

DO BELIEVE THE HYPE: TEACHING LITERACY TO URBAN STUDENTS IN A
SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM WITH CULTURALLY RELEVANT
PEDAGOGY

By:

Jeff Engelen

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University

St. Paul, Minnesota

August 2019

Capstone Project Facilitator: Melissa Erickson

Context Expert: Charlene Witherell

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Urban Classrooms and the Achievement Gap.....	4
Introduction.....	4
What Brought Me Here.....	5
Adventures in Teaching.....	10
The Substitute and the Beyond.....	11
Demographics and Urban Education.....	12
Summary.....	14
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review.....	15
Introduction.....	15
Challenges in Urban Education: Socioeconomics.....	17
Challenges in Urban Education: Standardized Testing.....	18
Challenges in Urban Education: Deficit Perspectives.....	21
Challenges in Urban Education: Classroom Management.....	22
Overcoming Deficit Perspectives with Effective Classroom Management.....	24
Challenges in Urban Education: Literacy Comprehension.....	26
Effective Strategies for Urban Literacy Instruction.....	28
Relevant Content in Literacy Instruction.....	30
What is Culturally Relevant Pedagogy?.....	31
Culturally Responsive Teaching: Well Meaning but Inadequate.....	33
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and How It Can Be Applied in the Classroom.....	35
Connecting the Pieces: Creating Relevant, Literacy Focused and	

Engaging Social Studies Curriculum.....	37
Summary.....	39
CHAPTER THREE: Methodology.....	40
Introduction.....	40
Rationale.....	41
Project Description and Timeline.....	42
Research Paradigm and Design.....	43
Assessment.....	44
Context of the District/School and Classroom and Audience.....	45
Summary.....	46
CHAPTER FOUR: In Conclusion.....	48
Major Learnings.....	49
Revisiting the Literature Review.....	50
Limitations.....	52
Implications/Benefits to the Field.....	54
Future Research/Projects and Communicating Results.....	55
Conclusion.....	56
REFERENCES:.....	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY:.....	61

CHAPTER ONE

Urban Classrooms and the Achievement Gap

Introduction

A recent study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2016) highlighted many troubling statistics for students in urban schools. According to the data, there exists “about a 14 percentage-point achievement gap” between low-income students and those who were not considered low-income. In addition, “black students were almost twice as likely” to face suspension in urban schools than white students (The U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Among the reasons for the achievement gap is poor literacy comprehension, and when looking at literacy statistics, 17% of African American students and 25% of Hispanic students have a reading level considered “proficient” (Hollins, 2017, p. 180). Why is there such a disparity in academic performance for urban students and what is contributing to the imbalance of behavior management in urban and suburban classrooms? With these statistics in mind, I will study socio-economic factors affecting academic performance for students in urban schools and the reasons that lead to an inability for many teachers to manage student behavior in urban classrooms. My intent is to design a curriculum unit that delivers literacy strategies to urban students with a foundation of proper classroom management and instructional practices incorporating culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

This chapter will conclude with the significance of the research topic in the field of education and I will also include a personal narrative, because my own educational background and teaching experiences with cultural diversity, classroom management and student relationship-building play heavily into the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary social studies classroom?*

What Brought Me Here

As an aspiring instructor of secondary students thumbing through a list of elementary research topics two pages long, none really piqued my interest: childhood development, pre-K educational practices, changes in elementary education, etc. Then I spotted a topic nobody else seemed willing to tackle, one that I found both intriguing and challenging: teaching culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The concept had briefly been covered during my prior social studies content courses. “Yeah, cultural diversity in education, I get it,” or so I thought. This scenario played out near the end of Educational Psychology in the Spring of 2017. We students were tasked with choosing a research project that would be presented to our peers on the eve of the last week’s class. I wrote my name on the line and made note of the corresponding book recommended for the project’s completion: *White Teachers/Diverse Classrooms* (Landsman and Lewis, 2006). The class concluded and the spring term faded into memory, but the book and its lessons stuck with me and proved profound on my approach to education.

After years of toiling in jobs with no long-term prospects and marginal personal satisfaction, I enrolled in a teaching program with the goal of obtaining my licensure in

secondary social studies. Years prior, I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in history and political science at an upper midwest state university and again a few years later with a Master's in history from the same institution. Coinciding with my return to school for the licensure program, I found the courage (after all, what did I know about teaching literacy?) to volunteer as a tutor for adult English language learners (ELL henceforth) at a local literacy center. Specifically, I chose a focus in line with my educational background by helping students prepare for the United States citizenship test. Learning of these peoples' stories and journeys to America and their desire to take the test and become American citizens proved an uplifting and motivating experience. Here they were studying so diligently, often in addition to working several jobs and raising families, to earn something I had acquired just by being born here; how humbling and inspiring. Witnessing the students succeed under my tutelage as they grappled with literacy comprehension demonstrated to me that not only was I entering the right field, but also that I seemed to have a knack for connecting with and teaching ELLs and non-mainstream students. This experience also reinforced my belief that all people have the capacity to learn and that everyone deserves an opportunity to a quality education.

The state's citizenship test presented challenges even for me, a political science and history multi-major, and joining these folks on their quest helped me understand the difficulties ELLs experience here in America. As was later pressed in the teaching program, an essential quality of effective teaching is developing relationships with students, and I firmly believe that many learning stereotypes and false assumptions could be dispelled by creating honest relationships with ELLs, immigrants, and non-mainstream

students, as I did. While tutoring I developed a better understanding of why and how ELLs struggle with more traditional methods of literacy instruction. Reasons like these are why I gravitated towards a capstone project that addressed literacy instruction to non-mainstream students.

One of the first courses that I registered for in the teaching program was Theory to Practice, whose teacher was laser focused on classroom management and teacher communication styles. Despite having an advanced degree and foolishly thinking I knew at least some of the fundamentals of teaching, this course quickly dampened those delusions. Until this course, I knew nothing about classroom procedures or the communication styles of effective teachers or how to productively manage student behavior. As part of the course's requirements, I spent upwards of 85 hours observing a social studies classroom in an urban middle school. In my interactions with urban students, I employed the course's theories to quite surprising results. Despite being inexperienced in the field, I found success in employing the basics of classroom management. These initial interactions proved to me how relationship building and classroom management can positively affect students in urban classrooms, and these successes stuck with me and played a part in my interest in more effectively teaching urban students.

Two books served as bookends for Theory to Practice, and proved to be game changers in my understanding of teaching and classroom management: *Restitution and How to Be an Effective Teacher*- both will be reviewed in the classroom management portion of the literature review in Chapter Two (Gossen, 1996; Wong, 2016). The

“Principles of Effective Teaching” were founded in clear and effective rules and consequences, deliberate and practiced procedures for classroom operation, well-planned and appropriate classroom activities and lesson sequencing (Wong, 2016). Wong (2016) professed that an effective teacher functions as a manager who favors order over discipline, and draws the parallel, “You don’t discipline a store, you manage it” (p. 12). This is a concept also favored by Gossen (1996), who wrote that an effective classroom manager is concerned with creating an environment in which the students choose to learn and take ownership in their learning, and that learning should lead to a “self-evaluation” of performance (p. 17).

What connects perfectly to this paper’s guiding question regarding urban instruction is the writings by Gossen (1996) emphasizing restitution and discipline as successful behavior management techniques as opposed to the use of punishment. With restitution, students are directly involved in behavioral resolution. While punishment is a heavy-handed solution based on decisions made by the teacher, with students being forced to comply, discipline and restitution are student-centered, fair and transparent (Gossen, 1996). In a classroom built on discipline, rules and consequences are patently obvious to students from the beginning weeks of class, which affirms the transparent and practiced classroom procedures (Wong, 2016). The fundamentals of these works, I believe, would contribute to a more engaging and productive teaching experience in an urban classroom (Gossen, 1996; Wong, 2016). With a foundation of these principles of behavior management, I am better prepared to design a curriculum focused on delivering

literacy strategies and content instruction to an urban classroom, because I have an understanding of students' needs and how to develop positive classroom environments.

Another course essential to the broadening of my teaching knowledge was Educational Psychology. It was within this course that I furthered my understanding of how the mental and emotional development of children and young adults affects learning. During the months of course work, the readings and discussions were centered on multiple intelligences and differentiated instruction as instructional delivery systems designed to promote the highest level of learning. Other concepts like the growth mindset, education and childhood trauma, stress and memory and the theoretical works of cognitive and emotional development proved influential in my understanding of the mental and emotional circumstances and needs of not just urban students, but all students, in general.

