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Educate to Liberate: Exploring Educator Narratives to Examine the Mis-Education of Black Students

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Concordia University–Portland
College of Education
Doctorate of Education Program

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Educate to Liberate: Exploring Educator Narratives to Examine the
Mis-Education of Black Students

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Concordia University–Portland
College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in
Transformational Leadership

Jillian Skelton, Ed.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

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Concordia University–Portland

2018

Abstract

It is not known why the chronic mis-education of Black students has neither been adequately investigated nor treated as the most significant, widespread phenomenon of twenty-first century pedagogy. To attempt to understand this quandary, it was urgent to ask: How do Black educators understand the education of Black students? Are they able to incorporate the tensions and varied experiences they have had as students into their professional repertoire? This study described how Black educators' unique cultural perspectives might enable increased insight into the problem of mis-education. Critical race theory framed this study with an emphasis on narrative inquiry and transformative learning. I interweaved narrative/counter-narrative and critical event research methods as both theoretical and methodological frameworks. I engaged in multi-part interviews and observations of 5 educators to explore their unique biographical narratives and analyze how their lives and teaching practices might better inform the success of Black students. Findings indicated (a) educators uniquely experienced the vestiges of mis-education as they faced insidious forms of racism during the course of their academic journey, (b) educators sought to interrupt the racism that their White teachers' and peers exhibited, (c) educators encouraged students to use their voices and various platforms to effectively counteract their oppression, and (d) educators engaged transformative pedagogies in overt and covert ways depending on both the social and the teaching context(s). Based on the findings of this study, a liberation-based pedagogy is recommended to ensure the empowerment, increased performance, and well-rounded education of Black students.

Keywords: mis-education, achievement gap, school-to-prison pipeline, micro aggression

Dedication

Written in sacred tribute to our African ancestors, the progenitors of humanity, for whom I am deeply indebted for their sacrifice on our collective behalf. This research is especially dedicated to those who were kidnapped and forced to endure the bowels of hell within the confines of the Maafa–African Holocaust, which began with the Middle Passage; who transcended the physical, mental and psychological horrors of chattel enslavement; who bore witness to the savage inhumanities of segregation, political and financial disenfranchisement, countless physical/sexual assaults and mob lynching brutalities, and who endlessly suffered the cruel injustice of post-enslavement, institutionalized oppression filled life here in America. My ancestors persevered despite the insurmountable odds, including the widespread proliferation of mis-education. They learned to embrace the knowledge of self, accept their divine oneness with God and to acquire the wisdom of the ages in pursuit of their own freedom from oppression. Without this fine exemplar, my own scholarly pursuits and that of future generations, would be in vain. Finally, this work is dedicated in loving tribute to my living legacy, my daughter ... Jendayi Assata Nkenge, for whom I eternally ‘give thanks’. May the creator’s omnipotent love and brilliant light forever radiate in, throughout and all around you.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Jillian Skelton, my faculty chair, who graciously maintained an infectious, eternal optimism throughout even the most challenging periods of this course of study. Dr. Skelton affirmed my original thought, asked insightful questions, and without her valuable input, this dissertation study would not have been realized. I am also indebted to my doctoral committee members and content editor(s), for their tireless work ethic on my behalf in providing thoughtful feedback throughout this memorable journey.

I am deeply indebted to my research participants, for their honesty, wit, candor, valuable time and significant contribution to academia through richly sharing of your biographical narratives and thereby, contributing to the growing body of knowledge of the Black educational experience. Your willingness to grant access to the intimate narratives of your personal and professional lives provided critical evidence to support the veracity of the problem of mis-education, and lends substantive insight, integrity and leverage to future scholarship dedicated to improving academic achievement outcomes for Black students.

