Re-centering the teacher agency narrative:

Educators reflecting on context, positionalities, and situated identities

By

Shabina Kavimandan

B.A., University of Delhi, 1995

M.S., Kansas State University, 2001

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas

2021

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the extent of teacher agency in response to a culturally responsive professional development model. This study aimed at findings results from a three-year professional development intervention provided to educators in a highly diverse school district. Teachers participated in a combination of whole group professional development sessions and smaller staff in-services that were provided on a bi-weekly basis. Biography Driven Instruction (BDI), the professional development intervention that was at the heart of this phenomenological case study provided an impetus to concentrate on teachers' action-oriented responses as exhibited through: (a) their positionality within the context of the school, (b) the context they work in and roles they play within these contexts, (c) the extent of their instructional, pedagogical, and curricular agency and the decisions they make within their instructional settings, and (d) their own professional identity negotiations in response to the BDI PD.

Further, this study examined the extent of teachers' professional agency in response to a context-specific, culturally responsive professional development within a highly diverse school district. Doing so it has also aimed to shed light on teachers' professional identity negotiations and educational change, as well as contribute to the discussions on how school districts adopt and develop educational programs. To further these much needed conversations on agency, for this study the influence of teachers and their capacity for agency was examined in relation to the following interrelated components: (a) teachers' action-oriented response to professional development, (b) factors that might cause dissonance between teachers' own beliefs and the change they are being asked to make (Buchanan, 2015), and (c) any impact of contextual

factors such as teacher's own positionality and the context within which they work. The following five major themes were developed from the gathering and reviewing of data:

- sense of empowerment for self and students
- situatedness of identity
- intentionality and control of actions
- sense of agency in instruction and planning
- curriculum: a nomenclature or a means to an end

The findings gave insights into the psychological attachment that these participants have found to their profession and how BDI in part has been responsible for this attachment. The participants overwhelmingly talked about the source of their agency being the outcomes their students exhibited. The importance of fostering relationships with students was highlighted repeatedly by the participants. There are several implications for pre-service and emerging educators as well. Of utmost importance is the need to provide professional development that supports emerging educators with opportunities to understand the biographies of their students and connect with their classroom communities in order to fully realize the extent of their agencies.

The following research question was at the heart of this study on agency: How does a professional development model grounded within a culturally responsive framework help teachers perceive the extent of their agency?

Re-centering the teacher agency narrative:

Educators reflecting on context, positionalities, and situated identities

by

Shabina Kavimandan

B.A., University of Delhi, 1992

M.S., Kansas State University, 2001

A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas

2021

Approved by:	Approved by:
Co-Major Professor	Co-Major Professor
Dr. Kevin Murry	Dr. Socorro Herrera

Copyright

© Shabina Kavimandan 2021.

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the extent of teacher agency in response to a culturally responsive professional development model. This study aimed at findings results from a three-year professional development intervention provided to educators in a highly diverse school district. Teachers participated in a combination of whole group professional development sessions and smaller staff in-services that were provided on a bi-weekly basis. Biography Driven Instruction (BDI), the professional development intervention that was at the heart of this phenomenological case study provided an impetus to concentrate on teachers' action-oriented responses as exhibited through: (a) their positionality within the context of the school, (b) the context they work in and roles they play within these contexts, (c) the extent of their instructional, pedagogical, and curricular agency and the decisions they make within their instructional settings, and (d) their own professional identity negotiations in response to the BDI PD.

Further, this study examined the extent of teachers' professional agency in response to a context-specific, culturally responsive professional development within a highly diverse school district. Doing so it has also aimed to shed light on teachers' professional identity negotiations and educational change, as well as contribute to the discussions on how school districts adopt and develop educational programs. To further these much needed conversations on agency, for this study the influence of teachers and their capacity for agency was examined in relation to the following interrelated components: (a) teachers' action-oriented response to professional development, (b) factors that might cause dissonance between teachers' own beliefs and the change they are being asked to make (Buchanan, 2015), and (c) any impact of

contextual factors such as teacher's own positionality and the context within which they work. The following five major themes were developed from the gathering and reviewing of data:

- sense of empowerment for self and students
- situatedness of identity
- intentionality and control of actions
- sense of agency in instruction and planning
- curriculum: a nomenclature or a means to an end

The findings gave insights into the psychological attachment that these participants have found to their profession and how BDI in part has been responsible for this attachment. The participants overwhelmingly talked about the source of their agency being the outcomes their students exhibited. The importance of fostering relationships with students was highlighted repeatedly by the participants. There are several implications for pre-service and new and emerging educators as well. Of utmost importance is the need to provide professional development that supports these emerging educators with opportunities to understand the biographies of their students and connect with their classroom communities in order to fully realize the extent of their agencies.

The following research question was at the heart of this study on agency: How does a professional development model grounded within a culturally responsive framework help teachers perceive the extent of their agency?

Table of Contents

List of Figures ..... **xii**

List of Tables ..... **xiii**

Acknowledgements ..... **xiv**

Dedication ..... **xv**

Chapter 1 - Introduction **1**

Statement of the Problem 3

Rationale for the Study 5

Parallels between Agency, Professional Development, and the Context of the Study 7

Conceptual Framework 10

Research Purpose and Questions. 11

Research Question 12

Conceptual Definitions 12

Procedures 14

Significance of the Study 14

Chapter Summary 16

Chapter 2 - Literature Review **17**

Scholarly and Research Context for the Study 17

Teacher Agency: An Interplay of Capacity and Action 18

Gaps in Literature 20

Context and Teacher Positionality: The Contextual Factors of the Study 22

Teacher Positionality: A Second Contextual Construct in the Study 23

Positionality and Agency: The Contextual Factor and The Perceived Outcome. 25

Theoretical Framework for the Study 27

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) 28

Forethought: 31

Self- Reactiveness: 31

Self-Reflectiveness: 31
Critical Race Theory and Its Role in the Study 32
Centrality of Race and Racism 33
Valuing experiential knowledge 35
Final Thoughts on Agency and Culturally Responsive Professional Development 38
Chapter 3 - Methodology 40
Introduction 40
Research Design 41
Research Question 43
Methodology for the Study 43
Context of the Study 45
Study Sample 46
Data Collection 49
Reflective Field Notes 52
Videotaped Lessons 52
Positionality Questions 53
Data Analysis 53
Trustworthiness 55
Credibility 55
Transferability 56
Role of the Researcher 57
Positionality Statement 57
Chapter 4 - Findings and Results 59
Individual Positionalities: Situating Each Teacher's Identity 64
Descriptive Findings: Codes/Categories/Themes 70
Theme 1: Sense of empowerment for self and students 72
Theme 2: Situatedness of Identity 76
Positionality: A by-product of context. 77
Positionality: Challenging your outlook 77
Theme 3: Intentionality and control of actions 80

Theme 4: Sense of agency in instruction and planning 86
Theme 5: Curriculum: A nomenclature or a means to an end 89
Descriptive Findings from the Videotaped Classroom Observations 90
Individual Teacher Video Observation 91
Ms. Alif's Instructional Actions 91
Ms. Bae's Instructional Actions 92
Ms. Jeem's Instructional Actions 94
Ms. Sheen's Instructional Actions 95
Ms. Tae's Instructional Actions 96
Ms. Noon's Instructional Actions 97
Ms. Meem's Instructional Actions 98
Ms. Daal's Instructional Actions 99
Ms. Kaaf's Instructional Actions 99
Summary 101
Chapter 5 - Conclusion and Discussions 103
Summary of the Study 104
Discussion of Results 109
The Journey Continues: The future state of teachers' agency debate 114
Theoretical Frameworks and their role in data analysis 116
Critical Race Theory and its support for the study 120
Conversations around the centrality of Race and Racism 123
Limitations 125
Recommendations/Implications for future research and the field 127
Commitment to the Profession 128
Sense of a shared agency 130
Implications for New and Emerging Educators and Pre-Service Programs 131
Conclusion 131
References 133
Appendix A: Interview Protocol 158
Positionality Questions 158

What do you identify as? 158
Interview Questions 159
Appendix B - Informed Consent Form 162
Appendix C - ISCRT Inventory 164

List of Figures

Figure 2.1. *The Congruence of Theoretical Frameworks* 28

Figure 3.1 *Methodological Framework* 40

Figure 4.1 *Study findings* 61

List of Tables

Table 3.1 *Participant Information* 48

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family first and foremost. My husband Suren and my kids Ayan Farhan and Anya Suresh were patient and so loving throughout this process. I would also like to thank my friends and especially my friends Angela and Mel for always being there for me and providing that constant support and acknowledgement of the hard work that comes with working on a dissertation.

Heartfelt gratitude to my friends Chloe, Graciela, and Mona for their support and encouragement throughout the process. Finally, I want to thank my committee members for their support. Dr. Socorro Herrera has been there from day one of this journey and throughout this process she guided and offered substantive feedback that was a tremendous help. Your support is heartfelt! Dr. Kevin Murry for all the encouraging emails and kind words. His sincere support was felt with each and every word of encouragement he shared. Dr. Spencer Clark for being the guide and mentor one needs to ultimately power through this monumental task. His thoughtful commentary via Zoom is much appreciated and Dr. Travis Bristol for all those calm words of encouragement and follow-up support. Without all of you, this would have been a much harder journey.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to all the educators out there making a difference. Thank you for braving it all and giving your best to the field.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Michael Fullan in his 1993 article, “Why Teachers Must Become Change Agents”, wrote, “Teaching at its core is a moral profession”. He further stated, “What happens in teacher preparation, the early years of teaching, and throughout the career is another story. Those with a clear sense of moral purpose often become disheartened and those with a limited sense of purpose are never called upon to demonstrate their commitment”(p.1).

If one were to chronologically situate this evolution of the term commitment within the profession of teaching from 1993 (when the article was published) to the present-day educational landscape, certain terms will absolutely find their place within that timeline as barriers in letting teachers fully express their commitment to the profession. Terms such as standards-based policies, prescribed curricula, standard-based assessment have been largely considered as barriers that have often challenged teachers’ commitment to their profession. A nationwide report by Economic Policy Institute (2019) examining the magnitude of teacher shortage and the factors that corroborate to this shortage, reported that nearly 80% of the teaching population believes that they have no control over establishing curriculum or setting performance standards for students. The report concluded that certain factors such as barriers to teaching, stress, and lack of say in how to run the classrooms often make it harder for teachers to do their work and in return impact students’ abilities to perform well.

This premise of teachers not being able to do their work in an agentic (defined in this chapter) fashion was the main impetus for this study. In the literature, references to teachers as change agents has been a common place (Pantić et al., 2021). Pantić and colleagues (2021) further encapsulate that often what ends up missing from this picture is what prompts teachers to exercise their agency as it comes to their commitment to any kind of change process and their

understanding of its implications for their practices (Lasky, 2005; Stillman & Anderson, 2015). This study examined the extent of teachers' professional agency in response to a context-specific, culturally responsive professional development within a highly diverse mid-western district. By doing so it has also shed light on teachers' professional identity negotiations and educational change, as well as contributed to recent discussion on developing educational programs (Vähäsantanen, 2015).

Policy makers and researchers have repeatedly pointed to the pervasive imbalance in our educational world, especially as it comes to mismatched expectations between teacher preparation and student outcomes. At the same time, it is also important to note that even though research studying the impact of teachers in education is widespread yet despite a robust research literature on the question of teacher quality, evidence for the impact of teacher characteristics (experience and professional knowledge) on student outcomes remains extremely limited (Burroughs et. al, 2019). Noonan (2016) further suggests that there is relatively little research built around the lived experiences of teachers, which draws on the perspectives of teachers themselves. Hence, this study aimed to better understand how teachers exert their agency in their classrooms, communities, and profession by reflecting on their lived experiences through their own positionalities. Without this simple understanding a piece of the puzzle regarding teacher identity development, positionality, and agency informing their professional practice will always be missing. Something that is tremendously needed in the current socio-political environment.

The following approaches regarding teacher agency as included by Imants and Van der Wal (2019) provided the primary focus on agency for this study. Two approaches to agency can be distinguished in literature (Goller and Paloniemi, 2017), in one approach agency is understood as an individual characteristic (capacity), another approach to agency is directly

associated with action, that is things that individuals or collectives actually do while affecting their work and professional identity. Borrowing from Bandura's work (later referenced in the chapter) and Imants and Van der Wal (2019) description of the teacher agency model, this study associated agency with the capacity that individuals exhibited either alone or in groups, in a given situation, making decisions, taking initiatives, acting proactively rather than reactively, and deliberately striving to reach a certain end.

To further these much needed conversations on agency, for this study the influence of teachers and their capacity for agency was examined in relation to the following interrelated components of agency: (i) teachers' action-oriented response to the professional development; (ii) factors that might cause dissonance between teachers' own beliefs and the change they are being asked to make (Buchanan, 2015); and (iii) any impact of contextual factors such as teacher's own positionality and the context within which they work. Chapters four and five present key findings from teacher interviews and videotaped lessons that show how agency was revealed or challenged given these three components.

Statement of the Problem

As an educational system we continue to struggle despite the numerous efforts that are taken at both the state and the federal level to improve our schools' performance and enhance our student academic outcomes while bridging their instructional gaps. According to Datnow et al. (2019), research over the past several decades reinforced that teachers must be active agents in educational reform in order to realize improvements in the processes of teaching and learning. However, these different policy climates in education have often supported this notion and in fact have yielded quite different conceptualizations of what active agency in reform might mean (Datnow, 2012).

The role that teachers' agency can play in helping educators develop tools to bring in much-needed change within our educational landscape provides grounding for this study. As Rigby et al. (2016) pointed out, even though reforms both within the United States and internationally are delivered to schools and districts at an alarming rate, educators are the ones left to prioritize and integrate these reforms (Cuban, 1990; Payne, 2008). Rigby and colleagues (2016) further juxtapose this dilemma against the scarcity of resources under which these reforms are supported; thus, many outcomes remain uncertain (Newmann et al., 2001; Tyack & Cuban, 1997). What is not clear from the research are the factors that often influence teachers to implement change. With these arguments in mind, it is evident that the teaching workforce needs to be equipped with professional development that lifts teachers' instinctive as well as intuitive abilities to bring in that intentional change. This is where the argument of agency comes into play. Can a context-based professional development have an impact on teacher agency? In contrast, can teacher agency have an impact on the kinds of professional development schools should provide to their teaching force? Many of these questions were covered via semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the nine participating educators.

Some studies have indicated that in education individual characteristics, or internal factors such as emotional intelligence, motivation etc. are essential for positive teacher change (Bodegraven 2015 ; Brackett et al., 2010; Hall & West, 2011; Kaniuka, 2012). Other studies have often indicated that external factors such as quality professional development, leadership, and opportunities for collaboration are critical for teacher implementation of change (Dingle et al., 2011; Melville et al., 2012). To investigate the nucleus of agency and whether or not participating educators could pin-point the experiences that marked the trajectory of their evolving agency, this study aimed to juxtapose the internal factors (positionality and context) of

teacher change against the backdrop of teacher professional development (external factors) while attempting to answer the broad question of how teachers develop their perceived sense of agency.

As Linda-Darling Hammond (2019) points out, “for more than a century, efforts to professionalize teaching have contended with initiatives to reduce teachers’ preparation and to substitute managerial schemes promoting standardized curriculum and testing in lieu of teaching expertise, which are thought to require less investment in salaries and professional learning”(p 60).

So, the argument becomes, what kind of dialogue needs to take place within our institutions of learning to ensure that our school systems are operating towards the fullest potential of all students. This argument alludes to further dialogue that needs to take place within our institutions of learning to ensure that educators can exercise their own expertise within the contexts in which they work.

Rationale for the Study

Several reasons provided incentive for this study. First, the idea for this study stems from the need for teacher accountability in education. This means that teachers need to be held accountable and be active participants in order to cultivate any kind of substantive and systemic change. Professional accountability for improvement is seen as an ecosystem of policies and practices that emanate from a consistent view of teaching/learning and a professional model of accountability for improvement (Snyder & Bristol, 2015). Many teachers, however, are unable to exercise control within their ecosystems, which in turn prevents teachers from showing accountability toward improvement. At the same time there are teachers who do find ways to circumvent policies and create a climate conducive to learning for their students

(Lopes & Ambrosio, 2016). This contrast in teacher behavior along with conditions that either inhibit or enhance their accountability further prompted the need to conduct this study. Even when teachers' actions (for this study actions are being considered part of agency) are contrary to the culture of the context in which they operate, it is important to identify the means that teachers use to balance their professional demands and to work in ways that ultimately support their students.

Murry et al. (2014) brought forth a significant argument that provides a rationale for this study (p. 3). These authors posed the following questions: Are teachers' own socialization experiences and perspectives in a particular culture so dominant, so omnipresent, that it overrides their teacher education? Does a disconnect exist between teachers' professional development experiences and the realities of postmodern classrooms? What can be done to enhance parallels between teacher practices and student outcomes? Such questions reveal the gravity of circumstances within the teaching profession that are causing an insurmountable gap within our educational ecosystems. Therefore, there is a need to constantly probe at what can be done to enhance teachers' agency so educators can see themselves as rightful stakeholders in the teaching profession.

The overwhelming challenge of teacher attrition is another argument put forth by the Learning Policy Research Institute (2016) that also contributed to the design of this study. The research brief by the Learning Policy Research Institute indicates about one-third of teacher attrition nationwide is due to retirement and pre-retirement attrition. Dissatisfaction with teaching conditions was a major reason why teachers left before retirement. Teacher agency can be an amenable solution and important topic of conversation regarding teacher turnover. Cuban (2013) also pointed to the importance of how policymaking contributed to the minimal impact

that structural, curricular, and cultural changes have made on teaching practices in American schools. Cuban (2013) specifically argues that while many important instructional changes have occurred since the late- nineteenth century in elementary and secondary school classrooms, no transformation in classroom authority or how teachers teach on the scale of the above fundamental structural, curricular, and cultural changes has altered classroom instruction. If teachers' instructional practices are not contributing towards transformation in classroom instruction, then a consideration of factors that cause such dissonance must be explored. Further, this study examined how teachers achieve agency and the role that teachers' agency can play in the process of making transformative instructional decisions in their current teaching context.

Parallels between Agency, Professional Development, and the Context of the Study

The term agency and its relevance for the study is explained in greater detail in chapter two. However, this section of the chapter provides an overview of how agency is being considered in response to context-based professional development. Professional development needs to be focused on the ability to interrupt habitual ways of thinking about teaching to cultivate teacher agency (Insulander et al., 2019; Priestley et al., 2015). Insulander et al. (2019) further postulated that professional development also needed to encourage teachers to adopt a more innovative and question-oriented mindset, which may lead to enactment and change. Juxtaposing this against Priestly et. al (2015), "agency is not something that people can have as a property, but is something that people do. More specifically agency denotes a quality of the engagement of actors and not a quality of actors themselves" (p. 626). Through this study's emphasis on the professional development that teachers took part in, it was established that quality of engagement that these individuals exhibited definitely grounded their agency.

This description of agency is further employed in a framework to understand teachers' agency utilizing Bandura's Social Cognitive theory (1998, 2001). Further, the juxtaposition of context and professional development in which agency is being studied is grounded within the framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson, 2018; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005).

The context of the study itself gives reason why CRT is the framework for this professional development intervention. This study was conducted at a highly diverse midwestern locale, representing the nation's increasingly diverse trajectory. Increased student body diversity, multiple title buildings, and varied levels of socio-economic status are represented among the student population. During the time of the study, it was researcher's belief that conversation surrounding agency cannot occur without a true representation of the situated context. Gourd (2016), focuses on the importance of resistance or support for change (by teachers) within a context, no matter what level of agency teachers exhibited. Treating agency as being devoid of context, shortchanges the argument of teacher agency itself and can disregard how agency might have been developed over the years, not to mention the role multiple contextual factors play within that context. As mentioned previously, the context of this study reflects a highly diverse demographic and the professional development provided to teachers centered around the tenets of Cultural Responsiveness with CRT employed as a framework to support this context.

Participants in this study were teachers from four school sites who were involved in a culturally responsive professional development program for three years. Specifically, professional development was facilitated using a culturally responsive method of instruction, known as Biography-Driven Instruction (BDI) (Herrera, 2016). In response to the emerging needs of educators, Herrera (2010, 2016) developed Biography-Driven Instruction (BDI), a

social constructivist method of culturally responsive teaching praxis (CRTP) that supports educators in making the curriculum accessible, relevant, and rigorous (Murry et. al., 2020). Further BDI also supports teachers to maximize assets of the student biography in the context of social constructivist classroom ecologies to provide culturally responsive teaching (Herrera & Murry, 2021). BDI, when situated within a broader definition of a professional development framework, is often defined as processes and activities that can enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers on an individual level so that educators, in turn, improve the learning of students as defined by Guskey (2002) & Imants & Van der Wal (2019).

This biography-driven, culturally responsive professional development framework provided a landscape to study teacher's agency. Important to note, BDI was selected by district personnel as a targeted professional development for all four school sites given the complexities of learners' diverse backgrounds and the need for teachers to understand more culturally responsive ways of working with their culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. Teachers often play a critical and synergistic role within the scope of professional development as they interact with the content of programs as well as school and classroom work environments (context) (Imants, 2019). Professional development of teachers is often treated as the most important activity that helps enhance teachers' capacities toward their profession. Having conversations around teacher agency in a professional development context and examining whether certain types of professional development programs lead to an increase in teacher agency among teachers has been integral to this study. Therefore, findings presented in this study focused on the multifaceted aspect of teacher agency from educators who participated and successfully engaged in culturally responsive, BDI professional development.

Conceptual Framework

The core of this topic stemmed from numerous curricular, instructional, and systemic shifts happening within the current educational trajectory of our nation. A quick scan of the educational landscape shows that improving student outcomes requires attention to many factors such as standards, assessments, initiatives, curriculum, family involvement or lack thereof etc. and yet school systems operate in a vacuum and seldom look at how these factors connect to teachers' decision-making abilities.

Anagnostopoulos et al. (2021) alluded to the fact that even though policymakers expect teachers to make changes to improve teaching, teachers often do not have a voice in policy decisions. Teachers are considered institutional agents yet, teacher agency is seldom recognized as a means to strengthen the power of their decision-making (Mitchell, 2015). It is equally important to consider the influence of teaching quality that builds up over time and has a lasting impact (Chetty et al., 2014). For these reasons, this study intersects the idea of teacher agency as a catalyst for positive, transformational change and meaningful decision making as districts choose an intentional professional development program that addresses both teacher and student needs in a diverse educational landscape.

The theoretical framework for this study weaves Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson, 2018; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1986, 2001, 2012) in education. CRT is used to situate Biography-Driven Instruction within the professional development model. Various components of culturally responsive professional development utilized in this study were grounded within the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson 2018; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995;

Yosso, 2005). Specifically, two tenets of CRT, Centrality of Race and Racism and Valuing Experiential Knowledge, provided a preliminary focus for analyzing the impact of professional development on teachers' praxis and agency as liberatory practices explained further in chapter two. Through his seminal work, Bandura (2001) referred to agency as the capability of humans to exert influence over their functioning and outcomes based on their actions. Bandura's reference of agency ties extensively to teacher's action, capacity, and decision-making as captured in this study.

Derived from Social Cognitive theory, which views people as "agents of experiences rather than simply undergoers of experiences" (Bandura, 2001, p. 4), agency is considered a combination of intention and action that influences experience. When an Agency shapes and drives the direction and course of action (Wilson & Deaney, 2010) it often embodies the aptitudes, belief systems, self-regulatory capabilities, and functions through which personal influence can be exercised (Hadar & Weisman, 2018). The data analysis and interpretation presented in chapters four and five share perspectives on the actions, habits, and the mindsets of participating educators. Participants exhibited what it means to act in an agentic way especially given the constraints of the environment they work in. Findings further highlighted the autonomy of actions educators choose to implement based on their students' academic outcomes.

Research Purpose and Questions.

The purpose of this research was to better understand the factors that inhibit or encourage the realization of teacher agency. Factors such as teacher positionality and the context in which teachers teach and receive professional development were the contextual factors considered for this study. The purpose of this study led to an improved understanding of the systemic realities

and initiatives that define, limit, frame, constrain, or enable teacher practice and agency in an individual or a collective manner.

Research Question

How does a professional development model grounded within a culturally responsive framework help teachers perceive the extent of their agency?

Conceptual Definitions

- **Biography-Driven Instruction**: A cognitively targeted, communicative method of teaching and learning that has been designed to simultaneously bolster content learning and accelerate language acquisition of learners (Herrera, 2016).
- **Context:** The interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs**:** Environment, Setting (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).
- **Contextual Factors:** Biographies of students, grouping structures/configurations, applicability of lessons to the real world, physical aspects of classroom that support learning, curriculum, and applicability of students' frames of reference (Herrera, 2016).
- **Culturally Responsive Professional Development:** Culturally responsive professional development draws on core tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy, as applicable to the development of teachers, as opposed to the instruction of students (Bristol et al., in press). This pedagogical tool provides teacher educators with a framework to enact strategies for building on the cultural assets and vantage points of teachers of color and their communities in the development and implementation of professional development (Kohli, 2019).
- **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD):** A culture or language that is different from the dominant culture and language in U.S society (Herrera & Murry, 2015).

- **Funds of Knowledge:** This means to approach and document the funds of knowledge of families and re-present them on the bases of the knowledge, resources, and strengths they possess, thus challenging deficit orientations that are so dominant, in particular, in the education of working-class children (Moll, 2019).
- **Liberatory Practices**: Grounded in the space between theory and practice, centralizes cultural and community knowledge and ways of being while de-centering forms of knowledge that relay dominant cultural norms, values, and assumptions (Jefferson et al., 2018).
- **Phenomenology:** Phenomenological research is the study of lived experiences. It is the study of the life-world, the world as we immediately experience (Manen, 1997).
- **Teacher Agency:** Distinguished as two different approaches of agency (Goller & Paloniemi, 2017; Imants & Van der Wal, 2019). One approach considers agency as an individual characteristic or capacity. Another approach directly associates agency with action, or what individuals or collectives do that affect their work and professional identity. For this study, agency is associated with the capacity that individuals exhibit either alone or in groups, in each situation while making decisions, taking initiatives, acting proactively rather than reactively, and deliberately striving to reach a certain end.
- **Teacher Positionality**: Positionality theory claims that individuals have a position that impacts how they socially constructed their world. The position of an individual is often formed by multiple identities such as race, gender, and class that simultaneously construct and reinforce individual perspectives (Kezar & Lester, 2010)

Procedures

This qualitative study was a phenomenological case study. An originating idea of phenomenology is that, "if we had experienced a phenomenon in our past, as we recall our experiences, then perhaps we can find possibilities for new ways of understanding those experiences through making new meanings and gaining new insights" (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 64). An interview-based phenomenology was used, which focused on the extent of teachers' agency rather than developing a theory to reveal meaning (Flood, 2010). Phenomenology was considered relevant to this study given the actions and perspectives of humans (teachers) that revealed meaning perspectives on instruction and curriculum through their perceived sense of agency.

According to Nassaji (2020) qualitative research emphasizes the process or patterns of development rather than the product or outcome of the research. Creswell (2013) further states that the case study research approach is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system or case over a time period through detailed, in-depth data collection and reports that included description of the case and themes. For the purpose of this study**,** participating teachers, their positionality, and the context in which they operate is the built-in bounded system being studied, to gauge the extent of their agency.

Significance of the Study

Literature pertinent to teacher agency paints a varied picture. Some arguments in support of agency are provided below:

- Agency is 'the capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one's life' (Bandura, 2001, p.1).

- Agency is an emergent phenomena of the ecological conditions through which it is often enacted (Biesta, et al., 2017).
- Agency can sometimes occur outside the context of teaching, either as removed from the context or a response in resistance to the context (Flessner, 2012; Gourd, 2016).

