HOPE AND CARING: A PORTRAITURE STUDY OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS OF HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

HOPE AND CARING: A PORTRAITURE STUDY OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS OF HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED STUDENTS

YOLANDA ISABEL NUÑEZ

Equitable education for all students is an enduring issue in public schools, especially for schools serving marginalized students living in poverty. Providing equitable educational opportunities to students in their K-12 careers increases the likelihood that historically marginalized populations will improve their social mobility and increase post-high school opportunities. This study examined the dispositions and practices of teachers who effectively teach historically marginalized populations. This study aimed to determine how Hope and Caring manifest in teachers who effectively promote rigorous learning and engagement for historically marginalized students. The following questions guided this study: (1) How do hope and caring manifest in teachers' work? (2) What lived experiences have prompted teachers to exhibit hopeful and caring dispositions? (3) How do hopeful and caring teachers resist the dehumanizing effects of teacher accountability based on high-stakes testing? Using portraiture methodology, the data for this study was collected through an interview with each participant and many hours of classroom observations. The study participants were two secondary teachers and their individual stories and experiences were captured in portraits. The findings of this study revealed that teachers must have the disposition and the pedagogical knowledge to go beyond the technical aspects of teaching to create humanistic, safe environments conducive to students' learning. First, teachers must have the political clarity to understand the systemic links between schools and society that substantially impact students' success or failure. The participants' political clarity was the foundation on how they created humanizing learning environments.

Second, teachers must understand their identity to effectively teach marginalized students. In doing so, they are better equipped to teach their students how to navigate dehumanizing school practices and society. Lastly, the participants' main priority was building relationships with students and creating a classroom community that included honoring students' voices. They created a classroom community where students felt valued, seen, and heard.

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I owe a world of gratitude to my family and friends who are just like family for always believing in, supporting, encouraging, and loving me. I am especially grateful to my Nana, who taught me how to hope through her faith in God.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To my Nana for teaching me hope through her actions and faith. She loved me unconditionally and showed me that everyone deserves grace and patience. To my Tata, who taught me about society's inequities. To my parents, Robert and Rebecca, who managed to guide me and allow me to express my views about life. To my Tia Grace and Tio Eli. Your unwavering support and belief in me have been the foundation of my success. I love you all!

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Working with teachers in turnaround schools provides a distinct perspective on their work with historically marginalized populations, school accountability measures, and the Arizona State Department of Education's (ADE) perception of "failing schools." This researcher experienced that often, the state's perception was that everything in the school was failing, and students were not learning. This perception was supported by the schools' persistently low achievement on high-stakes testing (www.azed.gov). As a school turnaround principal at three schools, one urban middle school and a middle and high school on tribal land, this researcher inherited teachers whose attitudes and dispositions were not optimal for working with historically marginalized populations. Conversations with teachers regarding students and teaching historically marginalized populations could most likely fit into the following categories:

1). Teachers blamed students, their parents, and the community for the lack of student achievement;

2). Teachers felt sorry for students regarding their home lives and did not want to make students uncomfortable by pushing students to excel;

3). Teachers were frustrated that their peers and other staff did not hold students accountable for high levels of learning and/or behavior or;

4). Teachers talked about adjusting curriculum and pedagogy to engage students in relevant and meaningful learning.

The first two categories imply deficit thinking and a lack of belief in students' ability to access a rigorous curriculum. Teachers in these two categories deny students the resources and the skills necessary to access opportunities available to their White peers. The denial of access creates a form of discrimination, racism, and a reproduction of inequality prevalent in our society

(Schwalbe, 2008; Stoval, 2016). The reproduction of social class is endemic in school structures, classroom processes, and outcomes. In the article, *Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work,* Anyon (1983) describes the reproduction of social class in school structures through the academic tasks teachers expect from their students.

Further, the dominant mainstream culture reinforces its middle-class ideals, values, and educational norms via public education policies and school accountability measures (Eslinger, 2013). The emphasis on test scores and school labels creates a test-taking culture that dehumanizes teaching and learning and minimizes the importance of creating student-centered practices. Teachers of historically marginalized populations have a critical role in determining students' academic paths. They can either connect students' lived experiences to the real world and demand that students demonstrate their knowledge through rigorous activities or impede students' trajectory by requiring rote memorization activities, which Freire (2008) called the depositing of information.

The last two categories indicate the teachers' willingness to go beyond the approved curriculum to validate students' cultural, language, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2017; Sosa-Provencio, 2016). In classrooms where this type of teaching occurs, one sees students participating in a healthy struggle with learning activities scaffolded to guide students to higher levels of thinking, problem-solving, and developing their conclusions from their learning. This type of classroom is a cognitively busy place where learning is a constant. The teachers constantly have a pulse on how the students advance in their learning by consistently asking questions to advance their intellectual and academic engagement (hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Skilled teachers can and will push students to their potential.

In each school, this researcher had the task of hiring teachers who were up to the challenge of creating classrooms that helped historically marginalized populations meet their full potential. At one school, the superintendent authorized this researcher to dismiss teachers who did not have the necessary characteristics to help students learn and hire teachers with the qualities required to engage students in rigorous learning. Reflecting on the environment the "effective" teachers created, this author realized that they cared enough about their students to create learning environments that pushed students to think critically about the world around them. The "effective" teachers also had hope, hope demonstrated through their instructional practices and high expectations that their students could access a rigorous curriculum, set goals, and think critically about real-world issues.

An example of a teacher exhibiting hope and caring is a high school English teacher with whom this author worked while a principal in a Tribal school. Within the first days of reviewing her resources, she asked if she could purchase literature books representing Native American culture. Because she was new to our staff, this author hesitated to honor her request without substantial reasoning. During our discussion, she assured me that she would teach to the Arizona State Standards but felt that she would be better able to engage students in higher-order thinking activities with literature written by Native American authors. She collaborated with the two Native American English teachers on our staff to decide which books would be appropriate. Together, the English department created a list of books that would engage students, see themselves in the literature, and therefore be able to interact with learning activities planned out by the teacher. This intentional planning resulted in students seeing themselves in the literature and related to the authors' perspectives. Students were willing to complete the rigorous learning activities required by the teacher.

Further, there were minimal office referrals in classrooms where students were cognitively engaged, and the classroom culture was one of high expectations, respect, and trust. Teachers in such classrooms exhibited a form of caring by building positive relationships with students. Their caring did not stem from pity; instead, it was rooted in their deep knowledge and respect for students; "to create spaces wherein ... students may cultivate dignity, self-love, and educational means necessary to grasp the quality of life that they deserve, and that so often escapes them" (Sosa-Provencio, 2016, p. 310). Effective teachers understand what historically marginalized students need and want and can humanize students' distinct situations through their pedagogy and classroom environment.

Few teachers understand that much more is required when teaching disadvantaged students. Essentially, teaching historically marginalized populations necessitates a willingness to expand on other responsibilities extending beyond the classroom; responsibilities include, but are not limited to, "serving as counselors, advocates, and mentors" (Valenzuela, 2016, pp. 34-35). Teachers must be willing to adjust their pedagogy from the planned lesson to another learning activity to support students in dealing with the harsh realities of poor communities. Effective teachers of historically marginalized populations can push students to achieve academically high levels through their mindful planning of learning activities. Because teachers establish a trusting, reliable relationship grounded in their students' culture, they can maintain high student expectations. Students, in turn, recognize that their teachers care about them, and they strive to do well in school (Duncan-Andrade, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Watson et al., 2016). Thus, a highly qualified teacher serving historically marginalized populations must have the content knowledge and be willing to understand students personally and culturally and "sustain reciprocal relationships with students as the basis for all learning" (Noddings,1988, cited in

Valenzuela, 1999, p. 61). Teachers must possess a combination of caring, content knowledge, and hope to effectively address the needs of historically marginalized populations to give them a fighting chance at accessing opportunities that *ought to be* available to any child desiring a better life.

Background

School failure has long been blamed on marginalized students' achievement on high-stakes tests. The belief that marginalized students cannot learn a rigorous curriculum narrows the curriculum and pedagogy, decreasing access to optimal opportunities. In 1983, the United States Department of Education published A Nation at Risk. The report explained how schools were not educating students well, instilling the fear that the United States would lose its competitiveness among other nations. A Nation at Risk (1983) was the catalyst for the rigid school reform models we see today by recommending a more rigorous and standardized curriculum across the nation's schools.

School reform models exacerbate deficit models and the need to find magic teaching methods that will help students score proficiently on high-stakes testing (Bartolomé, 1994; Rodriguez & Osegura, 2015). Furthermore, school reform models do nothing to help marginalized students gain the necessary skills to compete in a global society and counter the very premise of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Consequently, most current reform models, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), minimize the strengths, knowledge, and cultural diversity that marginalized students bring into the classroom (Bartolomé, 2004; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The majority of teachers in the United States are White. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (N.C.E.S.), 81.9% of teachers in the United States are White, and non-Hispanic (2020). The vast majority of teachers are White, while the student demographic is increasingly diverse. In 2017, the public-school enrollment for Hispanic students was 26.8% and 15.2% for Black students (N.C.E.S., 2020). Furthermore, the N.C.E.S. predicts that by 2029, Hispanic student enrollment will increase to 27.5%, and Black student enrollment is expected to remain at 15.2%. The need for teacher training is evident because most practicing and prospective teachers are products of predominantly White communities and White colleges of teacher education (Nieto, 1996, in Howard, 2006). Racial disparities between teachers and students cause significant issues in the education of historically marginalized populations. Because White, middle-class teachers cannot connect to their students' lived realities, they are unable to "connect the academic rigor of content areas with their students' lives" (Duncan-Andrade, 2007, p. 9).

Teacher capacity is essential to successful schools; it is critical in schools serving historically marginalized populations. "Effective teachers" are rare in schools in poor communities (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Valenzuela, 2016). Teacher preparation courses do not prepare teachers effectively with the skills needed for successful historically marginalized classrooms (Bartolomé, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2009). The insufficient pool of quality teachers applying for positions in poor communities confirms this statement. There is a need for White educators to look within themselves to realign their core beliefs and expectations regarding Whiteness. White educators must confront how assumptions of

dominance have influenced perceptions and attitudes according to race and diversity (Bartolomé, 2004; 2008; Howard, 2006).

Teachers' identity and ideology influence their approach to teaching historically marginalized populations. It is much more common to observe teacher attitudes that include disrespect, deficit thinking, and a lack of meaningful instructional practices than to see hope, caring, and rigorous instruction. Teachers make assumptions that students' socioeconomic status, language, or culture affect how they can perform rigorous academic tasks; "teachers seem to see only deficit and need" (Ladson-Billings p. 99). Deficit thinking is challenging to address with teachers because of the deep-rooted belief system stemming from a hegemonic ideology.

At a minimum, teachers of historically marginalized populations must understand how to deal with their own identity and the cultural differences encountered in marginalized student classrooms (Bartolomé, 2008; Valenzuela, 2016; Yosso, 2005). Addressing teachers' ideology is vital because of its influence on teaching and learning (Bartolomé, 2008). Teachers' ideology shapes how they approach teaching such that within one's ideology lies their beliefs and assumptions through which they view the world. Consequently, teachers' ideology is reflected in their attitudes and how they teach students in their classrooms (Bartolomé, 2008). Teachers' belief in student ability dramatically affects a student's track in their schooling, forming their own identity and developing a *teacher-initiated self-fulfilling prophecy*, making them unable to recover from poor school performance (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Theory

Critical theory is considered a social transformation theory originating in The Frankfurt School in Germany. Some of the most known members of the Frankfurt School are Theodor

Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm (Corradetti, 2017; deMarrais & Le Compte, 1999; Thompson, 2017). Critical theorists believe that historical study is crucial for comprehending social phenomena, unlike the traditional approach of looking to the past for precedents. Frankfurt school philosophers criticized the positivistic approach, arguing that human phenomena cannot be understood like physical phenomena. The Frankfurt school opposed Marxism's economic determinism because it overlooked the role of culture in perpetuating inequality and injustice. However, they shared a concern for injustice, oppression, and inequality with Marxists. They aimed for a "radical transformation of social arrangements to increase human freedom" (deMarrais & Le Compte, 1999, p. 29).

Other theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Jurgen Habermas, Michael Foucault, and Paulo Freire have contributed significantly to contemporary critical theory. Their work was instrumental in shaping critical theory in American educational philosophy. Gramsci's research focused on how dominant ideology affected the individual consciousness of struggling working-class men and women in Italy. This author's work developed the concept of hegemony to describe how the dominant social class preserves control through the socializing activity of institutions (Apple, 1979; deMarrais & Le Compte, 1999). Through hegemony and the saturation of social, political, and cultural assumptions, the dominant group maintains its influence of control (Bartolomé, 2008).

Habermas and Foucault were concerned with the interconnectedness of knowledge and power. They believed that knowledge is as essential a "social resource" (p. 30) as material goods such as money and property, which help people advance in society (deMarrais & Le Compte, 1999). Foucault contended that those in power had access to and controlled knowledge; powerful groups in society declared what was taken to be authentic and established societal standards. He

claimed that "power is knowledge" (p. 30); therefore, those in power determine how and what types of knowledge to disperse to the masses. Habermas also focused on knowledge; however, his interests revolved around how disseminating information cultivated an unequal society. He argued that continuous, open dialogue allows citizens to know true knowledge derived from political and historical contexts.

Similarly, Paolo Freire, a Brazilian educator, believed that dialogue was critical in the transformation of people to escape oppressive situations. Claiming that dialogue is more than the interaction between people to discover the world together, Freire felt that dialogue indicates equality and freedom that can transform the world for every human being. Freire (2018) claimed that traditional education was oppressive and dehumanizing. For example, the "banking" model of education, which views students as empty vessels to be filled by teachers' knowledge, is considered dehumanizing. This model requires students to recite and memorize information rather than think critically about world issues. Freire (2018) considered teaching and learning political acts and felt that educators must utilize critical pedagogy to make teachers and students aware of the politics surrounding education.

In the 20th century, education theorists began applying critical thought to education issues surrounding ethnicity, societal groups, and gender. Michael Apple and Henry Giroux, two of the most notable theorists, were concerned with two issues: how the interactions of teachers and students create social reality and why these interactions developed as they did (deMarrais and LeCompte, 1999). Both theorists analyzed how education is used to maintain the dominant group's position and power. By analyzing these concepts, the theorists combined macro and microlevel approaches into one perspective to comprehend the schooling process.

Critical theory assumes the responsibility of unmasking the impact of the dominant ideology and its influence on the practices in schools. It is a theory that connects the concerns of social structures with a focus on the actions and beliefs of individuals (deMarrais and LeCompte, 1999). Critical theorists emphasize the power of individuals to structure their destinies to ameliorate oppression. Additionally, Critical theory states the impact that society's beliefs have on marginalized populations because schools are organizations where society is reproduced (Apple, 1979; Bartolomé, 2004; Eslinger, 2013; Freire, 2018). The principles of critical theory will be utilized to broaden the understanding of this study's participants and how they approach their practice.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how hope and caring manifest in teachers who effectively promote rigorous learning and engagement for historically marginalized students. If most teachers are White and middle class, their lived experiences are distinctly different from their historically marginalized students. How can these teachers teach students the critical skills they need to navigate systems and a society that sees them as subordinate? Specifically, this study will determine the inherent nature of caring and hopeful teachers of historically marginalized populations to the extent that we can shape White teachers' experiences and knowledge to become better teachers of historically marginalized populations.

Significance/Implications for the Education Field

Equitable education for all students is an enduring issue in public schools, especially for schools serving marginalized students living in poverty. Providing equitable educational opportunities to students in their K-12 careers is fundamental in increasing the likelihood that historically marginalized populations will improve their social mobility and increase post-high

school opportunities. This study could help professors in teacher preparation programs and school district leaders understand the relationship between teacher dispositions and student achievement. This study's findings could help impact policy, teacher preparation programs, and in-service teachers.

During this time in our society of racial strife, conversations around ideology and identity could help lessen the emerging racial tensions and make visible the actual abilities that historically marginalized students have if given the appropriate scaffolding and supportive learning environments. Expanding teachers' knowledge base to exhibit hope and caring for their students could increase student achievement, improve school letter grades, and avoid a failing school label.

Because educational leaders are accountable for fostering environments that maximize student outcomes, this study will assist educators in articulating standards and fostering organizational cultures and conditions conducive to achievement for *all* students. This study may also assist education leaders in developing instructional capacity by providing training on how hope and caring manifest in classrooms. The training would require a great deal of inner work on behalf of the participants (Bartolomé, 2004). However, it would greatly benefit historically marginalized populations and all students regardless of their race and socioeconomic background.

Research Questions

1. How does hope and caring manifest in teachers' work?
2. What lived experiences have prompted teachers to exhibit hopeful and caring dispositions?

3. How do hopeful and caring teachers resist the dehumanizing effects of teacher accountability based on high-stakes testing?

Limitations

There are some possible limitations in this study. The first limitation is that the researcher has been working in the district of study for less than one year in a role that does not have easy classroom access. Classroom observations have not been completed to identify good teachers. A second limitation is that the researcher may have to rely on another's perception of effective teaching. A third limitation is that student populations in individual schools have varying degrees of ethnicity and poverty as measured by the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Other factors that could contribute to the results of this study might be the attitudes of teachers and students due to the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Delimitations

This study included only teachers in classrooms with historically marginalized students. The selection criteria included educators working in a large school district serving students who qualified for free and reduced lunch or had a racial background other than White.
The interview questions were consistent, and interviews were conducted during teachers' regular school day, specifically during their planning period.

Definition of Terms

Throughout the study, various terms are used to describe and support the research. The operational definitions provide clarification of terms specific to this study.

Caring: Prioritizing the concern for relationships rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness (Noddings, 2005).

Critical Pedagogy: Analyzes the relation between power and knowledge. It empowers students to understand and engage the world around them and develop the courage to change the social order where necessary (McLaren, 2003, p. 85).

Deficit Thinking: Defining students by their weaknesses rather than strengths and blaming their poor academic performance on their socioeconomic status or race.

Equity in education: Fair distribution of educational services (Valenzuela, 1999).

Historically Marginalized Populations: Minoritized, marginalized students based on race, culture, language, or socioeconomic status (Paris & Alim, 2014; Valenzuela, 1999;).

Hope: A dynamic, cognitive, motivational process exhibited in teachers' work and affecting student outcomes (Snyder & Shorey, 2002).

Ideology: The production and representation of ideas, values, and beliefs and how they are expressed and lived out by individuals and groups (McLaren, 2003, p. 79).

Political Clarity: Recognizing that educational institutions are socializing institutions that reflect the culture, values, and norms of the larger society (Bartolomé, 1994; Nieto, 2006; McKinney de Royston, 2020).

Pragmatic Hope: Recognizing the difficulty of current circumstances and approaching such difficulties with thoughtful action (Nolan & Stitzlein, 2001).

Racial Identity: Identification or identifying with one's racial group.

Womanist Caring: Womanist teachers use systemic injustices as educational tools to liberate their students. They assist students in understanding how various oppressive systems affect them daily, allowing them to rediscover their agency (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; 2008; McArthur & Lane, 2019; McKinney de Royston, 2020; Thompson, 1998).

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study is organized into four chapters. Chapter Two presents a review of the literature relating to inequitable schooling, social and cultural capital, and the notion of hope and caring in classrooms serving historically marginalized students. Each literature review component will serve as a foundation for the portraits created later.

The study's methodology is Portraiture and is presented in Chapter Three. Portraiture is appropriate for this study because it provides a robust empirical structure while simultaneously painting a portrait of the participants. Chapter Three also describes the research design, data collection, data analysis procedures, and the researcher's positionality. Chapter Four presents the study's findings by presenting the portraits of each participant in the study. Chapter Five includes a summary of the study, a comparison of the portraits, the implications of the study related to educational leaders, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers' hope and caring impact the classroom culture and how their pedagogy embedded in that culture creates high-level learning experiences for historically marginalized students. This chapter will review the literature on the characteristics and dispositions of effective teachers of marginalized children. Generally, marginalized students do not perform well on high-stakes testing; however, some teachers' pedagogical practices create rigorous learning environments for students in the margins. Their students show academic growth on assessments. The literature encompasses the issues of Education Policy and its effects on the schooling of marginalized students, teachers' ideology and assumptions, and the dispositions of hopeful and caring teachers.

Education Reform

Equitable education for all students is an enduring public-school issue, especially for schools serving marginalized students living in poverty. Providing equitable educational opportunities to students in their K-12 careers is fundamental in increasing the likelihood that historically marginalized populations will improve their social mobility and increase post-high school opportunities. School reform efforts have been at the heart of educating less privileged students, with federal mandates dating to the mid-1960s. School reform continues today, with federal mandates becoming more stringent for schools to meet acceptable metrics (NCLB, 2001, https://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml). The history of significant federal mandates will be organized chronologically.

History of Education Reform

Until 1965, the federal government played a small role in public education. Lyndon B. Johnson, a strong advocate for public education, believed education was the solution to poverty. As part of his War on Poverty initiative, he signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It was the largest source of federal spending on elementary and secondary education, bringing Title 1 funding for schools (https://www2.ed.gov). The legislature aimed to supply assistance for underprivileged youth and improve their academic performance to increase their learning to the same levels as their more advantaged peers. The initiative called for equal access to education, especially for economically disadvantaged students, and aimed to close the achievement gap for struggling learners, minorities, and children living in poverty (https://www2.ed.gov).

The United States was satisfied with its public education system placing its trust in public schools and the abilities of teachers to educate children. However, in 1983, President Reagan's administration published "*A Nation At Risk,"* which compared American student achievement to other industrialized nations. The report disclosed that American student achievement was lower on 19 academic tests administered and that SAT scores were declining. Additionally, the report stated that "23 million adults were functionally illiterate, 13 percent of 17-year-olds could be considered functionally illiterate, and functional illiteracy among minority youth was as high as 40 percent" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Ultimately, "*A Nation at Risk"* proclaimed that the United States was no longer internationally competitive due to the mediocrity of the education system, thus propelling a movement to change the state-funded instructional framework.

During this era of education reform, the federal government begins exacting requirements on states to improve educational outcomes for students. "*A Nation At Risk"* was a pivotal moment for education reform because it focused on areas of schooling to raise the standard of education. The report suggested increasing rigor, implementing new standards, increasing teacher salaries, and improving teacher preparation programs (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The report urged increasing high school graduation requirements that schools adopt more "rigorous and measurable standards" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and increase expectations for performance and behavior. Furthermore, the report endorsed better use of instructional time by dedicating more time to teaching and implementing more stringent attendance policies to "reduce the amount of time lost through absenteeism and tardiness" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The report also addressed teacher preparation programs and made teaching a rewarding profession by referencing teacher salaries based on performance pay. Teacher quality and the implementation of an evaluation system to distinguish teacher effectiveness are first mentioned in this report.

"A Nation At Risk" heightened the concern for the education of America's youth and called for stiff reform. The strong language used in the document spurred fear and doubt in the public education system. It prompted a necessity for radical change, compelling the government to increase accountability for student learning and teacher effectiveness. *"A Nation At Risk"* is the catalyst for the strict school accountability measures we see today to a great degree. Current federal mandates contain much of the same language, and to a large extent, this report drives current education policy and education reform efforts.

The fear and angst generated by "*A Nation At Risk"* manifested into the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The NCLB legislation reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Act and became the most extensive education reform since 1965. With the new century came a new testing era. NCLB significantly increased the federal role in holding schools accountable for all students' academic progress, requiring students to test in Reading, Writing, and Math in third and eighth grades and once in high school (www.ed.gov). Science testing was required in the fourth and eighth grades and once in high school. Fundamental to this reform is the belief that exposing detailed school performance information to the public and tying it to "high-stakes" assessments could increase school productivity. (www.ed.gov).

The NCLB pillars were standards, assessments, accountability, and recruiting high-quality teachers and principals. A significant component of this reform model was that school improvement grants were available to schools needing improvement, giving states the authority to prioritize grant funding for school districts that:

(1) serve the lowest-achieving schools;
(2) demonstrate the greatest need for such funds; and
(3) demonstrate the strongest commitment to ensuring that such funds are used to enable the lowest-achieving schools to meet the progress goals in school improvement plans (NCLB, 2001, Sec. 1003, School Improvement).

NCLB required explicit and increasingly stringent penalties for persistently low-performing schools receiving Title 1 funding. The legislation mandated states to introduce sanctions and rewards for each school based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status. Like previous federal mandates, NCLB focused on closing the achievement gap by requiring 100% proficiency by all students in Reading, Writing, and Math and requiring schools to hire highly qualified teachers.

NCLB school accountability de-emphasized the importance of good teaching by placing importance on meeting proficiency standards rather than acquiring deep knowledge. A considerable body of research shows that standardized tests are normed to "White, middle-class, monolingual measures of achievement" (Bartolomé, 1994; 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2017, p. 142; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015), putting marginalized students at a further disadvantage to meet proficiency scores. Comparing test results of historically marginalized children to those of their White, more privileged peers have shown the academic underachievement of these students. Research states that good teachers alleviate the consequences of poverty and can impact advancing or impeding student achievement (Nieto, 2006; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015). Accordingly, high-quality, effective teachers must teach marginalized students. To this end, NCLB's definition of highly qualified teachers is a poor indicator that teachers have the qualities and dispositions needed to increase marginalized students' proficiency rates. Nieto (2006) contends that deep content knowledge and passing a teacher certification test are insufficient to account for other qualities determining teacher competency. Therefore, NCLB's highly qualified teacher requirements ignore the importance of teachers' knowledge of diversity regarding social class, language, and race.