Finally, to my Mother Jo Ann . . . in you, I have been blessed to witness and admire the sheer power of divine God consciousness. Without your empowering love, consistent prayers, positive encouragement & substantive, unfailing support—this goal would never have been realized. For you and my entire family, I am humbled and eternally grateful.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

Racism permeates nearly every aspect of American society and education is no exception (Alvarez, 2017; Howard, 2016; Laman, 2016; Modica, 2015; Moon & Singh, 2015; Noguera, P. 2003; Wood, 2017). In disproportionate rates, Black youth are the unwitting casualties of a racism-fueled, negative and unfortunate encounter with mis-education (Capper, 2015; Cokley, 2006; Gillborn, 2001; Kohli, 2014; Young, 2011). “Teachers, counselors, administrators, coaches—practically anyone involved in education—work with at-risk students at some point. They often find they need to learn more about at-risk students by reading the research or perhaps even conducting research of their own” (Check & Schutt, 2011, p. 65). As such, it is now more than a warranted assumption that significant numbers of Black students are impacted by mis-education and it can be argued that across urban communities in the United States, in both public and charter schools, Black students languish in seemingly experimental institutions that are hindered by identical elements of *mis-education* (Kohli, Pizarro, & Nevárez, 2017; Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011). Mis-education, in the context of this study, refers to “a wrong or deficient education or to educate improperly” (Mis-education, 2016). Researchers have stipulated that mis-education persists in schools comprised of Black youth because of general apathy, ignorance, or abject unwillingness to consider alternative pedagogical paradigms that have the capacity to challenge the status quo (Gillborn, 2015; Humphries & Iruka, 2017; Jayakumar, 2015; Lozenski, 2017; Shapiro, 2007; Woodson, 1933). According to Woodson,

[Education] should not be decided upon by the trial and error method . . . used in dealing with others in a different situation and at another epoch. Only by careful study of the Negro himself, and the life, which he is forced to lead, can we arrive at the proper procedure in this crisis. (1933, p. x)

As testament to a long-standing tradition of educational inequity (often equated with the achievement gap, which is a primary component of mis-education), Watkins (2001) asserted that Northern White philanthropy and Southern White policy makers served to create an educational structure based on Black subservience and the maintenance of the racial and classist social hierarchy. This traditional, institutionally embedded structure of racism and the perpetuation of racist, classist norms have led to and prolonged the present-day mis-education of Black youth. Watkins posited:

Schooling, in the modern corporate-industrial society . . . emerged as central to state, political and ideological management. Political and ideological management involves ideation, which in this context means the imparting and reinforcement of ideas and values that support the current economic and social order (p. 9).

Kozol (1991) offered a thorough assessment of the modern inequalities in U.S. public schools. Kozol advised stakeholders that despite the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision and subsequent Civil Rights legislation and remedies, the education system remained widely segregated and inherently unequal. Undeniably, structural differences and or savage inequalities remain in the treatment of students of color, particularly Black students, across educational institutions in 2018. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2013a, 2013b), although all racial groups in the United States are underperforming, the mis-education of Black students is

particularly evident in the significant disparities between Black students' education outcomes and those of students from other racial groups. In fact, "in both math and reading the average black student in grade 12 placed in the 13th percentile of the score distribution, meaning that 87 percent of white students in grade 12 scored ahead of the average black 12th grader" (Camera, 2016). Results from national assessments consistently reflect the presence of mis-education and of a failing educational system where significant numbers of Black students are enrolled, but have failed to meet academic standards.

In 2014, the nation observed the sixtieth anniversary of the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, purported to transform the pursuit of educational equality in U.S. education. However, in the 64 years since that decision, Black students have not reached levels of academic achievement comparable to students in other demographic groups (NCES, 2013a). Academic achievement disparities between Black students and their White, Asian, and Latino counterparts have been well documented over the past two decades (Banks, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2015; Gillborn, 2014; Howard, 2015; Lozenski, 2017). At a time when children of color comprise a majority of students in most urban districts, and will be the majority in the nation as a whole by 2025 (Banks, 2012), "we face pernicious achievement gaps that fuel inequality, shortchanging our young people and our nation" (Darling-Hammond, 2015, p. 3).