These themes emerged from the literature on agency, with emphasis on action-orientation. Additionally, these themes are either supported or challenged in the findings of this study as part of agency and the reasons for its realization or inhibitions among teachers.

The significance of this study hopefully advances knowledge in the field of education and helps bring changes with the idea of transformation as it comes to utilization of certain professional developments in schools especially through the emphasis on teacher buy-in and agency. In addition, this study created opportunities for schools to consider their own contextual and situational processes as critical factors when it comes to school reforms by identifying the conditions under which teachers successfully change their own classroom practices (Herrera, 2016).

As Bodegraven (2015) pointed out, overcoming teacher resistance to change has been a concern for various educational leaders since the last century (Ravitch, 2001; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Often, this teacher resistance to change is equated as or considered as lack of teacher empathy, consciousness, and overall incompetence. Research has shown that teachers clearly articulated their reasons for resisting change and these reasons were often grounded in practical and pedagogical concerns (Thornburg & Mungai, 2011). From this interview study, teachers were able to articulate their perceived sense of agency and also reasons why some teachers might resist change, which helped define their own reasons for supporting change or

resisting it. Bringing teacher voices to the forefront of scholarship will provide educational leaders and policy makers with a better understanding of conditions that surround teacher's ability to more readily adopt and lead change. Improvement in teacher practice leads to improved student learning. It is through the voices of educator's sharing their experiences that more meaningful professional development opportunities might come to light, which ultimately leads to positive student outcomes and hopefully changes in policy orientations.

Chapter Summary

Discussions around professional identity and teacher agency have been shared by various scholars, over the years. This study while drawing from Bandura's (1998, 2001) seminal work on agency aimed to situate the idea of agency as an act towards change. For those engaged in teacher education, the preparation of the next generation of teachers and a continuous professional fulfillment of the current cadre of in-service practitioners should include explicit discussions of teacher agency.

The important question in studies of agency should be agency for what specific actions and how is it that the teachers come to take control of their own instructional and pedagogical actions. Often policy makers view schools as a complicated set of structures in need of overhaul rather than a network of intersecting systems, initiative, and ecologies where teachers serve as daily gatekeepers. Far too often districts and schools are seen as a set of isolated systems and islands. Focusing on one main system of teacher professional development that considers teachers as change agents can have a significant impact on education systems. This study evolved quite a bit from its original conception however, the premise remains the same. The core of this study has been to understand teacher change, teacher resistance, and teacher accountability and serve as a guiding light for research on teacher agency.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter describes and discusses the following:

- scholarly and research context for this study
- various factors that situated the research question
- theoretical framework used to ground and situate the study, data analysis, and the findings
- positionality of the study in relation to the already established research

Scholarly and Research Context for the Study

Stosich & Bristol (2018) propose that "a focus on teaching quality is appropriate since the abilities of individual teachers can change over the course of their careers. Just as the goal of schooling are broad—quality teaching depends upon a wide array of personal and contextual factors" (p. 2). Keeping this perspective in mind, this study established itself within the idea of teacher capacity-building and teacher quality development through an emphasis on teacher agency and whether or not their participation in a contextualized (explained below) and a culturally responsive professional development model led to actions that are agentic in nature. The study also sought to focus on factors that might cause dissonance in teachers' perceived sense of agency towards their own instructional practices.

The following argument by Imants and Van der Wal (2019) provided the primary focus for this study. Two approaches to agency can be distinguished in literature (Goller and Paloniemi, 2017). In one approach agency is understood as an individual characteristic (capacity), another approach to agency is directly associated with action, which means things that individuals or collectives actually do while affecting their work and professional identity.

For this study, the concept of agency was situated within the instructional and pedagogical capacity that individuals might exhibit either alone or in collaboration, in a given situation while making decisions, taking initiatives, acting proactively, and striving to reach towards their students' outcome.

The following research question was at the center of this study:

How does a professional development model grounded within a culturally responsive framework help teachers perceive the extent of their agency?

Teacher Agency: An Interplay of Capacity and Action

Within education, the concept of agency has been explored from multiple theoretical, conceptual, and practical perspectives. Scholars from various sociological and psychological traditions have provided many perspectives on agency and how it starts to define the characteristics of a person. According to Eteläpelto et al. (2013), "professional agency is practiced when teachers and/or communities in schools influence, make choices, and take stances in ways that affect their work and their professional identity" (p. 61). This view positions agency as a two- dimensional idea where there is a focus on teachers' capacity to produce certain actions within the context they are a part of.

Similarly, Bandura (1989/2001) whose seminal work provided impetus for this study, defined agency as "the capacity to exercise control over one's own thought processes, motivation, and action" (p. 1175). This notion establishes agency as the core of individuals' perceptions of having control over their life and the activities they take part in. Bandura also has identified personal agency as foundational to engagement (e.g., Bandura 1989, 2000, 2006; Schunk 2008). This further situates the fact that individuals who perceive themselves as having a meaningful influence or role within a context are more likely to be involved in actions that

produce change, which was ultimately considered as a factor for this study. In chapter one, several arguments were shared regarding the lack of teacher accountability in practice (Snyder & Bristol, 2015; Lopez & Ambrosio, 2016). It was further argued that the lack of accountability stems from teachers' lack of engagement, which goes back to Bandura's argument that agency is paramount to engagement. Bandura (2009) further defined human agency as "the human capability to exert influence over one's functioning and the course of events by one's actions" (p. 8). From this perspective, this study investigated teacher agentic behavior through a lens that considers agency as a capacity and an action.

A more multifaceted, dynamic view of agency sees it as an emergent and evolving phenomenon, which according to Priestly et al. (2015), is often achieved by individuals through an interplay of personal capacities and the resources, affordances, and constraints of the environment prompting individuals to take action. This definition then emphasizes the importance of both the capacity of the individual and their context, thereby situating agency as a complex and dynamic system of various components and not a formulaic entity. Thus, from this perspective agency "is not [merely] something that people can have as a property, capacity or competence but is [also] something that people do" (Biesta et al., 2015, p. 626). Agency, therefore, can be assumed as being dependent on myriad of factors which can ultimately have an impact on the outcomes (agency) and the choice people make within different contexts. Later in chapter two such factors are explained in detail that are critical to understanding the way agency takes shape.

Drawing from existing definitions of agency, teacher agency can also be seen as an emergent phenomenon that is dependent on multiple interrelated factors as shared below. It represents teachers' capacity and intentionality to act (physically, emotionally, relationally,

pedagogically, and professionally) in line with their values, beliefs, goals, and knowledge within the complex teaching contexts in which they are often situated (Parsons et al., 2018; Toom et al., 2015). This argument strengthened the case for context and positionality as two factors that may or may not support teacher agency.

Gaps in Literature

A closer look at the literature also points to gaps that exist in defining the term agency and perceiving its scope within the realm of teacher change and accountability. Agency has been seen as a poorly conceptualized construct in much of the literature, where it is often not clear whether the term referred to an individual capacity or to an emergent ecological phenomenon dependent upon the quality of individuals' engagement with their environments (Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Biesta et al., 2015). Further, Priestley et. al. (2015) argue that if one were to look at agency as a construct it thus appeared as a temporally embedded process of social engagement informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities), and acted out in the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment). These conceptual references of agency minimizes the term within the notion of time sensitivity. Another perspective of agency worth mentioning is that, agency represented the means through which to explain and understand how individuals act with differential effects in social situations (Hiver & Whitehead, 2018). From this perspective, agency is viewed as "the capacity of actors to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 971). However, if the notion of agency was only situated within problematic situations, then we would not be able to truly focus on the idea of agency as being central to teachers' abilities as true change agents for meaningful educational reform.

Considering the given arguments, it could be reasoned that agency might come to rest on an inner capacity that individuals sometimes exhibit. Rogers and Wetzel (2013) argued that inner capacity is something an individual may or may not have, however the idea of agency ignores the fact that "agency operates within a broad network of socio-structural influences" (Bandura, 2002, p. 278) and that the reality of agency is one of dynamic bidirectional influences between a socially constituted self which exercises agency generatively and proactively on social systems (Bandura, 2001).

Having highlighted the gaps that are existent in the current literature regarding agency and its impact on teacher actions, it is to be noted that the videotaped lessons were utilized as a way to gauge the action part of agency, which was in part drawn from the practical-evaluative dimension of agency that states, "although agency is involved with the past and the future, it can only ever be acted out in the present, which is precisely what is expressed in the practical-evaluative dimension which entails the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Biesta et al., 2015, p.6). Through the interview questions and videotaped lessons that were a part of this case study analysis, it was analyzed whether currently (after the intervention had completed), the teachers' actions showed any kind of agency and whether it tied to the intervention they received.

As mentioned in chapter one, teachers at the school site were involved in a highly contextualized professional development intervention. After juxtaposing the impact of the professional development against the evolving ambiguities of the school systems regarding curricular demands, changes in student population etc. it became even more critical to see this

study on agency as an action-oriented perspective and how is it that the teachers come to take accountability over their own practices. The next section of the chapter explains the factors that were considered as the contextual factors for the study. Chapters four and five explain the impact of these contextual factors on teachers' agentic outcomes.

Context and Teacher Positionality: The Contextual Factors of the Study

Chapter one briefly touched upon the idea of context and the reason why no study in agency can be removed from the context in which it seemingly occurred. Context in which the teachers teach, is being considered a contextual factor for this study as explained by Biesta et al. (2017), in addition, the sense of control over one's everyday practices, or agency, is also often shaped by the structures and cultures within which teachers work. Further, Parker (2016) also argued against adopting "an overly individualistic view of agency" (p.3) that de-emphasizes the impact of society's forces and structures, while also dismissing positions that over-interpret the power of such forces and structures to represent individuals as helpless and dependent, rather than as autonomous beings. This study sought to implement a phenomenological lens to this view in order to study a more in-depth and descriptive experience (Hirsch, 2015) of these participating nine individuals.

Additionally, the study aimed to look at teachers' own understanding of who they are within their professional context (positionality) and whether or not it shaped their agency as highlighted here: "aligned with rationalism, an aware perspective positions (teachers) knowledge as often tacit, developed through (inter)action with the context and within local systems" (Linden & McKenney, 2020, p.707; Brown et al., 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). This is often characterized as (intuitively) knowing-to-act within the context you are in (Depaepe et al., 2013) and is constructed through the actors' interpretations of the local context, therefore being

inextricably tied to the actor. Keeping this argument at the forefront, this study hoped to see whether the professional development that was provided to teachers led to an organic interaction between the individuals (attributes and inclinations) and the tools and structures of their setting, and whether this led to any kind of agency (Aydar, 2015). Keeping the aforementioned description in mind, context remained a sub part of this study throughout the duration and was heavily considered during the data-analysis stage to see if the teacher interviews pointed towards the role that context might have played in the way they viewed the evolution of their own agency.

Teacher Positionality: A Second Contextual Construct in the Study

Positionality captures the dynamic ways where an individual is defined by socially significant identity dimensions (Secules et al., 2021). This particular stance helped solidify the interview protocol since the researcher was able to put forth questions that captured the way these participating individuals viewed their own role within the immediate school community and the society at-large.

Further, according to Kezar and Lester (2010) positionality theory provides an overview for us to see how individuals have positions in society that impacted how they socially constructed the world. Since an individual's positionality could be solidified by multiple roles they play, their identities, and the way they situated themselves within a system and this in-turn might impact the way they construct or challenge individual and collective perspectives towards an idea or an initiative, this study aimed to gauge whether teacher agency was at all shaped by their positionality. Kezar and Lester (2010) defined positionality theory's emphasis on context, and this argument gave an impetus to focus on these two attributes as contextual factors which

says, “the context in which people live and work should be examined in an effort to understand individual’s perspectives, power, and positionality that exist within a social context” (p.168).

Positioning theory suggests that we are not just actors of predetermined scripts, but also agents and authors in our social participation (MacLoed et al., 2015). Acevado et al., (2015) argue, “that the positions from where we make meaning of—as well as engage with—the world are informed by our identities and lived experiences” (p.32). For this study the concept of positionality provided a context and a backdrop of sorts to gauge the extent of teacher agency and whether agency is inhibited or extended as a result of an individual teacher’s positionality.

As such, “positionality theory emphasizes the position of or situatedness of identity” (Kezar & Lester, 2010, p. 166; MacLoed, 2015). Another reason why teacher positionality was considered a contextual factor was based on Gomez and Sosa’s (2011) claim that positioning can be understood as the ways in which individuals take up certain perspectives and views, according to the membership of a given category or subject. To further illustrate the importance of positionality within this study it was crucial to establish that teachers often do not have much say when it comes to implementation of a particular initiative; in that instance it is important to consider the factors that might help them engage or inhibit their own involvement with that initiative. As Ketelaar and colleagues (2012) propose, “as teachers are often not involved in the design of educational innovations, their reactions to the implementation of an innovation largely depends on whether they perceive their identities as being reinforced or threatened by the proposed changes” (p.3). Just like the contextual factor of context, teacher interviews and videotaped lessons provided an insight into whether a teacher’s positionality impacts their agency.

Positionality and Agency: The Contextual Factor and The Perceived Outcome.

Rogers and Wetzel (2013) defined agency as "the capacity of people to act purposefully and reflectively on their world" (p. 63). Aydar (2015) argued, however, that the teacher is not "a neutral player in the classroom, but on the contrary, her positionality in relation to her students, and to the broader context in which the teacher was situated is vital" (p. 22). Drawing from these two arguments, it is important to consider the intersectionality between teacher agency and positionality. Positioning theory states that agency is viewed as "strongly connected to the contextual conditions within which it is achieved and not as merely a capacity or possession of the individual" (Priestley et al., 2012, p. 197). From this argument both context and positionality are considered sub-factors to gauge their impact on teachers' agency development. Questions specific to the context in which these individual teach were included in the interview protocol to further reflect on what Priestly et al. theorized.

Aydar (2015) argues that unlike roles that are static and fixed, positions are situation-specific, disputed, challenged, changing, shifting and therefore dynamic, it is important to consider that as agency is shaped, it could be possible to see the same individual exercising more agency in one context and less in another. Therefore, this study set out to see whether the individuals involved in this study see the shades of agency within the context in which they received the professional development and might their agency differ in other situations. Aydar (2015) further propose that while certain positions may enable one to become more agentic, agents can also actively resist certain positionings. Hence this study, while drawing from the idea of positionality and context, also argued that agency is shaped by social interactions and achieved in particular situations (Priestley et al., 2012), thereby concluding that agency and positioning are closely linked, one influencing the other. Another reason why this study aimed to

utilize the factors of context and positionality as contextual factors is what Ebersöhn and Loots (2017) argue: “How can teachers become agents for change in spite of the continuing contextual disparities” (p.81)?

This study also aimed to further the conversations on teacher agency and their actions and whether certain factors contribute to the act of agency. Although research consistently finds that supportive school contexts encourage teachers’ agentic behavior (Van der Heijden et al., 2015), little is known about how personal characteristics explained differences in the extent to which teachers enacted professional agency within the same school context (Bakkenes et al., 2010). This argument strengthened the focus on positionality, context, and agency.

A final consideration for teacher positionality was the very nature of this study as explained here. According to MacLeod et. al (2015), “taking on the position of an educator in the classroom can evoke privileges of power; however, the qualities and practices will differ if the educator is positioned in a traditional pedagogical context versus a liberatory pedagogical context, the first being more authoritarian and the second more horizontal”(p.37). MacCleod further argued that when coupled with awareness, critical thinking, and reflective practices, the activity of positioning can be more self-directed, strategically applied, and transformative. Please note that the professional learning framework of Biography Driven Instruction (BDI) (Herrera, 2010/2016, Murry et. al 2021), which is the focus of this study, is grounded within specific ideals of Critical Race Theory. BDI emphasizes the ecologies of liberatory contexts, critical thinking, and reflective practices. As such, this study also sought to grasp the extent of teacher agency within the ideals of liberatory practices simply due to the nature of the highly diverse context in

which the study took place. With specificity, this study is further clarified in the following section on theoretical framework.

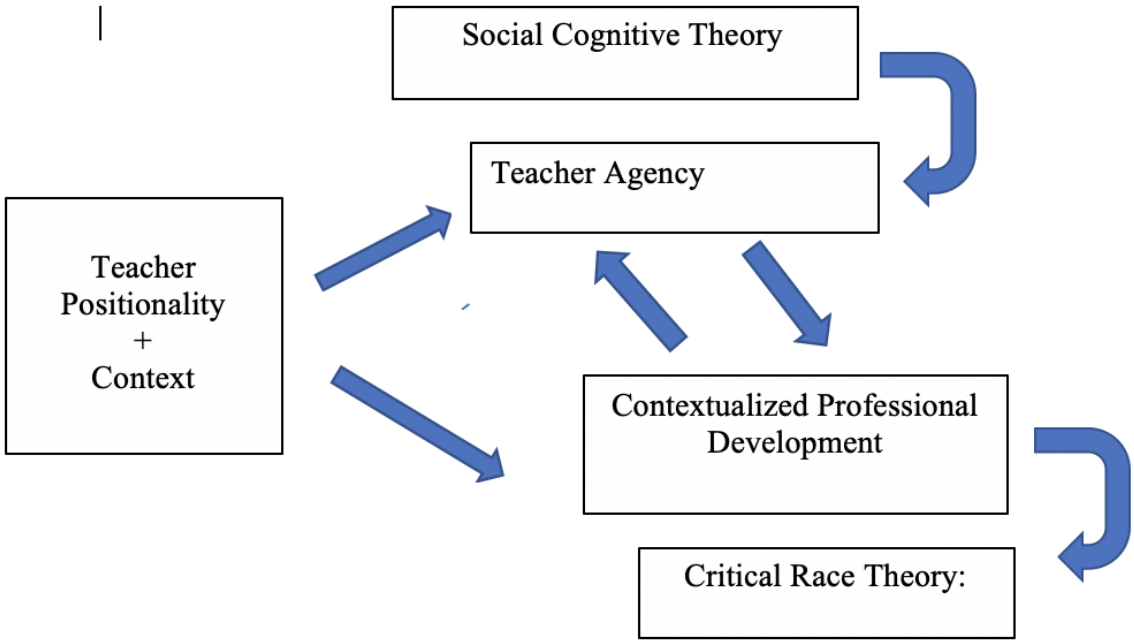
Theoretical Framework for the Study

This section of the chapter explains the key elements of the theoretical framework used for the study and the way these help shape the study and guide its qualitative research and analysis.

In developing the theoretical framework for this study, two theories were analyzed. The analysis provided a theoretical foundation for the idea of teacher agency in response to a culturally responsive professional development model earlier referred as BDI. The framework is grounded within the two core tenets of Critical Race Theory: Centrality of Race and Racism and Valuing experiential knowledge alongside Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory with its emphasis on teacher agency. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001) provided impetus for analyzing agency within teachers' actions and Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Dixson, 2018; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005) provided a grounding for the professional development framework and an analysis of teachers' praxis. Please see Figure 2.1, which explains the congruence of the two theories within the tenets of this study, followed by a robust description of the two theories and their intersectionality for the study.

Figure 2.1. *The Congruence of Theoretical Frameworks*

The Congruence of Theoretical Frameworks



Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Social cognitive theory with its emphasis on human development, adaptation, and change (Bandura, 1986/2001) emphasizes that to be an agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances. Bandura also postulates that learning occurs from the interplay of participant interactions, environment, and behaviors. Furthermore, a main assumption underlying social cognitive theory is that individuals are competent and active agents and their actions can influence their development, learning, and behavior (Bandura, 1986; Bembenutty et al., 2016). Drawing from this preliminary explanation, this study emphasized the need for intentionality of actions that are required to achieve professional agency. Another aspect

of agency for this study was the perceived capacity of teachers to influence decision making based on what Bandura (2001, 2006, 2017) espoused agency as a human capability to exert influence over one's functioning and outcomes based on one's own actions.

Deriving from social cognitive theory, which views people as "agents of experiences rather than simply under goers of experiences" (Bandura, 2001, p. 4), agency can be considered a combination of intention and action that influences experience. It is also important to note that agency has the ability to shape and decide the direction and course of action by focusing on the aptitudes, belief systems, self-regulatory capabilities, and functions through which personal influence is exercised (Hadar &Weisman, 2018). At the same time, when you look at one of the main assumptions underlying social cognitive theory which says that individuals are competent and active agents whose actions can influence their development, learning and behavior (Bandura, 1997), it becomes important to focus on not just the competency part but also the course of action individuals take to reveal that competency. Which is what this study tried to do. Through the questions grounded in agentic behavior of the teachers, it also strived to look at the competencies teachers might exhibit as they practice certain instructional behaviors.

Bandura (1997) further suggests that individuals can learn by observing others in social contexts. He posits that individuals respond to their environment based on their beliefs, values, prior experiences, sense of efficacy, and expectancies. Hence context and positionality were considered the contextual factors for this study. Social cognitive theory also conceptualizes individuals as able to engage in the regulation of their own thoughts, beliefs, and actions. This particular emphasis on social cognitive theory is further explained in chapter five as participants

exhibited shades of their own thoughts, beliefs, and actions through the interviews and videotaped lessons.

According to Bandura (1999) “internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events, behavioral patterns, and environmental influences all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other” (p.14).

Hence, the additional layer of the two contextual factors, teacher positionality and the context in which they operate, were further considered for the study to gauge their impact on teacher agency. As Hunt (2018) states, where agency exists, stakeholders become participants in the operations of organizations, as opposed to onlookers or bystanders. This argument ties nicely to the decision-making argument which says that teachers often have not been able to make instructional decisions. Shared later in chapters four and five, this particular professional development did lead teachers toward instructional and curricular agency where teachers felt comfortable in making their own pedagogical decisions.

According to Schunk and DiBeneditto (2019), a central premise of Bandura’s social cognitive theory is that individuals often strive for a sense of agency, or the belief that they can exert influence over important events in their lives. They further argued that individuals exercised this sense of agency using their cognitive and self-regulative capabilities such as by setting goals and implementing strategies to attain them. According to them, individuals also monitor their progress toward their goals and adjusted their strategies as needed. These arguments were definitely strengthened and validated through the teacher interviews conducted for this study. Furthermore, Bandura (2018) posits that social cognitive theory, the theoretical foundation to this study, played a paramount role in agentic properties in such psychosocial functioning as setting goals and implementing strategies to attain them. The agentic portion of

Bandura's theory manifested though the three main properties of forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness was considered for data collection and analysis for this study as shared in chapter five. Bandura (2018) describes these three properties in following ways:

Forethought: In forethought, people motivate and guide themselves by creating action plans, adopting goals, and visualizing the likely outcomes of their actions. This form of anticipatory self-guidance is governed by visualized goals and anticipated outcomes rather than being pulled by an unrealized future state.

Self- Reactiveness: The second agentic property is self-reactiveness. Agents are not only planners and fore thinkers. They are also self-regulators. Individuals manage their behavior by self-sanctions within a self-governing system. They do so by adopting behavioral standards against which they evaluate their performances. They respond with positive or negative evaluative self-reactions depending on how well their behavior measures up to their adopted standards (Bandura, 1991a).

Self-Reflectiveness: The third agentic property is self-reflectiveness. People are not only self-regulators but also self-examiners of their functioning. They reflect on their efficacy to realize given challenges, the soundness of their thoughts and actions, their values, and the meaning of their pursuits. It is at this higher level of self-reflectiveness that individuals address conflicts between alternative courses of action and competing values and often favor one course over another. The metacognitive capability of reflecting on oneself and the adequacy of one's capabilities, thoughts, and actions is the most distinctly human core property of agency.

The three above-mentioned properties were utilized to analyze the themes that emerged from data analysis from teacher interviews and are presented in chapter five.

Critical Race Theory and Its Role in the Study

This section of the chapter discusses the tenets of Critical Race Theory that provided a framework for further analyzing the culturally sustaining praxis as exhibited in teachers' agency. Teachers often equate the term in-service with "presenter", "training" and "Sit and get sessions". Since the main aim of the study was to find an intersectionality between the culturally sustaining professional development, praxis and teacher agency, this section describes the tenets of Critical Race Theory and its utilization:

- Supporting the professional development model (BDI) that was framed around the premise of Cultural Responsiveness and Sustainability.
- Identifying and discussing teacher agentic actions that showed evidence of culturally sustaining and liberatory praxis.

According to Howard and Navarro (2016), Critical Race Theory has been a transformative conceptual, methodological, and theoretical construct that has assisted researchers in problematizing race in education. This study sought to focus on the methodological and theoretical constructs of CRT through an emphasis on its two tenets as described below. It is important to note what Tate (1997) argued regarding CRT, **"**CRT is a product of and response to one of the most politically active and successful eras of social change in the United States"(p.197).

CRT was expanded to education in the 1990s by educational scholars Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F. Tate, IV to study the ways in which race informs schools' practices and educational policy (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Various components of the culturally responsive professional development being utilized for this study are grounded within the framework of Critical Race theory in Education (Delgado

& Stefancic, 2012; Dixson, 2018; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005). According to Sablan (2019), CRT's role in education research typically adheres to foundational tenets, briefly reproduced here (Solorzano, 1997/1998; Solorzano & Bernal, 2001; Yosso et al., 2004, pp. 3-4):

- Racism, race, and its intersections (with gender, class, etc.) are an endemic part of society.
- CRT challenges dominant frameworks and ideologies that are White centered or White supremacist in origin.
- Scholarship works toward social justice, including the empowerment of oppressed groups and elimination of racism and poverty.
- The experiential knowledge of people of color is a legitimate way of understanding the world, such as through storytelling.
- CRT is inter- or transdisciplinary.

These tenets help frame this idea of how CRT and its tenets often function as both a theoretical foundation and a methodology for centering race relations within K-12 systems. This study borrowed from the following two tenets of CRT in order to provide a preliminary focus for analyzing the impact of the professional development on teachers' praxis and agency as liberatory practices as explained earlier in the chapter.

Centrality of Race and Racism

CRT represents a paradigm shift in discourse about race and racism in education (Maddox & Solorzano, 2002). Cabrera (2019) further posits that CRT from its point of origin, has become a central form of racial analysis in educational scholarship. Which means that CRT centers its focus of analysis on multiple forms of oppression in addition to racism, such as gender

inequity and anti-immigrant discrimination. He further stated that CRT begins with several basic insights. One of these insights brings race and racism to the forefront of the curriculum, which was heavily utilized for this study. This particular emphasis of CRT was utilized as a discussion point during the interviews. Another insight recognizes that the experiential knowledge of people of color is critical in order to understand and analyze issues surrounding race and racism in education and beyond. These facets suggest that the experiences of people of color should be carefully considered and brought into schools and curriculum since they have the capacity to inform how teachers might interact with their students and utilize their experiences in the classrooms. Teachers in this study often talked about BDI strategies aligned with their students' experiences.

Leonardo and Boas (2013) further discussed the salience of race in classrooms where they examine White women teachers' role as "benevolent saviors of children in need" (p. 322). Their CRT analysis suggests that as teachers work within culturally responsive ways they be mindful of the following:

- Critically reflect on racialized and gendered histories and how you are implicated in them.
- Make race and race history part of the curriculum, and fight for its maintenance in it.
- Teach race as a structural and systemic construct with material, differential outcomes that are institutionally embedded not reducible to identities.
- Work to understand and teach race not as a personal crusade but as a sociohistorical construct through which we are all (unequally) produced.

It is important to understand that as we center such discussions on racial and ethnic lines, it is important to analyze how different school outcomes often get impacted via an explicit or a

lack there-of on the role that race and racism play in school policies, pedagogies, and practices (Dixson, 2014; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Leonardo, 2013). It is through these arguments that the tenets of CRT were considered to further focus on influence these could have on teacher practices, as presented in chapter five.