Critics of NCLB contend that test-based school accountability measures can lead to unanticipated outcomes, such as narrowing the curriculum and creating a test-taking pedagogy and culture (Dee & Jacob, 2011). The researchers assert that the problem with current school accountability mandates is that educators may focus on identifying "bubble students" (p. 420) to achieve gains. This practice reallocates resources from low- and high-performing students to win the numbers game of school accountability. Additionally, schools allocate more instructional time to teaching Reading and Math, which diminishes time for other non-tested subjects

(Darling-Hammond, 2010). Teachers spend instructional time familiarizing students with exercises that look like test items, often "reverting to drills based on recall and recitation" (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 71) to prepare students for tests. The pressure of the test-taking culture minimizes the importance of getting to know students at the basic human level. Building relationships with students is pushed aside to promote the importance of test scores and school labels (Nieto, 2006; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015). The policy-driven conditions perpetuate a test-taking pedagogy, consequently lowering the learning expectations for students.

The increased presence of federal policy in K-12 education exaggerates the focus on test-taking practices, which worsens the exclusion of historically marginalized students. Test-taking pedagogy dehumanizes teaching and learning. The dehumanization of teaching and learning further denies marginalized students access to a curriculum that already does not serve them. Moreover, the test-taking culture in schools maintains the undereducation of marginalized students (Liou & Rojas, 2016; Nieto, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999).

Cultural Capital

Social mobility and school success are dependent on one's socioeconomic status (Anyon, 1983; Giroux, 1983). Social class refers to groups of individuals occupying similar positions regarding capital, and it is reproduced from one generation to another (Apple, 1979; Giroux, 1983). Social class affects how educators approach teaching and learning and ultimately affects students' academic achievement. Educators consistently confront the effects of social class on learning. Students increasingly come to school with what some teachers perceive as deficiencies (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Students' socioeconomic factor creates ongoing challenges for teachers to produce favorable student outcomes, especially with stringent school accountability models.

Education researchers claim that schools play a large part in reproducing societal inequities (Apple, 1979; Bartolomé, 2008; Giroux, 1983;). Researchers argue that lacking cultural capital could hinder a student's academic achievement. Giroux (1983) employs Pierre Bourdieu's analysis regarding culture and cultural capital to explain the reproduction of society. According to Giroux (1983), Bourdieu defines cultural capital as the assets one acquires from their family; this includes language, knowledge, education, skills, elements of style, and perceptions regarding "what the dominant class(es) label as the most valued cultural capital" (p. 268). Schools have ways of legitimizing forms of cultural capital, such as ways of speaking, forms of knowledge, and familiarity with skills or standards that benefit students from certain class relations (Apple, 1979; Giroux, 1983). Schools promote language patterns, particular curricula, and authority structures, and children from higher socioeconomic structures are familiar with these types of social arrangements (Tramonte & Willms, 2010). One of the main arguments of cultural capital is that middle-class home structures support students in school. As a result, higher-class students come into school with an advantage and ultimately do better.

Other than the mainstream group, children from different socioeconomic groups do not have access to the standards or rules set by the dominant culture. Therefore, children who do not have access to the dominant culture's knowledge do not have access to the rules or skills that will help them access the curriculum (Delpit, 2006). Students entering school lacking "basic skills" are labeled deficient and need intervention. Students familiar with the school structures, i.e., children from higher socioeconomic families, are academically successful. For students raised outside the mainstream culture, considerable negative consequences can be imposed on them by schools and the greater society (Bartolomé, 2008). There are language rules that outline success in institutions. These rules relate to forms of communication in particular ways of speaking,

writing, "presentation of self and ways of interacting" (Delpit, 2006, p. 25). Children raised in families unfamiliar with schools' culture are unfamiliar with the rules. Consequently, inequality is perpetuated since historically marginalized children lacking middle-class cultural capital do not develop the skills necessary for academic success.

Cultural capital explains why some students achieve academically and continue post-secondary education, and others do not (Tramonte & Willms, 2010). The perception that education is an equalizer is a misconception because schools reproduce an unequal society (Schwalbe, 2008). Researchers have discussed how schools, educators, and curriculum writers knowingly or unknowingly can reproduce and replicate social conditions in the greater society (Apple, 1979). Identifying historically marginalized students' levels of cultural capital and filling in the gaps can equalize opportunities for them.

Social Capital

Social capital plays a significant role in historically marginalized students' schooling. Social capital is the social ties students establish with their peers and school personnel to help them benefit from resources they may not otherwise obtain. Unlike cultural capital, social capital does not indicate an individual's attributes (Valenzuela, 1999). Social capital is the connection among people; it is the social networks people create to pursue a shared goal that cannot be achieved individually (Arneil, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). The relationships that develop within social networks have a foundation of trust, respect, and support. Academic achievement among historically marginalized students and the adults that support them relies on the strength of the social capital created by students. In schools, social capital becomes "the connections to individuals and networks that can provide access to resources and forms of support to accomplish goals" (Stanton-Salazar, cited in Bartlett & Garcia, 2011, p. 189).

Strong social connections at school are incredibly constructive because they increase social capital, which can be used to gain resources or opportunities, for example, good grades or a high school diploma (Valenzuela, 1999; Bartlett & Garcia, 2011). Because these social networks develop trust, beliefs, values, and expectations in youth, a sense of connectedness also develops. Connectedness can positively affect historically marginalized youth, creating a sense of belonging and improved self-esteem (Baroutsis et al., 2016). Bartlett and Garcia (2011) contend that minority and immigrant youth benefit from social capital because it helps them adapt to schooling and contributes to academic persistence.

Teacher-student relationships are also considered a form of social capital within the school. Teachers can help students with academic and emotional support. Marginalized students can benefit from positive teacher-student relationships as the teacher creates a safe and trusting space for students to turn to when needed (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011). Valenzuela (1999) explains that caring teachers become more fundamental for student success when peers cannot support each other. The impact of positive teacher-student relationships facilitates access to other areas of schooling that extend beyond academics.

Social and cultural capital are significant in how historically marginalized students access success in schools. First, learning involves a social process through which conformities toward school are cultivated in familiar contexts and similar groups. Second, cultural capital involves the support and willingness of caring teachers to add the necessary academic knowledge and cultural rules so that historically marginalized students are provided similar opportunities as their middle-class peers. Lastly, social connections developed within a school help marginalized students access resources that help them achieve in school.

Teacher Assumptions/Ideology

A vast body of research suggests that teacher beliefs and attitudes regarding student ability are critical for academic achievement. Bartolomé (2008) and Rodriguez and Oseguera (2015) suggest that a teacher's belief in students can deny them an equitable education that prevents them from obtaining equitable opportunities. Because beliefs and attitudes develop from one's values, or possibly, as Bartolomé (2008) and Apple (1979) explain, one's ideology, it is essential to discuss the effects of teacher perceptions on the academic achievement of historically marginalized students. Teacher beliefs and attitudes affect teachers' approach to pedagogical practices, the classroom environment, and verbal and non-verbal cues delivered to students. These practices can determine students' access to a curriculum that can change or perpetuate their current situation.

Deficit Ideology

Ideology shapes our perception of the world around us. Comparable to an individual's cultural practices, ideology is a belief system that people maintain to explain and justify the status quo. According to Wolf (2004), Althusser claims that society operates on a set of beliefs; those beliefs are inculcated into individuals within families and through social organizations such as schools and churches. Schools are places where we learn the hidden and unwritten rules of society. The rules of society are concealed because they are embedded within pedagogy and the school's curriculum. Nieto (2006) expounds that education reproduces the inequalities of society "through decisions about funding, curriculum, class size, testing, tracking, and other matters of policy" (p. 3). Therefore, students' experiences in their schooling shape how they perceive the natural world surrounding them.

Although Bartolomé (2008) suggests the need for more research regarding the influence of ideology on teachers' beliefs and attitudes, there seems to be a connection between how teachers view their students' potential, how they structure classroom practices, and how they treat students (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999). Through their practice and use of available resources, teachers reproduce society's inequalities. Apple (1979), Bartolomé (2008), and Schwalbe (2008) state that reproduction in schools occurs, in part, because teachers have not done the internal work of critically analyzing their ideology and its effects on their attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning. Because of this, they cannot teach historically marginalized students the skills needed to participate in the dominant culture's world, thus denying them opportunities readily afforded to their more advantaged peers. Teachers' belief in their students' ability dramatically affects a student's track in their schooling. The pervasive discriminatory discourse that portrays low achievement by historically marginalized students as expected outcomes suggest teachers' inability to foster academic expectations that believe in this population's academic performance (Liou and Rojas, 2016).

Teachers not belonging to a historically marginalized population must make a thoughtful, concerted effort to deeply understand these populations' lived experiences (Bartolomé, 1994; Eslinger, 2013; Paris & Alim, 2014). Additionally, Eslinger (2013) contends that White teachers cannot fully understand the lived experiences of minoritized students because of the inherent privilege that comes with their Whiteness. Paris and Alim (2014) state that educators must be very cognizant of what it means to be a student of color and plan learning activities through the perspectives of students' lived experiences.

Bartolome (1994) suggests that teachers and educators believe underachievement is a technical issue; therefore, a technical solution is needed. Teachers must move away from finding

"effective methods" that will "help" subordinated students succeed in school and use pedagogical practices that humanize subordinated students. Teachers whose pedagogy simplifies the curriculum due to their limiting beliefs regarding students' abilities diminish students' capacity to access a rigorous curriculum (Yosso, 2005). Students' inability to access the curriculum contributes to their underachievement, dropping out of school, and performing well on state assessments or college entrance exams (Darder & Torres, 2002). Moreover, marginalized students' inability to perform academically further confirms the deficit ideology, exacerbating the problem. According to Ladson-Billings (1999), much of the literature portrays historically marginalized students as lazy, "deficient and fundamentally lacking enthusiasm" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 4), and lacking motivation. hooks (1994) explains that this type of thinking is counterproductive to marginalized student success and contributes to the practice that thus becomes the "banking concept of education" (Freire. p. 72, 2018). According to Freire (2018), the "banking concept of education" removes students' opportunities because students are not required to think critically about the real-world concepts affecting their lives. The author contends that teachers deposit information, and students "receive, file, and store the deposits" (p. 72) to use when they are asked. When this happens, teachers obstruct access to a rigorous curriculum, thus impeding students from reaching academic milestones and becoming self-actualized.

The test-taking pedagogy that is prevalent in today's classrooms is promoted by current education policy. Teachers with low expectations do not believe marginalized children can acquire challenging content and instead encourage them to remember, recite, and regurgitate it. Rarely are creativity, critical thought, and inquiry required. Similarly, the longer students acquire trivial knowledge; the more their perception of reality is molded by those in power (Bartolomé,

2008; Freire, 2018; Yosso, 2005). Education then transforms into an "act of depositing" (Freire, 2018, p. 72) rather than liberating students from their circumstances.

Hope and Caring

The underachievement of historically marginalized students continues to be of concern. Reports of poor test scores, high dropout rates, and low college graduation rates indicate the imperishability of this crisis (Curry, 2016). The most cited reason for this crisis is assimilationist school practices that manifest in schools as deficit thinking and culturally irrelevant instruction (Curry, 2016). While this may be true in most schools, there are many schools where historically marginalized students succeed despite their socioeconomic or cultural background. High-quality teachers are the single most important school-based factor that correlates with student achievement, graduation rates, and college eligibility among historically marginalized youth (Valenzuela, 2016). While education policy requires teachers to be highly qualified, this standard falls short of the teacher dispositions required by marginalized students.

Teacher capacity is a common issue in low-achieving schools. Few teachers recognize that much more is required when teaching disadvantaged students. Valenzuela's (2016) point that "teaching children and youth from marginalized communities comes with added responsibilities" (p. 34) suggests that teachers must be willing to accept other roles that fall outside of the teacher contract, including serving as counselors and mentors. This assertion further emphasizes the critical role of effective teachers. Educators' attitudes toward disadvantaged students and their approach to student learning determine a student's success throughout their K-12 education, including graduation from high school and well into adulthood. Teacher capacity is an essential component of successful schools; it is critical in poor communities.

Hope

Education itself is a hopeful endeavor. Paulo Freire once remarked that 'without hope, there is no way we can even start thinking about education'… (Webb, 2013, p. 397-398). Freire (1994) states that "hope is an ontological need" (p. 2); inevitably, one cannot think about education without being hopeful. Even though hope for the future is a fundamental motivator for education, little research has been conducted on the role of hope in teaching. Teachers must care about their students to handle the obligation of caring for their lives and learning. This section will explore the concept and meaning of hope by examining hope analytically in the context of teaching and teacher dispositions.

Hope is valuable because it has an energizing effect by counteracting risk aversion and generating new constitutive hopes (Bovens, 1999). Hope makes us focus on the gains rather than the losses and provides the courage to take risks in doing things differently to change the outcome. Researchers assert that Hope is a learned thought pattern that must be "instilled through instruction and example" (Webb, 2013, p. 408). Bovens (1999) emphasizes that hope is highly significant since it provides the inner strength necessary to persevere in challenging conditions. According to Bovens (1999), hoping fosters a mentality in which one can make a difference in the world by taking action to challenge the status quo.

Snyder (2002) describes hope as a state of mind where feelings are both necessary and beneficial. The author states that hopeful people know their capabilities to attain their goals. Hopeful people undergo a set of thinking processes that include setting goals, generating multiple "pathways," and using "agency thinking" to maintain motivation in attaining their goals (Snyder, 2002, pp. 250-251). Snyder (2002) asserts that one creates objectives to address a

void in one's life. As a result, goals are important and valuable enough to require intentional effort.

Pathways and Agency

Snyder (2002) asserts that goals, pathways, and agency thinking are essential for hopeful thinking. Goals provide the mental target of the desired outcome, and goals must be meaningful and of value to sustain conscious thought. Pathways are the actions or routes for successful attainment. Snyder (2002) defines pathways as the process of approaching specific goal pursuits with the intention of developing possible routes. The author claims that humans constantly think about how to get from one point to another and that if an obstacle develops, they will devise new pathways to reach their goal.

Agency thinking is recognizing one's capacity to use alternative pathways for goal attainment, providing motivation for continued efforts towards achieving goals, and is essential in all goal-intended thought (Snyder, 2002). High hope people are adept at being flexible thinkers and constantly find ways to reach their goals even when facing difficult circumstances. Agency thinking also assists in providing redirection when one faces obstacles.

Hopeful thinking necessitates both agency thinking and pathways. Pathways and agency thinking interact, are repetitive, and have a positive relationship (Snyder, 2002). When confronted with obstacles, hopeful people use agency thinking to access one of the many pathways they created to keep moving toward their objective (Snyder, 2002). Goal-directed thinking develops over time, and this thinking maintains a successful goal-fulfillment trajectory. According to Snyder (2002), people's perceptions of the success (or failure) of their pursuit of personal goals influence their subsequent emotions. Consequently, persons acquire positive feelings when they recognize successful goal achievement.

Types of Hope

False Hope. When teaching historically marginalized students, it is essential to understand the different types of hope and how they affect students. Duncan Andrade (2009) warns that educators must understand that while expressing a strong work ethic is essential, this will not necessarily help students hope for a better future. The *pull yourself up by the bootstraps* mentality suggests that marginalized students can attend college and live a good life if they pay attention, work hard, and play by the rules. This assumption, however, tends to blame students for not working harder to overcome their significant obstacles. While it is crucial to emphasize a strong work ethic and effective effort, telling students that hard work will get them ahead in life gives them false hope (Duncan Andrade, 2009; Stitzlein, 2018). False hope ignores the socioeconomic disparities that prevent marginalized students from gaining access to opportunities (Williams, 2015). Marginalized students already come to school with unequal cultural capital; this view reinforces the child's character rather than acknowledging the inequities they face.

Mythical Hope. Teachers often focus on the accolades of a few students and celebrate the school's success rather than preparing all students for the realities of society as a whole. Duncan Andrade (2009) classifies this as Mythical Hope, which denies a group's suffering by constructing a myth of meritocracy. An example of this myth would be President Obama's election. Duncan Andrade (2009) and Stitzlein (2018) warn against this rhetoric of celebrating the individual success of some while others do not, as making progress towards improving society's injustice.

Material Hope. For marginalized students, it is nearly impossible to control the number of social stressors resulting from growing up in poverty. Educators who engage in material hope balance

their students' realities with the understanding that their actions and inactions significantly impact their students. Teaching marginalized youth necessitates personal sacrifices that many educators are unwilling to make. This sacrifice can potentially bridge the gap between students' needs and the education we provide them (Duncan-Andrade, 2009). Teachers can find "cracks in the concrete" (Duncan-Andrade, 2009, p. 186) by providing marginalized youth with high-quality instruction and connecting them to resources and networks that can help them change the course of their lives.

Teaching the most vulnerable students requires much more than a teaching degree; it requires care, hope, and a deep belief that one's work can and will make a vast difference in the lives of these students (Nieto, 2006). Good teachers alleviate the consequences of poverty (Bartolomé, 1994; Duncan Andrade, 2009; Nieto, 2006) and the living conditions that students experience. Good teachers can transform children's lives by giving them the skills to build a better future.

Hopeful teachers

Hopeful teachers believe that all children have the right to learn and can learn. Teachers must create classroom cultures that are safe, happy, and cognitively busy places that are conducive to learning. Those who believe teaching is a calling tend to be more mindful, enthusiastic, and committed and realize their students' possible impact (Bullough & Hall Kenyon, 2012; Valenzuela, 1999). Effective teachers are satisfied with the intrinsic rewards of teaching rather than other rewards.

Effective teachers of historically marginalized students are hopeful and want a better future for their students. They can design classroom environments that nurture their students and cultivate hopeful thinking by believing in their learning ability and capability. They can design

humanizing classrooms in which students feel welcomed and valued. Hope can be taught to students, but it requires teachers with the disposition and the pedagogical knowledge to do so (Duncan Andrade, 2009; Lopez, 2013; Snyder & Shorey, 2002; Stanger, 2016). Hope compels teachers to go beyond the content that must be taught and deliver lessons in ways that bring meaning to students' lived experiences. Effective teachers go beyond the technical aspects of instruction to foster humanistic, safe learning environments. They create relevancy in their practice by building relationships, helping students know their identity, having high expectations, and holding students accountable for quality work and acceptable behavior (Bartolome, 1994; Duncan Andrade, 2009; Nieto, 2006; Sosa-Provencio, 2016).

Hopeful teachers believe in their students' ability and capability to learn. These teachers go beyond the content and required curriculum to deliver lessons relevant to students' lived experiences. Hopeful teachers determine how to create relevancy by getting to know their students' dreams and fears, lived experiences, and what they bring to the classroom. Knowing their students enables teachers to explicitly teach students vocabulary, allowing them to put words to their complex ideas and experiences; it also entails developing background knowledge so that students can access a "Eurocentric curriculum" (Bartolomé, 1994, p. 176). A hopeful teacher balances what is right with what school reform models require. Effective teachers of historically marginalized students know that available resources are not always the best choice in teaching their students and independently find better resources "to keep a balance of fairness and equity" (Nieto, 2006, p. 20). Hopeful teachers understand that historically marginalized students need to see the relevance of school so that it matters to them. These teachers know that traditional pedagogy strips students of the possibility of reaching the American dream (Ladson-Billings, 2017). Because of this reason, highly effective teachers of historically marginalized

students have pedagogical practices that acknowledge their students' backgrounds and make them aware of the injustices in society to prepare them for a better tomorrow.

Care

The affective realm of teaching and learning is absent from school reform measures and discourses. Research has shown that students consistently cite caring teachers as the most crucial factor contributing to their positive school experiences (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Eslinger, 2013; Valenzuela, 1999). In Noddings' (2005) seminal work, she emphasizes an ethic of care that is relational, involving a caregiver, teacher, who initiates and connects with their students, the "cared-for" (p. 15) who is receptive and accepting of such care. Noddings' (2005) framework on caring considers how teachers and students adapt to each other in the unequal teacher-student relationship. Because of the imbalance, the teacher must initiate the relationship through their attentiveness to students' well-being to make a connection. According to Noddings' (2005) framework, attentiveness means to be "fully receptive, to see, hear, and feel" (p. 16) what students disclose, thus allowing the teacher to show regard for students' circumstances. The teacher is responsible for creating a space that initiates the caring relationship. Given Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if students' most fundamental needs are not addressed, this will inhibit the development of a caring relationship (Duncan-Andrade, 2009).

Valenzuela (1999) examines how the teacher must initiate a caring relationship. She argues that teachers are typically more concerned with the "technical" (p. 22) and non-personal content than their students' subjective realities, often misinterpreting misbehavior or students' disengagement as an indication that students "don't care" (p. 22) about school. Valenzuela (1999) defines "aesthetic caring" as teachers' concern for non-personal content, such as the technical aspects of schooling. In an aesthetic caring culture, the relationship's more powerful

participants (teachers) identify as caring even though the recipients (students) of their apparent caring do not perceive it (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Kohl, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999). According to the author, this creates pragmatic relationships where "things and ideas" (p. 22) take precedence over students' actual well-being.

A teacher's approach is critical to establishing a caring connection because it clearly communicates acceptance and affirmation to the student being "cared for" (Noddings, 2005, p. 15). Both teachers and students can benefit from the experience because they can reciprocally learn from each other. However, the emphasis on reciprocity is far from straightforward because of the inherent power of being a teacher. When the "cared-for student is willing to respond by revealing their essential self," the reciprocal relation is complete (Noddings, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999), indicating that care is a two-way street characterized by dialogue and exchange.

Regarding good teaching, it is widely accepted that students should be cared for in personal and meaningful ways, regardless of how the instructor expresses that care. Caring is necessary for effective teaching (Nieto, 2006; Noddings, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999) because it allows teachers to empathize with their students' circumstances. However, caring for students is more than a sentimental feeling. Caring entails genuinely respecting students and their identities and having high expectations and admiration for them. Noddings (2005) explains that teachers care, but most cannot establish connections with their students that would complete their caring relationships. Garza (2009) argues that caring for students should be a deliberate act tailored to meet the specific needs of each student. Establishing a feeling of community, respecting students, and affirming their identities will likely affect students' behavior in the classroom and motivation to participate in the educational process. Teachers can easily connect with an entire class, but they must also establish individual relationships with their students (Garza, 2009;

Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015; Valenzuela, 1999). Teachers' caring behaviors and relationships with students contribute to a sense of belonging, which leads to their willingness to learn and put forth effort into their academics (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015; Valenzuela, 1999). Caring teachers connect students with school; they also teach students, through their modeling, to understand themselves and be empathetic and sympathetic to others.

Womanist Caring

Educational researchers and theorists have expressed concern about the lack of caring in our schools. As researchers seek to address this issue, they urge teachers to transform themselves into adults capable of relating to and thus teaching all children in our schools more effectively (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Delpit, 2005; Nieto, 2002; 2006; Noddings, 2005; Sosa-Provencio, 2016; Valenzuela, 1999;). As a result of their personal experiences with racism, sexism, and classism, many black women have a unique perspective on evidence, action, and morality (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002). Womanism, commonly known as black feminism, is a theoretical perspective that sees the experiences of black women as normative rather than a variation of black male or White female behavior (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; 2008). Womanists believe that injustices are complex, in which everyone is subjected to varying degrees of disadvantage and privilege (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; 2008; hooks, 2003; McArthur & Lane, 2018). They represent a humanism that seeks the freedom of all people and think that individual empowerment mixed with collective action is the key to long-term change (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Friere, 1994; Thompson, 1998). There are three characteristics in how African-American women teachers demonstrate care; a maternal approach to teaching, political clarity, and seeing themselves as agents of change (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2008).

Maternal Approach

Delpit (2006) and other education researchers have stated that schools often mirror society's racial and economic biases. Overt and subtle distinctions exist between majority member students ("our children") and children from minority groups ("other people's children"). Exemplary African-American teachers have particular ways of countering society's biases. According to Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002), exemplary African-American teachers use a "familial mother-child relationship as a guide for their interactions with students" (p. 74). The author explains that these teachers do not allow school or district expectations to limit their instincts to connect familiarly with their students (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2008). Instead, these educators see the mother-child relationship as crucial to counteract injustices. These educators acknowledge children's strengths and potential and assume (rather than avoid) responsibility for their development when they adopt a maternal approach to subordinated students (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; 2008; Delpit, 2006; McArthur & Lane, 2018; Thompson, 1998).

The maternal aspect of effective African-American women teachers' care serves as a constant reminder that effective teaching is dependent on the quality of relationships one develops with students and that teaching allows one to have a significant impact on a child's development (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; 2008; Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2009; McArthur & Lane, 2018; Noblit, 1993; Thompson, 1998). Caring as a mother is one of the most powerful ways to reach out to children. Teachers' understanding of society and its effects on the lives of immigrant, poor, and ethnic minority children is critical to their caring and effectiveness. They are politically clear.

Political Clarity

Political clarity is a teacher's realization that links between schools and social structure the successes and failures of specific groups of children unevenly (Bartolomé, 2004; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; 2008; McArthur & Lane, 2019; Thompson, 1998). Political clarity materializes in teachers' pedagogical understanding of the societal and structural origins of schooling. Whether implicitly or explicitly, teachers with political clarity see teaching as an ethical and relational endeavor that socializes students into specific personhoods and futures (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; McKinney de Royston, 2020). Teachers with political clarity approach teaching as a responsibility to "contest the societal stereotypes imposed on children" (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002, p. 77). They desire to educate the whole child on how the curriculum and pedagogy position marginalized students' teachability (McKinney de Royston, 2020) and ways of knowing how to navigate society's dominant structures.