In my final semester in the program I enrolled in Education and Cultural Diversity, a class that magnified my understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy and the socioeconomic, perhaps radical, writings of educational scholar Anyon (2014). We dissected and discussed the school-to-prison pipeline, especially as it pertains to our urban youth and communities, school choice- public vs. private and charter schools-, immigration and education and cultural representation and biases in textbooks and instruction (Anyon, 2014). This course emboldened my interest in culturally relevant pedagogy, and I have since sought to incorporate the belief system in my student-teacher interactions, instruction and classroom management (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Having described my pedagogical growth, I will now examine how my experiences as a teacher

contributed to my interest in working towards the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary social studies classroom?*

Adventures in Teaching

In the Fall of 2018, I student taught for twelve weeks at a high school in the state's largest urban school district. When considering the context of the school, the multi-layered definition of "urban," covered in Chapter Two, will be of use, as the student population, though diverse, resembled the present demographic makeup of the country with white students comprising the majority of classroom enrollment (Kwok, 2017, p. 355; The U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The essential tools of procedure, persistence and practice were invaluable as I grappled with the best approaches and techniques of instruction and classroom management (Wong, 2016). In the formative weeks, I spent significant time and effort on classroom procedures, because as Wong (2016) professes, establishing proper procedure reduces the number of redundant and time wasting student behaviors, which in turn, frees up more time for instruction and student learning. Guided also by the writings of Gossen (1996), I developed, a calm, cool and consistent style of classroom instruction. As I found, having that measured and dependable presence in the classroom was monumental in terms of maintaining order and promoting student learning. I also leaned heavily on literacy strategies and deliberate note taking, much to the students' collective chagrin. Front loading the students with strategies contributed, I believe, to greater student achievement.

However, throughout my student teaching, I witnessed firsthand many diverse students and ELLs struggle with literacy comprehension and content relevancy. Experiences like these, no doubt, influenced my project's focus of teaching literacy strategies to urban students. My experimentation in classroom management and measured use of literacy strategies found success, but I believe the missing component culturally relevant pedagogy would have lead to even greater academic achievement and literacy comprehension among the diverse students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This project will be an effort to address these instructional practices within the context of an urban, secondary social studies classroom. The next section will introduce experiences, challenges and revelations that I discovered during my time substituting in urban classrooms.

The Substitute and the Beyond

After successfully completing the twelve-week student teaching program and obtaining licensure through the state, I became a reserve teacher for the large urban school district in which I student taught. It was here that I quickly learned that not all urban schools were equal in terms of district investment, infrastructure or student engagement and academic performance. Cultural diversity became quickly apparent as a substitute in this district, and most of the teaching assignments involved me being the sole white person in the classroom. These experiences contributed greatly to my interest in connecting with and teaching to diverse, urban students. Many questions arose in those short few months. How could these students relate to my background? How could I earn their trust and prove my dedication to their academic success? I readily embraced these opportunities to strengthen my classroom and behavioral management skills and

approaches. Most days passed without incident, however, there were times when the classroom descended into chaos. Students, without consequence, ran in and out of the classroom, played music on their cellular phones and shouted loudly during instruction and, in regular intervals, verbally accosted other classmates and educational assistants. Despite being licensed and having a modicum of classroom management experience, days like these still proved highly challenging and stressful.

From my time in the classrooms, I have since learned a lot about student anxiety, poor academic performance and interpersonal conflicts resulting in students acting out and using disruptive behavior as a shield for their insecurities. Substitute teaching in urban schools often led me to reflect on the challenges facing urban schools and how best to inspire students success. Among those challenges are student demographics, teacher representation, and the achievement gap, which I will address in the next section.

Demographics and Urban Education

Authors in the field of urban education contend that changing demographics in America demand not only an analysis of the cultural breakdown of students and teachers in urban classrooms, but also these demographics demand more effective and responsive teaching of urban students (Hilburn & Jaffee, 2016; Landsman & Lewis, 2006). Why are demographics important when researching education and what do they reveal about the teacher-student dynamic in urban schools? As Hilburn & Jaffee (2016) and Landsman (2006) asserted, as supported by the U.S. Department of Education (2016), it is foolish to ignore the importance of demography when considering several facets of American education: immigration, politics, economics, social and racial issues, and so on. (Hilburn,

2016, p. 47; Landsman & Lewis, 2006, p. 15; The U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Demographic studies of Americans indicate that the country's population is becoming less white, and in a mere decade or so, white Americans will no longer comprise the cultural majority (The U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The U.S. Department of Education (2016) predicted that by the year 2024, white Americans will account for 46 percent of student enrollment. In that same study, Hispanic students have shown a steady increase and are predicted to reach 29 percent of all enrolled students in the same time period, African American students are expected to decline slightly to 15 percent, while Asian American students will experience an uptick to 6 percent of the student population in America (The U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Despite these statistics, as of 2012, the vast majority of school teachers in America were white- a consistent 80-85% over the past decade (Puzio, 2017, p. 225; The U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Of those white school teachers, the overwhelming majority were women. Because of this disparity there exists a disconnect between many white teachers and diverse, urban students (Landsman and Lewis, 2016; Puzio, 2017). What are these teachers neglecting to understand about their students? Through researching this topic, I have discovered that staffing issues and teacher turnover often leads to an inexperienced teacher force in urban schools, which can be problematic as inexperienced teachers oftentimes lack proper classroom management and literacy instruction training in their pre-service education (Landsman and Lewis, 2006, p. 31- 32; Puzio, 2017).

This paper is informed by the challenges that have plagued urban education and the recent federal mandates introduced to address those issues. Educators have agreed that literacy is crucial to narrowing the achievement gap and statistics have shown that urban students underperform in testing for literacy competency compared to their counterparts in suburban schools (Puzio, 2017, p. 225). My plan is to create a social studies curriculum for teachers in urban classrooms that is founded in classroom management, incorporates literacy strategies and is culturally relevant.

Summary

Chapter One presented the societal concerns for the academic achievement and behavioral mismanagement of urban students in American classrooms. I also included my own experiences with teaching, specifically of ELLs and diverse students in urban classrooms. I concluded with examples of problems affecting urban education and my goals for alleviating these problems within the context of a social studies unit curriculum. Chapter Two demonstrates that teaching effective literacy instruction to urban students begins with positive relationships, is strengthened by proper classroom management and is more successful when partnered with culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The authors implore that an effective instructor of urban students must know their students, support their students, and challenge their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Puzio, 2017; Teale, 2008). Chapter Two will present the research that supports the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary Social Studies classroom?*

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter One explored the societal concerns for the academic achievement and behavioral mismanagement of urban students in American classrooms and provided examples of problems affecting urban education. I also expressed my interest in addressing the issues that affect urban students with the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary Social Studies classroom?*

Substantial changes have been introduced to the American educational system in the past two decades, generating significant arguments over their effectiveness. High stakes testing with the intent of gauging student performance has had an immense impact on expectations for student success (Mattias, 2016). Educational standards have established unity in curriculum and instruction to better ensure that students across each state are being properly taught, much to the chagrin of many who believe uniformity removes individual learning opportunities and student discovery in the classroom (Landsman & Lewis, 2006, p. 80; Zadavsky, 2006). But what was the impetus for these drastic measures? Largely in response to the achievement gap that existed between urban and suburban schools, the federal government, with state governments following suit, acted to shore up the crisis. (Mattias, 2016) The effectiveness and results of these changes

in education have been and will continue to be debated, and these changes have contributed to the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary Social Studies classroom?*

Before reviewing the authors' recommendations for strategies to effectively teach students in urban classrooms, it would be beneficial to explore how urban classrooms operate and how successful teachers connect with urban students. But first, a proper examination of urban classrooms and students would be remiss without establishing a working definition of urban education. Skerrett et al. (2017) describes urban schools as, "those situated in communities in proximity to large metropolises; exhibiting great cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity; and affected by historical and contemporary injustices such as inadequate educational, economic, infrastructural, and other resources" (pg. 457). Building on that, a structural definition of urban education can characterize an urban school by its "size, structure, and [from] the influences of school bureaucracy" (Weiner, 2003, p. 307). Others have argued, however, that using terms like "urban," "diversity" and multicultural" have doubled as coded language designed to soften the racial realities that affect minorities in America (Mattias, 2016, p. 202).

Owing to their cultural, economic and political circumstances, urban students have issues affecting them that often do not apply to students in mainstream classrooms (Anyon 2014; Ganz, 1971). Of the notable concerns that profoundly affect urban education, this subchapter will focus on socioeconomics and politics, cultural representation of teachers in the classroom and standardized testing. The following

sections will contribute to further understanding urban education and in answering the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary Social Studies classroom?*

Challenges in Urban Education: Socioeconomics

Critics of the education system and its mishandling of urban schools point to larger deficiencies in America's response to poverty and access to resources and opportunities (Anyon, 2014). For myriad complex sociological reasons, the more radical critics argue that urban centers (and urban education) have been largely dismissed, perhaps intentionally, as a necessary evil of the socioeconomic system (Ganz, 1971). Ganz (1971) argues that the poor or impoverished serve a functional purpose in society, and many have benefited from the persistent poverty of so many millions of Americans: those in the penal system, "sociologists", "criminologists", "social workers", etc (p. 150).

