

CONNECTING HOME AND SCHOOL DISCOURSE

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Dr. Vera Lang-Brown, my sister, Rosalind Lang Overall, and my beautiful daughter, Kendal Smith. You have anchored me and stood in the gap for me throughout this journey. I love you, and I thank you.

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## ABSTRACT

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### CONNECTING HOME AND SCHOOL DISCOURSE

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Children's first literacy experiences take place in homes embedded in families' social practices and language interactions representing the primary Discourse system. Children's home or primary Discourse significantly impacts literacy development. Teachers in schools the social represent a secondary Discourse system where literacy learning takes place. For some children, schools fail to build on their primary Discourse system, and as a result, struggle with literacy learning. This study focused on professional development for teachers aimed at supporting their understanding of Home and School Discourse. A qualitative descriptive design framed the inquiry into how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse in professional learning led by an assistant principal. Five teachers engaged in three 1-hour school-based professional development after school and were interviewed by the assistant principal, who was also the researcher. The findings indicated three broad themes in their language around the Home and School Discourse. Teachers storied about their experiences, revealed deficit views or in some cases challenged deficit views, and asserted equity and access issues around curriculum,

resources, and professional development. The findings shed light on how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse in focused professional development. Teachers mostly relied on stories and asserting equity and access to school district levels to curriculum and professional development rather than challenging deficit views and engaging in self-reflection.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Research Problem.....	5
Purpose of Study.....	6
Significance of the Study.....	7
Theoretical Framework.....	7
Discourse .....	7
Primary Discourse .....	8
Secondary Discourse .....	9
Acquisition.....	10
Learning.....	11
Literacy as a Discourse.....	11
Summary.....	12
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	13
Introduction to Home Discourse.....	14
Home Discourse .....	14
Summary of home discourse .....	22
Introduction to School Discourse .....	23
School Discourse .....	24
Summary of school discourse.....	30
Introduction of Teachers: Home and School Discourse.....	30
Teachers: Home and School Discourse .....	30

Summary of teachers: home and school discourse.....	38
Introduction to School Leaders: Home and School Discourse.....	38
School Leaders: Home and School Discourse.....	38
Summary of school leaders: home and school Discourse .....	47
Summary of the Literature Review .....	47
III. METHODOLOGY .....	48
The General Perspective.....	48
Qualitative Descriptive Analysis.....	50
Assistant Principal as Researcher.....	50
The Research Context and Participant Recruitment.....	55
Description of Teachers.....	59
Melinda.....	59
Debra .....	62
Gwen.....	64
Barbara.....	67
Kevin .....	69
Description of Professional Development.....	72
Professional Development One .....	73
Professional Development Two.....	74
Professional Development Three.....	75
Data Sources .....	76
Written Field Notes .....	77
Audio Recordings .....	77
Interviews .....	78
Transcriptions .....	78
Data Collection .....	79
Data Management.....	80
Data Analysis Process .....	81
First Cycle Coding.....	81
Reviewing field notes .....	82
Listened to audio recordings of professional development .....	83
Transcribed recorded professional development.....	83
Listened to audio recordings of interviews.....	84
Transcribed recordings of teachers' interviews.....	84
Descriptive codes.....	85
Creating definitions for codes.....	89
Development of Themes.....	89
Peer Review Feedback.....	92
Trustworthiness .....	94



Limitations of Methodology .....	97
Summary of Methodology .....	98
 IV. FINDINGS .....	 100
How Teachers Talk: Process .....	101
Storying/Reflecting .....	101
Refining .....	102
Confirming .....	104
Challenging .....	105
Changing .....	106
Process Codes: Professional Development Patterns .....	107
Professional development one .....	109
Professional development two .....	110
Professional development three .....	112
Process codes .....	113
Teacher Interviews .....	115
Melinda .....	116
Debra .....	117
Gwen .....	119
Barbara .....	122
Kevin .....	124
Process codes combined for five interviews .....	125
Process codes count of professional development and interviews .....	127
How Teachers' Talk: Themes Across Professional Development and Interviews .....	129
Storying .....	132
Childhood experiences .....	133
Awareness and responsiveness in the classroom .....	135
Revealing Teacher Dispositions .....	138
Confirming deficit views .....	139
Challenging deficit views .....	141
Addressing Equity and Access .....	143
Culturally responsive curriculum .....	144
Resources .....	147
Professional development .....	150
Summary of Findings .....	152

V. DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, AND IMPLICATIONS .....	158
Review of Methodology .....	159
Summary of the Findings .....	160
Discussion.....	166
Storying .....	168
Childhood experiences .....	169
Cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness in the classroom .....	171
Revealing Teacher Disposition.....	175
Confirming deficit views .....	177
Challenging deficit views .....	178
Addressing Equity and Access .....	179
Culturally responsive curriculum .....	179
Resources .....	181
Professional development.....	182
Implications for Practice.....	183
Recommendations for Further Research .....	186
Conclusion .....	186
REFERENCES .....	188
APPENDICES	
A. Teacher Recruitment Flyer .....	198
B. Agenda for Professional Development One .....	200
C. Agenda for Professional Development Two.....	203
D. Agenda for Professional Development Three.....	206
E. Teacher Interview Questions.....	209
F. District Approval Letter .....	211
G. Internal Review Board Approval.....	213
F. Letter of Informed Consent .....	215

## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

1. District Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile for the 2018/2019 School Year .....	57
2. School A: Melinda's 2018-2019 Campus Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile .....	61
3. School B: Debra's 2018-2019 Campus Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile .....	63
4. School C: Gwen's 2018-2019 Campus Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile .....	65
5. School D: Barbara's 2018-2019 Campus Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile .....	67
6. School E: Kevin's 2018-2019 Campus Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile .....	70
7. Teacher's Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Grade Level, Years of Experience, and School District .....	72
8. Data Collection Details.....	80
9. Process Codes and Descriptions .....	85
10. Descriptive Codes.....	86
11. Melinda's (I) Interview Transcript .....	117
12. Debra's (II) Interview Transcript .....	119
13. Gwen's (III) Interview Transcript .....	121
14. Barbara's (IV) Interview Transcript.....	123
15. Kevin's (V) Interview Transcript .....	125

## LIST OF FIGURES

### Figure

1. Professional Development Process Codes Frequency Counts .....	110
2. Combined Frequency Counts for Professional Development Process Codes .....	115
3. Frequency Counts for Interview Process Codes.....	127
4. Frequency Counts for Professional Development and Interview Process Codes .....	128
5. The Three Themes and Subcategories.....	130
6. Theme One Across Professional Development and Interviews .....	132
7. Theme Two Across Professional Development and Interviews.....	138
8. Theme Three Across Professional Development and Interviews .....	143

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Children's first literacy experiences occur in the home (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Edwards, Thompson-McMillon & Turner, 2010; Taylor, 1983). Homes represent a myriad of cultures and ways of using language (Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983). According to Gollnick & Chinn (2016), children learn their culture from the people closest to them, such as their parents or caretakers. This culture has a significant influence on children's language and thoughts. Researchers define culture as what individuals or a group of people agree and practice the basics of their shared behavior, beliefs, and values (Gollnick and Chinn, 2016; Lazar, Edwards, & Thompson-McMillon, 2012). Because children's homes represent different cultures, families develop many ways of being literate (Heath, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Literate, in this sense, is being able to read and write. Parents and children's unique cultural interactions and language experiences shape how children's literacies develop (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2013).

Schools represent different types of cultures and ways of being literate. A school's culture can be different from that of a family. Part of the school culture is academic literacy. For example, children and teachers in classrooms have specific ways of using language, acting, reading, and writing. Gee's (1987, 1989, 2001, 2015) research on literacies, describes ways of using language, acting, reading, and writing as Discourse with a capital "D." Discourse is defined as a person's state of being based on

their "social position, who they are, where they are, and what they are doing" (Gee, 1987, p. 155). Because of the diverse culture and background children and teachers represent, schools encompass more straightforward language, behaviors, and interactions that constitute Discourse.

Discourse is framed using two specific areas: primary Discourse and secondary Discourse. Primary Discourse is the first Discourse learned within people's social setting during the earliest years of their lives (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). In these social settings, individuals may share similar feelings, beliefs, thoughts, actions, and usage of words. These specific ways of speaking, thinking, and acting allow individuals to act out or recognize their socially acceptable identities (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015).

The first Discourse to which individuals are exposed to begins in their homes as children when making sense of the world as they see it. The primary Discourse provides the initial sense of self and establishes the foundations for identifying a culturally specific vernacular language (our "everyday language"). As the primary Discourse develops and children learn the language, they begin to formulate thoughts and feelings that contribute to their interactions as everyday people (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015).

Gee's work also references a secondary Discourse. As defined by Gee, secondary Discourse involves and includes social institutions outside of, or beyond the family, such as the church and the school. Secondary Discourse builds upon and extends the use of

language acquired as part of one's primary Discourse (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015).

Based on peoples' social position, their use of language will be changed to fit their social setting.

The two Discourses focused on in this study are the language spoken at home and that spoken at school. Although they are independent of each other and begin at different stages of a person's cultural and social development, both Discourses build off of each other. They are essential to schoolchildren understanding how to make sense of the world.

Given the work with children, to support their language acquisition and learning, teachers must participate in learning opportunities to help them understand how Home and School Discourse is connected. Such ongoing learning develops teachers' knowledge of language content, pedagogy, and curriculum. Teachers having close familiarity with their students' Home and School Discourse enable them to become highly influential in tailoring the curriculum, the knowledge of language content, and the pedagogy to their students' Discourses. Teachers may be viewed as highly effective practitioners when they understand that they are destined to be lifelong learners who address students' diverse needs and cultures who enter their classrooms. Through professional development, teachers can address the challenges that will enable their success in the classroom, thus connecting Home and School Discourse. However, teachers perceive professional development differently. Therefore, it is essential to understand how teachers perceive

the influence that professional development has on their knowledge regarding the content, the pedagogy, and the curriculum.

Studies suggest that teachers benefit from opportunities to engage in effective professional development (Morewood, Ankrum, & Bean, 2010). Professional development opportunities should account for 25% of a teacher's workweek (Morewood et al., 2010). Twenty-five percent of a teacher's workweek is a tall order. It is primarily up to school administrators to designate space and time for teachers to do such learning. It is also administrators' responsibility to organize, plan, and structure teachers' professional development to address teachers' personal and professional needs. Professional development must be relevant to what teachers need as they deliver effective instruction to children.

Effective professional development typically takes place when teachers engage in job-embedded activities. Job-embedded professional development consists of teacher-learner activities that are rooted in the day to day teaching practices. The professional development is framed to meet the specific instructional needs that serve as barriers for teachers supporting academic growth in their students (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hirsh, 2009). Job-embedded professional development significantly impacts their teaching and children's learning versus pre-scripted, sit-and-get professional development (Morewood et al., 2010). During professional development sessions that represent sit-and-get sessions, there are limited opportunities for teachers to collaborate, share best practices, and engage in discussion items related to the topic. Teachers'



professional development should be ongoing and address targeted areas of teaching that teachers are struggling to implement. A measure of the effectiveness and relevance of such professional development is whether it helps teachers to build upon their content knowledge and pedagogy to help them to teach what is mapped out in the curriculum. When teachers understand the content and the best pedagogical approach by which to convey that content, students' literacy development increases (Guskey, 2000; 2002).

Teachers believe that they should be able to choose which professional development opportunities they participate in because (they say) it is the teacher who knows best what is needed to support and instruct their particular students. Indeed, research suggests that when teachers have a choice in selecting professional development in which they will participate, they receive more targeted and specific support that aligns with their instructional needs (Morewood et al., 2010). When professional development offerings align with teachers' felt needs, they are much more likely to improve their classroom practice. Also, when teachers understand the material, pedagogy, and curriculum, they can plan for and execute rigorous activities that facilitate critical thinking on behalf of the students.

### **Research Problem**

When children's Home and School Discourse systems do not match, children are at risk of failing academically (Delpit, 1988; Delpit & Dowdy, 2008; Heath, 1983). Leaders and teachers often view children's Home Discourse as a deficit (Compton-Lilly; 2003; Purcell-Gates, 1996). Children become at risk of academic failure when teachers

and leaders have a deficit view of language (Compton-Lilly, 2003). As school leaders, administrators are responsible for helping teachers understand children's Home Discourse to strengthen children's academic literacy and success (Lazar et al., 2012). Professional development is one setting where administrators interact with teachers and may potentially help them understand Home Discourse. The teachers' talk patterns during professional development may potentially reveal their understandings of Home and School Discourse.

Existing studies about teachers and Home and School Discourse are case studies (Compton-Lilly, 2003, 2017; Purcell-Gate, 1996) and ethnography studies (Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981). Descriptive qualitative studies of teachers' talk in professional development followed up with interviews do not exist. Therefore, this study focused on the way teachers talk about Home and School Discourse in professional development and interviews.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study's purpose was to describe how teachers reflect and talk about connecting Home and School Discourse in their schools during professional development and interviews conducted by a school administrator. Describing the patterns present in the talk will help educators and researchers plan supportive professional development that aims to help teachers improve teaching and build more supportive classrooms for children whose Home Discourse differs from School Discourse. The following research question guided the study: How do teachers talk about Home and School Discourse?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is important because teacher talk was analyzed, described in detail, and was led by an assistant principal. The results support researchers who seek to understand teachers' perspectives around Home and School Discourse. Administrators benefit from the study because of how expressive the teachers talked during professional development and interviews. The analysis of the teacher talk will help administrators understand how to work more effectively in planning and organizing professional learning. Teachers participating in the study will benefit from having space and time to share their stories and perspectives. Other teachers will benefit from hearing their voices.

### **Theoretical Framework**

James Paul Gee's theory of Discourse frames this study. Gee theorizes that a child's exposure to and experience with language begins in their home long before they enter a school setting (Edwards, 2004; Gee, 1989; Heath, 1982). Gee's theory draws from ideas represented in the sociocultural and sociolinguistic theory. Sociocultural and sociolinguistic theory suggests that language is acquired based on children's cultural associations, social settings, and interactions. This theoretical framework will be used to present ideas related to Gee's theory of Discourse.

### **Discourse**

The term *Discourse* refers to a community of practice in which an individual is immersed and the set of socially acceptable practices within the community or social

setting to which the individual belongs (Gee, 1989, 2001, 2015). These (social) practices consist of specific ways of acting, behaving, and listening (Gee, 1989, 2001, 2015).

Interactions include exposure to the use of social languages and literacy styles embedded within the Discourse (Gee, 1989, 2001, 2015; Taylor, 1988). The particular language use of this community of practice has meanings that are relevant to the setting, situation, family, and/or group of individuals using the language at the time (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Gee, 1989, 2001, 2015; Taylor, 1988). A person can situate himself or herself within a specific social context, a community of practice, or Discourse by their interactions, actions, ways of thinking, talking, and listening (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). These behaviors are what Gee refers to as "Discourse with the capital D" (Gee, 1987, p. 166.).

Members of a particular group, culture, or social setting become socialized into a particular Discourse, in the case of schoolchildren it is often one acquired at birth (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). Discourse is also a person's identity kit. Identity kits come with specific practice standards about how one should talk (social languages), think, and act to be recognized, understood, and accepted by others within that social group (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001).

### **Primary Discourse**

Discourse is typically identified as either primary or secondary with primary Discourse referring to the first Discourse learned within one's home or social setting during the earliest years of one's life (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). Within the child's home or social setting, he/she begins to make sense of the things seen in that setting (Gee,

1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). Primary Discourse provides the child with an initial sense of self. It establishes the foundations for the child being able to identify with a culturally specific vernacular language (our "everyday language") and identity (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). Who children are, what they believe, and what they value are all part of their primary Discourse. With the primary Discourse, a child learns a language and how to use that language, learns appropriate ways of acting in a social setting, and learns how to interact as everyday people (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). Additionally, primary Discourse serves as a foundation for the acquisition and learning of a secondary Discourse that develops through exposure, interactions, and experiences in different social settings and groups outside of the child's own home, such as in others' homes, at school, and church (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015).

### **Secondary Discourse**

Secondary Discourse pertains to social institutions outside of or beyond the family, such as the church and the school (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). Secondary Discourse builds upon and extends the language children acquire as part of a primary Discourse (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). The language children use within the school setting is a secondary Discourse. Schools benefit from finding opportunities for children to use their primary Discourse to acquire their secondary Discourse. The schools have to understand the children's primary (Home) Discourse.

Although homes/families are the primary influence in children's development and capacity to use their primary Discourse, schools play a significant role, and they have an

obligation to work with families as they facilitate their children's understanding of secondary Discourse (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Gee, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2015). School-based secondary Discourse sometimes conflicts with the values and ways of thinking from some non-mainstream children's primary Discourse and other community-based secondary Discourse (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Gee, 1987; Heath, 1983). A conflict that may occur between children's primary and secondary Discourse may consist of rules and procedures that have been established by schools, such as parents being required to listen to their children read a specific nonfictional text for 30 minutes each day. This study will describe how teachers' conversations in professional development and interviews help them to understand how they connect children's acquisition of learning within the primary (Home) and secondary (School) Discourse.

### **Acquisition**

The acquisition occurs in children's natural settings and may occur without any formal teaching or instruction. Listening to, observing, and repeating individuals in children's social settings may contribute to their acquisition. Through acquisition, children learn the skills to control their first language (Gee, 1987). As a result of acquisition, Discourse is learned and acquired by interacting with others and observing the cultural models within children's social settings (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2015). These cultural models may consist of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, extended family members, neighbors, and anyone connected to a cultural or social group that has close ties with the family. These cultural models also contribute to children's acquisition

because they form the models, learned behaviors, social practices, and languages acceptable within their social groups.

## **Learning**

Learning is typically the process whereby knowledge is gained through teaching, but teaching does not always come from a teacher (Gee, 1987). Learning often occurs best through interactions in which authentic dialogue facilitates critical thinking and problem solving (Freire, 1986). Gee's theory of Discourse draws on Lev Vygotsky's ideas about learning through his sociocultural theory of development. The theory emphasizes that learning is socially mediated through language and that children learn through transactions with adults or peers who have fully acquired and learned the concept now being taught to the children (Vygotsky 1978; Woolfolk, 2014).

Based on Gee's (2015) work, learning differs from acquisition in that it is delivered in a sequential pattern that facilitates comprehension. In contrast, acquisition occurs in a natural setting and is learned due to listening, observing, and practicing. Gee (1987, 1989, 2015) posits that specific explanation and analysis must occur during learning. Real-life experiences are prompted, causing reflective thinking. As a result of the explanations and analysis that occurs during the children's learning process, the learner (child) can attain information and reproduce it as needed (Gee, 2015). This is when children's literacy as a Discourse is beginning to develop.

## **Literacy As Discourse**

Literacy expands far beyond reading, writing, and spelling. Literacy consists of

creating, computing, communicating, interpreting, and understanding a variety of written texts. Literacy Discourses are embedded in the culture and background of individuals (Li, 2009). Many literacies make up a variety of Discourses. The ways in which children speak, behave, and write are significant in how they develop and use language and literacy. Those people who are essential to children have ongoing interactions and verbal exchanges with them (Halliday, 1978). Literacy as Discourse is accomplished when children have fluent primary and secondary Discourse (Gee, 2015), or easy control and mastery of both. Learning to read and write are aspects of Discourse. Whether it is primary or secondary, the Discourse is often "mastered through acquisition, not learning" (Gee, 2015, p. 190).

### **Summary**

Children's first experiences with language start in the home. These experiences and interactions of learning and using language in the home make up children's primary Discourse. Children subsequently develop a second Discourse, typically through interactions at school, church, or any other place outside of their home. The secondary Discourse may not always align with the Home Discourse. Therefore, teachers and administrators must understand and embrace students' primary Discourse. In doing so, this understanding will support children in learning and acquiring the secondary (in this case, school) Discourse. This study offers teachers opportunities to reflect on and talk about how they connect Home and School Discourse.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Students' exposure to and experiences with using language and specifically reading begin in their homes and the community environment before they enter a school setting (Darling, 2001; Edwards, 1992; Heath, 1983). There, typically the students' parents and family members are their first language and reading teachers. Yet teachers and administrators, particularly in low-socioeconomic communities, do not always acknowledge and value the Home Discourse that children bring to school (Cazden, 1979; Gee 2015). The literature on Home and School Discourse shows that children's academic performance increases when the two Discourses connect (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Street, 1984). Also, positive educational experiences—specifically when teachers value and embrace students' Home Discourse including their languages, backgrounds, and cultures—lead to improved students' academic performance.

The purpose of the study was to describe how teachers reflect and talk about connecting Home and School Discourse in their schools during professional development and interviews conducted by a school administrator. The study sought to answer the guiding question: How do teachers talk about Home and School Discourse?

The literature review shares studies conducted on Home Discourse, School Discourse, the teacher and school leaders' view of Home and School Discourse. The literature review also discusses the historical and more current research studies aligned with how Home and School Discourse relate to schools, teachers, and professional

development. After reviewing several research studies, I connected at least three of them to my present study of Home and School Discourse.

### **Introduction to Home Discourse**

Home Discourse is a child's primary Discourse and is the foundation on which children learn the language. How a child hears the language, uses the language, and makes sense of the language is grounded in their Home Discourse. Children are socialized into their Home Discourse as soon as they are born. Home Discourse is the first means by which a child is exposed to seeing, hearing, and using language, particularly influencing how a child learns to use language. This section will present studies that focus on Home Discourse.

### **Home Discourse**

Children acquire language through listening to adults and through interactions that take place within the home. Heath's study indicates that families' socialization patterns can significantly impact the degree of early learning and acquisition of secondary Discourse (Heath, 1983). Gee's theory of Discourse draws from Basil Bernstein's sociolinguistic theory. The sociolinguistic theory has to do with language that is learned as a result of people's social interactions with each other (Bernstein, 2009). Research suggests that diverse patterns of social and language interactions in the home result in diverse patterns and levels of acquisition of secondary Discourse (Heath, 1982). Like Gee's theory of Discourse, Bernstein's social linguistic theory also observes that the background and culture of a family/home have a significant effect on three areas of

language acquisition. Language acquisition refers to how children's language is developed and used, the development of their dialect, and their ability to read and write fluently (Bernstein, 2009).

In *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms* Heath (1983), describes in detail her classic study of the oral and written language of three communities where language use and patterns "differed when interacting, communicating, and or socializing within the family" (Heath, 1983, p. 103) studied a rural community named Trackton, highly populated with Black people who worked at the local mill factory. The ethnographic study revealed that children from Trackton lacked exposure to print-based literacies in the home. Even though the children lacked exposure to some forms of literacies, the parents shared oral stories with them. The parents' stories did not require their children to engage in higher-order thinking or answer questions.

Heath (1983) explained Trackton children's response to unfamiliar types of questions, which asked for "what-explanations" (p. 256). When individual children were asked to identify and respond to what to them were unfamiliar questions, such as naming and identifying shapes, colors, sizes, and numbers, students were unsuccessful. The students' lack of exposure to literature and participation in literacy events in the study seemed correlated with their difficulty with school-based literacies, thus with their low scores on state assessments in school.

Unlike students from Trackton, the students from Maintown's community practiced and mimicked school-like literacy events at home. For example, parents/family

members asked Maintown's children more questions about the books they read. These more complex texts, decrease the need for children to think deeply about questions that they were asked. The Maintown's children were introduced to books as early as age six, and their parents consistently put literacy types of activities before them. As a result, the Maintown children "learned to listen, look at illustrations, and respond to a variety of questions about the story" (Heath, 1983, p. 102). Heath's study indicated that the families from the Maintown's community were middle class and school-oriented.

Heath's (1983) study described a third community, Roadville, where parents participated in literacy events early with their children. The mothers who were a part of the study read to their babies while the babies were still in the womb. The children's environments reflected those of school. Walls at home were colorful, print-rich, and reflective of walls typically seen in a literacy-rich classroom. Children were also exposed to bedtime stories believed to contribute to the children's success in "literacy learning during their lower grade levels" (Heath, 1983 p. 103). However, as the children progressed to their upper-grade levels, they experienced difficulty with literacy tasks, as the questions required more complex and critical thinking. Heath (1983) explained this finding by noting the parents' patterns of socialization. During the early years of parents reading storybooks to their children, they focused on "letters, number identifications, and item labeling" (Heath, 1983, p.103). As the parents' interacted with their children, they rarely asked questions to engage them in various thinking levels to encourage more conversation.

The results from Heath's study of the families in the three different towns indicate that their socialization patterns can significantly impact the degree of early learning and literacy development of their children. She related the sociolinguistic theory to that of the various patterns of social and language interactions of the families, leading to the differences in the children's individual reading skills (Heath, 1983).

Heath's (1983) work supports my study on connecting Home and School Discourse. She observes that families have a significant influence on how children view literacy and how they develop literacy. Facilitation of a child's first interactions with literacy experiences occurs in the home. Like my study on connecting Home and School Discourse, Heath's study also identifies how children bring to school their literacy experiences at home. My research also recognizes that the teachers' efforts to support children's acquisition and learning of School Discourse are more effective when they understand and value students' Home Discourse.

In 1983, Taylor's groundbreaking ethnographic research study illustrated the importance of literacy styles and values that impacted children's learning to read. The seminal research subsequently became a published book, *Family Literacy: Young Children Learning to Read and Write* (Taylor, 1983). In her study, Taylor (1983) examined literacy interactions surrounding texts within family settings, how children became literate, and how children use literacy in their everyday lives. Taylor (1983) also studied the individuals in the homes that were literate persons and what counted as literacy in the children and families. She learned how the schools' systematic ways of

looking at reading and writing as activities have consequences and are affected by family life (Taylor, 1983).

The teachers in the study were six white, middle-class families living in suburban towns within a 50-mile radius of New York City. The educational backgrounds of the families varied. Each family included a school-age child whose family identified them as a student thriving in reading and writing.

The collection of data included interviews, audio recordings of children reading books, and a collection of children's writings. To collect data, Taylor (1983) also served as a participant-observer. As a participant-observer, she observed how parents and families' backgrounds shaped their children's literate lives. During interviews, parents shared memories of literacy experiences and events that took place within the homes during their childhoods.

The results of Taylor's study revealed that patterns of reading were passed down from one sibling to the next. Younger siblings engaged in literacy events with older siblings. The study also showed that past experiences with literacy influenced how parents approached and facilitated literacy experiences in their homes. The study found that literacy was connected and embedded in daily interactions within the homes of the teachers (Taylor, 1983). For example, reading recipes, signs, board games that required matching, puzzles, completing paperwork and written notes to family and friends were practical ways for literacy and writing to be embedded in daily practices.

Taylor's research relates to my study connecting Home and School Discourse because her work observed how literacy used in the home influenced how literacy is used and appropriated in the school. More meaningful learning experiences occur when teachers understand and embrace the literacy practices that students bring to school. Embracing students' Home Discourse takes place for example when teachers use positive cultural models and representations in the class setting that represent the cultural backgrounds of students. Embracing students' Home Discourse in the classroom setting supports the new language and learning identified as school Discourse.

The article, "The Jones Family Culture of Literacy" explored the intergenerational histories of literacy practices within the Jones family (Johnson, 2010). The teachers were selected through community nominations. A process similar to snowballing, community nominations occur when the first interviewee nominates additional people to serve as teachers for the study. In this study, the initial interviewee selected her mother and daughter to serve as teachers. The Joneses were an African American family who lived in a small town of about 572 people in the United States' southeastern region. Johnson (2010) described how the Joneses' intergenerational family histories embraced a culture of literacy.

To gain information about their intergenerational family histories, Johnson (2010) conducted interviews with three family members. Her interview centered around questions that led to Discourse about places where "literacy was learned, materials used for literacy, people fostering literacy in the home, practices where literacy was used,

other members of the family, magazines, books, shopping, and family routines” (Johnson, 2010, p. 3). During Johnson's interviews, she shared the significance and the benefits of several family literacies that the family valued and embraced.

In the study, she coded some of the interviews' feedback in the following manner: interactional (letter writing and reading within the family), or instrumental (searching, reading, and sharing memorized recipes, passed on from generation to generation along with sewing tips). Feedback from the interviews also included the mentioning of reading newspapers to learn about events locally, state, and nationwide; financial materials (documenting expenditures, preparing budgets, with daily occurrences of the use of numbers); spiritual material (reading the Bible, praying together, attendance at Sunday school and church services, printed scriptures posted in home, etc.); recreational uses of print (available reading for pleasure: fairy tales, poems, novels from child to adult); and literacy materials used for educational purposes (which valued school as a place for learning and encouraged attendance at schools or which involved the sharing of school materials with other members of the family to enhance skills, the oral reading of books, etc.). Johnson (2010) learned that the Jones family valued literacy and education. She indicated that even though the Jones family members' education varied between members, the literacy level they maintained as a family was a mechanism that helped them to uphold their culture.