Valuing experiential knowledge

CRT builds on the oral traditions of indigenous communities of color around the world. It also does so by placing a value on counter stories presented by people of color that call into question majoritarian stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Since this tenet is primarily utilized to draw upon the lived experiences of people of color by including methods of storytelling, family histories, biographies, and narratives (Ladson- Billings, 1998; Yosso, 2006) for the study, it was insightful to see how teachers' actions embraced the idea of recognizing their students' cultural and experiential capital to support student identity and academic/linguistic development in the classrooms. It is important to note that an important aspect of BDI, the professional development framework that was used for the study, is to guide teachers to maximize four interrelated facets of the student biography, including the sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic (Herrera, 2016; Herrera & Murry, 2016), to provide effective, yet humanistic education of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students. Through this methodology, students are also encouraged to link what Sleeter, 2016 defines as important background knowledge and experiences and as Murry et. al (2020) emphasize as making connections to home, community, and school, and discuss personal connections to the curriculum. Both of these highlighted facets of BDI relate to this particular tenet of CRT, emphasizing the need for enhancing students' existing repertoires through their experiential knowledge.

As presented earlier in the chapter, according to MacLeod (2015) "taking on the position of an educator in the classroom can evoke privileges of power; however, the qualities and practices will differ if the educator is positioned in a traditional pedagogical context versus a liberatory pedagogical context, the first being more authoritarian and the second more horizontal" (p.37). These components of CRT, along with the three core properties of human agency, provided the main support and framework for this study to analyze the extent of teachers' agency as exhibited through their liberatory practices. It was further realized that BDI professional development provided teachers with a sense of liberatory practices and the role these practices played in their agency development as presented in chapter five.

It is important to note that within the field of education, CRT has become an evolving methodological, conceptual, and theoretical construct that seeks to disrupt race and racism in educational theory and practice (Solórzano, 1998; Calderon & Ledesma, 2015). According to Navarro (2016), CRT provides an analysis of the state of affairs of the students of color as one of the most pressing concerns in the field of education. It further presents itself as an interpretive framework that has the potential to constantly challenge the dominant ideology of standards, tests, and accountability, including meritocracy, and color blindness. Through the semi-structured interviews, it was further analyzed whether teachers shared views specific to what CRT suggests for K-12 schooling at detailed above.

This longitudinal and evolving focus of CRT with the recent emphasis on pedagogy and curriculum is where this study intersected with Bandura's social cognitive theory. Research has shown that teachers are most effective when they teach in ways that are culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 2009). CRT helps locate the realities of examining teacher attitudes and practices, while at the same time offering means and processes to move such limiting

attitudes and practices towards the necessary liberatory ends (Matias & Liou, 2014; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012). Since a core focus of the study was to reflect on teachers' agency in response to the culturally responsive professional development, one aspect of the analysis related to the liberatory pedagogical praxis where teachers willfully exercised their influence and agency to engender freedom and equity with academic learning (Wilson et al., 2019). Yoon et. al (2020) shared that, "emancipatory teaching practices involved interrogating "truths" in our country's long history of oppression, and rewriting curriculum to exemplify the rich history of communities of Color are professional and personal work" (p.835). Through the analysis of teacher interviews and field notes, this study established that some of the participating teachers see their agency as actions of emancipatory teachers, where they challenged the "whiteness" of the curriculum.

Critical race pedagogical practices often have the potential to empower students of color while dismantling present notions of colorblindness, meritocracy, deficit thinking, linguicism, and other forms of subordination (Kohli, 2012; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012). Since the site for this study was a highly diverse school district, the study emphasized upon teachers' actions in response to this culturally responsive framework as Solórzano (2013) points out, that CRT often rests on a comprehensive and informed set of propositions that many scholars and practitioners fail to possess in their attempts to engage with classrooms full of diverse learners. Ultimately, the two theories provided a framework for analyzing teacher interviews to gauge the extent of teacher agency resulting from their participation in a critically reflective professional development.

Final Thoughts on Agency and Culturally Responsive Professional Development

Borrowing from and adding to Bandura's work on agency, this view of agency encapsulates the reason behind this study. "Agency should be understood as a configuration of influences from the past, orientations towards the future and engagement with the present" (Biesta et al., 2015, p. 3). In teaching and learning situations, there is an increased need to help teachers situate and identify the power of their own agency. The production of actions that this study aimed at are grounded in the agentic tenets of social cognitive theory as earlier defined in the chapter. This final section of literature review establishes the relationship between teacher agency and the evidence of culturally sustaining praxis because of the professional development.

According to Imants & Van der Wal (2019), professional development can be defined as processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers on an individual level so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students. Even though the relationship between policies, practices, and interventions on the one hand and teachers on the other has productively been conceptualized in terms of the positioning, autonomy, and agency of teachers (Priestley et al., 2015; Wermke & Forsberg, 2017), there is still much to be seen regarding teachers' evolving sense of agency and autonomy within the parameters of the context in which they work. If according to the above argument teacher agency and positionality can have an impact on the way policies and practices take shape at the school and classroom level, then hopefully this study will add to the discourse on agency and teacher accountability.

Priestly and colleagues (2015) conclude that to cultivate teacher agency, professional developments need to focus on the ability to interrupt those habitual ways of thinking about teaching. Programs also need to encourage teachers to adopt a more innovative

and questioning mindset, which may lead to enactment and change. This is where this study with its emphasis on teacher agency resulting from a culturally responsive professional development framework becomes timely. As Bottiani et al. (2017) share, to support student learning effectively and equitably, educators must understand how to leverage culture and cross-cultural differences in the classroom (Paris, 2012; Gay, 2010). It seems that professional development grounded in cultural responsiveness and sustainability will support and encourage the necessary teacher agency to enable teachers to address the wide variety and interplay of cultures in their classrooms to create the best learning environments.

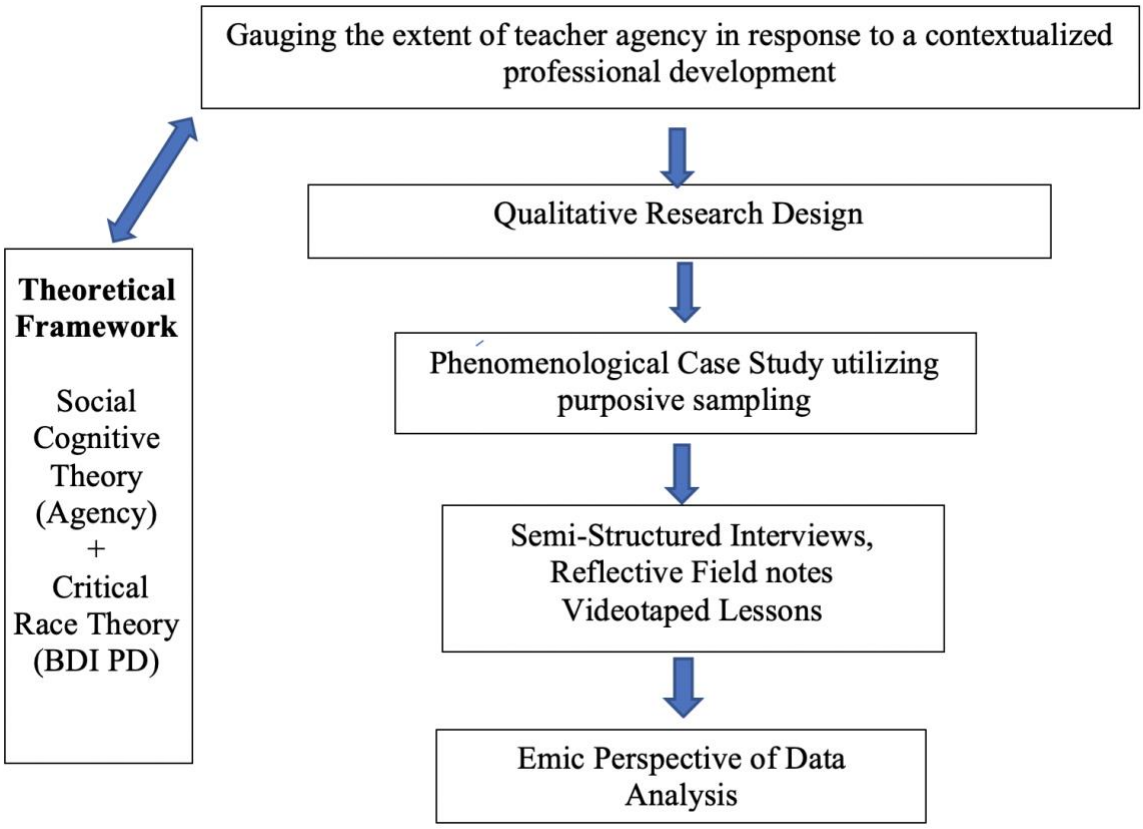
Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was used for this phenomenological case study. It provides the rationale for why the study was conducted, a thick description of the site and sample, and the participants along with their demographic information, and the data collection mechanisms. Figure 3.1, illustrates the core of the study and the supporting research design with the data collection and analysis measures. Please note that the narrative that follows shares an in-depth explanation of the multiple aspects included in Fig. 3.1.

Figure 3.1 *Methodological Framework*

Methodological Framework



Research Design

Since this study aimed to examine the extent of teachers' professional agency in response to a context-specific and culturally responsive professional development, within a highly diverse mid-western district, a qualitative research design was utilized for this study. According to Nassaji (2020) qualitative research is contextualized and interpretive, which also emphasizes the process or patterns of development rather than the just the product or outcome of the research. Keeping this in mind, a qualitative research design was primarily chosen since the idea of teacher agency is too complex and deep of a phenomena and because this study aimed to gauge teacher perceptions of their agency based on their participation in a professional development plan.

Further, qualitative research can be defined as, “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.3) where researchers aim to understand or interpret a phenomenon in its natural settings through multiple data sources and collection methods that led to interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, Creswell, 2013). The setting of the study included four extremely diverse urban schools and the qualitative measures of this study aimed to gauge teacher perceptions of their agency and whether or not the professional development they received led to instructional actions that were agentic in nature. Further, the in-depth analysis of the literature provided justification for utilizing qualitative methodologies for this study regarding how teachers perceive their own sense of agency against the backdrop of their positionalities.

With teacher positionality being considered as a contextual factor which may or may not be responsible for the occurrence of teachers agency, Merriam’s (2009) argument that qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpreted their experiences, how they constructed their worlds, and what meaning they attributed to their experiences, further

connected to the nucleus of this study on teacher agency. This qualitative research study allowed the researcher to explore the phenomena through an exploration of contexts that Yin (2003) explains as individuals or organizations, complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programs and support the deconstruction and the subsequent reconstruction of various phenomena. In part, this phenomenological case study attempts to do what Hirsch (2015) theorized about phenomenology, "The hermeneutic researcher is equally concerned with the participants' description of the phenomena, as well as the interpretation or the meaning of the experience" (p.253). This particular phenomenology aimed to capture the instructional and pedagogical experiences of these nine teacher practitioners as they partook in the BDI professional development over the course of a three- year period.

Since qualitative research tries to get to the bottom of the process by continuously focusing on exactly what happened to the participating individuals, what led them to make the decisions they ultimately made, and how the choices they made came to take the form that they eventually did (Yin, 2014; Kalu & Bualya, 2017), it aligned well with the nature of this study in finding the 'why' and the 'how' of the teacher agency debate.

As described in chapter two, the three core properties of agency: Forethought, Self-Reactiveness, and Self-Reflectiveness as defined by Banduras (2018) were used to analyze the semi-structured interviews conducted as part of data collection, which is described in chapter five. This phenomenological case study (described below) was informed via an intersection of a theoretical framework that ties Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson 2018; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986, 2001) together for the review of the literature and the subsequent data collection and analysis. Since the study addressed how teachers position themselves as instructional

decision makers and whether or not these decisions lead to agency, it was determined that the study will be a qualitative case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003, 2014) consisting of semi structured teacher interviews, teachers videotaped lessons, and reflective field notes.

Research Question

Merriam & Tisdell (2015) state that the clarity of the research question dictates what other elements should be included in the research. Although Stake (1995) does not suggest a specific point during the research process when data collection and analysis should start, the research questions might help structure the observation, interviews, and document review (Yazan, 2015). Keeping these ideas in mind, this study addressed this broad research question:

How does a professional development model grounded within a culturally responsive framework help teachers perceive the extent of their agency? The question for this study helped structure the data collection process.

Methodology for the Study

According to Yin (2014), following conditions come into play when one selects a research method: (1) The research question(s), (2) the amount of control the researcher has over events, and (3) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to entirely historical events. All these factors definitely played a role in choosing the qualitative methodology for this study. In research there are multiple designs for qualitative research. Some of these designs are: phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, historical research, action research, and case study (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2013). This study used a phenomenological case study approach to investigate and analyze how the phenomena of teacher agency took shape and the ways teachers perceived their own agency in response to a particular professional development framework. The phenomenological approach coupled with the case study method allowed the researcher to

analyze and make sense of the experiences that these individual had and "the essence and the underlying structure of a phenomenon" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). According to Hirch (2015), "a key characteristic of phenomenological research is its rich, detailed descriptions of the phenomenon being investigated. The description should present "how" the participants experienced the phenomenon investigated rather than any preconceived perception the researcher may have of the phenomenon being studied" (p.252). Through chapters four and five, rich descriptions of how these participating nine educators experienced agency and the resulting outcomes have been provided.

The argument by Creswell (2014) that while compiling a phenomenology, it is critical to report how individuals participating in the study viewed their experiences (Moustakas, 1994), further provided an incentive to utilize phenomenology as a basis for this case study. This provided the ability to see how the teachers view their own experiences with the professional development and whether or not that provided an impetus for their individual and perhaps collective agency to surface.

Nine educators were selected for the study in order to thoroughly examine the extent of their agency and to gather rich data primarily from semi structured interviews and teacher videos. And since, "…a phenomenological approach is well-suited to studying affective, emotional, and often intense experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 28), this methodology connected well with this study on agency.

According to Bhattacharya (2017), a case study involves an in-depth and a contextual analysis of a person, people, issue, and place within a pre-determined scope of the study that is to take place. Bhattacharya further states that the case study research is commonly used in qualitative research to answer focused questions with in-depth inquiries. As a case study research

involves the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting (Yin, 2009), this was the case with this study and its focus on the contextual factors.

For the purpose of this study**,** participating teachers, their positionality, and the context in which they operate was the built-in bounded system that was studied to gauge the extent of their agency. This case study also followed what Yin (2014) proposed the framework as a linear but iterative process for the case study approach:

- Design the case study
- Collect data for the case study
- Analyze the case study evidence
- Share the conclusions, recommendations, and implications

Context of the Study

The study was conducted at four school sites within a diverse midwestern district. The sites at the center of the study, serve a wide array of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students within grades K-5. According to the Department of Education website, the average student enrollment by ethnicity ranged anywhere from 66.33% Hispanic to 49.46% Black. The four schools have the designation of being Title I buildings with highest concentrations of ELL students in the district. The majority of teachers at these schools are white and monolingual.

In order to understand the context of the study, it is important to know that the teachers at the four sites were involved in a Culturally Responsive Professional Development, named Biography-Driven (BDI) Culturally Responsive Professional Development (Herrera, 2016, Murry et. al., 2020). According to Murry et al. (2021), BDI supports teachers to maximize assets of the student biography in the context of the social constructivist classroom ecologies to provide culturally responsive teaching. BDI, when situated within a broader definition of a professional

development framework, is often defined as those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers on an individual level so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students (Guskey, 2002; Imants & Van der Wal, 2019), provided a contextual framework to study the extent of teachers' agency in this phenomenology.

The BDI professional development included a combination of whole group PD sessions and smaller staff in-services that were provided on a bi-weekly basis. The smaller sessions, 90 minutes in length, were designed to enhance teachers' understanding of the proposed intervention and application of the strategies and the methods that are embedded within the tenets of CRT. Individual teacher support was provided through classroom observations and debriefing, modeling of instructional strategies and techniques, and co-teaching. Teachers were also given access to the seminal BDI texts that described and illustrated target practices. Multiple culturally responsive strategies were utilized throughout the intervention to enhance teachers' understanding of BDI and its guiding principles. This particular structure of the BDI intervention was carefully chosen in response to the context of the school sites. The school district decided to adopt Biography-Driven Instruction as the focus for the professional development for the teachers at these sites, due to its responsiveness to the multi-dimensional needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Study Sample

The sample size for the study was comprised of an intermediate and a primary teacher from each of the four school sites. Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this study. The concept of purposive sampling fit well with this qualitative research. This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 2013).

This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et. al, 2015). Since the researcher spent three years at these sites, purposive sampling was strategically used to select participants that could inform about the phenomena of teacher agency in response to the professional development they received.

The targeted participants were chosen from a primary and an intermediate group. All the teachers had participated in the professional development that was provided to them as part of the intervention. Participants for the study were selected based on the following criteria:

1. certified educator,
2. participated in the professional development framework during their tenure at the school

Gentles et al. (2015) recommend a sample size of 4-10 in a qualitative case study. For this study a sample size of nine participants was used which seemed to be sufficient to gather data in an inductive manner. Nine participants shared their experiences as part of this study to gain deeper insights into their positionalities, learnings, experiences, and impacts through their participation in the BDI professional Development. Interviews with participants occurred over a four-week period. All the participants in this study were females. The following table, represents some general demographics of the participants involved in the study:

Table 3.1 *Participant Information*

Participant Information

Pseudonym	**Grade-Level**	**Self-expressed Ethnicity**	**Years in the district**	**Languages Spoken**
Ms. Alif	Elementary	Native and Mexican American	5	English and Spanish-(Fully proficient in both)
Ms. Bae	Elementary	White American	11	English
Ms. Daal	Elementary	White Caucasian	16	English
Ms. Jeem	Elementary	European American	6	English
Ms. Kaaf	Elementary	Mexican American	12	English and Spanish
Ms. Meem	Elementary	Mexican American	11	English and Spanish
Ms. Noon	Elementary	White American	6	English
Ms. Sheen	Elementary	European American	19	English
Ms. Tae	Elementary	White	12	English and Some working knowledge of Spanish (self-reported).

Data Collection

Proper data collection procedures are an important hallmark of qualitative research studies. In this research study, the primary data collection happened through semi- structured interviews (Merriam, 2009, Creswell, 2018), videotaped lessons, and reflective field notes. Videotaped lessons were used to locate the action part of agency within teachers instructional practices as evidenced through their implementation of BDI specific instructional practices. The semi-structured interview format allowed for flexibility when key points were explored (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2013) and provided the chance for interviewees to not only answer the questions posed but to share new ideas on the topic as well (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This process helped the researcher in further reflecting upon the participants' experiences, beliefs systems, ways of doing, and perspectives regarding the extent of their agency through the medium of their positionality. Using this semi-structured interview process allowed for an open investigation of the participants' opinions on the questions, and as Deifenbach (2009) states, interviews can reveal ideas and deliver insights no other method can provide. He further stated that asking the same people several times (in the hope that increased trust supports the gathering of more in-depth data) and/or asking different people about the same issues (in the hope that certain pattern will emerge) can improve the quality of interview data is something that this study utilized as well, due to its heavy emphasis on this interview-based case study.

Potential participants were contacted and invited to participate in this study with an email letter and the interview was conducted via Zoom. The following protocols were observed for a secure data collection mechanism:

1. Teachers who agreed to participate in the study were asked to send their confirmation via e-mail.
2. A consent form was sent to review and sign.
3. Each participant selected a time and date that was conducive to their schedule.

The interviews were used to collect data about the participants' perceptions of their own agency. Since through a qualitative study the researcher often asks about topics such as how people are experiencing an event, a series of events, or a condition, the questions that the research creates usually help uncover the perceptions of an individual, a group, or various groups (Agee, 2009, Garrett, 2017). Every attempt was made for the interview questions (Appendix A: Interview Protocol) in this study to help uncover the participating teachers' perception of their own agency and whether or not they consider themselves decision makers. Teacher videos were also used as a tool to create the questions for the interview protocol. In order to do this, the researcher first watched the videos and then, based on the evidence of instructional practices observed from there, created the interview questions.

The questions were also written utilizing the literature review and the theoretical framework that had already been framed on teacher agency and the use of CRT for liberatory practices (as explained in chapter two). The interview questions were utilized first and foremost to obtain data to answer the research question of the study but also to address the gaps and problems that were uncovered through the review of the literature. The initial interview questions were a combination of questions prompting teachers to share their positionality and the extent of their agency in response to the BDI professional developments and whether their positionality and the context were a factor. Contrasting questions on teachers' response to other professional developments were also included to gauge factors that cause dissonance between teachers' own

beliefs and the change they are being asked to make (Buchanan, 2015). In summation, the interview focused on the following:

Participating teachers' internalization of their accumulated professional learning and whether or not it led to any kind of agency.

The role that teachers' positionality and the context could have on educators' agency.

An interview protocol (Montoya, 2016) was utilized under the following guidelines:

- Ensuring interview questions align with the research question,
- Constructing an inquiry-based conversation

This protocol was used for all nine participants, and pseudonyms were used for each of the participants as their interviews were collected. Prior to conducting the study, each participant was asked to sign a consent form which included a description of the study, risks and benefits of the study, and confidentiality issues (Appendix B Consent Form). Participants were also informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time without any obligation to the researcher as their participation is completely voluntary in the study. The following steps were utilized for the interview process:

- These interviews were conducted by the researcher via Zoom and were one-one with each of the nine participants to ensure privacy and to gain an in-depth insight into the phenomena that occurred in response to the professional development they received.
- Prior to the interview process, a permission to conduct the study was sought from the district administration and the administrator at each of the sites. Appropriate IRB protocols were followed keeping in mind the requirements set forth by KSU and the district. Interview protocol was approved by KSU IRB to ensure

credibility. After gaining IRB approval, permission was obtained from district as well as the participants regarding the research.

Reflective Field Notes

Along with the interviews field notes, reflective field notes that detailed the events from the interviews were kept. This included any reactions, reflections, and notes from the interviews and interactions with all of the case study participants that were done virtually. Field notes were organized in a T-Chart format with observations noted in the left column and thoughts, reactions, and feelings in the right column.

The notes were reviewed and the elements that related the most to the research question were highlighted. These were further used to analyze the themes that emerged from the interviews utilizing the open-coding format leading to categories and themes. In reporting the results, the pseudonyms were used to represent each individual who participated in the study.

Videotaped Lessons

Videotaped lessons were used to observe the instances of agency in teachers' actions specific to the processes associated with the BDI instructional framework. These lessons that were filmed during 2019-2020 school year gave a glimpse of teachers' utilizing various BDI structures in their classrooms, namely Activate, Connect, Affirm, Revoicing, i+TpsI, and scaffolding for language and academic development. In each of the videos, teachers were seen utilizing a BDI tool, an action that they repeatedly discussed in the interviews as well. Detailed analysis of video lessons is included in Chapter four. Appendix C: ISCRT (Inventory of Situationally and Culturally Responsive Teaching) rubric was utilized to provide a descriptive analysis of teacher videos in Chapter four.

Positionality Questions

Prior to the start of the data collection, each teacher was asked open-ended questions regarding their view of their own positionality within the context of the school. As the data from the interviews was analyzed, the responses were juxtaposed against teachers' views of their own positionalities and whether or not these impacted the extent of their agency.

Data Analysis

Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, 2014) have discuss seven stages of interview inquiry process. These stages include and were also utilized for this study:

1. Thematizing- Formulating the purpose of the study.
2. Designing- Planning the design of the study.
3. Interviewing- Conducting the interviews.
4. Transcribing- Preparing the interview material for analysis which includes transcribing oral speech to written text.
5. Analyzing- Deciding which modes of analysis are appropriate for the interviews.
6. Verifying- Ascertaining the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the interview findings
7. Reporting- Communicating findings

These seven stages were utilized to format the development of the design, structure, and the analysis of these qualitative interviews and to further bring in themes and categories.

The interviews were initially transcribed and analyzed using NVivo software and coded for five themes and four categories. Information on these categories and themes is included in Chapter four. Chapter five includes an analysis of these themes against the three components of agency: Forethought, Self- Reactiveness, and Self-Reflectiveness as well as the components of

Critical Race Theory. The components of agency were also aligned with the evidence of liberatory practices in teachers' decision-making efforts.

For the purpose of data analysis, it is also important to consider emic and etic (Creswell, 2013) perspectives. Since emic perspectives are most useful with an inside out approach, which attempts to understand the phenomena as it emerges and unfolds from the viewpoint of the participants, data analysis of this study was done from an emic perspective.

During the analysis part of the interview answers, I utilized the emic approach which meant starting with the ideas leading to descriptive labels, themes, and observed behaviors that emerged from the interviews and the cross-checking of the reflective notes. The next step was to connect these findings to the theoretical framework shared via chapter two (Scarduzio, 2017). Further, as the data analysis took place, the emic approach was used in order to focus on the participants' point of view while utilizing the reflective field notes to describe and analyze participants' ways of reflecting and pondering about a question, behaving, and interacting with the researcher while the interviews took place.

In order to analyze the data all traceable information such as participant names, school district name, and site of the school/district were eliminated and a pseudonym was assigned to represent each participant who took part in the study. None of this information was shared with the administrators. After the study, all forms and recordings are being stored in a safe place until the required time by the university after which time they will all be destroyed.

Reflective field notes were further analyzed to retrace any emergence of new ideas or if a newer theme developed that might warrant a follow-up interview. Since field notes can be useful in subsequent analyses including secondary analyses and metasynthesis (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018), these notes were treated in a similar light as the interviews.

Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness of a study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) used unique terms such a credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (p.300), (Creswell, 2013). To operationalize trustworthiness Lincoln and Guba further assert that a prolonged engagement in the field and the triangulation of data sources, and methods is needed to establish credibility. This section of the chapter identifies several elements that were involved in order to ensure the study's trustworthiness.

Credibility

Wood et al. (2020) state that establishing a reader's confidence in the findings requires the author to demonstrate the trustworthiness and credibility within the research process. Creswell (2013) stated that in order to demonstrate credibility, the weight of evidence in your research should become persuasive. In order to do this, member checking was done to authenticate the results with the participants (Hatch 2002; Creswell, 2013). Participants were informed of member checking prior to taking part in the study. According to Moon et al. (2016), credibility can be shared through strategies such as data and method triangulation, peer debriefing (sharing questions about the research process and/or findings with peers who provide an additional perspective on analysis and interpretation); and providing member checking.

In order to do the member checking, the participants were sent the transcripts of their interview data to check for accuracy. Member checking is an effective way to find out whether the data analysis is congruent with the study (Birt et al., 2016).

In order to establish this, each participant was sent a copy of their transcribed interview prior to the analysis of the data to look for any inconsistencies in the transcribed

manuscripts. This process was also repeated after the data was transcribed and interpreted. The participants were also sent a copy of their positionality statements.

To ensure further credibility, every attempt was taken during the analysis of the data to present and state clear evidence of participants' responses. The objectivity of the study was maintained with a clear and well-stated coding mechanism leading to the themes formation. The reflective field notes and videotaped lessons were used as a way to corroborate the responses that were received from the interviews. All ethical concerns and possible biases were addressed at the beginning of the study.