According to Dumas,

For many black children in the United States schooling is a site of suffering . . . it is the suffering that we have been least willing or able to acknowledge or give

voice to in educational scholarship, and more specifically, in educational policy analysis. (2014, p. 2).

Again, the problem examined in this study was the perception of the chronic mis-education of Black students. The researcher wanted to explore the adequacy of investigation and treatment of the perceived issue. The researcher also wanted to examine the level of significance placed on it, particularly as a phenomenon of 21st century pedagogy. Overwhelming evidence of present-day performance deficits and the historical context of educational disparity for Black students, coupled with the scant body of research and literature on the study of mis-education and the gap in previous knowledge, warranted this study.

Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

This study began with the researcher's own academic journey, curiosity, and experience of being a woman of African descent born and raised in a hostile American culture. Van Manen (1997) acknowledged that the natural or logical starting place for a phenomenological study is self because "My own life experiences are immediately accessible to me in a way that no one else's are" (p. 55). Additionally, Moustakas (1994) stated that "as a learner, to know *initially* what something is and means, I listen to my inner dialogue, purified as much as possible from other voices, opinions, judgments, and values" (p. 62). The researcher's own displacement and feelings of alienation and invisibility in educational institutions as a member of the culture under study created the impetus to examine the unique plight and experience of mis-educated Black students.

This initial self-knowledge prompted the belief that many Black people live as a permanent underclass in society, a condition that has had a significant negative effect on

Black K–12 students. This belief inspired the conception that one’s cultural, educational, and professional experience could be similarly examined in the context of a narrative inquiry as a means to study the mis-education of Blacks students. The absence of current scholarship on the mis-education of Black students from the lens of Black educators further rendered this study relevant. The core worldview of many Blacks in America seems to stem from the distinct way in which each person is raised and includes a unique combination of beliefs forged from the paradigms of ancestral lineage, parents’ teachings, and a sort of collective value system as cultivated in the educational system and further developed in adulthood (Baldwin & Hopkins, 1990; Carroll, 2014; Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995). The researcher conducted this qualitative, narrative study of the mis-education of Black students by viewing their situation through these paradigms.

The ever-widening achievement gap of Black students and the widespread failure of pedagogical reforms to address the prevalence of mis-education provides the framework for a viable attempt at studying a problem not yet examined through the unique lens of Black people who have endured and unsuccessfully attempted to overcome mis-education. The narrative inquiry research study approach empowers a solution uniquely geared to the twenty-first century needs of this nation’s underserved masses because it enables insight not sufficiently afforded through other methodological approaches. While the researcher in this study did not intend to investigate every cause and effect of mis-education, explicit trends, strategies, and interpretations emerged in this research to empower both educators and policy makers to evolve into leaders capable of transforming the educational experience of mis-educated, Black students. Thus, conducting a qualitative study of mis-education helped fill the gap in understanding why Black students

consistently underperform academically while simultaneously enabling current and future education leaders to create learning environments in which students receive the knowledge they need to overcome any obstacle.

Carter G. Woodson's research on mis-education is the foundation for this study. The thesis of Woodson's 1933 seminal work *The Miseducation of the Negro* included a sweeping indictment of the American educational system in general and critiqued the mass of educated Black professionals in particular, for having unwittingly contributed to the scourge of mis-education. Woodson cited the universal failure of U.S. schools to educate Black youth properly, and perhaps no informed assessment was more important than his criticism of educators who intentionally (or unintentionally) perpetuated Black students' mis-education. Placing the bulk of the blame and responsibility to counteract mis-education on other Blacks in pedagogy, Woodson, the revered founder of Black History Month, believed the key in reversing the failure of educating Black students was for the Black middle-class to stop looking to White people for salvation. Instead, Woodson believed Black teachers and schools could solve the problem by considering education as a collective vocation (Kalam, 2017).