Johnson's (2010) study emphasizes how important it is that teachers and researchers engage in substantial research to learn more about how families value and



interact around literacy. Johnson's research is significant to my study because she details how children come to school with various literacy experiences. When teachers value those experiences and use them to support learning, children feel they are part of the school learning community.

In another study that focuses on Home Discourse, Victoria Purcell-Gates (1996) examined the relationships between the uses of print and the emergent literacy knowledge that children had within the home. Purcell-Gate's (1996) study also reported various ways in which print was used in the homes of low-income families. The questions used to frame her research study were: 1) What are the different ways and the frequency people use print in their homes?; 2) What young children hold the knowledge of the written language in the homes?; and 3) What is the relationship between the home's literacy practices (both in type and frequency) and the types and degrees of written language knowledge held by the children?

Purcell-Gate's (1996) study was conducted using a qualitative descriptive design. Twenty-four children ranging in ages four to six from a total of 20 families participated in the study. English was the primary language spoken in the homes of the families participating in the study. The study reported that the literacy levels of the teachers ranged from functional literacy to low literacy. Data for the study was collected through two and five participant observation sessions of each family. The researcher looked at the various ways in which children and families used print in the home. Artifacts, such as children's writing samples and drawings, were part of the data collection. Children in the

study were administered a written language assessment task that included three sections and were designed to assess their abilities to read and write.

Purcell-Gates (1996) found that children, parents, and their families used literacy in their daily routines and used literacy as a means of entertainment. Literacy events that were categorized as entertainment included: reading newspapers, books, magazines, board game directions, and game cards. Daily routines consisted of parents and families using literacy for reading recipes when cooking and reading when shopping and even cleaning. The results of Purcell-Gates' (1996) study revealed that families and children from urban communities where families may be categorized as having a low-socioeconomic status used literacy every day. The literacy events used in the home may not mirror structured, school-like literacy events, but literacy is embedded throughout the home in various ways (Purcell-Gates, 1993, 1995, 1996).

Purcell-Gate's (1996) study is relevant to my research on connecting Home and School Discourse because it shows that parents and families facilitate various ways of using literacy every day. Although these ways of using literacy are prevalent in homes with children, teachers in the classroom do not always acknowledge them. When teachers capitalize on these literacy events and use them to bridge Home and School Discourse, children see reflections of themselves in the classroom. By feeling that they are part of the learning that goes on, children become more involved in their learning.

**Summary of home discourse.** In summary, several studies were reviewed that were significant in the discussion on Home Discourse. The studies demonstrated that

children's first experiences with language contribute to their literacy development. Children's interactions with family members, their ways of using language, and their exposure to various literacy events are all experiences that facilitate literacy development in children. The studies highlighted that literacy is used not only for seeking information but also for entertainment. The studies identified suggest that Home Discourse, which is referred to as primary Discourse, is the foundation for how a child learns a language and makes sense of how to use language. Studies on Home Discourse also found that reading patterns were passed down from one generation to the next. Specifically, the literacy practices used in parents' homes when they were growing up influenced how they, in turn, engaged literacy with their children.

### **Introduction to School Discourse**

School Discourse is a secondary Discourse that is acquired by assimilation, enculturation, and immersion in the school setting (Gee, 2015). Like Home Discourse, School Discourse is also made up of structures, rules, procedures, and protocols (Gee, 2015). The protocols and routines practiced in School Discourse are specific to the organization's goals, mission, beliefs, and values. Its members gain social acceptance upon compliance with the rules, protocols, and routines. Compliance in School Discourse includes children following social norms and fulfilling the expectations for specific ways of interacting that are acceptable in their school settings (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Gee, 2015).

There is a strong link between Home Discourse and children's acquisition of School Discourse (Zygouris-Coe, 2007). In some cases, children's experiences with how language is used in their homes differ from how language is used in school. The misalignment between how children experience language at home and school may result in challenges in children becoming versed in School Discourse (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Gee 2015; Heath, 1983). Some parents and families incorporate School-like Discourse into the primary Discourse practiced in the home (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2015). This practice is identified as "early borrowing" (Gee, 2015, p.176). It is done to expose children to the academic skills required during School Discourse and make them familiar with social interactions, language use, and attitudes that reflect School Discourse (Gee, 2015). The following section focuses on research studies that focus on School Discourse.

### **School Discourse**

In *Growing Up Literate: Learning from Inner City Families*, Denny Taylor and Catherine Dorsey-Gaines (1988) examined how three African American families from an urban setting perceived their children's literacy skills. Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines (1988) looked at the social, political, and cultural functions of how African American families used literacy in an urban community (Shay Avenue), and the impact that these functions played in the children's literacy development. In the study, the researchers set out to examine: the reasons why families read and write; how reading and writing is used within a social context; how personal biographies and the educative styles of parents and families shape children's experiences with literacy; how children initiate, engage in, and

understand their reading and writing influences; the interrelationship between how reading and writing is taught at school versus how they are taught at home; the family's literacy needs and the relationship between the teaching of reading and writing; how children's day-to-day literacy experiences may positively or negatively affect their literacy development; and how schools might build relationships with Black children that live in poor urban communities (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988).

Ethnographic qualitative methods were used to collect data for this study. Three African American families with at least one child in Kindergarten to Grade 1 were selected to participate in the study. Each parent who was a part of the study perceived their child was mastering the concepts necessary for reading and writing. The researcher gathered data by observing the children in their home environments. The researcher conducted open-ended audio recordings with parents, grandparents, and other family members. Photographic observations were also used to capture the daily experiences of literacy used by family members. Artifacts collected by the researcher consisted of items that represented how literacy was used in the home. Findings from the study revealed that African American parents and families living on Shay Avenue used literacy in various settings and for multiple purposes. The children's literacy development was supported through their environment and by that they were provided with. Data collected from the study revealed that like families from middle- and upper-class communities, such as the families from Shay Avenue, also held high expectations and a desire for their children to excel in literacy.

Data collected as a part of the study included children's writings and drawings, which included words and sentences that described their home and community settings (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). The study revealed that literacy use may intrude into parents and families' personal lives experiencing economic distress when dealing with certain government entities. For example, when a family seeks assistance for food stamps, housing, and so forth, it is required that family member(s) complete paperwork in which they are asked to share an overwhelming amount of information about their personal lives.

Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' (1988) study relates to my study on connecting Home and School Discourse because both studies show the way literacy is used at home influence how literacy is used in the school. When teachers' value and embrace the literacy practices and experiences with which students come to school, learning is facilitated in a safe and judgment-free environment. The connection of the Home and School Discourse occurs when activities are relatable and relevant to the students' literacy lives and practices. Like the ideas shared in connecting Home and School Discourse, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' study demonstrates that children benefit more when writing and reading activities are relevant to their personal experiences.

In 1987, Patricia Edwards developed the Parents as Partners Reading Program to increase parents' knowledge about how to share books with their children. The program also included a course designed to broaden teachers' understanding of multiple literacy environments and African American children's learning styles (Edwards, 1995). The

article, "Combining Parents' and Teachers' Thoughts about Storybook Reading at Home," (Edwards, 1995) highlighted the conversations between Edwards sharing about storybook reading. Through questioning and dialoguing, it was found that parents wanted their children to succeed. Still, they did not plan to facilitate that success when engaging in literacy events at home. According to Edwards (1995), questions raised by parents included, "Do I point to the pictures? What do I do while I'm holding the book? Do I say the title of the book?" In considering the parents' raised questions, Edwards (1995) concluded that many of the parents were low-level readers who lacked the ability to engage children in school-like literacy when at home.

Edwards' (1995) conclusions about parents and their literacy ability are similar to what France and Meeks (1987) found in their study. They concluded that parents who do not have basic literacy skills could not meet the challenge of creating a "curriculum of the home" to prepare their children to succeed in school (France & Meeks, 1987, p. 222). Furthermore, such parents cannot help their children build a foundation for literacy because they are unable to read to them (Edwards, 1995).

The goal of the Parents as Partners Reading Program was to teach parents techniques to help teachers increase their children's ability to read (Edwards, 1995). Throughout the program, parents participated in over 23 2-hour sessions, allowing parents to see storybook reading in action. The sessions' components consisted of modeling, parent practice of a specific skill or technique with each other, and parent-child interactions. Throughout these different components, Edwards served as a coach,

assisting parents as needing and providing them with feedback. From these interactions, the parents learned the importance of involving their children in a book-reading interaction, and they recognized that "the parent holds the key to unlocking the meaning represented by the text" (Chapman, 1986, p. 12).

The studies presented are relevant to my study on connecting Home and School Discourse because both underline schools' responsibility for creating a learning environment in which children's Home Discourses are valued and appreciated. Studies suggest that parents' education level or socioeconomic status do not impede their desire for wanting their children to thrive as readers. Similar to the ideas presented in Edwards' (1995) study, connecting Home and School Discourse also shows that parents provide their children with a wealth of knowledge and experiences that support them in acquiring and learning School Discourse.

With a class of first graders for 1 year in an ethnographic study, Sarah Michaels (1981), serving as the principal investigator, examined the students' "home-based oral discourse competence and their acquisition of literate discourse features" (Michaels, 1981, p. 423) that would contribute to their written communication. During the study, she learned that children's home-based oral discourse made a significant impact on how successful or how much a teacher would have in first graders' literate skills contributing to their written communication. She learned that students who shared stories more freely without interruptions staying on the topic would gain better time learning how to transition from oral communication to written communication.



During sharing time each morning, the students would be asked to come and stand next to the teacher and describe an object or share a topic related to themselves. The sharing time occurred the entire year. As the students' talked, Michaels recorded the students' stories, and at the end of the year, she selected 50 samples where she analyzed the students' sharing. Michaels revealed that the first graders had different oral discourse patterns for their sharing styles, and the sharing patterns varied by race and gender, specifically with girls. The way the students shared stories and expressed themselves were different.

As she analyzed the recordings, she revealed that the white students tended to begin their sharing with a topic and would talk about that topic with a beginning, middle, and end with little to no interruption by the teacher. Thus, the teacher could follow the students' sharing and considered they would have fewer problems with written communication. However, when the Black children were asked to share, Michaels found that the children's oral discourse patterns consisted of rambling and repetition, and many times their sharing was disconnected. They would begin with a topic and shift the topic while talking, making it difficult for the teacher to follow their sharing. The teacher would ask questions for clarity to try and follow the students' sharing and get them back on track with a single topic. The teacher would use her own insight to interpret what the student was sharing. Findings from Michaels' (1981), study revealed that students' Home Discourse plays a significant difference in students' literacy acquisition. When teachers and students' Discourses are different, teachers sometimes struggle to connect students'

Home and School Discourse to improve oral communication, support literacy acquisition and written communication (Michaels, 1981).

**Summary of school discourse.** In summary, schools introduce a Discourse that includes a specific set of rules, procedures, language use, and behaviors that are not necessarily always aligned with children's existing Home Discourse. The research studies identified the importance of how Home Discourse affects the acquisition of school Discourse. The way children engage in Discourse at home affects how they participate in and understand School Discourse. In providing children with the support of learning and making acquisitions into School Discourse, schools must create meaningful learning opportunities in which both Home and School Discourse are recognized and valued.

### **Introduction of Teachers: Home and School Discourse**

When working with children and families, teachers need to reflect on how they view children from various backgrounds and cultures different from their own (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). The goal of connecting Home and School Discourse is more attainable when teachers understand that children are members of a family system that operates within specific sets of norms and rules that may differ from school norms (Gadsden, 1997, 2000).

### **Teachers: Home and School Discourse**

In 1992, Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez conducted a qualitative ethnographic case study to show that by capitalizing on household and other community resources, educators can organize classroom instruction beyond the traditional teacher-centered, sit-

and-get methods of teaching. More specifically, Moll et al. (1992) examined how children who may appear marginalized are often not offered an opportunity to share their funds of knowledge. This occurs primarily because of the way teachers structure their lessons and set up their classrooms.

To capture households' complex socio-historical functions, Moll et al. (1992) used ethnographic observations where the teacher assumed the learner's role. Questions that drove the study included: 1) How do families use their funds of knowledge in dealing with change, and often difficult, social and economic circumstances?; 2) How do families develop social networks that interconnect them with their social environments?; and 3) How do social relationships facilitate the development and exchange of resources, including knowledge, skills, and labor that enhance the household's ability to thrive and survive?

The researchers observed children's and family interactions within their households and used researcher observations of classroom practices and open-ended interviews. The research design also included after-school, collaborative teacher study groups. The after-school study groups consisted of the teachers and the researcher exploring how Home and School Discourse connects.

Moll et al.'s (1992) study on socio-culture influence suggested that teachers should allow students to share positive experiences in the home to promote literacy learning. The researchers' suggestion was shown to be successful when a teacher invited into the classroom a student's father who was not formally educated but was a farmer

who possessed a wealth of knowledge about farming. The child also knew a lot about farming.

The parent spoke about farming and his lifestyle. According to the research, after the parent's visit, the children were required to complete a writing assignment about their learning. This was a positive literacy learning experience for the students in general, but perhaps particularly for the farmer's validated child. The teacher subsequently invited other parents with different occupations to visit the class. Moll et al.'s (1992) research indicated that adults' social influence and cultural interactions, along with children's home environments, could impact literacy development and learning and do so in an engaging way.

The study results identified that knowledge is gained when teachers assume the role of learner and researcher, visiting the parents, children, and families they serve. Teacher home visits build a positive rapport and provide parents and families with opportunities to exchange funds of knowledge with teachers, an exchange that results in a definite connection between Home and School Discourse (Moll et al., 1992). The study also suggested that teachers could organize classroom instruction and activities that reflect the children's homes and communities served by the school by drawing from children's experiences, home, and community resources.

Moll et al.'s study correlates to connecting Home and School Discourse because both agree on the importance of teachers communicating with the parents, families, and communities they serve to bridge Home and School Discourse. Establishing a community

of learners in which teachers can facilitate learning experiences and in which children are invited to share their cultures, customs, practices, and family histories is a way of appreciating the diverse backgrounds that the children represent. Both studies suggest that parents are critical factors in building children's literacy development at school.

*The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (Ladson-Billings, 1994) more specifically highlights how culturally relevant teaching supports the connection between Home and School Discourse. The study was conducted to document the practice of highly effective teachers of African American students. Ladson-Billings' (1994) ethnographic study included eight African American families that served as research teachers. A selection of nine teachers was made through community nominations. Community nominations for this study consisted of submissions made by individuals who have personal insight, connections, interactions, and knowledge of the potential research participant. These individuals with insight included church members, community members, or other advocates within the community or social setting that knew the person being asked to participate in the study.

In the study, parents, administrators, and colleagues provided nominations for potential teachers who could serve as teachers for the study (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The criteria used for selecting teachers included: the teacher's ability to manage their class, positive student and teacher relationships, effective practices with African American students; student attendance; and student performance on standardized assessments.

Data collection consisted of recorded and transcribed teacher interviews and 30 classroom observations lasting from 90 minutes to 2 hours each. To gain a greater understanding of one classroom teacher's reading program, the researcher conducted 20 additional classroom visits. During classroom observations, the researcher served as a participant-observer, where she tutored students, served as the teacher's aide and interacted with students while they worked in groups. Videotaping, collective interpretation, and analysis were used to collect data.

The study revealed that teacher preparation is needed to facilitate and deliver culturally relevant teaching in the classroom. For this to happen, the study suggested that colleges, schools, and universities design programs to help prospective teachers gain a useful learning experience. Ladson-Billings (1994) shared that quality programs for future teachers include access to materials and resources that will support their teaching efforts in exposing students to culturally relevant teaching that connects Home and School Discourse. Participation in training and professional development that will lead to an understanding of African American students' cultural background and social practices is critical for teachers to build their capacity to facilitate culturally relevant teaching in the classroom. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings (1994) shared the importance of teachers' immersion in (in this case) African American culture as they deliver culturally relevant teaching to their children. To teach children from diverse backgrounds, knowing about and experiencing the culture is essential. Classroom observations of master teachers who

are proficient in the culturally relevant teaching method (Ladson-Billings, 1994) can help ensure that prospective teachers see how to deliver culturally relevant teaching.

The study suggests that teachers must facilitate a learning environment in which interactions and Discourse reflect educational self-determination for teachers to develop and maintain a vision for culturally relevant teaching. Educational self-determination is an attitude of confidence and resilience. When teachers possess educational determination, they are not afraid of challenging the status quo or of seeking out advanced educational opportunities that are not being provided (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Ladson-Billing's (1994) research regarding culturally relevant teaching helped to facilitate positive connections between Home and School Discourse because students felt valued and appreciated in the classroom. Meaningful academic tasks implemented due to culturally relevant teaching honored and respected children's home languages and cultural backgrounds.

This study is important because it highlights how culturally relevant teaching supports the connection between Home and School Discourse. As a result of culturally relevant education, students understand how they connect to local, national, racial, cultural, and global identities (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and see themselves represented in positive ways. More important, when engaging students in culturally relevant education, teachers' actions and beliefs demonstrate that all students can and will learn.

In another study, Compton-Lilly (2003) set out to dispel the myths, negative perceptions, and biases that some teachers may have regarding literacy practices in urban

families' homes. To dismiss these myths, opposing opinions, and prejudices, Compton-Lilly (2003) documented the various ways parents, children, and families view reading and situate their experiences within the social and political world in which they live. Three questions drove Compton-Lilly's (2003) study: 1) What were the difficulties that children faced when becoming literate?; 2) What are the roles that parents and families play when helping children's literacy development?; and 3) What are the challenges that children face with literacy development in urban schools and communities?

Data for this study were collected using a qualitative research method that consisted of a case study. Ten families were selected by convenience sampling. The researcher gathered data by conducting four parent interviews. Parents could share ideas regarding their views on literacy, literacy practices, past and present experiences, and how they use literacy in and outside of their homes. Parents could also share their views regarding how schools facilitate literacy instruction and support their children's literacy development. Data collected for the study also consisted of four student interviews. Students could share how they felt about reading and elaborate on their understanding of what actions are demonstrated by good readers. Other data collected consisted of field notes, classroom observation, and student work samples.

The research conducted took place at an urban elementary school where 97% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. Out of the 23 students in the classroom, three were Hispanic, three were multiracial, and the remaining 17 students were African American. The socioeconomic status of parents was diverse. Findings from this study



suggested that the teachers' value reading, and they see it as a way of communication. Parents and families reported that they believed reading to be essential for gaining access to employment and career acceleration. Parents and families in the study also shared that reading is critical to maneuvering through society daily and that if not mastered as a discourse, social mobility may be challenging.

Compton-Lilly (2003) found that teachers must understand the families' feelings and views about reading for teachers to facilitate positive connections between home and school. Teachers must recognize that their assumptions about urban parents and families are often myths and false narratives. When teachers realize that these are myths and false narratives, they must also recognize that such assumptions and understandings about urban parents and families can and do subconsciously affect how they connect to parents. Being aware of these feelings and working to understand better the children, families, and community will help dispel those false narratives and myths.

Compton-Lilly's (2003) study relates to connecting Home and School Discourse because how literacy is used or approached at home influences how literacy is used or approached at school. When teachers embrace literacy practices in children and families' homes and incorporate those practices into literacy tasks and methods, students feel that their cultures, backgrounds, and ways that they are literate are valued. In conclusion, teachers play a crucial role in connecting Home and School Discourse. Yet, without a genuine understanding of their own assumptions and how they view children from

different backgrounds and cultures, teachers will encounter barriers with connecting Home and School Discourse (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Edwards et al., 2010).

**Summary of teachers: home and school discourse.** In summary, teachers' understanding of Home and School Discourse is critical because teachers are often the first line of defense in ensuring that students feel valued, safe, and a part of the learning community. By acknowledging the false narratives, myths, biases, and misrepresentations that exist for children and families from urban communities, teachers will be better able to support children's literacy development.

### **Introduction to School Leaders: Home and School Discourse**

Much of the literature on connecting Home and School Discourse focuses more on teachers' actions than on the specific roles that other school leaders play. However, research strongly points to the fact that other school leaders are also crucial to schools' success and play a significant role in improving the quality of teaching, which affects student learning. Those school leaders are the ones charged with creating and maintaining positive relationships between the home and school. The following four studies reviewed and discussed the role of school leaders, and how they connected Home and School Discourse to improve teaching and student learning.

### **School Leaders: Home and School Discourse**

The exploratory study conducted by Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1990) determined eight key features essential for effectively connecting Home and School Discourse. The essentials are 1) effective schooling values students' language and

cultures; 2) high expectations for language-minoritized are made concrete; 3) school leaders make the education of language-minoritized students a priority; 4) staff development is designed to help teachers and staff serve language-minoritized students more effectively; 5) a variety of programs for language-minoritized students are offered; 6) counseling programs give special attention to language-minoritized students; 7) the school encourages parents to become involved in their children's education; and 8) staff members share a strong commitment to empowering students through education.

The study used qualitative and quantitative methods. Several individuals made nominations of secondary schools that had large populations of language-minoritized students. In addition to the nominations made, Lucas et al. also obtained recommendations from the state, county, and district level officials. The researchers were able to find six schools that agreed to serve as sites for the research study. Data were collected from structured interviews of one superintendent, two district-level bilingual program directors, six principals, six assistant principals, five school-level project and program directors, 15 counselors, 52 teachers and teacher aides, 135 students, 124 student questionnaires, and 54 classroom observations. Audiotapes and observation notes were used to record the data collected.

Lucas et al. (1990) argued that certain features are essential to effectively connect Home and School Discourse. Some of the crucial requirements include leaders making the education of language-minoritized students a priority; supporting teachers through

professional development initiatives; offering a variety of programs; and providing a counseling program that meets language-minoritized students (Lucas et al., 1990).

Another study, conducted by Dantas and Manyak (2010) presented perspectives on how schools perceive the deficits between the Home and School Discourse of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. That study also explored the discontinuities that children face as they move between Home and School Discourse. Additionally, Dantas & Manyak (2010) presented perspectives regarding the disconnections and connections that families sometimes encounter as they transition between home and school. Dantas and Manyak concluded their study by identifying tools and strategies that school leaders could use to connect Home and School Discourse.

Displacing deficit thinking in school district leadership is imperative when changing stakeholders' attitudes and mindsets within a school district. Displacing deficit thinking should start from the top and be encouraged to trickle down to district officials, school officials, and then teachers. Skrla and Scheurich's (2001) study found that deficit thinking includes ideas such as the notion that children's academic deficiencies reflect their parents' and home lives. These researchers focused on how deficit thinking in school-district leadership typically includes a limited way of thinking about expectations for academic performance and learning expectations of children of color and children from low-income homes. Such a deficit thinking mindset exists not only in classrooms; it is adapted and facilitated in practices, policies, and ideas at the national, state, and local

levels. These ideas and practices impact how students of color and students from low-income families are perceived academically.

As a result of the (mis)perceptions that occur in deficit thinking mindsets, students are often (mis)labeled as struggling learners, coded as special education students, and (mis)identified as having behavioral issues. Additionally, stakeholders with deficit thinking mindsets most often encourage non-mainstream students (particularly ones whose primary language is not English) in low-level classes, special programs, remedial classes, and even segregated classrooms based on their home languages (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). The study identified five ways that school and district leaders may assume displacement of deficit thinking. The researcher enlisted four public school districts to serve as the sites for the study. The student population ranged from 8,000 to 50,000 students at each of these sites. When looking at potential teachers for the study, the researcher looked at the district's size, eliminating any school district that did not have at least 3,000 students. Fifty percent of the students received free or reduced-cost lunches, and schools had to have the status of a "recognized" or "exemplary" school.

A school is rated as a recognized school when 80% of students pass the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). To obtain an "exemplary" status, the passing rate for the TAAS must be 90%. Schools selected to serve as sites for the qualitative study included Aldine ISD, Brazosport ISD, San Benito ISD, and Wichita Falls ISD. During multiple site visits, the team of six researchers interviewed board members, superintendents, central office staff, school administrators, teachers, and parents, and

collected the data. They also interviewed newspaper staff, business leaders, and community members, and they collected the data. Skrla and Scheurich (2001) conducted over 200 individual and group interviews using audio recording, observation notes, and documents to collect the data.

To analyze their data, Skrla and Scheurich (2001) used Folio Views 4.2, a qualitative research software. This software helped the researchers identify themes and codes from the interview transcripts, observation notes, and other documents. Their findings revealed that to move a district made up of a diverse group of learners into equitable learning for all students, the displacement of deficit thinking must be a priority. Superintendents found that the accountability systems in place for the districts revealed that all students, particularly those of color, were not being served. In fact, students were not being served equitably. The third studies suggested that the accountability system forced superintendents to research schools with the same makeup as their schools, and mirror those schools' successes. The final finding was that in light of the research the superintendents re-evaluated their deficit thinking by learning to view the equity of all students' success in a more positive way across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

In their 2004 qualitative study, McKenzie and Scheurich noted explicitly that their research intended to "offer a researched-based construct as a tool" for university professors in preparing administrators to develop successful schools for all children, particularly those schools with students of color (p. 601). The researchers identified the

construct as equity traps. The equity traps evolved as teachers responded and discussed their perceptions of specific topics presented by the researchers, revealing conscious and unconscious thoughts and behaviors about students of color, parents, and the community. The study results showed how the equity traps interfered with the teachers' abilities and desire to create successful schools for their children of color. The study addressed four equity traps: the deficit view, racial erasure, employment and avoidance of the gaze, and beliefs and behavior. It offered practical strategies for assisting teachers in avoiding equity traps.

The teachers in the study included eight experienced White teachers who identified as good or decent teachers and had the most elementary school teaching experience (3–20 years) at a site where 95% of the 291 students were from low-income homes. A one-hour interview and 2-hour group sessions were conducted to gather information from the teachers about their perceptions of working with students of color. The interview and group sessions were recorded and transcribed for data gathering, and the data informed the researchers' thoughts about developing questions for the next sessions and topic discussions. Teachers were advised to keep journals during the study.

The first equity trap McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) identified was the deficit view. The deficit view revealed that teachers deemed their students' lack of success due to their poor economic background, lack of interest in school and learning, poor behavior, and inherent failure based on the education, cultural backgrounds, and outlooks of their families and communities. The researchers recommended that the teachers get to know

their students by visiting the parents in their homes. The teachers accepted the recommendation, saw parents in their homes, and left the community with a very different view: parents of low-income families were very concerned about their children's education. As a result of the debriefing, several teachers experienced a positive and encouraging meeting with the parent(s) and decided to continue the parent-teacher discussions in the homes.

The second equity trap was racial erasure. The study suggested developing book study groups to engage teachers in reading and discussing books that placed them in settings that helped them present their views on "racial Others." The concept of color blindness emerged from a reading passage in Ladson Billings' (1994) text, *The Dreamkeepers*. When this statement was read and understood by the White teachers, they began to examine their perceptions, "beliefs, and dysconsciousness" about whether they see color as they work with their children of color (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p.35).

McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) also recommended reviewing school or district data by conducting equity audits. The audits would raise teachers' awareness and engage them in discussions to identify students' inequitable placements (particularly students of color) in particular programs and activities.

The third equity trap was avoidance and employment of the gaze. Teachers tended to express the importance of their job position and expectations based on the school setting where they taught. Teachers working in a low-income environment were more relaxed and not concerned about being questioned by administrators or parents about



their students than those working in schools with children whose parents were predominantly White and had middle-class incomes. It transpired that teachers deliberately chose the low-income teaching settings to avoid the expectations and accountability they deemed to be higher in the White middle-class schools. Also, by teaching in a low-income background, the teachers felt they could treat the children at the school in ways that would not be tolerated without being seriously questioned at a middle-income school site. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) labeled the teachers' choice and reactions as avoidance of the gaze.

The employment of gaze was another phase of the third equity trap. This trap tended to have a significant influence on teachers' negative thinking over teachers' positive thinking. In the study, teachers Lauren and Tammy were engaged in talking about the success of students. Tammy expressed her empathy for students' failures. However, Lauren was adamant about not being the reason for students' failure, and her comments soon swayed Tammy to express "that the students were far behind" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, p. 620). It was recommended that school leaders form interview teams and hire teachers committed to all schools' success. Since this study was designed to prepare school leaders to work with teachers, the researchers recommended that the instructor create opportunities for the in-service teachers to participate in mock interviews where there are questions relating to racial biases.

The last equity trap that became clear in the study was paralogical beliefs and behaviors. Teachers admitted that their negative and inappropriate behaviors were often

characterized by their students' misbehavior and even parents at times. The teachers did not feel responsible for their students' inappropriate behavior. They did not feel accountable for their behavior or actions. The teachers were advised to visit other classrooms whose teachers had positive relationships with their students. Another suggestion was that a master teacher or coach worked with teachers on the challenges they had in the classroom and watch the coach demonstrate alternative teaching methods.