Transferability

Thick descriptions, as defined by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Korstjens & Moser (2017), are a strategy to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research. Since transferability can also lead to further investigation, it relies on this thought that findings from a study can be transferred to other settings or groups at the culmination of the study. One way to do this is to ensure that there is a rich thick description that allows readers to make decisions about transferability (Erlandson et. al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2013). Thick description of the site was done extensively along with the details of the participants and the settings of the study. It is my hope that this information provides the reader information they might need to transfer the findings to other settings and to determine whether these findings can be utilized for other settings. It was ensured that the rich, thick description is utilized not just to describe the setting and participants of the study but also the data collection mechanisms, data analysis, and results as detailed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Role of the Researcher

According to Merriam (2009), a researcher becomes the primary instrument for data collection and its analysis leading to the final results being descriptive in nature. Also, qualitative research experts suggested that researchers acknowledge their personal connections to the study up front, rather than pretending they do not exist (Creswell 2003, 2013; Merriam, 2009). This is the approach that I took as a researcher to share participants' perceptions of their teacher agency. However, considering the phenomenological nature of this case study, every effort was taken to let the participants' experiences speak for themselves as they evolved. My goal during the interview process was to first acknowledge my own biases regarding teacher agency and the professional development without discussing them with the participants, essentially keeping an open mind to the responses given by the participants.

Every attempt was made to not disclose personal perceptions during the interview so as not to bias participants' responses. Due to the researcher's personal involvement with the professional development involved in the intervention, it was important to understand and acknowledge personal opinions on the study.

Positionality Statement

My positionality to this study stems from my own professional experiences as an educator, an Instructional coach, and a Title III Project Director working to provide professional development to educators across the state of KS and beyond. In all three capacities, I spent a multitude of hours in professional developments in the name of workshops, seminars, and graduate level course-work. Sometime during these long hours on the road, I had the realization that teacher capacity-building is an aspiration that can only be achieved through true self - actualization, self-efficacy, and a belief in one's ability to bring about change.

After spending many hours participating in professional development sessions alongside many of these teachers, most of which did not transform teaching practices, I realize the need for a study that can add to the field and can add to the existing body of knowledge on the subject of teacher agency stemming from their participation in a targeted professional development intervention. Since my primary question stems from teachers' internalization of their accumulated professional learning and whether or not it reflects or contradicts the ideals they hold regarding their own agency, the interviews were conducted so that my own positionality did not cloud the data collection process.

Chapter 4 - Findings and Results

"I ended up getting my Masters because I was hooked. I had done the ESOL endorsement, and then BDI just added that curiosity for me. I wanted others to see what I saw in BDI, and now that I have this M.S., it has added that leadership aspect too. I wanted others to live this [BDI], experience it, and feel the benefits of knowing their students. There is resistance but after so many years, my principal has expressed that I have, to some degree, managed to change it."

Ms. Kaaf

Ms. Kaaf (pseudonym) was my third interviewee. We started this discussion on a Thursday afternoon. She had just finished a PD on AVID, the newest instructional framework being adopted by the district. As we switched gears to discussion surrounding BDI, all she said to me was, "I am ready." We spent close to an hour discussing shades of Ms. Kaaf's agency punctuated with her deep reflections on her life as a teacher, her positionality, and the way she has come to be recognized as an instructional leader at her building. Along with Ms. Kaaf's reflections, this chapter includes nine educators' individual and collective insights on a semi-structured interview surrounding the topics of agency and positionality. It also highlights the evidence of instructional, pedagogical, and curricular agency as observed via videotaped lessons, ranging from forty-five minutes to an hour, of the same nine educators.

Consequently, this chapter describes and reflects upon the scope and depth of teacher agency debate as evidenced through the above-mentioned data sources by presenting categories, and themes generated via teacher insights on their agency, their positionality, and the varied agentic roles they play within their own contexts. In part, this phenomenological case study attempts to do what Manen (1997) theorized about phenomenology, " Phenomenological

research is the study of lived experiences. To say the same thing differently, phenomenology is the study of the life-world, the world as we immediately experience" (p.9), he further states, "phenomenology is not concerned primarily with the factual aspects of some state of affairs, rather it always asks what is the nature of the phenomenon" (p.40). This particular phenomenology aimed to capture the instructional and pedagogical experiences of these nine teacher practitioners as they partook in the BDI professional development over the course of a three- year period. Phenomenological reduction was achieved by providing a thick description of the participants and the data analysis and making sure the researcher stayed aware, monitored, and accounted for own values, beliefs, knowledge and biases that might impact the data generation, relationships with research participants and data analysis (Berger, 2015).

Through a description of the themes and categories presented via semi-structured interviews and videotaped lessons, this chapter highlights the following broad topics about the participants:

1. Their positionality within the context of the school
2. The context they work in and roles they play within these contexts
3. The extent of their instructional, pedagogical, and curricular agency and the decisions they make within their instructional settings
4. Their own professional identity negotiations in response to the BDI PD.

Semi-structured interviews provided the primary source of data for this study. The secondary sources used to gauge the extent of teacher agency were teachers' videotaped lessons and reflective notes kept by the researcher during the interview process. It is to be noted that the observations from the videotaped lessons helped the researcher in finalizing the interview protocol and posing questions specific to the action part of agency during the interview process.

The research question that guided the data collection process of this study is:

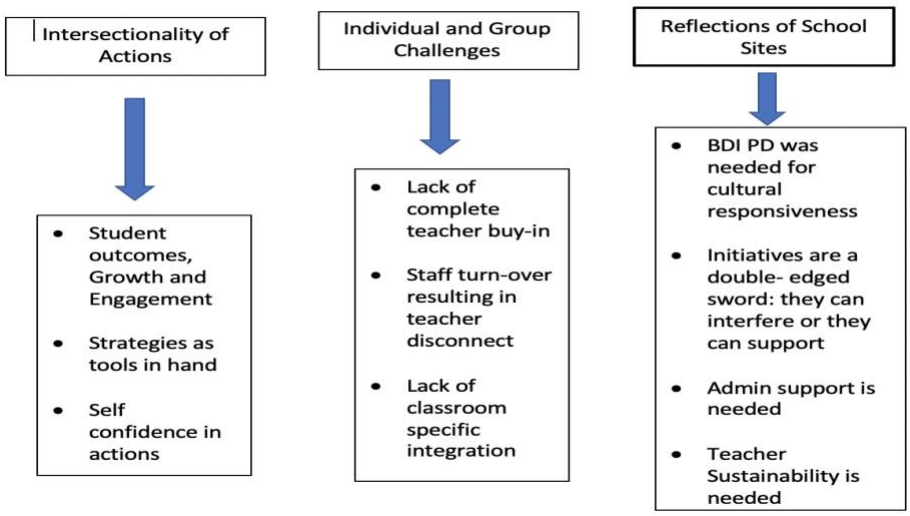
How does a professional development model grounded within a culturally responsive framework help teachers perceive the extent of their agency?

All nine teachers in the study were involved in BDI professional development grounded within the principles of a culturally responsive framework. Chapters One, Two, and Three detail the specifics of BDI professional development and how this backdrop served as an impetus for this study to take place. Subsequent to the presentation of findings from the interviews, an analysis of the a priori themes and the findings that emerged from the videotaped lessons have been shared. Certain components of BDI have been emphasized alongside the findings from the videotaped lessons.

The semi-structured interviews provided the following preliminary findings, as seen below in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 *Study findings*

Study findings



All nine participants identified student growth and acceleration as outcomes of their continued BDI implementation at the core of their agency. Participants identified BDI as the right kind of professional development for their school sites (four different ones), especially in helping them focus on and re-emphasize the need to consider students' individual biographies as starting points of instruction.

In Chapter One, three arguments were presented that provided an impetus for this study on agency: (i) teachers' action oriented response to the professional development; (ii) factors that might cause dissonance between teachers' own beliefs and the change they are being asked to make (Buchanan, 2015); (iii) any impact of contextual factors such as teacher's own positionality and the context within which they work. Specific data collected from different data sources was used to substantiate and analyze the three arguments shared above. As a reminder to the reader, this study finds its grounding from the following arguments:

- Teachers need to be active agents in educational reform in order to realize improvements in the processes of their own teaching and learning. However, different policy climates in education have not always supported this notion of reform and have often yielded varied representations of what active agency in reform means (Datnow, 2012).
- There is a need for more teacher accountability in education reform (Hammond, 2019).
- There is a disconnect between teacher professional development and the results that are expected from teachers within their own classrooms.

The following five themes of participant intentionality and/or action were finalized after transcribing the interviews, watching the videos, and a thorough analysis of the themes and categories:

- sense of empowerment for self and students;
- situatedness of identity;
- intentionality and control of actions;
- sense of agency; and
- curriculum: a nomenclature or a means to an end.

In the first section of this chapter a detailed summary of the data gathered via semi-structured interviews conducted through Zoom has been presented. This is followed by the findings from the videotaped lessons.

The interview protocol provided an insight into the individual and, to a certain degree, collective instructional and pedagogical experiences of these nine individuals. It further allowed for the unfolding of rich descriptions of how these participants view their roles within these school systems and the spaces they have come to acquire through their participation in the BDI professional development. The interviews were initially transcribed through NVivo and later individually transcribed and analyzed, which allowed for identification and isolation of words, thought patterns regarding their experiences, and participants' responses which set the stage for subsequent theme to emerge (Moustakas, 1994). According to Hirsch (2015), phenomenological research differed from other modes of qualitative inquiry since it attempts to understand the essence of phenomenon as the participants share what they experienced. Ultimately the focus for this particular research did not rest on the isolated participants or the community they inhabit but rather on the meaning and the essence of the association between the two and how this

relationship impacted their agency as they participated in the BDI professional development. The interview questions with an emphasis on teacher positionalities and their perceived agency provided an opportunity to understand this relationship.

This reading and analysis of the transcription, and the interviews led to the phenomenological reduction, which was achieved by noticing the patterns and themes as participants described their experiences within the school, their response to the BDI professional development, and the resulting academic and instructional impact on their students. This was utilized to create categories, and then further analyzed to form themes. Through four categories that were developed from this process of phenomenological reduction, five themes emerged representing the lived experiences of these nine participants. The study primarily allowed the participants' voices to be heard regarding their first-hand experiences and thoughts through the comments included with the teacher quotes, while interpretive comments regarding the action part of agency are provided for the videotaped classrooms as observed from the researcher lens.

Individual Positionalities: Situating Each Teacher's Identity

Considering that the study solely focused on the extent of teachers' agency in response to the BDI PD, it is important to share the unique positionalities of all nine participating teachers as described by them. As mentioned in Chapter Three, purposive sampling was used for the study because these individuals had the potential to purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 2013). This kind of purposive sampling allowed me, a researcher, to listen to the participants as they shared their take on their own positionalities, the reasons why they felt they have agency, and the dissonance they felt in their own work. It is researcher's hope that the following participant descriptions help the reader feel the intensity of these individuals' positionalities and how they situated themselves in this

study while getting an understanding of their lived experiences within the BDI professional development. All participants have been given a pseudonym, which has been shared with them. ***Please know that each pseudonym is an Urdu alphabet, which is the researcher's third language.***

Ms. Alif joined school X as an intern, and is now an elementary school teacher. She considered herself fortunate enough to be placed in a teacher's classroom whose walls were filled with BDI artifacts, and BDI strategies were constantly being used. Ms. Alif started her own educator journey as a self-described non-traditionalist who became a teacher quite late in life. She started her career trajectory at the current school district as the district was starting to invest in BDI as an instructional resource for teachers. Ms. Alif, who identifies as a Native American and a Mexican American takes the most pride in having a parallel positionality to that of her students. When asked about her take on this parallel positionality, she beamingly exclaimed, "Because of my experiences they are able to share their experiences." When Ms. Alif talks about curriculum, she uses the phrase "Our curriculum," and quite liberally adds that our curriculum lacks true stories of Native Americans and it is her job to fill those gaps. She stressed constantly on, "Our ethnicity and race is not represented in the curriculum," and she will do everything she can to help her learners see those gaps.

Ms. Bae started her Elementary school trajectory as a teacher in a parochial school. After eleven years in the public-school system, she attributes her Christian values, being a mom, and her experiences at a high needs, Title I co-op building where she worked during her student teaching as ultimately giving her an appreciation for a culturally responsive professional development. BDI came at a perfect time in her life. She was struggling to find ways of connecting with her students and BDI gave her the tools she needed to do so. For Ms. Bae, PDs

are an extension of her students' presence in her room, and according to her, "It was only through BDI and Trauma-Informed training that I had an appreciation of the diversity of my students. Regardless of the PD I received, I had to have certain students in my class to understand what they go through." Ms. Bae looks forward to a teacher's life post pandemic because she'll get to do her favorite thing which is more student interaction in the class.

Ms. Daal, while identifying as a White Caucasian educator, emphasizes that she has to work harder than the teachers of the same race as her students. On being asked about her positionality, she exclaimed, "I am usually the only White one in my room, it takes a lot before I can get their trust." As a Caucasian teacher she feels she has to work harder with African American students all year before trust is established with them and their parents. Having spent sixteen years as a teacher in the school district and her 8 years in her current position, she has also had experience with administrators of different races and how they either supported or challenged her performance. She has always had EL students in her class, but also feels like there hasn't been enough professional development on culturally responsive ways of working with students.

Her positionality as a White teacher in a very diverse school has led her to believe that she must trust her students more when it comes to her own instructional practices, but has also employed many trial and error situations in order to ensure that she is responding to the academic needs of students well.

Ms. Jeem is a sixth-year teacher within the public-school systems who has always taught 1st grade. She does not consider her lack of a second language ever getting in the way of her connections with her students. She works in a highly diverse building and remarks excitedly that, "Kids have been so eager to share different words with me and I am not afraid to reach out for

help." She defines her religious upbringing, and her love for the BDI instructional processes, as helping her understand the nuances of the diverse classroom community she serves in. When asked to explain about the religious upbringing and its role within her teaching career, she exclaims that, "My parents through their religious beliefs were always helping others, and this is something that I believe is being asked of me as well." At the start of her teacher career, she didn't feel prepared to serve her students, but after four years of implementing BDI, one of which was a pandemic year, she feels confident in her abilities to work with her diverse group of learners. Her biggest self-reported strength in taking control of her students' learning is, "This is not something I am making up. My students' results (through BDI) show the administration the impact it's had on my students." When Ms. Jeem spoke of the impact of BDI on her students, her voice and her facial expressions became animated with the desire to tell more of her (success) story.

Ms. Kaaf identifies as a Hispanic American and has been within the district for twelve years. She has taught multiple grade levels and is fully bilingual. Having grown up as an ELL student herself, she understands the struggle of communicating in a second language and not having the same experiences and knowledge as everyone else in the class. According to Ms. Kaaf, "I can connect with my students due to my ethnicity, the way I could never connect with my own teachers." She has always had ELL students in her classrooms and considers getting ESOL endorsement through KSU as a pivotal moment in her life. BDI worked an as an extension of the professional development she received through her participation in the ESOL endorsement. Ms. Kaaf chooses her words very carefully when she talks about the intersectionality of BDI and ESOL endorsement, especially as she considers this to be an investment she has made for her students. Her positionality stems from growing up in a high-

poverty household where her parents had to work constantly and didn't ever have time to read with her. Because of this she feels like she needs to capitalize on the time she has with the students in her class before they go home. In closure of her positionality statement during the interview she said, "I want to bring my students into a classroom which is their family and give them all the things I needed as I was growing up. This is why I try to do the best for them."

Ms. Meem, identifying as a Hispanic- American, has been at the district for eleven years, teaching at the elementary level for past five years. She is bilingual and considers her language skills an asset given the context she is in. Growing up, she was embarrassed of her bilingual language skills, but understands that she needs to leverage her language skills to support the families and students. Her own reflection over her language skills parallels what she often sees in the educational world with the families. As she says, "They are embarrassed sometimes to share about their own skills, yet it is so important to bring them into the fold of education." Due to her cultural background, she has been able to connect with students and this certainly gave her an edge in connecting with the families too, even during the pandemic year. Just like her counterparts in this study, she is appreciative of the fact that her administrators brought BDI to their school.

Ms. Noon is a Caucasian American in her seventh year of teaching in the primary grades, Ms. Noon is convinced that not knowing a second language never really stopped her from reaching to the highest potential of her students. However, she has often wondered lately if knowing a second language would have further help her in "making her students feel more comfortable." It is due to this important factor that she is starting to work on ESOL certification and getting more acquainted with the needs of the students. According to Ms. Noon, "We have such diverse demographics that I need to have that extra certification and knowledge to better

help them since I don't have their language understanding." She wants to learn as much as she can about the needs of her students. As a younger teacher, she enjoyed the focus on restorative practices to respond to students' emotional needs. At the same level, BDI instructional framework has helped her so much with student engagement.

When asked about her positionality, she beamingly talked about growing up in a loving, two parent household and juxtaposing this against the reality of her classrooms, where so many students don't come from such an environment. Due to this stark reality, she exclaimed, "I want to do the best in my classroom for them so they have the best chance of success in life. Since I come from a loving family, I want to love on them and encourage them." When prompted by the researcher on what kinds of actions constitute love, Ms. Noon reflected that definitely giving them hugs is a part of showing love, but meeting her students' needs, strengthening social emotional needs, and students holding high standards for themselves, is a huge part of how she describes love.

Ms. Sheen has nineteen years of teaching experience at the school district, and has seen initiatives come and go, but what has stayed with her is the ESOL endorsement she started her very first year of teaching. According to her, "It's the most beneficial thing she has done and that led her to have an appreciation of other professional developments (including BDI)." Not knowing a second language was never a challenge for her, even though at times she wished she had a working knowledge of Spanish. Fifty percent of her class has always been ELL learners with majority Spanish speakers. Ms. Sheen's positionality has impacted her world view and vice versa. She considers herself an Instructional leader at her current school, and is always willing to give one hundred percent to her diverse group of learners. At any given time, her class comprises of at least fifty percent identified ELs.

Ms. Tae. identifies as White, and whole heartedly announced when asked about her own ethnicity that these “Racial classifications are odd to her.” She provided a bit more context to this statement by sharing that she is married to a Black individual and has two kids who identify as mixed race. She has spent twelve years as a teacher in the district and has now happily transitioned to an ESOL teacher. Ms. Tae does have a little bit of understanding of Spanish language, but doesn’t feel comfortable enough to communicate in the language. However, she believes wholeheartedly in communicating with the families and realizes that a solid understanding of Spanish is needed for that.

She contributes her positionality to a Seattle trip where her world view was challenged and growing up in a small town where she only came across one person of color. She has experienced racism in the family which made her even more determined to be an open person towards diversity, and her path lays in opening other people’s eyes towards any kind of an injustice. BDI professional development definitely helped to solidify a lot of these diversity-specific thoughts she has had in her own life and considers her life experiences as the best thing for her. Her life dream was to teach in Mexico but for now the place she is at will do. The experiences she gained over the years have left a lasting impression on her own education trajectory and have given her the power to provide her students with the tools they might need to do better in life.

Descriptive Findings: Codes/Categories/Themes

The final data analysis for this chapter occurred via the theoretical framework described in Chapter Two. The excerpts from the interviews were first transcribed using a tabular format with one side for teacher positionality data and the other side for questions specific to agency regarding BDI and the intentionality of actions. The responses that teachers gave were also

matched against the evidence of BDI specific actions from their videotaped lessons. Initial descriptive labels were assigned to the excerpts of data derived from the participants' interviews, and a priori labels were later on used for the videotaped lessons by highlighting elements of the transcript that indicated the following:

1. teachers' action-oriented responses towards the professional development (Interview data);
2. any indication of the interruption of habitual ways of thinking and a move towards liberatory practices as described in Chapter Two (Interview data);
3. actions that indicated BDI processes (Video observation);
4. indications of culturally responsive ways of teaching (Interview +Video observation);
5. maximization of students assets (Experiential knowledge, students' responses etc) (Interview +Video Observation); and
6. teachers' confidence in preparation as a teacher in diverse settings (Interview) and indications of such within their classroom settings (Videotaped observation).

The final compilation took place by further syphoning the themes that integrated participants' shared ideas towards their students' outcomes, instructional behaviors, and narratives that added substance and credence to this phenomenological study based on the stories and the narratives shared by them. The five themes that are later presented in the chapter are a reflection of what Hirsch (2015) stated, a key characteristic of phenomenological research is its rich, detailed descriptions of the phenomenon being investigated. The description should present "how" the participants experienced the phenomenon investigated rather than any preconceived perception the researcher may have of the phenomenon being studied" (p.252).

The detailed description of categories, labels, and themes helped highlight the what and the how of the individual and collaborative experience of these nine educators through an interpretive analysis of their lived experiences as emphasized by the learnings they gained, the challenges they faced, and the confidence with which they want to maintain BDI specific instructional actions. All these experiences were wrapped in the argument regarding the extent of agency these individuals were willing to exhibit or share with me.

The following four categories helped with the final emergence of five themes: (1) teacher autonomy; (2) student outcomes; (3) curricular initiatives; and (4) collegial validation.

These four categories, and the stories and anecdotes as shared by the participants, resulted in the following five major themes: (1) sense of empowerment for self and students; (2) situatedness of identity; (3) intentionality and control of actions; (4) sense of agency; and (5) curriculum: a nomenclature or a means to an end. Ideas related to these particular themes were repeated by the participants through the stories, anecdotes, examples, and the narratives shared.

Theme 1: Sense of empowerment for self and students

The etymology of the term empowerment highlights it as a verb meaning something that gives power or authority to someone. When I first heard the term “empowered” in my very first interview with Ms. Alif within the context of BDI empowering her students, I just wrote it on the side. However, by the 6th interview, when related examples kept resurfacing, I had to pause and consider the nucleus of this term empower, through their stories. The participants repeatedly talked about what their participation in the BDI professional development process did for their students. Whether it was from the positionality of being a parent or a Christian, a second generation Hispanic-American or a White Caucasian individual, all roads ultimately led to their students and their success stories.

Four out of nine participants used the phrase “biggest bang for their buck” when they explained how they make curricular and instructional decisions for their students and how in turn these decisions ultimately empower their students. They all talked about the flexibility, the resourcefulness, and the fulfillment they have felt through the utilization of BDI in their instruction and curricular adaptations. They gave examples of their ELL students from Congo, Pakistan, India, Vietnam, and Mexico and many other countries by sharing stories of their participations in their respective classrooms. These stories centered around unassuming examples from students simply taking delight in just being in a U.S classroom to deep sharing of students talking about their journeys across the ocean, diverse experiences of their families, their roles in the civil wars in their own countries, the elephants they saw while visiting India with their parents, and having a sense of empowerment as it comes to putting their thoughts down on the tools in their hands, a phrase lovingly used by many of these nine participants to describe the BDI strategy templates that their students used.

As Ms. Alif shared, “You guide them and show them how to use it (BDI) but once you show them, it is theirs, they own it and they are so much more engaged. It has helped me since I have that extra layer of a different language, but this has empowered my students and I can show people the results.” “My student from Vietnam was able to talk about internment camps and talk about Civil Rights based on his family’s experience, while we did the vocabulary quilt (A BDI strategy). In these instances, I am helping empower them and these sharings [Sic]empower them even more.” This particular sentiment from Ms. Alif not only supports the etymology of the term empowerment itself as she talked about giving power to her students, it also speaks to the extent of her own agency based on what Bandura (1989, 2001) summarized, agency is the capacity to exercise control over one’s thought processes, motivation, and action.

Ms. Alif knows that she has students from diverse backgrounds and the empowerment that is jointly constructed in her class between her students and herself can lead to so much more for the learners. It situates them for life because someone identified these students' presence and their identity in the moment. This particular quote was a great testament to Ms. Alif's agency in response to the needs of her students.

Ms. Bae talked about her own sense of empowerment unfolding as she talked about the first day of BDI professional development, "when you did the BDI PD and shared that lesson in your language, you put us in students' shoes and I only did that for an hour or so, these students do it all day long. Through BDI, I have been able to equip my students with 'tools in their hands', which is so important because then I can see what's going on in their brain and in turn help this to shift my instruction, which ultimately empowers my students." This reflection from Ms. Bae highlights the fact that her sense of personal agency was foundational to her engagement with BDI professional development. She found a meaningful voice/role in this activity that was done during the PD and was motivated to participate in actions that would ultimately prove to be so meaningful for her students.

The interview was divided in two parts: A pre-interview that posed questions specific to the teachers' positionalities and the Interview portion that focused on the questions specific to the BDI PD and the resulting teacher agency with instructional decision making, curricular adaptations, the role of their administration etc. One thing that I noticed as an interviewer which is important to note here is that even without me prompting a question on BDI, the participants brought up BDI in their responses. Many of these teachers talked about BDI being a way of (teaching) life for them. Six out of nine participants said in parting that they cannot be removed from BDI, it will also be a part of their instructional, curricular, and

pedagogical journey. The degree to which they expressed their agency and their comfort with BDI differed but all of them shared agency with centeredness of BDI in their decision-making processes especially as it comes to student outcomes.

In fact, all nine participants shared that being able to utilize the strategies even when other initiatives have been introduced to them has been great for student engagement. As Ms. Noon shared, “before I started doing BDI, I used to do a lot of call and response where we were just reading and answering the questions. But as I started using BDI, it helped with student engagement so much. My students look forward to learning. Story bag is their favorite”. Even though each discussion surrounding the term student engagement produces a distinct understanding of what really defines student engagement, in this particular situation, Ms. Noon really wanted me to realize that she sees her students as being engaged when they look forward to their learning, and the excitement her students exhibit in turn strengthens her own pedagogical capacities.

Participants also shared that the cultural responsiveness of BDI as a whole further helped them with the curricular and instructional decision-making processes. As Ms. Tae shared, “When X introduced BDI to us, and talked about the power of individual students’ stories, I thought…bring it on, I’ve been missing this exactly.” However, the participants were also not shy about juxtaposing this against the fact that there is huge teacher turn-over, and with a lack of continued PD and an understanding for the new teachers, there is always going to be a disconnect between individual and collective agency within a school context. As Ms. Jeem shared, “I plan on sharing this with my fellow team members, but I also have time, I don’t have a family so I can prioritize it, and with others who knew BDI have left, I just have to take the lead and share or it won’t happen.” This particular sentiment from Ms. Jeem resonates with what

social cognitive theory a theoretical framework for this study shared, ‘people are agents of experiences rather than simply under goers of experiences’ (Bandura, 2001, p. 4). Ms. Jeem certainly espouses to be an agent of the BDI experience when she talks about sharing it with other educators so they can reap the benefits as well.

Theme 2: Situatedness of Identity

United due to the similarities in their teaching positions, yet poles apart due to their individual experiences, outlooks, and levels of comfort with BDI, all nine participants shared slices of their positionalities during these interviews. The most striking of them all was what Ms. Daal said, “I am Caucasian and that is an important part of BDI that we have to understand because we have to work harder than the teacher of the same race as students. It takes so much buy-in on the students’ part when teachers are different than the color of their students.” “It sometimes takes all year before the parents trust you to make decisions about their students.”

On being asked which professional development helped them in situating their positionality within the school and within their own classrooms, six out of nine teachers vehemently talked about BDI as being the catalyst to help them see their role within these diverse communities. Four out of nine participants talked about ESOL endorsement as a parallel professional development that has helped them gain an understanding of their own decision-making process. One talked about finishing a Master’s degree due to her involvement in the BDI professional development.

Three participants excitedly talked about their religion being the defining factor that lets them take so much pride in implementing BDI with their students. As Ms. Jeem mentioned, “My religion played a big role in helping me understand what I need to do. My parents (in their church) always jumped in to take charge and this was showed to me at home

too. We take care of people and that's what I have to do for my students too." Through Ms. Jeem's willingness to do it right for her students, she picked up BDI as a mechanism for her to make the right decisions about her students' needs. After three year of implementing BDI, she loves it and is at the point where she feels that, "She is very good at it" and "her results with her students" speak to her own classroom efficacy.

Positionality: A by-product of context.