Essentially, Woodson (1933) critiqued the abject failure of what was then categorized as "Negro education." In highlighting the components of this quandary, Woodson (1933) lamented

Those who have the idea that education is merely a process of imparting information . . . is an educator [who] accounts for most of the troubles of the Negro. Real education means to inspire people to live more abundantly but [American] instruction so far, has worked to the contrary. (1933, pp. 28—29)

Additionally, as a proponent of an innovative, African-centered ideology that the study of one's self serves as the basis for all-encompassing measures of cultural development, Woodson charged U.S. schools with mis-education because of what he cited as the overwhelming, stark absence of a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Among the multiple challenges Woodson cited as factors underlying the presence of mis-education were the inculcation of an inferiority complex and a deep-seated self-hatred among the oppressed, Black student; an indictment of the entire educational system as a tool of oppression due to the staunch preservation of outside control; and a harsh criticism of the abandonment of the suffering, impoverished Black masses as the apparent ultimate goal of the Black educators, or intelligentsia. Woodson's targeted indictment of Black educators and of the Black middle-class as dismissive of the problem of mis-education begs the question of how Blacks in pedagogy could better contribute to an understanding of the interminable problem of mis-education. Certainly, each of the challenges Woodson cited represents themes that are still observable in today's educational landscape.

Further, Woodson (1933) believed:

Every individual of the social order should be given the unlimited opportunity to make the most of himself. Such opportunity should not be determined from without by forces set to direct the prescribed element ... but should be determined by the Negro himself and by what his environment requires of him. (p. x)

Modern researchers support this self-help sentiment by contributing to a substantial, growing body of research to demonstrate that a strong Black identity is linked to improved educational outcomes and higher academic achievement (Shin & Raudenbush, 2011;

Zirkel & Johnson, 2016). Such scholars promote the ideology that greater numbers of Black teachers and leaders significantly improve the academic achievement of Black students, particularly from low-income households. According to Kalam (2017), a 2004 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that when Black teachers taught black students from kindergarten to 3rd grade, the gap in students' reading and math scores closed, by 71 percent and 65 percent, respectively (Kalam, 2017, para. 10).

Woodson also unwittingly predicted the inescapable, detrimental effects of the current state of mis-education on Black students in American schools, by arguing that a disregard for the Black experience would ultimately render true education unattainable in the U.S. school system. Woodson theorized that Black students would be increasingly alienated in an educational system unfit to meet their needs. Certainly, the continued omission of the Black experience and overall disregard for a unique, cultural pedagogical paradigm in early education has only been exacerbated since the start of the twenty-first century, thus warranting a renewed examination of the pervasive problem of mis-education. Overall, the depth of Woodson's early study into the phenomenon of mis-education, as a well respected, Harvard educated intellectual with a breadth of experience in pedagogy, and as "one who for forty years participated in the education of the black, brown, yellow and white races in both hemispheres . . . with students in all grades from the kindergarten to the university" (Woodson, 1933, p. ix), qualified him to diagnose the unique phenomenon of mis-education. Woodson's forecast of educational inequity was prescient and accurate; therefore, a study of mis-education is both relevant and warranted.

Woodson's historic scholarship on mis-education is complemented and supported in later educational research. Namely, in a Harvard published, scholarly work outlining

the crisis of the continuing mis-education of Black youth, Lozenski (2017) considered how “African-American education has always been precarious and, thus, able to be labeled a crisis. Using a combination of synchronic (snapshot) and diachronic (longitudinal) analyses, the achievement gap logic does not allow us to address historical constructions of contemporary disparity” (p. 162). Therefore, Lozenski concluded that Black people’s own self-determination, not an emphasis on federal or state-centered reform efforts, should be the driving force behind educational decisions that impact Black youth. This conclusion represents a present-day, scholarly synopsis that education is still too often imposed by the power structure and understood from outside the Black experience, and so it follows that a credible study of the mis-education of Black students, through the qualitative, narrative context of the Black educator is warranted.