Agents of Change

Exemplary African-American women teachers are fully aware of the societal problems that negatively and disproportionately impact the lives of marginalized students. They know that working with marginalized students is demanding and requires effort and a good deal of persistence. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002; 2008) terms these educators *politicized mothers*. They regard themselves as change agents and their classrooms as places of potential. However, they believe they are part of a broader movement of individuals striving for change that keeps them enduring (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2008).

In addition to considering themselves change agents, politicized mothers strongly believe that all children can learn rigorous academic content. They are not perfect teachers, but they constantly improve themselves and learn from their mistakes (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2008;

Duncan-Andrade, 2007;). Their primary purpose is to improve themselves and help their students do the same. A belief in change pushes them to believe in others and themselves, allowing them to see growth as a positive result of working for social change.

Hope and Caring in the Classroom

Identity

Teachers must know and understand their own identity to effectively teach marginalized students (Nieto, 2006). Effective teachers recognize that their cultural frame of reference causes them to interpret much of what they see in their students, which is different from their own education experience, as barriers to student learning (Martin, in Bartolomé, 2008). Subsequently, teachers who confront their assumptions can look at the world critically and change their practice. Successful teachers of historically marginalized students understand that the dominant culture shapes society; therefore, it is essential to impress how privilege and myths of superiority construct thoughts and behaviors concerning race and diversity (Howard, 2006; Eslinger, 2013). They understand that their classroom can shape how students approach circumstances in the real world. Therefore, they plan learning experiences relevant to students' lives, challenge students, and provide opportunities for them to think critically about the world.

Further, effective teachers of historically marginalized students emphasize the importance of knowing their identity as it applies to the greater social context. Effective teachers identify with their students' struggles and see their roles as necessary in preparing students to overcome the struggles they will face (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Teachers who identify with their students' experiences can teach them in ways that connect the curriculum to their real-world experiences. When teachers can relate to students' struggles, they are better equipped to modify the

curriculum and develop a pedagogy that engages their students. Acknowledging students' identity supports them in taking risks and seeing themselves as capable of tackling any obstacle. Also, when teachers understand their identity, they have the tools to help students remove the shame resulting from assimilated school practices. For historically marginalized students, academic and social survival are contingent upon denying the entirety of their cultural and ethnic identity at any cost (Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015; Sosa-Provencio, 2016), resulting in abandoning their language and heritage or disengagement from school.

Pedagogical Practices

Numerous studies have documented educational disparities for marginalized students and urban areas (Anyon, 1983; Bartolomé, 1994; Kozol, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999;). Today's techniques for educating marginalized students have mostly stayed consistent with Dewey's (1990) assertion that [school] "is made for listening...passivity, and absorption" (p. 31-32) with little to no variations to accommodate individual needs. Effective educators must examine methods, pedagogy, and curricula to engage and relate to their students and humanize the educational process (Bartolomé, 1994). Common Core standards and high-stakes testing make it impossible for teachers to explore lessons that highly engage students or see the relevance in their learning. Often, the solution to marginalized students' underachievement is frequently reduced to identifying the "appropriate" teaching methods, strategies, or pre-packaged curriculum that will work with children who do not respond to so-called "normal" instruction (Bartolomé, 1994).

Pedagogical practices that promote marginalized student success require teachers to care for their students, understand their circumstances, and have high expectations. Notably, teachers must have hope that students can have a better future. Possessing strong content knowledge and

demonstrating effective teaching practices is not enough to sustain the needs of marginalized students. Effective teachers must also deeply understand the communities where they work and the lived experiences of the students they teach (Delpit, 2006; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Friere, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Their pedagogy must go beyond the "required" textbook or curriculum so that students can learn to think critically about their lived experiences and develop solutions for the real issues they face.

The literature shows that effective teachers work to create classrooms that respond to the needs of historically marginalized students. Effective teachers have certain dispositions that separate them from other teachers. First, they believe that building positive relationships with students is essential. These teachers understand that building relationships comes before teaching and learning (Delpit, 2006; Nieto, 2006; Rodriguez & Osegura, 2015). Second, they believe that their students can access a rigorous curriculum. They demonstrate this by having high expectations for learning (Bartolomé, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009, 2017; Nieto, 2006; Rodriguez & Osegura, 2017). Finally, they create classrooms of opportunity by utilizing specific curricula, delivery methods, and underlying themes to motivate students (Delpit, 2006; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2019). Effective teachers will stop at nothing through cultural modalities, building relationships, or using different resources to ensure learning happens.

Relationships

Students' relationships with teachers have significant, beneficial, and long-lasting consequences for academic and social development. Students' relationships with their teachers alone may not result in academic gains. However, students who have positive, supportive relationships with their teachers achieve higher levels of achievement than students with more

conflict in their relationships (Brooks, 2014; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Sosa-Provencio, 2016;). The mainstream view holds that academic content is what establishes the relationship between a teacher and a student. Effective teachers know that teaching begins with developing relationships between their students and themselves (Delpit, 2006, Duncan-Andrade, 2007, Ladson-Billings, 2019); teaching does not begin with how much content a teacher knows.

The quality of teacher-student interactions heavily influences students' commitment to their school. Additionally, research indicates that students' relationships and interactions with adults in school may be one of the few sources of social capital that provide access to college and career opportunities, especially for underprivileged adolescents(Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Rodriguez & Osegura, 2017). Valenzuela (1999) explains that positive school social interactions highly benefit students because they create social capital. Social capital can transform into valuable resources or opportunities, such as good grades, a high school diploma, and other resources that help students make academic gains.

Building relationships with students compels teachers to learn about their students' dreams and fears, experiences, and what they bring to the classroom. Relating to students' lives is critical to their success in and out of the classroom (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Teachers who understand the value of building relationships with their students can relate to their students personally and eventually build trust with their students and thus can push them to meet higher standards and expectations (Brooks, 2014; Duncan-Andrade, 2007, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Rodriguez & Osegura, 2017; Sosa-Provencio, 2016). The teacher-student relationship is significant for students to engage in their learning and classwork and see the benefits of schooling.

Trust is a significant outcome of positive teacher-student relationships. Effective teachers understand the importance of trust and understand that they must earn students' trust (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Watson et al., 2016). These teachers understand that they represent government institutions, which often have negative histories with marginalized students (De Jesus & Anthrop-Gonzalez, 2006; Delpit, 2006; Duncan Andrade, 2007; Rodriguez & Osegura, 2017; Valenzuela, 1999). Regardless of their intentions, this enables them to recognize the difficulties inherent in developing trust with children and the critical nature of speaking out against discriminatory school policies that perpetuate inequality (Delpit, 2006; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; 2009; Lasdon-Billings, 2009; 2017). Effective teachers committed to earning students' trust do so through each aspect of teaching. These teachers are intentional in their classroom management policies, pedagogy, curriculum, and grading practices (Delpit, 2006; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2009). Positive teacher-student relationships contribute to a classroom culture that communicates to students that they are valued and intelligent, capable learners. Furthermore, a positive teacher-student relationship allows teachers to expect more from their students. They can push their students to more extraordinary lengths, and students will respond by meeting those expectations (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

High Expectations

To maintain high and positive expectations within a system that frequently reinforces a deficit ideology of marginalized students, teachers must consciously implement and put their expectations into practice (Liou & Rojas, 2016). High expectations for students begin with a conviction that all students can access a demanding curriculum. Effective teachers firmly believe that children's academic performance depends less on their family's socioeconomic status than on their ability to receive a quality education (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009;

Watson et al., 2016). Additionally, these teachers feel that it is their responsibility to provide students with the necessary skills to succeed in the future and overcome failure (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Sosa-Provencio, 2016).

Effective teachers believe their students are intelligent and should be given opportunities to demonstrate this. They look for strengths in their students, find ways to help each one get from where they are, and intentionally plan lessons to advance them (De Jesus & Anthrop-Gonzalez, 2006; Halpin, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2009). The literature suggests that effective teachers of marginalized students approach teaching thoughtfully and intentionally. These teachers constantly scaffold student learning experiences to help them meet mastery (De Jesus & Anthrop-Gonzalez, 2016; Kohl, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999; Sosa-Provencio, 2016). These teachers re-teach the content until students understand it; they also provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery (De Jesus & Anthrop-Gonzalez, 2016; Liou, D. D., & Rojas, L., 2016). Multiple learning opportunities demonstrate to students that their teachers will not let them fail, instilling in them that teachers care and are willing to support students regardless of their circumstances.

Duncan-Andrade (2009) states that a great deal of risk is involved when teachers demand high-level work from their students. Teachers who demand this level of work understand that they must work hard at developing trusting, positive, caring relationships with their students. When this occurs, a relationship of solidarity develops between the teacher and the student resulting from these humanizing pedagogical practices (Duncan-Andrade, 2009). The author expounds that educators promoting this form of unity understand the difference between "being liked and being loved by their students" (Duncan-Andrade, 2009, p. 188). Duncan-Andrade (2009) explains that being liked results from avoiding unpleasant situations, whereas being loved

is frequently painful. The author expounds that "liked" teachers lower their standards by avoiding disciplining students and accepting students' excuses for not completing their work. While loved teachers acknowledge students' hardships, they still expect students to work and meet their high expectations. A loved teacher is persistent in getting quality work completed and turned in (Duncan-Andrade, 2009).

Regarding discipline, these teachers understand that their response to student misbehavior can either heal the student's pain or add to it (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; 2009). Just as important, they are aware that their approach to discipline affects the classroom community. Duncan-Andrade (2009) explains that other students observe how teachers interact with their classmates. Teachers frequently underestimate the impact of their responses on the other students in the classroom. When teachers become frustrated and punish students who exhibit pain or anger symptoms, other students have legitimate doubts about the teacher's ability to meet their needs if they are ever in pain (Duncan-Andrade, 2009).

Critical Pedagogy

Teaching practices must challenge students to think critically about their lives and the world. Pedagogy must empower students to create change in their lives and hopefully impact their communities in the future (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; hooks,1994). Teachers whose pedagogy empowers students to return to their community and empower others consider teaching a calling (Bullough, 2012). Learning is an active endeavor that requires students to participate and engage in their learning. Critical pedagogy engages students in ways that the learning applies to the issues they face in their communities or the world; it is designed to help students understand the "hidden curriculum and develop a critical political consciousness" (McLaren, 2003, p. 71). Critical pedagogy is transformative and assists students in developing critical thinking skills to

contest injustices in their lives (Bartolomé, 1994; 2004; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; McLaren, 2003). Critical pedagogy enables teachers to remain "vigilant against the inherent racism" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008, p. 167) in state standards and institutional conditions that limit opportunities for marginalized students who are still held accountable for the same standards.

McLaren (2003) explains that critical pedagogy includes macro and micro-objectives in which students discover the links between course objectives and societal norms, values, and structural connections to the greater society. Pedagogical practices must move away from restrictive and mechanistic instruction and towards more expansive practices which consider education's socio-historical and political elements (Barotlomé,1994). School accountability pressures contribute to a test-taking pedagogy denying marginalized students the opportunities to confront the injustices they face.

Some teachers produce positive academic outcomes with historically marginalized students regardless of the policy-driven climate. To replicate this type of success, education leaders must investigate how teachers approach their work, why they approach it in that manner, and what they do to create relevance in their pedagogical practices (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009). The author expounds that effective work in urban neighborhoods requires commitment and effort, but educators must resist the misconception that success requires exceptional people and circumstances (Duncan-Andrade, 2007). Duncan-Andrade (2007; 2009) explains that paying attention to the purpose and process of a teacher's pedagogy is more important than to the individual executing it. Education leaders can create training and support to build teacher capacity by examining effective processes.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is a theoretical model that focuses on various aspects of student achievement while also assisting students in maintaining their cultural identities. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) also encourages students to develop critical perspectives that question societal inequalities (De Jesus & Anthrop, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2006). Ladson-Billings (2017) states that culturally relevant pedagogy involves three main components: (a) a focus on student learning, (b) developing students' cultural competence, and (c) supporting their critical consciousness (p. 142).

Student learning is an outcome of teaching, but learning is more than just a test score (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2017). For teachers practicing culturally relevant pedagogy, learning begins with a thorough assessment of a student's prior knowledge and skills and progresses from there. Ladson-Billings (2017) believes culturally relevant teachers can create learning experiences that foster intellectual growth not always measured by school accountability measures. For example, a teacher may have a student reading three years below grade level at the start of the school year, but the student's reading level may have increased by two grade levels at the end of the year. This measure of student learning may not be readily apparent on a standardized test; however, the student made positive gains. (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011; Bartolomé, 1994; Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2017).

Standardized tests provide a data point for students for culturally relevant teachers, but this data does not provide a complete picture of the student. Additionally, culturally relevant teachers look for growth in students' reasoning abilities, problem-solving skills, and moral development - things that standardized tests do not measure. These teachers look for growth in

areas that will help students succeed in future school and life (hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2017; Liou & Rojas, 2016).

In the context of CRP, cultural competence refers to the ability and capacity of students to understand and respect their culture of origin while simultaneously developing fluency in at least one other culture (Ladson-Billings, 2017). Culturally relevant teachers take the time to learn about the communities where they work to serve them better. These teachers design their classrooms to implement nurturing patterns and students' behavioral expectations in ways that do not compromise their cultural identity (Watson et al., 2016). Additionally, teachers intentionally plan learning experiences for students so they can recognize their strengths as learners, thus empowering students to push beyond their own perceived abilities (Eslinger, 2013; Liou & Rojas, 2016; Valenzuela, 1999;).

The academic rigor in CRP is redefined and refocused on developing students' critical consciousness and modes of world engagement. Culturally responsive educators strive tirelessly to engage students in meaningful initiatives that address pressing issues in their lives. These educators help students think critically about their community and world problems (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2017) and design projects that align with the issues students see in their communities. Culturally responsive teachers maintain that developing critical consciousness is vital to their students' survival and overcoming the inequities, they will face in life (Bartolome, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2017; Watson et al., 2016). Teachers must care enough about their students to instill a critical consciousness that allows them to confront the injustices directed at them.

Leadership Fostering Hope and Caring in Classrooms

School districts are dynamic organizations, and an education leader must possess various leadership capabilities to handle many issues. An educational leader must be knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction, motivate others, possess decision-making and problem-solving abilities, and foster a collaborative caring culture inside the organization (Leithood & Levin, 2010). School reform models have identified the importance of having effective school leadership to increase student achievement. Since schools exist mainly to impart learning, district leaders must recruit principals with a strong background in instruction. There is a direct link between effective schools and evidence of strong instructional leadership demonstrated by the principal (Hallinger et al., 2010). However, Murphy (2017) contends that while instructional leadership is essential, leaders must also tend to the humanistic side of teaching to address the diversity in schools today. Murphy (2017) expounds that the Professional Standards for Education Leaders (PSELs) include two pillars, "strong academic press and caring support" (p. 8). The author asserts that focusing exclusively on academic aspects of schools is insufficient because the academic press does not address the quality of social relationships necessary for effective teaching and learning (Murphy, 2017), particularly for historically marginalized students.

Institutional Culture

Researchers define institutional culture as the guiding beliefs and values that are visible in how an institution operates (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015). The PSELs define school culture as a community, a concept that can be defined in various ways (Murphy, 2017). The term "community" refers to the psychological aspects of social settings that meet the needs of group members for belonging and meaning (Murphy, 2017).

Rodriguez and Oseguera (2015) suggest that institutional climate and culture significantly impact student experiences, particularly for marginalized students who face injustices from peers, teachers, and administrators. Rodriguez and Oseguera's (2015) study found the following:

> Institutional culture across the educational pipeline can refer to the social climate within the institution (i.e., social groupings, who has access to the opportunity structure, the normative beliefs and practices within the institution (i.e., presence or absence of student voice, the normative beliefs about who "deserves" to succeed, and the modes of communication and interactions among various people within an institution (i.e., whether teachers/faculty believe that it is their job to motivate students or not). (p. 132)

The researchers also suggest that stakeholders are directly involved in shaping institutional culture (Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015). While education policies, funding, and the political climate are essential components of any institution's culture, stakeholders' actions, beliefs, and norms directly shape the limitations or possibilities for students. This is particularly true for historically marginalized students, who typically rely on the institution as a beacon of hope and possibility to meet their individual and collective goals (Delpit, 2006; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Nieto, 2006; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015; Valenzuela, 1999). When examining the impact of institutional culture on the opportunities available to historically marginalized students, it is critical to analyze how educational leaders influence institutional culture.

A growing body of research suggests that school leadership significantly impacts students' learning and that its contributions are mostly indirect (Leithwood, 2018). The impact of school leadership on student learning is now well-documented to the point where one of the most pressing topics for practicing leaders and leadership scholars is "how" school leadership

"influences student achievement" (Leithwood et al., 2020, p. 571). Leithwood et al. (2020) developed a leadership framework that covers "four paths" (p. 56) in their study on the influence of school leadership. According to the four paths model, a school leader's influence on students "flows" along "four paths to reach students." (Leithwood et al., 2020, p. 56). Each path contains a set of variables that are related. Choosing the most promising of these variables is one of the most challenging tasks facing school leaders (Leithwood et al., 2020). Leithwood et al. (2020) study developed the following framework:

Table 1

School Leadership Domains and Practice

Domains of Practice	Specific Practices
Set directions	• Build a shared vision • Identify specific, shared, short-term goals • Create high-performance expectations • Communicate the vision and goals
Build relationships and develop people	• Stimulate growth in the professional capacities of staff • Provide support and demonstrate consideration for individual staff members • Model the school's values and practices • Build trusting relationships with and among staff, students, and parents • Establish productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives
Develop the organization to support desired practices	• Build collaborative culture and distribute leadership • Structure the organization to facilitate collaboration • Build productive relationships with families and communities • Connect the school to its wider environment • Maintain a safe and healthy school environment • Allocate resources in support of the school's vision and goals
Improve the instructional program	• Staff the instructional program • Provide instructional support • Monitor student learning and school improvement progress • Buffer staff from distractions to their instructional work

(p. 573)

The four domains of leadership practice identified in Table 1 are setting directions, developing relationships and people, developing the organization to support desired practices, and improving the instructional program; the table also includes a list of the specific practices in each domain. According to Leithwood et al. (2020), as leaders strengthen the elements in each path, the quality of students' experiences improves.

Institutional culture is a significant force that influences organizational behavior due to its group norms, values, and beliefs (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015). The principal is responsible for every aspect of the school, including students' treatment and acceptance into the organization. Addressing issues with institutional culture is a challenge to leaders concerned with the academic success of marginalized students (Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015). In schools serving marginalized students, school leaders must have the political clarity to address issues regarding institutional culture. Therefore, if schools are to improve the schooling of historically marginalized students, the school's culture must be at the forefront. The teachers must have support from school leadership to establish pedagogy and culturally relevant structures to maximize student learning.

Summary

This chapter discussed the impact of education policy, specifically NCLB, on teaching and learning. The repercussions of NCLB and current education policies create stringent accountability measures and test-taking pedagogies. The test-taking pedagogy narrows the curriculum depriving marginalized students of opportunities to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Researchers argue that schools reproduce inequalities because of the hegemony inherent in school structures. School personnel perceives those students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds as lacking skills. Because historically marginalized students come

to school with different cultural capital, which is not similar to the mainstream culture, school personnel make assumptions about their abilities. Strong social connections are incredibly beneficial at school because they build social capital, which can be leveraged to acquire resources or opportunities. Because of their lack of connections, historically marginalized students cannot access opportunities afforded to their more affluent peers.

Teachers' approaches to working with marginalized students reflect the concepts of hope and care. Teachers' pedagogy begins with a deep-rooted belief in their students' intellectual potential. Effective teachers of marginalized students are politically clear about the social inequities that students face and have a deep commitment to preparing students with the skills to handle obstacles they may face in the future. Effective teachers of marginalized students instill a sense of hope in their students. Teachers demonstrate that they care for and about their students through their critical and culturally relevant pedagogy of high expectations.

Chapter 3 will discuss the research methods and Portraiture methodology used in this qualitative study. It will include the study's design, participant population, and sampling techniques. The data collection, analysis, and validation techniques will also be discussed.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative research study aimed to determine the attributes of caring and hopeful teachers serving historically marginalized populations. A qualitative research study seeks to describe situations in their "natural settings" (Creswell, 2013, p. 44) and involves interpreting observations, field notes, interviews, and surveys. Qualitative research includes participant voices, and as Creswell (2013) states, "data collection [occurs] in a natural setting" (p. 43). This chapter outlines the research methodology and details the specific characteristics of the study.

This chapter contains a restatement of the problem and research questions, portraiture as a methodology, the physical setting and population of the study, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, validity of the study, and positionality of the researcher (portraitist).

Restatement of the Problem

The majority of teachers in the United States are White. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (N.C.E.S.), 81.9% of teachers in the United States are White, non-Hispanic (2020). The vast majority of teachers are White, while the demographic of students is increasingly diverse. In 2017, the public-school enrollment for Hispanic students was 26.8% and 15.2% for Black students (N.C.E.S., 2020). Furthermore, the N.C.E.S. predicts that by 2029, Hispanic student enrollment will increase to 27.5%, and Black student enrollment is expected to remain at 15.2%. The need for teacher training is evident, mainly because most practicing and prospective teachers are themselves products of predominantly White communities and White colleges of teacher education (Nieto, 1996, in Howard, 2006).

Racial disparities between teachers and students cause significant issues in the education of historically marginalized populations. Because White, middle-class teachers cannot connect to their students' lived realities, they are unable to "connect the academic rigor of content areas with their students' lives" (Duncan-Andrade, 2007, p. 9).

Teacher capacity is an essential component of successful schools; it is critical in schools serving historically marginalized populations. "Effective teachers" are rare in schools in poor communities. Teacher preparation courses do not prepare teachers effectively with the skills needed for successful marginalized student classrooms (Bartolomé, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2009). The insufficient pool of quality teachers applying for positions in poor communities confirms this statement. There is a need for White educators to look within themselves to realign their core beliefs and expectations regarding Whiteness. White educators must confront how dominant assumptions have influenced perceptions and attitudes regarding race and diversity (Howard, 2006).

Teachers' identity and ideology affect how they approach teaching historically marginalized populations. It is much more common to observe teacher attitudes that include disrespect, deficit thinking, and a lack of meaningful instructional practices than seeing hope, caring, and rigorous instruction. Teachers make assumptions that students' socioeconomic status, language, or culture affect how they can perform rigorous academic tasks; "teachers seem to see only deficit and need" (Ladson-Billings p. 99). Deficit thinking is challenging to address with teachers because it is a deep-rooted belief system that stems from a hegemonic ideology.

At a minimum, teachers of historically marginalized students must understand how to deal with their own identity and the cultural differences encountered in marginalized students' classrooms (Bartolomé, 1994; Valenzuela, 2016; Yosso, 2005). Addressing teachers' ideology is

vital because of its influences on teaching and learning (Bartolomé, 2008). Teachers' ideology shapes how they approach teaching such that within one's ideology lies their beliefs and assumptions through which they view the world. Consequently, teachers' ideology reflects their attitudes and teaching practices (Bartolomé, 2008). Teachers' belief in their students' abilities dramatically affects their schooling. A teacher's belief in students helps students form their identity and develops a "teacher-initiated self-fulfilling prophecy" (Ladson-Billings, p. 64, 2009). This often results in placing students in lower tracks, giving them less chance to succeed, and making them unable to recover from poor school performance (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Research Questions

1. How do hope and caring manifest in teachers' work?
2. What lived experiences have prompted teachers to exhibit hopeful and caring dispositions?
3. How do hopeful and caring teachers resist the dehumanizing effects of teacher accountability based on high-stakes testing?

Research Design

The study's objective was to determine how teachers of historically marginalized populations exhibit characteristics of hope and caring in the classroom and their approach to teaching and learning. The researcher used a qualitative methodology because it fits best with the purpose of this study. The empirical nature of measuring personal characteristics and classroom practices requires a qualitative approach because this approach allows for data collection in the natural setting and situates the observer in the world (Creswell, 2013). According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), a portraitist views the study's "actors" (participants) as "the best

authorities on their own experience" (p. 141). The researcher's objective was to demonstrate the manifestation of hope and caring through teachers' (participants') experiences.

Portraiture Methodology

Portraiture is a social science inquiry method distinctive in its blending of art and science, capturing the complexity, dynamics, and nuances of human experience and organizational life (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture utilizes key elements of ethnographic research to focus on a culture-sharing group by describing and interpreting shared patterns of beliefs, values, and behaviors (Creswell, 2013). Ethnographical research involves participant observation in which the researcher immerses themselves in participants' daily lives (Creswell, 2013). Like ethnography, portraiture allows the researcher to listen, watch, and interact with the actors over time. The difference between ethnography and portraiture is that ethnographical research listens *to* a story, and portraiture research listens *for* a story (Hackman, 2002; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture is appropriate for this study because it involves listening *for* a story.

Portraiture also utilizes elements of phenomenology. Phenomenology explores peoples' lived experiences and uses description in the inquiry process while balancing the parts of the whole (Creswell, 2013). It is also an interpretive process where the researcher interprets the descriptions (Creswell, 2013). Portraiture allows the researcher to "capture the complexity and aesthetic human experience" (Lawernce-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 4). As part of the research process, portraiture necessitates closeness between the researcher and the participants. Portraiture focuses on the essential elements of voice, context, emergent themes, relationships, and the aesthetic whole (Lawerence-Lightfoot, 2005). The process is rigorous in the empirical description and is written in an artful way to represent the actors in the portrait (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016).

Portraiture methodology is "intentionally inclusive" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016, p. 19), so it can be accessible to a broader audience besides academia.