All nine participants were very open to the idea of sharing their positionalities and were willing to dig deeper. Ms. Sheen articulated it well, "My positionality has changed from teaching at school X (context), I've become an advocate for ELL students and I love working with them. I focus more on the world and globally. BDI was an extra step that helps with this. My students have choices and they can share about their experiences".

Positionality: Challenging your outlook

Ms. Alif talked about the challenges that also come with the situatedness of your identity. Ms. Alif who identifies as a Mexican American and a Native American talked about seeing holes and gaps in curriculum and always wanted to fill those gaps. "If there is something that is missing especially for Native Americans, I have to bring that knowledge in." "There is often misrepresentation that I have to correct. This lack of representation can hurt our students. It is sometimes hard to relate to the realities of foster students because it is not my reality but I've had nieces who were in that situation so I think of them. As a collective, there is always a hole that we have to fill." Though Ms. Alif's words clearly define the fact that she sees her role as one where she has to bridge the gaps for students due to her positionality as a Native American, it also shares the dissonance she faces when she is unable to identify with the students. As her example of foster kids, however, even as she shares about that, she exhibits agency when she

talks about thinking of a parallel situation (example of her nieces), in order to continue to connect with her students' interpersonal needs.

Ms. Tae talked about, "I grew up in a small town, 99% white. Did not know many people of color growing up. Life experiences made me aware of what's missing with my students. I grew up with racism in my family which was not valid, which has prompted me to find tools that will validate my students. BDI was definitely one. They (BDI presenters) talked to us about honing into our positionalities." Again, I am reminded that digging into one's positionality is a messy endeavor where you try to find the nucleus of your agency or the impetus for your actions. Ms. Tae's words are a good reminder of the same.

Ms. Tae's life dream was to teach English in Mexico. However, when this didn't happen, she turned those experiences she gained by traveling to Mexico in making sure she supported her students of color. Even though questions pertaining to a person's ethnicity are difficult for her to navigate since she is in a bi-racial marriage and has two kids of her own that identify as mixed race, she understands the need to provide space to her students of color and support them "however she can." She animatedly talked about her life experiences informing her positionality. However, this also made it very clear that her family is a source of fostering that positionality for her. It was not fostered by her schools and the PD she received there "until she received BDI training," and that is a challenge that many teachers face.

To explain her point further, she gave an example of two Muslim students who were enrolled in their school during Ramadan. The students were being tested during the days they were fasting, which caused a great deal of anxiety for the students and staff. Situations like these cause dissonance in schools, especially if the schools have not had that particular population before. "Being culturally responsive does not mean you have an understanding of all

cultural differences". Ms. Tae had to lean into her positionality in order to ensure that these students received a room where they could pray and not be tested on the days they were fasting.

A major factor that often causes teacher dissonance, especially within diverse settings, is what Ms. Tae described as selective PD choices. "Problems occur because more often than not PD in our schools is on the technical aspects of teaching specifically reading and not focused on the interpersonal (which is only what she got from BDI)." She further mentioned that these kinds of conversations are important since it helps us in realizing the differences, "even if I look like the next white person, I am not the same as the next person." This particular sentiment was wrapped up in this statement, "BDI fills that gap in helping teachers learn about the kids." These teacher narratives disclosed teachers' own understanding of who they are within their professional context (positionality) and whether or not the PDs they received acknowledged their situatedness while shaping their agency.

While discussing the situatedness of identities, Ms. Kaaf shared something very profound, "Growing up as an English language learner, I understand the struggles of my students and struggles of learning." " For me this (utilizing BDI) was an investment in my students because of my life experiences whereas others at my building didn't have that." Just like Ms. Kaaf, at least five other teachers emphatically talked about how their identities impacted the way they aim to socially construct their classroom communities. As shared by Ms. Noon, "I grew up in a solid two parent household. My parents loved me and have given me and my brother all the opportunities". Ms. Noon's position(ality) in this situation is informed by her family's relationship with her and the love she received during her formative years. She wants to replicate that for her students in the classroom. For her love means, "hugging the students but also holding

them accountable, giving them (BDI) tools, engaging them in learning" which, according to her, she is able to do through an intentional focus on BDI.

Through this process of describing their positionalities the teachers not only impressed upon the role that the local context of their classrooms plays but also revealed how BDI has been present within the parameters of their everyday instructional actions by sharing such associated terms as i+TpsI, Revoicing, Tools as strategies, etc.. These testimonials confirm what Bandura (1997) suggested that "individuals are able to learn by observing others in social contexts". He posits that individuals respond to their environment based on their beliefs, values, prior experiences, sense of efficacy, and expectancies, which reminded me of the power of these teachers' sense of efficacies as it comes to their students. It is obvious that these teachers exhibit that intentionality of action but they also are aware of how their own actions impact their student outcomes.

Theme 3: Intentionality and control of actions

According to Eteläpelto et al. (2013) "Professional agency is practiced when teachers and/or communities in schools influence, make choices, and take stances in ways that affect their work and their professional identity" (p. 61). Responses to questions pertaining to teachers' ability to make specific decisions, administrative control, and their classroom evidences pointed to a focus on teachers' capacity to produce certain actions within the context in which they work.

The instructional framework of BDI, even though no longer being implemented as a district framework, lived an intentional and purposeful three years in these participating teachers' classrooms through their own accounts. Based on the reflections these teachers shared, they are in no way willing to part ways from this instructional framework. The dissonance stays in their brains with lack of new trainings for new staff, new district initiatives potentially making

BDI a secondary initiative, or an administrator inadvertently asking for evidence of a parallel initiative making BDI a secondary facet in that moment. Yet, through the dissonance they feel, the commonality of the intentionality of their actions pointing towards BDI as a framework they all believe in remained a constant. They see results and the results always speak for themselves. As Ms. Alif pointed about writing in her own classroom. “I taught Summer school this year, and my focus on BDI definitely challenged my own decisions this year.” “One kid in particular had an IEP and needed lots of writing support. I still went in and used BDI strategies as a scaffold. This kid who didn’t write anything, wrote 10 sentences. It was hard to understand but I celebrated him because he wrote and the (BDI) strategy just provided that structure. His words became sentences. I feel like BDI gives me the power and I do it very well.” As Ms. Alif shares this ultimately celebratory description, it also shows the degree of intentionality with which this teacher prompted her students’ learning. It is a reminder that control over one’s actions (agency) comes when the same actions are being challenged due to the subjectivities that the learners often bring to the situation, as in this particular case.

Participants who equated BDI with action almost did it in a way that not only does it impact their work but also their professional identities within their school settings. Over time, some of them have become leaders who are being asked to share the how and what of the BDI implementation process with their colleagues. Some of them are being proactive and helping their teams plan for next year. They are all striving to reach certain outcomes, yet the road they take differs. As Ms. Meem articulated, “When we started BDI, it didn’t go very well, first year we didn’t have much success. Too many unfamiliarities [sic], but the second year, I took a very systematic approach and it all flowed. When you go with a plan and let students’ experiences guide you, this makes teaching a little easier. We don’t know whose idea was it to

bring BDI to us, but it was a good one." This particular sentiment from Ms. Meem highlights the power of forethought, one of the three agentic properties of Bandura (1998) that pinpoint that through forethought, people motivate and guide themselves by creating action plans, adopting goals, and visualizing the likely outcomes of their actions, as in this case where Ms. Meem planned well for her students keeping in mind the experiential knowledge they bring with themselves.

One striking quote from Ms. Meem really helped understand the depth of intentionality that occurs as teachers become more agentic in their thought process. "Even though at this point people think I just know this, what they don't see is the practice I have done with my students. What they don't know is a lot goes behind the scenes and there is so much trust between us (her and students) by the end of it. But it takes practice to do it. At this point we have so much choice with BDI, but it comes with practice." Pantic (2021) states that whether and how teachers exercise agency depended in part on their commitment to any given change agenda, and their understanding of its implications for their own practices (Lasky, 2005; Sannino, 2010; Stillman and Anderson, 2015) through teacher narratives became quite apparent. The repetition of such phrases as, "biggest bang for my buck," "our results show for themselves," and "student centeredness of BDI strategies" are an indication that even though the structural and cultural aspects of school do shape teachers' agency, it is also very much internalized by teachers at their own unique level.

These phrases used by the teachers highlighted the association between their own beliefs regarding the qualities that all teachers must have while teaching within a context like theirs, but also revealed their perceptions regarding why some teachers are unable to own culturally responsive practices. As Ms. Sheen said, "As you start your educational journey, it

takes several years to understand that this particular curriculum or a manual just doesn't work well for your students and that's something we experienced teachers use with everything. You have to experience life in teaching to understand what works and it is through my experience that I saw that BDI worked. Others may not have that. New teachers may not have that." She further added, "It takes a certain mindset to decide what actions you want to take or you just want to do it for the sake of doing it?" Even though these teachers talked about their intentionality (of actions) with an unadulterated sense of certainty, it still remains uncertain whether they realize the intentionality of their actions as a long-term agentic endeavor that will always be with them.

One confounding thought that I struggle with is that even though they all acknowledged that it was an administrator who brought BDI to them, I am not sure if they realize that ultimately it was their actions and their commitment to this instructional framework that made it possible for the district to continue it for three years, and in some cases even beyond that. They realize their individual agency, yet still need a nod or an acknowledgement that their individual agency becomes a collective endeavor, and that eventually this is what helps shape change.

A particular sentiment by Ms. Noon makes this specific thought more transparent as she talked about students who have had lots of trauma needing breaks and someone who can show them that relational love. She also juxtaposed this against what new teachers really need, but instead what they end up focusing on in their classrooms. "New teachers are so focused on the classroom management and I was too and yet, we need to be focused on the relational needs of the students." "When first time I learned about it, it was so overwhelming because we are so focused on classroom management. I struggled with classroom management and yet, this ended up helping me. BDI strategies can help students process language in a meaningful way and the

conversations where students connect ideas to each other. It's the student engagement that ends up helping classroom management too." Ms. Noon vehemently verbalized to me that she wishes she had the understanding, as a new teacher, that the foundation of solid classroom management rests on the power of meaningful (to students) and engaging instructional actions exhibited by the teacher. I can't help but think that perhaps Ms. Noon always had this power and really just needed a peek into her own positionality to truly articulate it.

These participants often talked about their motivation in learning about BDI, narrated specific incidents/events that prompted them to find out more about BDI, and their own validation that often stemmed from examples of student accountability and satisfaction. There were often instances through this interview, where their sense of agency was either restored or re-constructed as they revisited their learnings with me. This was very obvious through Ms. Tae's narration of the story of two Muslim students being admitted to their school and being tested on a day they were fasting while not having a place to pray. Through an ordeal that these students went through, she put her own positionality and identity to test, utilized the learnings she gained from BDI, and reflected back on all she had learned in her professional career to find a place for these students to pray and convince people to not test these students the day they were fasting. She also acknowledged that this was a new thing for them. Their school has never had Muslim students so they will just have to deal with situations as they arise.

In a way these nine practitioners are the managers of learning and their own guardians when it comes to choosing the right kind of an instructional plan for their students. A lot of these teachers talked about an intrinsic voice that guided them in utilizing the path of BDI. Several times phrases included, "My association to BDI," "I heard that and I was sold," and "To me, it shows growth in my students." Yet, when I asked them to talk about whether there was an

external factor that might be responsible for this sense of agency, it was mostly brought down to the student level, “Because my students excel and show a sense of engagement.”

At the same time, they also talked about the frustrations when others didn’t see the similar things in BDI. As shared by Ms. Meem, “BDI is a reminder on relationships and how it helps to capitalize on people’s strengths. I resonated with it but I was also frustrated by others. I just don’t know why there was a disconnect. I just can’t see why others didn’t see a power in this.” “I was missing that art of teaching and It helped me gain confidence in every subject area.” As Ms. Meem shared her frustrations, Ms. Daal talked about how she gets validation when students interact with each other, and they need that support. She has had to do a lot of trial and error in this effort to make learning intentional for them. She does not think she gained much from any of the PDs, but it was more interpersonal and learning from others. “It is about finding out what works and sticks for your students.” When asked about what her plans for next year were, she excitedly talked about utilizing the strategy of Linking Language to send home pictures to the families that surround the topic they will be covering in their class for the week. She hopes that this action would bolster the communication that she hopes families will continue to have with their students regarding the topics they learn at school.

Final words by Ms. Kaaf impressed this theme of intentionality very clearly. She had always wanted to teach in a Title I building. She also talked about the parallels she has seen between the different principals she has worked with. “I worked under a stellar principal and then I went to work for an admin who was not as experienced (in BDI) so, I felt like the leadership part was not there because the knowledge part was not there. Sometimes teachers don’t buy in and don’t show any intentionality of doing things because the principal doesn’t have that buy in.” “I ended up getting my Masters in ESOL because of BDI…I wanted to get more

knowledge and in turn this guided me in the direction of leadership. It's not that I necessarily wanted to become a leader but I wanted to teach others about BDI. Once I lived BDI and saw how it opened up spaces for me, I needed others to see that too. And after 4 years, my principal has greatly expressed how he feels about ways I can help." Agents as described in Chapter Two are not just planners and thinkers but also self-regulators. They do so by adopting behavioral standards against which they evaluate their performances. They respond with positive or negative evaluative self-reactions depending on how well their behavior measures up to their adopted standards (Bandura, 2018). From Ms. Kaaf's words, it was obvious that she has self-regulated her own act of intentionality as it comes to BDI and being able to utilize the framework in her own classroom.

Theme 4: Sense of agency in instruction and planning

A question that has been on my mind since the beginning of these interviews has been, "Why are some professional learning experiences a hit with teachers while others fall flat?" This was the theme that tested my faith as a researcher several times during this process. Even though, as a researcher, I am in a quest to focus on the phenomena of teacher agency, it is against the backdrop of a professional development where I played the role of a facilitator, and all the participants were at the receiving end of it. After several hours and days of listening to the interviews, checking and rechecking them against the transcripts, and bringing my own objective self to it, I felt almost ready to talk about this particular theme. This was a turmoil I had to get past because it was not just a theme, but it was also an outcome that as a researcher I have been trying to investigate.

Ms. Alif's words left a lasting impression on me as a researcher. Something I know I am going to have to investigate more. "BDI is the only PD that has truly prepared me for

the cultural diversity of my classroom. You really can't teach a kid if they are not comfortable with you and this is something I had to learn. I am so glad that I worked under a teacher who believed in this (BDI) the same way as I do now. You know, during the PDs when you give us the opportunities to share, that is what helped me in having so much power in my own class. Now, I do it so well. It (BDI) has helped me to get my kids to open up, revoice, share, and write. And when they write, it is like magic. Kids who have processing difficulties, the possibilities are endless with BDI. And this is why I will always be a BDI teacher. I tell others…always, that I wish we were a BDI district." "Using BDI during the pandemic was a whole new thing. Virtual collaboration among students was hard but I still did it." "I have a library that I have built for myself with BDI." Since a core focus of the study has been to reflect on teachers' agency in response to the culturally responsive PD, this particular thought from Ms. Alif reminded me of the power of her pedagogical praxis as being liberatory where she is willfully exercising her influence to reminds others of BDI and her agency to align freedom and equity of her students with academic learning.

Of particular importance to me as a researcher was, when I asked Ms. Alif whether or not she will consider herself an instructional leader in a larger setting due to her faith in her own instructional processes, her first response to me was 'No'. However, two days later, I received an email from her that talked about her reflecting a bit more on the question and how she would consider herself a leader given the depth of knowledge she has, however that question has never been posed to her, so she was hesitant to respond to it when the question was posed the first time. Her sense of agency became quite apparent with this particular sentiment as well, "Racial divide is something in my classroom that I don't hide. If I am utilizing a strategy, I stress the importance of our cultures. Most of my students who are from X, they have lived here all

their lives. They can learn so much from my students from Samoa, Vietnam, and Mexico. I need to use that and BDI strategies help with it so much." These words from Ms. Alif speak directly to the power of students' experiential knowledge. Throughout her interview, one thing that Ms. Alif continuously pressed on was the important role her positionality and her identity played within the context of the school where she teaches. It is a very diverse building, and she receives a lot of ELs every year. She constantly reminded me that one part of her job was to ensure that she fills in the gap that curriculum might present by utilizing her students' stories, and that is exactly what she did in this particular quote.

Families were brought in several times during these discussions. From Ms. Bae talking about emphasizing on the importance of utilizing natives language at home with the parents, to Ms. Daal saying, "sometimes due to my identity and what's visible, it takes a whole year for the parents to trust me, to be the teacher of their kids," there was continual reference to the part that families play in this process. The extent of agency that was shared through these interviews differed but each one of these educators let me know through their own unique way that they had agency and they were not afraid to share it. What, Ms. Sheen shared towards the end of her interview, "It [BDI] has made me focus on appropriateness and the inappropriateness of what is even needed." "The curriculum is not always well thought out so you always have to use the lens of whether or not they will connect with it and BDI strategies just happen to provide that support," encapsulated the extent of curricular and instructional agency a lot of these teachers seem to be experiencing. This also strengthens the argument that Depaepe et al. (2013) made, "aligned with rationalism, an aware perspective positions (teachers') knowledge as often tacit, developed through (inter)action with the context and within local systems (Brown et al., 1989; Lave and Wenger, 1991). This is often characterized as (intuitively) knowing-to-act

within a certain context and is constructed through the actors' interpretations of the local context, therefore being inextricably tied to the actor. Often teachers are criticized for not sifting through the mandates that are enforced on them, yet these educators repeatedly talked about using the sense of their own agency to decipher the appropriateness of a certain mandate or curriculum through their accumulated agentic lens.

Theme 5: Curriculum: A nomenclature or a means to an end

During the interview, conversations around curriculum were front and center. In response to the question specific to how these teachers were making their curricular decisions, the responses ranged from, "Curriculum has so many deficits" to "Yes, for me curriculum and strategies go hand in hand." There were responses such as, "Wish we had BDI when X curriculum was in place" to "I had to have certain (diverse) students in my class for me to really see how BDI aligned with our X curriculum." No matter the kind of response that I received, one thing was clear: for these teachers curriculum is a nomenclature, a label, a concept, and an idea.

It is not a means to an end, it is a resource that they use to guide their lessons. Every video that I observed showed references to curriculum. In some classrooms, teachers walked around with their curricular book in their hand, in others, curriculum was mentioned in passing and the comments were made, "Yes, this story is from our X curriculum, but today we will look at this because it gives us more details." This particular statement from one teacher in her video was echoed by another teacher during the interview, "The curriculum we use, our ethnicity and our race is not represented well. Or sometimes it is not accurate." "If there is something missing, that is a misrepresentation for me, so I have to fill that gap and I do it all the time. I bring in other resources." "Our students need curricular adaptations and we must be prepared for that." As these participants talked about the missing narratives from the curriculum

and the steps they have taken to fill in the gaps, Rogers and Wetzel (2013) definition of agency as the capacity of people to act purposefully and reflectively on their world, and Aydar (2015) argument that the teacher is not "a neutral player in the classroom, but on the contrary, her positionality in relation to her students, and to the broader context in which the teacher was situated is vital," became quite evident. These teachers are not neutral players, they reflect on the world they inhabit and try to fill in for the weaknesses. They exhibit their agency through their positionality as placed against their students' especially within this curricular debate where they understand the deficits that exist and are willing to sift for the appropriateness of what's needed for students.

Descriptive Findings from the Videotaped Classroom Observations

Videotaped lessons were used to observe the instances of agency in teachers' actions specific to the processes associated with the BDI instructional framework. These lessons that were filmed during 2019-2020 school year, gave a glimpse of teachers' utilizing various BDI structures in their classrooms, namely Activate, Connect, Affirm, Revoicing, i+TpsI, and scaffolding for language and academic development. In each of the videos, teachers were seen utilizing a BDI tool, an action that they repeatedly discussed in the interviews as well.

The Inventory of Situationally and Culturally Responsive Teaching (ISCRT) tool (Murry, 2015; Herrera, 2013) (Appendix C) was used to observe instances of culturally responsive and situated practices in the teachers' classrooms. ISCRT rubric (Herrera, 2016) was also often utilized during the implementation of the BDI intervention with the teachers to provide feedback. The videos were coded using the 22 Individual indicators categorized under and aligned with the five standards of Joint Productive Activity, Language and Literacy Development, Contextualization, Challenging Activities, and Instructional Conversation, along

with the processes that were specific for the three phases of BDI instructional framework of Activation, Connection, and Affirmation.

Individual Teacher Video Observation

The a priori codes of (1) Intentionality and control of Actions (2) Sense of agency in instruction and planning, and (3) Curriculum: a nomenclature or a means to an end were aligned to the observations of the videos, along with the new inductive codes that emerged through the observation.

Ms. Alif's Instructional Actions

Ms. Alif's Instructional Actions repeatedly exhibited indicators that align with the principles of BDI. Most observable in this 50-minute lesson on text structures utilizing the strategy of Extension Wheel were the indicators of Joint Productive Activity (JPA), where students and teacher co-constructed the strategy of extension wheel and navigated the progression of the lesson utilizing the same strategy and Challenging Activities (CA). With the clear evidence of the Activation phase (Opening of the lesson) and the Connection phase (Work time) as the overarching framework for her lesson, Ms. Alif provided her students many opportunities to share their experiences, share their ideas with each other, stop and think about the topic, engage in meaningful questioning, and write at multiple intervals.

During the observation of Ms. Alif's video, the instructional act of writing by students was witnessed repeatedly. This particular evidence of writing was corroborated by what was shared by Ms. Alif during the interview, "Writing is an act that is very dear to me and I feel like BDI helps me foster it meaningfully." Students were assigned partners at the beginning of the lesson to discuss and confirm their ideas with each other and each partner was given ample time to discuss. The following instructional actions were observed during this lesson:

- She facilitated co-construction of the strategy.
- There was consistent and systematic connections to students' thoughts by asking such questions as, "How would you describe Fog? Can you measure Fog? What would you add to our extension wheel based on what you read*?"*
- As students discussed their thoughts, she walked around the class to watch for students' academic behaviors and listen to their conversations.
- She revoiced students' thoughts as they expressed their thoughts on their extension wheels.
- She asked students to use their native languages to add their words to the extension wheel.
- She had clear expectations for the students that she stated verbally and in writing.
- She consistently monitored students' states of minds by utilizing such phrases as, "Does this make sense to you?" or "Can anyone add something to the words that were shared by XXX student?"
- As the complexity of the lesson increased about half-way during the lesson, she moved the students from partner talk to having them discuss in small groups. As students' writing skills progressed on the extension wheel, Ms. Alif provided direct feedback to students by walking to their tables, leaning down and discussing with them.

Ms. Bae's Instructional Actions

Ms. Bae's lesson was about Alfred Nobel. Utilizing the strategy of Story Bag, Ms. Bae kept the focus on students' background knowledge and inferencing skills as she utilized the structures of Activation, Connection, and Affirmation for this particular lesson. The following

ISCRT standards were observed in this lesson: Joint Productive Activity, Language and Literacy Development, and Contextualization. The following instructional routines were observed throughout the lesson sequence:

- Affirmation of students' thought process from the very onset of the lesson;
- Lots of why questions, challenging students to think beyond what was evident in the text (Curricular Agency);
- Utilization of questioning as a strategy to connect students' known knowledge to the new topic;
- Having students revoice words shared by their peers;
- Providing lots of opportunities for students to connect to their experiential knowledge;
- Providing opportunities for students to share/document their own funds of knowledge; and
- Multiple, meaningful reminders for students to think about their own thinking by utilizing phrases such as, "Inferencing is thinking about your own thinking. Inferences don't have to be 100% right or wrong. As learners, you can always revise your thinking. When you actually change your inferences, it shows that you are actually thinking about the text". (Sense of Agency in instruction and planning)

Throughout the lesson, Ms. Bae was observed intentionally listening to her students and at one point during the lesson, she actually utilized a student's inference as an example to further share with her students how their inferences can always change, thereby building onto the ecology of the classroom.

Besides the above-mentioned instructional actions, the following gestures were repeatedly observed during the lesson: Proximity to the students, lots of eye contact, encouraging gestures, hands on students' shoulders, frequent stops at individual tables, leaning in and listening to students' conversations, confirming and disconfirming with students frequently during the lesson.

Ms. Jeem's Instructional Actions

Besides the utilization of Activation, Connection, and Affirmation, Ms. Jeem utilized multiple instructional routines where she paused and listened to her students, gave them hearty hi-fives, bent down to their level while reading little books, rotated between multiple table groups, and used the phrase 'Hocus pocus everybody focus' multiple times during her 45-minute lesson to maintain her students' interest. The BDI strategy of Pic-Tac-Tell, which she also discussed with me during the interview as her signature strategy and something that "she had become extremely good at without any guidance from anyone else because that's the beauty of BDI, you can just pick it up and do the strategies", was used during this lesson on Ocean Life.

(Sense of Agency).

The Activation phase of BDI unfolded in her classroom as she interacted with her students, when she had them read at their own pace, discuss in groups, and use their phonetic spellings to add their own words to their Pic-Tac-Tell templates, because in that moment, "spelling didn't really matter, what mattered was their ideas."

Besides the standards of Joint Productive Activity, Language and Literacy Development, and Challenging Activities, the following instructional routines were also observed throughout the lesson sequence:

- Simultaneous partner and group conversations;

- Modifications of instructions based on what students shared in their small groups;
- Consistent opportunities for students to write about their individual connections;
- Use of questioning as a scaffold to advance students' linguistic processing; and
- Meaningful connections to individual students' understanding and experiences.

This observation of Ms. Jeem's class definitely affirmed to me what she had said during her interview, "I often open up my classroom for others to observe the BDI strategies." "Others from the district also come and observe, but what they don't see is the effort that goes on in my classroom as I raise expectations for all my students, as I make sure that all my students get to participate. As I make sure that all my students understand the routines." All these words of Ms. Jeem's were obvious in this class. There was a lot of effort on her part to ensure equal participation from everyone in the group. Every time she reached a table group, she either bent down or sat on her knees to maintain eye contact with the students, ask them questions, and encourage them to interact and share.

Ms. Sheen's Instructional Actions

For this particular lesson**,** Ms. Sheen's little ones started the lesson on the carpet. They sat facing a visual of a mountain in order to start the strategy of Linking Language. Ms. Sheen reminded them to take a good look at the picture and consider all their feelings and thoughts as they attend to the visuals that had been placed on their tables. The lesson further proceeded to a collaborative space for students where they had a singular expectation to begin with: "Everyone must share and collaborate with the others at the table." Besides the standard of Joint Productive Activity that was well supported in Ms. Sheen's room, I could see shades of Instructional Conversations and Language and Literacy vividly in her room. The following instructional actions were evident in Ms. Sheen's class:

- Students consistently utilized pre-inventive spellings to share their interpretations of the visuals. In this instance the only thing that mattered was their understanding. Everyone got a chance to share.
- The excitement in Ms. Sheen's voice was helpful to her students as she shared such phrases as, "Ooooh! Good start to the sentence," or "I see your partner is helping you," and utilized questions like, "What does this picture remind you of?" "Do you think you have read a text that it reminds you of?" These prompted responses from students like, "It reminded me the cherry trees that I have seen."
- The interaction between Ms. Sheen's students was organic and alive. They were asked to share everything they discussed with their partner. Students were encouraged to repeat each other's words.
- Students' experiential knowledge was affirmed, as the student said, "It reminded me of the book that I have read," or "It reminds me of my grandma's garden."
- There were lots of text-text connections, and text-world connections that were fostered among learners. Interaction was fostered throughout the lesson.

Ms. Tae's Instructional Actions

During the topic on Native Americans, Ms. Tae and her students focused on the topic of text structures. The strategy for this lesson was the DOTS chart, and throughout the lesson the standards of JPA and CA were clearly observable. The following instructional actions were observed in Ms. Tae's class:

- Students were given multiple opportunities to add their own words, ideas, and thoughts.