CRT as the conceptual framework. In terms of the conceptual framework suited to study the problem of mis-education, in recent years a distinctive and challenging approach to understanding, and opposing, race inequity in education has developed under the banner of critical race theory (CRT), an approach that began in U.S. law schools in the 1970s. Existing CRT scholarship is particularly relevant to a study of mis-education because CRT addresses, in simple, straightforward language, additional themes characteristic of mis-education in the form of new educational reforms. An understanding of CRT as a framework begins with the notion that racism is normal in American society and within education (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). CRT’s use in the education field departs from mainstream legal and educational scholarship by employing storytelling to critique education in the United States and to observe how citizenship and race might interact. “Marginalized groups suffer doubly in relation to schooling: first, the drudgery

and futility of the school experience itself, and second, through the loss of hope for oneself individually, and for the group, collectively” (Dumas, 2014, p. 10). The use of storytelling in CRT underscores the rationale for a qualitative, narrative approach to a study of the mis-education of Black students.

As a final testament to the usefulness of the contextual framework of CRT to a study engaging a narrative inquiry of Black educators to better understand the problem of mis-education, there is confidence that:

Teachers who had and overcame academic challenges in their youth offer valuable insights into how to support students who struggle . . . [since] their memories of academic struggles lead them to use teaching practices that are grounded in the professional disposition that all children can learn. (Fry, 2015, p. 629)

Given the assumption of cultural relativity and personal investment, it can be argued that authentic education is only possible when students are regarded as equal, valuable partners in the educational process. As such, for educators of good conscience to affect meaningful and lasting change, an in-depth, reflective, narrative analysis of their experience should contribute to the virtually non-existent scholarship and pedagogical policy-making process pertaining to Black students’ mis-education. The researcher in this study assumed participants have themselves overcome educational obstacles to embrace the teaching profession. Therefore, this study’s findings increased understanding of the problem of mis-education. Beyond an understanding of the problem, there is the potential of fostering a pedagogical praxis that liberates Black students and teachers from the lengthy history of mis-education and which facilitates the growth of an informed and empowered point of view.

Narrative analysis as the design. The limitations observable in a quantitative approach to examining the achievement gap in education fueled the researcher's decision to use a qualitative, narrative design in the study. "Survey research cannot capture the richness, complexity, and depth of value questions. It pays no attention to levels of meaning, nuances in language, or lived values" (Morris, 1991, p. 82). However, qualitative research involves the views and internal worlds of participants with more depth. Morton (2011) conducted a quantitative descriptive study that examined the characteristics that contributed to the educational success of a subset of Black students who met specific academic criteria. Morton gauged the influence of eight factors on the academic achievement of a sample of Black high school students and college graduates in the Cherry Hill School District. Results of this scholarly study suggested that the Cherry Hill school district fostered intrinsic motivation and resilience in its Black students because all teachers within the school district had long-term community investment and high expectations for their Black students. Further, Morton suggested that a precursor to student success is that the parents of the Black students maintain active engagement in the educational process. Ultimately, Morton concluded that Black students fared well academically in an environment comprised of teachers with community investment and with equally high expectations for Black student performance. However, Morton's descriptive study, while compelling in its positive implications of data crucial to highlighting student success, derived quantitative results from a sampling of 249 study participants. The researcher in the present study determined that this significant degree of widespread participant sampling would not significantly support the depth of a qualitative, narrative examination of the problem of mis-education. Admittedly, mis-education is a

complex phenomenon better suited to a qualitative, narrative examination in order to be understood. An additional critique of quantitative study will be offered in Chapter 3.

Overwhelmingly, while there are both qualitative and quantitative studies committed to studying the problem of the Black student achievement gap and or the accompanying implications of mis-education, none seem to draw from the cultural, professional and narrative inquiry of educators as a viable source of data. As such, the researcher in this study believed a narrative study of the combined instructional experience and schooling history of Black educators would uncover significant insights into the prevalence of the mis-education of Black students and would have positive implications far beyond the group being studied.

Statement of the Problem

The problem the researcher addressed in this study was the perception of chronic mis-education of Black students. The researcher wanted to explore the adequacy of investigation and treatment of the perceived issue. The researcher also wanted to examine the level of significance placed on it, particularly as a phenomenon of 21st century pedagogy. The overwhelming evidence of present-day performance deficits and the historical context of educational disparity for Black students, coupled with scant body of research and literature on the study of mis-education and the gap in previous knowledge, warranted this study.