Despite depicting a grim reality, Anyon (2014) and Ganz (1971) argue that social norms regarding the poor and the affluent do not and should not have to be permanent fixtures; the system, and thereby urban education, can be changed. Such inequities demand a critical examination of how urban and minority students are treated by the system, and regarding the relevance of these social issues to the classroom, Anyon (2014) argues that systemic inequality has a very real and damaging effect on students' academic achievement. The macroeconomics of "wages, jobs, tax rates," transportation and housing have such a looming presence over urban education that their impact can not be understated in the classroom (Anyon, 2014, p. 4). These issues affect students and communities beyond the classroom, and many students enduring these hardships are

often unable to leave their problems at the school door (Anyon, 2014). Having an understanding of the greater macro concerns affecting urban education, the next subsection is a closer look at the debate surrounding the standards and testing that so drastically changed American education.

Challenges in Urban Education: Standardized Testing

Within urban schools there exists a struggle over instruction, student achievement and administration, and in 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) ushered in a new era of mandates, high-stakes testing and expectations for schools to succeed (Wright, 2010). The lower performing schools- many in urban centers- were forced to accept these rapid changes, often with little regard to administrative autonomy or external pressures that affect student performance, namely poverty, English language proficiency and socioeconomics (Mattias, 2016; Wright, 2010).

The merits of NCLB have faced great scrutiny since the program's inception, with many educators questioning its effectiveness, especially within urban schools and classrooms (Mattias, 2016). For example, Landsman (2006) criticizes standardized testing for evaluating without offering adequate solutions for shoring up student weaknesses. Landsman proclaims, "Any test used on a minority child should come out with prescriptive ideas for helping the child do better, never as a statement of ability" (Landsman & Lewis, 2006, p. 53). Landsman (2006) believes that testing has done little more than identifying minority children as having issues in key areas of achievement, because the initiative lacks practical solutions (p. 53).

Conversely, NCLB has been defended for its positive impact on district organization and structure (Zadovsky, 2006). NCLB has resulted in curriculum guides, organization for curriculum by grade and curriculum progression from grade to grade, and since the unveiling of the initiative, greater emphasis has been placed on lesson pacing and hitting learning objectives (Zadovsky, 2006). Proponents of the change have pointed to the uniformity and dependability of curriculum across classrooms and schools as a chief reason for improved academic performance (Zadovsky, 2006). Citing a linear learning experience for children from kindergarten to high school, district administrators touted their ability to provide stable curriculum for the more mobile students (Zadovsky, 2006). This consistency has major implications for urban students, who are too often mobile or homeless (Zadovsky, 2006).

Others, however, condemn uniformity and curriculum control as systemic policing that only serves to enforce a narrative, a narrative often designed by white people for white teachers to teach to white students (Landsman and Lewis, 2006). Resulting from testing policies in NCLB, others lament a narrowing of curriculum and of lost educational opportunities meant to connect students and teachers (Landsman & Lewis, 2006). Inside the classroom, many argue that NCLB restricts the freedom teachers have, resulting in far too many teachers succumbing to “teaching to the test” (Landsman & Lewis, 2006, p. 81). Culturally relevant pedagogy (to be discussed in an upcoming section) cannot be taught with authenticity if the teacher does not have the freedom to “deconstruct, construct, reconstruct” curriculum (Landsman & Lewis, 2006, p. 32). Sharp

criticisms have been aimed at standardized testing for being “impersonal” and muting individual learning in the classroom (Weiner, 2003, p. 306).

Other educators write of the “white stakeholders” who developed curriculum, testing and standards (Landsman & Lewis, 2006, p. 80). These stakeholders did so with little consideration of the urban classroom experience, and thus only serve to perpetuate the hegemony of mainstream, white education (Landsman & Lewis, 2006). Furthermore, advocates of ELLs decry standardized testing as an unfair disadvantage for immigrants and non-English speakers who have no connection or frame-of-reference to the cultural examples and cues featured in the testing model (Mattias, 2016). Despite the cultural unfamiliarities and language disadvantages, ELLs have similar expectations for testing as do native born, mainstream students (Mattias, 2016; Wright, 2010).

Anyon (2004) argues that high-stakes testing and standards have grossly misunderstood the problems that persist in urban education. Instead of high stakes testing, Anyon (2004) suggests that educators and lawmakers could potentially create positive change in urban classrooms by recognizing how socio-political-economics and systemic inequities have a negative impact on education. Testing is merely a surface level approach to change and that policy makers, educators and administrators should look for more productive solutions to the achievement gap (Anyon, 2004, p. 5). The next subsection will examine the challenges of teachers with deficit perspectives of urban students.

Challenges in Urban Education: Deficit Perspectives

With these ponderous educational battles in perspective, how then do white teachers succeed in teaching students in urban classrooms? Landsman (2006) and Ladson-Billings (1995) contend that white teachers must first acknowledge their position of cultural dominance or privilege, because doing so demands from the teacher significant self-reflection of their role in the classroom. A reflective teacher has to be mindful of the many struggles outside the classroom that urban students encounter and the many challenges within the educational system that impact urban schools, classrooms and students- this is the core of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Reflective teachers in urban schools, as Landsman (2006) and Ladson-Billings (1995) argue, should also overcome the idea of deficit perspectives. Deficit perspectives are exhibited when teachers interpret their students' poor academic performances as resulting from a deficit(s)- academically, emotionally or culturally- that is difficult to overcome (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Weiner, 2003).

Even with the best of intentions, newer and inexperienced teachers in urban schools often demonstrate deficit perspectives by having low expectations for their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). For example, a teacher may adjust curriculum to exclude assignments and activities that demand higher order functioning, assuming the students incapable of tackling more difficult work (Landsman, 2006). Ladson-Billings (1995) highlights the error of inexperienced teachers entering urban classrooms with idealistic expectations but minimal practical preparation. Unrealized idealism and inappropriate expectations can contribute to a deficit mindset for white teachers in urban

classrooms, because the material and pedagogical approaches may not be appropriate for urban students, which may result in student disengagement and a disconnect between students and teacher (Landsman & Lewis, 2006). Concurring with this philosophy, Anyon (2014) acknowledges that teachers are not always properly placed in the correct schools, and further states that teacher candidates that do not adopt relevant pedagogy or teacher candidates that view non-white students with a deficit lens have no place in an urban classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

To combat the deficit lens, Zoss (2014) and Ladson-Billings (1995) counter that it is imperative for teachers in urban schools to adopt asset perspectives of their students. In order to unlock the many possibilities that urban students have, a reflective teacher must first carefully and deliberately build an effective, ordered and demanding classroom, one focused on positive relationships, asset perspectives and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Zoss, 2014). Before considering the best practices for urban classroom instruction, a teacher must first focus on positive relationship building and productive classroom management principles, which will be covered in the next section.

Challenges in Urban Education: Classroom Management

Classroom management, according to the experts, is where so many teachers fail in urban schools (Kwok, 2017). Due to the macro issues facing urban schools, mainly larger class sizes, fewer teachers and limited or outdated resources and lower academic achievement resulting in behavioral issues, Kwok (2017) stresses that classroom management in an urban environment is especially critical for success. Because of the high degree of teacher turnover, overly idealistic, fledgling teachers and burned-out

teachers, the classroom, as Landsman (2006) opines, becomes less a place of learning and growth and more a room where behavior is managed and students are controlled. Urban schools more often than others have “pessimistic cultures” (Teale, 2010, p. 702). Instead of comisterating and perpetuating negativity, teachers should work together to improve the school’s culture and strengthen student learning (Teale, 2010).

Many newer teachers enter urban classrooms with a “behavioral compliance” approach to classroom management, meaning teachers will draw a hard line on discipline, and expect students to simply follow the rules (Kwok, 2017, p. 355). Instead of viewing the students with a negative lens, teachers should focus on student development and growth (Teale, 2010). Teachers- especially white teachers- should structure the classroom more positively with an emphasis on relationships among students as well as relationships between students and teacher (Landsman & Lewis, 2006, p. 32; Weiner, 2003, p. 306). Celebrating possibility and positivity is important because inexperienced teachers or teachers in failing school cultures often struggle to build meaningful relationships with urban students (Weiner, 2003).

Among the reasons highlighted for the achievement gap is low student engagement resulting from poor relationships between teachers and students (Weiner, 2003). Teale (2008) acknowledges that developing strong relationships in urban classrooms is often difficult and takes time, patience and consistency. However, the work necessary to build those relationships will pay off with increased student engagement and behavior management (Teale, 2008). Because of social power dynamics, urban students often demonstrate a lack of trust of teachers, and this lack of trust may manifest itself in

several ways (Hilburn & Jaffee, 2016). Considering the shift in student demographics listed in Chapter One, it should be alarming that many urban students feel unable to relate to their white teachers (Hilburn & Jaffee, 2016; Landsman & Lewis, 2006; The U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Students may also feel that teachers do not have their best interests in mind, resulting in a lack of effort or desire to participate in the class (Weiner, 2003). The next section will detail some methods that have produced success in creating classrooms built on positivity, high expectations and trust with classroom management.

Overcoming Deficit Perspectives with Effective Classroom Management

What, then, are proper ways to manage urban classrooms that promote growth, learning and student engagement? A reflective teacher of urban students understands that consistent procedures and clear expectations in the classroom lead to better student behavior and greater student engagement (Graham, 2017). Effective classroom management means that “students know what is expected of them” and students must be able to explain why procedures and routines exist and why they benefit the learning environment (Wong, 2016, p. 185). Proper classroom management is not about control, but about consistency, trust, “leadership” and guidance (Wong, 2016, p. 185). Furthermore, Gossen (1996) believes that students who help develop a behavioral system and its subsequent restorative policies are more inclined to follow an “agreement between teacher and the student” (p. 81).