- Students' connections were reinforced throughout the lesson as they shared their ideas on the DOTS chart. As students shared their thoughts on the DOTS charts, Ms. Tae gathered students' words and used those to further the conversations in the class.
- Ms. Tae affirmed students' words with a quick nod, with a quick share and a reminder that if she doesn't say their word, they should still keep all their words because they are theirs and are very important. Throughout this exchange with Ms. Tae, students continued making connections and affirming their peers.
- Writing was encouraged throughout the sequence of the lesson and their metacognition strengthened through questioning. Throughout the lesson sequence the class switched back and forth between whole group and small group discussions. Students read, discussed, added to their DOTS chart, and willingly shared with their peers.

Ms. Noon's Instructional Actions

Utilizing the strategy of Story Bag, Ms. Noon encouraged her students to infer from the very onset by utilizing structures such as turn and talk. As the students interacted with each other, she also asked them to explain their rationale to each other on why they chose a certain picture to go with the topic of the day. I was particularly focused on this step, since during the interview, Ms. Noon had talked about this structure of turn and talk as being fundamental for her students to gain their confidence. The following instructional actions were evident in Ms. Noon's lesson:

- Metacognitive questions were used to challenge students' thought processes.

- Multiple listening, speaking, reading, and writing opportunities were provided to students to express and utilize their academic language for higher order thinking.
- To facilitate conversations in the classroom, Ms. Noon encouraged students to share their ideas liberally.

Ms. Meem's Instructional Actions

The particular lesson of Ms. Meem's was defined by the following ISCRT standards: Joint Productive Activity, Challenging Activities, and Language and Literacy Development. The word of the day that students were trying to tackle was "Specialized." As her students huddled around their tables, the conversations erupted regarding what Specialized might mean.

- The association of the fast food place McDonalds with the term specialized as shared by one of the table groups was met with a lot of enthusiasm. This particular step generated a lot of discussion in her class and got the entire classroom community focused on the topic of the day. The following instructional actions were evident in Ms. Meem's class.
- Her walls were adorned with students' word walls throughout the room.
- Students used "big words" such as "marketing" and "talent" to describe the little words that they often encounter in their own reading and writing.
- She constantly asked them to think about the connections they can make to the text. Instructional processes like questioning and student collaboration were used to help students process the conversations.
- Her voice raised when she picked up students' words and revoiced them. Students were given opportunities to hold thoughts in their brain and connect their ideas to others.

- Students were constantly reminded of their tool vocabulary quilt. The students' completed vocabulary quilts were displayed in front of them.
- She constantly utilized such phrases as, "What connections are we making here?" and. "What does this mean to you?"

Ms. Daal's Instructional Actions

Turn and talk is most certainly a favored structure in Ms. Daal's class. Throughout the lesson sequence, Ms. Daal provided multiple meaningful opportunities for her students to discuss and share. The following instructional actions were evident in Ms. Daal's class:

- She gave kudos to her students when they made past connections.
- As students read with her, there were several pauses during which she affirmed students' prior experiences. She gave them opportunities to share those experiences with each other and in smaller groups.
- Through her own questioning, she strengthened students' abilities to pose questions about trees, the animals that climbed the trees, and what the animals found out when they climbed the trees.
- There were investigations of students' background knowledge, and it was carried throughout the lesson. Scaffolding was provided to students through the drawing of visuals. The visual reference and the visual was shared with the students. Consistent opportunities were provided to students to share what their thoughts were.

Ms. Kaaf's Instructional Actions

Ms. Kaaf started her lesson with a reminder that it was a new day of the lesson so students will need their tools for the strategy of Linking Language. A student in her class was

having a rough morning, which was shared with others and the class was reminded that he would join when he was ready. Just like Ms. Meem, Ms. Kaaf asked students to think, remember, and feel all the feelings about the visuals. The following instructional actions based on ISCRT were evident in Ms. Kaaf's class:

- Students in Ms. Kaaf's class did not have a pre-determined group, they were moved around to form groups. (The reasoning for this was asked later on, and it was shared that this was done to have them sit with others who can help them process information.)
- As students worked on their posters, Ms. Kaaf walked around, paused, and asked questions.
- Students added words, pictures, thoughts, and ideas to their posters throughout the lesson sequence.
- Lots of visual and linguistic scaffolding was done for the students.
- Constant reminders were given to students to check their illustrations. At the end of the lesson, students did a retell using their words. The only challenge they had was that they had to use their brain and their memory.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the a priori codes of (1), Intentionality and control of Actions (2), Sense of agency, and (3) Curriculum: a nomenclature or a means to an end were initially aligned to the observations of the videos. Biesta and Tedder (2006) defined agency as the ability to exert control over and give direction to one's life. This particular sentiment was shared by the participants over and over again through the interviews as they shared how BDI provided them with opportunities to implement tools and strategies that were meaningful and specific to their students. This was evidenced in teachers' instructional actions

exhibited via an interplay of teacher instructional behavior and student response, and, in many ways, student academic behavior and teacher instructional response through the videotaped lessons. A few years later, in a 2015 publication, Biesta talked about agency as an emergent phenomenon which combines several dimensions. Biesta (2015) argues that agency then is achieved by individuals through an interplay of personal capacities and the resources, affordances, and constraints of the environments by means of which individuals act. Through these videos, these educators exhibited many culturally responsive actions as they created culturally centered and learner supported (Bristol, in press) ecologies needed within the spaces they occupy due to the diverse nature of the schools.

These video lessons exhibited liberatory practices being utilized by these teachers as they created classroom spaces that were striving to take the conceptual standard of diversity that has been a standard for public schools to a more practical and collaborative endeavor. They were not creating an artificial context for the students within their classrooms, but one where the complexities of instructional behaviors were evident as they paused to reroute their discussions or revoice something that didn't make sense to a student. Through their actions, classrooms were seen as spaces for democratic action (Jefferson et al., 2018) as teachers and students jointly worked on the tools in their hands. Students were equal actors (Kirshner, 2015) in the production of knowledge as the teachers utilized insights from students to modify their own instruction as they changed a certain question to be asked or placed students in specific groups.

Summary

This chapter provided the data analysis and the results of this mission to determine the extent of teacher agency. Through a thick description of the participants targeted to gather data organized around the research question, it includes reflective voices of the participants in order

to share an unadulterated version of their experiences as narrated by them. It was hoped that teacher narratives as presented through this chapter reveal themselves as an evolving and an emergent phenomena of agency yet at times they also revealed the situatedness of agency as a "point in time" activity that revealed itself due to the context where these individuals work. These lived experiences of the teachers brought me back to the place where I started with the literature review. Agency revealed itself as an individual characteristic, and at the same time, agency is directly associated with action, that is things that individuals or collectives actually do while affecting their instructional actions and professional identity. These nine individuals gave in-depth insights into their positionalities, reflected with me, and above all gave me their precious time to provide insights in response to the question: How does a professional development model grounded within a culturally responsive framework help teachers perceive the extent of their agency? The conversations that were held with the teachers revealed the positions they have seemed to acquire within the context of their schools, the agentic roles they play within these contexts, the extent of their instructional, pedagogical, and curricular agency and the decisions they make within their instructional settings and above-all their own professional identity negotiations in response to the BDI Professional development.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion and Discussions

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological case study was to explore the extent of teacher agency in response to a culturally responsive professional development model. The researcher was interested in discovering how these practitioners gained and practiced their agency (if any) in their instructional practice and whether or not their positionality informed their decision making and the actions they took in their classrooms. Lived experiences of these nine practitioners were captured primarily through the face-to-face interviews conducted via Zoom. Coding of their videotaped lessons was done to capture the essence of BDI instruction and indications of teachers' curricular agency. The interview responses were coded in categories and further syphoned into five different themes as shared via Chapter Four.

This final chapter while presenting an overview of the data collection process, also shares the analysis that was done to answer the research question on agency, while highlighting its alignment with the combined theoretical frameworks. Following this description, the chapter also presents the results based on the study's findings, the study's contributions to research, and the implications for practice for both emerging and seasoned teachers as well as other education personnel. The intent of this research study is to augment the body of knowledge surrounding teacher agency and the actions practitioners exhibit as they take control of their own instructional and curricular decision making within the contexts in which they teach. The researcher's hope is that this study offers insight for researchers, university and community college faculty, academic administration, district personnel, policy makers, and K-12 educators. This chapter also shares recommendations for future research, as well as the limitations that were found within the study.

Summary of the Study

As I write this chapter and the conclusions of my study, I can't help but reflect on the timing of this particular chapter. It's the beginning of the fall semester, schools across the nation are starting to open, and teachers both new and seasoned are back in their buildings attending professional developments. Jubilant teachers try to take it all in with the promises of changing their classroom practices based on the information they receive. Yet, if my 17+ years of association with teacher education and schools is any indication, then generally these promises fizzle out a few months into the school year and many educators find themselves "back in a rut" of "business as usual."

As I interviewed these practitioners, I was repeatedly reminded of the challenge that remains ahead of them: a new initiative is about to start in their district. Many of the educators came straight from attending the beginning of the year PDs as they sat down to discuss the agency specific questions with me. They were forthright in sharing the new direction that the district has decided to take, wanted to assure me that BDI will always be a part of their professional repertoire, and constantly and carefully juxtaposed their own positionality and identity against the questions that I tossed their way. As we parted ways towards the end of the interviews, they talked about sharing the new learnings they gained via BDI with the novice teachers in their buildings, but also shared the skepticism of intersecting initiatives and how some teachers may never be able to see its uniqueness as it comes to classroom implementation and engagement for students.

This study used a qualitative, phenomenological approach. Phenomenology offers a theoretical lens to understand people's lived experiences of a phenomena (Bhattacharya, 2017).

To participate in this study, participants had to have been involved in the BDI professional development, and be an in-service educator at one of the four sites where PD was provided.

Since the backdrop of this particular study is a culturally responsive professional development, it is important to situate the arguments presented through this chapter against the notion that teacher professional development is often considered a fixed construct within the U.S. public school system, yet strategies and means utilized for teacher development vary based on the obligations, vision, culture, and available resources of individual institutions (Indika, 2016). Every day our educators are compelled to make instructional and pedagogical choices, to comply with a given initiative, or perhaps to defy a certain initiative or curricular plan. These interviews revealed facets that are often present while teachers make decisions that are reflective of complex issues such as their own positionalities, their interactions within professional communities of practice, and social and professional goals they have set for themselves as they provide instruction in these diverse communities.

A critical understanding for me as a researcher of this study was that these highlights of teachers' impressions of their own evolving learning and agency, and often of themselves as learners involved in this PD situation have to be analyzed in order to understand how teachers develop their instructional and pedagogical habits. As Imants, Wubbels, & Vermunt (2013) argue, at the core of such investigations of teachers as learners is the role that teacher agency plays. Teacher agency is certainly critical in this construction of knowledge about teaching and learning and to help understand the role that teachers play in driving professional development agendas in schools. The fact that these teachers decided to stay with BDI instructional processes even when the district moved into a new professional development framework is an indication that teachers can and should have the power to drive a district’s

professional development agenda, yet they stay on the fringes when the final decisions regarding certain professional development agendas are made.

Throughout this study, agency has been referred to as an individual's capacity to plan and enact change, direct and regulate their actions and influence external events and environments. Therefore, agency is a critical consideration in any form of learning. As the arguments were put forth in chapters one and two where agency is understood as an individual characteristic (capacity), another approach to agency being directly associated with action, that is things that individuals or collectives actually do while affecting their work and professional identity were either challenged or confirmed throughout the course of the study. Further as the data was analyzed the following premise put forth by Gurney & Liyanage (2016), teachers' exercise of their learner agency depends upon a range of factors, their career stage (Christensen & Fessier, 1992; Lynn, 2002) along with the identities and identity positioning in communities of practice (Gurney, Liyanage & Gharachorloo, 2014; Trent, 2011), and often the policy and administrative priorities of establishments in which they work (Feixas, 2004), were either challenged or confirmed at one point or another during the course of this study.

The participants for this study were contacted by the researcher, and, after the initial consent form was signed, the face-face interviews were conducted via Zoom. Prior to creating the interview protocol, the researcher utilized the videotaped lessons to finalize the interview protocol. The protocol was also shared with the primary advisor. The interview was divided in two distinct parts, where the first part of the interview labeled "Pre-interview on positionality" was discussed to gather information on teachers' positionalities and whether or not these positionalities played a role in advancing or lapsing the extent of teachers' agency. The pre-interview sessions on positionality took about 15 minutes, with specific questions asked

related to participant's demographics and their positionality. The follow- up interview related to questions specific to their agency and lasted anywhere from 35 minutes to fifty minutes.

To have a better understanding of each individual's response to the BDI PD and the resulting agency, the participants were asked open-ended questions that included questions specific to their positionality, their perceptions of what did and didn't work for them, the role their administrators played, and the direction they plan on taking as new initiatives are introduced in their respective schools. The results showed that even though almost all the participants were BDI believers, the extent to which they would implement the BDI instructional framework in light of the fact that support from "experts" was no longer available, varied. Over half of the participants showed a keen desire to share their BDI successes with others, and considered their identity a factor in positioning them in a way that they could positively make an impact in the lives of their students.

All nine participants described their BDI professional learning experience as 'solid' and something that was needed by their school. Four out of nine participants talked about taking up a leadership role in helping other teachers at their buildings learn BDI. Although issues such as new district initiatives and teacher turn-over at their specific schools were highlighted, the results indicated that all nine participants will continue to implement BDI within their own school settings. Eight out of nine educators talked about incrementally developing curricular and instructional agency in how they planned their lessons using the BDI strategies because their students' results were so powerful, as evidenced from quotes such as, "curriculum often becomes secondary" and "I now know what to bridge and what to take out."

Once interview transcripts were available, they were sent to the participants in order to do the member-checking for this study. Interview transcriptions were then coded by

hand, using an open-coding process (Murders, 2017). NVivo software was used initially as the interview data was collected. The researcher read each transcript, highlighting statements that pertained to participants' experiences with decision making, control over their own actions, their growth as an educator, and appropriateness of BDI as a framework for culturally and linguistically diverse settings. The coding process led to a disclosure of participant phrases, paragraphs, words, and ideas that were grouped into labels such as 'empowered' which ultimately led to the final five themes and four different categories. Some descriptive labels appeared between different transcripts, which helped with the final themes, while other descriptive labels were specific to an individual interview such as Ms. Tae's statement. "I grew up in a very very [sic] small town with 99% White population. My real understanding of diversity came from my trip to Seattle, Washington. I realized people around me said things at home that were not accurate. I knew I had to do something and that has carried over in my teaching. I wanted to open more people's eyes around me." Later on, she goes on to say that it was this particular aspect that drew her to BDI the very first time she heard it. Ms. Tae's description of her socialization was specific to her story and yet every participant shared a personal story that was unique to their positionality and that in a way impacted their teaching outlook.

The categories that emerged through the initial labels helped with the final five themes. As the categories morphed into themes, they represented and expressed the phenomenon of change/control/action through teacher participation in BDI professional development and the resulting teacher actions and behaviors that showed shades of agency. The focus of this study, as well as the main research question, was to determine the extent of teacher agency as a result of their participation in the BDI professional development. The themes discussed in Chapter four

answer the question, as well as create a picture of these teachers' positionalities and the lived experiences of these nine participants.

Discussion of Results

Leijen et al (2020) stated that, while increasing attention has been paid to the concept (of agency), the contexts and circumstances that characterize these limited forms or a lack of agency have also been revealed repeatedly. As mentioned in Chapter One and Two, educational policies that emphasize testing, accountability, and efficiency have been heavily criticized for restricting teacher agency (Mirra & Morrell, 2011). These arguments presented themselves through teacher interviews, but both the interviews and the teacher videos also revealed that teacher turn-over, a lack of collective sense of implementation, and in some situations that push from the admin are also the reasons why agency may occur in some teaching situations and not others.

Primarily Bandura's seminal work on agency along with Critical Race Theory in education served as a combined theoretical framework for investigating the appropriateness of the findings being presented through this study. Further, the argument by Eteläpelto et al. (2013) and Biesta & Priestly (2015) that agency is multifaceted, dynamic, and emergent provided further support in understanding the essence of agency as being practiced by the participants in this study. It is researcher's hope that the outcomes of this study pointing towards the important role that teacher positionality can play when appropriate professional development is matched with the context-based student outcomes can augment the arguments regarding the importance of teachers being able to employ elevated degrees of professional agency when attention is placed on the contexts in which they work. It is also important for the stakeholders and policy makers to see agency as a key dimension of teachers' professionalism and identity development.

This research very much adds to the significance of a context- based perspective to the agency debate. Based on what Eteläpelto et al. (2013) argue, “Professional agency is practiced when teachers and/or communities in schools influence, make choices, and take stances in ways that affect their work and their professional identity” (p. 61) and the insights these educators provided regarding their agentic instructional behavior, decision making capabilities, and the dissonance that happens regarding their own professional robustness all point towards the role that the context they teach in and the positionalities they hold play on a daily basis. It brings forth a very important argument that positionality conversations are important in both the pre-service teacher education as well as within in-service contexts.

As Toom et. al (2017) share that it (professional agency) is an integrated concept comprising of teacher's cognitive, motivational, and attitudinal resources as well as skills and abilities that help promote and manage learning in multiple professional contexts (especially in the classroom and professional community), the trends that emerged from the themes indicate that rather than simply acting in the environment, these educators see agency more as a potential to act because of the environment they are in and vice-versa where the environment prompts them to act a certain way. As Ms. Bae shared, “I had to have the student from Congo to experience his presence in my classroom to be able to actually incorporate my learnings from BDI and I needed BDI to help guide me on what to do in these culturally different situations.” Further, their attainment of agency is also influenced by their own individual efforts in understanding the resources that are shared with them (in this case BDI was the resource that was shared and implemented) and cultural and structural factors they are a part of. Then perhaps one can safely assume that agency results from “the interplay of individual’s capacities and environment conditions” (Leijen, 2020).

All nine participants expressed a desire for me as an interviewer to understand that their professionalism, experiences, and implementations specific to BDI had a purpose and much contemplation and reflection on their part went into their 'why' of BDI. This particular argument was substantiated as they collectively shared that their professional voices can hold weight now since their BDI artifacts showing student growth are clearly visible to everyone. They are being asked to be the model classrooms, they are asked to be adjuncts at the university classes, and wherever they go, they take a BDI specific evidence with them to show the possibilities to others. As Ms. Alif mentioned, "When I share the artifacts on my walls or during Covid when I taught virtually, I shared them via social media, there was curiosity. People ask me how I did X or how I implemented a certain strategy." This sentiment from Ms. Alif shows that she has a certain professional influence, and that influence can be further exhibited or solidified when she shares her instructional wins with the rest of the world.

Another peculiar argument shared by these practitioners that is worth investigating is the intersectionality of the way teachers start to view their positionality as being parallel to the positionalities of students. Five out of nine participants talked about how their students' identities and their ways of being influenced them to act a certain way, question certain things in their own lives, and ultimately use their own positionalities to understand ways they can impact the lives of their students. Whether it was their religious belief, their upbringing in a loving two parent household, their immigrant experience, or growing up with the family that shared racist comments, these teachers are not afraid to draw parallels between their own positionalities and the way they define their space within their own classrooms and schools. Based on these conversations, I would argue that the identity, experiential, and knowledge

capital of both our pre-service and in-service educators must be utilized and must be acknowledged to fully understand this teacher agency debate.

An example of experiential capital they shared was through a statement about curriculum becoming an afterthought sometimes because they now almost knew what they needed to do to achieve the desired results with students, which was to make sure they all got an equal opportunity to participate, perform, and excel. The role that knowledge capital of these practitioners can play was evident when they discussed not being afraid of the newer initiatives coming their way since they understood the BDI framework. They had seen the results in their students, and they had come to realize over time that students' writing excelled when they utilized the BDI strategies, which was an important expectation for all of them. When the question was raised on what the new teachers and administrators should do to understand what it takes to work in a building like theirs, their unequivocal response about getting to know students came across as the singular most critical factor in changing the course of student-teacher relationship. These words from Ms. Meem shed the light on what's really needed, "It is important to look at each and every student as they have their own individuality and make sure to always reflect on own's self-awareness as you learn new things. You just have to live life in schools sometimes to understand what works."

Even though this study was not about administrators' disconnect as it comes to a teachers' vision of a certain program, during the interview we did discuss whether an administrator had ever inadvertently stopped them from implementing what they (teachers) considered to be of value to their classroom community. The majority of the teachers responded by saying that this was never the case, yet what Ms. Tae said definitely needs to be considered: "My administrator has never stopped me from implementing what I considered important

however, there have been times, when I had to stop doing BDI in order to do an X lesson. Not everything aligns with BDI and sometimes we just have to do a decontextualized activity to fulfill the district and admin [sic] requirement. It's a 15-minute activity that I just have to do, once it's over I can go back to doing what I am good at."

This particular sentiment from Ms. Tae did raise some important arguments for me as a researcher and a professional developer. The following specific ones need to be highlighted when having discussions surrounding teachers' ownership of their own agency:

- Is this argument from Ms. Tae an example of her perceived sense of agency or is it a way for me to be a part of a larger conversation, are there going to be initiatives in our schools that will always remain devoid of culturally responsive actions?
- Should we start recognizing that certain decontextualized initiatives are so ingrained in the fundamental ways of working of our schools that perhaps educational community just has to accept them?

Throughout the interviews, these teachers narrated their positionality descriptions, listed qualities and characteristics that made BDI an appropriate method of teaching for them, shared anecdotes that gave examples of their evolving agency, and discussed their instructional plans for the future. Many of these teachers wore multiple hats during the 2020-21 school year since the majority of them were virtual teachers. All the participants in the study work at a Title 1 building and have had ELs in their classrooms for majority of their career tracks. Even though three out of nine participants identified with an ethnic/cultural identity that is different from the majority White population of our teaching force, they all talked about how their positionalities either challenged or strengthened their relationships with their students.

Ultimately, it all depended upon how they shared their expectations with the students and how they connected with them, a trait that all of them shared as being critical. Seven out of nine participants overwhelmingly talked about focusing on students' experiential knowledge because somewhere in their educational journey, they had realized that students' experiences needed to be centered. The three teachers that identified as Mexican-American did talk about their primary socializations and the gaps they faced as being the drive behind their culturally responsive actions with their students. On the one hand these educators shared that the challenges they faced became the ultimate source of their agency, on the other hand individuals like Ms. Jeem talked about her parents' unrelenting love as the source of her instructional agency in the classroom. Ms. Bae and Ms. Sheen talked about their religious beliefs as the source of their pride in their work with their students. Ms. Daal talked about all the trial and error she experienced throughout her teaching career becoming her strongest asset in her own instructional agency. No matter what their trajectory entailed and how their trajectory shaped, BDI was a pin on their instructional map and none of them were willing to lose their way with it. At least not yet!

The Journey Continues: The future state of teachers' agency debate

Social cognitive theory on agency that provided a theoretical framework for this study distinguishes personal, proxy, and collective agency (Bandura, 2001). Even though collective agency was discussed briefly with the participants, this study mostly focused on the development and realization of the individual nature of these practitioners' agency. In regards to proxy agency, almost all the participants talked about being surprised by the teacher resistance they saw in their schools with BDI, support they can provide to their team mates as they try and implement BDI, and continuing to share their own implementation artifacts with others so they

can build other's confidence in the framework of BDI as well. Most of these participants discussed the systematic and 'mindful' nature of the BDI professional development as being central to helping them situate and ground their own agency. As I think about the implications for this particular study, a future study emphasizing the role of our collective agencies needs to be considered, especially in the light of the two contextual factors of positionality and context. If teachers' positionality as evident from this study holds the potential to impact teacher instructional behavior, then it is worth investigating what it does for the collective consciousness of the school community.

Further investigation into this idea of collective agency becomes central as I think about an important point made by these participants regarding their first encounter with the BDI professional development. During this very first session, the professional developers had read them a book in a second language while this group of mostly monolingual English speakers had to decipher it. They overwhelmingly discussed that "one time" as being a crucial point in gaining an appreciation for what their ELs and emergent bilinguals go through on a daily basis. As Ms. Bae said, "In that moment I realized what I need to do and honestly I was uncomfortable only for 30 minutes or so." This particular anecdote from this study holds such implications for the ways we provide professional development to our teachers. What if that particular professional development would have followed with collective discussions with teachers within the specific school sites about what that particular activity did for their situated positionalities, and what that particular activity meant for the collective identity of their schools where diversity and emergent bilingualism was a reality?

University and districts across the nation must ask such tough questions. Are the professional developments being provided to our educators where they dig into and make sense

of their contexts right away? Are the culturally responsive ways of connecting to their students' lives being shared with them? Are we asking what Murry et. al (2014) emphasized, that future research is needed to unpack whether teachers' own socialization experiences and perspectives in a particular culture are so dominant, so omnipresent, that it overrides their teacher education? Or are we dismissing the role of socialization, positionalities, and teachers' budding identities throughout the course of their pre-service experience? And lastly, are we centering the conversations on positionality enough within our pre-service education programs where our budding practitioners are learning to solidify their pedagogical identities? As teacher educators we must prepare ourselves for these challenges and be prepared to identify and act upon these questions.

Theoretical Frameworks and their role in data analysis

This research utilized two theoretical pillars to frame the research: Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Critical Race Theory. Through support from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory this study framed the investigation on how teachers see their agency unfold as they make important instructional and curricular decisions within the contexts they teach.

As themes emerged from the descriptive analysis the three properties of agency (Bandura, 2018) **forethought, self- reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness,** as shared in Chapter Two provided further support for the etic analysis of teacher interviews and video lesson.

This study supported Bandura's argument as forethought being one indicator of shades of teacher agency. It was evident that agentic teachers expressed more forethought in their planning and the actual implementation of the lesson, as expressed by Ms. Kaaf, "I try to be really purposeful and meaningful with my time because I understand that many of my students are going to go home and will have other things on their mind. Their families can't read with them,

so I have to make sure they feel safe in my class and I make sure I hold high expectations for them." According to Pei & Yang (2018), this also further ties to the idea of self-regulation as being central to the agency argument. According to Pei & Yang (2018), self-regulation became central to the agency argument as it refers to self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted for the attainment of personal goals. Ms. Kaaf's actions, while grounded in the property of forethought, also further express a pedagogical self-regulation as she situates her instructional practices through the lens of her students' biographies.

Ms. Sheen expressed shades of forethought through this argument, "Now I always consider the appropriateness and the inappropriateness of what I am going to teach. As I use BDI strategies, I know my students would want to share and I have to plan for that. The curriculum is never well thought out and I have to make sure that I think through that beforehand. Like when I am using linking language, I have to have a plan for how they will relate to it, how they will connect with it." Forethought, as mentioned in Chapter Two, is an ability where individuals motivate and guide themselves by creating action plans, adopting goals, and visualizing the likely outcomes of their actions. This is what Ms. Sheen exhibited via this quote.

Even though teachers in this study talked about their abilities to map out the direction their students need to be taking and utilizing BDI instructional framework as a tool for themselves, they also talked about how this skill of forethought requires teachers to understand their students well. Ms. Alif and Ms. Kaaf particularly talked about teachers' abilities to see gaps in their curriculum in order to fill those with the experiences of students, and how this requires a certain kind of positionality and understanding from a socio-cultural perspective.