State accountability measures and education research frequently do not capture the good things that occur in schools. Often, these entities search for what is wrong and seek to mitigate the wrongs, leading to blaming the victim (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016). Portraiture methodology shifts the thinking to what is working instead of what is not; this is essential in research involving historically marginalized students (Brooks, 2017). Portraiture focuses on uncovering goodness and emphasizing successes while acknowledging that shortcomings will always be present within a social system (Hackman, 2002).

The researcher listens *for* a story (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). As the story emerges from the data, portraiture allows the researcher's voice to be present but not the central focal point. The narratives are co-constructed between the researcher and the actors (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005), ensuring that the researcher's voice is accountable to the participants. This is done by combining art and science and connecting aestheticism and empiricism (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016). This study aimed to create portraits of highly skilled teachers working with historically marginalized populations and utilizing hope and caring in approaching their work with students.

Portraiture methodology was a perfect fit as this study sought to examine successful skilled teachers of historically marginalized students. Lawrence-Lightfoot created portraiture while researching school-based studies (2005). The author's seminal work in the "Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture" focused on schools' successes rather than on schools' shortcomings. Portraiture reveals insights from the actors within a school, allowing for the nuances of school cultures to emerge. Because portraits are co-constructed between the actors

and the portraitist, portraiture resonates with educational personnel that perhaps other studies cannot (Hackman, 2002).

Portraiture Components

The portraiture approach comprises five components: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole. The *first* component, context, is concerned with the study's surroundings. The environment encompasses the physical location of study participants and the "physical, geographic, temporal, historical, cultural, and aesthetic within which the action takes place" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 41). Understanding the significance of context allowed the researcher to place the participants' lived experiences in ways that enhance their stories and may help connect the audience to them.

The *second* component is voice, which refers to the researcher's voice. The portraitist's voice is omnipresent in portraiture, but it should be "premeditated, restrained, disciplined, and carefully controlled" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 85). Voice is expressed in portraiture in six ways: as a witness, as a preoccupation, as autobiography, in conversation, listening for voice, and as interpretation. In this study, voice was used intentionally in three ways: as a witness, listening for voice, and as an interpreter. The researcher used voice as an interpreter to make meaning of participants' stories and experiences and meaning of portraitist's self-reflections. As the portraitist, the researcher was an outsider seeking to learn from the study's insiders at times, so it was critical to act as a witness to their experiences with the intent of re-telling them. At the same time, the researcher listened for voice to attempt to record the words, gestures, and tone, witnessing the voices in context, and seeking to understand the participants' interpretations of their conversations (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

The *third* component is relationship development. The purpose of relationships in portraiture is to assist the researcher in developing "empathetic regard" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 146) for participants. Empathy contributes to the development of the researcher-participant interaction. Additionally, a portraitist maintains boundaries that constrain the portraitist to focus on the participants' stories.

Emergent themes comprise the *fourth* component. These themes emerged from the researcher's iterative data analysis and the ongoing search for patterns. The data analyses involved coding or naming the patterns and grouping the codes. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), five modes of "synthesis, convergence and contrast" (p. 193) exist. These are repetitive refrains, resonant metaphors, themes expressed through cultural and institutional rituals, triangulation, and themes and patterns among perspectives (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis,1997).

The *fifth* component is the aesthetic whole. The researcher tells the final story using an interpreter's voice. In the art world, this would be a finished portrait. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) compare the aesthetic whole to a "completed quilt, in which the separate squares are stitched together to form a blanket" (p. 247).

Population and Sample

This study examined the dispositions and practices of effective teachers teaching marginalized students. The population of this study included teachers serving historically marginalized students attending Title 1 schools in a large school district in southern Arizona. The population consisted of an entire set of individuals to which this study's findings can ensure transferability (Check & Schutt, 2012).

The participants' selection and identification are essential in research studies (Check & Schutt, 2012). The sample represented the population of skilled teachers demonstrating hope and care in their dispositions and pedagogical practices. The researcher utilized purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is defined as the deliberate sample selection to fulfill the research objectives (Check & Schutt, 2012). Purposive sampling was appropriate for this study because hopeful and caring teachers have distinct characteristics that are uncommon on school campuses.

Sampling Procedures

This study examined two teachers working in a large school district in a metropolitan city. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identity and the schools' names. Additionally, a full review and approval through the Northern Arizona University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained prior to the start of the study. Teachers in this study have worked at least three years in a school predominantly serving students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch.

Subjects of the Portraiture. The study examined the characteristics and dispositions of two teachers working at the secondary level in a school with at least 80% of students on Free and Reduced Lunch. School principals identified teachers who effectively teach historically marginalized students. The researcher met with the Director of the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction (CRPI) Department, who also assisted in identifying teachers. The participants met the following criteria: (1) at least years of teaching historically marginalized students and (2) received at least two consecutive Proficient or Distinguished ratings on the district's teacher evaluation tool. Additional criteria included minimal office referrals. The researcher sent personal invitations to identified teachers that included an RSVP deadline. The researcher did not interview students for this study.

Physical Setting. The study focused on middle and high school classrooms serving predominantly historically marginalized students. The school district where the researcher conducted the study is a large metropolitan district with 89 schools. It had 10 comprehensive high schools, one Career and Technical Education high school, three alternative high schools, 12 middle schools, 15 K-8 schools, 46 elementary schools, and two online options. Additionally, the school district had several departments supporting the academics of marginalized students.

Instrumentation

Sources of Information

This study examined teacher hope and caring indicators in teachers' practices. The researcher's instruments to collect data were semi-structured interviews, observations, informal conversations, field notes, audio recordings, and other documents to provide evidence (Richards and Morse, 2013).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher conducted one interview with each teacher and approximately 35 hours of classroom observations for each teacher. The observations occurred over four months. School site observations included classroom visits and other common areas shared by students and teachers. Additionally, Participant-created artifacts, lesson plans, classroom management plans, and curriculum resources were collected. School data, such as discipline referrals, mission, vision, commitment statements, and student expectations communication, were also collected. Before conducting the study, the researcher obtained IRB and Human Subject Informed Consent permissions. The researcher also obtained school district permission to conduct the study.

Interviews. Interviews served the purpose of getting to know the participants and getting to know how participants approached teaching historically marginalized students. Before conducting interviews, the researcher received informed consent from the participants and approval from the IRB. Interviews were semi-structured and began with open-ended questions related to the research questions. Follow-up and probing questions occurred based on participant responses. Follow-up interviews were unnecessary because the researcher had ongoing conversations with the participants throughout the study. Interview audio recordings and transcriptions captured the essence of the interviews.

Participant-observation. Multiple site visits occurred during the study at different school day times. Classroom observations and participant-student interaction observations also occurred. Additionally, out-of-classroom participant observations occurred to understand the relationships between participants and students and the school environment. Out-of-classroom observations included before and after-school activities, lunch duty, tutoring sessions, student conferences, and other participant behaviors designed to support marginalized students. The researcher recorded nuanced interactions and behavioral cues between participants and their students. The researcher took field notes to capture how participants navigate their relationships with students throughout the school day.

Artifact collection. Examples of written artifacts that were collected are lesson plans, participant reflections, and student work samples. Additionally, the researcher reviewed school documents related to the message sent concerning the expected school environment to understand the school's expectations and culture. Examples of such documents include the vision and mission statement of the school, school climate survey results, Professional Development

calendar, and documents supporting teacher effectiveness. Table 1 demonstrates the data sources to answer the research questions.

Table 2

Data Match-up

Data Match-up Table

Research Question	Corresponding Sources of Data	Corresponding Data Analysis Procedure(s)
How does hope and caring manifest in teachers' work?	Field notes from observations, interviews, and artifacts	Coding
How do teachers demonstrate hope and caring in their relationships with students?	Field notes from observations, reflections	Coding
How do hopeful and caring teachers resist the dehumanizing effects of teacher accountability based on high-stakes testing?	Interviews, artifacts, and field notes from observations.	Coding

Data Analysis

The portraiture methodology guided the data analysis for this study. Reflections were recorded during interviews and observations and documented in an "Impressionistic Record" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 188). Data documented in the Impressionist Record or journal were analyzed for emergent themes to form the narrative. The researcher created an aesthetic whole for each portrait using the emergent themes to code and classify the collected data (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

The researcher completed multiple readings of notes, observations, and reflections to analyze the data. The researcher also listened to many hours of audio recordings that occurred during class time. Field notes reflections were written immediately following an observation to

capture the researcher's immediate thoughts. The data were coded to identify themes in creating the portraits.

Trustworthiness

Creswell and Miller (2000) present nine strategies to certify the validity of a study. The strategies include triangulation, prolonged engagement, peer review, member checking, negative case analysis, researcher reflexivity, rich/thick descriptions, external audits, and collaboration. Although Creswell (2013) recommends that qualitative researchers use at least two strategies, the portraiture methodology employs multiple strategies to ensure the study's validity. The researcher employed three strategies listed in Guba (1981) to ensure trustworthiness, persistent observation, collection of thick descriptive data, member checks, and triangulation.

Portraiture methodology expects the author to become part of the environment being studied. The researcher observed student transitions throughout the school. Additionally, the researcher conducted systematic, in-depth observations, including classroom observations and observations outside the classroom (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). Observation data supported providing thick descriptive data.

Portraiture methodology involves several inherent strategies to ensure the study's validity. Each actor will participate in an interview allowing the portraitist to "understand the actor's behavior…perspective…and how they experience social reality" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 43). Because the portraitist is new to the setting, the actors guide the portraitist into the inquiry process (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) explains that human experiences have value in specific social, cultural, and historical contexts. The author expounds that it is in this context that the actors are familiar with "which relationships are real" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 43). The researcher employed member checking procedures by sharing

interview transcript data, interpretations, and conclusions with participants to check for accuracy. Lastly, the researcher triangulated the data from observations, field notes, interviews, and identified themes. This researcher created portraits of highly skilled teachers using the main elements of portraiture, context, voice, relationships, and emerging themes.

Positionality

As a child, my grandfather, an immigrant from Mexico, told me that I would have to work twice as hard to prove that I deserved opportunities because of my surname and skin and hair color. I was unclear about what he meant by his statement, but I listened and kept his advice tucked away in the corner of my mind.

I identify as Hispanic, except for two teachers, one in middle school and another in high school, all of my teachers were White. My parents expected their children to graduate from high school, get a good job, get married, and raise a family. That was the expectation for my Hispanic friends as well. My parents never spoke to me about college because they were unfamiliar with sending their children to or preparing them for college.

Late in my Senior year of high school, I decided to go to college. I remember the confusion on my parents' faces as if they had, somehow, failed as parents. "We know nothing about college, Mija," were the first words out of my mom's mouth. Then she said, "I knew you would be different." I could hear a sense of pride and worry in her voice. In shock, my dad said, "I don't know how to help you with your decision." I also knew they could not afford the cost of college, so I had to figure things out quickly. I went to the school counselor's office for college admissions and scholarships information. Mrs. Narducci informed me that the information she had was for students going to college and did not share any of the information with me. I left her

office angered primarily because I did not speak up for myself. Second, because of how unfair that conversation felt to me.

During my years as a school turnaround principal in Title 1 schools serving historically marginalized students, I encountered many teachers like Mrs. Narducci. Teachers with deficit views of their students' abilities partly because of their ethnicity and socioeconomic classification and partly because students were not given the opportunities to compete with their peers. In these schools, inequity involving curriculum, resources, and school facilities was evident and easy to address. However, more difficult to detect was the undercurrent of disrespect for students. As I established my relationships with students and shared my story as a Hispanic woman, they felt safe in divulging the undercurrent of disrespect occurring daily. I gave students a voice, and because they trusted me, I accepted the obligation to improve their learning environment. As I observed teachers interact with students, I became aware of microaggressions. I realized that many teachers felt it was permissible to disrespect students through their words or actions. Even though students did not have the language to explain what was happening, they could express that their teacher's interactions did not feel right. Because of cultural norms, where teachers are highly respected, and minority children, specifically Hispanic and Native American children, are raised to do what the teacher tells them, some teachers exploit students' vulnerability.

Given my positionality as a school administrator, I will use my story and experience to establish relationships with the research teachers. I understand that my experiences as a student, teacher, and administrator may affect my voice in the research and how I interpret what I see and hear. Because of my experiences as a Hispanic female navigating unfamiliar spaces, it is a

personal interest to create learning environments that celebrate students' language and cultural backgrounds and honor the knowledge they bring to school instead of ignoring it.

Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology and the study's research design. Because science often cannot account for the human experience, the Portraiture methodology allows for capturing nuanced interactions between the participants and students. This study's finding indicated the need for leadership to promote effective pedagogical practices and encourage teacher dispositions that benefit marginalized students. In Chapter 4, the researcher discusses the findings of the study. Participants' voices were heard through the retelling of their stories.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how hope and caring manifest in teachers who effectively promote rigorous learning and engagement for historically marginalized students. This chapter is composed of two sections. The first section of this chapter is an overview of the data collection process and data analysis and a high-level overview of the emergent themes resulting from the interviews and classroom observations. The second section of this chapter consists of two portraits of the individual study participants. The order of presentation of the portraits begins with the high school teacher, followed by the middle school teacher.

Sample

There were two participants in the study, two public school teachers. One teacher was a veteran high school teacher; the other was a middle school teacher currently enrolled in an alternative educator preparation certification program. Both participants taught in the same large urban school district that served approximately 47,000 students in the Southwestern part of the United States. As described in Chapter 3, efforts were made to recruit a broader range of teachers from different school district regions but were unsuccessful. This researcher was able to recruit Secondary teachers from different grade levels. Two participants were chosen with the help of colleagues knowledgeable about this study. This portraitist searched for goodness - exemplary teachers who might tell this researcher something about how students achieve educational success. This researcher discussed the criteria for participants with colleagues so that they could help with identifying teachers. The selection was not scientific. Participants were selected

because of their reputation among people who knew of their work. This researcher sent out six emails explaining the study to potential participants. Within two days, the two participants agreed to participate in this study.

Both participants in the study were public school teachers in the same school district; one taught high school Social Studies, and one taught eighth-grade Language Arts. The high school teacher was an experienced teacher of 15 years, and the middle school teacher had six years of teaching experience. The schools have similar demographics. Copper Mountain High School is one of the high schools into which Roadrunner Middle School feeds. Most students from Roadrunner Middle School become high school students at Copper Mountain High School. The schools reside in the district's southwestern region, serving a predominantly Hispanic population. Copper Mountain High School serves approximately 2,019 students, of which 88% are Hispanic. Roadrunner Middle School serves approximately 813 students, of which 81.4% are Hispanic. Both schools receive Title 1 funding and district support to improve academic achievement. The demographics of each school can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Schools' Demographic Information

School Name	White/Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian American	Multi-racial	Total
Roadrunner Middle School							
Stu N	41	18	662	67	8	17	813
Stu %	5.04%	2.21%	81.40%	8.24%	0.98%	2.09%	100%
Copper Mountain High School							
Stu N	63	32	1,779	117	7	21	2,019
Stu %	3.12%	1.58%	88.11%	5.79	0.35%	3.69%	100%

Data Collection

This portraitist went into classrooms intending to provide a holistic, contextual, and complicated description of reality and with the conviction that settings and actors should be evaluated from an outsider's point of view. On many occasions, this portraitist had to remind herself that her role was a participant observer, a researcher, not a school administrator observing instruction. The primary data sources for this study were two interviews: (1) one conducted with each teacher and (2) approximately 35 hours of classroom observations for each teacher.

Interviews

The interviews were transcribed within 24 hours of conducting them. After each interview, this portraitist made notes about her initial reactions to the interview in her research journal. While reviewing the interview notes, the portraitist reflected on the significance of the participants' work with young people of color. To deepen her reflections, she used three guiding questions for journal entries: What was learned from the participants? What was surprising to hear? What insights were gained? This approach allowed the portraitist to position herself as a portraitist who would paint participants' varied experiences into an aesthetic whole.

Observations

Portraiture methodology utilizes observational field notes to provide detailed descriptions of cultural phenomena (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Observational field notes were used to document practices around teachers' demonstration of hope and care within their classroom interactions with students. The portraitist documented activities in and outside of the classroom. Although interactions outside of the classroom were minimal, there were opportunities to observe both teachers interact with students during non-teaching duties. The portraitist conducted

over 35 hours of observations per teacher over four months. The portraitist visited each teacher's classroom to observe their practice and how they worked with students. During the observations, the portraitist wrote observational field notes "documenting impressions, noting what was familiar and surprising" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 187). Activities and the actors' interactions were documented in separate notebooks. Interactions among students and between students and the participants were documented in the classroom. This portraitist observed and documented social interactions between students in the schools' common areas, such as the courtyard, basketball courts, and cafeteria. This portraitist also took pictures of the classrooms, posters hanging inside the classrooms, and the artifacts in the hallways. During school visits, this portraitist paid attention to the physical structures of the school environment and the surrounding neighborhood in which both schools reside. After each observation, the data were examined and organized to understand what the portraitist witnessed. As this portraitist became more comfortable in the setting, the observational field notes focused on instances, however nuanced, where hope and care manifested in participants' practice, behavior, or approach to students.

Data and Analysis

The interviews were transcribed within 24 hours of conducting them. An online service, Rev.com, was used to transcribe the interviews. To ensure accuracy, the portraitist read the interview transcripts twice while listening to the audio recording. The portraitist re-read the transcripts several times, making additional notes, and eventually manually coded the participants' responses. After the initial coding, the codes were compared with the codes to the notes in the researcher's journal to identify converging themes, repetitive codes, or contradicting themes. Portraiture data analysis identifies emergent themes based on "five modes of synthesis, convergence, and contrast" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 193). The five modes in

Portraiture are recurrent refrains, resonant metaphors, symbolic expressions, themes communicated through cultural and institutional rituals, triangulation to interweave data, and the creation of themes to expose contrast and link similarities among participants (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Using these modes for analysis, the portraitist identified four themes, two related to Hope and two related to Care. There were also eight sub-themes relating to both concepts.

Additionally, these themes were observed during classroom observations and interactions between the participants and their students. A visual representation of the relationships between the themes and Hope and Care can be seen in Figure 1. A comprehensive review of the data analysis procedures used for this study can be found in Appendix E.

This portraiture research examined how Hope and Care manifest in teachers' work with marginalized students. Their stories were written to "portray actors as the primary knowledge bearers and to convey their perspectives, perceptions, and values" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 27). The portraitist's voice is present throughout the presentation of portraits, adding depth, nuance, refinement, or relational value to the individual stories of the study's participants. As participants shared their stories during the interview, this portraitist was amazed at their candor and willingness to be open and honest. Seeing the participants' statements harmonized with their observed actions was gratifying.

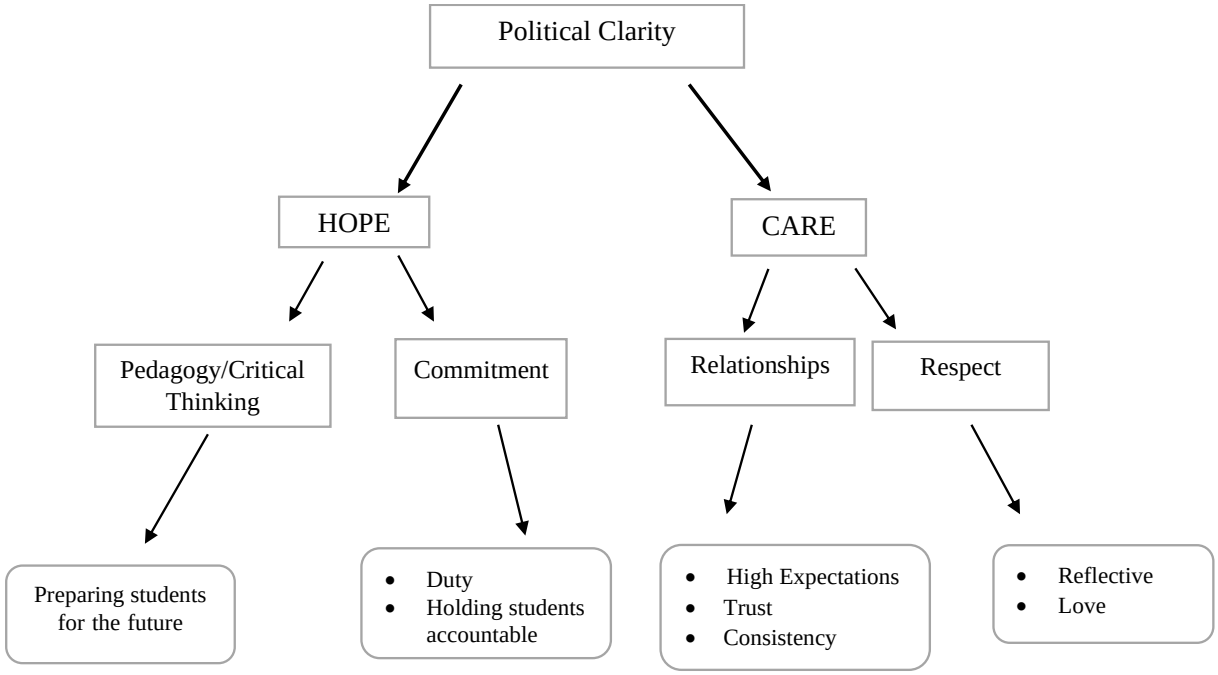
Portraiture was the most effective methodology for portraying the breadth of the participants' practice and the reflections on their stories. It served as a canvas for each individual's story and built a gallery to highlight their interconnectedness. While visiting the participants' classrooms and observing their intentionality in educating youth and the nuanced behaviors they exhibit with their students, this portraitist reflected on her professional work as a

school administrator. This portraitist sometimes wondered how her leadership impacted teachers like the participants and if they felt supported in their work.

After analyzing the data, a member checking process was utilized to validate the results. Each participant received their portrait and the transcript of their interview. The portraits included comments and language directly from the transcriptions and excerpts from conversations that this portraitist had with the participants or conversations heard during classroom observations. They also include this portraitist reflections on the classroom observations.

Figure 1

Overview of Emergent Themes



Source: Figure created by the author

The most crucial strategy for establishing credibility is member checking, in which the researcher solicits participants' opinions on the reliability of the findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2013). To ensure trustworthiness, interview transcripts were sent to the participants and included the context in which their voices would be heard in the portrait. The participants' positive feedback reaffirmed that conducting the member check helped make this portraitist and her study more credible.

Portraits

Mildred Gallacchio

The High School Teacher

Background

I first met Mildred via email after she replied to the initial invitation to participate in my study. We agreed on a date and time to introduce myself, discuss my study, allow her to ask questions, and set a date and time for the interview. On the day of our first meeting, I left my office with ample travel time to arrive at her classroom without feeling rushed. Approaching the school, I encountered a long line of cars wrapped around the block north of the school. It was near dismissal time, and parents were there to pick up their children. I felt anxious, knowing I may not make our appointment in time if I got in the line. I worried about being late and how Mildred would perceive my lateness. My anxiety and worry increased as our meeting time was fast approaching. I drove past the line of cars and turned into the next block directly south of the school. Luckily, I found another entrance to the school's parking lot. I quickly found a parking space, gathered my things, and walked into the front office to sign in and ask for a campus map.

As I walked into the high school, I saw evidence of the student culture. Hand-painted signs hung on the walls advertising the upcoming football game and a dance following the game. As I walked through the hallways, many more signs hung on the walls advertising various clubs and opportunities for tutoring and traveling abroad. A few students, holding hall passes, were walking the hallways. The walls in the hallway leading up to Mildred's room had motivational quotes painted on them. When I walked into her classroom, she was sitting at her computer. It was the middle of the first semester and knowing that progress grades were due within a few days, I wanted to respect her time.

When I first came face to face with Mildred, I am surprised. I do not know what I was expecting, but as I shook her hand, I was amazed by how calm and pleasant she was. I explained and apologized for my perceived lateness. She seemed unbothered by it, stating, "Oh yeah. That whole dismissal is a mess." I immediately felt at ease, and we progressed with the meeting. By the end of the meeting, we agreed to meet the following week, on teacher grading day, to conduct the interview.

A few days before the interview, Mildred asked if she could bring her children to the meeting. I agreed to this. On the interview day, she came to my office with her two boys, ages 3 and 4. I am immediately surprised at their comfort level in an unfamiliar environment. Mildred told both boys that "Mommy is working," and that they should keep themselves busy by either coloring or "exploring" the building. She was clear about giving them boundaries and instructed the boys that they "must stay inside the building." I am amazed at her comfort level of letting her children roam an unfamiliar building and the high level of trust that this instilled in her children.

Mildred is originally from Virginia and attended the College of William and Mary. She enrolled in William and Mary's teaching program because students could graduate with a

teaching certificate in four years. Mildred completed her student teaching in a suburban high school in Virginia. After graduating college and earning her teaching certificate, Mildred realized she wanted to teach in New York. She knew that to teach in New York, she would eventually have to earn a Master's degree. Soon after earning her Bachelor's degree, Mildred entered graduate school at Columbia University. She attended Teachers College at Columbia University to get her master's degree. She taught in New York for three years. After starting her fourth year, Mildred left New York and moved to Mexico City. Mildred spent a few years in Mexico before moving to Arizona. She identifies as White and understands that she has not faced the same obstacles as the students she serves. She enjoys teaching high school students, but Sophomores are her favorite age group.