As Chapter One detailed, students in urban classrooms, specifically young black men, are far more likely to fall victim to a “zero-tolerance” punishment strategy than

other groups of students (The U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Graham (2017) rejects such extreme measures of punitive control over the students and points to the fact that urban schools less frequently implement restorative disciplinary measures than suburban schools. Gossen (1996) believes in restitution over punishment, and argues that punishment leads to actions that shame or embarrass students. At best, punishment results in a net gain of zero; at worst, it contributes to repeat negative behavior (Gossen, 1996). Unlike punishment, restitution must be fair, it must be relevant and it must lead to less “future offenses” (Gossen, 1996, p. 55).

Restitution is not just a means of maintaining order in the classroom, it is a demonstration of respect and care by the teacher to their students (Gossen, 1996). An effective classroom manager gives the students choices and discusses with students how to make things right (Gossen, 1996). Under these guidelines, students are not only making things right for the wronged, but they are also making things right for themselves (Gossen, 1996). Especially pertinent in urban schools, working towards restitution allows students a chance to reflect on their behavior, acknowledge that their behavior was wrong and create solutions to correct it (Graham, 2017). This is real-life problem solving that will benefit students in making choices elsewhere in the classroom and in the real world (Graham, 2017).

For students to be fully engaged and supported in the classroom, as argued by Hilburn and Jaffee (2016), a disciplined and positive classroom environment must first be established, and an effective instructor must create a safe space for students to navigate

through difficult topics. The next subsection will cover the challenges of teaching literacy in urban classrooms.

Challenges in Urban Education: Literacy Comprehension

Another factor contributing to the achievement gap are low literacy rates for urban students (Teale, 2008). The statistics for student literacy are staggering, as only 17% of African American students and 25% of Hispanic students have a reading level considered “proficient” (Hollins, 2017, p. 180). Literacy concepts continue to stifle urban students because so many are ill-equipped to use literacy for information analysis (Hollins, 2017; Teale, 2008). Thinking back to the importance of demographics in Chapter One, as of 2006, Wright (2015) cites “children of immigrants make up 19% of the school-age population” (p. 7). Likewise, many students have native-English speaking parents who themselves have deficiencies in literacy comprehension (Wright, 2015, pp. 7-8). At this point, some “44 million” Americans are unable to read at an acceptable level, and Cooter (2006) connects these numbers to a cycle of “intergenerational illiteracy” that continues to affect so many urban children (p. 698). “Language socialization”, the process of language acquisition through social experiences, is tremendously important in the process of literacy comprehension, yet this is where many urban students are lacking (Cooter, 2006; Wright, 2015, pg. 58). Oftentimes, poor and working families lack appropriate language interaction between parents and children, because working parents may have multiple jobs that conflict with quality family time and the formative social interactions that support literacy. (Cooter, 2006).

Standardized testing and assessing for literacy achievement, Teale (2008) states, largely miss the mark for what should be done to promote and improve literacy in American education, especially in urban education. While Teale (2008) affirms that testing *could* be helpful for understanding and improving student literacy, he warns that the whole process has become jumbled to the point that the parts; curriculum, instruction and assessment are working out of sync and sometimes in conflict with each other (p. 358). Instead of the assessment serving as a culmination of curriculum and instruction, assessment has been pushed to the forefront of everything (Teale, 2008). Ideally, standards and objectives steer curriculum and instruction, resulting in the assessment of learning (Teale, 2008). However, contrary to Teale's (2008) recommendations, assessment has become the driving force with curriculum and instruction falling behind. Assessment informing instruction has proven counterproductive, and curriculum and instruction in this environment end up being solely about the tests and assessment (Teale, 2008, p. 359). As was evidence in the arguments against testing mandates, teachers too often teach to the test, not to the standards or to their own instincts for quality student engagement of literacy and content (Landsman & Lewis, 2006, p. 81; Teale, 2008).

Teale (2008) offers suggestions for improving student literacy on a macro-school and district level. First, schools and teachers should map out a literacy learning strategy based on the standards: the "I can" statements (p. 360). Second, make sure that tests reflect what the standards aim to achieve: aligning testing with standards (Teale, 2008). Only test what matters and make sure what is tested counts: test what you want students to learn (Teale, 2008). Quality professional development that informs how to effectively

assessment based on instruction is key to making testing effective, informative and learning based (Teale, 2008). Teale (2008) states, an “urban teaching environment presents complex literacy challenges that require well trained literacy educators, not a teacher assigned to teach reading” (p. 361). Teaching literacy without the proper foundation in technique, strategy and purpose will not produce the results necessary to close the achievement gap (Teale, 2008, p. 361).

As daunting as the task may be for working families with inadequate time and resources, educators recommend that urban schools should support literacy in parents who are lacking appropriate literacy comprehension skills (Cooter, 1996). Having family members at home who are literate is crucial to improving literacy in urban students (Cooter, 1996). Effective literacy instruction in the urban classroom will be covered in the next section.

Effective Strategies for Urban Literacy Instruction

Moving beyond the systemic issues of literacy in urban education, let’s look more closely at what makes for effective urban literacy instruction. A teacher focused on literacy should differentiate instruction and implement literacy strategies with “explicit and systematic” purpose (Teale, 2008, p. 358). Owing to the aforementioned failure in literacy pedagogy, urban students often lack confidence in reading and learning, thus focusing deliberately on literacy strategies contributes to improving student confidence, which also contributes to overall student success (Teale, 2008).

Many urban students lack literacy skills when entering the secondary level, therefore, teachers should focus on activities and strategies that give students the

opportunity to improve their literacy comprehension (Blachowicz, et al., 2010). For example, a teacher can “read aloud” more difficult text passages and afterwards ask the students what was difficult to understand or what words were new to them (Blachowicz, et al., 2010, p. 351). Reading text aloud prevents students who lack proper literacy skills from becoming frustrated and giving up on the material and learning (Blachowicz, et al., 2010). Teachers can use other means of instruction, like the integration of music, stories and poetry. Allowing the students a different access point for literacy is helpful for those who struggle with reading and writing (Cooter, 2006).

Taking a cue from the principles of effective classroom management, when developing plans for effective literacy instruction, educators argue that students should have a role in what and how they learn new literacy content (Gossen, 1996; Teale, 2008). When you involve students in the mechanics of the classroom, they are more apt to be engaged in learning (Gossen, 1996, p. 81; Teale, 2008-2009, p. 340). But what about assessments and ensuring that these techniques are working? Teale (2008) cited responses from teachers that indicated student participation and engagement with the readings is assurance that literacy strategies are working (p. 341). Furthermore, involving the students in the workings of the class and behavioral management system creates an environment of trust and respect opens up student dialogue that is necessary for culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom (Anyon, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

In a study of literacy teachers who used action research to improve instruction, a consensus was reached that principles of good literacy instruction began with an understanding of the student population and acknowledging their struggles (Teale, 2008).

Today's urban classrooms have become less homogeneous, which points to Weiner's (2003) earlier criticisms of equating urban classroom with minorities. Teachers in urban classrooms must present instruction that reaches cultures and narratives beyond African American students. It is not necessarily a singular culture that unites students in urban classrooms, but rather they are united by shared life's experiences, i.e., poverty, disruptions in the home environment, habitual hunger, etc (Teale, 2008).

Understanding and harnessing student diversity, life experiences, challenges and inequities is a major component of teaching literacy strategies to urban students (Teale, 2008). Teaching literacy paired with content that is relevant and meaningful to the students' lives will be explored in the next section.

Relevant Content in Literacy Instruction

Lastly, a contributing factor to the achievement gap is poor student engagement (Teale, 2008). When aiming for higher literacy comprehension, the content urban students work with is as important as the use of literacy strategies (Teale, 2008). Resulting from attempts at unifying instruction in the wake of the NCLB referendum, educational content and readings frequently do not match the diversity in urban classrooms (Vacca et al., 2013). That is not to say that mainstream texts can not and should not be used in an urban classroom, but greater effort should be made to enhance these texts with content and readings that represent the diversity of the students, because relevant material has a tremendous impact on engaging struggling students in an urban classroom (Blachowicz et al., 2010, p. 250). Puzio (2017) suggests that teachers would benefit from rejecting the either/or narrative of mainstream content versus diverse

content. A teacher should teach their students that there are many perspectives, many answers and many types of literature, stories, people, etc. This may require more work, explaining and discussing, but the process will immensely benefit the classroom environment and the students' learning experiences (Puzio, 2017).

Educators like Puzio (2017) note that white teachers- and curriculum in general- rarely capitalize on literature in a student's "home language" (p. 229). Instead, English-only texts and standard content have been used to teach students who find little in common with the stories, protagonists and lessons (Puzio, 2017). With a greater understanding of classroom and behavioral management and literacy instruction in urban classrooms, the next section will look at the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy for urban students (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

What is Culturally Relevant Pedagogy?

