or children of color, counseling programs should be tailored to include emancipatory and caring pedagogies that restore humanity and empower students to understand and negotiate the oppressive and racist structures in the education system.

Limitations

The first and most significant limitation of this dissertation is related to the COVID-19 global pandemic, which caused the immediate closure of all schools in March 2020. Two weeks prior to the shutdown, I had recruited and met face-to-face with eight research participants and their principals. As I had gained five of participants through snowball sampling (M. Patton, 2014), I did not know most of them. Therefore, my goal was to establish rapport and relationships with informal visits and talks prior to conducting formal research. I was to begin the informal visits the Monday after spring break, but the COVID shutdown occurred. Due to the unknown, I felt that it was inappropriate to reach out to my participants because I did not know how they were handling the pandemic and I did not want to appear insensitive. The next time I had contact with them was April 2020 via Zoom.

While I appreciated my participants continued interests in my dissertation study, I felt as though the gap between the initial recruitment meeting and the first talk had a negative impact on my ability to establish the rapport and relationship that I wanted. Though we always spent the first ten minutes of every online talk reconnecting and sharing our fears and frustrations about

the COVID crisis, the pressure was always there for me to hurry into the talks and get the data that I needed. By the second online talk, my participants and I were clearly in the clutches of "Zoom fatigue" and I always feared that I was going to lose them.

Another limitation, also related to COVID, was the amount of time between the talks. For example, there was one participant whose second and third talk occurred four months apart. It was difficult to schedule the online talks because Morrison ISD went through a series of openings and closings. When a faculty member or student contracted the virus, the district would have to close in order to conduct deep cleanings. Even with the physical closures, the teachers were still responsible for instruction through Google Meets; but their inconsistent teaching schedule impacted when I was able to meet with them via Zoom. There were times when I had to settle for days and times that were not convenient for me, but I had no choice but to collect data.

The final limitation was having to conduct research in a strictly online platform. Obviously, it was not ideal because the digital wall that interfered with communication. Because the participants were receiving so many emails about the district's response to COVID, decisions about state testing, and information from the CDC, I had to send multiple email requests in order to collect artifacts. When it came to scheduling online talks, through email and Google forms, sometimes a month would go by before I received a response. Even though I requested to conduct online observations in August 2020, administrators did not respond and give me approval until November 2020. I notified the participants immediately about the approval, but I did not receive the links to their Google Meet classes until December 2020. Once I had the links, I had no technical issue observing two of the participants. However, it was problem after problem trying to observe a third participant in December 2020 because the link to their Google

class would not open no matter what I tried. I even sought the help of the school administrator

and their IT support on campus, and nothing worked. I would not get to observe the third

participant until February 2021. Overall, the online observations provided some good insights

into the participants' practices, but they could not replace multiple authentic interactions in a

physical setting.

Despite the communication lags, scheduling issues, or time conflicts, I can acknowledge

that the participants enjoyed engaging in the talks. They felt honored by being selected for the

study and appreciated that someone wanted to tell their stories. When I shared drafts of their

chapters, they loved reading about themselves and offering feedback. What I am really excited

about was being able to collaborate with two of them beyond the dissertation study. I wrote an

article with one of the female participants from my pilot study (Foster & Smith, 2021) and it was

published. I supported one of male participants in writing a grant about his cultural approaches

to caring and he won! He was interviewed by a local news channel and invited me to be his

guest when he received the grant from Farmhouse Teacher Grant Program[67].

<div align="center">Directions for Future Research</div>

This study helped expose many gaps in the literature around the caring work of

contemporary Black teachers, principals, and school counselors. First, of all three of these

groups, there needs to be more research conducted with and on Black school counselors. Despite

their low numbers in the counseling field, there is a wealth of knowledge from Black counselors,

especially Black male counselors, that is not being tapped into. There is much to glean from the

ways in which they understand and negotiate the oppressive nature of school and promote caring

and nurturing. What are some of the ways in which they add Black-ness to the counseling

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[67] Farmhouse Teacher Grant is a pseudonym.

programs that serve Black children in predominantly Black and white school districts? What nurturing work are Black school counselors at AEPs doing? How can their practices be shared with other counselors of color?

Secondly, there should be more research about the dynamics between cultural pedagogies and Black ways of caring beyond one classroom, campus or district. While there is extensive research on the effectiveness of cultural pedagogies in increasing academic achievement, the studies do not mention if the pedagogies are bolstered by Black cultural approaches to care. Without this research filling the gap, we are left to believe that cultural pedagogies and institutional practices remain the educational model for Black children--even though we know that institutional practices can be harmful to the Black psyche. Could the integration of cultural pedagogies and Black caring be more widespread than we know?