The study results revealed that teachers consciously and unconsciously experience a myriad of inequitable thoughts and behaviors that trap them into failing to create successful schools—particularly in those schools with students of color and schools with a high poverty rate. The study advocated strongly for school leaders and teachers to create 21st-century schools that serve all children equally.

The study was specifically designed to offer university-level educational leadership programs a useful construct that could help prepare school leaders to develop research-based knowledge and experiences, adequate training, and strategies to help teachers acknowledge the equity traps so that those teachers can positively impact all students in school. As school leaders begin to understand the equity traps identified and articulated by McKenzie and Scheurich (2004), they will be able to create positive working environments and opportunities through professional development, book talks, and other options that will help teachers acknowledge their inequities and begin to build schools that foster success in all students.

**Summary of school leaders: home and school discourse.** In summary, school leaders play a vital role in connecting Home and School Discourse and are crucial to teachers and students' successes. Three studies revealed school leaders' dispositions in different phases in which their beliefs, decisions, and ways of thinking affected their leadership in connecting the Home and the School Discourses.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

Children's first models for literacy and language occurs in the home (Heath, 1983). These models consist of parents, family members and close friends. Through observations, interactions, and exchanges children become immersed into language and literacy use (Gee, 2015). As a result of these interactions, observations, and exchanges with parents, family members and close friends, children learn ways of acting, speaking, and being. These ways of acting, speaking, and being shapes children's identities (Gee, 2015). Despite children's initial exposure to language and literacy starting in the home, there seems to be a mismatch in between the language spoken at home and the language spoken at school.

Chapter II provided a literature review of studies related to teachers connecting Home and School Discourse. The current research sought to describe how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse. Chapter III described the methodology used to answer the research question.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study aimed to describe how teachers reflected and talked about connecting Home and School Discourse in their schools during professional development and interviews. I was the assistant principal and researcher who facilitated the professional development for teachers who were not working in my building. However, they did work in the school district. In the methodology, I begin by explaining the research design and my role in the research study. Then I describe the research context, the teacher recruitment process, professional development, and the teachers' demographic information. The data sources, timeline, and analysis are then explained, followed by how I seek to maintain credibility in the research process.

#### **The General Perspective**

From a constructivist paradigm perspective, people construct an understanding of their worldviews based on their interactions and experiences in social settings (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). This qualitative descriptive design was grounded in the constructivist approach. In the constructivist approach, I used a qualitative descriptive design as the method of research to conduct the study on how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse. A qualitative descriptive design method begins with an assumption, worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of a research problem that inquires about the meaning an individual may ascribe to a social issue or phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative descriptive design took place in the natural world, drew

on multiple data collection methods, and focused on the context (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I acted as an instrument by observing the phenomenon under study in its natural setting. This study fits the characteristics of a descriptive qualitative design because multiple data sources were collected to describe the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007).

The data sources collected included audio recordings of teachers' conversations during professional development session, written field notes, and transcripts. The data collected was organized into themes and categories that contributed to interpreting the phenomenon under study. This study also fits the characteristics of a qualitative descriptive design because it focused on the context. Data collected during observations and interactions with the teachers helped provide detailed descriptions of how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse in the three 1-hour professional development and interviews.

This study was well suited for a descriptive qualitative design because I served as a participant observer as I facilitated professional development and teacher talk. As a participant-observer, I gained information while being exposed to and actively involved in the teachers' day-to-day activities in the research setting (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999).

My role as a participant-observer was to closely observe how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse. As a result of listening, observing, and interacting with the teachers participating in the study during professional development, I provided

an accurate and detailed description of the phenomenon's characteristics (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Experiencing the phenomenon through the teachers' lenses helped me understand the actions, interactions, and discussions.

### **Qualitative Descriptive Analysis**

Qualitative descriptive analysis (Creswell, 2007) was used to answer the research question that addressed how teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse in the three 1-hour professional development and interviews. The descriptive analysis used words and short phrases to summarize the essential topic of the qualitative data collected (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2020). Some examples of the qualitative data obtained in this study analyzed using descriptive coding, included professional development transcripts, field notes, and interview transcripts. The goal for using descriptive analysis was to guide the reader and researcher in seeing and hearing the same thing throughout the data collection and data analysis process (Miles et al., 2020; Wolcott, 1994). As a result of the data analysis, three themes emerged to support the research question. A more detailed description of each theme is provided in the findings chapter.

### **Assistant Principal as Researcher**

I grew up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas and was surrounded and significantly supported by my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and several cousins –all of whom valued education. Even though my grandparents received a third grade (grandmother) to eighth grade (grandfather) education, they were sticklers for education. Due to the disparities within

the times they were growing up as children to young adults, they were unable to obtain, plus could not afford, a high school or college education. As my grandparents raised their children, looking back over their lives, they understood the importance of education. They became working people, particularly my grandfather, who provided what Maslow (1943) referred to as some of the basic needs of life (e.g., food, clothing, a decent place to live, and, most of all, a loving family). All these needs would suffice for my mom and her siblings to worry less but go to school, work, and get an education to prepare them for a job. This passion for education would start with my mom and her siblings and impacted people like my sister, other cousins my age, and me.

During my childhood and young adult days, both my parents were quite active and cheerleaders in my life. My parents never missed a parent-teacher conference and always participated in school-related functions. We (my sister and I) were always read to, and I learned early the value of learning to read. My grandmother was not a traditional reader. Often as a youngster (fifth, sixth grades, and into high school), I would read the newspaper to her, write out her bills, and create a grocery store list for her shopping. She was good with numbers. As she would read the Wednesday sales papers, I would make a grocery list. The sales papers would have attractive and colorful pictures of the food items and sale costs to encourage shopping at a particular store. However, the sales paper's design benefited my grandmother and many others in the neighborhood who could read certain text types. So, my grandmother's experiences truly helped me understand the value of reading as I assisted her. As a result of my early life experiences,

I recognized the importance of reading, which has stayed with me to this day. Also, from my monthly allowance, I would always order Scholastic books through my classes. My mom would question my budget, but she never insisted that I not buy books.

My extended family consisted of church members and neighbors. The community in which I resided indeed enacted the proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." All members of my immediate and extended family played a role in encouraging my sister and me never to stop learning because, they said, education was the key to building a brighter future. Without hesitation, I can say that my influences and experiences growing up positively molded who I am as an adult. Thinking back, but yet moving forward, their encouraging words were motivating.

In August 1998, I journeyed to Dallas, Texas, from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to begin a public-school education career in a North Texas urban school district. Afraid, anxious, and excited, I stood ready to start my education journey to shape and mold the lives of America's future leaders. Education was by no means new to me because, for many years, I had listened to the long but exciting conversations about educating children that took place among family members, dedicated public school leaders, and college professors. No longer would I be just a listener on the sidelines; now, I would join the conversations, participate in debates, brainstorm best solutions, share funny stories, and be a part of favorable outcomes to the complex issues students and teachers faced in school settings. For several years, I have served in different capacities that would allow me to positively



affect and influence the lives of many children, their families, and some aspiring educators.

I have served as a classroom teacher and a public-school administrator in an urban school setting for 20 years. Although I have encountered challenges along the way, I can say that I chose a rewarding career path. Throughout my journey, I enrolled in graduate courses. I participated in various leadership and teacher academies that increased my knowledge and skills to work with teachers and mainly work with students and parents from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. As a result of the rich learning opportunities, I understand how effective teaching practices and strategies are aligned with various research-based theories. I firmly believe and have experienced that all children can learn when they are provided the necessary tools and resources. Thus, I feel that children will know when they feel safe and believe teachers and the learning community value them.

As an educator and administrator, my goal has been to support students and parents by encouraging parent involvement. Gollnick and Chinn (2016) and Woolfolk (2014) agree that when parents are involved in their children's education, they are likely to succeed. I believe that my knowledge level based on years of teaching, serving as a school administrator, and working with children and parents from diverse backgrounds helps me facilitate my study on how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse.

There have been several instances where I have developed initiatives where I invited my parents and students to the school on Saturdays. These initiatives enhanced

the connection between Home and School Discourse. I organized a book club involving children and their parents. Several months over pancakes, sausage, and orange juice, several parents, students, community volunteers, my sister, and I shared reflections from selected readings. Parents and students were excited about the opportunity to interact with the reading of books in a different context outside of the regular school hours and parent literacy night. The book club was inspiring for children and their parents. It also provided me with a sense of responsibility to educate beyond the classroom by providing opportunities for parents to support their children's literacy development by serving as reading role models in their homes. Developing the book club sparked an even greater curiosity to understand how Home and School Discourse influences literacy development and contributes to children's daily literacy practices and genuine interest in reading.

In addition to serving as a classroom teacher, I currently serve and have long served as an administrator in an urban school setting. My roles and responsibilities as an administrator have allowed me to participate in various leadership and teacher academies that contributed to my knowledge regarding effective practices for working with children and families from diverse backgrounds. I understand how various theories support teaching practices, instructional strategies, and programs. I believe that children will thrive in a learning environment where they feel that their cultural backgrounds, experiences, and Home Discourse are valued.

Through my experiences as a classroom teacher and administrator, I have acquired skills and knowledge that have enabled me to facilitate positive school-and-

parent relationships while increasing literacy development. I have spent considerable time observing the teachers by paying careful attention to their behavior, languages, attitudes, and the feelings they express in the setting where the study is taking place (Spolsky, 1998). My immersion in the teachers' world has developed close relationships with students, teachers, parents, and fellow administrators that facilitate trust, empathy, and respect (Spolsky, 1998).

In this research study, the teachers' professional development served as the naturalistic setting for study. While gathering data to support the qualitative descriptive study, I also served as a participant-observer (Creswell, 2007). Through exposure and involvement in the daily activities of the teacher participants, over time, I gained insight about specific occurrences, interactions, and events taking place within the setting where the study is taking place (Schensul et al., 1999). Serving as a participant-observer, I interacted with the teachers and made observations about how they talked about Home and School Discourse. The data collected during the study consisted of transcripts of the teachers' discussions during professional development. An analysis of the data collected showed patterns and themes of how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse during the three professional development and teacher interviews.

### **The Research Context and Participant Recruitment**

The research site was located at an elementary school in a large North Texas urban school district. To maintain confidentiality, I used a fictitious name when referring to the school site. The teachers who agreed to participate in the study were from several

elementary schools in a North Texas urban school district. The teachers were diverse in number, and their schools were diverse in the student population. Students from the various schools received 90% free and reduced lunch. More information about the teachers and their schools is provided in Chapter IV.

The researcher is an employee at an elementary school located in the North Texas urban school district and an employee in the school where the study took place. The site of the professional development most likely did not affect the results of the data gathered for this study. The site was considered a neutral location, and the teachers would be away from their home schools. As researcher, I was familiar with the demographics of the schools located in the North Texas urban school district.

The study included teachers from elementary schools in a large urban area of North Texas. Table 1 provides charted information on the teachers who work in the school district. The schools are from one of the largest urban school districts in the state of Texas, comprising a total of 228 schools and approximately 160,000 students. The district consists of 152 elementary schools and 76 secondary schools. The student ethnic composition district-wide comprises of 70.4% Hispanic, 22.2% African American, 4.9% White, 1.4% Asian, 0.2 % American Indian, and 1.4% National Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Table 1

*District Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile for the 2018-2019 School Year*

Race/Ethnicity	Students		Teachers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Black/African American	34,255	22.2	3,564	35.
American Indian/Alaska Native	343	0.2	*	*
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2,091	1.4	*	*
Hispanic	108,521	70.4	3,072	32
White	7,612	4.9	2,944	28.9
Multiple	1306	0.8	240	2.4
Other*	-	-	360	3.5
Not Reported	21	0.0	-	-

*Note.* The information in the table is from the Dallas ISD data portal electronic platform 2018-2019. The race/ethnicity profile in the table is representative of the teachers in the North Texas urban school district. The profile categorizes the number and percentage of minorities by race and ethnicity within the school district. The students and teachers under the category Multiple identify themselves by multiple races. The "Other\*" category reports teachers who are American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. A small of students were Not Reported. The data provided was retrieved from Texas Education Agency ([TEA], 2018).

The goal for recruitment was to have a maximum of 10 teachers participating in the study. Ten teachers consented to participate in the study. However, only five teachers maintained their consent and participated in almost all three 1-hour professional developments.

Grade-level meetings at five of the elementary schools that were a part of my school's network served as the initial locations for disseminating letters for inviting teachers to participate in the study. After collecting interest letters, the initial plan was to meet with each school administrator to identify the teachers who would have volunteered to participate in the study.

After meeting with the principals, I planned to schedule a day and time to meet with the teachers who agreed to serve as participants in the study. The teachers' meeting served as an opportunity to provide them with background information on the study. During that time, the teachers had the opportunity to ask questions about the research study. After the teachers learned the research information, a written consent form to participate was made available to sign and leave with me at the end of the meeting. This process in communicating with the principals and the teachers to share information about my study was the first initiative for identifying teachers to consent to participate in the study.

Therefore, the initial process for the teachers' recruitment in the study was through communication with the principals via email, providing teachers with invitation letters, and meeting with them in person to discuss the goal of the study. After continued failed attempts to communicate with the principals, I reached out to the Chairman of the Review Board in the district to share my concerns regarding principals' failure to respond. The Chairman of the Review Board indicated that I did not need the principals' authorization to provide consent for participation since the study would be after contracted hours. The Chairman of the Review Board suggested that I obtain teacher emails and reach out to teachers using electronic correspondence. Therefore, I contacted the Texas Woman's University's (TWU) IRB and notified them of changes to recruit teachers for my study. I made the necessary changes (addendum to IRB and recruitment flyer) in the participant's recruitment as requested by TWU's IRB, submitted the changes,

and waited for approval. The changes were approved to move forward, and the flyer was sent via email to elementary teachers in the Texas urban school district.

The flyer was sent via email inviting elementary teachers from the North Texas urban school district to participate in the study. Again, the goal for recruitment was to have a maximum of 10 teachers participating. Ten teachers responded with their consent to participate in the study. Out of the 10 teachers who consented, five teachers responded and participated in most of the three professional developments, and all five participated in the individual interviews. At the end of the study, I provided the teachers that participated in the study with a \$20.00 gift card to Walmart. A copy of the flyer is provided in Appendix A. A description of the teachers who participated in the study is shared in the next section.

### **Description of Teachers**

The primary sources that I used to obtain information about the teachers participating in the study were professional development recordings, transcripts, interview transcripts, and recordings. Through reading, listening to, and analyzing the teacher interviews and professional development transcripts, I summarized information about each teacher participating in the study in a narrative. The teachers and their schools were not referred to in this study. In the research, anonymous names for the teachers and their schools were used.

**Melinda.** Melinda served as a second-grade bilingual teacher who identified as Hispanic. Melinda had taught second grade for 6 years. Out of those 6 years, Melinda

worked as a full-time second-grade teacher in a neighboring school district. After a year, Melinda transferred back to the district, where she once taught before leaving. Melinda shared that the year spent teaching at the neighboring district was a great experience. Melinda shared that she felt more needed at her first school rather than the new school. After 1 year, Melinda returned to her previous district and school. During professional development, she shared that the "students needed her at the current school where she is teaching, and she has no intention of leaving the campus anytime soon."

Melinda attended two of the three professional development. Due to illness, she was unable to make it to the third professional development session. However, Melinda's contribution was valuable to Professional Development Sessions One and Two. Melinda shared that she chose to participate in the study because equity was something that she believed was important to education. She also expressed that she responded to the email request because she loves to learn and collaborate with other teachers outside of her building.

School A Elementary (where Melinda taught) was one of the more diverse campuses represented by the five teachers participating in the study. There was a total of 40.2% of African American students that attended School A. Fifty-six percent of the student population consisted of Hispanic students. The remaining demographics accounted for 0.3% American Indian and 1.2% White. The demographics of teachers at Melinda's school represent 50% African American, 35% Hispanic, 7.5% White, and 7.5% identified as Other.



Table 2

*School A: Melinda's Campus 2018-2019 Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile*

Race/Ethnicity	Students		Teachers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Black/African American	275	40.2	20	50.0
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	0.3	*	*
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0.1	*	*
Hispanic	388	56.7	14	35.0
White	8	1.2	3	7.5
Multiple	10	1.5	3	7.5
Other* (teachers only)	-	-	0	0.0
Not reported (students only)	0	0.0	-	-

*Note.* The information in the table is from the Dallas ISD data portal electronic platform 2018-2019. The race/ethnicity profile in the table is representative of the number and percentage of students and teachers at Melinda's school. The students and teachers under the category multiple identify themselves by multiple races. The "Other\*" category includes teachers who are American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. No teachers were reported for this category. The data provided was retrieved from TEA (2018).

Melinda shared that she was dedicated to making a difference in the lives of her students. She encouraged parents to advocate for their students and school community by attending board meetings and community meetings. Although Melinda shared that she had an unwavering love for her school community, her students would sometimes demonstrate undesirable behaviors. Other teachers provided her with calming strategies to try with students who sometimes require more than others when addressing and correcting unwanted behaviors during professional development.

Melinda shared that both of her parents worked full-time jobs. They were not teachers, but her parents valued education and wanted their children to graduate. Melinda

remembered that the oldest child in their home was responsible for ensuring that the younger siblings read and completed their homework. Melinda's parents did not have an established reading routine, but her parents still required them to read independently. As a teacher and parent, Melinda saw the value that language and literacy play in children's literacy development. As a result, Melinda fostered opportunities at home and school, where she engages her children and students in language interactions by just talking to them.

**Debra.** Debra was an African American female teacher who had taught second grade for 22 years. Although Debra had taught in the same school district for 22 years, this was her first year serving as a second-grade general education teacher across town from where she had always taught. Table 3 provides Debra's campus student and teacher race/ethnicity profile for the 2018-2019 school year. The student demographics at the school where Debra was currently employed consists of 4% African American, 85% Hispanic, 0.7% White, 0.2% American Indian, and 0.2% Asian. Although Debra's school data revealed that a large percentage of Hispanic students, 35% of its teacher population was African Americans. Fifty-eight percent of the teacher population make-up was Hispanics. The remaining demographics reported as being 5.9% White.

Table 3

*School B: Debra's Campus 2018-2019 Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile*

Race/Ethnicity	Students		Teachers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Black/African American	85	4.0	12	35.3
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.2	*	*
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0.2	*	*
Hispanic	517	85.0	20	58.5
White	4	0.7	2	5.9
Multiple	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other* (teachers only)	-	-	0	0.0
Not reported (students only)	0	0.0	-	-

*Note.* The information in the table is from the Dallas ISD data portal electronic platform 2018-2019. The race/ethnicity profile in the table is representative of the number and percentage of students and teachers at Debra's school. There were no reports of teachers who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. There were no reports of students and teachers under the category who identified as Multiple races. The "Other\*" category reported no teachers of American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The data provided was retrieved from TEA (2018).

Debra shared that both of her parents were educators, and they valued literacy and language use in the home. Bedtime stories were a nightly routine in her household. Debra's religious beliefs, values, and traditions played a significant role in her personal and professional life. Debra expressed that she appreciates the diversity and differences each student brings to the classroom. She shared that this feeling stems from her upbringing. Debra also shared that her parents taught her to love all people. She remembers attending church daycare and prekindergarten. As a result of her literacy experiences as a child, Debra believed that she could better understand how to facilitate

experiences children have when using literacy and language in her classroom. Debra shared that her classroom library had books that reflected the diversity of her students. Debra described her goal as one who wanted to foster positive home and school communication with her parents.

**Gwen.** Gwen was a female Caucasian and special education teacher. Gwen currently served the Functional Living Skills (FLS) unit. The FLS serves students that were in first through fifth grades. Gwen was in her first year of teaching in the current district. Gwen had taught for a total of 15 years. Gwen spent 14 years teaching in Oklahoma ISD as a special education teacher. During the first professional development session, Gwen shared that she had previously participated in equity training while teaching in Oklahoma ISD. Gwen indicated, “since moving to North Texas, there have not been any professional development focusing on equity, race, and diversity in schools.” Gwen took part in the teacher interview and all three 1-hour professional developments.

On each professional development day, Gwen arrived at least 30 minutes early. She was eager to begin the discussion for the sessions. Gwen was asked several times to save her thoughts and comments for when the session started. Before the second professional development session, Gwen shared that her campus had at least two principals who transitioned in and out since the beginning of the current academic school year. Table 4 provides Gwen’s campus student and teacher race/ethnicity profile for the 2018-2019 school year. Gwen's school's student demographics included 35.3% African

American, 1.3% American Indian /Alaska Native, 60.9% Hispanic, 1.5% White, 0.0% Asian, and 0.0 % identified as having multiple backgrounds. The teacher demographics included 32.4% African Americans, 32.4% Hispanics, 8.8% Other, 8.8% White, and 17.6% Multiple race/ethnicity.

Table 4

*School C: Gwen's Campus 2018-2019 Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile*

Race/Ethnicity	Students		Teachers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Black/African American	167	35.3	11	32.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	6	1.3	*	*
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0	*	*
Hispanic	288	60.9	11	32.4
White	7	1.5	3	8.8
Multiple	5	1.1	6	17.6
Other* (teachers only)			3	8.8
Not reported (students only)	0	0.0	—	—

*Note.* The information in the table is from the Dallas ISD data portal electronic platform for 2018-2019. The race/ethnicity profile in the table is representative of the number and percentages of students and teachers at Gwen's school. There were no students reported as Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Multiple in this table is represented of students and teachers identified by more than one race/ethnicity. The "Other\*" category reported only teachers who are American Indian/Alaska Native and/or Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The data provided was retrieved from TEA (2018).

Gwen shared that she struggles to develop relationships with parents in her current position due to language barriers between her and the parents. Gwen had seven Spanish-speaking students during the study. Several of their parents require someone to translate the English language into Spanish to understand what the teacher was

attempting to communicate with them. Although she felt that language serves as a barrier for developing a connection between home and school, she would still send letters home and other English information to keep parents informed. Gwen had a teacher assistant who was sometimes able to provide support with communicating with parents. Sometimes Gwen felt left out because of her limited ability to understand and speak Spanish.

Gwen recalled that when growing up, she struggled in the area of reading. She was not able to read until the fourth grade. Her trick to showing off her ability to learn was to memorize familiar books that someone had previously read. When Gwen's fourth-grade teacher identified that she was a struggling reader, the teacher immediately provided her with reading interventions. Reading was not a structured routine that took place in Gwen's household. Although reading was not a routine practice in Gwen's home, she remembered being read to during visits to her grandparents' house. Gwen also remembered that she and her sibling would receive money for reading from her grandparents.

As a teacher, Gwen tried to create a classroom environment where students had multiple books to choose to read. She shared that her professional goal was to increase the number of times she engages in supportive conversations with students and parents. She wanted to encourage her students to take more advantage of everyday literacies that were around them.

**Barbara.** Barbara was a female African American prekindergarten general education teacher. Barbara had worked at her current school for four out of her 11 years as a teacher. Melinda and Barbara worked on the same campus. Table 5 provides Barbara's campus student and teacher race/ethnicity profile for the 2018-2019 school year. The student demographics for School C, where Barbara was employed at the time of the study, consisted of 40.2% African American, 56.7% Hispanic, 0.3% American Indian, 1.2% White, and 1.5% who were of a multiple race/ethnicity. Fifty percent African American represents the teacher demographics for School A, 35% Hispanic, 7.5% White, and 7.5% who have multiple races/ethnicities.

Table 5

*School D: Barbara's Campus 2018-2019 Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile*

Race/Ethnicity	Students		Teachers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Black/African American	275	40.2	20	50.0
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	0.3	*	*
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0.1	*	*
Hispanic	388	56.7	14	35.0
White	8	1.2	3	7.5
Multiple	10	1.5	3	7.5
Other* (teachers only)	-	-	0	0.0
Not reported (students only)	0	0.0	-	-

*Note.* The information in the table is from the Dallas ISD data portal electronic platform for 2018-2019. The race/ethnicity profile in the table is representative of the number of students and teachers at Barbara's school. Multiple in this table is represented of students and teachers identified by more than one race/ethnicity. The "Other" category reported only teachers who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. No teachers were counted as Other. The data provided was retrieved from TEA (2018).

Barbara shared that she was committed to progressing as a teacher and especially sought opportunities to engage in professional learning that focused on equity. Barbara grew up in St. Louis and moved to Dallas as an adult. She became interested in teaching after working the summer tutoring a group of students from a low socioeconomic community. At that time, Barbara shared that there was something special in each student that struggled to read. She believed in each student that she tutored and continuously provided them with motivation and encouragement. After that summer, Barbara shared that she sought an alternative certification program for her teaching certification. After becoming a certified teacher, Barbara requested to work with prekindergarten students because she wanted to impact students' lives early on in their educational experiences.

Barbara remembered struggling to read as a younger student. Opposite of her, learning to read was less difficult for Barbara's younger sister. She could recall her younger sister reading before she was able to walk. She shared memories of her sister being able to pick up any book and just read the words without making any mistakes. Growing up, Barbara also shared that the traditional reading of books was not often practiced in her mother's home.

Although the traditional reading habits were not always a focus in her mother's home, while visiting her father, she and her sister observed him as he read novels in his home library. Barbara recounted that she listened to him read to her during those weekends and summer visits with him. Barbara shared that she was able to venture into



self-discovery by reading books from various genres. Barbara believed that religion played a tremendous role in her personal and professional life. She believed religious beliefs should be demonstrated by showing unconditional love and compassion for the children and families you work with daily. Barbara feels strongly about her religious beliefs and practices, and she also believed that to be an impactful teacher, home and school connections should be fostered and nurtured. Throughout Barbara's years as an educator, she has developed long-lasting relationships with parents. She loves teaching and aspired to become a diagnostician in the future.

**Kevin.** Kevin is a male Caucasian who is in his first year of teaching. Kevin serves as an FLS special education teacher. His students ranged from first to fifth grade. Students assigned to an FLS class in special education units have been diagnosed with various learning disabilities and medical diagnosis. The medical diagnosis serves as barriers for their placement in a general education classroom. Table 6 identifies Kevin's campus student and teacher race/ethnicity profile for the 2018-2019 school year.

Kevin's school's student demographics were 18% African American, 77.8% Hispanic, 0.4% Asian, 2.6% White, and 0.4% of students identified as more than one ethnicity and race. The teacher demographics make up 30.3% African American, 39.4% Hispanic, 27.3% White, and 3.0% of teachers identify as two or more races/ethnicities.

Table 6

*School E: Kevin's Campus 2018-2019 Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Profile*

Race/Ethnicity	Students		Teachers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Black/African American	100	18	10	30.3
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0	*	*
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	0.4	*	*
Hispanic	414	77.8	13	39.4
White	14	2.6	9	27.3
Multiple	2	0.4	1	3.0
Other* (teachers only)	-	-	0	0.0
Not reported (students only)	0	0.0	-	-

*Notes:* The information in the table is from the Dallas ISD data portal electronic platform for 2018-2019. The race/ethnicity profile in the table is representative of the number of students and teachers at Kevin's school. There were no students reported as American/Indian/Alaska Native. Multiple in this table is represented of students and teachers identified by more than one race/ethnicity. Several students were identified in this area. No teachers were identified as "Other\*." The data provided was retrieved from TEA (2018).

Kevin was in his first year of teaching. Kevin shared that he struggled academically, specifically in reading, until he was in the fifth grade. Once Kevin was diagnosed with Dyslexia, he began to receive reading support and accommodations on classroom assignments and tests. As Kevin saw that he was able to achieve, his self-esteem and interest in school increased. Kevin spoke candidly regarding his parents not wanting him diagnosed as having a learning disability and refused testing throughout his first years of elementary school. He believed that if his parents were to have had a different mindset regarding special education, they would have taken advantage of the teachers' additional support while learning how to read.

During the study, Kevin shared that because he grew up in a household that did not see or appreciate the value that other cultures have contributed to society, his goal as a teacher was to expose his students to a culturally responsive curriculum. In his classroom, Kevin shared that he has literature that represents diversity and inclusiveness. Kevin also shared that he values the cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs that his students represent in his classroom.

Table 7 identifies the five teachers participating in the study and their demographic data. The table provides the teachers' ethnicity, gender, and the grade level that they teach. Also, the table lists the years of service and the district where the teachers worked at the time of the study. In the study, teachers were pre-K through fifth-grade teachers from elementary schools located in one of the largest urban school districts in North Texas. Their teaching experience ranged from novice to veteran. The same district employed all five of the teachers.