Mildred was a veteran teacher of 15 years. Her teaching experiences ranged from teaching in a suburban school in Virginia, an inner-city school in Brooklyn, and a school for diplomats in Mexico City. She currently teaches Culturally Relevant U.S. History and World History classes at Copper Mountain High School. She went into teaching because she "had a really good History teacher" in her junior year of high school. In college, she had plans to pursue a career in Forensics. However, she realized that science was not her strength, so she pursued teaching. Mildred said she likes teaching history and "the idea of helping kids figure out who they are, how to exist, and the rules of the world, and then how to resist…" I heard her playful tone, then we both chuckled. She continued to explain that she wants to teach students to "advocate for themselves by teaching them skills that will take them further in life, rather than just learning dates [of major historical events]." She accepted that she had had access to many opportunities because of the inherent privilege of being White and fully comprehended that marginalized students swim against a current set by the mainstream culture. Mildred advocates

for students and supports them in finding their voice. She teaches by her principles and follows her heart by doing what is best for the students in her care.

Political Clarity

Mildred's political clarity was consistent throughout her interview and classroom observations. Her words, practice, and actions with students demonstrated her political clarity. She understood that historical and educational structures hinder her students' access to opportunities. Through her content and pedagogy, she wants "to make sure [my students] know what's going on so that they're not taken advantage of and exploited." This statement revealed Mildred's understanding of the systemic links between schools and society that substantially impact students' success or failure. As she answered my questions during the interview, I saw that she reflected on her practice. Her responses were thoughtful, and her confidence emanated from her posture. I sensed a strong commitment and dedication to her students and that she deeply cares for them, "[I want them] to just be treated like humans, which I think a lot of kids aren't in educational spaces; they're not treated like humans." Her political clarity is the foundation for using her curriculum to teach students to "know the rules" of society so that they can advocate for themselves and question when they feel they are mistreated.

I visited her classroom on election day. Mildred asked the class, "Any current events? It's kind of a big one today." The students asked her about the legality of recording conversations and the need to notify when recording a conversation. The discussion led to the accuracy of politicians' advertisements. After a few minutes, Mildred asked, "Who's running for governor?" her students remained silent. A male student replied, "I saw this YouTube commercial that [the Republican] candidate is anti-abortion." Mildred replied, "That is correct and she believes in voter fraud." She continued to discuss the views of gubernatorial candidates. A female student

asked Mildred, “What will happen to our education if she wins?” Mildred replied, “If she wins, it could have a negative impact on your education. The Republican and State Superintendent of Instruction candidates have very similar views.” The student continued, “How will [State Superintendent of Instruction candidate] affect our education?” Mildred replied, “Because he wants to get rid of ethnic studies and wants to get rid of CRT.”

Another student asked, “What is CRT? I hear it on a lot of commercials?” Mildred replied, “It stands for Critical Race Theory. It states that oppression is embedded in our systems; Government, education, basically any system.” She continued, “That’s why it’s important that you vote! I know you’re not old enough now, but when you turn 18, you should register to vote. Your vote matters!” Mildred demonstrated her political clarity by being honest with her students about the reality of the impact of the outcome of the current election.

Hope

Mildred intricately wove hope throughout her pedagogy and curriculum. She studies her curriculum and looks for aspects of history in which marginalized groups of people rise from despair. During our interview, Mildred referred to a curriculum mapping conversation she had with her mentor teacher:

> We’re trying to map out my curriculum and we’re starting with Pre-Cuauhtémoc Indigenous History and we’re talking about it’s genocide. Her whole thing was like, what were the tactics used to erase the indigenous? And I was like, where’s the liberation? Her overarching questions, were all depressing. And I was like, yeah, history can be, but for me, I try and put the Hope in there, in the liberation. What’s the quote? ‘We are still here.’ Indigenous communities are still here. They’re not a thing of the past. So there’s Hope… And so…I try to change it to, *despite* all of the efforts to erase [them], how are

> indigenous still here? So looking at the resistance and at the liberation. I try and infuse the Hope in the content because history is wildly depressing. The human race is just God awful to each other.

Mildred's responses regarding her definition of hope and how she uses her curriculum to infuse hope in her students made me reflect on my educational experiences and the students I worked with.

During a lesson on Brown v. Board of Education, Mildred informed students that they were to complete a cartoon analysis. She projected the cartoons on the presentation board and asked students to describe what they saw. Mildred asked, "What does the wreath symbolize?" A few students responded, "Victory," "Champions," "Winner." Mildred acknowledged the students' answers, then asked, "What do you think they won?" A male student responded, "Anti-segregation?" Mildred responded, "Yes, what does anti-segregation mean?" Another student replied, "that schools couldn't be just for Whites or just for African Americans." Mildred nodded and asked, "Do you think schools are desegregated now?" Students did not respond. After a few seconds of wait-time, she continued, "Think about Copper Mountain. Is it segregated or desegregated?" A female student replied, "I think it's segregated because there isn't much diversity here." Mildred replied, "What do you think about that? Do you think parents on the district's east side want their children to come here?" Several students replied, "Nah, miss. This school is ghetto!" Another student replied, "Look at how old our buildings are! I've been to some of those schools and they have some nice things." Mildred continued, "That's why you have to take what you learn and help your community. If you think this school is ghetto, then help improve it by picking up trash. Make it look better." During my observations, Mildred

connected her content to her students' lives. As such, she built hope in them by demonstrating that they could use their talents to improve their lives and communities.

Pedagogy/Critical Thinking

Mildred's classroom is rich with posters that promote critical thinking about her content, encouraging students to use their voice and inspire an awareness of the societal narratives that marginalized students face. As I sit in her class, I am consumed by the posters. The fifty-plus posters that span the front wall of her classroom inspire social justice. It appears that she was deliberate in their placement. I also noticed that all posters contain pictures or drawings of Hispanic, African American, or Indigenous people. The posters inspire students to vote; two posters caught my attention. One is a black and white picture taken from the perspective of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. with the caption, "HEAR OUR VOICE." I take a picture and write in my notebook, 'connection between current rhetoric and voting season' noting the similarities of marginalized people in 1963 and now. The other poster I am drawn to is a drawing of a Mexican girl and an African American girl holding hands. The caption underneath the drawing reads, "EDUCATE YOURSELF." I am reminded of the class discussion that occurred on election day. The messages from the rest of the posters range from reminding students how to take Focused Notes, and Annotate the Text to voting, equality, and stopping gun violence. The visuals help Mildred establish strategies to help students reach their goals. The visuals also help raise awareness of the societal issues occurring today. However, it is her pedagogy and her curriculum that contributed to enhancing pathways in her students.

Mildred understands that the reading content may be challenging for her students. She scaffolded their learning by relating new concepts to concepts they had already mastered. When

introducing new readings, she read aloud so students could follow along. She stopped periodically to ensure that students are absorbing the information. Students accessed the curriculum by using graphic organizers and annotating the text to organize their thoughts about the reading. In addition, Mildred modeled how she analyzes the text and makes her thinking visible by thinking aloud. This strategy allowed students to learn how to access challenging content. When Mildred determined that students can grasp the learning independently, she released them into small groups so they could support each other. Mildred consistently reminded students to use their graphic organizers and annotate the text to support their learning.

Preparing students for the future

Mildred recognizes that school is unimportant to many students; many become disengaged for various reasons. She also realizes that many students have minimal positive experiences to initiate and sustain their motivation to attend classes. Mildred used aspects of her curriculum and pedagogy to impart agency to her students. She shares:

> There has never been a point in history where people are like, Yeah, that's fine. Just come on in, kill us. It's good. There's always been people resisting and fighting back. And so that's what I want [students] to focus on because you don't get that in history classes. They can tell you all about the Holocaust. But they can't tell you about the resistance, the Nazi resistance. They don't know that part. And that I think this is the biggest travesty of teaching history. Cause, no wonder you hate history, you wanna be depressed all the time. No. Find the good, find the joy, find those people who are bucking the system and then take that as inspiration of how are you gonna buck the system? How are you gonna bring Hope into your community?

Mildred's awareness of what her students face and will continue to face drove her to create learning opportunities that encouraged them to ask questions and hopefully confront their own injustices.

During the Brown v. Board of Education lesson, Mildred extended the lesson to discuss the Banning of Drums. She explained that the Banning of Drums was a law written into the 1740 Slave Code in South Carolina to prevent enslaved people from communicating with each other. One student stated, "That's mean, miss. How come we've never heard of this?" Mildred responded, "Remember how we don't teach you *all* the history?" she smiled and then continued, "everything is problematic because power corrupts." Her statement draws my eyes to a poster with the caption, "Every minute is a Chance to Change the World." I write in my notebook, 'I wonder how many students Mildred will connect this to their lives?' Her students participated freely in the discussion and continued asking tough questions that Mildred was willing to answer. She was honest about the surrounding society and helped her students understand that power corrupts.

Commitment

Mildred is committed to her students and recognizes that her students encounter oppressive situations in their everyday lives. She addressed this by teaching students about historical events that resulted from oppression and teaching the vocabulary students need to put a name to their feelings and experiences.

> …teaching them the foundational vocabulary, words of oppression and liberation. [Culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged students] face a lot more pressure in our society. They can hear it. They can feel it. They can see it. They experience it and they can't name it. And so they're just angry.

Mildred deliberately taught her students about institutionalized oppression and the terminology necessary to articulate their emotions and experiences, "they're starting to get those words so that they can put a finger on what they're feeling, [and] what they experience." She explained that institutionalized oppression occurs when history is taught through one perspective, "When all you learn about is George Washington and white people in history, [and] you don't see yourself in the curriculum, [and] when you only read books by white authors or males or heterosexuals, that's institutionalized oppression." She described the lack of representation in the curriculum puts her students at a disadvantage.

Mildred facilitated a lesson on the massacre of indigenous people in Mexico, students had begun the next reading on how the indigenous people rose from the massacre. Mildred asked the class, "Can I make a deal? I read the last of the prologue, but you do the rest of the chapters yourself. Deal?" Her students agree. She reads a few sentences, then asked, "Is this oppression or liberation?" The whole class responded, "Liberation." Mildred asked, "Which 'I'?" The class responded, "Intra-Community." Mildred asked, "Why?" A male student answered, "Because they are coming together to help each other and fight back." She asked the class, "Does everyone agree or disagree?" All students nodded. I write in my notebook that I am confused. I walk to a poster on one of the walls titled "Liberation!" I take a picture of it to analyze during my reflection. The poster contains the words "Internalized, Intra-Community, Interpersonal, Institutional, and Ideological." Under each word is a short description of each. The poster clarifies the lesson I observed earlier that day.

To establish fertile ground for all her students to flourish, Mildred has worked at learning the history of oppressed people. She uses her knowledge to make the learning relevant to current societal issues. She demonstrated a deep understanding of the content's key ideas and knew

prerequisite links between topics and concepts and the cognitive structures necessary to facilitate student comprehension. Her ideas and practice demonstrated knowledge of effective pedagogical approaches and the ability to anticipate student misconceptions.

In addition to her pedagogical practices, Mildred demonstrated her commitment to students by allowing them to 'hang out' in her classroom if they wished to complete assignments or eat lunch. During one visit, I realized that I arrive during lunchtime. I hope I do not interrupt her lunch as I approached her classroom. However, as I walked into the room, I was surprised that Mildred was not alone in her classroom. One student was reading his story, an assignment, to Mildred. Two other students were in the classroom; one was working on an assignment, the other was reading a book. Mildred was eating her lunch and seemed unbothered by the students' presence. She had small conversations with them, but everyone in the room went about their activities. This practice seemed to be customary; her door is always open. The students placed their laptops, folders, and books into their backpacks when the bell rang. Each said, "Bye, Miss. Thank you. Have a nice day." Mildred replies, "Sure. No problem. Have a good day, Babies."

Sense of Duty

While visiting Mildred's classroom or speaking with her, I realized she has a sense of duty to her students. It was apparent in how she planned her instruction, talked to students, and helped students advocate for themselves. She held students accountable for their learning and actions because she knows culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged students have a "harder road than the rest of us." I compared it to how a mother cares for and protects her children.

In our interview, we discussed how Mildred addresses students' needs and develops her curriculum and lesson plans around those needs. The discussion led to when she created a project

during the year when schools were mainly online. Mildred created a project so students could 'grade' their teachers; it was an extension of her unit on the Chicano Movement. Mildred's students expressed frustration because they felt they did not learn anything that year, and her students wanted to grade their teachers. She explained how some of her peers and school administrators were angry with her, and she received a letter from the district offices telling her to stop the project. I asked her how she felt about that, and she replied:

> I do what is best for the kids to the detriment of my reputation with my administration, to the detriment of my reputation with my colleagues because I don't care. They are not my clients. They are not who I'm there to serve.

Mildred's sense of duty demonstrated her connection, solidarity with her students, and willingness to take risks on their behalf.

It was the last three weeks of the first semester, and as I walked to Mildred's classroom, I noticed students carrying different hall passes. The hall passes were larger than I remembered, approximately legal-sized laminated cardstock glued to a yardstick. The signs contained the teacher's name and the destination. For example, "MR. RUIZ, BATHROOM PASS," or "MR. RUIZ, HALL PASS." I noticed that bathroom passes consist of one color and hall passes of another color. When I walked into Mildred's classroom, I saw the differentiated passes leaning against the wall closest to the door. As I prepared for the observation, I heard a student ask, "Can I go to the bathroom, Miss?" Mildred replied, "Is it an emergency?" The student gave her a questioning look and replied, "Yes." She responded, "I know. They emailed us telling us not to let you guys out of the room unless it was an emergency." She shrugged and smiled, then pointed to the passes at the door, "Don't forget to take the pass." After the class ended, I asked Mildred about the hall passes. She replied, "Apparently, some teachers are letting too many students out

of their classroom. I'm like, if a student needs to use the bathroom, then let them go. I normally let them go. If they gotta go, they gotta go. [Administration] wants to treat our students like little children who can't make their own decisions." I can hear the frustration in her voice. She continued, "This administration just doesn't get it."

Holding students accountable

During a lesson based on Aboriginal Dreamtime stories, Mildred showed several examples of Dreamtime stories. The instructions were to write an original Dreamtime story that involved something from the students' knowledge base from their community or cultural rituals. As students worked to complete the assignment, Mildred walked around the classroom and engaged them in conversations regarding the lesson. She started the conversation with, "Tell me what you're thinking." Most students replied with an answer to which she replied, "Interesting. Tell me more." Or "I hadn't thought of that in that way. Ok. I like where you're going with this…." These messages motivated students to continue working.

When students seemed stuck, Mildred stopped at their desk and asked probing questions, a few students indicated that they were making progress and there was no need for assistance. She moved on to another student, who was stuck and asked, "Would you like some help?" The student nodded. Mildred replied, "Ok, what are you thinking about?" The student replied, "I don't know Miss." She encouraged the student, "You have a lot of knowledge in your head. This is about you and whatever you want to write about. Think about what you want your audience to learn or walk away with. Let your imagination go crazy." The student smiled, still not convinced that he knew what to do. She continued, "Write about the nopal and how it became flat or another type of cactus." Mildred allowed the student to continue with the healthy struggle of being creative. She checked on him throughout the class until the student eventually created his

topic. Mildred used her pedagogy and gentle persistence to help students develop strategies to reach academic success. The student continued working quietly and diligently. He was focused and did not seem bothered by his peers' conversation.

My attention gets drawn to Mildred saying to a student, "Write your story, man!" Her tone is non-threatening yet firm. The student chuckled and replied, "Alright Miss." She approached another student, "Is it about a plant, animal, or geographic feature?" The student asked, "Can I do one about a tumor?" Mildred asked, "Like cancer?... Hmm. Can you do one on a remedio? A plant that maybe your family uses to get healthy when they're sick?" The student is satisfied with Mildred's guidance and pressed on. Her approach to clearing up confusion is subtle yet firm. Her steadfastness sent the message that the assignment requires thinking and effort**.**

Care

Mildred's demonstration of care begins at her classroom door. A visual representation of Mildred's classroom door can be seen in Figure 3. On the outside of her classroom door, a sign above the rectangular door window states, 'When you enter this room, YOU ARE… numerous positive words cover the door. To the right of the door's window, in big cut-out letters, the words "I [LOVE] Y'ALL," stand out. The positive messages on the door create a sense of calm in me. I imagine that this does the same for her students.

Figure 2

PICTURE OF MILDRED'S CLASSROOM DOOR

Source: The picture was taken by the author

During my first initial visits, I noticed a few students walk towards two large bins at the front of the room upon entering the classroom. As more students file into the room, a few more students go to the bins. My interest is piqued, so I looked in that direction and see that they get a snack, then go to their desk. This exchange occurred at the beginning of every period, sometimes during class, and right before students left the classroom. I asked Mildred about the food bins.

> I provide it, but I'm not supposed to. I'm just taking care of my kids. But they know not to say anything. When I get kids coming in and getting stuff, I tell them not to say

anything. I tell them if I get caught, I'm going to have to get rid of this and many students will lose out.

Students give what they can to buy a snack. Eventually, the snack bins pay for themselves. Mildred replenishes the snacks when they run low. She said she buys snacks at the beginning of the year so students do not go hungry during the day. Her solidarity with her students underscores the importance of caring relationships in educating students.

Relationships

The first observation of Mildred's classroom occurred in mid-October. It is evident in how she spoke to students and how they responded to her that she established positive teacher-to-student relationships. The classroom atmosphere felt comfortable, friendly, and unrestrained.

Mildred built relationships and developed trust with students through her bell work, which allowed her to have daily conversations with her students. She posted a bell work question every day. The bell work questions were simple but required students to think. The questions allowed her to get to know her students personally by getting to know their likes and dislikes. Students received points for completing and submitting their bell work. Examples of Mildred's questions were:

- Is a hot dog a sandwich? Is cereal soup? Explain.
- What's one thing you eat that other people think is gross?
- What is your love language? (What do you need to feel loved?)
- Dragon or Unicorn? Explain why.
- One thing I love about myself is…?

She gets to know her pupils through their responses, allowing her to have more individualized discussions. She also allowed students to share their answers with the class if they choose to. Consequently, these activities build a classroom community of trust with Mildred and other students. Mildred stated that the bell work questions are silly, but they help her see her students as individuals. During our interview, she states:

> It's getting to know them as people. Their likes, their dislikes and things like that. And it's hard because a lot of them don't wanna share because they don't feel comfortable, but they have to write it. And they have to write it so I can read them to get to know them.

During classroom observations, Mildred constantly engaged students by conversing with them. She was masterful in starting a conversation that had little to do with the assignment, subtly leading students to focus on their assignment. The trust she has built stems from her effort to know her students. Students' trust in Mildred allowed her to be firm with them when they lagged in completing their assignments or their grades fell. Students know that when she is firm, she is also fair. Mildred's firmness comes from a place of love. Students know and understand that she has done everything possible to help them succeed.

Mildred participated in playful engagement with her students. Toward the end of the semester, one student approached her, "Miss my grade is 89.1%. It has to be an 'A". She reassured him that he will be fine. He continued, "Miss. I *really* need an 'A' in this class." Mildred replied, "You'll be fine," and continued to explain quarter and semester grades. "But really Miss. I need an 'A." She replied, "We'll see how generous I am when I'm submitting grades." Both smiled and the student walked away, happy and reassured.

High Expectations

Mildred's presentation of her lessons was clear. The rigor in the content required students to exhibit a considerable amount of cognitive ability. Her class readings were demanding, requiring students to have good reading comprehension and stamina. Mildred scaffolded the learning and provided graphic organizers; however, she never let students avoid the hard work. She encouraged and guided students through the material and expected them to produce quality work. Mildred provided ample wait time throughout her lessons, allowing students to process the information and ask questions. Her lessons never lagged; instead, they moved steadily, keeping students engaged and allowing them to follow along and take notes. At the point of the lesson, when students were working together, Mildred told the class, "Please be marking your text. Because I see a lot of La La La (she motions with her hands)…This is an assignment. You will turn it in." For this particular assignment, students must analyze quotes they pulled from the article and write their analysis in their dialectic journal. Later in the class period, she told the class, "Don't be copying other's work! You can have the same quotes, but not the same analysis and connection. Not the same words because your brains work differently." On several occasions, I heard her say "think," or "think deeper." She pushed students to use their brains and did not accept anything less.

Regarding attending a school event, a student asked, "Miss, do we have to go?" Mildred replied, "Yes. You have to attend." The student replied, "But I gotta work." She replied, "Then you have to do the alternate assignment. Which is to interview a community member who is not a family member and has lived in [this area] for 15 years." Mildred reminded students to bring their Scavenger Hunt form to the event to show they participated. She continued, "If you get more than four squares filled, you get bonus points. And some of us can use the bonus points."

Mildred does not excuse students from performing any task. She provided choices for students to ensure equity and that all students can participate.

Trust

I observed Mildred from October 2022 through February 2023. Her practice was very consistent. Mildred built trust with her students through consistent practices, demonstration of care, and predictability. From the way she began class, to her delivery of instruction, to her gentle approach with students. The trust in her classroom can be seen and felt. It was evident when she approached students at their desks. They allowed her into their personal space and did not make any motion indicating uncomfortableness. When Mildred asked students tough questions, they responded to her and did not dismiss her. She pushed them to complete their assignments, and most responded. Her approach to her students was kind, deeply respectful, and loving. Mildred treated her students like the humans that they were, and they responded in kind. At the end of one class period, she told the class, "If you're failing my class, I sent your parents an email letting them know. I did not differentiate between 59 and 60. I didn't want to snitch on you, but I had to…." With this comment, she let them know that while she did not want to betray their confidence in her, she did have a job to do and will take whatever steps are necessary to hold students accountable. After Mildred made this statement, several students approached her, asking about missing assignments. Other students ask, "Miss? Can I talk to you about my grade?" Mildred replied, "Yeah, sure. I got you." A few students stay behind to talk to her about their grade.

Consistency

Mildred began every class in the same manner. She ensured that her agenda, bell work, and objective were posted and ready for students before they entered her classroom. When

students came in, they began working on the bell work question. After, Mildred started a unity clap, in which all students participated. Then she asked about current events. Students reported on a significant event of interest to them. Mildred rarely shared her current events but extended or clarified what students reported.

Another practice that was always present was Mildred's firm but fair approach. Her expectations for student learning were evident in how she scaffolded learning activities. She paused consistently to check for understanding, and before moving on, she asked students, "Is everybody good? Can I go on, or does someone need further explanation?" She adjusted accordingly depending on student responses. When the lesson was at the point of students working independently, Mildred maintained students' motivation by using phrases such as, "think," "you have a lot of knowledge in your brain", "tell me more," and "think deeper." When a student was not doing the work, Mildred did not let them off the hook easily. She approached the student, "Hey, man? Do you have questions?" Student replied, "No. I'm not gonna do it." "Well, that isn't going to get you anywhere. You need this grade or you'll fail my class." When the student shrugged, she replied, "Okay. If that's how you want to live your life, okay. But I'm here if you need me." Mildred consistently had a pulse on where her students were academically and emotionally and delivered the support they needed at any given time. Her consistent approach of being firm and fair with all of her students strengthened her students' trust in her.

Respect

All interactions between Mildred and her students and among students were highly respectful. Any requests that she had of students began with please and ended with thank you. I noticed that students consistently said "thank you, Miss," when she granted them a request. Students did not react negatively when Mildred did not grant them a request. They respectfully

accepted her decision. Another form of respect I noticed almost immediately of conducting observations is that Mildred pronounced students' names correctly, in Spanish, and did not English- ize them. Sometimes, when students called her, she replied with "Mande," the respectful response in Spanish, meaning 'what?'

Mildred began every class with a unity clap and the entire class recited In Lak'ech to build community. She showed the poem on her presentation screen every day:

In Lak'ech

Tú eres mi otro yo.	You are my other me.
Si te amo y respeto,	If I love and respect you,
Me amo y respeto yo.	I love and respect myself.
Si te hago daño a ti,	If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mí mismo.	I do harm to myself.

(*Luis Valdez, 1971)*

The unity clap and In Lak'ech set the tone for the class. In Lak'ech is a Mayan greeting that expresses respect and unity to one another. After the class recited the poem, she began her lessons.

Mildred has enough respect for students to recognize that she can learn from their experiences. She assigned a Teach Me project at the beginning of the first semester. This lesson aimed to demonstrate that school does not have to be a place students dislike and to highlight the knowledge that students possess. Students must pick a familiar topic and teach it to the class. Mildred stated, (referring to students) "You know things. So teach us. Give me *your* knowledge.

[It's about] harnessing what they know." The topics ranged from students teaching the class about their dog to cooking, kicking a football, dancing Folklorico, to roping a cow. "These kids walk in with all this experience," she states as she reflects on trying to humanize students' high school experience. Mildred stated that watching students show their knowledge brought her joy because she could get to know them better and tap into their strengths.

Reflective

Mildred was well-planned and knew her content very well. Almost immediately after students left her class, she assessed the success of her lesson and sometimes cited instances from the lesson that fell short. I believe she is too hard on herself. However, after a lesson, she stated, "I didn't do a good job today. I've had them read and annotate a lot. I don't want them (students) to rebel. So I did a lot of talking today. Not my best. But it happens." Even though she talked more than usual, students were engaged and participated in the discussion.

At the end of our interview, I asked Mildred if there was anything that she wanted to add, she stated:

> I feel like every time I finish a year, I didn't do enough. And while I'm in it, I'm not doing enough. And part of that is that I have to set my own boundaries because otherwise I will be all in. And then my home life deteriorates.

Mildred serves 175 students, and two of her junior-level classes have over 40 students on the roster. She spoke of the hopelessness in education regarding the lack of support she receives from her school administrators. She stated:

> How am I supposed to get to all of my students, address all of their needs when there's that many kids, when my administration doesn't support me? … when I'm reading these

> examples [in academia], these amazing things that you cannot recreate. And so that's where my Hope diminishes because everyone wants us to be doing it and no one has figured out a way to protect ourselves and how to do it correctly. Where we don't suffer well while we're serving the needs of our kids. And I try really hard and then there's some days I'm just not doing what I should be. That is the hopelessness of education in general in the educational system and how people respect us so much but don't wanna help us do our jobs.