The second agentic property as encapsulated by Bandura and evident in teachers' reflections as well as their videotaped lessons was: self-reactiveness. This property of self-

reactiveness as cited by Bandura shares that agents are not only planners and fore-thinkers they are also self-regulators. Individuals manage their behavior by self-sanctions within a self-governing system. They do so by adopting behavioral standards against which they evaluate their performances. This particular ideal was quite evident in the discussion surrounding the multiple initiatives that the district adopted while BDI was being implemented in these schools. As Ms. Jeem talked about aligning their newly adopted Standards Referenced Grading (SRG) to the instructional framework of BDI, it became quite evident that the property of self-reflectiveness was present as these teachers aligned BDI strategies with the new and existing initiatives. SRG was the assessment and grading system adopted by the school district. While SRG was being implemented, many of these teachers were getting used to incorporating the structures of BDI along with the strategies in their classrooms. Ms. Jeem said, “BDI with its flexibility of routines and built in scaffolds give you a sense of idea as to how to incorporate the SRGs with them. Once I understood how the structures worked, it was easy. You just have to take some time to understand the structures of SRGs and then you can align the BDI routines to it.” It is indicative that Ms. Jeem responded to this top-down decision made by the leadership through her own reactive agency (Jenkins, 2019) by taking time to figure out how this new initiative aligned with the already situated instructional actions of her class.

Of course, Bandura provided a strong argument for this study through his 2009 work where he defined human agency as “the human capability to exert influence over one’s functioning and the course of events by one’s actions” (p. 8). However, what Priestly et al. (2015) argued with agency that sees it as something individuals or groups can manage to achieve certainly resonated with the findings of the study as well. This is indicated by the fact that all the participants involved in the study teach in extremely diverse settings with high EL populations,

yet six out of nine participants talked about BDI being the only consistent and mindful professional development that helped them in understanding the differential needs of their students. It is through the culturally embedded actions of this particular professional development that the teachers managed to achieve agency over instructional actions surrounding the needs of their EL learners. As Ms. Bae articulated during one of the scenarios she described, "My student from Congo heard the fire alarm and had the flight response to it. The sound reminded him of home from where they had escaped. Through my years of being involved in BDI, I managed to develop the skills I needed to respond to this student." "Student experiences matter and I needed to have this student in my classroom and go through this experience to utilize the skills I have managed via BDI." For Ms. Bae, praxis with CLD students reminded her of students' differential experiences (assets) and needs, and that her implementation of this culturally responsive framework allowed her to maximize and fulfill those differentials through her own instructional actions.

The third agency property of self-reflectiveness was the one that was highly visible in teachers' agency discussions. Self- reflectiveness as defined by Bandura emphasizes that people are not only self-regulators but also self-examiners of their functioning. They reflect on their efficacy to realize given challenges, the soundness of their thoughts and actions, their values, and the meaning and morality of their pursuits. The metacognitive capability to reflect on oneself and the adequacy of one's capabilities, thoughts, and actions is the most distinctly human core property of agency.

Teachers repeatedly reflected upon the competing agendas that are often present in their schools, especially at the time of these interviews. Most of these participants were getting ready to focus on the new initiative that was being implemented at the school district and yet

they all talked about the intersectionality they were looking for between BDI and the new ways of doing things. They understood the challenges they might face as the district moved towards newer things but they also understood and owned the strength of their actions and were confident in their ability to continue implementing BDI in their classrooms. As Ms. Kaaf said, “the last three years at a new school really opened my eyes. When I was at school X, there was an expectation and when I came here there was resistance. I had already earned my endorsement so that gave me so much appreciation for the BDI method. I want my colleagues to just open their eyes and see that activate, connect, affirm (phases of BDI) can make a difference. There are other initiatives that are being introduced but I know I am good at this and I can do this well and my kids succeed with this. Now, I am being asked to share my expertise with others in the building by my administrator.”

Critical Race Theory and its support for the study

As mentioned in Chapters One and Two, the backdrop of the agency debate for this particular study comes from a very context-specific and culturally- responsive professional development that was provided to the teachers. Biography Driven Instruction (BDI), the professional development which was at the heart of this study, is a methodological framework grounded within the principles of cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2010). Many fundamental facets of cultural responsiveness as described by Gay (2010) and Bristol et al. (in press) are embedded in the instructional processes that are at the core of BDI. Bristol and colleagues posit that culturally responsive teaching (like BDI) situates one’s cultural background and knowledge of culture as central, not tangential, to instruction, which was certainly a primary emphasis of BDI intervention. BDI further situates cultural responsiveness and relevance as its core by emphasizing that learning should build upon what is already meaningful and important to

learners, especially as a result of their primary socialization in a particular culture and families' ways of knowing, first language use, etc. (Murry et. al., 2021).

As these above-mentioned ideals of cultural responsiveness were shared with the participating schools, instructionally BDI provided a guide of sorts to the teachers in operationalizing the principles of cultural responsiveness. Teachers maximized on the four interrelated facets of the student biography, including the sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic (Herrera, 2016; Herrera & Murry, 2016), while implementing the many BDI strategies as evident from their interviews and the video lessons.

A particular aspect of CRT became quite evident as teachers repeatedly talked about the student connections they create in their classrooms by tapping into the experiential knowledge of students, a core construct of CRT (Solórzano 1997, 1998). With an emphasis on three predictable phases of teaching and learning, Activate, Connect, and Affirm, the BDI framework and its associated strategies, tools, practices, and processes provide both the student and teacher opportunities to construct and build their own understanding of the lesson topic. During their interviews, teachers particularly emphasized the activation phase of this instructional framework that focuses on enhancing and capitalizing on students' prior knowledge experiences. During this stage of the lesson all learners have the opportunity to document their initial connections to the lesson topic, concepts, and/or vocabulary. Students are given the opportunity to use their home language, their second language, or draw images to name and/or record their ideas, where all these account for one level of accumulated experiential knowledge.

Several anecdotes and examples were shared by the participants where they talked about their students from Pakistan, India, Vietnam, Congo, and countless other countries sharing examples from their own unique perspectives, which in turn helped other students in the class

also learn new things. As Ms. Alif mentioned, “As I used the strategy of vocabulary quilt (a BDI Strategy) and opened up the class for small group discussion, my student from Vietnam was able to talk about internment schools and talk about civil rights based on his family’s experience. This is how I am able to empower my kids. My positionality parallels theirs, because of my experiences they are able to share their experiences. I am helping them empower themselves. This is something that I can offer them that may be other teachers’ don’t or can’t. And BDI just gives that structure to me.” As the debate currently rages within our political and educational world with multiple lawmakers putting forth the argument that CRT does not belong in schools, I am compelled to share Ms. Alif’s words here. The power of experiential knowledge (a core tenet of CRT), comes alive in her classrooms when she reflects upon her own positionality of being a person of color and what she can do to further solidify the identities and positionalities of her own learners. At the classroom level, the only tool she has in the moment is to capitalize on her students’ experiential knowledge to bring strength to her classroom community, and she does this by her own choice and through the agency she has come to acquire in her own instructional actions.

According to Solórzano (1998), experiential knowledge draws explicitly on the lived experiences of people of color by including such methods as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, *cuentos, testimonios*, chronicles and narratives (Yosso, 2006). The specific nuances of this particular tenet were evident as teachers discussed sending home visuals and strategy templates so the diverse families they work with can share their ways of thinking and referencing. Teachers talked about conducting Biography-Driven conferences with the families in order to know more about their biographies. Ms. Daal and Ms. Bae both talked

about sending visuals homes to the families so they could share their personal thoughts which then could be utilized at the classroom level.

Conversations around the centrality of Race and Racism

Even though only three out of nine participants recognized themselves as belonging to a racial make-up other than the predominant Caucasian or White American make-up of majority classroom teachers, the interview conversations did take a turn towards the importance of identifying race and racism within their own little classroom communities. It was apparent through these conversations that the idea of race and the differences pertaining to the racial diversity often becomes a cultural/symbolic construct as teachers consider how pedagogy and policy are implemented. Yet, in reality these teachers also realized that the racial make-up of their classrooms was different because of the differences in language production by the students. This core understanding of widely present linguistic differences prompted these teachers to continue to talk to me about the racial make-up of their classrooms.

Three out of nine teachers were vocal in their assertions that they needed to fill the (racial and cultural) identity gaps for their own students since they had either themselves experienced it or heard family stories of discrimination. The six other participants that identified as either White, European American, or Caucasian were keen on helping their students' identities unfold primarily through the lens of the experiences they had in their native countries, the color of their skin, and their different linguistic backgrounds. These teachers absolutely recognized that the cultures of our students of color can nurture and empower them (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Yosso, 2006), yet were vocal about a lack of culturally responsive professional developments available to them. They also at times juxtaposed what Yosso (2006) articulated regarding the importance of centrality of cultural nuances against the lack of professional developments

available to them. These ideas were further reinforced through the arguments put forth by Luis C Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff and Norma Gonzalez (1992), Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez and James Greenberg (1992), and Irma Olmedo (1997) where they assert that culture can form and draw from communal *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez et al., 1995; Moll, 2019). The anecdotes shared by these practitioners discussed their students' funds of knowledge in the forms of stories they were sharing, experiences they were bringing with themselves, the examples they shared during the activation phase of the lesson, and the artifacts that were sent home so the families could share their experiences with the kids.

It is my hope that this study helps the university personnel and school officials in utilizing and applying Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a lens to explore the ways teachers utilize students' lived experience within their classrooms. Reflecting back on the arguments presented in chapter two with literature review and the conversations held with these teachers, the importance of providing professional development to teachers through a culturally responsive lens was certainly highlighted repeatedly, especially the need for the centrality of students' experiential knowledge, counter story-telling, and conversations around race and racism. A focus on experiential knowledge, counternarratives, and conversations of the centrality of race and racism is something that educators sift through on a daily basis yet we often come short when it comes to actual implementation.

When educators share that there is not enough being done to support endeavors to bring in culturally responsive professional development in schools and especially in the pre-service programs, can we really put the blame on educators who in response often neglect or push aside these much-needed conversations on race and the centrality of racism? It is also important for the university faculty to reconsider the way discussions around diversity, cultural

responsiveness, and cultural sustainability occur. It is important to move beyond a one-class requirement for cultural issues, because clearly that is not the answer moving forward. Ultimately, as I reflected back on the literature review and the final data collection and analysis unfolded, CRT emerged as a fitting theoretical framework for not just the study itself but also to further explore the experiences of these participants in relation to their students and instructional frameworks they have come to adopt.

Limitations

It is important to consider that the arguments regarding agency as presented through this study are solely of the nine individuals who participated in this study. The researcher made every attempt to achieve phenomenological reduction however readers must exercise caution when making generalizations or conclusions about situations beyond the individuals who participated in this study. Further research in the area of teacher agency is absolutely needed in order to discuss teachers' need to own their agency and take responsibility for their learning. Teacher agency is not the cure-all. However, considering that teacher professional identity is a complex and often times a complicated phenomenon, this conversation with a larger sample size and a more diverse sampling pool would be a significant contribution to the literature. Since teacher positionality has come across as a significant contributor to this agency discussion, a larger sample size with diverse sampling will allow for a more in-depth analysis of teacher positionalities, which can tremendously help with the agency argument.

This study was conducted at four school sites with a total of nine participants. Perhaps a bigger sample size and a diverse racial composition might help in adding to the conversations. Since these participants were willing and eager to participate, they may have a high level of effectiveness with their craft and regarding their own actions to begin with, which

may have limited the results. Additionally, the participants in this study had a strong desire to share their own journey of their understanding of BDI. There is a possibility that the results would have been different if the sample was larger. The researcher's role as the BDI professional developer at these sites may have created some biases and preconceived notions about the study and its findings.

Although the researcher worked diligently to move beyond the limitations of biases and preconceived notions of self through bracketing and phenomenological reduction, they may have at some point influenced the study. Another related aspect and possible limitation in this study is that the researcher assumes participants shared their honest, lived experiences, which may not be the case if they were hesitant or uncomfortable about the process, even though it did not come across. This could be a limitation because participants were the main data for this study. One might argue that this can lead to an incomplete study, if participants are not honest or comfortable.

In this research, the thick description helped pick up the finer details as well as help establish the significance of the experience and the trajectory of these participating practitioners with the BDI professional development. My hope is that through the thick descriptions included in this chapter, the honest voices, feelings, essence of their agentic actions, and the meaning they made of this process are heard. (Denzin, 1989, p. 83; Ponterotto, 2006).

It is the researcher's belief that with the number of participants I had, the study definitely generated enough data to make substantive arguments regarding the phenomenon of teacher agency, perhaps if there were more study participants and interviews, the analysis might have disclosed a deeper understanding and insight into the arguments surrounding teacher agency alongside their positionality.

Recommendations/Implications for future research and the field

This dissertation was crafted during a once in a lifetime pandemic. By now, I have read many opinion pieces, many research articles that are wanting to provide an opinion, a solution, or an outlook towards the many problems in education. As the schools re-opened this fall, I've heard several administrators use the phrase " Before/After this Pandemic." This study, that is being published during this global pandemic, certainly doesn't hold the answers to this phenomena of teacher agency, but it is researcher's sincere hope that it adds to the depth of the conversations. I am compelled to share this particular piece from Education Week regarding teacher life in the middle of the pandemic. Santoro (2020) says, "It is worth distinguishing teacher demoralization from burnout. Teachers' ongoing value conflicts with the work (demoralization) cannot be solved by the more familiar refrain for teachers to practice self-care in order to avoid exhaustion (burnout)."

Santoro further argued that demoralization occurs when teachers cannot reap the moral rewards that they previously were able to access in their work. It often happens when teachers are consistently stopped in their ability to enact the values they brought with them to the profession. Even though this particular sentiment from Santoro is in response to the demoralization that our teachers continue to face in the midst of this pandemic, this sentiment reflects the reality of the teaching profession as one that is facing demoralization and burnout even without this pandemic in the background.

As a researcher and a professional developer making rounds in schools, I have seen countless administrators bring around a cart full of sonic drinks to boost their staff's morale or free teacher massages provided in the staff lounge for that temporary fix. While these temporary fixes provide that satisfaction for a day or two, the fact still remains that all these

gestures, even though heartfelt and sincere, fall short of solving the issue of teacher demoralization and burnout. In the end, teachers leave the profession unhappy and we as a nation and a system continue to grapple with teacher shortage. While this study captured many of the highs these teachers shared through their implementation of a framework that they have come to believe in, it also discovered that there is a huge need for us to focus on teachers' commitment to the profession, teachers' collective agencies, and the role teachers' positionalities play not only in their immediate environments but as a collective conscience of the school community.

Commitment to the Profession

This study is certainly not the first one to reflect upon educators' outlooks towards their own commitment towards the teaching profession. These participants validated what Lauermann et al. (2017) shared as multiple indicators of teacher commitment, such as "(1) commitment to teaching as a long-term career (2) interest in professional development as an indicator of professional engagement, and (3) willingness to invest personal time for teaching-related tasks (e.g., to help students)" (p. 323). All three indicators were exhibited through these teachers' discussions of their explicit agentic actions.

As Leijen (2019) shared, the commitment to teaching is a psychological attachment or bond to the teaching profession (Coladarci 1992; Firestone and Pennell, 1993) indicating the degree to which the teacher felt valued and felt connected to the profession (see e.g. Berger & Lê Van, 2019; Lamote and Engels, 2010). These teachers gave multiple insights into the psychological attachment that they have found to their profession and how BDI in part has been responsible for this attachment.

As Ms. Bae mentioned, "A big constraint I had in my teaching was gaining confidence and BDI really helped me in owning and doing it well, developing it and this

opportunity really built my confidence. Knowing that I do it right is what helps me in staying connected as a teacher to be able to teach all students." She further goes on to say, "My first year at X school was the worst of it all. I had students from so many different nationalities and I just didn't know what to do. Over time I realized that I have come to really be passionate about each child's individuality and cultural connection, especially when I discussed these ideas at my Sunday school. Families at the church shared with me how passionate I was and how much they wanted their child to be in my class. I had love in my words." She further talked about how she has thought about leaving the profession, but having confidence in her own teaching and the students she teaches always brings her back. "Understanding trauma informed now better and building those connections with BDI is what kept me grounded and brings me back to the profession." Through her words, Ms. Bae shared her love for the profession and also gave me an insight into that fact that she needed much more than just a quick massage or a sonic drink, she needed to gain confidence in her abilities as a teacher, and BDI helped her get that confidence back.

All the participants talked about the professional satisfaction, they received from seeing their students soar and take pride in their own work. They talked about the community that was built through the grouping configurations such as i+TpsI, an instructional construct of BDI that emphasizes the importance of and need for multiple grouping structures within culturally diverse settings and such structures as revoicing helping students connect their own individual thoughts to that of the classroom community's. As we think about a future state of teacher agency, new researchers like myself must also work towards equating teacher agency with teacher commitment to the profession and be willing to further the conversations on teacher commitment that has been at the heart of many opinion pieces and policy reports since the last few decades.

Sense of a shared agency

Borrowing from Liejen et al. (2019) that periodically supported the design of this study, agency often contains personal life histories of an individual teacher and also knowledge, attitudes, and knowhow resulting from the socialization to the teaching profession, these personal histories as shared by these teachers were definitely a testament to their commitment to the power of their positionalities and identities. Wrapped up in these testaments were their advice to the new and budding staff members, their desire to continue working within culturally responsive settings, and their reasonings for never giving up on BDI.

As Hökkä et al. (2017) surmised, the need for such collective agency appeared all the greater when one looked at the broader picture, in which there are pressures to develop work practices and renegotiate professional identities in response to the initiatives and socio-political and cultural changes that often happen at the school. For a future study this implies that teachers may be required to negotiate and act upon, individually and/or collectively, their response to current gaps and deficits within education, including their collective and individual positionalities, responses they provide to the diverse communities they serve, and tackle questions specific to race, racism, and cultural diversities within their own buildings. The scope of this particular study was to investigate the extent of teacher agency as an emergent phenomena at the individual level. However, as many of these educators used the term empowered for both themselves and their students, it is important to also investigate a shared sense of agency development that can lead to increased trust and togetherness within a school community so that the teacher educators become collectively empowered within their respective systems.

Implications for New and Emerging Educators and Pre-Service Programs

I am fortunate that I got to hold conversations with a group of committed, inspiring, and dedicated educators. They gave thoughtful answers and provided insights that helped me as a researcher tremendously. Based on the responses they gave, it is important to further study agency as a horizontal phenomenon where teachers could be developing their own unique sense of agency on a path that makes sense to them. For new and emerging teachers, often the road to instruction is paved with conversations on classroom management, and discussions on the implications of teaching and learning. However, as many of these teachers shared, they did not come prepared to teach in the contexts they worked in. If the teachers are choosing the context they are working in, then we must provide opportunities for them to realize the power of their positionalities and the parallel tracks these positionalities hold to that of their students in order to continue to develop their agency.

There is a need to provide professional development that provides these new teachers with opportunities to understand the biographies of their students and connect with their classroom communities. Also, there is a definite need to foster and strengthen the mentor mentee relationships in schools for new and seasoned teachers on not just the protocols and lesson planning collaboration but for educators to discuss and unfold their evolving positionalities in partners, groups, triads. If we are willing to provide our students with more opportunities for collaborative work then we must afford the same opportunities to our educators.

Conclusion

As this study comes to a closure, it is my hope that the administrators, policy makers, educators, and university personnel will focus on the importance of helping teachers perceive the

extent of their agency and also help them fully exercise it by listening to their voices and centering the important role they play in teaching and learning. Positionality as a construct needs to become a core premise for both pre-service and in-service educators as they navigate and negotiate their own identity placements within the context of education. Future research on agency should continue to test the usability of theoretical frameworks for understanding teacher agency as a multi-faceted and an emergent phenomena that reveals itself in a non-linear, horizontal format. Understanding teacher agency can be an important tool to help educators navigate the constraints, challenges, or the affordances of the contexts where they can flourish or flounder in their individual as well as their collective agencies.

Everyday our teachers are told to support students' critical thinking skills, enhance their linguistic repertoires and highlight their problem-solving skills, yet all this occurs against the imposition of a boxed curriculum and standardized tests. This study revealed that curriculum often ends up becoming just a nomenclature because when it comes to addressing the diversity of thought and views that our student body represents, teachers must supplement with other resources. In order to support our educators and to provide them with full extent of their agency, we must bring forth the support and partner our emerging teachers with seasoned teachers to help them experience a collective sense of agency. If educational institutions can shift their practices to support and strengthen teacher agency, they will go a long way in addressing the dilemma of teacher accountability and attrition.

References

Acevedo, S., Macleod, A., Olague, C ., Aho, M., Chao, J. C., Moutray, C., Cela, E., &., Garcia-Gonzales, I. (2015). Positionality as Knowledge: From Pedagogy to Praxis. *Integral Review, 11*, 28-46. https://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=founderssymposium#page=32

Agee, J. (2009) Developing qualitative research questions: a reflective process, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*,*22* (4) , 431-447, https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390902736512

Anagnostopoulos, D., Wilson, S., & Charles-Harris, S. (2021) Contesting quality teaching: Teachers' pragmatic agency and the debate about teacher evaluation, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *98*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103246

Babchuk, W. A. (2017). Book Review: Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation (4th ed.), by S. B. Merriam and E. J. Tisdell. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *67*(1), 71–73. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713616671930

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundation of thought and action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice Hall

Bandura, A. (2001). Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective, *Annual Review Psychology*, *52*, 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1

Bandura, A. (2012). Social Cognitive Theory. In P.A.M. Van Lange, A.W. Kruglanski, & E.T. Higgins (Eds.) *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology* (pp. 349-373). Thousands, Oaks. CA: Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249215.n18

Bandura, A. (2018). Towards a Psychology of Human Agency Pathways and Reflections. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *13*(2), 130-136. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617699280

Bembenutty, H., White, M. C., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2016). Applying social cognitive theory in the development of self-regulated competencies throughout K-12 grades. In A. A. Lipnevich, F. Preckel, & R. D. Roberts (Eds.), *The Springer series on human exceptionality. Psychosocial skills and school systems in the 21st century: Theory, research, and practice* (p. 215–239). Springer International Publishing AG.

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, *15*(2), 219–234. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475

Berger, J., & Van, K (2019). Teacher Professional Identity as Multidimensional: Mapping Its Components and Examining Their Associations with General Pedagogical Beliefs. *Educational Studies, 45* (2),163–181. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/03055698.2018.1446324.

Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamental of Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*. Routledge, NY

Biesta, G., & Tedder, M. (2007). Agency and learning in the lifecourse: Towards an ecological perspective, *Studies in the Education of Adults, 39* (2), 132-149, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/02660830.2007.11661545

Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015) The role of beliefs in teacher agency, *Teache and Teaching*, *21*(6), 624-640, https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325

Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2017). Talking about education: exploring the significance of teachers' talk for teacher agency, *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 49*(1), 38-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2016.1205143

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member Checking: A Tool to Enhance Trustworthiness or Merely a Nod to Validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, *26*(13), 1802–1811. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870

Bodegraven, D.V. (2015). Implementing change: How, why, and when teachers change their classroom practices. Doctoral Dissertation. Walden University. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/ &httpsredir=1&article=2910&context=dissertations

Bottiani, J.H., Larson, K. Debnam, K., Bischoff, C., & Bradshaw, C.P. (2017). Promoting educators' use of culturally responsive practices: A systematic review of in-service interventions. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487117722553

Brackett, M.A., Palomera, R., Mojsa-Kaja, J., Reyes, M.R., & Salovey, P. (2010). Emotion-regulation ability, burnout, and job satisfaction among British secondary-school teachers. *Psychology in the Schools*, *47*(4), 406-417. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20478

Brinkman, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd Ed). Thousands Oak, CA: Sage

Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of learning. Educational Researcher,*18*(1), 32-42. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X018001032.

Bristol, T.J. & Snyder, J. (2015). Professional Accountability for Improving Life, College and Career Readiness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 23 https://doi.org/:10.14507/epaa.v23.2002

Bristol, T.J., Johnson, P., & Manchanda, S. (in press). Culturally Responsive Professional Development: One Teachers Union's Professional Learning Community for Black Male Teacher. *In press*

Buchanan, R. (2015). Teacher identity and agency in an era of accountability, *Teaching and Learning*. *21*(6), 700-719. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044329

Burroughs, N., Gardner, J., Lee, Y., Guo, S., Touitou, I., Jansen, K., & Schmidt, W.H. (2019). A Review of the Literature on Teacher Effectiveness and Student Outcomes. *IEA Research for Education*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-16151-4_2

Cabrera, N.L. (2019) Critical Race Theory v. Deficit Models. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *52*(1), 47-54. https://doi.org/: 10.1080/10665684.2019.1630342

Calderon, D., & Ledesma, M. (2015). Critical Race Theory in Education: A Review of Past Literature and a Look to the Future. *Qualitative Inquiry*. *21*(3),206-222. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414557825

Campbell, E. (2012) Teacher Agency in Curriculum Contexts, *Curriculum Inquiry*, *42*(2), 183-190. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2012.00593.x

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for Interview Research: The Interview Protocol Refinement Framework. *The Qualitative Report*, *21*(5), 811-831. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2337

Chetty, R., Friedman, N., & Rockoff, J. (2014). Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood. American Economic Review, *104* (9): 2633-79. https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.104.9.2633

Coladarci, T. (1992) Teachers' Sense of Efficacy and Commitment to Teaching. *Journal of Experimental Education*, *60*, 323-337. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1992.9943869

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W & Creswell, J. D. (2018), *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (*5th ed.*):* Thousand Oaks, California : SAGE Publications, Inc., [2018].

Cuban, L. (1990). Reforming Again, Again, and Again. *Educational Researcher*, *19*(1), 3–13. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X019001003

Cuban, L. (2013). Why so many structural changes in schools and so little reform in teaching practice? *Journal of Educational Administration. 51* (2), 109-125. https://doi.org/ 10.1108/09578231311304661

Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). Accountability for college and career readiness: *Developing a new paradigm*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2020) Accountability in Teacher Education. *Action in Teacher Education*, *42*(1), 60-71. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/01626620.2019.1704464

Datnow, A. (2012). Teacher Agency in Educational Reform: Lessons from Social Networks Research. *American Journal of Education, 119*(1), 193-201. https://doi.org/10.1086/667708

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (2001). *The Power of Community: Mobilizing for Family and Schooling*. United States: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical Race Theory: An introduction* (3rd ed.). New York University press.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive biography.* Sage Publications, Inc.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). (Eds.). (4th ed.). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research.* London: Sage.

Depaepe, F., Verschaffel, L., & Kelchtermans, G. (2013). Pedagogical content knowledge: A systematic review of the way in which the concept has pervaded mathematics educational

research. *Teaching and Teacher Education*,34, 12–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.03.001.

Diefenbach, T. (2009). Are case studies more than sophisticated storytelling?: Methodological problems of qualitative empirical research mainly based on semi-structured interviews. *Quality and Quantity, 43*(6), 875-894. doi:http://dx.doi.org.er.lib.k-state.edu/10.1007/s11135-008-9164-0

Dixson, A., & Anderson, C.R. (2018) Where are We? Critical Race Theory in Education 20 Years Later, *Peabody Journal of Education*, *93*(1), 121-131. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/0161956X.2017.1403194

Ebersöhn, L., & Loots, T. (2017). Teacher agency in challenging contexts as a consequence of social support and resource management. *International Journal of Educational Development. 53*, https://doi.org/ 80-91. 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2016.11.005

Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What Is Agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, *103*(4), 962–1023. https://doi.org/10.1086/231294

Eteläpelto, A., Vähäsantanen, K., Päivi, H., &, Susanna, P. (2013). What is agency? Conceptualizing professional agency at work. *Educational Research Review*, 10, 45–65. 10.1016/j.edurev.2013.05.001

Flood, A. (2010). Understanding Phenomenology. *National Library of Medicine*, *17*(2), 7-15. https://doi.org/ 0.7748/nr2010.01.17.2.7.c7457.