Table 7

*Teachers' Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Grade Level, Years of Experience, and School District*

	Ethnicity	Gender	Grade Level	Years of Experience	Urban School District
Melinda	Hispanic	Female	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	6	North Texas
Debra	African American	Female	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	22	North Texas
Gwen	Caucasian	Female	Special Education (FLS) - 1-5	15	North Texas
Barbara	African American	Female	Prekindergarten	11	North Texas
Kevin	Caucasian	Male	Special Education (FLS) - 1-5	1	North Texas

*Note.* The table includes demographic data of the five teachers who participated in the study.

### **Description of Professional Development**

Before each session, the teachers were provided with the articles or a chapter of reading to prepare for discussion during professional development. An agenda for each professional development session was provided to each of the teachers. The agenda served as a guide to produce the teachers' talk for gathering information specific to the study (see Appendices B-D).

During professional development, teachers were seated in two groups of three and one group of two teachers where they were recorded talking about Home and School Discourse. An audio recording device was placed in the middle of each table where teachers were sitting. For the three 1-hour professional developments, the teachers engaged in teacher talk on how they connect Home and School Discourse.

## **Professional Development One**

The first professional development talk focused on an article, “Equity Traps: A Useful Construct for Preparing Principals to Lead Schools That Are Successful With Racially Diverse Students” (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). This article was selected to stimulate the teachers’ thinking and frame their discussion on connecting Home and School Discourse. McKenzie and Scheurich’s (2004) article discussed specific undisclosed deficit traps they found to hinder teachers’ ability to work with parents and children of low income and minority backgrounds.

During Professional Development One, the teachers discussed several equity traps that showed up in different settings. In the article, there were interactions between the Home and School. The teachers represented in the article demonstrated deficit views in their actions, thoughts, and behaviors when talking about their students and families. The teachers in the professional development showed a great deal of reaction to the deficits that the teachers in the article demonstrated. The teachers' discussion led to talks about strategies that would facilitate better connections between Homes and Schools. After discussing the article, the teachers were asked to talk about what they perceived to be their own equity traps in response to McKenzie and Scheurich's (2004) article. To strengthen the Home and School Discourse, teachers were asked to talk about strategies they would use to approach thinking differently about the deficit views that they may have regarding the potential of their students, families, or community (see Appendix B).

## **Professional Development Two**

The second professional development began with the teacher participants sharing an equity trap they chose to avoid. The teachers shared how information learned in Professional Development One influenced them to think differently about reaching out to parents and families, thus facilitating a more significant connection between Home and School Discourse. The teachers were asked to talk about how their day-to-day planning reflected their willingness to avoid equity traps.

Following the teachers' reflections on what they did to avoid equity traps, Professional Development Two talk transitioned to discussing the ideas gleaned from Lazar et al.'s (2012) *Bridging Literacy and Equity: The Essential Guide to Social Equity Teaching* book. The teachers had the opportunity to share how their experiences as teachers connected with content expressed in Chapter Four, "Variation Is Normal: Recognizing Many Literacies and Languages." They were asked to comment on how the authors' ideas were relevant to their school's community, children, and families represented in their classrooms.

To meet all students' diverse learning needs, teachers must understand their students' backgrounds and social settings to plan equitable and effective teaching instruction. During Professional Development Two, teachers read and discussed personal thoughts on how their perceptions of parents, families, and children's cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic status have contributed to their personal beliefs regarding their language and literacy abilities. The teachers also shared their views about

the critical role they play when they demonstrate how they value, understand, and recognize their students' cultural practices and backgrounds. The teachers were asked to share at least one thought about the significance of them soliciting parent stories when connecting Home and School Discourse. Professional Development Two was a critical session that ended with each teacher sharing at least one thought. Teachers shared thoughts about enhancing their practice as they worked toward building a stronger connection between Home and School Discourse (see Appendix C).

### **Professional Development Three**

Professional Development Three began with the teachers sharing best practices to demonstrate their appreciation, value, or understanding of their students and parents' cultural backgrounds and practices. Using Lazar et al.'s (2012), *Bridging Literacy and Equity: The Essential Guide to Social Equity Teaching*, teachers engaged in group dialogue about Chapter Three, "Beyond Heroes and Holidays: The Complexity and Relevance of Culture." The teachers discussed the importance of building a positive image to encourage children's development of their own cultural identity. The teachers were asked to reflect on their culturally relevant practices beyond celebrating holidays when connecting Home and School Discourse. They also examined their school and grade-level curriculum and shared how it incorporated lessons and activities representing students' diversity. Additionally, the teachers were asked to suggest additional ways to integrate learning activities throughout the curriculum, where students from diverse backgrounds can see themselves.

At the end of Professional Development Three, the teachers were encouraged to examine their own cultural beliefs, values, and practices to determine how their views differ from those of their students. The examination facilitated teacher reflections and discussions that led to a better understanding of Home and School Discourse. At the close of Professional Development Three, the teachers committed to implementing instructional practices and activities to see themselves in the curriculum. As a result of the teachers participating in the three 1-hour professional developments, they shared a new way of learning and thinking that began to help them realign their instructional practices and interactions with the realities of their children, parents, and families. These new ways of thinking put into action would most likely increase more positive connections between Home and School Discourse.

### **Data Sources**

In this qualitative study, I served as the main instrument for collecting data (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2020), and I used multiple methods to analyze the data. I collected multiple sources of information that included audio recordings, transcripts, written field notes, three 1-hour professional developments, and open-ended interviews. The data collected during observations and interactions with the teachers helped provide detailed descriptions of the phenomenon (teacher talk), under investigation (Marshall & Rossmann, 2016).



## **Written Field Notes**

Written field notes were collected as part of the data for the study. Throughout the professional developments, I made observational field notes. The observational field notes included a detailed, and to the extent possible, non-judgmental description of what had been observed (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Field notes were recorded in the following manner: by taking notes; detailing the physical environment and the social interactions; detailing activities and events sequentially; providing detailed descriptions of the people being observed; and describing teacher behaviors without inserting my personal beliefs or assumptions (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The field notes provided me with insight that assisted in the data analysis that would lead me to the study's findings.

## **Audio Recordings**

The three 1-hour professional developments in this study were audio recorded using a voice recorder. Audio recordings were used to ensure that the professional developments were captured in their entirety. Teachers were assigned to one group of three and one group of two to facilitate more dialogue. Before each professional development session, one voice recorder was placed in the center of each table to record the teachers' dialogue. After each professional development, I listened to each recording to begin the process of transcribing the teachers' talk around each table. The transcriptions were uploaded to Transcribe. This tool provided me with a detailed recording that was verbatim.

## **Interviews**

Interviews were used to obtain a more in-depth understanding of how the teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse. The interviews were conducted via Zoom. Zoom is a computer-based communication software used to facilitate face-to-face interactions in real-time. Using Zoom's scheduling feature, I scheduled each teacher for a 1-hour interview session. The amount of time varied for each teacher's interview. To honor the teachers' time and possible commitment to other obligations, I allowed them to provide me with an interview date and time of their choice. Each teacher was able to join the Zoom interview using either their telephone or internet. Each teacher's interview was recorded and later transcribed. The interview protocol is found in Appendix E.

## **Transcriptions**

The transcriptions of the three 1-hour professional developments and the teacher interviews served as part of the data collection. Audio recordings were uploaded to Transcribe where the entire dialogue was transcribed verbatim. I reviewed the audiotape recordings and made cross-comparisons to the typed transcriptions to ensure the transcribed data was accurate. There were limited occasions where I had to review the audio recordings to clarify comments or add to the transcriptions.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection began with the recruitment of the teachers who consented to participate in the study. The recruitment for participants started in September 2019. Consent for teachers agreeing to participate in the study also took place in September 2019. The first professional development took place on October 17, 2019. The session was recorded and later uploaded to Transcribe, where I received professional development transcripts. The transcript provided verbatim what teachers discussed during the Professional Development One.

Professional Development Two took place on October 24, 2019. The data collected for Professional Development Two consisted of an audio recording of the professional development. At the end of Professional Development Two the audio recording was uploaded to Transcribe. The audio recording was transcribed, providing a verbatim dialogue between teacher participants.

The third professional development took place on November 3, 2019. The data collected for Professional Development Two consisted of an audio recording of the professional development. After Professional Development Two the audio recording was also uploaded to Transcribe. The audio recording was transcribed, providing a verbatim dialogue between teacher participants.

Four teacher interviews were conducted via Zoom. One teacher requested to respond to questions in writing. The interviews were conducted between November and December 2019.

### **Data Management**

NVIVO is a web-based application software that has various features that support the organization of data. I utilized NVIVO as my management system. I developed my initial codes by hand using paper and pencil. After I created my first cycle of codes, I then transported the data into NVIVO and began coding there. NVIVO's program features enabled me to sift and sort through data in order to find patterns. The patterns that I found in the data helped to guide me in the process of identifying themes. The themes identified contributed to the description of how teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse.

Table 8

#### *Data Collection Details*

Dates for Data Collection	Recruitment	Professional Development	Interviews
September 2019	10 Participants		
October 17, 2019		5 Participants Audio Recordings Demographic Data	
October 24, 2019		5 Participants Audio Recordings	

November 3, 2019		4 Participants Audio Recordings	
November and December 2019			4 Virtual Interviews on Zoom One written response to questions

*Note.* The table provides an outline of specific information relating to the recruitment of teachers, the professional development, and interviews for my study.

### **Data Analysis Process**

In this section, I provide a step-by-step overview of my procedures. Headings organized these procedures that I followed throughout my data analysis process (Miles, et al., 2020; Saldana, 2016). First and second cycle coding methods were used to analyze the data collected. For this qualitative descriptive study, the data sources collected to describe the phenomenon under investigation (teacher talk), how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse, included audio recordings of teachers' conversations during professional development, interviews, written field notes, and transcripts.

#### **First Cycle Coding**

Transcripts and audio recordings from professional development and interviews were the primary sources of data used to develop the process codes during the first cycle of coding (Miles et al., 2020; Saldana, 2016). The process codes were used to describe how teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse in the professional development. Codes developed helped to answer the research question: How do teachers talk about Home and School Discourse? The process codes created included chunks or

units of information from the teacher talk that varied in size. The process codes' size ranged in units of data that were anywhere from one word to units of data that were made up of sentences and paragraphs from the transcripts (Miles et al., 2020; Saldana, 2016).

Throughout the first cycle of coding, I consistently reviewed my written field notes, reflections, and transcripts to ensure that the codes being considered would assist me with responding to my research question. A codebook was created to keep track of the process codes, definitions, and exemplars. The process codes and their descriptions are identified in Table 9. The data for the study was collected and carefully analyzed. The analysis of information will enable assistant principals, principals, and other school leaders to reflect on and develop more culturally responsive practices and teacher opportunities to ensure that schools are valuing and building upon students' primary Discourse. Schools valuing and building upon students' primary Discourse supports their acquisition of school Discourse (Gee, 1987, 1989, 2015).

**Reviewing field notes.** Throughout data collection, I consistently made notes on observations of the teachers' comments, behaviors, actions, and interactions. I believed that these field notes would help me gain a more robust understanding of the teachers once I analyzed the data. The field notes also enabled me to jot down facilitator actions that would help me prepare for the upcoming professional development. Although I had timers embedded in the agenda, I used the field notes to jot down the shared topics, leading to the minimal discussion. I also used field notes to notate when the teacher talk moved in a different direction as planned.

**Listened to audio recordings of professional development.** Each professional development session was audio recorded. After each documented professional development session with teachers, I reviewed the audio recordings several times and took anecdotal notes of the conversations/themes throughout the discussion. Listening to the audio recordings of professional development and interviews helped to begin the iterative processes for analyzing the data. In the iterative process of data analysis, as previously mentioned, I focused on recurring comments and conversations that related to how teachers were talking about the topic that was being addressed. For further documentation, the audio recordings were transcribed using Transcribe. The same process used to review the professional development was also used with the teacher interviews.

**Transcribed recorded professional development.** Each professional development was recorded and uploaded to Transcribe. Transcribe is a transcription software that provided me with a scripted dialogue of the teachers' verbal interactions verbatim. Once Transcribe sent me the documents, I read through each transcript line by line, highlighting, circling, underlining keyword phrases, and sentences that described how teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse. I compared my listening notes of the recordings with the transcribed notes. They were very much the same.

In this first phase of data analysis, codes created included chunks of data units from the transcripts. The size of codes sifted from the transcripts ranged from units of

data that represented one word to units of data representing full sentences and paragraphs. After reviewing the notes taken from the audio recording and transcripts, categories and themes were developed from the initial and emerging codes and then grouped or clustered together based on how often they appeared throughout the data analysis (Creswell, 2014; Marshall, & Rossman, 2016; Miles et al., 2020; Saldana, 2020). Each code created identified or represented an idea that related to the study.

**Listened to audio recordings of interviews.** After the three professional developments were completed, I began the process of interviewing the teachers. Following each interview, I listened to the recording several times making notes of the teachers' recurring comments. The comments recurring were noted and used to help describe how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse.

**Transcribed recordings of teachers' interviews.** The teacher interviews were also recorded and uploaded to Transcribe. After the transcriptions were completed, I sifted through each interview transcript, highlighting, circling, and underlining keywords, key phrases, and sentences that described teachers' experiences with connecting Home and School Discourse.

The initial data analysis for this study began after reading articles, implementation of professional development, and then the coding of transcripts. The descriptive and process codes that were created consisted of "labels that assigned symbolic meaning to descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles et al., 2020, p.64 - 68). Each code created identified or represented an idea that related to the study. In this



study, the first cycle of coding consisted of the descriptive codes and process codes (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Process Codes and Descriptions*

Process Code	Description
Confirming	Substantiating comments, behaviors, actions, feelings, thoughts
Reflecting in time/Storying	Thinking back to past experiences
Challenging	Think about something or someone different than expected
Refining	To improve the implementation of a practice that already exists. To make improvements to ways of thinking, believing, speaking, or acting.
Changing	To make or become different.

**Descriptive codes.** The descriptive codes were used to describe what the teachers talked about during the professional development and the process codes described how the teachers talked. Transcripts and audio recordings were used to identify the descriptive codes used to describe what the teachers spoke about during professional development. Although each professional development had a focus that would prompt discussion regarding home and school connections, trends, and recurring comments, word, and phrases contributed to the codes' development. Table 10 shows the descriptive codes and their descriptions for the study.

Table 10

*Descriptive Codes*

<b>Descriptive Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
Bridging the Gap Between Home and School Connection	Connecting the home and school through various types of positive communications that keep parents abreast of opportunities for involvement
Experiences and beliefs that have shaped the ability to develop home and school connections	A trusting and positive relationship between teacher and parent in addressing student concerns and needs.
Facilitation of programs and activities that encourage parent participation	Activities and school-led opportunities where parents are invited to participate. Programs may even consist of home and community partnerships and visits conducted/initiated by school faculty/staff.
Principals creating opportunities where teachers can interact and get to know the parents and families in their social setting	Strategies in which principals promote and influence interactions/communication
Relationship building through consistency and communication	Various ways of communicating-notes, letters, school messengers, parent groups, parent meetings,
Cultural Awareness	The teacher's ability to understand the differences that exist between themselves and people who are from different cultures and social backgrounds. Acknowledging the student's ethnicity and background.
Accessibility to culturally relevant curriculum	The degree to which children, parents, and their families can obtain resources, such as technology, culturally relevant reading literature, etc.
Cultural practices impact teacher behaviors and teaching practices.	A group of people's beliefs, practices, values, and traditions.
Cultural Responsiveness	A pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
Culturally Consciousness	The teacher's ability to understand the differences

	that exist between themselves and people who are from different cultures and social backgrounds. Acknowledging the student's ethnicity and background.
Racial Erasure	Ignoring race by erasing the racial marker of students. The idea that racism does not exist when you refuse to see color and ethnicity when looking at people.
Equity and Access Within Schools	Students deserve the right to obtain an education from highly skilled, trained, and qualified teachers in a clean, nurturing environment that is safe and conducive to learning types. Teachers should have the ability to gain access to unlimited resources where they are met with immense knowledge that will enable them to fulfill their responsibility of educating students.
Inequity or lacking access to resources, service, and materials	Disparities, unfairness regarding the distribution of resources may exist in schools that are in low income or underserved communities. For example, libraries in underserved communities might not have a variety of rich literature in the library that other communities may have.
Student Inequity and access	Disparities, unfairness, injustices, and biases that an individual may have regarding students that are being serviced by the special education program
Exposure to Professional Development opportunities that will facilitate and build cultural awareness and understanding	Diverse professional development that provides teachers with various types of skills that they can use to connect home and school
Lack of PD on culturally relevant instruction	Learning opportunities made available for teachers so that they are individually supporting their needs as a teacher. Teachers understand and can plan and teach lessons based on the background of students and their learning needs.

Lack of Preparation for New Teachers	Programs, institutions, school districts fail to provide new teachers with adequate professional development and ongoing training that will empower them to connect home and school learning.
Teacher Collaboration and Discussion	Teachers meeting, working together, planning together, researching together, learning together, engaging in various types of discussion surrounding best practices.
Literacy and Language Experiences	How were language skills developed in the home? Skills learned and used to facilitate communication. How was literacy used in the home? In what ways was literacy used to facilitate learning to read?
Language use at home	Activities, such as storytelling, bedtime stories, reciting rhymes, reading poetry, reading along, writing raps, choral reading, reading the newspaper, catalogs, comic books, etc., are all opportunities that parents may use and engage students in at home.
Language Barriers between parents, families, and teachers create hardships that can impact home and school connections.	Parents unable to communicate with teachers due to differences in the languages spoken.
Literacy use in the home	How was literacy used in the home? In what ways was literacy used to facilitate learning to read?
Teacher Disposition	The way that a teacher may act, respond to, or feel when interacting, or engaging with students, parents, and families.
Teacher Deficit View	Teachers' perceived belief or ideas about someone and something based on perceptions that may not be a reality.
Teacher Paralogical Beliefs and Behaviors	A physical and emotional condition that stems from severe stress. As a result of the physical and emotional strain on a teacher, he or she may suffer from insomnia, the inability to eat, depression, anxiety, and fluctuation of weight.

Teacher talk and behaviors that show avoidance and employment of the gaze	The act of a teacher consciously evading the surveillance of parents, other teachers, and administrators. Some teachers may avoid the gaze by selecting to work in a school that is considered low income with a limited amount of parent involvement. Employment of the gaze occurs when other teachers attempt to normalize the comments and ideas that may disrupt the deficit views shared. The teacher initiates verbal and nonverbal cues to silence or change others views to fit the undesirable comments.
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**Creating definitions for codes.** Definitions of codes were created using the collection of data from the professional development and interview transcripts. Throughout the study, data was compared to the codes to ensure that the intended definition for a specific code meaning was not changed (Creswell, 2014). To ensure that codes and definitions were organized, easy to understand, and follow, I created a chart. The chart included the descriptive codes, which were events taken from the transcripts that described the content and context of the teachers' talk. Some definitions explained each code and an example from the transcript. The definitions provided context for the code and its corresponding example. The definitions were created by using information presented in research articles that were identified in the literature review and the readings used during each 1-hour professional development. The process codes were also included on the chart. The process codes provided further explanation for how the teachers talked.

### **Development of Themes**

The second cycle of coding was the development of themes. Qualitative

researchers view patterns as human behaviors and actions that are predictable (Miles et al., 2020; Saldana, 2016). The predictable patterns and practices that people demonstrate assist with confirming data collected based on the observations (Miles et al., 2020; Saldana, 2016). The utilization of pattern coding served as the method of coding for the second cycle coding. Pattern coding method summaries are condensed into smaller categories, themes, or concepts (Miles et al., 2020). Smaller units result in more meaningful data that is easier to understand.

Using Saldana's (2016) method for first cycle coding for process codes, I coded the professional development and interview transcripts. Once process codes were developed, I then began the second coding cycle by organizing the codes into categories. The categories organized and led to the development of themes that added context to how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse. I then began to input codes and definitions from my hard copy into NVIVO. I also uploaded the professional development and interview transcripts into NVIVO as files.

Using NVIVO, I was able to go back into each NVIVO file document and select reoccurring words, phrases that supported the initial codes from the hand copy versions. The same was done with the teacher interviews. I compared the similarities and differences. Between the hard copy and NVIVO, they both were similar. The hard copy version that included codes, definitions, and exemplars enabled me to become more familiar with my documents uploaded into NVIVO. As a result, I was able to maneuver through the NVIVO system without intense difficulty.

While looking at patterns in the data, I referred back to the researchers' key information in the literature review and readings from each professional development to support me with understanding comments and interactions that were made during the professional development session interviews. In addition, as a result of categorizing information and looking at patterns seen in the data, I was able to establish focus and clarity for interpretation of what the data showed (Miles et al., 2020).

After data files were uploaded into NVIVO, I began to combine similar codes. Queries were done in NVIVO to help to develop the themes. I went through several reiterations of themes to make sure that they fit my research question. I did queries using frequent concepts that appeared in the data that also appeared in the article relevant to what the teachers used. Using NVIVO queries for each major topic or theme, I could query or search for specific words and phrases from the data sources and perform frequency counts on the number of times that they reoccurred. These frequency counts helped establish consistencies in codes, which increased credibility when making decisions resulting in similar codes merging into the same categories. According to (Miles et al., 2020), when similar data is condensed into smaller units, placed into categories based on their relationship, it helps with interpretations and descriptions of the phenomena researched.

After reviewing the codes that were created, they were then clustered into themes/categories based on how often they occurred throughout the data analysis. The interpretations and descriptions lead to theory development, as it related to the research

question under investigation: How do teachers talk about Home and School Discourse?

As a result of the data analysis, three overarching themes emerged that described how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse. Some subcategories specified how the teachers talked about Home and School Discourse.

### **Peer Review Feedback**

I worked with a peer reviewer who reviewed my transcripts, coding, and themes throughout each data analysis cycle. The reviewer also provided me with feedback. The feedback addressed the codes, themes, patterns, and findings of the study. My peer reviewer served as an additional source who attested to the trustworthiness and credibility of the methods used for data collection and the creation of themes when analyzing the data (Miles et al., 2020; Saldana, 2016).

I spoke with my peer reviewer, a doctoral student at the time, to see if she would be available to serve as my peer reviewer to review the data collected in my study.

Specifically, my peer reviewer would review the codes, themes, definitions, and NVIVO files that contained the data assembled from my three professional developments and teacher interviews. My peer reviewer responded to me, letting me know that she would serve as my peer reviewer, but asked if she could have a few days to review the data.

Therefore, I provided a word document of the data that included the following: descriptive codes (identifies what the teachers talked about) and their definitions; process codes (the manner in how teachers were talking about the what (descriptive codes) and their meanings; a column that listed the teachers' discussion; and the exemplars



(examples of actual conversations of teachers) all conducted during the professional development and interviews.

After several days, my peer reviewer and I met via Zoom to review her comments and feedback that would confirm and enhance the credibility of the data analysis gathered from the study. I began our Zoom meeting with a greeting, thanking her for taking the time to serve as my peer reviewer, and then I moved to the shared document. To begin the review, I uploaded my NVIVO file and shared my screen with my peer reviewer. NVIVO was used to analyze the data for Chapter IV. NVIVO was a qualitative data analysis program that researchers use to organize, analyze, and visualize data in their study. Researchers use NVIVO to organize materials by topics and uncover trends and emerging themes. I have used NVIVO to organize my professional development transcriptions, surveys, and interviews for my research. NVIVO helped to support the offline work with the data that was initially conducted before me using NVIVO. Also, using the NVIVO software allowed me to ask questions about the data.

I prepared to take notes so that I would be able to capture my peer reviewer's feedback as we read and reviewed the data in its entirety. After my peer reviewer and I carefully read and reviewed all documents, we looked at the first query and continued until we finished reading the last query. Querying was a feature in NVIVO that allowed me to conduct a basic search for process codes.

My peer reviewer suggested combining the descriptive and process codes that were similar in meaning. Using the feedback that the peer reviewer provided, I was able

to go back into NVIVO, review the data, and then rerun queries for each data set. Moving back and forth from the hard-copy documents that contained data analysis and the frequency count documents in NVIVO, I arrived at the themes for the study.

To maintain reliability in the research study, it was essential that as my peer reviewer, she held me accountable for the procedures used, collection of data, and the analysis by reviewing and asking questions about the research study. I found it extremely helpful when my peer reviewer checked the codes to establish intercoder agreement (Creswell, 2014). The use of a peer reviewer or an intercoder determines reliability in the data analysis. The intercoder agreement occurs when two or more coders can agree on the same codes for specific data units. As my peer reviewer or intercoder, my peer reviewer also checked for consistency in codes' meanings and applications by applying the definitions to the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Based on my peer reviewer's understanding and feedback regarding the codes, meanings, and potential categories/themes comprehended from the data, we were at least 80% in agreement with each other. According to Creswell (2014), for there to be reliability in the qualitative descriptive study, two or more coders should be at least 80% in agreement with each other. If the coders are not in an 80% agreement, the coders would be required to review the transcripts and code until all coders are at least 80% in agreement.

### **Trustworthiness**

Every effort was made to its greatest extent to establish and maintain trustworthiness and credibility throughout the study. The criteria used to establish the

trustworthiness of this study included four items: (1) confirmability, (2) dependability, (3) credibility, and (4) transferability (Miles et al., 2020; Saldana, 2016). The qualitative methods for creating *confirmability* of the findings took place through peer reviews. My peer reviewer was a fellow doctoral student who was in the process of defending her dissertation. She was also familiar with my research study.

This study meets trustworthiness through confirmability because the peer reviewer looked at how data was collected, my data sources collected, my data analysis, codes, definitions, themes, and sub-themes. I provided my peer reviewer with a word document of the data that included the following: descriptive codes (identifies what the teachers talked about) and their definitions; process codes (the manner in how teachers were talking about the what (descriptive codes) and their definitions; a column that listed the teacher's discussion; and the exemplars (examples of actual conversations of teachers) all conducted during the professional development and interviews. The peer reviewer and I engaged in several discussions about how the codes, patterns, definitions were developed, and how they supported the study.

To maintain quality and integrity throughout the study, *dependability* was established through written field notes taken during the three professional developments, while listening to the audio recordings of professional development, and interviews. Notes that I made when reviewing transcripts from professional development and interviews also contributed to the data sources' dependability and analysis when establishing trustworthiness. Throughout the collection of data, specifically during

professional development and interviews, field notes that I made consisted of actions, behaviors, ideas shared by teachers that were significant to the study's findings. Field notes were also made as I initially listened to the audio recordings of professional development and interviews. Dependability was further established when comparing comments made about the teachers' actions and behaviors. Similar occurrences were notated in professional development and interview transcripts.

Pre-reading the materials used in professional development was the first effort to ensure *credibility* was established. Timelines and agendas were created and shared with the teachers. Teachers were also provided with materials that would enable them to engage fully in professional development discussions. I spent 5 weeks in the field, interacting with the teachers while also gathering data. I also spent time outside of the field, reviewing the literature used to facilitate the teacher talk. Becoming familiar with the featured texts enabled me to facilitate, guide the discussion, and prompt teachers when there was a need for increased dialogue surrounding a topic.

After each professional development, I consistently listened to the audio recordings and took notes of what I observed and heard. To ensure the study's credibility, I debriefed with my advisor, discussing the process and methods for data collection and data analysis. The review of data and discussion with my advisor provided me with an even greater understanding and clarity for the study. Meetings with my advisor supported my understanding of how to look at the data to provide me with insight into my research questions.

As a result of data analysis and ongoing debriefings about the analysis with my peer reviewer and advisor, I was able to identify critical events that would contribute to the *transferability* of the findings. Also, the study's organization and detailed descriptions of the study's findings shared a clear vision for how teachers talk about connecting Home and School Discourse in professional development.

### **Limitations of the Methodology**

Throughout professional development, participants were able to engage in surface-level conversations about race, including being culturally aware of the differences that students bring with them to the classroom and various issues with equity and access in schools. As I facilitated professional development and conducted data analysis, I thought about the possible items that may serve as limitations in the study. My position as an assistant principal served as a potential limitation for the study. In my experience as an assistant principal providing professional development, teachers engage in dialogue that is safe. Throughout the professional development and interviews, the teachers were very respectful and attentive to how they framed responses and comments.

Another limitation that might have impacted the outcome of the study is that race, equity, and cultural awareness are sometimes difficult conversations to have openly with others. The teachers might have felt a level of discomfort when talking about various topics that included race, equity, and cultural awareness. The teachers appeared to be safe in expressing their thoughts about equity in terms of the supplies they lacked compared to other classrooms. Nevertheless, they seemed to shun conversations

addressing how they could or would promote their students' diversity and rally for equity, and serve as an advocate for gaining a better understanding of cultural awareness to better serve their students and parents.