Third, there is a lot of research on Black educators practicing resistance and disruption in predominantly white districts because this response is expected and accepted. However, this study demonstrates that Black educators in predominantly Black school districts also practice resistance. This is a crucial standpoint because it speaks to the dilemma of double consciousness and the manner in which Black educators handle it. But more importantly, it exposes the optics of a Black school: while demographically Black, a Black school district can still operate very much with dominant culture values and beliefs at the forefront. This perspective acknowledges that Black educators continue to work in anti-Black institutions, and it is important to learn: How are these educators resisting? Why are they resisting? Is their resistance supported? What has their resistance accomplished as related to caring, leading, and teaching?

Fourth, research is needed to explore the usefulness of Black-ness as a Disruptive Pedagogy framework in alternative and traditional educator programs. This framework speaks to

the Black radical imagination in that it has the potential to prepare Black educators to do the work of resistance in urban schools in order to affirm the well-being of Black students as well as support their potential. What would this framework look like in suburban and rural school districts? How can Black elementary educators utilize this framework? What other oppressive infrastructures could it dismantle, such as heteronormativity or gendered oppression?

Final Thoughts

When I decided to conduct this research in Morrison, I did so because I wanted to offer a counternarrative about the predominantly Black urban school district. There are usually two stories that come out of urban schools: how they are the displaced, violent spaces with low achievement and high teacher turnover. Or they are districts that have overcome their disadvantages and have great academic success. Without question, Morrison is a difficult place to work because of past leadership styles and motives, financial woes, and social conditions that affect all urban areas; but Morrison has proven to be a great place for student learning, *where the majority of the educators are dedicated to loving and uplifting Black children*. There are other urban, predominantly Black school districts doing the same work and we need to tell and hear their stories. We must begin to normalize Black excellence and joy.

My anger and sadness about the spirit-murdering of Black children in U.S. schools prompted this dissertation. It's what Nina Simone spoke and sang out repeatedly in her protest songs: "You give me second house and second class schools" (Backlash Blues, 1967); "It ain't your name/It's the things you do" (Old Jim Crow, 1964); and "Bring more tragedy/Do it slow/Why don't you see it/Why don't you feel it" (Mississippi Goddam, 1964). This has been a cathartic journey, but admittedly re-traumatizing on occasion. But what I learned from Dr. Madison, Mr. Banks, Mr. Richardson, Ms. Riley, Mr. Christianson and their students restored

my hope that there are Black educators doing the hard work of resistance, sometimes to their

own detriment, in order to nurture Black children's well-being and potential. As a Black

feminist scholar and researcher, it is my goal to continue collaborating and supporting their work

of healing and uplifting urban children in the Morrison ISD community. Also Ms. Nina would

want me to, as she has spoken to me all throughout this journey and reminded me of my

responsibility as an artist. I can hear her telling me:

> You know that bread cast upon the water comes back? Because when I see
>
> them doing their thing one day, and I'm too old to do anything but sit and
>
> look at them, I can say that I was a part of that...

APPENDIX A: ABRIDGED SECONDARY DISCIPLINE MATRIX

REASON CODE	INFRACTION	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH
CHEM	Abuse of volatile chemical*	90 AEP	90 EXP	See drug policy	See drug policy
LANG	Abusive lang/racial slurs	3 SAH	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP
AGROB	Aggravated robbery*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
FELAL	Alcohol-felony violation	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
ALC	Alcohol- possession/use/influence	90 EXP	90 EXP	See drug policy	See drug policy
SHREC	Altering/destroying school records	3 ISS	2 SAH	20 AEP	30 AEP
ARSON	Arson*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
AGASE	Assault-aggravated (on employee)*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
AGASN	Assault-aggravated (on student)*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
ASEMS	Assault, simple (on employee)*	90-180 AEP	90-180 AEP	90-180 AEP	90-180 AEP
ASNES	Assault, simple (on student)*	45 AEP	60 AEP	90 AEP	180 AEP
ASEMP	Assault, bodily injury (on employ)*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
ASNEM	Assault, bodily injury (on student)*	60-90 AEP	120-190 AEP	120-145 AEP	145-180 AEP
BMBHX	Bomb threat-Hoax	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
BULLY	Bullying	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
BUS	Bus conduct	Warning	5 SUS	10-30 SUS	REM of Year
CL911	Calling 911	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
CMDIS	Campus disruption	3 ISS	2 SAH	3 SAH	See AD guide
CMINS	Campus insubordination	3 ISS	2 SAH	3 SAH	See AD guide
CLDIS	Classroom disruption	3 ISS	2 SAH	3 SAH	See AD guide
CLINS	Classroom insubordination	3 ISS	2 SAH	3 SAH	See AD guide

REASON CODE	INFRACTION	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH
CLUB	Club-possession/use/exhibit*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP

REASON CODE	INFRACTION	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH
CRMIS	Criminal mischief > $1500*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
HOM	Criminal negligent homicide*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
VAND<	Vandalism < $50.00	3 SAH	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP
VAND>	Vandalism > $50.00	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
DRESS	Dress Code Violation	See Dress Code Policy			
FELCS	Drug-felony*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
DRUG	Drug possession/use/influence*	90 AEP	90 AEP	See drug policy	See drug policy
FIGHT	Fighting	30 AEP	60 AEP	90 AEP	180 AEP
FLSAL	Fire alarm pulled-evacuation*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
GUN	Firearm-possession/use/exhibit*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
FRWKP	Fireworks-possession	3 ISS	2 SAH	3 SAH	20 AEP
HARAS	Harassment-Employee/Staff	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
HITLT	Hit list	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
IDINF	ID badge/lanyard infraction	1 ISS	2 ISS	1 SAH	3 SAH
INBEH	Inappropriate behavior	3 ISS	2 SAH	3 SAH	See AD guide
IDA	Inapprop. display of affection	3 ISS	2 SAH	3 SAH	20 AEP
LEAVE	Leaving school grounds	3 ISS	2 SAH	3 SAH	20 AEP
LOIT	Loitering/30 mins after school*	3 ISS	2 SAH	3 SAH	20 AEP
LAWEA	Look-alike weapon possession	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
MAJCD	Major campus disruption	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP	90 AEP
MURDR	Murder-capital or attempted*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP

PCLMS	Persistent class misbehavior	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
GANG	School-related gang activity	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP	90 AEP
SCLMS	Serious class misbehavior	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
AGSAE	Sexual assault (on employee)*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP

REASON CODE	INFRACTION	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH
AGSAN	Sexual assault (on student)*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
SEXHA	Sexual harassment	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP	90 AEP
TECH	Technology abuse	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
TECHT	Technology threat	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP	90 AEP
TERTH	Terroristic threat*	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
THEFT<	Theft < $25.00	3 ISS	3 SAH	20 AEP	30 AEP
THEFT>	Theft > $25.00	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP	60 AEP
THREM	Threat to an employee	45 AEP	60 AEP	90 AEP	180 AEP
THRST	Threat to a student	3 SAH	20 AEP	30 AEP	45 AEP
TOB	Tobacco-possession/use	2 SAH	10 AEP	20 AEP	30 AEP
TRESP	Trespassing on other campuses	Warning	5 ISS	SAH	20 AEP
WPNPS	Weapon-possession	30 AEP	30 AEP	30 AEP	30 AEP
WEAP	Weapon-prohibited per Penal Code 46.05	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP	180 EXP
Source: Morrison ISD Secondary Discipline Matrix (2013-2014)					

*These infractions should be supported by documentation from a law enforcement agency or a statement from the campus administrator explaining the incident and why no documentation is available. Administrator shall consider extenuating circumstances before making decisions and assigning consequences

APPENDIX B: ELEMENTARY DISCIPLINE MATRIX

	Level I (Minor)	Level II (Moderate)	Level III (Severe)
B E H A V I O R	● Class disruption ● Dress code violations ● Electronic device/cell phone ● Gum/food/drink ● No materials/supplies/homework ● Non-compliance/delay in following directions ● Off task ● Sleeping ● Talking out/making noises/offensive language ● Tardy ● Loitering/trespassing on campus	● Cheating/copying ● Computer system violations ● Defiance to authority/school personnel ● Disrespect to authority/school personnel ● Insubordination ● Mild physical aggression/horseplay ● Repeat offenses (tardy, dress code, gum, no materials, class disruptions, etc.) ● Verbal aggression/gesture (to student)	● Bullying/harassment ● Gang/drug/alcohol ● Physical aggression ● Severe/repetitive class disruption ● Strong/repetitive defiance ● Truancy ● Verbal aggression/gesture (to school staff) ● Use of profanity
I N T E R V E N T I O N	● Change seating/location ● Parent contact ● Proximity ● Signal/gesture/look ● Teaching and practice of expected procedure ● Verbal reprimand	<u>Previous responses PLUS:</u> ● Counseling (teacher, counselor, or administrator) ● Loss of privileges, points, etc. ● Parent escort ● Penalties in extracurricular activities ● Student action plan ● Time out/time owed ● Weekly behavior report	<u>Previous responses PLUS:</u> ● De-escalation ● Individual behavior intervention plan ● Mentor ● Peer mediation ● Referral to outside counseling agency

C O N S E Q U E N C E	● Counselor referral
	● Parent conference
	● Community service/building service
	● Parent shadow
	● Student infraction
	● Teacher and student conference
	● $15 for electronic device/cell phone
		<u>Previous responses PLUS:</u>
		● 5 single student infractions = referral
		● Administrative conference
		● Counselor/parent/teacher conference
		● Detention--Lunch with teacher
		  ❏ Afterschool
		  ❏ Saturday School
			<u>Previous responses PLUS:</u>
			● Immediate referral
			● In-school suspension
			● Removal from school
			● Out of school suspension
			● DAEP

Source: Morrison ISD Elementary Discipline Matrix (2013-2014)

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