Thus, if we embrace the approach that teaching urban students requires an asset perspective predicated on building relationships and understanding the students' needs, and that effective urban literacy instruction is deliberate and grounded in culturally relevant content, then we must define relevant content (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In the 1960's, Brazillian educator Freire implored the impoverished masses to "liberate" themselves with "critical pedagogy". Freire (as cited in Wright, 2015) argued that people who have been failed by the system should educate themselves to one day be free of their "oppressors" (p. 62). Culturally relevant pedagogy is an extension of this revolutionary philosophy (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Weiner (2003) and Anyon (2014), argue that student performance in urban classrooms is impacted by much more than just an individual student's abilities or motivation to learn. Students in urban schools face problems outside the classroom that most "mainstream" students rarely, if ever, experience (Anyon, 2014; Weiner, 2003). Puzio (2017) states that teachers versed in CRP will make serious efforts to help students rebuild their worth in the classroom and to help students "maintain cultural competence and develop a critical consciousness" of society and their roles within (p. 224).

As they struggle with these concepts and strategies, students need guidance to prevent lessons from devolving into half-truths, stereotypes and conspiracies (Hilburn & Jaffee, 2016, p. 51). Mattias (2016) stresses that successful teachers of urban students should engage in active listening with their students. An effective urban teacher must give voice to the students, listen to their struggles, provide a platform for students to comfortably fail, succeed and grow as learners, and give them freedom to critique the system. Graham (2017) envisions effective teachers in urban classrooms creating environments that support students' academic and social-emotional learning.

For many white teachers in urban classrooms adopting CRP, they must first acknowledge the insufficient cultural diversity of their own education (Mattias, 2016). Students in suburban, mostly white, classrooms traditionally have been taught from an early age that racial power does not exist. To speak of racism is to admit a problem, which white education in America often minimizes or ignores (Mattias, 2016, p. 198). While white students are able to ignore race, being beneficiaries of the power structure, as Mattias (2016) suggests, ignoring race is not only a disservice to urban students, it is a

continuation of the racial dynamics that greatly harm non-white students (p. 198). Therefore, teachers- especially white teachers- in urban classrooms *must* teach race relations and understand why teaching race and racism is crucial to reaching urban students. As Mattias (2016) succinctly argues, “How can white teachers teach students of color if they claim to not see color in the first place” (p. 206)? Reiterating a theme from the section on literacy instruction, struggling urban students commonly cite their inability to connect with the material or relate to the instructor (Hilburn & Jaffee, 2016; Landsman & Lewis, 2006). How have successful white teachers overcome the cultural and historical disparity with their urban students? Weiner (2003) argues to achieve genuine academic success in an urban classroom, “cultural diversity and race [must be] “put on the table” (p. 308). So what does recognizing race look like in a culturally relevant classroom? To understand that, the next section will first demonstrate the differences between culturally responsive and CRP.

Culturally Responsive Teaching: Well Meaning but Inadequate

Pre-service teachers completing education programs in the past few decades have been taught to be culturally responsive. What does responsive mean? Typically, culturally responsive teaching means approaching other cultures and experiences with sensitivity (Landsman and Lewis, 2006; Vacca et al., 2013). Teachers may incorporate books, speeches or videos from cultural minorities into the curriculum, but rarely do they task their students with any substantive discussion of race and racial issues. Mattias (2016) points to the uncomfortableness of “white guilt” associated with confronting substantive issues of race as a reason for teachers opting for the safer culturally responsive instruction

(p. 202). Responsiveness is more positive, celebratory and easier to approach, while culturally relevant teaching addresses difficult topics and presents uncomfortable realities (Mattias, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Mere cultural sensitivity is not sufficient in teaching students in urban classrooms, as the situation of many students in urban schools demands more attention and action than just sensitivity (Mattias, 2016; Landsman & Lewis, 2006). Furthermore, as Puzio (2017) notes, including culturally diverse material in a curriculum without context or appropriate understanding of the material's place in culture may misjudge or misuse the content's meaning or significance (p. 226). This will do no favors for teachers seeking a well-managed, effectively taught and fully engaged urban classroom. Culturally responsive teaching takes a surface level approach to teaching culture, while relevant pedagogy elevates the teaching of urban students by providing content that is real and meaningful (Puzio, 2017). Instructing with culturally relevant pedagogy, especially for newer teachers entering the field, can be difficult (Hollins, 2017). Struggles with classroom management, standardized testing, resource shortages, daunting expectations from school and district administrators can all cause CRP to be relegated to the background (Hollins (2017). Likewise, Hollins (2017) stresses that embedded, more experienced teachers may be slower to accept changes to their pedagogy, which also makes collaboration with or mentorship of newer teachers difficult.

Many new teachers express timidity when faced with studying the home cultures of their students before embarking on culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Puzio (2017) states that this exemplifies a failure in approach, because CRP does

not require a teacher to become experts in every culture, however CRP does require a teacher to incorporate “contrasting worldviews” (p. 224). This means that a teacher does not have to be an expert as long as they approach instruction and diverse viewpoints with authenticity and respect, and students will likely respond positively and often forgive any lapses in cultural expertise (Puzio, 2017, p. 224). If a culturally relevant teacher has respect for their students and their diversity, the teacher will accept that at times they must assume the role of learner (Ladson-Billings, 1995). A culturally relevant teacher compensates for not being a cultural expert with an eagerness to learn from the students and the students’ communities (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Puzio, 2017; Wright, 2015).

For instance, a teacher in a classroom with ELLs may encourage students to read and write materials in their native languages. This action supports the students as individuals and supports their culture as worthwhile and positively contributing to their education. Offering students options to use multiple languages will support their learning of literacy strategies and lessons and will assuredly affect their English literacy competency (Puzio, 2017). Again, this is another example of how developing relationships with students through honesty, respect and encouragement will lead to greater success in teaching literacy strategies and relevant pedagogy in urban classrooms (Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Weiner, 2003). Now that CRP has been introduced, the next section will cover how to apply it in the classroom.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and How It Can Be Applied in the Classroom

CRP is a conscious attempt to close the achievement gap by delivering instruction that is culturally relevant, challenging and real (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Where culturally

responsive teaching suggests including the works of other cultures in a curriculum, CRP examines the very inequities that affect the students' lives. Culturally relevant teachers must prepare their diverse students to advocate for themselves in a world that ignores them and keeps them immobilized (Anyon, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995). In a social studies classroom, a culturally relevant teacher educates their students about social, economic and political inequities (Anyon, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995). A culturally relevant teacher educates their students about past efforts towards mass reform, protest and any subsequent changes that resulted from these actions. A culturally relevant teacher presents this information to their students, as the information is relevant and urgent to their everyday lives (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Let us look at some pervasive examples where CRP could be applied. It would be appropriate to turn again to Ganz's (1971) examination of the sociological functions for the persistence of poverty in America. Among them,

- relying on poor people to accept low-wage but sometimes very dangerous labor (Ganz, 1971).
- in society, the poor or the lowest classes serve as a warning for deviating from social norms (Ganz, 1971).
- impoverished people service the more affluent classes and, in turn, the more affluent classes benefit economically from the impoverished classes (Ganz, 1971).
- the purchase of less desirable goods, the selling of "dumbed down" entertainment to the lower classes, etc (Ganz, 1971, p. 150).

To put it another way, for somebody to be rich, somebody must be poor- it's all relative (Ganz, 1971, p. 150). This is a very teachable lesson for a culturally relevant classroom (Anyon, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Another example of CRP dissects the narrative in the American media that African Americans are more violent and more prone to crime, which ties into the statistics of the tendency for young black men to be suspended at far greater rates than other students (The U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Ladson-Billings (1995) refutes stereotypes of aggressive and violent urban youths: "at risk, savages, self-fulfilling prophecies" (p. 31). Anyon (2014) notes that most urban youth do not engage in violence and secondly, the violence perpetrated by urban youth are often directed towards other urban centers, which does not directly impact suburban communities. In short, stereotypes of "violent thugs" are the very reason for teaching CRP (Anyon, 2014, p. 166). These negative images not only contribute to power inequities but they also contribute to the inadequacies and confidence issues endured by young urban students (Teale, 2008). Now that CRP has been introduced, let us now turn to the creation of a social studies curriculum that engages students with literacy strategies and CRP.

Connecting the Pieces: Creating Relevant, Literacy Focused and Engaging Social Studies Curriculum

How does a reflective social studies teacher use asset perspectives, classroom management, literacy strategies and CRP in a way that is engaging, appropriate for learning and effective? Saye (2014) was a proponent of creating social studies units instead of lessons. What he meant by this is that without proper planning and goal setting,

daily lessons could turn out to be fruitless, regardless of how fun or engaging the activities are. In order to deliver quality, purposeful social studies instruction, an effective teacher must plan out a full unit's worth of lessons (Saye, 2014).

Saye (2014) argues that authentic social studies instructors intentionally approach activities, discussion and learning in “meaningful, real-world ways” (pp. 33-34).