Love

It is the last week of the semester. I walked into Mildred's classroom and my eyes are immediately drawn to her presentation screen. In large font, the words "YOU ARE LOVED" welcome students as they trickle in and settle into their seats. Students look at the screen and they smile. I am reminded of Mildred's answer to my interview question, "How do you resolve situations with difficult students?" She replied:

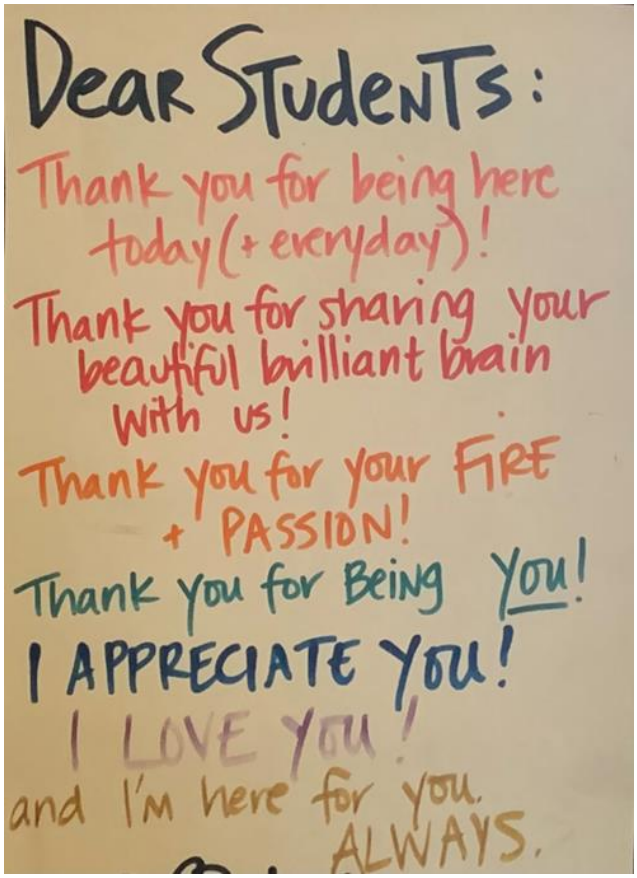
> I don't have difficult students. Maybe they exist, I'm sure. But I think those kids who are labeled difficult have been dehumanized so much that they walk into the classroom ready to fight. They already have their guard up because they know how teachers see them. They know how society sees them. They're ready to advocate for themselves because society's not. And no one in their life is going to. And you get those kids and you start talking to those kids. They're all teddy bears. They're the sweetest people and they just need love and they just need you to care about them. And they will a hundred percent still fail your class. They will. But they will be there every single day and they will participate and they will and they will speak brilliance into the world…. They're difficult if you continue to teach and treat them that way.

During our interview, Mildred extended on this by saying that some students are children with adult responsibilities, including working, being responsible for their younger siblings, and dealing with homelessness. She added that students have built barriers around them to safeguard their hearts, but teachers see what they want to see and "not the heart that is hurting underneath."

Everything that occurred in Mildred's classroom came from a place of love. I observed how she worked with students and the love she demonstrated to them. Her love was also evident in how she addresses students. Often, she referred to them as her babies. It is a term of endearment that signifies to them that they are safe, they are protected, and valued. I noticed students' reactions when she uses the term 'baby' or 'babies.' A little smile appeared on their faces and a sense of comfort covered their bodies. I reflected on my interview with Mildred and how she spoke to her children. I realized that Mildred spoke to her students like she spoke to her own children. Further demonstrating the love she had for her students. As students left her room, they had another reminder about their importance to Mildred.

Figure 3

PICTURE OF POSTER INSIDE MILDRED'S CLASSROOM DOOR



Source: The picture taken by the author

Mildred's approach was caring and created hope for her students. Even though she has had no firsthand experience with institutional oppression, Mildred could reach and teach her students whose lives and lived experiences are vastly different.

For my final observation, I had one main objective, to provide Mildred the opportunity to offer anything she might want written in her portrait. She paused and as she began speaking an announcement reminding students to fill out their FAFSA comes on over the speaker. She shook her head then stated:

> Yeah. So now we have the Copper Mountain College Prep Academy. We are trying to compete with [the college prep high school in the district]. We are trying to steal those

> kids who [live in our boundaries and] moving to the [college prep school]. And I hate it. They are big into this Southern Arizona Ivy league and these kids get accepted to these Ivy League schools and one year on the loud speaker [they announce], so and so got accepted to Brown. Yay. So and so got accepted to Smith. Yay. I got on the email, I was like, Are you gonna announce everyone who got accepted to [the local university], everyone who got accepted to [the local community college], everyone who got accepted to [another state university?] The counselor replied, 'No, we we'll have the declaration night for that. And I was like, then you can't announce that. It's all or nothing. That's not fair. And the kids were upset. They hear it.

Paying close attention to Mildred's words and reflecting on her disposition and practice, I realized that she is a strong advocate for her students and will stop at nothing to ensure her students are treated equitably. Mildred demonstrated what Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2008) calls a politicized mother; teachers who frequently have little patience with coworkers' liberal, White savior views. Her primary goals were to illuminate the social structures that adversely affect marginalized populations and to see her students succeed. She did this through her intentionality of building relationships and humanizing her pedagogy.

The next portrait looks at Lucia Guerrero. In many ways, Lucia has the passion of Mildred, but is much more outgoing and animated. As an eighth-grade English Language Arts teacher, she is aware of the pressures associated with state accountability assessments, but she shields her students from them. Although teaching is Lucia's second career, her dedication and commitment to her students were evident through the time I spent with her.

Lucia Guerrero

The Middle School Teacher

Background

When I set out to identify hopeful and caring teachers who successfully taught marginalized students, a friend suggested I reach out to a colleague she knew of through her students. I emailed Lucia and introduced myself, and briefly summarized my study. She replied to my email within five minutes. I was struck and pleased by the immediacy of her reply. We set an initial date and time for formal introductions, discuss my study, allow her to ask questions, and set a date for the interview. The school's location is on the southwest corner of the school district, approximately 10 miles from my office. I left my office with enough time to deal with any traffic issues that may arise. I arrived at the school within 15 minutes of the interview time. The school parking lot is full, but I found a space quickly. As I made my way to the front office, I meet up with a large security gate attached to a security fence surrounding the campus perimeter. The beauty of the campus hides behind the tall, black, iron fence. Through an intercom, I stated my name and reason for my visit. The gate clicked open, I walked into the office and signed in. An office staff greeted me, and asked whom I am there to see. They call Lucia's room to let her know that I am on my way to her classroom.

A bit of nostalgia filled my mind as I walked toward my former classroom's location. I have not been to Roadrunner Middle School in a long time and am excited and nervous. Roadrunner Middle School (RMS) is where I started my teaching career. Walking through the hallway, I think about how the school has aged. The floors are more worn than when I left 15 years ago. The posters on the walls remind students to be responsible and on time. Other posters

advertise after-school tutoring and student council activities. I saw two students sauntering down the hallway, a typical occurrence in middle schools.

Lucia Guerrero greeted me at her door with a wide smile. Her greeting is enthusiastic, and I felt that she has been looking forward to our meeting. She guided me to a kidney-shaped table towards the back of her classroom. "I hope this is okay. I'm sorry for all this mess. I have to grade this weekend," she pointed at the piles of papers stacked on the table. She moved some piles out of the way as I retrieved my things out of my bag. There is an easiness to Lucia that is inexplicable. She speaks as if we know each other. We discussed my study and I provided her with the opportunity to ask questions. She stated that she did not have questions but was very excited that I chose her to participate. She stated, "My mom has always told us to take advantage of opportunities; if we get invited to participate in a study, we should do it! So, I'm excited that this came to me." We set a date and time for the following week to conduct the interview.

Lucia was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States as a child. Her family left Mexico because her parents wanted a better life for their children. Lucia's parents divorced a few years after moving to the United States. She explained that although she was not happy about the divorce, she realized that the divorce helped her parents become friendlier to each other and better parents to her and her siblings. She said she perfected her English skills by translating for her mother when they moved to the United States. Lucia attended the local community college and then transferred to the local university to earn her Bachelor's in Political Science. Lucia said she never intended to become a teacher but is grateful that "teaching found her."

Lucia's teaching experience spans six years, two as a long-term substitute and four as a language arts teacher at Roadrunner Middle School. Lucia did not choose teaching as a career; she states, "teaching chose me." She majored in Political Science, Sociology, and English in her

undergrad studies and intended to attend law school to study immigration law. A life-altering event led her to quit her job. Her friends encouraged her to become a substitute teacher; meanwhile, she found another job. Lucia reflected on her reluctance to teach and thought, "I can't be a teacher. I don't know how to teach," but decided to try it because she needed an income. Her tone and her excitement exuded in her intonation. She was grateful that teaching "found her." She enjoyed working with students and stated that "her students saved her life." Lucia remained in the profession because she "realized how happy [she] was coming into work…the kids are very funny, and they bring me joy."

Lucia held an emergency certificate and attended the teacher certification program offered through the local community college. Lucia carried herself confidently but will not consider herself a "real teacher" until she completes her program. I shared how some of the best teachers I have worked with have come into teaching as a second career. Lucia smiled and shrugged, but I could see that holding an actual teaching certificate will authenticate her.

Political Clarity

Lucia's political clarity stemmed from her upbringing and being denied an opportunity in high school. She spoke freely and honestly about her upbringing, stating that her maternal grandmother was the most significant positive influence. Her grandmother had a positive outlook on life and rarely complained about her physical ailments. Lucia stated that her grandmother "was never negative" and always looked for the good in people. She credited her grandmother for how she approached life, "She taught me the importance of what comes out of your mouth. What came out of her mouth was always very positive. And not only what we say but what we do." Lucia recalled that her grandmother would match her actions to her words, "my nana was

never giving me advice and not showing it to me." When Lucia spoke of her grandmother, she did so with great affection and endearment.

In addition to her grandmother's philosophy, Lucia kept her paternal grandfather's words at the forefront of her practice, "He told my father that if his kids are doing better than he is, then he's done something [well]. The goal is that your kids are doing better than you were [at their age]. I want my students to be better than I was when I was in eighth grade." I found myself relating to Lucia's recounting her grandparents' influence on her life. My maternal grandparents were influential in my life as well.

Lucia recalled a time in high school when she was denied an opportunity. When I asked her this question, she answers it without hesitation. She stated that her high school counselor informed her she was ahead regarding her graduation requirements and could graduate early. Lucia recalled asking her counselor, "Don't I need four years of math? I only have two, then [my] junior year will be three? [The counselor] said, 'No. you can graduate with just two.' And I thought, wow? I always struggled with math. So it was good news for me!" She let out a small laugh as she retold this experience. It was not until Lucia applied to the local university that she realized she was deficient in college entrance requirements. Lucia stated, "So I didn't think she was denying me an opportunity. She *denied* me an opportunity and I didn't realize because I didn't know better. So I guess in her head (the counselor), I wasn't going to a university. So I didn't need more years of math." Lucia chuckled at her last statement. I shook my head in disbelief and wondered how many students have been affected by this counselor's decisions. I asked Lucia if she had told her parents about this experience. Lucia shook her head and told me that she did not tell her parents because she felt "dumb that she didn't do more research," and she questioned herself, "I'm sure that [the information] was in a presentation, and I didn't pay

attention." Lucia continued, "I don't think she meant anything bad. I think she thought, 'oh this little Mexican girl will probably get pregnant soon. So at least, let's get her a high school diploma." Like her grandmother, Lucia sees the positive in a person who could have changed Lucia's economic mobility. She enrolled at the community college to gain university entrance requirements, then transferred to the university.

In the classroom, Lucia demonstrated her political clarity in many ways, but one that stood out for me was when she returned students' graded assignments. Lucia told them to keep their work in their Language Arts folder, "don't throw it away!" One student asked, "Why Miss? Why do we have to save our work in our folder?" Lucia responded, "Because sometimes we have meetings about you and it will come up that he or she 'doesn't do any work.' Then I pull out your folder and say, 'Yes, they do. Look?" Her students are satisfied with her answer. One student stated, "So you save our butts?!" Lucia gives them a wide smile and replied, "Yeah, I do." This exchange that occurred demonstrated that Lucia is aware of the school structures that often impede students' success. She seemed to have found a way to advocate for her students' by demonstrating their capability of completing assignments.

Hope

Lucia credited her grandmother for her hopefulness, stating that her grandmother would tell her, "As long as there is life, there is Hope…everything has a solution, except death. Once you're dead, there are no more solutions. But if you're alive, you can find one." Lucia uses her grandmother's philosophy to reach her students when she sees them facing challenges in their personal lives. She stated that this philosophy has also gotten her through some rough times, "I think about her now, all the physical pain [she endured], and I never noticed because she was like, 'I'm breathing, so let's go!" Lucia laughed as she reminisced about her grandmother.

I observed Lucia's positivity in the classroom and with her students. She was consistently upbeat and happy to see her students. Even when she was tired or stated that she was overwhelmed, she gave her students all she had to give. It is a true testament to her grandmother's legacy. Regarding her classroom practices, Lucia stated that she strives to teach students "to ask questions and be able to figure things out on their own. I want them to [learn] some tools from my classroom that will help them when there's no one there to help them; to be critical thinkers." She reflects deeper and states, "I want them to not be afraid to ask questions to figure it out and to rely on the tools that our backgrounds have provided us." Through her statements and her practice, Lucia understands that her pedagogy and curriculum can provide Hope for her students.

During classroom observations, I observed Lucia ask her students many questions. When her students answered, she followed up the answer with another question, usually asking student to explain their answer, use text evidence, or support their answer with other types of evidence. On one occasion, I heard an announcement asking teachers to lock their doors. The RMS administration was conducting a 'tardy sweep.' As Lucia made her way to her door, two students came running into the class. Lucia locked her door. She addressed the class, "Do you like the tardy sweeps?" Almost in unison, students replied, "No!" She asked, "Why not?" One student replied, "There just isn't enough time to go to the bathroom and get to class on time." Lucia then asked, "What are some things you can do to improve this?" She turned this into a lesson on teaching students how to voice their concerns to the school administrators appropriately. Lucia used her pedagogy to teach students self-advocacy.

Pedagogy/Critical Thinking

Lucia's classroom is rich with posters and student work, demonstrating a deeper understanding of literary concepts and student collaboration. I walked around the room to look at them; each had some similarities, while others seemed to have distinct differences. I asked Lucia about the posters and if the students reached the intended outcome. She stated that most students reached the intended outcome. She pointed to a few posters and stated, "This group had three Exceptional Educations students, and even though their poster doesn't look like they mastered the concept, the students were able to explain each element of the plot and the theme of the book." Lucia continued, "There are 11 Exceptional Education students in this class. I had to be creative on how they would demonstrate their learning to me."

Additionally, Lucia encouraged her students to question everything. She speaks about the internet era and students' exposure to misinformation, "I tell them, just because the YouTuber you watch or the TikTok personality you follow is someone that makes you feel comfortable, doesn't mean [their opinions] are right. Quite the opposite." Lucia continued to speak about how impressionable middle school students are and how dangerous it can be for youth. Additionally, Lucia spoke about a unit she teaches on analyzing the information students research or see online. It is a lesson in evaluating sources to determine if the source is credible and reliable. Lucia stated that students are usually astonished when they learn how easy it is to put content into the online spaces that they frequent. The lesson includes asking a series of questions to determine a source's Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose. She states, "kids are always blown away when we get into that [lesson]. [I usually teach it] during the fourth quarter because I want [students] to take that to high school." Lucia continues, "I tell [students] it takes more time, but at least you're not going to be fooled easily."

Preparing Students for the future

Lucia demonstrated a sense of urgency when preparing her students for high school. In many ways, it took me back to when I taught eighth grade. I remembered the pressure that I felt in making sure that I sent students to high school well-prepared and able to engage in the ninth-grade curriculum. Although hindsight tells me that this pressure was most likely self-imposed, I fully understand when Lucia stated, "I have to send them [to high school] ready for what may come."

During one of my visits, the school had planned a school-wide walk to raise awareness for mental health. It was a windy day, and the weather was starting cool. Lucia's students had no interest in participating in the walk. She explained to them the importance of mental health. She stated, "There was a time when I felt like you do. But, when I struggled with my mental health, I realized that I was wrong. Someday, hopefully not, but you may face a time when you need more support than usual. This is important and we are participating." As I walked with Lucia, I asked if her students knew her story, she stated that she had shared parts of her story so that she could normalize mental health and so students could understand that "we all go through hard times. Hopefully, my story will help them if they need it." We discussed the balancing act between sharing too much information and sharing just enough to impact students.

As we continued our walk, our conversation focused on preparing students for high school. Lucia shared that high school teachers from the surrounding area met with middle school teachers to discuss the skills students needed to be successful in ninth grade. She stated that reading stamina was the primary skill that high school English teachers wanted students to possess when they entered ninth grade, "So, I'm working on that with my students by having them read for at least 15 minutes every night. But I also think it's important for my students to

know the major literary elements and root words." Lucia stated that in her experience, knowing root words helped her become a better reader because she could figure out what she was reading by knowing the root words.

During the first semester, students focused on learning Latin root words; in the second semester, they focused on learning Greek root words. On several occasions, I observed students creating root word study cards, studying for a test, or taking a root word test. One student asked, "Miss, why do we have to learn Greek roots?" Lucia answered, "So you can break down bigger words and know where they come from. And if you know where it comes from, it can give you an idea of what it means. It will make your reading comprehension better." The student is satisfied with Lucia's answer; however, she extended her answer, "When you were in elementary, you learned context clues to help you understand what you read. This is kind of the same thing." Students continued to work on their study cards, knowing that there was a purpose for their learning.

Commitment

It was the last week of the first semester, I felt the students anxiously waiting for Winter break. Lucia was anxiously waiting also. I noticed that she was waning; she looked exhausted. She was not her usual upbeat self. I asked if she was feeling ok. She said, "I'm tired. My family made me go to a gathering this weekend." Lucia did not want to attend the gathering because she had to grade papers. She continued to tell me that her family made her "feel guilty" because she had missed a few other gatherings earlier in the semester. "I didn't start grading until 8:00 last night," Lucia related, "I didn't finish until 5:45 this morning! So, I just got ready and came to work." She shrugged her shoulders and chuckled. I empathized with her and asked her why she stayed up all night. She stated that it was important for her that students know what grade they

had so they could have the opportunity to submit additional assignments to raise their grades. I playfully asked, "Will you do this again?" Lucia replied, "No! I won't go to the family gathering if I have grading to do." I shared how I have sacrificed family gatherings if I had not met my writing or studying goals. We both laughed because we understood the familial pressures that exist in a Mexican American family.

As I review her lesson plans, I could tell that Lucia is well-planned. She knows what she wants her students to know by the end of the year. Through our time together, we discussed her teaching and how she will feel like a "real teacher" when she completes the teacher preparation program. I asked, "What do you think will change after receiving your teacher certification? Will it change how you approach teaching or how you work with students?" Lucia replied that the teaching certificate will justify her in this profession. She stated, "It takes a lot of time to work full-time and complete this program. I get tired sometimes, but my students deserve a real teacher. That's why I decided to go through this program." I commended Lucia on her commitment to her students and offer that she is doing some great things with students.

Holding students accountable

Throughout my time visiting Lucia's classroom, she constantly held students accountable. She was firm in her redirects but stated them in a playful tone. Students responded well to her, indicating they know she is serious with her requests. During a lesson, Lucia saw that multiple students were off task. After a few redirects, Lucia told the class, "This is what this tells me…Is that we need a seating chart." Students quieted down and, in the usual eighth-grade fashion, simulated completing their classwork. Lucia continued, "I want you to be comfortable, but I want to be comfortable too. If *I* can't be comfortable, then we *need* a seating chart." By my subsequent visit, students had assigned seating.

During another classroom visit, Lucia started the lesson and at the point in the lesson where students were to collaborate, she allowed students to choose with whom they would collaborate. Approximately ten minutes into collaboration time, I heard Lucia tell a group of students, "I guess you can't sit there if I need to repeat myself. You're talking while I'm giving directions." The students she addressed quieted down and seemed to pay attention to her. Lucia continued to address the small group, "Please move to another space. I don't want to keep telling you to stop talking or to keep your hands to yourself." Without protest, the students gather their things and move to another table.

As the semester draws to a close, Lucia foreshadows what students should expect when they return from Winter Break. Lucia told them that she will require more reading from them and when they return they will have to fill out a weekly reading log. I heard students grumble. One asks, "Why, Miss?" Lucia replies, "Because I need you to be ready for high school. If you can spend that much time on Tik Tok, you can spend that time reading." I could tell by the students' body language that they were unhappy with the new requirement, but I sensed that they will rise to Lucia's expectations.

Sense of Duty

As I observed Lucia's interactions with students, how she spoke, and her preparedness, I am aware that her sense of duty guides her practice. She walked the fine line between holding students accountable and giving them the space to be themselves. Lucia provided students the opportunity to ask questions and to question everything. She understood that developing self-advocacy in her students is important, but also cautioned them to know the boundaries. She states, "I want them to know I'm here with them. I'm not separate from them. Obviously, I'm the adult. But I don't want them to feel like they can't question [me] because I'm the adult. No, I

want the opposite of that. I want them to question everything I say because I'm human." Lucia's sense of duty in preparing students for self-advocacy stemmed from her adolescence, when she felt unable to question her mother's decision-making. Lucia was aware that some of her peers do not appreciate being questioned by students, so she informed students not to disrespect other adults in their lives. She does, however, advise her students to question everything when they become adults, saying, "I do tell them that when they are adults, they should question everything…because there is a lot of misinformation [out in the world]."

During the beginning of the second semester of the school year, I walked into Lucia's classroom. Her manner was drastically different; her greeting was not as exuberant, and she was not smiling. I waited until her students left the room before asking her what she is thinking. Lucia informed me that the principal asked her to teach another class; a reading intervention class. She stated, "I am so overwhelmed, right now. I don't even have time to do the things I need to for my regular classes…." I empathized with Lucia and asked if her administrator gave her any options. She replied, "No. Basically, no. They told me just to do IXL (an online intuitive intervention program). But [students] don't need that. They need real teaching. If they're struggling, a computer program won't help them." Even when unhappy with her administrator's decisions, Lucia's obligation to do what is best for students shines through.

Care

Lucia stands outside her door to greet students entering her classroom. She does this at the beginning of every period, every day. During our interview, Lucia stated, "I'm at the door every period, even if I have to do something else. I need to catch their mood at the door." This practice helped Lucia be proactive with supporting her students. She continued, "I'm always trying to notice how they're moving. How they're talking to other kids." Stating that most

students come in doing well, but there are instances when Lucia has seen students enter the classroom upset or sad. She provided an example of what occurred earlier that day, "today, one of my students, she's always really quiet, but today, even through her mask and her fake eyelashes, I could see her eyes…just…" Lucia shook her head as if she wished she could do more for this student. After the class was settled, Lucia asked the student to step outside to ask if she was "ok." The student started crying and asked if she could do her classwork outside. Lucia did not press her on what was bothering her. Instead, she allowed the student to complete her classwork outside. Lucia stated, "I don't know what's going on with her. She didn't tell me. But I want her to feel comfortable." Lucia reiterated that every student is different, each requiring different support, "I just try to treat them as an individual. We don't know what they're going through. So, I try to be kind [to them] every day."

Relationships

Building relationships with students is Lucia's top priority she stated, "[Building] relationships is the number one thing. If I [don't] build positive, professional relationships with students, they're probably not going to learn." Knowing each student as an individual is very important to her, "each year, I have between 110 to 140 students on my roster. They are all different. So I make it *my* homework [during] the first four weeks [of the school year] to know them on a personal level. It's a lot of work [for me], but it's important." Lucia stated that she is very intentional in building relationships because the approach is different for all students, "I'm very intentional. And it looks different for different kids. Some are very standoffish, some are ready to talk to you about stuff, and some are never here." Lucia stated she prioritizes students with high absenteeism because she may never see them again due to their mobility, "I want every child to know I *see* them and I don't just *see* them if they misbehave, or if they have a straight

A's. I see them because I've met them [and I know a little about them]." I see and feel the warmth in Lucia's classroom. The environment is welcoming and comfortable.

To continue strengthening the relationships, Lucia expects students write at least six sentences on various topics for their bell work. In doing so, she can get to know her students better as the year progresses, "I read their sentences to catch a glimpse into who they are or what they talk about. And then I bring it up, I write something [in my feedback to them] or say something about what they wrote." Examples of Lucia's bell work prompts were:

- Tell me about your weekend. Explain in detail.
- Describe your favorite type of vehicles. Explain why.
- Describe a happy moment. What made you happy? Give details.
- Explain what comes to mind when you hear the term mental health.
- Describe what type of stories you enjoy; scary, funny, sad, romance. Why? Give details.

Lucia's intentionality in building relationships with her students resulted in students responding respectfully to her when she had to tighten boundaries and expectations in her classroom.

High Expectations

Lucia gradually instilled confidence in her students through verbal communication and the assigned learning objectives. She scaffolded the curriculum so that all students could access it. In addition, she expected students to demonstrate active reading practices by taking notes as they read and writing summaries about what they read. Lucia insisted that every student reads and writes. She never let them avoid the hard work and encouraged students to exert effort in everything they do.