An additional limitation may have been when the teachers that consented reduced from ten to five may have been because the teachers may have been fearful of the topic addressing race, equity, and cultural awareness. According to Gollnick and Chinn (2016), many teachers resist talking about race or may be reluctant to participate in the discussion because they are afraid of offending someone. Some teachers may worry about becoming angry or avoid the risk of being labeled as racist. Gollnick and Chinn (2016), implies that many teachers, in part, are not confident in their stance regarding race.

### **Summary of Methodology**

The methodology chapter provided an outline for the methods and research design approach used to conduct this study. The general perspective for the study was the first section discussed in this chapter. In the section titled, General Perspective, I explained why *Connecting Home and School Discourse* fit the design for a qualitative descriptive study. The general perspective was followed by an explanation for selecting a qualitative descriptive analysis and the researcher's role as a researcher and assistant principal. The methodology chapter also summarized the research context, that specified the demographics and description of the district and schools where the teachers worked.

Following the research context, I provided background information regarding the teachers' recruitment and descriptions for the participants in the study. I offered an explanation of each professional development and data sources in the methodology. In the study's methodology section, I discussed data management, the data analysis process used in the study, first cycle coding, and theme development. Finally, trustworthiness for the study and findings were also discussed in the methodology chapter. Chapter IV provides an analysis of the data collected and the findings for the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

When children's Home and School Discourse systems do not match, children are at risk of failing academically (Delpit, 1988, Delpit & Dowdy, 2008; Heath, 1983).

Leaders and teachers often view children's Home Discourse as a deficit (Compton-Lilly, 2007, 2017). Children become at risk of academic failure when teachers and leaders have a deficit view of language (Compton-Lilly, 2003).

The purpose of the research study was to describe how teachers reflect and talk about connecting Home and School Discourse in their schools during professional development and interviews conducted by a school administrator. The research question that guided the study was: How do teachers talk about Home and School Discourse? A qualitative analysis of transcripts and interviews of five teachers utilized Saldana's (2016) first and second cycle coding process.

This chapter is organized into two main sections. The first section addresses the "how" or process codes of the teacher talk. Definitions for each process are provided with an analysis of the teachers across the three 1-hour professional developments. For this section, frequency counts were used to support the analysis. The second section represented the thematic analysis or second cycle of coding. The first part of Chapter IV provides a more detailed description of the teacher's talk. Thus, the first part of the



chapter focused on the how of the talk and the second portion of the findings looked at the patterns with more detailed descriptions. The first section where I discuss codes was not where the depth of the teacher talk lies. The teacher talk's depth comes at the end of the chapter when I discuss my themes and provide evidence for the themes.

### **How Teachers Talk: Process**

As a result of the analysis, five process codes were identified across the data. These process codes were reflecting in time, refining, confirming, challenging, and changing. First, each process was defined with an example from the data for further clarification. The frequency and patterns across three 1-hour professional developments and teacher interviews are illustrated with data display charts.

### **Storying/Reflecting**

Throughout professional development and the interviews, I observed that teachers reflected in time by storying while making sense of the topics discussed. Gee (2015) described that the main ways that we (humans) think about the world are by looking for similarities. The teachers storied about past experiences about how language and literacy were used in their homes. In this study, reflecting in time was defined as teachers thinking back to past experiences that helped them understand topics being discussed. Throughout professional development and teacher interviews, there were several instances where teachers connected to the featured text by storying about how their self-

awareness, cultural beliefs, practices, and backgrounds shaped how they connected Home and School Discourse in their classrooms. As previously mentioned, people seek to obtain a new understanding of how it resembles something old (Gee, 2015). An example from the dataset represents the teacher talk that took place when teachers reflected in time by storying. For instance, Kevin stated:

Some roles that literacy and language played in my household when growing up was that there was really only one view that we were subjected to and even specific authors that I would not want to use in my classroom. For example, many people teach and read Dr. Seuss for the simplicity and because it was catchy, but he was a racist and bigot while developing his stories and illustrations.

## **Refining**

Refining was defined as the act of teachers attempting to improve the implementation of a classroom or teacher practice that already exists. The refinement may improve the teacher's way of thinking, believing, speaking, or acting. During professional development, the teacher talk led to teachers discussing both themselves and their colleagues. They shared how they would refine practices for connecting Home and School Discourse. Here, the teachers talked about how other teachers refined their teaching practices and how their interactions with children, parents, and families would

foster a more positive home and school connection. Below is an example from the data set that represents the teacher talk where refining was observed. Melinda recalled:

When I left the school that was located in the North Texas urban community to go to another school in a different school district, it was an easier district. Being in an easier district, the essential things that you need for teaching were already set up for you. Like any other district, you have certain things that are a priority. I ended up going back to the same school that I left because I missed the kids. When in the school district that was in a suburban neighborhood, I felt not as needed, if that makes sense, and so coming back to the school in the North Texas urban school district, two weeks in, I was burnt out. This was where I need to be. Sometimes, I don't feel like I'm capable of...because of everything that the kids come with, it required so much to maintain order. I have other teachers saying, well, you've got to toughen up. My personality does not allow me to be rigid, you know. I'm a teacher and let kids know what I expect from them. I am like, more laid back than other teachers in my building.

For Melinda to maintain an environment conducive to learning, her teaching practices needed refinement to ensure productivity as a teacher. Melinda's counterparts in her building felt that she would have to change teacher practices to thrive as a successful teacher. Melinda did not feel the need to change her interactions and expectations when

communicating with students and parents. However, Melinda thought she would be more explicit when communicating desired outcomes regarding students' work and behaviors. The next process code that explained how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse was confirming.

### **Confirming**

Teacher talk during professional development and teacher interviews reflected conversations that were confirming. For this study's purpose, confirming was defined as teachers validating statements they made aligned to what they believed regarding the importance of connecting Home and School Discourse. For example, Gwen talked about teachers' actions and behaviors who held values and beliefs that differed from hers. She believed that the lack of communication was a barrier when communicating with parents. Because of Gwen's class makeup, she had concerns about not communicating with students and specifically with the parents. As Gwen talked, she confirmed how limited she was in communicating with her parents due to their language. However, Gwen confirmed that she was working to build the relationships. Below is an example from that data set where Gwen was engaged in confirming while talking about Home and School Discourse.

Melinda and Gwen made confirming statements about classrooms being diverse. Melinda shared, “to work with students, teachers should know who their students are.”

Gwen commented:

I believe that there must be an open line of communication and desire to know the students that we are serving. Some educators that I have heard from lately are still stuck in the old days where they are just used to serving one group of students.

The world is developing, and education should be developing alongside it.

### **Challenging**

Teachers challenged their dispositions developed through the teacher talk during professional development and interviews due to experiences and interactions with parents and families. The teachers were engaged in discussions that challenged how they viewed equity compared to how others within their educational setting viewed equity for all students. The next sentence is an example from the data set where Debra's ideas, beliefs, and views of what parents valued were challenged due to communication and interaction.

Debra shares her experiences regarding an initiative promoted by the district:

When North Texas Urban Schools started that initiative where we all wore blue and white shirts, walking through the neighborhoods, and visiting parents before the school year started. That was really enlightening for me because I...we were scared. We were like, Oh, we're going to get chased by dogs, but the parents were very welcoming, and you know, we rang the door, they asked questions, and we were able to answer their questions. I was like, man...that was so good.

When Debra participated in her school's community walk, she was able to engage in a positive exchange with her students' parents. This interaction caused Debra to challenge her previous assumption about parents not caring about their children's education. While visiting with the parents and listening to the parents' questions, Debra was able to see that parents were interested in their children's academic success. The last definition and example identified from the study was changing.

### **Changing**

In this study, changing was defined as a specific behavior, thought, or idea that becomes completely different from what it initially started as being. During the conversations that took place with teachers during professional development and interviews, teachers could be observed talking about the impact of changing their personal views regarding perceptions, beliefs, and practices when connecting Home and School Discourse. Teachers could also be heard talking about changing views and the mindset of their parents. Teachers believed that changing parents' mindsets would cause them to be more receptive to participating in activities that would facilitate more interactions between home and school. The following comment made below also serves as an example of the process code changing. Debra stated:

We talked about changing the mindsets of the teacher and the mindsets of the

parents. Like, the article talked about that. In our schools, you know, we assume, 'Hey, this child, you know, they don't value education; their parents don't value education.'

Gwen, in her talk, provided another example of the process code changing:

It's not necessarily that they (parents and students) don't value education. It's the fact that they're so tired of hearing about the behavior. That's all that they (parents) hear from the school, [sic] Johnny's doing this. Johnny's doing this. Johnny's doing this. They don't want to answer the phone. And so, I had to retrain my parents. Like I was saying over here before, they (students) could have just torn up my room, and I told them, 'I'm calling your Mom', but I didn't tell Mom, 'He just destroyed my room.' I had to find the positive.

### **Process Codes: Profession Development Patterns**

Figure 1 provides the frequency counts for the process codes across the three 1-hour professional developments. Figure 2 provides a combined frequency count for the total amount for each teacher's use of process codes. Explanations are included to support comprehension for the frequency counts of each process code.

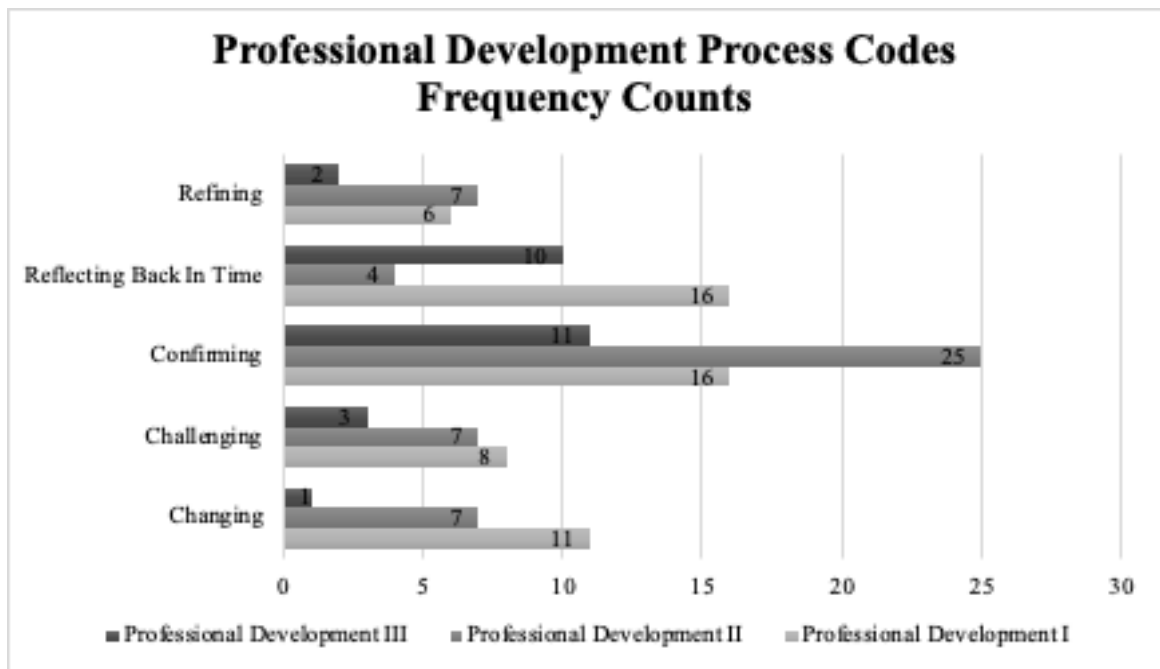
Most teacher talk included conversations where they were confirming their beliefs about their students, parents, and families' academic abilities throughout the professional development. Without knowing, sometimes, the teacher's beliefs resulted in them

confirming their deficit views regarding their students and parents' potential. As I reviewed Figure 1, confirming and reflecting in time were each coded 16 times across the data analysis. The types of conversations and interactions I listened to include those where teachers confirmed their deficit views. Teachers in professional development shared instances where they observed colleagues demonstrating deficits views. They also shared cases where they saw how other teachers spoke about their students, parents, families, and communities through a deficit lens. I also included how teachers reflected in time about personal or professional experiences of how language and literacy are used in their homes. While reflecting in time, the teachers shared how those literacy and language experiences in their homes currently impact how they connected Home and School Discourse in their classrooms.

The professional development showed that teacher talk also spanned to ideas where the teachers referred to changing the behaviors, interactions, and feelings that serve as barriers for parents when connecting Home and School Discourse 11 times. During professional development, the teacher talk led to teachers challenging their personal deficit views about parents, families, and students. The teacher talk that was identified as challenging was noted eight times throughout Professional Development One. Talk that was analyzed and identified as refining conversations were coded six times during Professional Development One.



**Professional development one.** Figure 1 shows how often the teacher talk corresponded to the process codes: confirming (16), reflecting in time (16), changing (11), challenging (11), and refining (6). In Figure 1, the process code changing was recorded 10 times. This code's frequency indicated that the teachers' talk extended to ideas where they referred to changing the behaviors, interactions, and feelings that served as barriers of parents when connecting Home and School Discourse. The frequency of the process code challenging was noted eight times as the teachers talked during the professional development. This code revealed how often the teacher talk led to them challenging other teachers' words, actions, and behaviors recognized as deficits. Even though the teacher talk included them challenging other teacher deficits, they also challenged their deficit views about parents, families, and students. The process code, refining, was referenced six times during professional development. This code described how often the teacher talk led to conversations where teachers communicated the needs for the refinement, upgrade, or improvements of behaviors, actions, practices when connecting Home and School Discourse.



*Figure 1.* This figure represents the frequency count of the process codes during each of the three professional developments.

**Professional development two.** Frequency counts were taken of the process codes for Professional Development Two. Figure 1 also included frequency counts for how often the process codes were referenced during Professional Development Two: confirming (25), challenging (7), changing (7), refining (7), and reflecting in time (4). Figure 1 showed that confirming was coded 25 times. There were seven references queried for the process code, challenging. There were also seven references in the data for the process code changing. Like the process codes challenging and changing, the process code refining was also referenced seven times. The last process code referred to

in Professional Development Two was reflecting, and it was referred to four. Teachers articulated ways that their actions and other teacher actions were challenging, changing, and refining behaviors and teacher practices that would enable them to facilitate more effective methods for connecting Home and School Discourse. Figure 1 points out that two teachers were confirming and reflecting in time more. See Figure 1 for frequency counts for process codes referenced in Professional Development Two.

To frame the discussion for Professional Development Two, teachers focused on a specific piece of literature. The literature that teachers focused on led them to think about their students, parents, and families' socioeconomic status and cultural backgrounds. As the teachers thought about their students, parents, and families' socioeconomic status and cultural backgrounds, they were prompted to determine if those characteristics previously mentioned determined their language and literacy abilities. Teachers expressed their thoughts on what they believed while also sharing literacy histories about their students, parents, and families. Also, during professional development, two teachers shared their beliefs about the critical roles they play in their students' academic lives. The teachers also expressed that the most immense contribution that an educator can make to their students was to show them that their backgrounds and cultural practices were valued. The teachers shared thoughts about the significance of their soliciting parent stories when connecting Home and School Discourse.

**Professional development three.** During Professional Development Three, the teacher talk centered around literature that discussed culturally relevant practices beyond celebrating holidays and famous African Americans that have made historical contributions. The teachers also examined their school and/or grade-level curriculum and shared how it incorporated lessons and activities that represented their students' diversity. Additionally, throughout Professional Development Three, teachers shared ways in which their school could place, throughout the curriculum, learning activities in which students from diverse backgrounds could see themselves. At the end of the professional development, the teachers were encouraged to examine their own cultural beliefs, values, and practices to determine how their beliefs differ from those of their students. Figure 1 shows the six process codes' frequency that identified how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse.

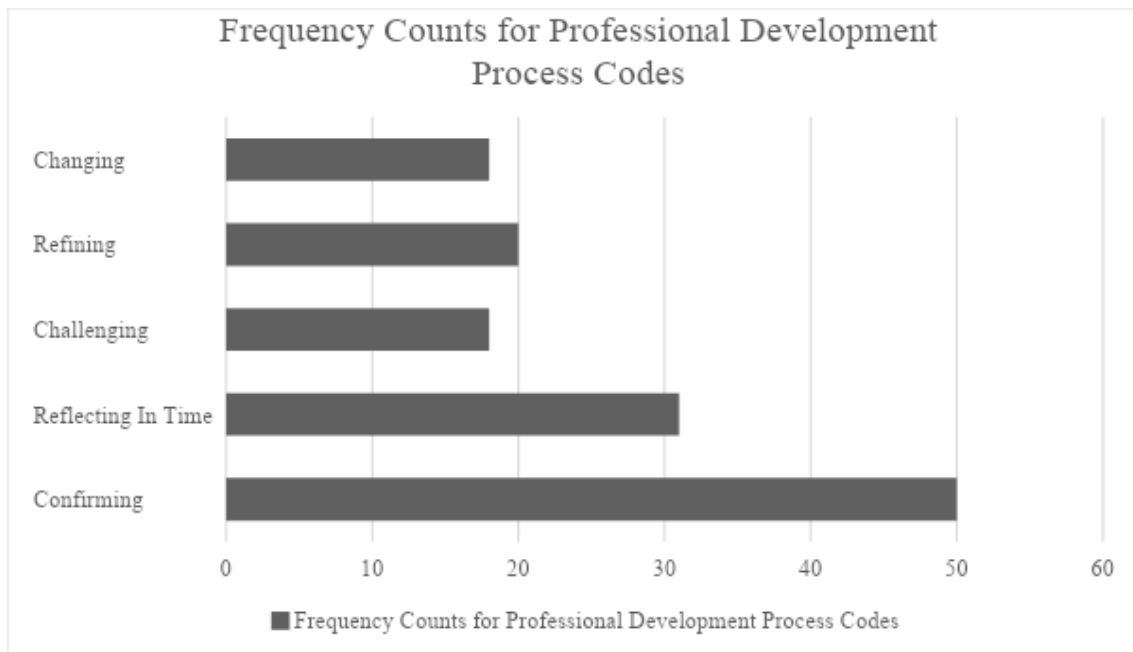
The data in Figure 1 identify the process codes: confirming (11), reflecting in time (10), challenging (3), refining (2), and changing (1). The data analysis revealed that the frequency of the process code, confirming, was referenced 11 times. The data analysis also shared that during Professional Development Three, the teacher talk was coded as reflecting in time on ten occasions. The process code challenging was reported three times in the teacher talk. The process code refining was referred to two times during Professional Development Three. The code that revealed the lowest

query from the teacher talk was changing; it was only coded one time.

**Process codes.** There were five process codes to describe how teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse throughout professional development. The data in Figure 2 reports the process codes: confirming (50), reflecting in time (31), refining (20), challenging (18), and changing (18). The frequency of the process code confirming was referenced throughout professional development 50 times. The data analysis revealed that the teacher talk consisted of teachers having conversations where they were confirming. The teachers talked in various ways, where they confirmed the deficit views perpetuated by schools and teachers as they made attempts to connect home and school. The teachers also engaged in confirming ways where they spoke about the issues with equity and access in schools that had a higher number of students living in households identified as being low socioeconomic.

The second highest process code described how teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse was reflecting in time. During professional development, there were 31 times, the teachers were observed reflecting in time about childhood experiences of how language and literacy were used in their homes. Teachers reflected on how those experiences using language and literacy currently impact their classroom awareness and responsiveness when connecting Home and School Discourse. The third process code, refining, was identified across the data for professional development 20

times. Teachers talked in a way that addressed the need for districts, schools, and principals to consider refining professional development that would provide them with relevant topics that discussed equity and access in schools. There was an overall count of 18 instances where teachers talked about Home and School Discourse by revealing their teacher dispositions. The teacher dispositions revealed communicated that teachers' comments were challenging and confirming deficit views. The fifth process code that explained how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse was changing. The teachers expressed the need for their schools to change issues that they have regarding equity and access to culturally responsive curriculum and resources in their schools. Many of their students' parents were identified as below the poverty level, and as a result, were identified as at-risk or socioeconomic disadvantaged.



*Figure 2.* The frequency counts for the process codes across the three professional developments.

### **Teacher Interviews**

There are six charts in this study that provide frequency counts for the process codes that explain how the teachers talked about Home and School Discourse during their interview. The first five tables provide the frequency counts of the process codes referenced by each the teachers (see Tables 11-15). The third figure depicts the combined frequency count of each process code across all five interviews (see Figure 3). Each interview was conducted virtually, except for the last one; the teacher responded in writing to each interview question. A summary of each teacher's interview and chart are

provided in the next sections of the findings to provide information on how the teachers talked during the interviews.

**Melinda.** Melinda was the first teacher to be interviewed. Table 11 presents a numerical chart that shows the frequency counts for the process codes recorded during Melinda's interview. Melinda referred to the process code reflecting in time three times, which was recorded as having the most frequency counts. Melinda storied about the impact that her personal experiences have had on how she used language and literacy in her current classroom teacher position. As Melinda responded during the interview questions, the data found that she referred to the all of processing codes with changing, confirming, and refining two times each. Melinda responded to questions where she addressed the need to change her mindset to make sure that she did not view her students' capabilities and parents as deficits.

The data also noted that Melinda confirms views centered on how she spoke of equity issues, consistently showing up in her school. Melinda confirmed issues of equity in her school. Melinda described equity issues as barriers that prohibit teachers from providing students with a quality education. Melinda also addressed concerns that she had regarding the lack of access to culturally relevant curriculum, resources, and materials. Coupled with having a lack of access to curriculum, Melinda also shared that the district and school officials should ensure that curriculum resources and materials



should be refined so that students can see positive images and stories that represent them. Melinda strongly advocated a need for the district, schools, and principals to refine the curriculum resources and materials so that students can see positive images and stories of themselves. The last process code was challenging. This code had a frequency count of one. Melinda shared that teachers' deficit views about the students, parents, and families they served should be challenged. To support Melinda's statement, she commented, "When you see something that you should not hesitate to say something."

Table 11

*Melinda's (I) Interview Transcript*

Process Codes	Number of Coding References
Challenging	1
Refining	2
Confirming	2
Changing	2
Reflecting in Time	3

*Note.* This table identifies the number of coding references made by the first teacher interviewed.

**Debra.** Table 12 represents the total frequency counts of the process codes Debra referenced during the interview: confirming (10), reflecting in time (10), challenging (4),

refining (4), and changing (3). The frequency of the process codes, reflecting in time and confirming, revealed to be the highest total for how teachers talked during the interviews. The two codes challenging and refining reported the same amount of frequencies. Of the process codes, changing was reported as having the least frequency counts during her interview. Debra's interview was reported as having the least amount of teacher talk.

Debra shared more in the interview than she shared during professional development. Debra believed that teachers should look at their colleagues' behaviors and challenge them about the deficit views that drive their assumptions of parents, children, and families. Four coding references were identified as refining. Debra shared how teachers' curriculum should be refined to provide teachers with more access to lessons, resources, and curriculum that facilitate different conversations that address diversity. She also shared that teachers should be willing to use the libraries to research stories that depict diversity.

The last process code, changing, was referenced three times throughout the interview. Although changing was referenced three times, Debra firmly believed that education required a change. Religion and discipline were vital areas that Debra felt school systems lacked. As a result, Debra shared that students are not as motivated to learn.

Table 12

*Debra's (II) Interview Transcript*

Process Codes	Number of Coding References
Changing	3
Refining	4
Challenging	4
Reflecting in Time	10
Confirming	10

*Note.* The table identifies the number of coding references made during the second teacher's interview.

**Gwen.** Table 13 references the process codes recorded during the interview with Gwen. The process codes referenced the most; totaling six references in the interviews were for confirming and reflecting. The data in Table 13 reports the process codes: confirming (6), reflecting in time (6), challenging (4), changing (1), and refining (0). The frequency of the process code, reflecting in time and confirming, revealed the highest total of teacher talk during the interview. During Gwen's interview, she confirmed that there were issues of equity in her school. The equity issues involved how resources and materials were distributed. Depending on who you were, some teachers received more or fewer resources when disseminated to the staff.

There were six coding references where Gwen reflected in time about how literacy and language were used at home as a child. Gwen referenced that those childhood experiences with using language and literacy impact how she connects Home and School Discourse in her class today. Childhood experiences with using language and literacy have impacted Gwen's teaching practices as well. The next process code, challenging, was referenced four times throughout the interview. The teacher talk focusing on the process code, challenging, stemmed from conversations where teachers declared that they would question why there appears to be inequity and access to campus resources.

Gwen would first challenge the thoughts on why her special education students did not have computers when the class across the hall had enough computers that could accommodate her class and their own. Although teachers shared various experiences and issues of lack of equity and access to resources and materials, the transcripts reflected limited teacher talk or even suggestions about the necessary actions and behaviors needed to change the behaviors and actions that perpetuate inequity.

Table 13

*Gwen's (III) Interview Transcript*

Process Codes	Number of Coding References
Refining	0
Changing	1
Challenging	4
Reflecting in Time	6
Confirming	6

*Note.* The table identifies the number of coding references made by the third teacher during the interview.

As Gwen talked, she did share one comment that could be referenced to the process code, changing. Gwen believed she would be more productive if she had more access to a culturally responsive curriculum and resources. Other teachers shared ideas about how they researched historical icons who shared the same ethnicities, backgrounds, and experiences as many of their students. After hearing how other teachers incorporate culturally relevant lessons, Gwen's openness began to shift. Gwen mentioned that she was open to looking for books that consisted of characters representing students from different cultural backgrounds. There were no coding references for the last process code, refining.

**Barbara.** The data in Table 14 reported the process codes: confirming (10), reflecting in time (8), challenging (1), changing (2), and refining (2). The frequency of the process code, confirming, revealed the highest total of teacher talk during Barbara's interview. During Barbara's interview, she confirmed that having the appropriate access to essential resources is needed to be productive in the classroom. Barbara was not opposed to purchasing her resources when needed. She believed that having the resources and materials was essential for her to teach the curriculum as it was written. The process code, reflecting in time, was referenced eight times. Barbara reflected on how her personal experiences with language and literacy growing up could not be remembered as easy. Barbara's responses to questions referenced to two coding references for the process code changing. Barbara voiced the need for the district to change how they support teachers in obtaining materials and resources. That way, teachers are not required to spend a significant amount of time buying and creating resources to support learning activities.

Table 14

*Barbara's (IV) Interview Transcript*

Process Codes	Number of Coding References
Challenging	1
Refining	2
Changing	2
Reflecting in Time	8
Confirming	10

*Note.* The table identifies the number of coding references made by the fourth teacher during the interview.

Once teachers can receive the necessary resources and materials, perhaps their views for implementing a culturally responsive curriculum might change. The fourth process code identified in the chart is refining. Table 14 shows that refining had two coding references. The last process code, challenging, had one coding reference. By the principal leading initiatives that connect Home and School Discourse, teachers can challenge their deficit views. Barbara shared that her campus was able to bridge the gap between Home and School Discourse through campus committees specifically designed to go into the school's community to support children, parents, and families. After parents

recognized the school's efforts, teachers had more support as they worked with the children.

**Kevin.** The data in Table 15 identified the coding references for the process codes reflected in Kevin's interview. The process codes reported were: confirming (8), challenging (1), changing (1), reflecting in time (1), and refining (0). The frequency of the process code, confirming, revealed the highest total responses of Kevin's interview. It had a total of eight coding references. Comments from Kevin's interview confirmed the importance of facilitating positive communication between the home and school. Kevin believed that it was essential to have diverse literature available in the classroom. Even though Kevin believed that Dr. Suess was a bigot and racist, he would make sure that he had literature in his classroom representing the diversity of his students. Challenging, changing, and reflecting in time were referenced only once during Kevin's interview. Kevin believed that teachers should hold each other accountable by challenging them to view their students and parents through a positive lens.



Table 15

*Kevin's (V) Interview Transcript*

Process Codes	Number of Coding References
Refining	0
Reflecting in time	1
Changing	1
Challenging	1
Confirming	8

*Note.* The table identifies the number of coding references made during the fifth teacher's interview.