“Mis-education advanced what is arguably the most fundamental tenet of progressive pedagogy, which is that education must be relevant. Students’ backgrounds, needs, and interests should drive the curriculum” (Snyder, 2015). Given that the formation and social construct of race, White privilege, and the resulting systemic mis-

education of Black students has occurred in American schools for centuries, there are several prominent themes to be understood and explored in the context of a study of mis-education. Namely, there is a need to connect mis-education to the predominant use or reference to the achievement gap. Likewise, teacher education, school funding, and education policy are recurrent themes indirectly informing the problem of mis-education. The Chapter 2 Literature Review will demonstrate that mis-education has far-reaching implications beyond mere schooling to encompass the school-to-prison pipeline and even the prospect of a diminished life capacity for the students who suffered the effects of mis-education.

Mtshali (2016) summarized the widespread, long-term problem of mis-education as follows:

Beliefs that black student underperformance lies either in darkness of spirit or double helix will continue to reproduce the achievement gap, and with it, poor life prospects for African Americans. Erroneous beliefs are the achievement gap's building blocks. This edifice, in tandem with the school-to-prison pipeline, portends a divided schoolhouse that will collapse onto black America's destiny without the iron reinforcement of black America's will (p. 134).

Mis-education and the achievement gap are synonymous and while mis-education is rarely referenced, the achievement gap is much more prominent.

The achievement gap continues to be an issue of critical concern in education.

Despite the ubiquity of this concern, studies of racial and ethnic minorities who are not doing well in school make up a very small percentage of the research literature in school psychology. (Worrell, 2014, p. 332)

Admittedly, a better understanding of the current state of the Black-White achievement gap is needed because the Black–White achievement gap remains large (NCES 2013d), yet consistently confounds education policy makers.

From a historical examination of the problem of mis-education and the expansive achievement gap, considering Tatum’s (1992) argument that the oppression-related resistance response had the real potential to interfere with cognitive functioning and subsequent mastery of the material is important. Though scarcely examined in modern literature sources, the concept that resistance to oppression might interfere with cognitive functioning of the oppressed is still a very salient point for consideration in a study of mis-education, which has yet to be addressed in modern scholarship. Though the by-products of resisting oppression were not explored at length in this study, a correlation between the oft-studied problems synonymous with the phenomenon of mis-education were briefly highlighted as a means to gain a better understanding the problem of Black students’ educational inequities.

As a complement to an examination of the statistically low performance of Black students, school leaders’ beliefs and teaching approaches indicate they view students’ race, not their behavior or other factors, as the reason for high imprisonment rates among Black people (Skiba, 2014). As such, the school-to-prison pipeline and its related implications must be examined as a potential consequence of the problem of the mis-education of Black students. Spending time out of the classroom for perceived behavioral deficiencies invariably leads to Black students falling further behind their peers, thus widening what is referred to as the achievement gap (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Notably, the problem of mis-education must also be understood and explored in the

context of teacher education and education policy, as pedagogical policy makers and practitioners might unwittingly contribute to a proliferation of mis-education of Black students.

The school-to-prison pipeline. The scholarly consensus on the link between mis-education and the school-to-prison pipeline appears to be best summarized in the statement that “schools and prisons do not sit on opposite sides of a metaphorical path, and the criminal justice system is not merely at the end of the pipeline—it is implicated all along the way” (Simmons, 2017, p. 4).