As she roamed her classroom during a test, Lucia told students, "You will do well if you have notes about what you've read, if you have your notes on elements of the plot, if you have your homework book, and your notes on Theme. This is the language you will you use in high school. We've talked about this. You can do this!" I saw students searching through their backpacks for the items that Lucia listed. Most of the students found what they need. A few students, however, seem to not locate some of the items. They asked their neighbor for help, but Lucia stopped that behavior almost immediately, "There's no talking during a test, unless you want to receive a zero. You guys know the expectations." As Lucia continued to circulate across the classroom, she told students, "You got this eighth graders. You know this." She stood at my desk for a few seconds and statee, "They're tested out. They're tired." She was not planning to administer a test during this week because the students had completed their quarterly benchmarks the week before. However, Lucia realized that the following week is the week before Winter Break; she was concerned that some of her students would miss the test due to leaving to Mexico for the holidays. Even though students have been testing for the last two weeks, Lucia's students work diligently to complete their test to demonstrate what they have learned. This is an indication that students will work for teachers whom they respect.

Throughout each of my visits to Lucia's classroom, I believe I always heard her address inappropriate language with her students. On one occasion, she heard a male student say an inappropriate word, Lucia, pulled him to the side and stated, "I know you think you need to cuss to be cool, but you don't. There are places that you can speak that way. I use cuss words at home, but not here." The student apologized then returned to his seat. During another visit, another male student used inappropriate language but Lucia does not hear him. His peer corrected him stating, "Watch your language! That's not how we speak." The first student replies, "Dude, you

sound like Ms. Guererro." Both students chuckled, showing that they were aware of Lucia's standards for conduct in the classroom.

Trust

Lucia has built a relationship of trust with her students. They know what to expect, and there were no surprises throughout my time in Lucia's classroom. Lucia does an excellent job of foreshadowing for students to prepare them for what is to come. I see that she is mindful on how to address behavior or motivation issues with some students. Lucia occasionally asked students to leave the classroom so that she could speak individually with them. On other occasions, though, she confronted the behavior in the classroom. Her decision to differentiate stemmed from her lived experiences and knowing her students, "I didn't like being called out in front of the class, so I stopped doing that to my students. But every kid is different. Today. I did call out one boy and he laughed because that's his personality. And I joked with him. But with most kids, no. I talk outside [with them]. They know Ms. Guerrero is not going to humiliate them."

Another sign that Lucia has earned her students' trust is their willingness allow her into their personal space. While roaming the classroom to check for understanding, she often sat next to students to clarify confusion. Students welcomed her help and did not back away when Lucia sat close to them. I could feel the trust that students have in Lucia. They know she is a constant, reliable adult with whom they are safe.

Consistency

In addition to Lucia greeting students at the door every class period, she began every class similarly. After greeting them, students clumsily entered the classroom, found their seats, and settled in. Students had assigned seats. She began each class, "Good morning/afternoon, Potatoes! Please take out your notebooks and do your bell work."

Meanwhile, Lucia took attendance and did a few check-ins with certain students. She read the daily agenda when she saw that students were close to finishing the bell work. Every week, Lucia gave students a quiz on what they learned. She foreshadowed the quizzes so that students were not taken by surprise. Even though some students grumbled, they acquiesced. Lucia comforted them by telling them, "Remember, this quiz isn't for you. It's to tell me where you're at in your learning and what I need to adjust or add." The students accept her explanation and get to work.

Lucia constantly roamed the classroom to check for understanding or to ensure students advancing their learning. She held students to high levels of learning and behavior. When students became off-task, she firmly but fairly pulled the class back to center and refocus them. Lucia often let students work with peers of their choice. However, on several occasions, she addressed students who are off task asked them to return to their original seat. Lucia's consistency demonstrated to students that learning is important and that she will hold them to high standards.

Respect

Respect is about connections for Lucia. She recognized that in order to establish a respectful environment, she must first establish connections with her students. Lucia began by sharing aspects of herself with which students may identify. She tells them that she was born in Mexico, an aspect that many of her students share. Lucia felt that it was important to acknowledge students' backgrounds, "I first acknowledge. I always acknowledge. I think that's super important. I was always very proud to be Mexican. And I think kids should know they're roots and then learn about it. I think it's really empowering to know [where you come from]." As I glanced around Lucia's classroom, I noticed that she recognizes students' birthdays, their work,

and their ethnicity by offering a classroom library with a diverse selection of books written by authors of color. A visual representation of Lucia's birthday board can be seen in figure 5.

Figure 4

PICTURE OF STUDENTS' BIRTHDAY BOARD

Source: Picture taken by the author

Interactions between Lucia and students and among students were very respectful, demonstrating genuine warmth and compassion to students. Students respected Lucia and contributed to high respect among all class members. Throughout my time in Lucia's classroom, I observed that she balances her student interactions between firm redirects and playful engagement. Depending on the request, students either complied or reciprocated with the same playfulness; however, it never became disrespectful. Lucia's classroom had a sense of community in which students felt appreciated, valued, and comfortable taking intellectual risks.

Reflective

Lucia knew her content very well and understood the state standards. Most importantly, she knew what skills her students will need to succeed in high school. She was well prepared, and I saw that students were confident about completing the learning tasks. During a particular visit, the lesson objective was character analysis. Lucia quickly reflected on the lesson between classes: "I didn't want them to be bored, but we had to re-read some of the play. Otherwise, they will forget what happened before." I offered that she told students that it was important to re-read. Somehow it did not seem to satisfy her.

During a visit earlier in the school year, we discussed the support that Lucia received during her first years as a teacher. She stated she received two years of coaching through the district's mentor program. Lucia also receives coaching through the teaching certification program. Lucia was very satisfied with the district's mentor program but feels the current support is not meeting her needs. She stated, "At first, it was great! I felt like I was growing, getting what I needed. But this semester has not been as rewarding." I asked what area she feels she needs support and she answered, "Everything!" We both laughed; however, I wondered if she will gain confidence after receiving her teaching certificate.

It is the middle of January and I am observing Lucia's afternoon classes. The school administrator gave five school-wide announcements within 12 minutes. I asked Lucia if this resulted from the district's technology issues; she states, "This is normal. It has nothing to do with the internet!" We both shook our heads and chuckled. A few minutes later, an adult from the front office comes into her classroom and asked to speak to Lucia. They stepped outside. She walks into the classroom after approximately five minutes, raises her hands, and states, "It's impossible to teach in this school!" Throughout my time with Lucia, she consistently reflected

on her practice and questions whether she adequately prepares students for high school. Even though she is confident in her ability to get the job done, many classroom interruptions, i.e., school-wide announcements, hinder the flow of her instruction.

I reflected on my interview with Lucia. At the end of the interview, I asked her if there was anything she wanted to add. She states:

> We need to be in the moment with the kids. It's so important to really be in that moment. Sometimes I lose sight of what I'm doing because I have to turn in paperwork, do this or that, or log into a Zoom meeting. But if this kid is telling me a story *right now* about the video game level, he just passed. I need a be there *in that* moment. And a lot of times I cut kids off because I have to teach. But *this* moment might leave. This student might see me as someone like, 'Oh, well, she doesn't care about what I'm telling her.' So we just *need to be there* in the moment with them, whether it's a positive or a negative moment.

I appreciated her thoughts on being present with the students. She wants them to be heard and seen, especially by her, because she genuinely cares about them.

Love

It is the final week of the semester. I could feel the students' enthusiasm as they anticipated two weeks off. As I settled into my seat, I looked at Lucia; her energy was lower than usual, but students are unaware of this. She gets the students started on their classwork. This class of eighth-grade students is calm and focused on learning despite being the semester's final week.

During Lucia's planning period, she told me about a student who was suspended long-term because he was fighting inside a classroom and the principal was moving toward expelling

the student because the teacher became involved and was hurt while trying to stop the fight. Lucia continued, "The students don't like her. They're always saying how badly she treats them. So, I'm not surprised. Not that I want anything bad to happen to her, but she doesn't build relationships. And relationships are *your* safety." I agree with Lucia. That evening, as I reviewed my notes for the day, this statement took me back to our interview, specifically her statement, "Relationships. It's the number one thing." She continued to state that without positive relationships, it would difficult teach students.

Lucia weaved her kindness and love throughout the interview. When I asked her how she handled difficult students, she responded, "Talking to them. Everything can be resolved through listening." She asks students many questions to get to the bottom of the issue. Additionally, Lucia stated that when talking to students, she sits down because "I never want them to ever at all feel that I'm the authority. I didn't deal well with [authority] myself at that age. So I never wanna be that." Lucia also reflected on how much she has learned by listening to her students:

> Every year I feel like I'm even a better listener because I've learned that the moment I jump to a conclusion, I'm gonna mess things up. Because even when I am positive that this is what happened, or that's the kid who did that. But there's one little thing I might have missed and maybe it was the kick under the table and it's the kid that's working the whole time kicking [another student].

Lucia extended on her perspective on dealing with all students in general:

> You have to meet [students] where they are. And sometimes it's a very dark place and sometimes it's a place that I will never, ever understand no matter how much I care and want to understand… I mean, seeing the stuff, the real stuff that kids go through, *and* it's always the kids who *you* think are the toughest, that are going through the craziest stuff

> and you think, 'Oh, this kid is fine, they just wanna push my buttons.' No, there's no kid that just wants to push your buttons. They're sad, or they're angry, or both. They're going through some deep stuff.

She continued, "I want everyone [in my class] to feel safe because I will protect them." Through her statements, I felt the love that she has for her students.

Throughout my visits, Lucia consistently addressed the class, "Alright, potatoes; I need your attention, potatoes." I realized that this is a term of endearment however, I cannot make the connection as to why she uses this term. Toward the end of my time visiting Lucia's classes, I asked her why she calls her students potatoes. She sheepishly laughed and replied, "Because it's my favorite food and potatoes can be anything, they can be baked, mashed, or they can be French fries. Potatoes can be cooked in so many different ways. And I tell [my students] that just like potatoes, they can be anything they want to be." We both laughed. She walked away to answer a student's question as I continued observing Lucia's joy.

Lucia demonstrated that teaching entails a commitment to students that require Hope and Care, and that our words and actions matter. She understands that her students are perceptive of her demeanor. Lucia intentionally pressed students to meet their potential while showing them that she cared about their well-being. Lucia humanized her classroom by creating a community of learners. She disliked the effects of focusing on testing because it removed humanity from education. She stated, "I think we standardize everything so much that we believe, 'if you're not linear, then you're not gonna do well. But that's not necessarily true. You can [be successful]. This focus takes away students' ability and some teachers' ability to use their resources, their gifts." Lucia's perspective and commitment to educating her students

resonate with Delpit's (1995) assertion that teachers must foster caring relationships with their students, learn about their lives, and maintain high expectations.

Lucia was absent for my final observation. Her students greeted me and immediately informed me that "Miss Guerrero isn't here." One student stated, "She said she will be here after fourth period, Miss." I thank them for letting me know. I sit in my usual space. Another student asked me, "Are you staying here with us even though Miss Guerrero isn't here?" I replied that I would stay for a while. I observed how the classroom managed itself - indicating that students knew and understood Lucia's expectations. I asked the substitute about the class; she replied that everything was going well and that students were well-behaved. One student overheard us and stated to me, "You know Miss, Miss Guerrero tells us to be super good for substitutes because she doesn't want them thinking that we're bad kids." I smiled at the student and replied, "I hope you listen to her, because I wouldn't want anyone thinking poorly of you either."

Reflecting on my time with Lucia, I wonder if she feels more confident in preparing her students for high school. I emailed her to thank her for participating in my study and included a draft of her portrait. Lucia replied favorably to her portrait and shared the following email from a high school English teacher teaching some of Lucia's former students:

> Dear Ms. Guerrero,
>
> My name is Ms. Gold and I teach freshman English at Mesquite High School. Riley Minger, Jessie Gutierrez, Christopher Baca, and Alicia Ballesteros are incredibly well-prepared for my class -- better prepared than most. Well done, fellow educator! Keep doing what you are doing!!!

ALL four of them love you! They say you're the best. Riley says, "Thank you for teaching me." Alicia says she will visit you and pay you back 35 bucks. Christopher said you were the best!!!

I hope this email makes you feel good. It was intended to do just that. :)

Best,

Ms. Gold

I thanked Lucia for sharing the email with me. I hoped that being recognized by her peer, will help her understand that the teaching certificate would not make her a "real teacher." Lucia's authentic caring for her students, instilling hope, and her intentional focus building and maintaining positive relationships with her students are what make her a "real teacher."

Conclusion

The findings for the interviews and classroom observations were presented in this chapter. In this portraiture, the experiences of each participant were presented as portraits. However, their personal and professional stories and lived experiences were stitched together to create a quilt of mastery and skillfulness in their work with marginalized students. Both participants wove hope and care into their daily practices and ensured that their students were cared for and felt safe and loved.

The primary data sources were participants' interview transcripts and observation field notes, including impressions from nuanced classroom interactions. The development of themes began with coded transcripts. More themes emerged once the field notes were coded. Chapter 5 will discuss the analysis of the portraits, provide recommendations, and reflect on the findings.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study and the major themes and sub-themes of the portraits presented in Chapter 4. It also provides conclusions, discusses the implications for action practice, and makes recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

The race disparity between teachers and students causes significant issues in the Education of historically marginalized populations. Teacher capacity is essential to successful schools; it is critical in schools serving historically marginalized populations. "Effective teachers" are rare in schools of poor communities. As Bartolomé (2008) and Ladson-Billings (2009) maintain, teacher preparation courses do not prepare teachers effectively with the skills needed for successful historically marginalized classrooms.

The purpose of this study was to explore how hope and caring manifest in teachers who effectively promote rigorous learning and engagement for historically marginalized students. If most teachers are White and middle-class, their lived experiences are distinctly different from those of their historically marginalized populations. How can these teachers teach students the critical skills they need to navigate systems and a society that sees them as subordinate? Specifically, this study aimed to describe the inherent nature of caring and hopeful teachers of historically marginalized populations to the extent that we can shape White teachers' experiences and knowledge to become better teachers of historically marginalized populations. In this study, the researcher sought answer three research questions:

1. How do hope and caring manifest in teachers' work?
2. What lived experiences have prompted teachers to exhibit hopeful and caring dispositions?
3. How do hopeful and caring teachers resist the dehumanizing effects of teacher accountability based on high-stakes testing?

Qualitative methodology was used to examine teacher dispositions because it fit best with the purpose of this study. The empirical nature of measuring personal characteristics and classroom practices requires a qualitative approach because this approach allows for data collection in the natural setting and situates the observer in the world (Creswell, 2013). The design methodology for the study was portraiture. Portraiture focuses on uncovering goodness and emphasizing successes while acknowledging that shortcomings will always exist within a social system (Hackman, 2002). Portraiture shifts the thinking to what is working instead of what is not; this is essential in research involving historically marginalized students (Brooks, 2017). The population for the study were two public school teachers. Both participants in the study are public school teachers in the same school district; one teaches high school Social Studies, and one teaches eighth-grade Language Arts. Both schools have similar demographics.

The primary data sources for this Portraiture study were interviews, one conducted with each teacher and approximately 35 hours of classroom observations for each teacher. The interviews were transcribed within 24 hours of conducting them. After each interview, the researcher made notes about initial reactions to the interview in a research journal. The interview transcripts were checked for accuracy, and foundational codes were assigned. Observational field notes documented practices around teachers' demonstration of hope and care in classroom

interactions with students. The field notes were coded using In Vivo, emotion, or process coding methods.

Findings Related to the Literature

Each portrait demonstrated the "goodness" of each classroom and the nature of the two participants. Even though the two participants have had diverse experiences and come from different backgrounds, they share similarities in how they approach teaching and work with their students.

According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), portraiture deliberately focuses on what is good and healthy as defined by the study's participants. Each actor's distinct experience was documented within each portrait, and growing elements of "goodness" were visible throughout the portraits. It is critical to recognize these emergent themes because they can be used as a foundation to find possible strategies to support teachers serving marginalized students.

Question one: How do hope and caring manifest in teachers' work?

Hope. Successful teachers of historically marginalized students want a better future for their students. They design classroom environments that nurture their students and cultivate hopeful thinking by believing in their ability and learning capability. Researchers, particularly, Duncan-Andrade (2009), Lopez (2013), Snyder and Shorey (2002), and Stanger (2016), emphasize that teachers can teach students how to hope. However, teachers must have the disposition and pedagogical competence to do so. Both teachers in this study had the disposition and the pedagogical knowledge to go beyond the technical aspects of teaching to create humanistic, safe environments conducive to their students' learning. This finding resonates with researchers who emphasize the importance of creating relevancy in their practice by building relationships,

helping students know their identity, having high expectations, and holding students accountable for quality work and acceptable behavior (Bartolome, 1994; Duncan Andrade, 2009; Nieto, 2006; Sosa-Provencio, 2016).

Each teacher humanized students' education by deliberately creating a classroom community where students were "seen" and "heard." Both teachers utilized bell work to get to know students and to gauge where they were regarding their thinking and emotional well-being. Their practice amplified their unwillingness to be the authority in the classroom. Mildred understood that students come in with a plethora of knowledge. Therefore, she assigned a 'Teach Me' project in which students must teach a lesson on something they know. This lesson allowed Mildred to tap into her students' strengths and know them better. Comparatively, Lucia stated that "every day that she teaches, she learns." She extended by stating that she "learns from her students daily" and found that her students' knowledge strengthened her practice because she must create relevant learning experiences to keep her students engaged.

Lucia and Mildred balanced what is right with what school administrators and district curriculum require. Mildred and Lucia believed their students had a right to a rigorous curriculum and ensured that they learned at high levels in their classes. Bartolomé (1994) emphasizes the importance of explicitly teaching students vocabulary to put words to their complex ideas and experiences; it also involves building background knowledge to access a "Eurocentric curriculum" (p. 79). Additionally, both teachers deliberately taught vocabulary to build students' background knowledge and give them the language to understand what they see and feel in society. Mildred and Lucia instilled hope in their students through their pedagogy and commitment.

Political Clarity. Both teachers understood the systemic links between schools and society that substantially impact students' success or failure. Their words, practice, and actions demonstrated their political clarity with students. Each spoke of wanting their students to ask questions, so they were not exploited or taken advantage of and to learn self-advocacy. Their values resonate with Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) that teachers with political clarity approach teaching as a responsibility to "contest the societal stereotypes imposed on children" (p. 77).

Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002), and McKinney de Royston (2020), state that whether implicitly or explicitly, teachers with political clarity see teaching as an ethical and relational endeavor that socializes students into specific personhoods and futures. Political clarity materializes in teachers' pedagogical understanding of the societal and structural origins of schooling. Mildred used her curriculum to teach students to "know the rules" of society so that they could advocate for themselves and question when they felt mistreated. Lucia used her experience in high school of being denied an opportunity to implore students to ask questions. Both participants negated the social assumption that their students will fail in school or life. They set up their classrooms to assist students in accessing a rigorous curriculum and had high expectations for them. Additionally, each teacher was honest with their students in expressing the realities of society, educated the whole child, and positioned their students on knowing how to navigate society's dominant structures.

Pedagogy. Bartolomé (1994) maintains that good teachers must examine methods, pedagogy, and curricula to engage and relate to their students and humanize the educational process. Each participant used their pedagogy to instill hope and care in their students. Mildred taught Culturally Relevant U.S. History and World History classes. She preferred to teach students the aspects of history in which marginalized groups of people rise from despair. She

also highlighted the aspects of history rarely mentioned in the textbook and asked students to think about why that occurs. Lucia used her curriculum and practice to show students they could learn challenging concepts. Through her constant encouragement and scaffolding, she guided deeper learning and prepared students for success at the next level. Each teacher had high expectations of their students and held them accountable to their expectations. Rarely did they excuse students from completing assignments.

Mildred and Lucia relentlessly prepared their students for their academic and societal future. Even though both possessed strong content knowledge and effective teaching practices, they understood that these were insufficient to sustain their students' needs. Therefore, both teachers deliberately read what students wrote and paid attention to how students acted so they could respond appropriately. This practice echoes the literature on effective pedagogical practices. In particular, Delpit (2006), Duncan-Andrade (2007), Friere (1994), and Ladson-Billings (2009) insist that effective teachers must have a deep understanding of the lived experiences of the students they teach. However, there was more to what made them effective teachers. Mildred and Lucia assumed their responsibility by continuously learning from their students and adapting their lessons to the needs of their students. These teachers highlighted the benefits of student-centered learning rather than assuming the role of the all-knowing authoritarian teacher. Both teachers insisted that their students become critical thinkers regarding their academics and the real world. They also insisted that their students learn to question things that may not feel right and learn to advocate for themselves.

Commitment. Both teachers were not miracle workers; however, they found success with "challenging" students because they were willing to work with them and see them for the humans they were instead of judging students for the behavior that they exhibited. On several

occasions, both teachers used the term 'serving my students,' signifying that they saw themselves as responsible for serving their students and their community. According to Duncan-Andrade (2007), teachers who see themselves as 'servants' have a level of dedication to their teaching that "leads them to invest in students" that others in the school do not (p. 628). As such, Mildred stated, "I do what is best for my students to the detriment of my reputation with peers and administration." Mildred continued, "They are not my clients. They are not who I'm here to serve," her statements demonstrated her willingness to put her students at the forefront of her work. Mildred also explained that she did not have "difficult" students. Instead, she described such students as having "been dehumanized so much that they walk into the classroom ready to fight" because they know how teachers and society see them. Hence, they are ready to advocate for themselves.

Lucia demonstrated her servitude by giving students additional time before or after school. She said she stays "after school every day to provide students whatever additional help they may need." She explained that students often come to chat, "My door is always open. They come in after school and sometimes in the morning before the first bell rings." Lucia "stays connected to her students" (Duncan-Andrade, 2007, p. 629), ensuring she knows what is happening in her students' lives. Additionally, she invested in herself by taking courses toward her teaching certification to guarantee that her students have a "real teacher" teaching them.

Care. According to Duncan-Andrade (2009), Eslinger (2013), and Valenzuela (1999), students consistently cite caring teachers as the most important factor contributing to their positive school experiences. Noddings' (2005) framework on care explores how teachers and students adjust to each other in a relationship where they are not equal. Because of the imbalance, the teacher must initiate the relationship by showing concern for students' well-being. Both teachers' care began

at their classroom door. Mildred's classroom door was covered with positive words to her students and "I love y'all" in large letters. Lucia stood at her door every period, every day, greeting her students as they walked inside to "catch their mood at the door." Each teacher spoke about humanizing their classrooms so that students felt seen and heard. They spoke about the importance of knowing their students and creating a safe space in which their students could develop their voice and learn to speak out when things do not seem fair or right. Mildred and Lucia also prioritized building relationships and establishing respect with their students.

Relationships. The literature shows that effective teachers work to create classrooms that respond to the needs of historically marginalized students. Effective teachers have certain dispositions that separate them from other teachers. They believe that building positive relationships with students is essential. Building positive relationships with students was Lucia's top priority because without a "positive relationship, [students] will probably not learn." To build a classroom community, Mildred began each class with En Lak'ech, a Mayan greeting that expresses respect and unity to one another. In order to effectively teach marginalized students, various scholars (Delpit, 2006; Nieto, 2006; Rodriguez & Osegura, 2015) suggest that good teachers understand that building relationships comes before teaching and learning. Through their bell work, Mildred and Lucia continued developing relationships throughout the school year. In doing so, they learned about their students' hopes, fears, experiences, and the knowledge they brought to the classroom.

According to Duncan-Andrade (2007) and Ladson-Billings (2009), the teacher-student relationship is critical to students' success in and out of the classroom. For example, through their consistent practices of high expectations and holding students accountable, Mildred and Lucia built strong student relationships, which resulted in building trust. Trust is a significant

outcome of positive teacher-student relationships. Researchers, particularly Duncan-Andrade (2007) and Watson et al., (2016), assert that effective teachers understand the importance of earning students' trust and must earn their students' trust. Mildred and Lucia were committed to earning students' trust through each aspect of their practice. Delpit (2006), Duncan-Andrade (2009) and Ladson-Billings (1995 & 2009), maintain that teachers are deliberate in their policies for classroom management, pedagogy and curriculum, and grading practices. Because of the trust both teachers established, they created a classroom communicating to students that they were valued and intelligent, capable learners. Thus, Mildred and Lucia pushed their students to more extraordinary lengths by expecting more from them and students met their expectations.

Respect. Caring for students goes beyond sentimentality. For effective teachers, caring entails respecting students and their identities and having high expectations and admiration for them. Mildred and Lucia were intentional in creating spaces in which they could know their students individually, and this is supported by the studies of Garza (2009), Rodriguez & Oseguera (2015), and Valenzuela (1999). Both teachers utilized their work to open a door into their students' minds. Through their students' answers, both teachers extended that knowledge to have individual conversations about their students' lives. This knowledge also allowed both teachers to adjust any lesson to meet the needs of individual students.

Both teachers had the respect of their students. The tone of their classrooms dictated the flow of interactions. When the teacher had a request, they consistently said 'please' and 'thank you.' In return, students were respectful of their requests. Because of the nature of a middle school classroom, Lucia had much more redirects regarding appropriate language, but Mildred also redirected inappropriate language from her students. In both classrooms, students immediately apologized for their use of language. There was a strong connection between both

teachers and their students. The connection was evident in how they spoke to each other, the classroom ambiance, and their engagement's reciprocal nature.

Question two: What lived experiences have prompted teachers to exhibit hopeful and caring dispositions?

While teaching students from the Dominican Republic in New York, Mildred realized they were at a disadvantage in passing the Regent's exam because she could not provide relevance to their U. S. History classes. Mildred began teaching a culturally relevant curriculum so her students could pass the test.