**Process codes combined for five interviews.** The data in Figure 3 provide the frequency counts for the combined number of coding references for the teacher interviews: confirming (35), reflecting (26), challenging (11), changing (8), refining (7). The total amount of coding references for the process code, confirming, was referenced 35 times. The second process code, reflecting in time, consisted of 26 coding references. Throughout interviews, teachers responded to questions by reflecting in time about various childhood experiences that currently shape how they view, understand, and connect Home and School Discourse. When people create meaning, there is a negotiation

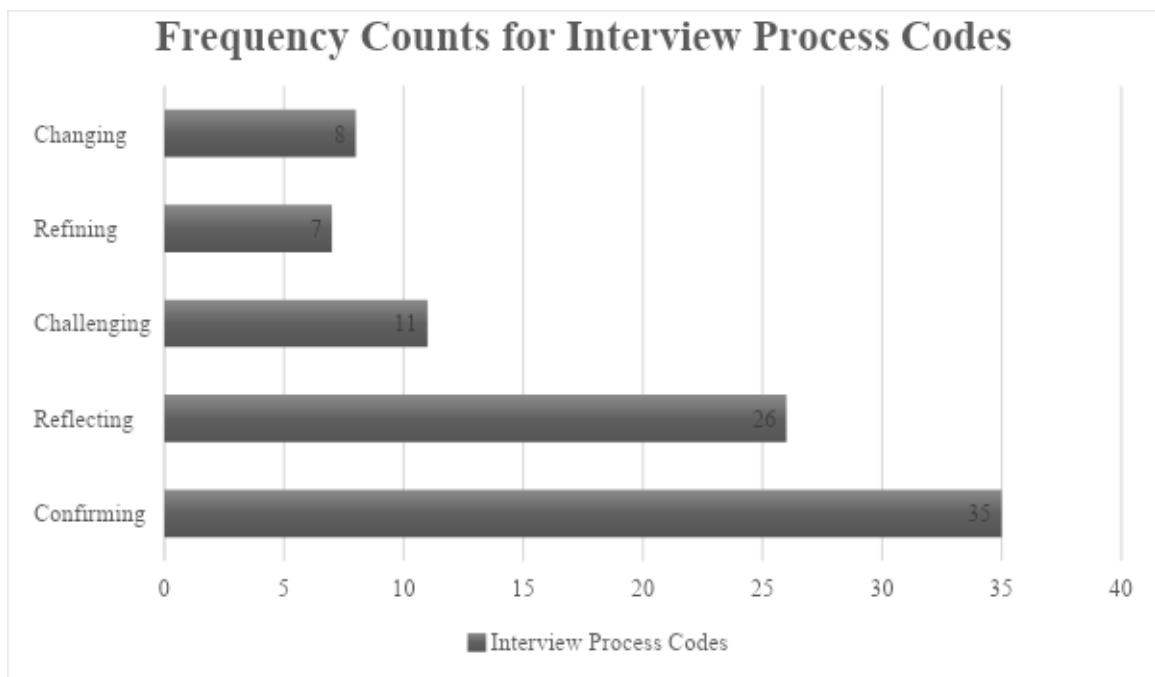
between different social practices with different interests by individuals who share a mutual understanding.

The next process code identified in Figure 3 is challenging. Across the interviews, there were 11 coding references for the process code, challenging. The fourth process code identified in Figure 3 is refining. There were seven coded references for refining. The teachers talked about Home and School Discourse through conversations about refining teacher practices that facilitate positive Home and School Discourse.

The last process code, changing, was identified in Figure 3. The frequency count consisted of eight coding references. Throughout interviews, teachers talked about the importance of changing their perceptions of parents, families, and students. During the interviews, teachers expressed the principals' desire to make changes to professional development offerings. Receiving more professional development on cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness in the classroom was echoed by each teacher. As a result of receiving more training on best practices that facilitate cultural awareness and responsiveness in the classroom, they would be more confident when presenting students with lessons beyond the understanding of holidays and heroes studied.

A comparison of how the teachers talked during professional development and the interviews revealed that the teachers spent most of the time in professional development and interviews confirming and reflecting. A comparison of the patterns across the two

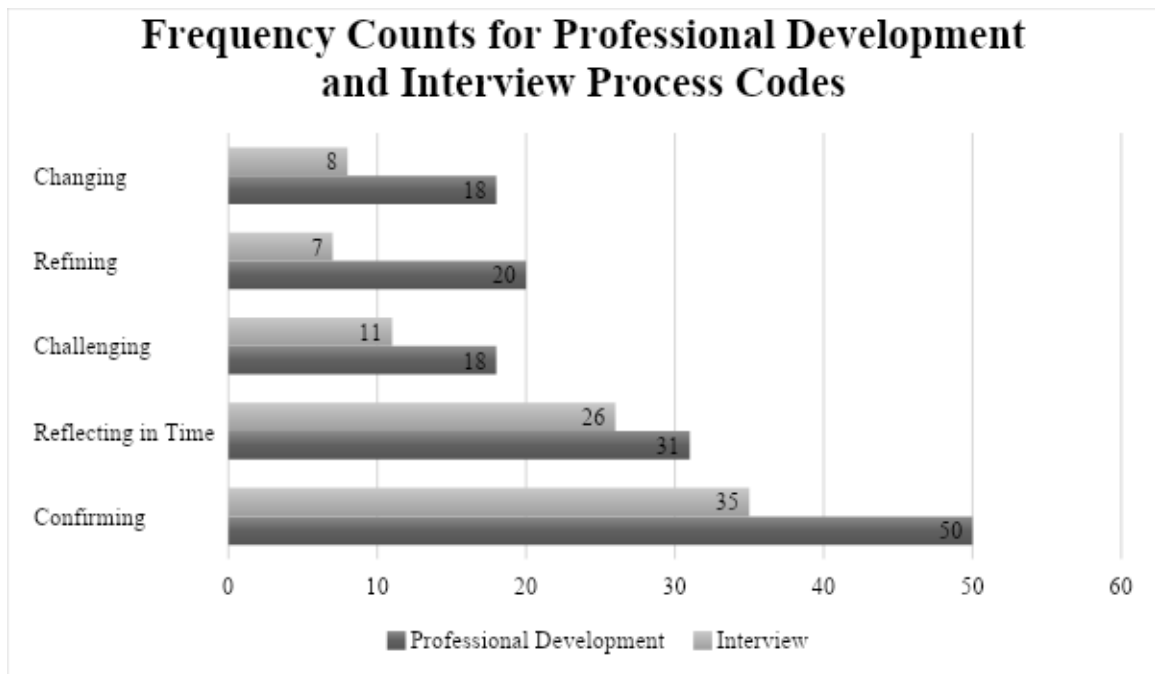
settings is a topic of further research beyond this study. The units of analysis and the amount of data in the transcripts varied.



*Figure 3.* Identifies the frequency counts of the process codes combined from the five interview transcripts.

**Process codes count for professional development and interviews.** The data in Figure 4 provide the frequency counts for the combined number of coding references for the teacher interviews and professional development. The overall patterns across the data for professional development and teacher interviews communicate that teachers spent more time engaging in talk where they were confirming and reflecting in time about their

experiences with connecting Home and School Discourse. Gee (2015) explains that meaning is rooted in negotiation. By confirming and reflecting in time, teachers could make connections about how other educators understood and facilitated Home and School Discourse. Although the transcripts created from the teacher talk were extensive in length, the number of process codes referenced challenging, refining, and changing were low.

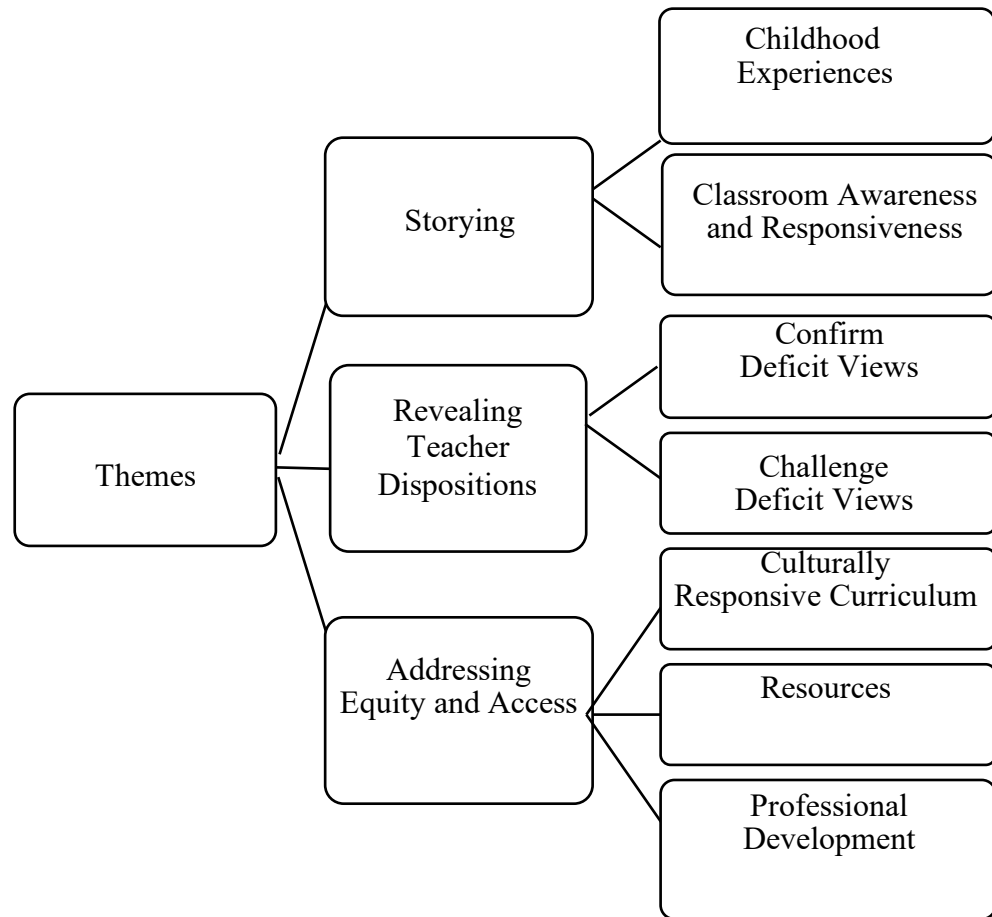


*Figure 4.* The figure shows the frequency counts of the process codes from all interviews.

### **How Teachers Talk: Themes Across Professional Development and Interviews**

The process illustrated the "how" in the teacher talks. Across the process codes, three themes were identified in the second cycle coding process. For each theme, there were subcategories supporting the topic. The subcategories provided a framework for illustrating the findings of the analysis. Themes and subcategories are presented in a graphic organizer based on the data collected for this research study. The three themes are storying, revealing teacher disposition, and challenging the equity and access to culturally relevant curriculum, resources, and professional development.

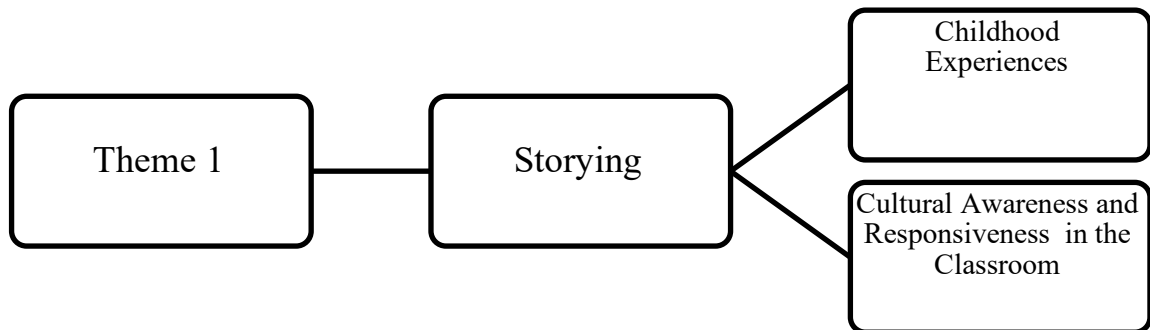
Figure 5 illustrates the relationship between themes and subcategories. The graphic organizer provides a framework for presenting the data around the themes. In the following section, each theme is discussed in detail. Excerpts from the teacher's talk support the themes present in how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse.



*Figure 5.* The graphic organizer shows the three themes and subcategories across the three professional developments and interviews for the research study.

The three themes identified in Figure 5 helped describe how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse in professional development and interviews. The first theme shared in Figure 6 is storying. When teachers were asked to reflect on the content being discussed, they did so by storying about how language and literacy were used in their homes while growing up. As teachers storied, they were able to connect new learning to their lived experiences. While making connections to cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness, teachers storied about their professional and personal experiences when interacting and connecting to students and families whose cultures and social backgrounds were different from their own.

The next theme in Figure 7 is identified as revealing teacher dispositions. As mentioned before, a teacher disposition refers to how a teacher may speak, act, respond to, or feel when interacting or engaging with colleagues, parents, families, and students (Liston, Whitcomb & Borko, 2007; Taylor & Wasicsko, 2000). Depending on the context of the conversation, teachers revealed dispositions during professional development and interviews that sometimes confirmed that they had deficit views and, in other times, challenged deficit views. The third theme pictured in Figure 8 is that teachers addressed equity and access issues when receiving culturally responsive curriculum, resources, and professional development.



*Figure 6.* Theme 1: Storying identified that teachers use storying as they talked about childhood experiences that connect home and school. Teachers also used storying when talking about awareness and responsiveness in the classroom.

### **Storying**

One of the significant findings in this study's descriptive analysis showed that teachers used their childhood experiences to connect to topics through storying. These connections to their childhood experiences lead teachers to address how their cultural beliefs and interactions with language and literacy serve as a foundation for the values that have influenced their teaching of literacy and language use. In *Other People Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*, Delpit (1995) shared that John Dewey believed that teachers should encourage students to bring their personal experiences to the classroom when making connections to a subject discussed. A total of 129 excerpts



were coded for Storying. Ninety-four excerpts were coded for cultural awareness and responsiveness in the classroom. Thirty-five excerpts were coded for childhood experiences.

To support process codes, excerpts were lifted from the transcripts and served as examples used to add context to the process codes and themes. The evidence providing context consisted of actual words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Trends identified in the data for process codes revealed that teachers created meaning during professional development and interviews by storying about childhood experiences with language and literacy usage. The trends revealed that teachers used childhood experiences to make connections to the topics discussed. Some of the conversations that took place by the teachers regarding childhood experiences are listed below.

**Childhood experiences.** Like with children, adults storying, or "story sharing," fosters a critical examination of the subject, enhancing a greater understanding of the topic discussed (Delpit, 1988, 1995). During the interview, Kevin shared more about the roles that literacy and language played in his household when growing up. He said:

Some roles that literacy and language played in my household when growing up was that there was only one view that we were subjected to and even specific authors that I would not want to use in my classroom. For example, many people teach and read Dr. Seuss for simplicity and because it is catchy, but he was a

racist and bigot while developing his stories and illustrations.

In Barbara's interview transcript, when asked about the role literacy and language played in her household while growing, she stated:

The difference between my sister and me is that my sister started reading very, very young like three or four. Not even four years old, maybe younger than that. She read sentences, simple sentences like it is black, you know, stuff like that. Whereas, I wasn't exposed to a lot of reading. My mother and father weren't together. Now that I think about it, when I did visit my father, he was into novels. He would take a book that he was reading at the time and read out loud to me.

Barbara's comment further supports the research by Compton-Lilly (2003), Edwards et al. (2010), and Taylor (1983) about how children's first experiences with literacy occur in the home. Barbara's comments connect to the work of Heath (1983) and Taylor (1983). Their research shows that homes represent a myriad of cultures and ways of using language. Looking at Barbara's comments during the interview, she inferred that literacy used at her mother's home differed from how literacy was used at her father's house.

Debra's interview statements also stood out when asked about the role that literacy and language have played in their lives growing up. Debra responded by stating:

I value literacy. I love reading. Uh, I think I love reading more than math, so I try to, uh, incorporate that to my students so that they can develop a love for reading at an early age. Like, I make it fun. I do little, silly things.

**Awareness and responsiveness in the classroom.** Through storying, teachers also reflected on their classroom awareness and responsiveness in the classrooms. During one professional development, the teachers read an article titled, “Difference Does Not Mean Deficit.” This article fostered much discussion surrounding various equity traps, such as deficit views that serve as barriers to connecting Home and School Discourse. Comments shared by Barbara helped describe how her cultural awareness shapes her understanding of the importance of connecting Home and School Discourse. During the discussion, Barbara stated:

We (African Americans and Hispanics) are very different. So, I think that (not seeing the color of students) was, um, interesting to hear. Furthermore, even, you know, being black, and from St. Louis, and then also - I'm kind of like you. Living in an all-black community, and then suddenly, my stepfather's job was moving around, so now I'm in a majority white community, and I've met some, uh, some severe prejudices from some people, and then I've met some true love. I had to learn from my Hispanic teachers at the school, and I had to go beyond the district resources to learn more about cultural responsiveness. To this very day,

I'm no longer at the school where I first started teaching, but the parents are still looking for me. My husband and I go to many quinceañeras. I cry because I can't believe how the school and the children have changed from the time that I first started until now.

Barbara believed that you must see your students' color. Opposite of Barbara's beliefs, Gwen said:

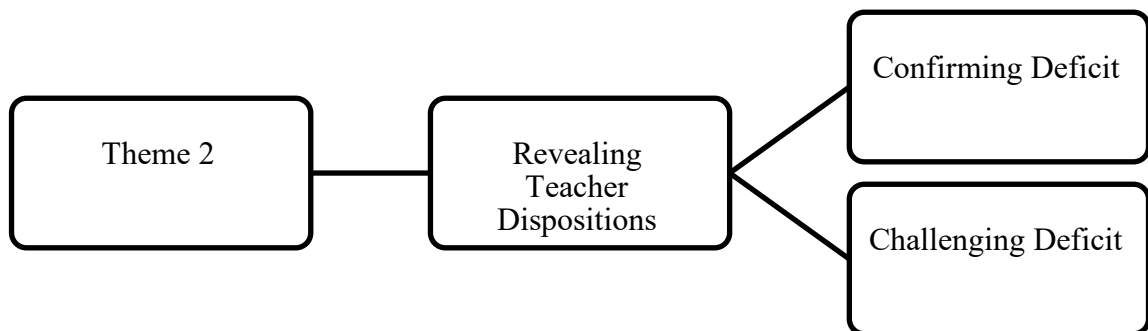
I went to high school in a predominantly white area. We had a few African American students there. We did not see skin color. Yes, we know you are different, but we didn't treat you any differently because of your skin color, and I think that's what a lot of this is talking about. You're white, you're black, you're this, you're that. We had this child so convinced that he was one of us that when he went to college and discovered he wasn't one of us, it was a shock to him. I mean, that...but to me, that's how it should be, whether you've got a disability, whether it's the color of your skin. It doesn't matter. It comes back to, what is the community's mindset around that? But, as I said, we never saw skin color. We never saw a disability. He came back home, and he goes, did you all know I was black? And, we all started laughing, and we're like yeah, and? But we never treated him as if he was black. He was just one of the guys. He was one of the football players. He was one of the players on the team right there with us.

When reflecting on their cultural awareness and interactions serve as a foundation for the values that have influenced their responsiveness in the classrooms, Debra stated:

When I was growing up, prayer was in schools. We had discipline in schools. It just made it better for education, and I feel like they're getting away from that. And, that's where we're losing our babies. We must bring religion back into the schools.

Immediately following the statement made by Debra, Barbara chimed in, stating:

I pray out loud, and my mama was even praying, and she's a big volunteer at the school. She doesn't volunteer in my classroom, but she volunteers in other places at the school. She walks through the halls and prays. I also do a lot of praying, you know, over the kids. When they were having their fits, I knew that it was not them. I would hold them or do whatever I had to do. I would count to ten—and I still do this to this day, I just put them against my heart because the sound of a heart beating is calming. When they removed that [religious practices] from school, education has kind of fallen by the wayside.



*Figure 7.* Theme 2: Revealing Teacher Dispositions shows that the teachers talked about home and school by revealing teacher dispositions that confirmed and challenged deficit views.

### **Revealing Teacher Dispositions**

Three 1-hour professional developments took place, along with teacher interviews. Revealing teacher dispositions was the second theme that the data analysis revealed in how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse. Disposition in the study refers to how a teacher may speak, act, respond to, or feel when interacting or engaging with colleagues, parents, families, and students (Liston et al., 2007; Taylor & Wasicsko, 2000). In this section, two trends are identified when looking at the teachers' disposition during discussions of specific topics. Excerpts will provide evidence that supports that teachers talked in ways where they confirmed deficit views for parents, families, and students of color. The second trend will discuss what teachers talked about as they challenged deficit views. Direct quotes from teachers are provided to help enhance the

understanding surrounding the trends identified for disposition. There were a total number of 50 excerpts coded for teacher disposition. There were 34 out of 50 excerpts coded for confirming deficit views and 16 out of 50 excerpts coded for challenging deficit views.

**Confirming deficit views.** The first trend identified that supported disposition was the discussion that took place confirming deficit views. Deficit views negatively influence a teacher's disposition, attitude, beliefs, or feelings towards someone. During professional development, the dialogue centered on the article, “Displacing Deficit Thinking in School District Leadership” (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). As mentioned in the literature review, this study found that deficit thinking includes ideas such as the notion that children's academic deficiencies reflect their parents and home lives. These researchers focused on how deficit thinking in school-district leadership typically includes a limited way of thinking about expectations for academic performance and learning expectations of children of color and children from low-income homes. Such a deficit thinking mindset exists not only in classrooms; it is adapted and facilitated in practices, policies, and ideas at the national, state, and local levels. These ideas and practices impact how students of color and students from low-income families are perceived academically. During the discussion, Gwen shared:

I'm also finding that Hispanic culture, from what I understand, does not expect women to go onto school. They don't encourage it, or if they do, they don't care. I mean, if you have a boy and a girl in the same family, they're going to push the boy before they push the girl. They believe that she doesn't need to know how to read, and she doesn't need to know how to write, because the man's going to write the checks, pay the bills and buy the groceries. I also think that's also part of understanding what your culture is in your room.

The next comment also stems from the discussion taking place during professional development when teachers shared thoughts on the various equity traps that show up when working with children and parents of color. Kevin stated:

The school where I am, there's like a bilingual part of the school where it's just Spanish, and the other side is just English or ESL. There's a teacher with three bilingual classes, one that they call it 'Gen Ed' or 'Monolingual.' Like what happens on page 619, she says that her 'Gen Ed' parents are crazier than her Hispanic parents. She is not used to dealing with White parents and African American parents. She described her bilingual parents as lazy or felt that they did not care about their child's education because they came from a different country, she felt like she could slide by on different things with them than the other students. Like, they take away recess if they do not behave, but she said she could



not do it with ...she calls them the White class because the parents will call up there in five minutes and try to get her fired. Teacher that does not want to serve special education students. She tries to push them a side. When I go into the classroom, and they're like, no, we're not doing something they [special education students] can do today. If they [general education students] are taking a quiz, the teacher tries to kick us out. We always stay and make our students do it. They [special education students] need to have socialization skills, even if they can't do it.

Kevin also made another comment that stood out while sharing. Kevin stated:

There is also a negative connotation on special ed. I went untested for 12 years. During those years, I was slow. Once I started getting 504 accommodations my grades improved. I started doing much better. My mom never wanted the 'Sped', label on me.

**Challenging deficit views.** The next three examples will serve as evidence to support the discussion trend during professional development that challenged deficit views that have influenced their dispositions. The first example comes from the first professional development session. Debra stated:

I guess it's been about two or three years ago, when Dallas started that initiative where we went with the blue shirts on, and the white, uh, writing, to the

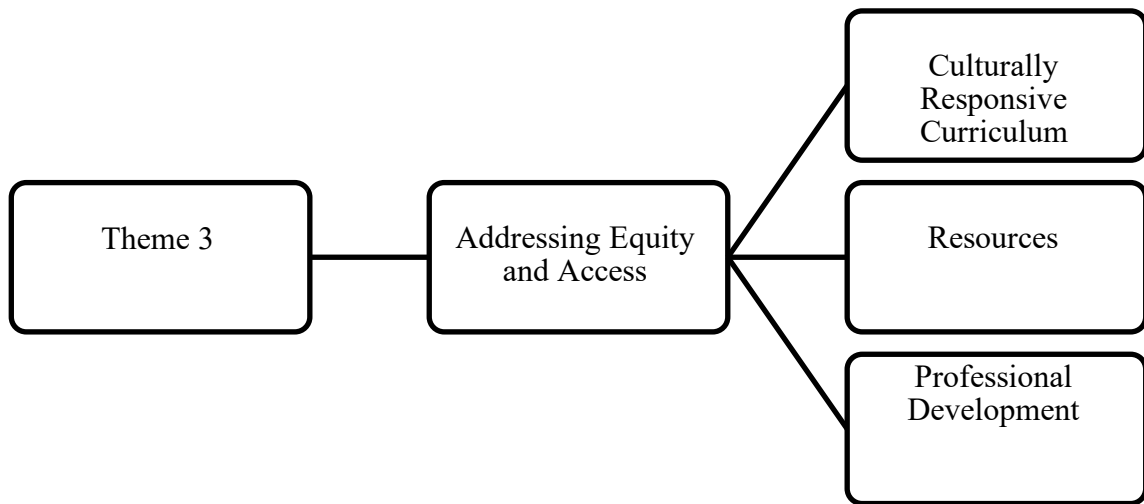
neighborhoods to welcome the parents before school started. That was enlightening for me because I...we were scared. We were like, 'Oh, we're going to get chased by dogs,' but the parents were very welcoming.

Gwen shared:

It is assumed that when the students are coming from low-income poverty that the parents do not care about education. They [parents] want their kids to do their best. They want them to behave. They expect them to. The kids know this. They [parents] do not want you to call home, or do the home visits, or any of that, but it is still that dialogue you have not just to communicate and build relationships with the grownups, but you also have to create those connections with the child, too.

In his interview, when asked about his family's role in interacting with his students, Kevin stated:

Growing up, no, my family didn't see the impact that minority groups had and didn't support the different groups that were represented in the classroom. This has taught me that there is a wrong and right viewpoint, and I would never want my students to feel like they should have a hatred towards a certain group because of their upbringings.



*Figure 8.* Theme 3: Addressing Equity and Access identified that teachers talked about home and school connections by addressing the equity and access issues with receiving culturally responsive curriculum, resources, and professional development.

### **Addressing Equity and Access**

Teachers connected Home and School Discourse during professional development through discussions about equity and access, as evident in the frequency count. The frequency counts identified the trends where teachers consistently talked about the lack of equity and access to technology, culturally relevant curriculum, resources, materials, and professional development. The following information spotlights what teachers discussed explicitly related to equity and access in professional development and teacher interviews. The three supporting trends discussed while discussing equity and access include culturally responsive curriculum, resources, and professional development.

Excerpts taken from transcripts will provide evidence to support the themes. There were a total of 53 excerpts coded for equity and access. There were 11 out of 53 excerpts coded for a culturally responsive curriculum, 17 out of 53 excerpts coded for resources, and twenty-five out of fifty-three citations coded for professional development.

**Culturally responsive curriculum.** In Professional Development Three, teachers read "Beyond Heroes and Holiday: The Complexity and Relevance of Culture," from *Bridging Literacy and Equity: The Essential Guide to Social Equity Teaching* (Lazar et al., 2012). The featured chapter discussed the importance of exposing students to a culturally responsive curriculum where they use critical thinking to explore motives behind characters' actions—exploring how a character's beliefs, values, backgrounds contribute to actions and decisions made. Recognizing and analyzing how a character's actions, values, beliefs, experiences, and impact others expose students to critical thinking goes beyond knowing heroes and holidays (Lazar et al., 2012).

In Professional Development Three, when sharing concerns about having access to a culturally responsive curriculum, Gwen stated:

I remember when growing up, we talked about these people [African American contributions in history] interspersed. It wasn't this month is this one, and this month is this one, and this month is this one, and this month is this one. I mean, I understand why they dedicate it because they don't have time, supposedly, to do it

any other way. How much of a disservice because the school I'm at right now, during the Hispanic month, the principal talked about a different Hispanic—famous Hispanic person. But that was it. It was like a three-minute blurb on his—on some Hispanic. And half the—I don't know about the rest of the world. I could barely hear half of it because the system in my room stinks. Depending on where you are, at some schools, I'm finding that it's uncomfortable to focus more on one holiday than the next. Because, here, teachers become offended if you focus more on Cinco de Mayo than you focus on Black History Month. I'm just finding that it's not always about the curriculum. It's about the personal perception of what we should be doing when we are implementing it, or are we bringing different types of, stories into our curriculum when we read to the kids, you know? So, it's just I don't know.

In another statement referencing access to a culturally responsive curriculum, Gwen, also in her comments, stated:

See, I read all those things (Holocaust, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, etc.). That's where it's funny because I read *To Kill a Mockingbird* in school, but I've never read about Ruby Bridges—that's why I'm like, 'It'— depends on what the teachers want to read. We also read *The Diary of Anne Frank*. We acted out scenes from the story. I think that it also depends on the timeframe that you're in

school. I say that with tongue-in-cheek because I went to the same school my boys—the same school system two of my boys went to. My oldest was in Gifted and Talented. They did a discussion on the Holocaust and the whole nine yards. My younger and middle one, nothing was said about it. It also depends, too, on where they're at in the school system. I mean, because Gifted and Talented versus Advanced Placement versus and the regular classes are different. My exposure to it [culturally responsive literature] was through *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and we did do in-depth discussions and stuff on it. We talked about the war. We talked about what happened with the trains, gas chambers and all. I do think it's not just an area, like geographical it also where you're at in time. Even 9/11 is kind of brushed under the carpet. April 15th, for Oklahoma, is—brushed under the carpet, it's like, 'Hey, we're going to have our 20 minutes of silence,' and that's it. You know, 9/11, 'Okay, we're going to have 11 seconds of being still,' and I'm like, but it lasted longer than 11 seconds. April 15th lasted longer than 15 seconds.