Authentic pedagogy elevates instruction by engaging in higher-order thinking (thinking that will prove beneficial in life after school), have “deep knowledge” of the subject, engage in “substantive conversation” and make connections beyond the classroom (connectedness to the real world)” (Saye, 2014, p. 34). Authentic pedagogy intersects with CRP in that both pedagogies are concerned with challenging students by providing content that is planned, purposeful and relevant to their lives (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Saye, 2014).

Others in the field have advocated for the consistent and overt use of literacy strategies within social studies instruction (Hairrell, et al., 2011). Reaching the secondary level, social studies often, due to standards, testing and administrative expectations, becomes a reading intensive subject (Hairrell, et al., 2011). Therefore, social studies teachers who are invested in student literacy and achievement in the classroom should make teaching literacy strategies a priority (Hairrell, et al., 2011). There are numerous reading strategies that should be employed before, during and after reading- a few will be used within the design of Chapter Three (Vacca, Vacca & Mraz, 2013).

Students should be equipped with the right tools for reading before being assigned social studies texts (Hairrell, et al., 2011). For example, a teacher can distribute

anticipation guides, detailing important sections, phrases and concepts to which students should dedicate particular attention (Hairrell, et al., 2011). Vocabulary guides can and should be used to enforce the relationship between vocabulary and literacy (Vacca, et al., 2013). Extra time spent on preparing the students for reading will pay in literacy understanding and competence (Hairrell, et al., 2011).

Summary

Many of the same concepts, understandings and qualities of good instruction were argued by the authors. All agree that effective instruction begins with understanding the students' needs, whether that was through principles of classroom management, culturally relevant teaching, instruction of literacy strategies or content that was engaging and relevant to the students' lives (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Landsman & Lewis, 2006). A teacher of urban students must be reflective of their craft and pedagogy, and must understand their role as leader and facilitator of learning. Procedure, preparation and planning were valued as critical concepts for teachers in urban classrooms, and these concepts were reiterated as vital components in honestly and purposefully addressing the achievement gap (Gossen, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Puzio, 2017; Teale, 2008; Wong, 2016).

The following chapter will take the lessons learned in Chapter Two and apply the concepts to a unit design with the intent of answering the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary Social Studies classroom?*

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

As outlined in Chapter One, even though all students should be entitled to an education, not all education, classrooms or curriculum are created equal. What works in a mainstream classroom may not always work in an urban classroom. These thoughts powered the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary social studies classroom?* Chapter Two introduced challenges facing urban education, offered suggestions for how to manage an urban classroom and demonstrated how literacy is more effectively taught to urban students with the use of culturally relevant pedagogy (Blachowicz et al., 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Teale, 2008; Teale, 2010). These arguments were filtered through the framework of a social studies curriculum based on authentic pedagogy, which makes content relevant to students' everyday lives (Saye, 2014).

In researching culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), I discovered a whole host of writings explaining what the concept is and why it is important in urban classrooms, but found a dearth of information for putting the concept into practice (Landsman & Lewis, 2006). This project addresses that need by providing an example of CRP implemented in a curriculum unit. This chapter introduces the project and its rationale, the research paradigm and design, length of instruction, choice of unit, literacy strategies and

assessment, context of the district and the classroom and the intended audience. The goal was to create a curriculum unit for an urban, high school social studies classroom that used literacy strategies in conjunction with CRP. The guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary social studies classroom?* drove the research and project design. First, the rationale for creating this project will be introduced.

Rationale

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, there exists a significant achievement gap for students in America, often playing out in suburban versus urban education (The U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Among the concerns contributing to the achievement gap is the underperformance of urban students in literacy competency, as was evidenced in Chapter One and Two (Hollins, 2017). Educators and scholars agreed that to effectively teach literacy in an urban classroom, an instructor must develop personal relationships with the students- thereby earning their trust- and deliver relevant, thriving content and incorporate literacy strategies focused on student organization and understanding (Blachowicz et al., 2010, Hairrell, et al., 2011; Teale, 2008; Teale, 2010).

Urban students frequently cite difficulties in connecting with the people and situations covered in textbooks and instruction. Additionally, urban students often demonstrate a level of mistrust for their white teachers, and express concerns that teachers might not have their best interests in mind (Weiner, 2003). Therefore, a topic rich with culturally relevancy, the American civil rights movement, was chosen for this project to challenge those assumptions and boost student engagement. A staple of CRP

and authentic pedagogy is instruction with real-life implications, and the civil rights era has many obvious throughlines to issues affecting urban students today (Anyon, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Saye, 2014). With this backdrop in mind, the paradigm for research and design will be presented next.

Project Description and Timeline

I created a curriculum unit as the focus of this capstone project. As a social studies teacher, I have the fortune of navigating through issues that affect our urban youth, and the unit chosen for this project, the American civil rights movement, is no exception. The purpose of the project, as guided by the UbD framework, was to create a unit focused on culturally relevant content with the support of literacy strategies that promote student engagement and literacy growth (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

The unit spans 15 days- three school weeks- and relies heavily on primary sources from the people involved in the movement, like Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, etc. Serving as the backdrop for the unit's narrative was an acclaimed documentary series featuring many of the key actors from the movement, *The Eyes on the Prize* (Hampton, 1987). To support the literacy and content components of the project, as I designed each day's activities and assessments, I reviewed the research to ensure that literacy was a main focus and that CRP was included in every lesson. I achieved CRP and authentic pedagogy by not only including relevant content like poems, songs and speeches, but by also creating lessons that promote critical thinking of ideas like media bias, the challenges to protest movements, questioning power and political gain, and the connections between the civil rights movement and current events (Anyon, 2014;

Ladson-Billings, 1995; Saye, 2014). With this backdrop in mind, the paradigm for research and design will be presented next.

Research Paradigm and Design

The unit's curriculum development was guided by the state's K-12 academic standards for social studies, more specifically for the 10-12 social studies standards (MN Department of Education, 2011). Using backwards design, I began with a unit endpoint in mind, and proceeded to work backwards in the curriculum ensuring that all daily lessons, activities and assessments led logically to the concluding project (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). Successful use of backwards design ensured that daily lessons were created with purpose and clear objectives in mind, and culminated in a summative assessment that effectively checks student understanding (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

I utilized three principles of the literature review in the content area of the project's design (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Saye, 2014; Teale, 2008). First, proper care was taken to ensure that the lessons were culturally relevant. To ensure this, I opted for primary sources from the main actors in the civil rights movement. However, CRP goes beyond diverse perspectives by challenging the power structures that affect many urban students, so activities that considered power structures were included (Anyon, 2014). Second, when designing the daily lessons, I made certain to include at least one literacy strategy to enhance student learning and literacy comprehension. Third, when designing the lessons and the unit as a whole, I turned to the literature review and authentic pedagogy to create opportunities for "higher-order thinking" and problem solving (Saye, 2014, p. 34).

Further research, informed by action research, will be conducted in the classroom for the purpose of improving instruction and student performance (Mill, 2014). Information and data gathered from student interactions and formative and summative assessments will be put into future classroom practice (p. 10). The unit begins with a prior knowledge assessment of student understanding, and the answers will serve as a baseline for what students already know and what students still need to learn concerning American civil rights history, and, specifically, its corresponding vocabulary (Vacca, Vacca & Mraz, 2013, p. 19). Assessments are a major component of the backwards design format, and the assessments used in this project will be evaluated next (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

Assessment

The cornerstone of the project was the use of vocabulary and assessments to guide instruction and test student learning. On day one, a prior knowledge assessment was selected to gauge student understanding of ten vocabulary words for the civil rights unit. The assessment, a literacy strategy, chosen was the “Knowledge Rating”, described by Vacca, Vacca and Mraz (2013) as, “a list presented in a survey-like format that requires students to analyze each word individually” (p. 218). Halfway through the unit, the prior knowledge assessment will be repeated, but this time allowing students to use their notes from the lessons. The purpose of this mid-unit check in is to assess student learning since day one. Where have the students improved? I will evaluate the students responses to provide scaffolding needed for growth in content understanding and literacy comprehension (Vacca, et al., 2013, p. 5).

The prior knowledge assessment also informed the design of the unit-end summative project, by checking student understanding of the vocabulary words (Vacca, et al., 2013). Students will be asked to watch interviews from the Library of Congress on several actors from the civil rights movement (The Civil Rights Act of 1964, n.d.). Students will again be given the ten vocabulary words of the Knowledge Rating assessment and asked how the interviewee addresses the vocabulary words (Vacca, et al., 2013, p. 218). The last two days of the unit will be spent on student presentations of their project. Classmates, with a rubric, will grade their peers' presentations. The hope with this activity is to further enhance literacy comprehension by having the students grade their classmates' use of the vocabulary (Vacca, et al., 2013, p. 94). Since a core focal point of the project is the use of literacy strategies, the next subsection will explore how each strategy was used and their function in the classroom.