Flessner, R. (2012). *Agency through teacher education: reflection, community, and learning.* Rowman & Littlefield Education, NY

Fessler, R., & Christensen, J. (1992). *The teacher career cycle.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Feixas, M. (2004). The influence of personal, institutional and contextual factors on university teachers' careers and teacher development. *Educar*, 33, 31-58. 10.5565/rev/educar.260

Firestone, W. A., & J. R. Pennell. 1993. "Teacher Commitment, Working Conditions, and Differential Incentive Policies." *Review of Educational Research, 63* (4), 489–525. https://doi.org/ 10.3102/00346543063004489.

Fullan, M. (1993). Why Teachers Must Become Change Agents. *The Professional Teacher, 50* (6), 12-17. http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar93/vol50/num06/Why-Teachers-Must-Become-Change-Agents.aspx

Garcia, E., & Weiss, E. (2019). The teacher shortage is real, large and growing, and worse than we thought. *Economic Policy Institute.* https://www.epi.org/press/the-teacher-shortage-is-a-growing-national-crisis-epi-releases-first-paper-in-series-on-national-eacher-shortage/

Garrett, F. (2017). Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Development Benefits for Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms. Doctoral Dissertation. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/3298/

Gay, Geneva. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College.

Gentles, S. J., Charles, C., Ploeg, J., & McKibbon, K. (2015). Sampling in Qualitative Research: Insights from an Overview of the Methods Literature. *The Qualitative Report, 20*(11), 1772-1789. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2373

Goller, M., & Paloniemi, S. (2017). *Agency at Work: An Agentic Perspective on Professional Learning and Development. Springer*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-60943-0

Gourd,T. (2016). Toward a theory for understanding teacher agency: Grounded theory with Inclusion Co-Teachers. Doctoral Dissertation. Washington University.

Gurney, Laura & Liyanage, Indika & Gharachorloo, Haniyeh. (2014). EAL teachers' identity and agency: The impact of participant positioning through in-service professional development. http://hdl.handle.net/10072/67845

Gurney, L., & Liyanage, I. (2016). EAL teacher agency: Implications for participation in professional development. *International Journal of Pedagogies & Learning, 11*(1), 49-59. doi:http://dx.doi.org.er.lib.k-state.edu/10.1080/22040552.2016.1187650

Guskey, T. (2002) Professional Development and Teacher Change. *Teachers and Teaching*, 8 (3), 381-391, https://doi.org: 10.1080/135406002100000512

Hall, P.C., & West, J.H. (2011). Potential predictors of student teaching performance: Considering emotional intelligence, *Issues in Educational Research, 21*(2), 145-161. Retrieved from https://er.lib.k-state.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/potential-predictors-student-teaching-performance/docview/2393127138/se-2

Herrera, S. G (2016). *Biography Driven Culturally Responsive Teaching.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Herrera, S. & Murry, K. (2015). *Mastering ESL/EFL methods: Differentiated instruction for the culturally and linguistically diverse students* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon

Hirsch, K. (2015). Phenomenology and educational research. *International Journal of Advanced Research, 3* (8), 251-260. https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1172&context=edu_article

Hiver, P., & Whitehead, G. (2018). Sites of Struggle: Classroom Practice and the Complex Dynamic Entanglement of Language Teacher Agency and Identity. *System*. 79. 10.1016/j.system.2018.04.015.

Hökkä, P., Vähäsantanen, K.,& Mahlakaarto, S. (2017). Teacher educators' collective professional agency and identity – Transforming marginality to strength, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *63*, 36-46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.12.001

Hunt, J. (2018). *Teacher Agency and the Implementation of Restorative Justice*. Theses and Dissertations. 2965. https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/2965

Imants, J., & Wubbels, T., & Vermunt, J. (2013). Teachers' Enactments of Workplace Conditions and Their Beliefs and Attitudes toward Reform. *Vocations and Learning*. *6*, 323-346. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12186-013-9098-0.

Imants, J., & Van der Wal, M. (2019). A model of teacher agency in professional development and school reform, *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2019.1604809

Insulander, E., Brehmer, D.,& Ryve, A. (2019). Teacher agency in professional development programmes. A case study of professional development material and collegial discussion. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction.23,* 100330. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2019.100330.

Jefferson, A., Gutierrez, C., & Silverstein, L. (2018). Liberatory public education: A Framework for centering community and democracy in public education. The Urban Review, 50, 735-736. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-018-0467-8

Jenkins, G. (2019). Teacher agency: the effects of active and passive responses to curriculum change. *Australian Education Researcher, 47,* 167–181. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-019-00334-2

Kalu, F. A., & Bwalya, J. C. (2017). What Makes Qualitative Research Good Research? An Exploratory Analysis of Critical Elements. *International Journal of Social Science Research* , *5*(2), 43-56. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijssr.v5i2.10711

Kaniuka, T. (2012). Toward an understanding of how teachers change during school reform: Considerations for educational leadership and school improvement. *Journal of Educational Change, 13,* 327-346. https://doi.org/10.1007/S10833-012-9184-3

Kayi-Aydar, H. (2015). Teacher agency, positioning, and English language learners: Voices of pre-service classroom teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 45*, 94–103. 10.1016/j.tate.2014.09.009.

Ketelaar, B., & Boshuizen, D.B. (2012) Teachers' positioning towards an educational innovation in the light of ownership, sense-making and agency. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 28(2) https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.10.004

Kirshner, B. (2015). *Youth activism in an era of education inequality.* New York University Press

Kohli, R. (2012). Racial pedagogy of the oppressed: Critical interracial dialogue for teachers of color. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *45*, 181-196. https:doi.org/ 10.1080/10665684.2012.644187

Kohli, R., & Solórzano, D. (2012) Teachers, please learn our names!: racial microaggressions and the K-12 classroom. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 15 (4), 441-462, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/13613324.2012.674026

Kohli, R. (2019). Lessons for Teacher Education: The Role of Critical Professional Development in Teacher of Color Retention. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *70*(1), 39–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118767645

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2017). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 2: Context, research questions and designs. *European Journal of General Practice*, *23*, 274-279. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375090.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education. *Teachers College Record*, 97, 47-68. https://doi.org/ 10.4324/9781315709796-2

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education,* 11, 7-https://doi.org/24. 10.1080/095183998236863.

Lamote, C., & N. Engels. (2010). The Development of Student Teachers' Professional Identity. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 33* (1), 3–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619760903457735.

Lasky, S. (2005). A sociocultural approach to understanding teacher identity, agency, and professional vulnerability in a context of secondary school reform. *Teacher & Teacher Education, 21* (8). 899-916. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.06.003

Laura G., & Indika L. (2016) EAL teacher agency: implications for participation in professional development, *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, *11*(1), 49-59, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/22040552.2016.1187650

Lauermann, F., Karabenick, S., Carpenter, R., & Kuusinen, C (2017) "Teacher Motivation and Professional Commitment in the United States: The Role of Motivations for Teaching, Teacher Self-Efficacy and Sense of Professional Responsibility." In *Global Perspectives on Teacher Motivation*(Current Perspectives in Social and Behavioral Sciences), edited by H. Watt, P. Richardson, and K. Smith, 297–321. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/ 10.1017/9781316225202.011

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Leijen, A., Pedaste, M., & Lepp, L. (2020). Teacher agency following the ecological model: How it is achieved and how it could be strengthened by different typed of reflection, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *68*(3), 295-310, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/00071005.2019.1672855

Leko, M., Dingle, M., Haager, D., Boardman, A., & Brownell, M. (2011) Developing effective special education reading teachers: The influence of professional development, context and individual qualities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 34(1), 87-103. https://doi.org/10.1177/073194871103400106

Leonardo, Z., & Boas, E. (2013). *Other Kids' Teachers: What Children of Color Learn from White Women and What This Says about Race, Whiteness, and Gender*. In M. Lynn & A Dixson (Eds.) Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education (1st Ed.) (pp. 313-324). New York, NY: Routledge.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Linden, S. V., & McKenney, S. (2020). Uniting epistemological perspectives to support contextualized knowledge development. *Education Tech Research Development*, *68*, 703–727 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09772-7

Lockton, M., Weddle., H., & Datnow, A. (2019). When data don't drive: teacher agency in data use efforts in low-performing schools, School Effectiveness and School Improvement. *An*

International Journal of Research, Policy, and Practice, 31(2), 243-265. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2019.1647442

Lopes, C., & Ambrosio, B. (2016). Professional development shaping teacher agency and creative insubordination. *Ciênc. Educ.*, Bauru, 22,(4), 1085-1095. https:// doi.org/10.1590/1516-731320160040015

Lynn, R. (2002). Racial and ethnic differences in psychopathic personality. *Personality and Individual Differences, 32*(2), 273–316. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(01)00029-0

Maddox, R., & Solórzano, D.G. (2002). Using Critical Race Theory, Paulo Freire's Problem-Posing Method, and Case Study Research to Confront Race and Racism in Education. *Qualitative Inquiry. 8(1),* 66-84. doi/pdf/10.1177/107780040200800105

Manen, V.M. (1997). *Researching Lived Experiences*, Routledge

Matias, C., & Liou, D. (2014). Tending to the hearts of communities of color: Toward Critical Race Teacher Activism. *Urban Education, 50*(5), 601-625, https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085913519338

McCoy, D.L., & Rodricks, D.J. (2015), Critical Race Theory in Higher Education: 20 Years of Theoretical and Research Innovations. ASHE Higher Education Report, *41*,1-117. https://doi.org/10.1002/aehe.20021

Melville, W., Bartley, A., & Weinburgh, M.H. (2012). Change force: Implementing change in a secondary school for the common good. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy.* https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ971064

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, John

Murders, M, " A Phenomenological Study of the Online Educational Experiences of College Students with Learning Disabilities' (2017). Thesis and Dissertations. 2518. https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/2518/?utm_source=scholarworks.uark.edu%2Fetd%2F2518&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages

Mirra, N., & Morrell, E. (2011). Teachers as Civic Agents Toward a Critical Democratic Theory of Urban Teacher Development. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *62*, 408-420. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487111409417

Mitchell, B. (2015). Theorizing Teacher Agency and Reform: How Institutionalized Instructional Practices Change and Persist. *Sociology of Education*, *88*(2),140-159. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040715575559

Moll, LC, Amanti, C, Neff, D and Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, *31*(2): 132–141. http://er.lib.ksu.edu/login?url=https://www.jstor.org/stable/1476399

Moll, L. C. (2019). Elaborating Funds of Knowledge: Community-Oriented Practices in International Contexts. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, *68*(1), 130–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/2381336919870805

Moon, K.,. Brewer, T.D., Januchowski-Hartley, S. R., Adams, V. M ., & Blackman, D. A. . (2016). A guideline to improve qualitative social science publishing in ecology and

conservation journals. *Ecology and Society*, *21*(3), 17. http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ES-08663-210317

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Sage Incorporated.

Murry, K., Kavimandan, S., Herrera, S., & Holmes, M. (2021). Phenomenological Research on Biography-Driven Instruction Use in Highly Diverse Classrooms. *Teacher Education Quarterly*. https://er.lib.k-state.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/phenomenological-research-on-biography-driven/docview/2531342061/se-2?accountid=11789

Murry, K. G., Holmes, M., & Kavimandan, S. (2020). Approximating Cultural Responsiveness: Teacher Readiness for Accommodative, Biography-Driven Instruction. *FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education*, 6(2). https://doi.org/10.32865/fire202062203

Murry, K., Fanning, C., and Kavimandan, S. (2014) Contextualizing Teacher Education Emphases for Classroom Diversity, *The Advocate*, 22 (2). https://doi.org/10.4148/ 2637-4552.1062

Nassaji, H. (2020). Good qualitative research. *Language Teaching Research*, *24*(4), 427–431. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820941288

Navarro, O., & Howard, T (2016). Critical Race Theory 20 Years Later: Where Do We Go From Here? 51 (3). https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915622541

Neubauer, B.E., Witkop, C.T., & Varpio, L. (2019) How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8(2), 90–97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

Newmann, F. M., Smith, B., Allensworth, E., & Bryk, A. S. (2001). Instructional Program Coherence: What It Is and Why It Should Guide School Improvement Policy. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 23*(4), 297–321. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737023004297

Noonan, J. (2016). Teachers Learning: *Engagement, Identity, and Agency in Powerful Professional Development.* (Publication No. 2009555313) [Doctoral Dissertation. Harvard Graduate School of Education]. ProQuest LLC, 2016

Olmedo, IM. (1997). Voices of our past: using oral history to explore funds of knowledge within a Puerto Rican family. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 28(4): 550–573. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3196244

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and policy in mental health, 42*(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice. *Educational Researcher*, *41*(3), 93-97 https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244

Parker, G. (2016). An Ecological approach to teacher agency; a theoretical overview. *Annual Review of Education, Communication & Language Sciences.* 13(14),1-14.

Pantić, N., Galey, S., & Florian, L. *(*2021*).* Making sense of teacher agency for change with social and epistemic network analysis. *Journal of Education Change.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-021-09413-7

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Payne, C. M. (2008). *So much reform, so little change: The persistence of failure in urban schools.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Education Press

Pei, M., & Yang, H. (2019). Developing teacher agency and self-regulation in a professional training program: a case study in a rural and ethnic minority area of China. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *20*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-019-09606-z

Phillippi, J., & Lauderdale, J. (2017). A Guide to Field Notes for Qualitative Research: Context and Conversation. *Qualitative Health Research*, *28* (3), 381-388. https://doi.org/104973231769710. 10.1177/1049732317697102.

Priestley, M., Edwards, R., Priestley, A., & Miller, K. (2012). Teacher agency in curriculum making: agents of change and spaces of maneuver. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *42* (2), 191-214. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2012.00588.x

Priestley, M., Biesta, G.J.J. & Robinson, S. (2015). Teacher agency: what is it and why does it matter? In R. Kneyber & J. Evers (eds.), *Flip the System: Changing Education from the Bottom Up*. London: Routledge.

Ponterotto, J. G. (2006). Brief Note on the Origins, Evolution, and Meaning of the Qualitative Research Concept Thick Description. *The Qualitative Report*, 1*1*(3), 538-549. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/

Ravitch, D. (2001). *Left back : a century of battles over school reform*. Simon & Schuster

Rigby, J., & Woulfin, S. (2016). Understanding How Structure and Agency Influence Education Policy Implementation and Organizational Change. *American Journal of Education, 122*, (3), https://doi.org/ 10.1086/685849

Roger, R., & Wetzel, M. (2013). Studying Agency in Literacy Teacher Education: A Layered Approach to Positive Discourse Analysis, *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *10* (1), 62-92. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2013.753845

Sablan, J. R. (2019). Can You Really Measure That? Combining Critical Race Theory and Quantitative Methods. *American Educational Research Journal*, *56*(1), 178–203. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831218798325

Sannino, A. (2010). *Breaking out of a professional abstraction: The pupil as materialized object for teacher trainees* V. Ellis, A. Edwards, P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), Cultural–historical perspectives on teacher education and development: Learning teaching, Routlege, London (2010)

Santoro, D. A. (2020). Teacher Demoralization Isn't the Same as Teacher Burnout. *Education Week.* **https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-teacher-demoralization-isnt-the-same-as-teacher-burnout/2020/11**

Scarduzio, J.A. (2017). Emic Approach to Qualitative Research. In The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods (eds. J. Matthes, C.S. Davis and R.F. Potter). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0082

Schunk, D. H. (2008). Metacognition, self-regulation, and self-regulated learning: Research recommendations. *Educational Psychology Review*, *20*(4), 463–467. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-008-9086-3

Schunk, D., & Dibenedetto, M. (2019). Motivation and Social Cognitive Theory. *Contemporary Educational Psychology,* 60. https://doi.org/101832. 10.1016/j.cedpsych.2019.101832.

Secules, S., Mccall, C., Meija, A, J., Beebe, C., Masters, A.S., Sánchez-Peña, M.,& Svyantek, M., (2021). Positionality practices and dimensions of impact on equity research: A collaborative inquiry and call to the community. *Journal of Engineering Education*, *110*, 19– 43. https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20377

Sleeter, C. E. (2017). Critical Race Theory and the Whiteness of Teacher Education. *Urban Education*, *52*(2), 155–169. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916668957.

Smith, J. & Osborn, M. (2003). I*nterpretive phenomenological analysis.* In J.A. Smith (Ed.) Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods (pp.51-80). London: Sage.

Solórzano, D. (1998). Critical Race Theory, Racial and Gender Microaggressions, and the Experiences of Chicana and Chicano Scholars. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*, 121-136. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/095183998236926

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 (1), 23-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103

Solórzano, D. G. (2013). Critical race theory's intellectual roots: My email epistolary with Derrick Bell. In Lynn, M., Dixson, A. (Eds.), The handbook of critical race theory in education (pp. 48-68). New York, NY: Routledge.

Sosa, T.,& Gomez, K. (2012) Positioning Urban Teachers as Effective: Their Discourse on Students. *Education and Urban Society*, *44*(5), 590-608. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124511403995

Stake, R. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research.* Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, London.

Stillman, J., & Anderson, L. (2015). From accommodation to appropriation: Teaching, identity, and authorship in a tightly coupled policy context. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 21*, 720-744 doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044330

Stosich, L.E., & Bristol, T. (2018). Advancing a New Focus on Teaching Quality: A Critical Synthesis. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education

Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A Coming Crisis in Teaching? Teacher Supply, Demand, and Shortages in the U.S.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Tate, W. (1997). Chapter 4: Critical Race Theory and Education: History, Theory, and Implications. *Review of Research in Education. 22, 195-247*. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X022001195

Thornburg, D., & Mungai, A.M. (2011). Teacher Empowerment and School Reform. *Journal of ethnographic and qualitative research*, *5* (4), 205-217. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ955299

Toom, A., Pietarinen, J., Soini, T., & Pyhältö,K. (2017). How does the learning environment in teacher education cultivate first year student teachers' sense of professional agency in the professional community? *Teaching and Teacher Education,63*,126-136. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.12.013

Trent, J. (2011). The Professional of Teacher Identities in Hong Kong: Can a short-term course make a difference? *Professional Development in Education, 37(4),* 613-632. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2011.576262

Tyack, D., & Larry, C. (1997). *Tinkering toward Utopia: A Century of Public-School Reform.* Harvard University Press.

Vähäsantanen, K (2015). Professional agency in the stream of change: Understanding educational change and teachers' professional identities, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *47*, 1-12, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.11.006.

Van der Linden, S., & McKenney, S.(2020). Uniting epistemological perspectives to support contextualized knowledge development. *Education Technology Research and Development, 68*, 703–727, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09772-7

Van der Heijden, H., Geldens, J., Beijaard, D., & Popeijus, H.L. (2015) Characteristics of teachers as change agents, *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 681 699, https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044328

Vélez-Ibáñez, C and Greenberg, J. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among U.S.-Mexican households. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, *23*(4): 313–335. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3195869

Weisman, B. M., & Hader, L.L., (2018). Teachers' agency: Do their values make a difference?. *British Educational Research Association*, *45* (1), 137-160. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3489

Wermke, W., & Forsberg, Eva. (2016). The changing nature of autonomy: Transformations of the late Swedish teaching profession. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, *61*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2015.1119727

Wilson, E., & Deaney, R. (2010). Changing career and changing identity: How do teacher career changers exercise agency in identity construction?. *Social Psychology of Education*, *13*, 169-183. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-010-9119-x.

Wilson, CM., Hanna, M., & Li, M. (2019) Imagining and Enacting Liberatory Pedagogical Praxis in a Politically Divisive Era. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *52* (2-3), 346-363, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/10665684.2019.1656563

Wood, L. M., Sebar, B., & Vecchio, N. (2020). Application of Rigour and Credibility in Qualitative Document Analysis: Lessons learnt from a case study. *The Qualitative Report*, *25*(2). 456-470. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027

Yazan, B. (2015). Three Approaches to Case Study Methods in Education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *The Qualitative Report*, *20*(2), 134-152. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2102

Yoon, H., Myers, M., & Volk, D. (2020). Teaching as Emancipatory Practice: Professional Partnerships Enacting Culturally Relevant Work. *Urban Education*, *55*(6), 835–837. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085919892051

Yosso, T. J., Parker, L., Solórzano, D. G., Lynn, M. (2004). From Jim Crow to affirmative action and back again: A critical race discussion of racialized rationales and access to higher education. Review of Research in Education, *28*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X028001001

Yosso, T. (2005) Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *8*(1), 69-91, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/1361332052000341006

Yosso, T. J. (2006). *Critical race counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline.* Routledge.

Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Yin, R. (2014). *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 282 pages..

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Positionality Questions

What do you identify as?

- European (Anglo)-American
- African-American
- Asian American
- Hispanic-American
- Other _____ (please specify)

How many years have you been a teacher?

_____ (number of years)

How many years have you taught in the school which you are currently teaching in?

_____(number of years).

How many years have you taught in your current position _____ (number of years)

_____

Do you speak a language other than English? If yes, then do you feel like that's an asset considering the context you teach in?

How many years of your teaching career have you had identified English Language Learners in your classroom?

_____(number of years).

Do you feel/think your positionality (lived experiences, identities: race, class, gender, beliefs, skills) influences your teaching practices/decision making?

What kinds of professional developments have helped you in understanding your role and your positionality within this school?

Do you feel confident in your preparation as a teacher in culturally diverse settings? How so? What challenges do you face?

In your opinion and based on your experience, what should teachers be doing to become better teachers within the context you teach in? What do teachers need to learn or understand?

Interview Questions

Can you walk me through the BDI professional learning experience? What stands out to you, what has stayed the most with you? How did it support/challenge your growth as an educator? Had an impact on your teaching practices?

Do you think that BDI was the right kind of a professional development for your school? How so?

In what ways did the BDI Professional Development prepare you to address the needs of your students and make decisions about their instructional journeys?

How has the journey of the last few years shaped you as a teacher? Did it help remove any constraints for you?

Would you consider yourself an instructional leader? In what ways did BDI professional development help challenge or advance your decision-making capacities/abilities as it comes to planning for your students' academic successes? Making curricular decisions? Choosing the appropriate strategies and techniques?

In our schools, we often have multiple initiatives at any given time. Would you say that the BDI professional development went hand-in-hand with these initiatives? What kinds of challenges did you face with your implementation of culturally responsive instructional routines? How did your administrators support/inhibit your growth as an educator with BDI?

In the video, you started the lesson by asking students to share what they know and then you pointed to _____, _____, _____, is this a regular instructional practice for you? Can you expand a little bit more on this?

In what ways did you find yourself centering on the experiential knowledge of your students? Are their specific steps you take? In the video it was obvious that you… can you expand more on this?

Appendix B - Informed Consent Form

Dissertation Study: Shabina Kavimandan

Kansas State University

Principal Investigator: Dr. Socorro Herrera

The following is a sample consent form for a research project being conducted by Ms. Shabina Kavimandan.

This consent form is for the dissertation research project aimed at gauging the extent of teacher agency in response to a culturally responsive professional development. Ms. Kavimandan seeks to focus on the following: 1) teachers' action oriented response to the professional development (ii) factors that might cause dissonance between teachers' own beliefs and the change they are being asked to make (Buchanan 2015), (iii) any impact of contextual factors such as teacher's own positionality and the context within which they work.

Risk Factors: This study holds no foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subjects.

Benefits: There are no monetary benefits from the research for the participants. However, it is researcher's hope that this study helps participating teachers in their own educational practice.

Subject Identity: Only the researcher knows the identity of the subjects. All the participants will be assigned a pseudonym for the study.

I understand that:

- My participation in this interview process is strictly voluntary.
- None of this information will be shared with my administrators and will remain confidential.

- I understand that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure and anonymous. Only the researcher knows my identity. The interview data is stored on an external drive with the researcher. Only the researcher has access to the interviews.
- I may opt out of this study at any time.
- I will be given one copy of the signed form.
- The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview.
- There is no penalty or loss of benefits for withdrawal from participation and I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.
- Data from this research may be shared with future researchers without my consent.

I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kansas State University. For research problems or questions regarding subjects, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted at: Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224; Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My Signature _____

My Printed Name: _____

Date _____

Signature of the Investigator: _____

Appendix C - ISCRT Inventory

State		Teacher Name		Date	
District		Grade Level(s)		Observer	
School		Content Area(s)		Start:	
		Number of ELL Students		Total Students	End:

Classroom Environment / Setup
☐ Rows w/individual desks ☐ Groups w/3 to 5 desks ☐ Pairs w/2 desks

Lesson Overview	
Lesson Topic:	

☐ Other

ELL Language Proficiency	*# of Students*
☐ Beginning	_____
☐ Intermediate	_____
☐ Advanced	_____
☐ Fluent	_____

Lesson Summary:	

Strategy Implemented	
☐ Active Bookmarks	☐ Mini Novela
☐ All in the Box	☐ Pic-Tac-Tell
☐ All on my Clipboard	☐ Picture This
☐ Consequence Wheel	☐ Pictures & Words
☐ DOTS Chart	☐ Relevance Scale

Opening / Work Time / Closing
Own thoughts
Pictures
Group project
Someone has a thought
Walking around and listening to students.

- ☐ Extension Wheel
- ☐ Foldables
- ☐ Heart Activity
- ☐ IDEA
- ☐ Linking Language
- ☐ Listen Sketch Label
- ☐ Magic Book
- ☐ Mind Maps
- ☐ Story Bag
- ☐ Three Facts & an Opinion
- ☐ Thumb Challenge
- ☐ Tri-Fold
- ☐ U-C-ME
- ☐ Vocabulary Quilt
- ☐ Word Drop
- ☐ Other _____

I. Joint Productive Activity

	Not Observed 0	**Emerging 1**	**Developing 2**	**Enacting 3**	**Integrating 4**
		The teacher:	*The teacher:*	*The teacher:*	*The teacher:*
LE	A. No evidence of a respectful learning environment	A. Creates an environment that **respects students as individual learners**	A. Creates a **culturally and linguistically** respectful learning environment	A. Creates a **low-risk** learning environment that **values diverse perspectives**	A. Orchestrates **conditions and situations** to ensure that students collaborate as **equal members** in a low-risk **learning community**
TC	B. No collaboration between teacher and students	B. **Collaborates with students** but no evidence of a joint product	B. Collaborates with **whole class** to create a **joint product** or students collaborate on a joint product in **pairs or small groups**	B. **Collaboratively guides small groups** of students, especially those that need **higher levels of support**, to create joint products	B. Collaborates with students to create joint products that **integrate language and content standards**

TPSI	C. Students work independently of one another	C. Provides **minimal** opportunities for **student interaction**	C. Provides **occasional structured opportunities** for student interaction	C. Provides **frequent** structured opportunities for **purposeful** student interaction	C. Provides **consistent** structured opportunities for purposeful student interaction that **promote development of the CLD student biography**
PGD	D. Pair or group students based on random grouping or student self-selection	D. Pair or group students based on **one dimensions of the CLD student biography**	D. Pair or group students based on **two or three dimensions** of the CLD student biography	D. Pair or group students based on two or three dimensions of the CLD student biography **as appropriate for the task/activity**	D. Pair or group students based on **all four dimensions** of the CLD student biography as appropriate for the task/activity
AC	E. No connections between the activity and the lesson	E. Makes **minimal connections** between the strategy/activity and the lesson	E. Makes **occasional relevant** connections between the strategy/activity and the lesson	E. **Frequently uses insights** from the strategy/activity to make connections **affirm learning, or modify instruction as needed**	E. **Consistently** uses insights from the strategy/activity to make connections, affirm learning, **and** modify instruction as needed

Notes:
LE= Learning Environment **TC=** Teacher Collaboration **TPSI=** Total Group, Partner, Small Group, Individual **PGD=** Partner/Grouping Determination; **AC=** Activity Connections

Adapted from CREDE (1999) Standards for Effective Pedagogy and Learning