After Gwen shared the comment above, a hush came over the room as other teachers tried to console, as they all were aware of the events that took place on 9/11.

When Gwen shared that the district did not provide teachers with a diverse catalog of literature that represented students from different backgrounds, Barbara

responded by stating:

[The school district] is trying, but I don't think we're there yet. They're trying to incorporate more culturally relevant stories where students can see themselves.

But there's a lot of them [diverse stories] out there that you can research. You don't have to use the stories that go with the unit. Those are just suggestions.”

Gwen followed up by stating, “That would require me to have a curriculum.

That's why I'm saying general education teachers have the curriculum but as the special education teacher, I don't.

**Resources.** The next trend for equity and access spotlights the talk surrounded what teachers commented on regarding resources. Teachers in the study were all from Title I schools where resources were limited. Teachers repeatedly discussed their concerns for accessing the needed resources to ensure that their students received a quality education. Quotes taken directly from teachers help explicitly share their personal and professional experiences related to equity and access to resources. In Professional Development Three, Barbara stated:

Not having accessibility to resources impacts everything if you don't have the finances to get it on your own. You know, like, okay, you can go on Pinterest, you can get some things free, but a lot of stuff, the good stuff, you can't. Like, for books, you can't get- go on there and get books free. You literally must purchase

it, and that's important if they can't read, they can't do the math, they can't do science, they can't do social studies.

In another comment shared by Barbara, she also stated:

The district doesn't have any useful resources. You have to go through- it's too much for a child to get any services, so, I mean, even though it's- and- and with that, what they are coming from, the federal government, who provides the money, I don't understand why it's such trouble for the students to get assistance. Our struggle is our schools, and I'm thinking about my last few years of education because I'm retiring when I'm 62, which is not long. Maybe I'll be a diagnostician for our area because they are not meeting our children's needs over there. It's like they're running away from them instead of running to them. Okay, so if you have an overload, then hire some more help. I've been there, I've walked in their [children] shoes, so I know the kids do need the services, and that's part of the reason why they weren't being served or failing in the first place. As a result of students not getting tested, they didn't get to receive services. There was a lack of equity that the school provided. The new diagnostician that came last year was like; this is not my only school. Okay, if this is not my only school, then somebody needs to hire more diagnosticians. Now they're [district diagnosticians] telling these parents that they must write a note or whatever, so now the parents



must go downtown. Okay, that's fine. That's like setting the children up for failure because many parents in our area don't have transportation. They can't go over there, and so that's back on the teacher again, who does not get paid much. For our children to get the same education that they have over on the other side of town, we come out of our pocket a lot and take away from our household. It costs parents as well.

Aside from the district's curriculum, Gwen found equity and access to resources to be a significant factor when teaching students about African American history. Ladson-Billings (1994) shared that quality programs for prospective teachers include access to materials and resources that will support their teaching efforts in exposing students to culturally relevant teaching that connects Home and School Discourse. School districts should also ensure that classroom teachers have unlimited access to materials and resources to support their education. When providing insight regarding her thoughts about teaching African American history to students, Gwen stated:

But many teachers don't have the cultural background to...I can't teach African American history. Number one, I'm not African American. Number two, I wasn't exposed to it. I was exposed to people. So, I can give you the history of somebody. But as far as the culture, no. The race riots, that type of stuff, yes, I had exposure to because we talked about it, but again, this is what was going on

during the time that I mentioned earlier. A lot of the kids are in the hood. That's their culture. They don't stop to think about it. How did I get to this point? But as a white teacher, I couldn't and can't tell you how you got to this point because it's all still very surface-level.

**Professional development.** The last set of teacher responses spotlight the talk that teachers specifically commented on when discussing equity and access to professional development. In *Bridging Literacy and Equity: The Essential Guide to Social Equity Teaching* (Lazar et al., 2012), the authors stated that professional development that merely focus on how to implement a scripted curriculum do not to foster an intellectual understanding that's needed on behalf of the teacher when studying issues of equity and access. When discussing equity and access to professional development, Melinda shared:

Teachers should be able to always walk away with knowledge and information that's specific to what they are needing. Gaining information from conversations and interactions with colleagues is essential. It's becoming more seldom where we get to have a conversation over an article. It seems as if the topic is always focused on an initiative. Nevertheless, to get the kids' attention, we must have some idea about their background.

During Professional Development Three, the teachers shared their observations and concerns for new teachers entering education. In *Bridging Literacy and Equity: The Essential Guide to Social Equity Teaching*, Lazar et al. (2012) shared how many universities and teacher preparation programs fail to adequately prepare their program teachers on how to effectively serve students who come from diverse backgrounds and non-mainstream communities. Due to the lack of preparation, teachers are more susceptible to fostering deficit views that impede setting high learning expectations for children and families of color. These deficit views or equity traps that teachers may develop because of a lack of preparation before entering the field may also impact how parents and children of color are viewed. Gwen currently works at a campus where several new teachers are struggling in various areas. According to Gwen:

Teach for America, who are alternatively certified teachers, and like the book said, if you put teachers that are not qualified into these classrooms, some of them, one that comes to mind was previously an engineer. She couldn't teach. She [Teach for America Teacher] tried, but she did not have any classroom management. Kids were doing whatever they wanted to do. She probably would've been phenomenal if she was in like a high school where it was more of higher-level math, like trig and calc.

Debra was asked to talk about the professional development opportunities centering around looking at students' cultural backgrounds, beliefs, values, and practices when connecting home and school. Debra stated:

There is not enough actual professional development that has taken place at schools that talk about the importance of connecting Home and School Discourse. We never just sit down and talk about, you know, how teachers' and students' cultural backgrounds impact the home and school connections.

Debra comments lead back to ideas shared in *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (Ladson-Billings, 1994) regarding participation in training and professional development that will lead to an understanding of the cultural background and social practices of African American students are critical for teachers to build their capacity to facilitate culturally relevant teaching in the classroom.

### **Summary of Findings**

To shift from our deficit views, we have first to start to talk about them. Gee's (2015) theory of Discourse identified that when speaking and interacting with people, we must ensure two things: (1) we must be clear about who we are and (2) we must make it clear what we are doing. Throughout my study, I had to be conscious of my beliefs regarding Home and School Discourse. I did not want to influence or persuade the teachers' thoughts. Forcing my beliefs on the teachers could have resulted in adverse

reactions that could have contributed to either negative teacher behaviors, positive teacher behaviors, or a mixture of both (Gee, 2015). Research articles aligned with the study were used to facilitate teacher talk, resulting in teachers expressing their thoughts, feelings, ideas, understanding, and experiences about connecting Home and School Discourse.

The study, Connecting Home and School Discourse, was a qualitative descriptive study. This qualitative descriptive study was designed to describe how teachers reflect and talk about connecting Home and School Discourse. The data collected to support the study's findings consisted of audio recordings and transcripts from three 1-hour professional developments and five teacher interviews. Trends in teacher talk were looked for in the professional development and interview transcripts. Process coding and the thematic analysis served as the two phases for analyzing the data that lead to the study's findings. Process coding was the first method used during the first phase of the data analysis.

A graphic organizer was used to record words, phrases, and comments of the reoccurring data that would serve as trends and patterns in the teacher talk. After reviewing the coded data, process codes that described the how for the teacher talk were identified. After creating the process codes, they were then defined. As a result of the first phase of coding for the process codes, the data was revealed for the “how” in teacher talk

during professional development and teacher interviews. The data analyzed described how the teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse during professional development. After analyzing the data for the process codes and descriptions, the second phase involved thematic analysis.

The thematic analysis was the second phase of the data analysis. During the thematic analysis process, the data was organized and grouped based on their similarities. Thematic analysis identified that teachers did a lot of storying, revealing their dispositions, and addressing equity and access issues within their schools. The thematic analysis revealed that throughout professional development and teacher interviews, teachers could make connections when discussing articles by storying about childhood experiences using language and literacy. Teachers were able to connect how these experiences have framed how they connect Home and School Discourse in their classrooms.

Teachers also storied about how their cultural awareness and responsiveness in their classroom contribute to their understanding of connecting Home and School Discourse. Also, the thematic analysis showed that teachers revealed dispositions throughout professional development and interviews. The dispositions indicated, confirmed and challenged deficits regarding the abilities of their children, parents, and families of color. Finally, during professional development, the teacher talk revealed that

teachers addressed their issues with equity and access to culturally responsive curriculum, resources, and professional development that will support them.

In Chapter IV, the findings were presented based on the data collected through professional development and teacher interviews. First, I provided an overview of what Chapter IV would include. Next, an introduction of process codes, definitions, and excerpts to describe each process code including charts displaying the total counts of codes from the queries. Following identification of the process codes were the thematic analysis across the how of teachers' talk. Excerpts from teachers were taken from the three professional development and teacher interviews. The excerpts served as evidence to support the themes. The three themes identified in the study answered the following question: How do teachers talk about Home and School Discourse in professional development? The subheadings described the content of the talk that spanned across the three professional development and interviews.

In looking at the data collected for the professional development and interviews, there was a difference in how teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse in professional development and the one-on-one interviews. The process codes for the interviews were higher in all five categories. Throughout the professional development, the process codes fluctuated in numbers across the data. Looking at the interviews' analysis, I can assume that the teachers felt more comfortable sharing their

thoughts, experiences, and personal beliefs with me as they related to race, access, and equity in education. The comfort that teachers felt during interviews led me to Gee's (2015) comments about how the context of the communication assumed by the physical setting, a speaker's beliefs, and values that the speaker has about the topic shapes the meaning. During the interviews, teachers spoke more freely than they did during professional development. The interviews were more personal and limited to the interviewee and me.

During professional development, teachers were respectful of their peers but still engaged in teacher talk. During professional development and interviews, the data revealed that teachers would connect to the topics by storying their own childhood experiences. Teachers also used storying when sharing ideas about cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness. The data also revealed that teachers talked about Home and School Discourse when discussing how their career values, beliefs, traditions, and customs impact teaching practices. Professional development facilitated dialogue around topics that teachers sought more to learn. The Discourse surrounding how teachers connect Home and School Discourse resembled ideas Gee (2015) shared when asserting that people think about the world by looking for similarities. By listening to others' experiences, they could make connections and determine their meanings when negotiating between their different social practices (Gee, 2015).



I was also able to observe their interactions with each other surrounding the featured readings. I was able to see that meanings for them were rooted in their experiences. Although teachers had different interests, they taught very different subjects, but they share and seek the same common ground, making better connections between Home and School Discourse (Gee, 2015). As a result of the discussion, teachers' dispositions may have revealed that they talked about Home and School Discourse through a deficit view. Some of the teachers' dispositions resulted in deficit views challenged by personal experiences or observed behaviors from others that they felt were inappropriate for educators to demonstrate when interacting with or communicating with children, parents, and families.

In conclusion, this section reported that teachers discussed the disproportionality relating to children and teachers not having the appropriate access and equity to culturally responsive curriculum, resources, and professional development. Teachers felt that this inequity to access culturally responsive curriculum, resources, and professional development resulted in students not having the same learning opportunities compared to students from more affluent communities.

## CHAPTER V

### DISUSSION, SUMMARY, AND IMPLICATIONS

The study on connecting Home and School Discourse described how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse during professional development. Chapter V serves as the final chapter of the dissertation. This chapter provided another glimpse into the research problem and the methodology used to conduct the study. In this chapter, the results of the study are discussed, and the implications are explained. When children's Home and School Discourse systems do not match, children are at risk of failing academically (Delpit & Dowdy, 2008; Heath, 1983). As a result of school leaders and teachers often viewing children's Home Discourse as a deficit, barriers exist that prohibit the connection between home and school language, putting children at even more risk for academic school failure (Compton-Lilly, 2003). Administrators are responsible for helping teachers understand children's Home Discourse and how to connect Home with School Discourse to strengthen children's academic literacy (Lazar et al., 2012). There are few descriptive studies on how school administrators support teachers' professional learning around Home and School Discourse. Therefore, this study focused on the way teachers' talk about Home and School Discourse in professional development and

interviews. Understanding patterns in teachers' talk during professional development may reveal their understanding of Home and School Discourse.

### **Review of the Methodology**

The discussion in Chapter V helped me understand how my role as an assistant principal can help teachers understand and value Home and School Discourse. The question that guided this study was: How do teachers talk about Home and School Discourse in professional development?

This study contributed to the research on connecting literacy and language use between the home and school. I used a qualitative descriptive approach to describe how teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse (Miles et al., 2020; Saldana, 2016). Through this method of study, I was able to observe and examine the "how" in the teacher talk during professional development. The professional development topics created for this study were designed to frame the teacher talk. The professional development topics included discussions about race, ethnicity, equity, and access in schools. Additional topics that framed the discussion during the professional development centered on deficit views that teachers sometimes develop about their students and parents. In the discussions that took place during professional development, the teacher participants reflected on how childhood experiences using language and literacy impacted how they currently connect Home and School Discourse in their

classrooms. Throughout professional development, data collection and analysis were completed simultaneously.

The professional development and participant interviews were the two primary sources for collecting data. The data analysis that led to findings in the study revealed that as a result of teachers talking to each other and making connections, they could look at their acquisition of learning within the primary Discourse and secondary Discourse. As a result of these interactions and experiences, they reflected on their practices and applied them to new learning related to connecting Home and School Discourse.

### **Summary of the Findings**

Learning occurs best through interactions in which authentic dialogue facilitates problem-solving (Freire, 1986). During professional development, teachers were engaged in discussions that provoked critical thinking in terms of language, literacy, race, and ethnicity when connecting Home and School Discourse. There were three themes identified in this study. The first theme identified in the study was teachers talked about Home and School Discourse by reflecting back in time storying about childhood experiences using language and literacy. The first theme also included teachers reflecting back in time storying about how their childhood experiences currently impacted both their cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness in the classrooms. The second theme identified how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse by revealing and

challenging their teacher dispositions. The third theme identified how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse by addressing issues with equity and access to culturally responsive curriculum, resources, and professional development.

The first theme identified in Chapter IV was drawn from findings where teachers storied in professional development by reflecting in time on their childhood experiences. For example as a child, the teacher shared that she lived with her mother during the week and spent weekends with her father. Her parents shared different philosophies for how language and literacy were used in the home. Her mother did not have a set routine for how the readings of various literacy types were incorporated into their daily schedules. The interactions with literacy in her mother's home were out of necessity. Some of these necessities for literacy usage were in the form of reading recipes and notes from school. While at her father's home, the teacher reflected on and storied about the various literacy and language experiences where she was exposed to reading. The teacher had vivid memories of her father having a designated room in his home that he referred to as the study. The teacher recalls the room resembled a library because it was filled with bookshelves that consisted of different genres of books that ranged in sizes from very thin to very thick. Although the teacher did not consider herself to be more efficient than her younger sister in reading, she would always select the thicker books for her father to read to her. When facilitating positive connections between Home and School Discourse in the

teacher's class, she reflected on childhood experiences and exposure to various literacy and language models. By facilitating positive relationships with parents, the teacher feels that she demonstrates that she values them as parents and advocates for their children. Barbara's experiences lead to the second significant finding that supported the study.

Besides storying in professional development about their childhood experiences using language and literacy in the home, the second major finding was when teachers storied about being aware of the diversity in cultures, ethnicities, beliefs, traditions, practices, and experiences that students bring to the classroom. The teachers storied about their experiences and highlighted specific classroom practices demonstrating their understanding of cultural awareness and responsiveness.

For example, Gwen shared:

I read all those things (Holocaust and *The Diary of Anne Frank*). That's where it's funny because I read *To Kill a Mockingbird* in school, but I've never read about Ruby Bridges—that's why I'm like, 'It'— depends on what the teachers want to read.

Adding additional context to her comment, Gwen continued to share:

We also read *The Diary of Anne Frank*. We acted out scenes from the story. My exposure to it [culturally responsive literature] was through *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and we did do in-depth discussions and stuff on it. We talked about the

war. We talked about what happened with the trains, gas chambers and all. I do think it's not just an area, like geographical it also where you're at in time. I think that it also depends on the timeframe that you're in school.

As a result of her experiences and exposure to historical events such as the Holocaust, Gwen felt she was more equipped to teach students about the context surrounding the Holocaust rather than issues surrounding African Americans.

In their talk, teachers discussed how the lack of cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness might impact the relationships formed due to connecting Home and School Discourse. For example, when talking to Melinda, she shared:

There is not enough actual professional development that has taken place at schools that talk about the importance of connecting Home and School Discourse. We never just sit down and talk about, you know, how teachers' and students' cultural backgrounds impact the Home and School connections.

The third finding to support how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse is teachers began to reveal their dispositions unknowingly when being explicit in their talk. Through observations and data analysis of the teacher talk, teachers revealed dispositions that either confirmed or challenged their deficit views about students, parents, and families during professional development and interviews. As teachers reacted to the articles that framed the study's discussion, comments such as, "I don't see

color when I look at my students, color is not important, or I treat all of my students the same are deficits." To not see the color of your students is devaluing who they are as people. To not see color is to ignore the historical backgrounds that contribute to the values, beliefs, practices, and experiences children bring to the classroom. The discussion that teachers had about their deficit views was challenged. They were challenged when teachers participated in community walks. The dialogue and personable interactions between teachers, students, parents, and families were positive. As a result of the positive interactions from the community walks, teacher dispositions that parents were unsupportive and not concerned about their child's academics were challenged. When teachers were welcomed into their neighborhood, barriers between Home and School Discourse declined. Teacher dispositions that once reflected deficit views were now being challenged because of the positive interactions and ongoing communication with parents and families. The teachers were able to see the genuine interest and concern that parents had regarding the drive for their children to progress in school and to be academically successful.

The fourth finding to support how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse when addressing equity and access issues, teachers depended on their schools to provide them with the necessary resources to implement culturally relevant instruction. Teacher talk in professional development indicated that if the curriculum does not come



with stories representing diversity, it will not be taught. Some teachers are less likely to seek out resources to engage students in culturally relevant instructions; they will stick to what is provided in the curriculum.

Professional Development Three focused on teachers presenting students with diverse opportunities to engage them in critical thinking about literature that featured characters, plots, settings, and events that reflected African Americans' lived experiences. Some of these events were considered historical moments in times that made a significant impact in the United States. Throughout professional development and interviews, the teachers repeatedly discussed how not having access to a culturally responsive curriculum impacted how they plan lessons where students can see positive images of themselves. The teachers expressed that being unable to access a culturally responsive curriculum makes them feel undervalued as educators and unequipped to present students with a culturally responsive curriculum. The teachers expressed not having access to a culturally responsive curriculum places them at a disadvantage when connecting Home and School Discourse.

In addition to not having access to a culturally responsive curriculum, teacher talk also centered on the lack of basic resources that they receive from the district. In the teacher talk, I could hear the frustration as they shared their experiences with not having access to basic resources such as copy paper, ink, access to Xerox machines, binders,

composition books, etc. The teachers shared that they were no strangers to using their own money to ensure they had what was needed to present students with high-quality lessons that would facilitate critical thinking and engagement. Teachers' frustrations about the lack of access to culturally relevant professional development were also observed during the teacher talk. Teachers felt that to provide students with culturally relevant instruction; the district should find different methods for effectively training them.

### **Discussion**

The teachers were provided with a space for talking and sharing. The articles used in the study framed the teacher talk during professional development. Through storying, teachers were able to make connections that helped them understand the articles' content. As a result of the teachers reading and discussing the article's content, they identified the deficit views being presented. Through storying, teachers also revealed their deficit views. Teachers' comments made during professional development and interviews sometimes mirrored behaviors and actions identified as equity traps.

The space for and power of storying in professional development were essential to teachers in recognizing their own biases that might influence how they connect Home and School Discourse.

During professional development, the teachers were often redirected to talk about specific topics. The teachers made connections to the topics shared through storying about their religious beliefs. Three teachers appeared to prefer to talk about religion and the celebration of various holidays to discuss a deficit perspective. In Professional Development Three, the teachers hid behind their understanding of celebrating various holidays and represented cultures in their classrooms. When talking about the holidays, it appeared that the teachers preferred to talk about what they believed. Their talk about what they believed did not address how they see heroes and holidays in the curriculum or how they address heroes and holidays related to children's Home and School Discourse. The teachers struggled in their responses and they seemed to have depended mainly on the curriculum when talking about the role they play when addressing the diversity of their children.

During Professional Development Three, the teachers had long conversations on their religious beliefs and indicated that they go through the motions on specific holidays. In other words, several teachers could not separate their beliefs to provide students with opportunities to read literature about outstanding African Americans who overcame barriers and obstacles during their stance for justice. Instead, during the professional development, they got stuck on storying and talking about Halloween and their religious beliefs and practices instead of focusing on what they do to help students build on and

celebrate their culture awareness. For an example, Barbara shared, “I let my students dress up in their little costumes and go trick or treating, but that wasn't the case for me and my siblings. We couldn't dress up because my family is very religious, to this day.”

In addition, Barbara also shared:

Now I don't celebrate Halloween because I am saved. That's the only holiday I don't celebrate in my classroom. I don't even use it for a book character dress up day because I don't believe in it. I tell my parents—when I'm introducing myself, I tell them right off the bat that I celebrate everything except for Halloween.

It also appeared that teachers resisted talking about their own deficits by hiding behind the school's curriculum by casting blame on the district because not enough diversity representing students' cultures were integrated into the curriculum or professional development. The teachers expressed in some of their talk that they loved their students and wanted to give them the best, yet it appeared they depended on the school to include some aspects of reading literacy in order for children to be taught.

### **Storying**

Through storying, during professional development, the teachers were able to make connections by reflecting back in time on their childhood experiences. The article and book talks enabled the teachers to make personal connections and create new meaning across the reading. As the teachers read various articles and engaged in the

teacher talk, they were able to key in on their specific behaviors, thoughts, and actions featured in the reading. The teachers were able to reflect on how they saw themselves in relation to how they treated students, parents, and families of color.

During the discussion, teachers shared how race, ethnicity, and social-economic statuses of children and parents may sometimes serve as barriers for them as they attempt to connect home and school. The teachers also reflected on how their childhood experiences have shaped some of their professional practices and how these practices have appeared in their classrooms and subsequently affect Home and School Discourse.

As the teachers storied, they were explicit in their teacher talk when sharing their perspectives for the meanings surrounding specific topics for connecting Home and School Discourse. Gee (2015) asserted that meanings are rooted in negotiation between different social practices with varying interests by people who share or seek to share common ground. Although each teachers' experience with connecting Home and School Discourse was different, they shared commonalities.

**Childhood experiences.** Children's exposure to and experience with language begins in their home before entering into a school setting (Edwards, 2004; Gee, 1989; Heath, 1982). It is the primary Discourse in which children begin to observe and make sense of what they see and hear taking place in their social surroundings. Across the three professional development and interviews, the teachers were presented with topics where

they made connections by reflecting back in time on their own childhood experiences with language and literacy. Through ongoing dialogue during professional development, the teachers shared how their childhood experiences with language and literacy contributed to how they currently connect Home and School Discourse in their classrooms. Some of the teachers shared reflections of not being read to as children, while other teachers in the study recounted vivid memories of reading with their parents, grandparents, or siblings. A study conducted by Taylor (1983) revealed that reading patterns were often passed down from one sibling to the next.

Taylor's study detailed how younger siblings engaged in literacy events with their older siblings. In the case of one of the teachers in the study, she experienced difficulty reading. As a result of the problem in reading, her younger sister would read to her.

Teachers who participated in this study storied about very different childhood experiences with how language and literacy were used in their homes. When the teachers storied about the roles literacy and language played in their household, some shared that they were not exposed to literature that represented diverse cultures. For example, Kevin storied about how Dr. Seuss's books were stories that he was exposed to as a child. Kevin shared that even though Dr. Seuss's books were simple to read and catchy, he saw Dr. Seuss as a racist and bigot when developing stories and illustrations for his books. Because of what Kevin learned and his feelings about Dr. Seuss, he organized his

classroom where he displayed and made available to his students books representing children of diversity. Kevin's comments mirrored the findings from Taylor's (1983) study, where she examined literacy development in three families' homes.

One of the families in Taylor's (1983) research shared where they studied the individuals in the homes that were literate persons and what counted as literacy in the homes of the children and families. The teacher talk about their childhood experiences related to language and literacy supported Taylor's (1983) study for how the schools' systematic ways of looking at reading and writing as activities have consequences affected by family life (Taylor, 1983). In Taylor's study, she also observed how parents and families' backgrounds shaped their children's literate lives. This is similar to the teachers in this study who storied about childhood literacy experiences within the home. Like Kevin, he talked about how Dr. Seuss was read to him growing up, but as an adult he talked about Dr. Seuss being a racist. In his own classroom, he chose not to repeat part of his literacy history, growing up with Dr. Seuss. Yet, he chose to select for his classroom books where children of diversity would see themselves in reading and as characters. Kevin was sold on his childhood history not being repeated in his classroom.

**Cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness in the classroom.** Teachers in the study also storied about their cultural awareness and responsiveness in the classroom. The teachers shared that they valued the differences of their students, parents, and

families. Although the teachers shared that they valued children's differences, one teacher emphasized that she did not see color when looking at her students. According to Gollnick and Chinn (2016), race is defined by the physical characteristics or color of an individual's skin. Gwen commented that she did not see color. This comment contradicts her statement, "I have eleven students in my classroom, and seven of them are Hispanics, and only four speak English." As Gwen continued to share specifics about the background of her students and the limited access they had to the English language made it even more apparent to me that she did see color when looking at her students. How else would she know the race of her students without looking at who they are in her classroom? She was able to count and put to a name the number of students in her classroom and discuss a character trait and their language. Ladson-Billings' (1994) work described a discussion on the concept of color blindness with a group of White teachers. When the teachers read and discussed the passage, they were placed in a position to honestly examine themselves to determine whether or not they saw color when working with children from diverse backgrounds in their classrooms.

Ladson-Billings' (1994) discussion with the teachers warrants a similar or same talk with the teachers in this study, particularly Gwen, who does not see color when working with her children. But without any hesitation, she indicated the race of children in her classroom.



When discussing cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness in the classroom, the teacher talk led to comments that focused on the absence of religion and discipline in public school settings. As the teachers' storied, they reflected on how their foundation for cultural awareness and responsiveness in the classroom was instilled in them by their parents' and their religious practices that impacted their behavior in school. The teachers were sold on the idea that religion made a big difference in teachers, students, and parents' behaviors and relationships.

The teachers believed that the absence of religion in schools had resulted in many adverse effects that created hostile environments where there is a lack of empathy, kindness, understanding, and love demonstrated by parents, teachers, and children. Similar to the beliefs of three of the teachers in my study, De Ruyter (2006) and De Ruyter and Merry (2009) argued that education in public schools should include religious ideals. In a previous study conducted by De Ruyter (2006), religious ideals were described as values that people believe to be excellent or perfect. These religious ideals are of great importance when looking at a person's traits of character, actions, and behaviors (De Ruyter, 2006; De Ruyter & Merry, 2009). Although religion is not specifically studied or practiced in public schools, counselors promote character education schoolwide. Students hear and practice how to show empathy, kindness, compassion, and respect for peers.

Barbara particularly storied about how her religious beliefs and practices have always been a part of her day as a child and now as an adult. Barbara shared that she created positive affirmation statements for her students. The idea for creating affirmation statements stemmed from select Bible verses that inspired and strengthened her during challenging and difficult times. Barbara believed that the affirmation statements that students memorize and recite help to build stronger connections between Home and School Discourse. By incorporating affirmation statements into classroom practices, Barbara feels that she shows cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness for her students, parents, and families. Being African American, Barbara feels that the African American church has played a significant role in character development, social-emotional support, oral communication, build self-efficacy, self-awareness, and self-esteem. Edwards et al. (2010) shared that the African American church creates a trusting environment where literacy and cultural practices are learned and reinforced. Similar to the three teachers in the study, Edwards et al. (2010) noted that Sunday school, Children's Church, and weekly Bible class instruction were often based on unique learning styles that are engaging to students.

Barbara addressed behavior issues in her class, using background experiences from when she grew up in the church. Because of the close-knit relationships established between the teachers and students, behavior issues were nonexistent during Sunday

school and Children's Church (Edwards et al., 2010). Barbara depended a great deal on her religion as a foundation for showing empathy and understanding for her students even though she did have students who struggled with behavior.