Lucia was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States when she was in elementary school. Her experience with her high school counselor denying her an opportunity compels her to be present with her students. Additionally, her upbringing and a life-altering experience help her to be hopeful and caring with her students.

Despite the differences in Mildred and Lucia's lived experiences and ethnic backgrounds, two shared themes that foster hopeful and caring dispositions in their practice emerged. Both teachers understood their identity and both utilized their students' cultural background and knowledge to teach the state standards.

Identity. Nieto (2006) claims teachers must know and understand their identity to teach marginalized students effectively. Mildred fully recognized that she had too much privilege to encounter the obstacles that her students face. When asked to talk about a time she felt a teacher or a counselor denied her an opportunity, she answered, "I don't think that's ever happened to me. I have too much privilege for that." She utilized her identity to show students the inequalities that exist in society. Lucia used her Mexican heritage to instill a sense of pride in her students.

Stating that she was "proud to be Mexican" and that students need to "know their roots to they can know themselves," Lucia taught her students to use this knowledge to dispel deficit ideologies. When teachers understand their identity, they have the tools to help students remove the shame from assimilated school practices. Researchers Rodriguez and Oseguera (2015), and Sosa-Provencio (2016), insist that historically marginalized students must conceal aspects of their cultural and racial identity to succeed academically and socially. When teachers know and understand their identity, they are better equipped to help students honor their culture and identity to help them be successful in the mainstream culture.

Culturally Relevant. Ladson-Billings (2017) states that culturally relevant pedagogy involves three main components: (a) a focus on student learning, (b) developing students' cultural competence, and (c) supporting their critical consciousness (p. 142). Mildred and Lucia honored the knowledge that their students brought into their classrooms. Mildred assigned the "Teach Me" project, and Lucia used her grandmother's words to help her connect with her students. Both teachers focused on improving their students' reasoning skills, problem-solving abilities, and moral growth - things that standardized tests do not measure. Culturally relevant teachers look for growth in areas that will help students succeed in future school and life (hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2017; Liou & Rojas, 2016). Mildred and Lucia created caring and kind classrooms, yet they held students to high expectations for behavior and academics. Their classroom environment was a safe space where students could take intellectual risks and be themselves. Watson et al. (2016) explain that culturally relevant teachers design their classrooms to implement nurturing patterns and students' behavioral expectations in ways that do not compromise their cultural identity.

Question three: How do hopeful and caring teachers resist the dehumanizing effects of teacher accountability based on high-stakes testing?

Classroom Community. Mildred and Lucia created a classroom community that included honoring students' voices. Neither had an interest in being the authority in the room. They encouraged students to express themselves when they felt uncomfortable with a situation. Both teachers were conscious of how they individualized their redirects.

Regarding student discipline, both teachers recognized that their approach to student misbehavior affects the classroom community. During her interview, Lucia stated, "I ask [students] questions, and I listen to them. I never want them to feel that I'm the authority and they can't question me." During Mildred's interview, she stated the she "doesn't have difficult students," because she "sees the heart that is hurting underneath." This supports Duncan-Andrade's assertion that effective teachers' understanding of their response to student misbehavior can add to students' pain (2007; 2009).

Mildred and Lucia were conscious of the dehumanizing effects of school accountability and the state of public education. They did not allow pressures outside the classroom to affect their practice. Mildred and Lucia created opportunities for their students to choose how they would complete assignments and allowed them to give their opinion on what grade they felt they deserved. They created a classroom community where students felt valued, seen, and heard. Mildred and Lucia stated that they do not let the pressures of high-stakes testing influence their environment. They normalized the tests and told students they were snapshots of their learning, not a reflection of their growth or who they were as learners. These teachers looked for growth in areas that will help students succeed in future school and life (hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2017; Liou & Rojas, 2016).

Additionally, both teachers sought student input on their performance as teachers. Mildred and Lucia's pedagogy went beyond the "required" textbook so that students could learn to think critically about their lived experiences and develop solutions for the real issues they face. This practice made learning relatable and humanized the educational process (Bartolomé, 1994).

Reflective: Each participant stated that they have grown into the teacher they are now. Mildred stated that this experience has been "a learning experience and this is not where I started my educational career." She appreciated the mentorship she received from the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction Department. Lucia changed her practice by reflecting on her educational experiences as a child. She stated, "I came into this job, treating kids, [like] teachers treated me." She changed her approach to student behavior because she realized the uncomfortableness of teachers' treatment of her.

Both teachers have large class sizes and questioned their ability to reach all of their students. Mildred felt she was "not doing enough [for her students]" because of her large class sizes; she could not reach all of them. She mentioned her school administration's lack of support, asking, "How am I supposed to get to all of my students address all of their needs when there's that many kids, when my administration doesn't support me?" Additionally, she spoke of being cognizant of self-care because if she is "all in," her family life deteriorates. She spoke of her frustrations with the school's administration stating that they place much pressure on their teachers to meet students' needs, yet they do not minimize class sizes or support her in her work. Lucia also expressed her frustrations with her school's administration, stating that she "took matters into my own hands," regarding two students' physical altercation. She stated, "I was seeing that it wasn't being fixed by [the] administration or the counselors. So I brought them into

the back room and I spoke to them because their anger was affecting my classroom." Lucia stated that both parties resolved their issues. She continued by mentioning that the administration does not fully realize what students need.

Unexpected Findings

Although this study aimed not to assess the instructional rigor in the participants' classrooms, it was important to identify if rigorous learning existed. The researcher was surprised to uncover the level of consistent scaffolding participants demonstrated to ensure that all students received rigorous instruction. Both participants were aware of the rubric used for their yearly evaluations; however, there was no specific mention of either participant placing importance on the evaluation. The data showed that participants understood the rubric, but neither was concerned about receiving a specific score on their evaluation. The participants emphasized the evaluations their students gave them were of more value than the evaluations received by their administrators.

Another surprise was that participants expressed similar frustrations with their school's administration and their lack of respect and attention paid to students' needs. The data showed that participants did not appreciate school-wide announcements that interrupted learning and announcements that highlighted some students' successes over others'. Additionally, both teachers expressed that the school's administration did not consider students' situations when delivering discipline. On several occasions, participants stated that the school's administration or counselors "don't get" their students' lived experiences and did not understand how to support students.

The data showed that participants exhibited similar behaviors that would support all students, especially the most vulnerable. The participants' parallelism in their pedagogy,

instruction, and dispositions was a similar surprise. This researcher did not anticipate the parallelisms due to years of teaching experience, the difference in ethnicity, the differences in lived experiences, and one participant being part of the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Instruction Department.

Major Findings and Conclusions

Compared to the literature, the data in this study were organized into five essential themes that illustrate hopeful and caring teacher dispositions. First, this study proved that teachers' hope and care stem from their political clarity. Second, hope materialized in teachers' practice through their pedagogy and their commitment to students. Third, teachers demonstrated care by building positive student relationships and treating students with respect. Fourth, teachers humanized their practice. Most importantly, this study proved that teachers must not be part of their students' culture or ethnic background to teach them effectively.

Both teachers were conscious that systematic links between schools and society significantly influence students' success or failure. Teachers' values led to them creating pedagogical practices that brought some level of consciousness to their students. It can be considered that teachers must have political clarity in order to teach marginalized students. As a result of the teachers' political clarity, they could acknowledge their students' situations, allowing them to express society's realities and position their students on navigating society's dominant structures.

Both participants indicated a desire to prepare students to become critical thinkers. Throughout the interviews, they stated that they wanted their students to think critically about their learning and, more importantly, about society's structure. They emphasized the need to

teach their students to question everything, especially when things were not going well. Through their 'affective,' humanizing pedagogy, hope manifested in teachers' practice.

Furthermore, the teachers humanized every aspect of their practice to ensure students were seen, valued, and heard. They included a component where students assessed their teaching. This strategy allowed the teachers to reflect on and improve their craft. Additionally, they placed importance on students' feedback and made adjustments accordingly. The analysis of this data guided the researcher to conclude that allowing students to provide feedback to teachers will help them reflect on and adjust their practice.

The teachers' commitment to their students was evident throughout the interviews, classroom observations, and conversations with this researcher. Both teachers stated that they do what is in the best interest of their students. Their students come first in every decision they make for their classes. Both teachers made references to student complaints about other teachers. They also referenced either helping students advocate for themselves or providing resources for students. Both participants provide their students with what Duncan-Andrade (2009) terms Material Hope. They balance their students' realities with the understanding that their actions and inactions significantly impact their students.

The participants in this study demonstrated their care in various ways. Both participants used the entrance to their classroom as the first contact they have students. One teacher posted kind words on her door to demonstrate her care for them. The other greeted her students as they walked into her classroom. Both indicated a need to know where their students were emotionally and mentally so they could support them. Each stated the importance of establishing positive student relationships and earning their students' respect as the core of their work.

Both participants intentionally used harmless, simple bell work questions to get to know their students. They extended this knowledge to start conversations or to motivate their students. Both stated that they provided feedback to students so that students were aware that they read their responses. Additionally, teachers held students accountable to high expectations for behavior and academics. It was evident through classroom observation data that students understood and met their teachers' expectations.

Teachers and students had a reciprocal relationship based on respect for one another. Both teachers used terms of endearment to address their students, and students responded well to teachers. Both teachers exhibited a maternal approach to their students. They used a "familial mother-child relationship to guide their interactions with students" (Beauboeuf-Lafontant 2002, p. 74). Both teachers took responsibility for their students' academic development and well-being. This data suggests that teachers must build relationships with students and learn about them individually to push students to their potential.

Another important conclusion from this study was that teachers do not have to be part of their students' ethnicity or cultural heritage to teach marginalized students effectively. In addition to political clarity, knowing and understanding one's identity seemed to affect how teachers approached their practice. Both participants understood their identity and how privilege and myths of superiority construct thoughts and behaviors concerning race and diversity (Howard, 2006; Eslinger, 2013). Both teachers realized how their classrooms might influence how students approach real-world situations.

New Learnings

Each portrait uncovered new ground related to teachers' hopeful dispositions and creating hope for students. Understanding the impact of links between school structures and society

grounded teachers' pedagogy and approach to humanizing their classroom practices. The two participants in this study were committed to teaching because of their dedication to their students. When describing who they are as teachers, each individual minimized themselves and the unique qualities they contribute to the position, opting to highlight their students' knowledge, culture, and value in shaping them into the young adults they will eventually become.

Although school accountability pressures were ubiquitous, participants' concerted efforts to humanize their classrooms demonstrated their deep respect for the students in their care. Additional questions that deserve further study are, 1) Can hope exist without care? 2) Can care exist without hope? 3) Does having a caring disposition without understanding the connections between schools and society develop into apathy?

The researcher intentionally selected the methodology to highlight the importance of searching for goodness in classrooms serving marginalized students. This methodology led to building authentic relationships with the participants. Since the conclusion of this study, the researcher has remained in contact with the participants. As a scholar who wishes to continue engaging in scholarly activism and challenge traditional methodologies, this researcher intends to examine additional classrooms to identify more "goodness" concerning humanizing pedagogical practices for marginalized students.

Implications for Practice

The findings in this study suggest that school district administrators and professors in teacher preparation programs understand the relationship between teacher dispositions and student achievement, especially when there are diverse student populations. Participants provided data about their knowledge and experience with successfully teaching marginalized

students. The implications of this study include training teachers and all support staff on how to create hopeful and caring environments around the school.

Implication 1. School and district leaders should build instructional capacity by providing training on how hope and caring manifest in classrooms. Bartolomé (2008) and Ladson-Billings (2009) maintain that teacher preparation courses do not effectively prepare teachers with the skills needed for successful historically marginalized classrooms. School leaders should provide professional development opportunities to assist teachers in honing their skills in working with marginalized student populations. The learning should concentrate on learning about political clarity and understanding one's identity. The training would require a great deal of inner work on behalf of the participants (Bartolomé, 2004). However, it would greatly benefit historically marginalized populations and all students regardless of race and socioeconomic background. Additional professional development could focus on providing cultural relevance to lessons, including current events surrounding the school's community. Teachers would learn to create lessons to develop students' cultural competence while supporting their critical consciousness.

School leaders and teachers should look for growth that will help students succeed in life. They should look at the growth of every aspect of the child and not only the data from standardized test scores. Furthermore, school and district leaders should shift their thinking about what type of data constitutes intellectual growth.

Implication 2. School administrators should address the institutional climate and culture. Rodriguez and Oseguera (2015) assert that institutional climate and culture substantially impact student experiences, especially for marginalized students who confront injustices from classmates, teachers, and administrators. There is a direct link between effective schools and

evidence of strong instructional leadership demonstrated by the principal (Hallinger et al., 2010). However, Murphy (2017) contends that while instructional leadership is essential, leaders must also tend to the humanistic side of teaching to address school diversity today. Focusing on the academic aspects of schools does not address the quality of social relationships necessary for effective teaching and learning. One way this could be accomplished is by setting the expectations for the school climate and culture at the beginning of the school year. This should be done by hearing everyone's voice and allowing everyone to contribute. Classroom walkthrough data should also be collected to ensure teachers utilize consistent practices.

Implication 3. School leaders should establish a school community where all staff members feel seen, heard, and valued. School administrators should model the hope and care they wish to see in the classrooms. This could be accomplished by asking teachers non-intrusive questions and providing small but meaningful incentives. A hopeful and caring school community could also be established by hosting staff gatherings outside of the school. Teacher and staff recognitions should also be established to nurture the development of care in the school.

Recommendations for Further Research

A gap exists in research on hope and educating marginalized students. The findings of this study should be viewed as the beginning of how hope and being hopeful can help educators teach marginalized students about society's structures, know their identity, develop students' critical consciousness, and create humanizing classrooms. One recommendation for further research is to increase the scope of participants to include a broader selection of teachers, school administrators, and students. This research could include student data to determine student growth comparisons between teachers who exhibit hopeful, caring dispositions and those who do not. The types of student data that could be used are attendance, discipline referrals, grades,

surveys of teachers, and test scores. A second recommendation for further research is to extend this study to teachers of Native American students.

Another recommendation for further research is to create a portrait of a school. By examining the teachers, staff, students, school climate, and culture of a school, a full portrait of the school could provide a broader understanding of what promotes and hinders marginalized student learning.

Concluding Remarks

The inspiration for this study was to not only show the importance of principals and teachers to be aware of society's issues but, through the portraits, search for goodness to show that historically marginalized students can have a positive, humanizing experience that motivates them to rewrite their narrative. For many administrators, supporting marginalized students in schools to ensure they have a rigorous yet caring experience seems out of reach and impossible, especially for administrators leading persistently low-achieving schools. Even for the administrator who understands the importance of knowing one's identity and discussing critical consciousness, the fear of the pushback they may receive from upper administration, governing board members, parents, teachers, and community members is enough to keep them from doing so. The importance lies in providing equitable educational opportunities to students in their K-12 career because it is fundamental in increasing the likelihood that historically marginalized populations will increase post-high school opportunities, which will improve their social and economic mobility.

Critics may argue that teachers are not there to build caring relationships or create hope for their students; they are there to teach. The reality is that students cannot learn unless they are in a safe and comfortable setting. Students will also not produce quality work for a teacher they

feel does not care for them. For this reason, we must identify the factors that make marginalized children feel safe and empower them to be themselves.

By focusing on staff-student relationships that foster trust, all students benefit, as it supports their needs and helps them navigate the issues they face in society. Ensuring that the school has a positive school climate makes all students feel safe. A positive school climate enables students to develop into self-assured, self-advocating, independent young adults. As educators, it is our duty to create a welcoming and safe environment for all students. Within this environment, we can create hope for our students in which they see themselves in a society where they can successfully navigate and change generational behaviors that have affected them.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Background Questions:

1. Tell me a little about yourself and why you chose a teaching career?
2. What is your race/ethnicity?
3. How do you ethnically identify?
4. How long have you been a teacher?

Research Questions and Prompts:

1. How does hope and caring manifest in teachers' work?
    a. How do you define caring as it relates to your work as a teacher?
    b. How do you define hope as it relates to your work as teacher?
    c. How do you address the needs of students from culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged backgrounds?
    d. How do you resolve situations with difficult students?
2. What lived experiences have prompted teachers to exhibit hopeful and caring dispositions?
    a. Tell me about at time when you felt that a teacher or a counselor was denying you an opportunity?
        i. How did this make you feel?
        ii. What steps did you take to continue your path?
        iii. Did you tell anyone about this experience?
    b. Please share a time when you faced an unexpected challenge. How did you overcome this challenge?

c. Can you give me an example of a difficult problem you solved involving a student? How did you go about reaching a solution?

3. How do hopeful and caring teachers resist the dehumanizing effects of teacher accountability based on high-stakes testing?

    a. How do you develop trust?

    b. How do you motivate reluctant learners?

    c. What role does relationship building have in your practice?

    d. Can you give me an example of how you address students' backgrounds while also addressing the need to increase test scores?

Appendix B

NAU IRB Approval

NAU NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
Office of Research Compliance

Institutional Review Board for the
Human Research Protection Program

525 S Beaver St
PO Box 4062
Flagstaff AZ 86011
928-523-9551
https://www.nau.edu/IRB

To:	Yolanda Nunez
From:	NAU IRB Office
Approval Date:	September 12, 2022
Project:	Hope and Caring: A Portraiture Study of Effective Teachers of Historically Marginalized Students
Project Number:	1929256-2
Submission:	Revision
Action:	APPROVED
Project Risk Level:	MINIMAL RISK
Approval Expiration Date:	September 12, 2027
Review Category/ies:	**The project is not federally funded or supported and has been deemed to be no more than minimal risk.**

This project has been reviewed and approved by an IRB Chair or designee.

- Northern Arizona University maintains a Federalwide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (FWA #00000357).
- All research procedures should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the guidance.
- The Principal Investigator should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that affect the protocol and report any unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others. Please refer to Guidance Investigators Responsibility after IRB Approval, Reporting Local Information and Minimal Risk or Exempt Research.
- All documents referenced in this submission have been reviewed and approved. Documents are filed with the HRPP Office within IRBNet. If subjects will be consented, the approved consent(s) are available within IRBNet upon approval notification from the HRPP Office.

Important

The principal investigator for this study is responsible for obtaining all necessary approvals before commencing research. Please be sure that you have satisfied applicable external and University requirements, for example (but not limited to) data repositories, listserv permission, records request, data use agreement, conducting University surveys, data security, international, conflicts of interest, biological safety, radiation safety, HIPAA, FERPA, FDA, sponsor approval, clinicaltrials.gov, tribal consultation, or school approval. IRB approval does not convey approval to commence research in the event that other requirements have not been satisfied.

Appendix C

Human Subject Informed Consent

Project Number: 1929256-2
Approval Date: September 12, 2022
This stamp must be on all consenting documents

NAU NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
Office of Research Compliance

Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: Hope and Caring: A Portraiture Study of Effective Teachers of Historically Marginalized Students

Principal Investigator: Yolanda Nuñez

This is a consent form for research participation. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you do not have to participate. This document contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate.

Why is this study being done?
The purpose of this study is to explore and understand how teachers effectively utilize pedagogy to plan rigorous learning experiences and maintain engagement for historically marginalized students. The study aims to determine how hope and caring manifest in teachers who effectively promote rigorous learning resulting in academic achievement for students. By creating portraitures that allow subjects to define the "goodness" of school experiences, the trends will be identified to obtain the essence of what effective teachers do.

How many subjects will participate and what is the duration of the study?
The principal investigator will study three participants from the Tucson Unified School District. Each participant will be interviewed once and the interview will last one hour. Follow up conversations to clarify and verify information will also take place. The duration of the study will occur over a three-month period. During the three-month period, the principal investigator will engage with each participant by conducting an interview, conducting several classroom observations, and observations of participants interacting with students outside of the classroom. The time to participate in this study is approximately one hour for the interview. My observations will be approximately 35 hours over the course of three to four months.

Data collection and analysis is expected to take no longer than six months.

What will happen if I take part in this study?
If you choose to participate in this study, the principal investigator will interview you. The interview questions will focus around what prompted participants to choose a teaching career and how they define hope and caring in their work with historically marginalized students.

The interview will be audio recorded. Allowing for the recording of the interview is an essential element of the participation. By consenting to be part of the study, you are also consenting to being audio recorded. The audio recording will be transcribed and quoted in a dissertation regarding how hope and caring manifest in teachers' work.

The time involved in the recording of each interview will be approximately one hour. The principal investigator will phone or email you to set up a time and location for the interview that is convenient for you. There is also the possibility of follow up conversations to clarify and verify information.

The principal investigator will also observe you and your interactions with students both inside the classroom and in other settings outside of the classroom. The observations will enrich the principal investigator's understanding of how hope and caring manifest in teachers' work with historically marginalized students. You will also have the opportunity to share student work if you feel that it will help explain your work.

During the course of the study, the principal investigator will share your data, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions with you in order to check for accuracy and credibility.

Will there be any cost to you to participate in this study?
There will be not be any monetary costs to your participation in this study. Although, your time will be essential in order to participate.

What are the risks and/or discomforts you may experience by participating in this study?
There are no expected risks to you as a result of participating in this study. However, some questions being asked may be considered sensitive. You may feel uncomfortable answering them. You are not required to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Some potential risks to the participants of this study include:

- Recalling sensitive moments from your childhood as a student.
- Providing information regarding your experiences with your teachers.
- Describing challenges of navigating societal injustices.

Breach confidentiality is always a risk, but procedures will be used to lessen this risk. The procedures are described later in this form.

What are the benefits for participating in this study?
You may or may not benefit as a result of participating in this study. Taking part in this study may lead to a deeper understanding of how schools can better serve historically marginalized students. Increased understanding may encourage school and district leaders to evaluate school environments and professional development to create learning environments conducive to marginalized students.

Can I stop being in the study?
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part in the study, you may withdraw from the study at any time.

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How will my study-related information be kept confidential?

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. The information that you provide in the study will be handled confidentially. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released or shared as required by law. Northern Arizona University Institutional Review Board may review the research records for monitoring purposes.

Confidentiality will be maintained before, during, and after the research study. Names of participants will only be used on the consent forms. Original signed consent forms will be stored in a secure location on Northern Arizona University Property. Pseudonyms will be assigned to participants for the interviews, audio recordings, observations, as well as throughout the data collection and data analysis procedures. Participant names will not be used in any part of the study. The principal investigator will maintain a confidential list of participants and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator's office.

Audio recordings of interviews will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator's office. Audio recordings will be transcribed within two weeks of each interview. Once I have made the transcript, I will erase the recordings. Your name will not be in the transcript or my notes. Transcriptions will be stored on a password-protected computer in encrypted files.

Any paper artifacts/data collected by the principal investigator, including observation notes, journal notes, school artifacts, and principal investigator notes, will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's office.

All other data will be stored by the principal investigator in a locked filing cabinet or encrypted file for 5 years after completion of the study. At the end of the 5-year period, destruction of records will be performed by the principal investigator. Paper records will be shredded, audio tapes erased, and electronic media scrubbed after files are deleted.

Who can you call if you have any questions?

If you have any questions about participating in this study or if you feel you may have suffered a research related injury, you can call Yolanda Nuñez, the principal investigator at: 520-401-5722.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Research Protection Program at 928-523-9551 or online at http://nau.edu/Research/Compliance/Human-Research/Welcome/.

Project Number: 1929256-2
Approval Date: September 12, 2022
This stamp must be on all consenting documents

NAU NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Compliance

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form, and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I affirm that I am at least 18 years of age and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

Printed name of subject	**Signature of subject**	**Date**

AGREEMENT TO BE AUDIORECORDED

Subject Signature:_____ Date:_____

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent:_____

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Appendix D

District Approval

July 18, 2022

Yolanda Isabel Nuñez

Project Title: Hope and Caring: A Portraiture Study of Effective Teachers of Historically Marginalized Students

Dear Ms. Nuñez,

On behalf of the [redacted], I am pleased to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved for the 2022- 2023 school year. We are committed to collaborating with you on your study of hoping and caring in teachers of historically marginalized students. In support of your research, we agree to provide you with the opportunity to recruit secondary teachers, 6-12, to participate in your study.

As a provision of approval, we require that you:

1) Obtain signed consent for each participant and keep the consent forms in a secure location.

2) Provide a report to district administration upon the completion of your study.

3) Re-apply annually if your study is a multi-year project.

We look forward to working with you to facilitate this study. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Research Project Manager

Appendix E

Data Analysis Procedure

Step	Rationale	Procedure
Review of researcher journal (impressionistic record	To discover themes and patterns, and to start looking for convergence	Reflection on researcher's first impressions, thoughts, experiences, and select significant interactions and reactions during interviews, classroom observations, and discussions with teachers
Open Coding	Development of emergent themes	Guided by research questions
Triangulation	Search for convergence emergent themes	Review interview transcripts, observation notes, audio recordings, and reflections.
Emotion coding	Search for possible sub-themes	Review observation notes, interview transcripts, and audio recordings searching for emotion words
Values coding	Search for possible sub-themes	Review observation notes, audio recordings, interview transcripts,
Axial Coding	Create larger concepts related to emergent themes	Review codes to group them
In Vivo coding	To use words or phrases from participants' language.	Review participants' language to support themes
Development of emergent themes	To construct and test hypotheses that give data form and structure (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).	Review for symbolic expressions and recurrent themes
Triangulation	Revisit emergent themes and search for nuances	Revies coding notes, observation notes, other documents
Creation of portraits	Search for recurring themes within individual participants	Create a log for each participant
Compilation of portraits	Create an aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).	Review each portrait and determine connections.
Member Check	To demonstrate credibility and trustworthiness	Send respective portrait to each individual for review of accuracy and feedback