Context of the District/School and Classroom and Audience

The school in focus is an upper midwestern high school, housed in a district that is primarily urban and the largest in the state. 92-93% of the student population are considered cultural minorities, with 56% of that enrollment identifying as African American, 18% of students identifying as white and 16% enrolled identifying as Hispanic (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2018, p. 10). Upwards of 80% of students are reported as disadvantaged economically and 75% qualify for the state's free lunch program (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2019, p. 2). Regarding standardized testing, students are required to complete MAP testing in 9th grade for reading and writing and take the MCA

test for reading in 10th grade. These tests inform any interventions necessary to help students improve their weaknesses (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2018, p. 3).

The project was tailored to the needs of the students with deliberate use of literacy strategies and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Teale, 2008).

Supported by the research in Chapter Two, focusing on literacy comprehension and using culturally relevant content is an effective intervention for raising student engagement and achievement (Blachowicz et al., 2010; Teale, 2008). Next, I will look more closely at the students and intended audience for this project and curriculum unit design.

Since this project produced a unit curriculum design, the audience was an urban high school social studies classroom. High schools in this state usually consist of grades 9-12 and although the unit was created for a 10th grade U.S. History course, the design does allow some flexibility so that it could be used to meet the state standards for high school grade levels 10-12 (9th grade students in the state enroll in a human geography course) (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011). American civil rights history was the unit chosen, and thus the class needed to be an American history course that covered a time period through the twentieth century. The rationale for this unit design, which will be explained in the next section, was influenced by my research of effective classroom management, literacy instruction and culturally relevant strategies designated for an urban social studies classroom.

Summary

This chapter covered the context of the district, school and classroom, presented the intended audience, explained the project's design and the rationale for developing

social studies curriculum with literacy strategies the assessments used. These qualities were used to answer the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary Social Studies classroom?* The proceeding chapter will reflect on the major learnings of the project and its process, the literature review, the implications of the project and how it contributes to the field of education and social studies teaching, and will conclude with my future plans for using the project and its research.

CHAPTER FOUR

In Conclusion

The intent of my project was to address a very serious concern in urban classrooms. Because many urban students lag behind in terms of literacy competency, my focus as a social studies teacher was to create a curriculum unit design that utilized deliberate instruction of literacy strategies (Teale, 2008). This focus was based on the findings in the Literature Review in Chapter Two, which emphasized how teaching literacy strategies to students coupled with relevant content was a much more effective approach to improving literacy competency (Teale, 2010).

The project's intent was to answer the guiding question: *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary social studies classroom?* This chapter will be dedicated to the lessons that I learned while devising a curriculum unit based on the guiding question, such as working towards true backwards design with activities that provide interesting, informative and relevant content for students, as well as the vital importance of a summative assessment that tests not only content comprehension but literacy competency as well. I will address how the research for the literature review was used, and reflect on the context of teaching presented in Chapter Three. Chapter Four will be dedicated to the major learnings that were uncovered during the making of this project, a revisit of the literature review, the implications of the project and how the project contributes to the field of education and

social studies teaching, and will conclude with my future plans for using the project and its research. First, the major learnings from the capstone project will be presented.

Major Learnings

Being new to the field of education, each curriculum unit that I design is a major learning experience, and this project was no exception. Originally, my intent was to conclude a unit on the American civil rights movement with a group discussion addressing major social implications from the movement and how its aims are still present today. The intent, guided by authentic pedagogy, was to have the students make connections between history and their everyday experiences in the forum of a group discussion (Saye, 2014, p. 34). This summative proved a lofty and likely unattainable goal, at least with my current level of experience in designing curriculum and implementing instruction. Even if my summative assessment was designed to maximize student learning (I do not believe it was), its effectiveness in the classroom would have been difficult to achieve. Why? I failed in implementing backwards design because I did not create activities and learning experiences that were testable in a summative assessment (Wiggins and McTighe, 2011) . Even if the unit's vocabulary words were addressed during the discussion, it would have been difficult to measure understanding of every student in the class. That is ultimately what drove my decision to change to an individual project.

While I still firmly believe that the group discussion has great potential for student discovery, it fails to capture the essence of a summative for this project's unit design. One of the foundations of backwards design is to be deliberate in all lesson

planning so that students can logically and naturally reach conclusions in their learning (Wiggins and McTighe, 2011). My original summative had the potential to be successful, but it also had the potential to be a confusing and frustrating experiment. That level of chance is contrary to backwards design and authentic pedagogy (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011; Saye, 2014).

I learned to start small, start modestly and start effectively. Could the unit-end classroom discussion be a great conclusion to a civil rights unit in the future? Absolutely. Do I currently have the practice and seasoning of a unit designer and instructor to comfortably deliver on that goal? Probably not. Thus, I started small in my unit design and, like this project, I revised, edited and adapted. It is important now to turn to the literature review and reflect on how the authors' recommendations and writings impacted the eventual summative assessment and the project's design as a whole.

Revisiting the Literature Review

Even if this project, in its current form, turns out to be partially successful in answering the guiding question *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary social studies classroom?* the research conducted for the project will continue to inform my pedagogy, lesson planning and instruction. The research represents only a snapshot of the field, and I tend to view the research and the project's goals as ever-evolving. Guided by the findings in the literature review, I will research further and I will continue to grow my understanding of urban students, culturally relevant pedagogy, backwards design lesson

planning, literacy instruction and authentic pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Saye, 2014; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

As I was designing the unit, revisiting the literature review helped in my discovery of the summative assessment's blindspots and limitations. Despite doing all the research and writing, I failed to heed the lessons of the authors using a summative activity that was just another lesson. Reviewing Saye (2014), Wiggins and McTighe (2011), Teale (2008, 2009) and Wright (2015) righted my course. The moment of clarity came once I realized that, while a worthwhile activity, the discussion did not actually test the students' knowledge of the vocabulary terms from the unit. Staying on this course would have been a tragic mistake, because the aim of the unit, the research and the guiding question is to improve student literacy in an urban classroom. An assessment of understanding is the whole point of the unit's literacy instruction and is also the whole point of this project (Teale, 2008). Upon reflection, I drafted up a summative project with the fundamental purpose of making deliberate use of the unit's vocabulary terms, which then reinforces what the literature review strongly emphasizes: be prepared, be consistent and be deliberate in teaching literacy to urban students (Teale, 2008; Saye, 2014; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

As the project's goal is to connect literacy instruction with culturally relevant content, I turned to the works of Anyon (2014) and Ladson-Billings (2006) to ensure that what I was teaching moved beyond culturally responsive teaching to the more effective culturally relevant teaching. I also used the writings of Saye (2014) to combine culturally relevant pedagogy with authentic pedagogy with learning experiences that challenged

social inequality and demanded higher-order thinking (Anyon, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Saye, 2014). I designed lessons that tackle and dissect culturally relevant topics like race, protesting, civil disobedience, and imbedded lessons and activities that provide students with opportunities to use critical thinking and problem solving (Saye, 2014).

Again, I used the literature review as a road map for the summative assessment. I changed course from a group discussion to an individual student project based on a member of the civil rights movement that prominently featured both cultural relevancy and literacy competency. Does this summative logically conclude the unit by checking for student learning? Yes. Does the summative check for students' literacy growth within the unit? Importantly, yes. Finally, again according to the narrative of the literature review, is the summative culturally relevant while still being relevant to the students' everyday lives? Yes (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Saye, 2014). With the impact of the literature review in mind, I will turn to the limitations of the project's design.

Limitations

I found that the project did have its limitations. First, having just earned my teaching licence in December of 2018, I do not yet have a classroom. Thus, I did not have a previous unit plan or lesson experience to fall back upon for this project's design, so I had to start completely from scratch and create a hypothetical unit for a yet-to-be-seen classroom. Because of this, I also did not have a textbook or district guide to create the unit. To cover for these deficiencies, I based the unit and its narrative on an acclaimed documentary series from the late-1980's, *Eyes on the Prize* (Hampton, 1987). Beyond

lesson design, I also do not have students to tailor the instruction to, which is crucial to teaching not just urban students but all students, in general.

The project has major implications for the study of English Language Learners. Linking again to the demographic study in Chapter One and in the literature review, ELL instruction will be a mainstay in education for years to come. Because of this, understanding the students and their needs is vital (The U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Wright, 2015). While I briefly addressed ELL students, because they are certainly a part of the urban experience, I did not really probe deeply into the pedagogy of ELL lesson planning and instruction. There is a wealth of material available on the subject of ELL students and literacy instruction, and I believe that the subject could be an entire capstone project in and of itself. When in a classroom, I would need to do considerable more research on ELL students to provide more effective literacy instruction.

So, as it stands, the project will serve as a blueprint for future curriculum design and instruction. Could the whole unit be taught unchanged? Perhaps. Is it possible that the whole project needs to be upended to meet the specific needs of a class of students? Absolutely. However, the lessons, experiences and research can easily be adapted to meet the needs of any district and any classroom. This is why I see this project and its lessons learned as fluid. Regardless of what subjects I am assigned, what students I teach and what district I work for, this project will have its place in my instruction. The concept, I believe, is important to the field of education, and how this project can be applied to social studies and the field of education will be addressed next.