### **Revealing Teacher Dispositions**

Throughout professional development, the teachers revealed their dispositions for how they viewed their students and parents. Disposition refers to how a teacher may speak, act, respond to, or feel when interacting or engaging with colleagues, parents, families, and students (Liston et al., 2007; Taylor & Wasicsko, 2000). There were two trends during the professional development that were continuously observed and analyzed across the data. Teachers were confirming and challenging their deficit views they had regarding the abilities of their students and parents. As I listened to the teachers, their dispositions tended to fluctuate. I found that people are not always aware of how comments, actions, and attitudes contribute to interpretations. Their attitudes, beliefs, and acts may not coincide or add up to what they say are their true ideas. In a study conducted by Starck, Riddle, Sinclair, and Warikoo (2020), it was shared that teachers were just as likely to have the same explicit and implicit biases as everyday people who are non-educators. I recognized that as the teachers talked, they became comfortable in their sharing of information. To get people to shift from Discourses that marginalize a specific group of people, we have to first make them explicit (Gee, 2015). During the

conversations, the dispositions they claim may have come across as offensive as if they were challenging their deficit view of how they see children and their parents not always aligned with their conversations. The comments made by the teachers further confirm ideas shared by Horowitz, Parker, Brown, and Cox (2020) that as Americans work to confront racism in society, educators need to acknowledge that they play an ongoing role in perpetuating racial inequality in schools.

On several occasions, teachers talked about how they shared and valued students' diversity and celebrated their cultures. However, when the teachers were asked to talk about how they facilitated critical thinking that moved beyond just celebrating African American heroes and holidays, they tended to struggle in their responses. Yet, they spoke at length about Halloween and mentioned names most often acknowledged like "Martin Luther King and baseball player, Jesse Jackson." As I listened closer to the Discourse taking place during the professional development, it appeared that one participant mistakenly named Jesse Jackson, the political leader/activist, for Jackie Robinson, the African American baseball player who was the first to play in major league baseball. When working with children, parents, and families from diverse backgrounds, it is important for educators to serve as culturally relevant teachers. Culturally relevant teachers use their students' backgrounds and cultural experiences to facilitate learning

that fosters academic success, builds cultural competence and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

**Confirming deficit views.** In this study, teachers revealed their dispositions by confirming deficit views regarding children, parents, and families' academic abilities when talking about Home and School Discourse. Skrla & Scheurich's (2001) study found that deficit thinking includes ideas such as the notion that children's academic deficiencies reflect their parents' and home lives. Teachers shared that to connect Home and School Discourse effectively, they needed to change parents' mindsets.

Throughout the first professional development, teachers consistently commented that parents did not value education. Teachers also shared that to connect Home and School Discourse effectively, they needed to change parents' mindsets. Out of frustration from past interactions with parents, teachers in the study shared that for several years they have felt a decrease in the number of parents that value education and are actively involved in their children's academics. The teachers also shared that because of the decline in parents not valuing education they have seen a decreased number of parents participating in parent teacher conferences and other parent meetings that inform them of their students' academic strengths and weaknesses. As a result of the (mis)perceptions that occur in deficit thinking mindsets, students are often (mis)labeled as struggling

learners, coded as special education students, and (mis)identified as having behavioral issues.

**Challenging deficit views.** In order for teachers to facilitate positive connections between home and school, they must understand the families' feelings and views about reading (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Edwards et al., 2010). Teachers must realize that when subconscious thoughts about, myths and false narratives about parents and families, this may be detrimental to how they facilitate connecting Home and School Discourse.

During Professional Development One, teachers talked about ways in which their deficit views had been challenged after reading and discussing the article. As the teachers talked about deficit views discussed in the article, Debra responded, "We [teachers] assume that when students don't value education, then parents don't value education." Debra had the experience of walking the school community to introduce herself to the children and their parents. She was excited about the genuine interest and support that parents showed regarding their children's education. This experience changed Debra's image of parents not caring about their children's education, which may have easily been due to the behavior of a child. Debra's change of thought supports what Compton-Lilly (2003) reflected on in her research about false statements and how they can "subconsciously influence how teachers connect with parents" (p. 60).

Another study conducted by Moll et al. (1992), proved that teacher home visits build a positive rapport and provide opportunities for parents and families to exchange funds of knowledge with teachers. The exchange results are a definite connection between Home and School Discourse. Barbara shared that her campus has a committee of teachers who make frequent visits to students' homes who have attendance, behavior, or social and emotional concerns. When there is a situation affecting one of her students, she insists on visiting the parent at their home.

### **Addressing Equity and Access**

Three trends were consistent throughout professional development and interviews when teachers addressed ideas related to equity and access. The trends consisted of teachers sharing their experiences with having a lack of equity and access to culturally responsive curriculum, resources, and professional development. Because of the lack of equity and access, teachers in the study felt that they struggled to meet students' needs.

**Culturally responsive curriculum.** In a study conducted by Ladson-Billings (1994), she talks about the importance of teachers' immersion in African American culture as they deliver culturally relevant teaching to their children. She explains that in teaching children from diverse backgrounds, knowing about and experiencing their culture is essential. One of the focuses of Professional Development Two was for teachers to talk about culturally responsive curriculum. When talking about a culturally

responsive curriculum, Gwen confirmed that they go strictly by what is in the curriculum, which can be an indication that if the curriculum is not culturally responsive, children are less able to see themselves in stories, etc. Gwen also shared that she read *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and she considered this reading her first exposure to a culturally responsive curriculum. Gwen admitted she has a limited understanding of the cultural backgrounds of her students, and therefore, she finds it challenging to seek outside of the curriculum to address culturally relevant stories where students are able to see positive images of themselves. She also implied that her lack of access is a downfall of the district. As an educator in the 21st century, teachers have to be self-seekers of information to bridge the gap in the curriculum in addressing diversity in their classrooms. This was echoed by Barbara by saying the district is getting better by making resources available for teachers' use.

The teacher talk for this section of the professional development strongly encouraged teachers to develop and maintain a vision for culturally relevant teaching. Teachers must facilitate a learning environment in which interactions and Discourse reflect educational self-determination. Educational self-determination is an attitude of confidence and resilience. When teachers possess educational determination, they are not afraid of challenging the status quo or of seeking out advanced educational opportunities that are not being provided to them (Ladson-Billings, 1994).



Gwen recognized that although the principal attempted to showcase diversity in the school through announcements during specific months, not enough time was spent engaging students in learning about the various people that were highlighted in the morning announcements. Gwen indicated that she had trouble hearing the people who were being mentioned over the intercom. As Gwen continued to talk, she never shared any suggestions on what she would do or what could be done to bridge the gap between what was said over the intercom and what could be done to promote a more culturally responsive curriculum, particularly in her classroom. As I listened to Gwen, one could not help but think it does not get taught if it is not in the curriculum. Gwen's comments suggest that the curriculum is set, and to teach a culturally responsive curriculum, the leadership should make more resources available to teachers.

**Resources.** During Professional Development Two, teachers were consistent when discussing their shared experiences with a lack of access and equity with resources available to them (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Teachers shared that to provide students with the same quality of education as schools in the more elite part of town; it was not out of the ordinary for them to spend their own money on resources. This has not changed much because teachers continue to use their finances to purchase resources for their classrooms. However, the lack of resources to effectively implement instruction and owning the responsibility for purchasing what is needed can become overwhelming for

the teachers. Gwen shared that access and equity within her school is an issue of concern. Accessing technology for her special education students is a daily task. She mentioned that she becomes overwhelmed with requesting to obtain computers for her students. The inequity is visible to her because the classroom down the hall has chrome books for each student. Similar to the teachers' beliefs in this study, Ladson-Billings (1994), suggested that districts should ensure that teachers have unlimited resources and materials that are needed to support instructional delivery in their classrooms.

**Professional development.** Throughout professional development and interviews, teachers consistently referred to needing ongoing professional development that would enable them to facilitate culturally responsive teaching. In their talk, teachers also shared that the professional development that they have attended in the past focused on district reading and writing initiatives. Although professional development teachers often participated in focused on reading and writing, prekindergarten and special education teachers were not always invited.

When teachers were asked why they took an interest in the study, they all shared that the topics discussed were of interest to them. They all desired to collaborate, share, and obtain information that would support how they connect Home and School Discourse.

## **Implications for Practice**

The research question used to guide this study was: How do teachers talk about Home and School Discourse. A descriptive qualitative design was used in this study. Implications for the study are discussed in this section. The teachers were consistently asked to participate in weekly professional development where they are introduced and exposed to district initiatives, campus initiatives, and instructional strategies for best practices in math and reading. The teachers shared in the professional development that there were sparse occasions where they have been given the opportunity to attend professional development with topics that included race, cultural responsiveness, and equity in schools. This chapter discusses implications for practice to be considered for teachers and administrators.

The first implication for this study is that teachers could express and discuss inequities in the educational system by reading and talking together during professional development and interviews. The disparities that they see in their schools and communities have motivated them to encourage parents to advocate for better resources to enhance their learning.

The second implication of the study is that teachers were provided a space for talking and sharing. The articles used in the professional development framed the discussion taking place throughout professional development. Through the talk, teachers

reflected on the assumptions that stimulated their conversation on how they viewed children, parents, and families. Throughout the three 1-hour professional developments, the teachers were free to express themselves. While the teachers talked, I listened and observed how their dispositions were revealed on how they viewed and facilitated Home and School Discourse as they worked with their children, parents, and families.

The third implication for the study is that storying gives the teachers space to consider multiple perspectives. The power of storying in professional development is essential. The power of stories in time prompts a renewal in feelings, thinking, and actions. Teachers storying about experiences connection to new learning influences thinking that might not have been stimulated in a professional development where the participants' primary focus is to sit and receive information.

The fourth implication for the study is to consider ways of challenging deficit perspectives by working with stories. Observations made of teacher talk during the professional development and interviews showed that when teachers are storying, they reflect on their own experiences. These experiences then provide them insight into their feelings, attitudes, and expectations for children of color and their families.

Seeking out explicit yet supportive ways of challenging deficit perspectives is the fifth implication for the study. Principals establishing times throughout the school year, where teachers visited children, parents, and families in their communities, was how

some teachers in the study could overcome deficit views. In addition to principals designing reading and math professional development, more cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness sessions should be provided to empower teachers when building Home and School Discourse.

The next implication for the study is to consider multimodal representation to facilitate understanding of professional development. Make resources available for teachers to use that emphasize a variety of ways to facilitate their understanding. Some of these resources may include: articles, videos, Ted Talks, podcasts, and educational books. Some of the resources may be easily accessed in the teachers' workroom, email, newsletters, or blogs. Also, principals may allow teachers to participate in article studies during the first ten minutes of faculty meetings. Teachers may use pictures, charts, drawings, or a video clip as a visual representation that adds to the article's explanation.

Finally, the implication for an African American administrator leading the teacher talk about race, cultural awareness, and equity in schools is essential. As an African American woman, I have had many experiences where I have been both overlooked and undervalued because of my ethnicity and background. Similar to the three African American principals who were a part of Bloom and Erlandson's (2003) study, growing up in the Midwest and South, I can draw from my cultural background, experiences, beliefs, and practice. Administrators should provide teachers with professional development that

focuses on all stakeholders gaining information on fostering positive Home and School Discourse where children, parents, and families feel valued for who they are and what they bring to the learning environment.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Professional development is an essential component of ongoing learning for teachers. This study described how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse. Further research on this topic might include a continuation of the study that builds on how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse in ongoing professional development. A comparison of the patterns across the two settings is a topic of further research beyond this study. Another recommendation for further research includes examining the role of race, leadership, and Home and School Discourse.

### **Conclusion**

The present study aimed to describe how teachers talked about Home and School Discourse in. The study was guided by the following research question: How do teachers talk about Home and School Discourse? The data collected to support the study included three 1-hour professional developments and five participant interviews. A qualitative descriptive study was the research method used to analyze the data. The data analysis resulted in three significant findings for how teachers talked about connecting Home and School Discourse. The study's findings highlighted that teachers used storytelling as they

spoke of childhood experiences that connect Home and School Discourse. Also, teachers used storying when talking about cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness in the classroom. In addition, the study's findings also showed that the teachers spoke about Home and School Discourse by revealing dispositions that confirmed and challenged deficit views that teachers had regarding their students' academic potential and abilities. Finally, the study's findings detailed that teachers talked about Home and School Discourse by addressing the equity and access issues with receiving culturally responsive curriculum, resources, and professional development.

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## APPENDIX A

### Teacher Recruitment Flyer

# Teacher Participants Needed

*If you are a teacher in an elementary school setting you may be eligible to participate in a research study.*

## Connecting Home and School Discourse

I am seeking volunteers to participate in a research study about Connecting Home and School Discourse. The purpose of this study is to describe how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse in professional development.

### Are you eligible?

- Teacher in an elementary school setting

### Participant will be asked to participate in:

- 3 professional development sessions
- Complete the Teacher Multicultural Attitude survey (TMAS).
- Spend 90 minutes total before each session to review the reading for the professional development

### Participants will receive:

- Snacks and refreshments will be provided
- A \$20.00 gift card
- Reading material to support the discussion topics

### Location:

- Nathaniel Hawthorne Elementary School
- Umphress Road, Dallas, Texas 75227

### Time:

- 5:00-6:00

### Dates:

- Week 1: October 17<sup>th</sup>
- Week 2: October 24<sup>th</sup>
- Week 3: October 31<sup>st</sup>

## Featured Topics

### Session 1

#### Equity Traps

### Session 2

#### Literacy and Equity

#### Difference Does Not Mean Deficit

### Session 3

#### Beyond Heroes and Holidays:

#### The Complexity and Relevance of Culture: Recognizing Many Literacies and Languages.

**If you are interested in learning more about this study, or unsure if you meet the requirements, call or email the researcher:**

**Sherry Lang**  
**214-909-5986**  
**Slang@twu.edu**

*Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. As a result of internet transactions, such as emails, social media, there is a potential loss of confidentiality. If you have any concerns about your participation based on the description of this survey study, or you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas Woman's University at 940-898-3378 or email [irb@twu.edu](mailto:irb@twu.edu).*

## APPENDIX B

### Agenda for Professional Development One

Professional Development I  
Hawkeye Elementary School Library  
October 17, 2019  
4:30 p.m. –5:30 p.m. Room 108

***Sherry Lang, Assistant Principal and Principal Investigator/Researcher***

***Agenda***

***“Equity Traps”***

- I. Brief Introductions
  - Principal Investigator/Researcher
  - Teachers
- II. Overview of Research Study, *“Connecting Home and School Discourse”*
- III. Review Goal(s), Objectives, and Timeline, and Specific Procedures
  - Video recordings
  - Anecdotal notes were taken
  - Materials/Supplies
  - Housekeeping comments
- IV. Brief Overview of Article Study
  - *Equity Traps: A Useful Construct for Preparing Principals to Lead Schools that are Successful with Racially Diverse Students* (Mckenzie & Scheurich, 2004)
- V. Teacher Talk on Equity Traps and Connections to Classroom and Teacher Practices
  - Equity Trap 1: A Deficit View
  - Equity Trap 2: Racial Erasure
  - Equity Trap 3: Avoid and Employment of the Gaze
  - Equity Trap 4: Paralogical Beliefs and Behaviors
- VI. Wrap Up, Reflections, Teachers Share Key Takeaways
- VII. NEXT STEP
  - Intro to Professional Development II and Focus

## VIII. Professional Development I Dismissed

## APPENDIX C

### Agenda for Professional Development Two

Professional Development II  
Hawkeye Elementary School Library  
October 24, 2019  
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Room 108

***Sherry Michelle Lang, Assistant Principal and Principal Investigator/Researcher***  
***Agenda***

***“Difference Doesn’t Mean Deficit”***

I. Opening Session

- Teacher Talk Begins
  - ☐ Reflection from Professional Development I – Equity Traps

II. Introduction/Overview of Professional Development II

- ***“Difference Doesn’t Mean Deficit”***

III. Review Goal(s), Objectives, and Timeline, and Specific Procedures

- Video recordings
- Anecdotal notes taken
- Materials/Supplies
- Housekeeping comments

IV. Brief Overview of Chapter Study

- Chapter 2: *Difference Doesn’t Mean Deficit*
  - ☐ *Bridging Literacy and Equity: The Essential Guide to Social Equity Teaching* (Lazier, Edwards, & McMillon, 2012)

V. Prompts to Begin Teacher Talk

- Looking beyond the statistics of your students’ families and the community. What do you see?
- Does poverty determine the low literacy of students?
- Does race matter: Connecting home and school
- Impact of inequities; Inequalities on home and schools
  - ☐ Curriculum District resources
  - ☐ School resources
  - ☐ Teacher quality



VI. Wrap Up, Reflections, Teachers Share Key Takeaways

VII. NEXT STEP: Intro to Professional Development III and Focus

VIII. Professional Development II Dismissed

## APPENDIX D

### Agenda for Professional Development Three

Professional Development III  
Hawkeye Elementary School Library  
November 7, 2019  
4:30 p.m. –5:30 p.m. Room 108

**Sherry Michelle Lang, Assistant Principal and Principal Investigator/Researcher**  
***Agenda***

*“Beyond Heroes and Holidays: The Complexity and Relevance of Culture”*  
(Lazier, Edwards, & McMillon, 2012)

I. Opening Session

- Teacher Talk Begins

Reflection from Professional Development II – *“Difference Doesn’t Mean Deficit”*

II. Review Goal(s), Objectives, and Timeline, and Specific Procedures

- Video recordings
- Anecdotal notes were taken
- Materials/Supplies
- Housekeeping comments

III. Introduction/Overview of Professional Development III and Chapter Study

- *“Beyond Heroes and Holidays: The Complexity and Relevance of Culture”*
  - Chapter 3 *Bridging Literacy and Equity: The Essential Guide to Social Equity Teaching* (Lazier, Edwards, & McMillon, 2012)

IV. Teacher Talk Prompts

- Teachers reflect
  - on past school experiences that shaped how they view culture
  - how experiences contributed to the way they connect home and school in their classroom
  - how their culture influence teacher practices and connections between the home and school
  - does understanding privilege and subordination impact positive home and school connections
  - understanding how culture is reflected in the school

- representation of students across classrooms contributing positive home-school connections

V. Wrap Up, Reflections, Teachers Share Key Takeaways

VI. Thank you for your participation

## APPENDIX E

### Teacher Interview Questions

## Interview Questions

1. What grade do you teach?
2. How long have you taught?
3. What do you love most about teaching?
4. How comfortable were you in talking about race as it related to home and school connections?
5. Have you in any professional development, had the opportunity to discuss some of the topics relating to students' background?
6. What inspired you to participate in the study?
7. What did you gain from the PD that will support you when connecting home and school?
8. During the PD we talked a lot about literacy and language. What are some of the roles that literacy and language played in your household when growing up?
9. Were the roles that literacy and language played in your household consistent with how language and literacy was used in your school when growing up?
10. How have these roles impacted how literacy is used in your classroom today?
11. What particular literacy and language practices have students brought to your classroom that have contributed to how students use literacy and language? Are these practices embraced?
12. What is your perspective regarding what schools must do more of in order to make effective home and school connections that support the development of literacy and language in children?
13. We talked about equity traps in our first professional development. What are your beliefs regarding equity traps? Do you believe that positive homes and schools may be established when we as educators have them?
14. Did you see yourself caught up in any of the equity traps?
15. As the year moves on and our daily duties as educators become fast paced and more challenging, how will you avoid equity traps to maintain/or improve your ability to connect Home and School Discourse?
16. What does it mean to change the mindset of the parent? Is this even possible?

## APPENDIX F

### District Approval Letter

August 29, 2019

Ms. Sherry Lang  
Texas Woman's University  
2125 Acorn Grove  
Mesquite, TX 75181

RE: Connecting Home and School Discourse

Dear Ms. Lang:

The Research Review Board (RRB) of [REDACTED] has reviewed and approved your proposal to conduct the above-referenced project. Based on the information provided, the committee concludes that the project serves a worthwhile purpose and will benefit the district. Approved project activities include:

- Participant recruitment
- Administering teacher surveys

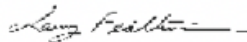
It is our understanding that you have read and agreed to the terms described in the *Guidelines for Conducting Research in the District's Independent Schools Division*. Please note that all school and district information, wherever applicable, should remain confidential within the limits of the law. In addition, any data collected from Dallas ISD may be used solely for the purposes of the approved study.

Approval by the RRB does not guarantee that any [REDACTED] department, school, or employee will comply with data requests for the study. If the study involves collection of primary data at a school or schools, the permission of the building principal(s) must be obtained separately from this approval.

Please provide the RRB with a copy of any data file constructed using [REDACTED] student or personnel information, and a copy of your final report, within 30 days following the completion of the study. In all future communications, please use the study's reference number (19-0045).

On behalf of the committee, I wish you the best of luck with your study.

Sincerely,



Dr. Larry Featherston, Ph.D.  
Chair, Research Review Board  
Office of Applied Research  
Department of Evaluation and Assessment  
[REDACTED]



## APPENDIX G

### Internal Review Board Approval



Sherry Lang <[slang@twu.edu](mailto:slang@twu.edu)>

IRB-FY2019-121 - Initial: Exempt Letter

Im@twu.edu <im@twu.edu>  
 To: nanduson@twu.edu, Marq@twu.edu

Mon, Aug 5, 2019 at 8:55 AM



**Texas Woman's University**

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

irb@tyl.edu

<https://www.twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/>

August 5, 2019

Sherry Lang  
Reading

Re: Exempt - IRB-FY2019-'21 Connecting Home and School Discourse

Dear Sherry Lang,

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU IRB - Denton operating under FWA00000178 and was determined to be exempt on August 3, 2019. If you are using a signed informed consent form, the approved form has been stamped by the IRB and uploaded to the Attachments tab under the Study Details section. This stamped version of the consent must be used when enrolling subjects in your study.

Note that any modifications to this study must be submitted for IRB review prior to their implementation, including the submission of any agency approval letters, changes in research personnel, and any changes in study procedures or instruments. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any adverse events or unanticipated problems. All modification requests, incident reports, and requests to close the file must be submitted through Cayuse.

On August 2, 2020, this approval will expire and the study must be renewed or closed. A reminder will be sent 45 days prior to this date.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the IRB analysts indicated on your application in Cayuse or refer to the IRB website at <http://www.twu.edu/institutions-review-board-irb/>.

Sincerely,

TWU IRB - Denton

## APPENDIX H

### Letter of Informed Consent

## Letter of Informed Consent

### TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY (TWU) CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: Connecting Home and School Discourse

Principal Investigator: Sherry M. Lang.....Slang@twu.edu .....214-909-5986

Faculty Advisor: Nancy Anderson, Ph.D. ...Nanderson@twu.edu..... 940-898-2235

#### Summary and Key Information about the Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Ms. Sherry Lang, a student at Texas Woman's University as a part of her dissertation. The purpose of this study is to describe how teachers talk about Home and School Discourse in professional development. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a teacher. As a participant, you will also be asked to complete the Teacher Multicultural Attitude survey (TMAS). This survey asks questions that will provide insight regarding your beliefs and attitudes towards multicultural/culturally responsive practices in the classroom. As a participant you will also be invited to attend three-one-hour professional development where you will be audio recorded discussing your views and experiences with home and school connections. Code names will be used to protect your confidentiality.

The total time commitment for this study will be about five hours. Following the completion of the study you will receive a \$20 gift card for your participation. The greatest risks of this study include potential loss of confidentiality and emotional discomfort. We will discuss these risks and the rest of the study procedures in greater detail below.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you are interested in learning more about this study, please review this consent form carefully and take your time deciding whether or not you want to participate. Please feel free to ask the researcher any questions you have about the study at any time.

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Initials

Page 1 of 4

### Description of Procedures

As a participant in this study you will be asked to attend three 1-hour professional development that will take place over three weeks. In the three 1-hour professional developments, teachers will participate in the readings and discussions about diversity in the classroom. The featured topics and materials include:

- I. Professional Development Session Week 1—Article Study on Equity Traps
- II. Professional Development Session Week 2—Book Study using Patricia Edwards’s Bridging Literacy and Equity
  - 1. Chapter 2 — Difference Does Not Mean Deficit
- III. Professional Development Session Week 3– Book Study using Patricia Edwards Bridging Literacy and Equity
  - 2. Chapter 3—Beyond Heroes and Holidays: The Complexity and Relevance of Culture
  - 3. Chapter 4—Variation is Normal: Recognizing Many Literacies and Languages.

The purpose of each one-hour professional development is to gain an understanding and describe how teachers talk about their views and experiences with Home and School connections. Professional development will be audio recorded and then written down so that the researcher can be accurate when studying what you have said. The audio will be uploaded to the researcher’s laptop and destroyed once the study is completed.

In addition to your participation in the three 1-hour face to face professional development, approximately 90 minutes may be needed for you to engage in pre reading the material that will be used to center the focus for discussion. Before each session, you will be provided with the articles, or a chapter reading, that will enable you to prepare for discussion during the professional development. You will be able to share connections to the materials and discuss how diversity in the classroom applies to how you connect Home and School Discourse.

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Initials

Page 2 of 4

Finally, as part of the study, you will also be asked to take 30 minutes to complete the online Teacher Attitude Multicultural Survey (TAMS).). The survey will be sent to your email address and it may be taken at any time during the study. The Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS) consists of twelve questions that pertain to teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards multicultural/culturally responsive practices in the classroom. The survey also includes one open-ended response that will enable teachers to share their views regarding connecting Home and School Discourse. In order to be a participant in this study, you must be a teacher.

The total amount of time commitment to the study is approximately 5 hours. Throughout three weeks, a total of about 3 hours of professional development will be conducted. Each professional development session will be a total of one hour in length. The survey instrument and the one open-ended response is projected to take a total of 30 minutes to complete. In addition, teachers are projected to utilize 30 minutes for pre-reading and reviewing the materials prior to each session. The total amount of time teachers will take to prepare for all three sessions is projected to be 90 minutes in total. The total time commitment for the entire study is an estimated 5 hours. Again, your participation is voluntary. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you may do so without any penalty.

#### Potential Risks

The researcher will ask you questions and facilitate group discussion where teachers talk about their views and experiences with Home and School Connections. A possible risk in this study is emotional discomfort during professional development, or when completing the online survey. During each professional development session, we will demonstrate discussion behaviors where we are demonstrating respect for each other. Breaks will be embedded throughout the professional development session. If you become tired or upset, you may take breaks as needed. You may also stop answering questions at any time and end the survey. If you feel you need to talk to a professional about your discomfort, the researcher has provided you with a list of resources.

Loss of anonymity is a potential risk in the study. To maintain anonymity data analysis and publication processes, pseudonyms will be used to replace the names of all teachers. Another risk in this study is loss of confidentiality. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law.

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Initials

Page 3 of 4

The survey will be taken online at your convenience during the study at any location that you deem comfortable and private. No one but the researcher will know your real name.

The audio recording and the written interview will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. Only the researcher, her advisor, and the person who writes down the interview will hear the audio recording or read the written interview.

The audio recording and the written interview will be destroyed within three years after the study is finished. The signed consent form will be stored separately from all collected information and will be destroyed three years after the study is closed. The results of the study may be reported in scientific magazines or journals but your name or any other identifying information will not be included. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, electronic meetings and internet transactions. Your audio recording and/or any personal information collected for this study will not be used or distributed for future research even after the researchers remove your personal or identifiable information (e.g. your name, date of birth, contact information).

One other potential risk in the study is the loss of time for completing the survey. To protect and respect your personal time. You will be informed about the approximate time that will be designated for all activities in advance. If time does not permit, you have a choice to not take the survey, or attend meetings.

The last potential risk in the study is coercion. Your participation in the study is solely voluntary. There will be no penalty should you decline, discontinue, or give consent for not participating in the study. I will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let me know at once if there is a problem and I will assist you in any way possible. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

### Participation and Benefits

Again, your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Following the completion of the study you will receive a \$10 gift card for your participation. If you would like to know the results of this study, we will email or mail them to you.

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Initials

Page 3 of 4

Here are commonly used resources provided to teachers in a mental health referral list:

American Psychological Association Psychologist Locator

<http://locator.apa.org/>

National Register of Health Service Psychologists

<http://www.findapsychologist.org/>

Mental Health of America Referrals

<http://www.nmha.org/go/searchMHA>

Psychology Today Find a Therapist

<http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/>

National Board for Certified Counselors

<http://www.nbcc.org/CounselorFindQuestions> Regarding the Study

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep. If you have any questions about the research study, you should ask the principal investigator; the phone number is at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at [IRB@twu.edu](mailto:IRB@twu.edu).

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*If you would like to know the results of this study tell us where you want them to be sent:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ or Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Initials

Page 4 of 4