In 1970, fewer than 350,000 people were held in prisons and jails in the United States (Sokolower, 2013). However, in 2012, Alexander posited the number of inmates in the United States exceeded 2,000,000. “Conventional data sources of the incarcerated population estimate the dropout rate among young white men to be 24% while among young black men the dropout rate is 71%” (Pettit & Sykes, 2015, p. 590). Specifically, “in 2014, African Americans constituted 2.3 million, or 34%, of the total 6.8 million correctional population” (NAACP, 2017). In terms of the intersection between mis-education and incarceration rates, Martin & Beese (2015) cite the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights released data showing that Black students are suspended and expelled at three times the rate of White students. This inflated suspension rate is significant given that “as many as 1 in 10 black men age 20–34 are in prison” (Pettit & Sykes, 2015) and the inherent risks of incarceration and criminal justice profiling are highly stratified by race, social class, and prior records of school suspension (Pettit & Sykes, 2015).

In conjunction with the school-to-prison pipeline and the problem of the mis-education of Black students, Hopson and Dixson (2014) lamented the caste-like system in education and argued that U.S. schools are still largely separate and unequal because of the criminalization of Black youth in many schools across America. Given that there is substantive evidence demonstrating the inferior quality of education many young Black students receive, an understanding of the problem of mis-education would include an examination into the criminalization of Black youth in many schools across America. The connection between mis-education, criminalization, and racial profiling is elucidated elsewhere (Skiba, 2014; Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014; Wilson, 2014). The school-to-prison pipeline is an outgrowth of the premise of mis-education because research has indicated that systemic racial profiling or the criminalization of Black students begins in schools and is inextricably linked to their diminished academic performance (Malone & Malone, 2015; Simmons, 2017).

In 2013, Ervin and O'Hagan reported that the U.S. Department of Education had conducted a probe of the Seattle Public Schools for their punitive treatment of Black students. As education statistics have long proven, Black students are far more likely to be disciplined than any other racial or ethnic group and to also receive longer suspensions. In fact, Black students are more than “three times more likely to be suspended than White students” (Loveless, 2017), beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school. Ervin and O'Hagan (2013) quoted a school superintendent as saying, “We have a serious problem here. The data is clear that there is a disproportionate number of students of color being suspended and expelled” (para. 8).

According to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2012), Black students are 3.5 times more likely to be suspended or expelled. Although they are only 18% of the overall student population, Black students comprise 46% of those students suspended from school more than one time. Given that “one in every three Black males born today can expect to go to prison at some point in their life, compared with one in every six Latino males, and one in every 17 White males, if current incarceration trends continue” (Knafo, 2013), then the school-to-prison pipeline affecting Black students is certainly inextricably tied to the phenomenon of mis-education. The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (2012) report contained this statement from U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder: “this administration is moving aggressively to disrupt the school to prison pipeline in order to ensure that all of our young people have equal educational opportunities.”

Research shows that Black students, and especially Black males, are disciplined more often and receive more out-of-school suspensions and expulsions than their White student peers. A 2009–2010 survey of 72,000 schools (kindergarten through high school) shows that while Black students made up only 18% of those enrolled in the schools sampled, they accounted for 35% of those suspended once, 46% of those suspended more than once and 39% of all expulsions (Lewin, 2012). Perhaps more alarming is the 2010 finding that over 70% of the students involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement were overwhelmingly Hispanic or Black (Shah, 2013).

According to Winters and Bethune (2014), such examples of the degree of inherently racist school behavior policies and school suspension practices inscribe moral intention on the presence of Black children in U.S. schools, potentially robbing them of

their youth, their future, and too often their lives. Loveless (2011) likened the traditional practice of ‘tracking’ as one such inherently racist school policy. Tracking “is the practice of grouping students into classes by ability and organizing curriculum by its’ level of difficulty” (p. 1). It is entirely feasible that schools which subscribe to this outdated, yet common, practice risk sorting low-performing students (with a potential history of behavioral problems due to academic frustration) “into immutable destinations correlated with race and social class” (Loveless, 2011, p. 2). Implementation of this policy eliminates the benefits of heterogeneous class groupings, which might elicit more positive behavioral examples to reinforce an un-biased school behavioral protocol. Winters and Bethune (2014) stated:

Racial discourse is locally operational to produce surveillance systems that monitor Black movement and judge Black behavior. Teachers and school administrators make assessments of Black children based on the tools provided through teacher education and education leadership programs that rely on allochronic data. (p. 578)

According to this research, the racial narratives that speak to the assumption that Black male youth are inherently bad and thus are in need of strict school disciplinary practices are duly tied to issues of racial injustice and repression. This assumption affects the quality of learning experiences for both male and female Black students in schools, hence constituting a rationale for mis-education.