Implications/Benefits to the Field

Being a neophyte in the field of education, the implications of this project, at least for me, are vast. I employed backwards design to create a curriculum unit which is logical and true to my goals of teaching literacy strategies in an urban secondary social studies classroom with culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Saye, 2014; Teale, 2008; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). With this proven unit design, I can now apply the principles of relationship building, using literacy strategies and implementing instruction that is culturally relevant and relevant to student life outside the classroom not just for this project, but for all future lessons and pedagogy (Saye, 2014; Wong, 2016).

In my short experience in the classroom, I observed a certain reticence from veteran teachers to include literacy strategies in student learning. I attended a workshop and witnessed teacher discussions, and in response, they all agreed that teaching literacy was important to student learning, but many of the teachers lacked experience with successful literacy instruction. This project will aid in bridging the gap between content delivery and literacy instruction. My goal was to prove how the instruction of literacy strategies, especially in subjects other than language arts, does not detract from lesson planning and student learning experiences. In fact, as the literature review indicates, the opposite is true. Teaching literacy strategies makes content instruction more effective and more meaningful (Vacca, et al., 2013). Knowing that, I have included literacy strategies as part of the project, and I will continue to research and advocate for the use of literacy strategies to colleagues and professional learning communities.

In doing research for this project, I read many articles and books about what culturally relevant pedagogy is, yet found little research on how culturally relevant pedagogy can be applied in the classroom. I was often frustrated to read authors suggesting that teachers who know what culturally relevant pedagogy is will simply know how to incorporate its lessons in the classroom (Landsman & Lewis, 2006). The capstone practicum and research question provide practical applications for teaching literacy with culturally relevant pedagogy. Other teachers will be able to view the curriculum guide and use what is appropriate for their classroom or use the findings of my project to draft their own curriculum. At the very least, I aimed to provide an example for those seeking answers for where to begin with utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy in their instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1995). I will now look at how the lessons of this project can be used in future research and further projects.

Future Research/Projects and Communicating Results

Thankfully, the research and implications of this project are not done in isolation. I used the understandings of the literature review for a unit on the American civil rights movement. I would use these same understandings for a unit on slavery, the Civil War, the American Revolution and so on. In fact, the lessons learned can be used, I believe, for any social studies subject. The teaching of economics, civics, geography could all benefit from literacy instruction and culturally relevant instruction.

This unit was designed for the purpose of use in action research, and at some point I will use the unit and its lessons to assess student achievement and understanding. From there, I will adjust instruction, change content objectives and alter daily

assessments to work towards a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary social studies classroom. Again, working towards an answer for the project's guiding question *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary social studies classroom?* will be a quest that I undertake until the very last day that I am in a classroom.

Conclusion

Chapter Four reflected on the major learnings of the project and its limitations, as well as a re-analysis of the literature review. I concluded the chapter with the implications of the project in the field of education and how the project will be utilized in future instruction. To reiterate a hypothesis reached in Chapter Four, this project will continue to evolve as it is enacted in the classroom. Lessons will be adjusted, assessments strengthened and approaches reconsidered as I continue, throughout my teaching career, to answer the guiding question *What is a more effective approach for delivering literacy strategies and content instruction to urban students in a secondary social studies classroom?*

REFERENCES

- Anyon, J. (2014). *Radical possibilities: Public policy, urban education, and a new social movement*, (2nd ed., *Critical social thought*). New York, NY; Oxfordshire, England: Routledge.
- Blachowicz, C., Buhle, R., Ogle, D., Frost, S., Correa, A., & Kinner, J. (2010). Hit the Ground Running: Ten Ideas for Preparing and Supporting Urban Literacy Coaches. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(5), 348-359.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964. (n.d.). Retrieved from:
<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/credits.html>
- Cooter, Kathleen S. (2006). When mama can't read: Counteracting intergenerational illiteracy. (Issue in Urban Literacy). *The Reading Teacher*, 59(7), 698-702.
- Gans, H. J. (1971). The Persistence of Social Inequality. The Uses of Poverty: The Poor Pay All. *Social Policy*.
- Gossen, D. (1996). *Restitution: Restructuring School Discipline*. Chapel Hill, NC: *New View Publications*.
- Graham, E.J. (2017) Authority or Democracy? Integrating Two Perspectives on Equitable Classroom Management in Urban Schools, Published online: *Springer Science+Business Media, LLC*, part of *Springer Nature*.
- Graham, E. J. (2017). In real life, you have to speak up: The civic significance of no-excuses classroom management practices. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, New Brunswick, NJ., *Rutgers University*

- Hairrell, A., Simmons, D., Swanson, E., Edmonds, M., Vaughn, S., & Rupley, W. H. (2011). Translating Vocabulary Research to Social Studies Instruction: Before, During, and After Text-Reading Strategies. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 46*(4), 204–210.
- Hampton, Henry. (Producer), Bagwell, Orlando (Director). (1987) *Eyes on the Prize* [Documentary]. United States: Blackside.
- Hollins, Etta R. (2017). Literacy Learning and Teacher Preparation for Urban Students. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 53*(4), 179-183.
- Journell, Wayne (editor) (2016), Hillburn, Jeremy and Jaffee, Ashley Taylor. *Teaching Social Studies in an Era of Divisiveness: The Challenges of Discussing Social Issues in a Non-Partisan Way*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kwok, A. (2017). Relationships between Instructional Quality and classroom Management for beginning Urban teachers, *Educational Researcher, 46*(7), 355–365.
- Ladson-Billings. G. (1995). Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491.
- Landsman, J. and Lewis, C. (editors) (2011). *White Teachers/Diverse Classroom: Creating Inclusive Schools, Building on Students' Diversity, and Providing True Educational Equity*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Mattias, C. (2016). Why do you make me hate myself?: Re-teaching Whiteness, abuse, and love in urban teacher education, *Teaching Education, 27*(2), 194-211.

- Mills, G. E. (2014). *Action research. A guide for the teacher researcher (5th edition)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.
- Minneapolis Public Schools. (2018) *Fall2018_Racial_Ethnic_by_School-by_Grade*. [PDF File]. Retrieved from http://studentaccounting.mpls.k12.mn.us/uploads/mps_fall2018_racial_ethnic_by_school_by_Grade.pdf
- Minneapolis Public Schools. (2019) *2018: Meal Distribution* [PDF File]. Retrieved from http://studentaccounting.mpls.k12.mn.us/uploads/fall_2018_Meal_eligibility_official.pdf
- Minnesota Department of Education. (2011). *Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies- 2011*. [PDF] Retrieved from: <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/stds/soc/>
- Puzio, K. et al. (2017). Creative Failures in Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy *Language Arts*, 94(4).
- Policy and Program Studies Service, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. (2016). The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce, *U.S. Department of Education*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversityworkforce>
- Skerrett, A., Williamson, T., LeeKeenan, K., Rubin, J., Land, C., Hendrix, A., & White, H. (2018). Transforming Literacy Education in Urban Schools. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 61(4), 457-460.
- Teale, W. H. (2008). What Counts? Literacy Assessment in Urban Schools. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(4), 358-361.

- Teale, W.H. (2010). Making Urban Schools Better Places for Students, Teachers, and Families: An Interview With Charles Payne. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(8), 701-704.
- Vacca, R.T.; Vacca, J.A.; Mraz, M. E. (2013) *Content Area Reading: Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum (What's New in Literacy)*. Pearson Education.
- Weiner, L. (2003). Why Is Classroom Management So Vexing to Urban Teachers? *Theory Into Practice*, 42(4), 305-312.
- Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design, 2nd edition*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Wong, H.K. (2016). *The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher*. Harry K. Wong Publications.
- Wright, W.E. (2015). *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners; Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice*. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.
- Zadavsky, H. (2006). How NCLB Drives Success in Urban Schools, *NCLB: Taking Stalk Looking Forward*, 64(3), pp. 69-73.
- Zoss, M., Holbrook, T., McGrail, E., and Albers, P. (2014). Knotty Articulations: Professors and Preservice Teachers on Teaching Literacy in Urban Schools, *English Education*. 47(1), pp. 38-79.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bondy, E., Ross, D. D., Gallingane, C., & Hambacher, E. (2007). Creating environments of success and resilience: Culturally responsive classroom management and more. *Urban Education*, 42(4), 326–348.
- Hinchman, K., Alvermann, D., Boyd, F., Brozo, W., & Vacca, R. (2003). Supporting Older Students' in- and out-of-School Literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47(4), 304-310.
- Rhodes, V. (2008). Learning on the go: Voices of highly mobile urban students. *Learning Inquiry*, 2(2), 113-125.
- Scott, J., Teale, W., Carry, D., Johnson, N., & Morgan, D. (2009). Effective Literacy Instruction for Urban Children: Voices from the Classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(4), 338-341.
- Teale, W.H. (2009). Students Learning English and Their Literacy Instruction in Urban Schools. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(8), 699-703.
- Vacca, R. (1998). Literacy Issues in Focus: Let's Not Marginalize Adolescent Literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 41(8), 604-609.
- Watson, D. (2011). "Urban, but Not Too Urban": Unpacking Teachers' Desires to Teach Urban Students. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(1), 23-34.