As further testament of the school-to-prison pipeline as an outgrowth of the problem of mis-education, Almeida (2012) posited that society’s prevailing message to Black boys that “we fear you and view you as dangerous” is constantly reinforced. In

fact, the growing body of research that likens schools to a feeder system of the prison-industrial complex sends the universal message to Black boys that they must be educated.

Otherwise, they will:

End up on a fast track to prison and to the graveyard. But even those who keep their distance from this deadly idea are at risk of losing their lives to it. The death of Trayvon Martin vividly underscores that danger (Pfaff, & Sherman, 2015, p. 162)

According to Martin and Beese (2015), students labeled *at-risk* for school failure often have lowered expectations placed upon them from without that impact how they feel within. Compounding this problem of perception is the real issue of heightened surveillance on these students, including the disturbing trend of involving the police when Black students are discovered to have violated school rules (Kagan, 2004). For example, the ACLU (2008) posited that many under-resourced schools represent gateways to the school-to-prison pipeline by placing increased reliance on police rather than teachers and administrators to maintain discipline. “As a result, children are far more likely to be subject to school based arrests—the majority of which are for non-violent offenses, such as disruptive behavior—than they were a generation ago” (ACLU, 2008). The corresponding school-to-prison pipeline analysis speaks to the potential of criminalization of Black youth, as a direct byproduct of mis-education and renders this component of the phenomenon worthy of mention in this study. The school-to-prison pipeline deserves individual study of its own depth to further examine the intersection between mis-education and the relationship to the current growth of America’s prison industrial complex; however, recommendations for future research will be included in Chapter 5.

For the purposes of this study, it is appropriate to acknowledge the inextricable nature of the two societal problems.

Educational policy, reform, school funding and teacher education. Through the unique lens of educational policy, Bertrand, Perez, and Rogers (2015) argued “pedagogical policy insiders across party lines increasingly acknowledge educational gaps, yet talk about this inequity in very different ways. Though some critique disparities through a structural lens, others use deficit discourse, blaming families of color for educational outcomes” (p. 93). Essentially, this blame the victim modern analysis of educational law and policy serves to perpetuate mis-education. Bertrand et al. (2015) specifically examined how national policy insiders explain educational inequity, thus shedding light on the complex relationship between language and the maintenance of systemic racism and classism in education. Drawing upon a unique data set of interviews with 50 policy insiders in one U.S. state, the researchers found three main discourses used to explain inequity in education. Educational policy intensifies relevant structural inequities while teacher education offers unique insights into the problem of the mis-education of Black students.

Part of the problem in modern education pertains to the fact that despite the increasing diversity of our student population, the K–12 teaching force in America is 84% White (Feistritzer, 2011). Given the disproportionality between the demographic composition of the student population and that of the faculty composition, there is an argument that mis-education can also be attributed to the existing Black student—White teacher academic performance gap. One of the key arguments regarding the importance of diversity in America’s teaching force is that Black students perform better academically

when they have teachers of color. For example, a 2010 study found that “teachers of color use their insider knowledge about the language, culture, and life experiences of students of color to improve their academic outcomes and school experiences” (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). The importance of the need for teachers of color is increased by the fact that the Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2013a) forecasted that by 2020, ethnic minorities would comprise the majority of the United States’ school system enrollment.

According to Vilson (2015) of the nearly 3.4 million public school teachers in the United States in 2011–2012, nearly 82% of teachers were White, and approximately 18% were of color (p. 30). Of those of color, Black men comprised only about 4% of the teaching force. This data undoubtedly foreshadows a disproportionately negative effect among Black and Latino students in general, and Black male students in particular, who are at future risk for greater levels of mis-education. Moreover, this statistic supports the need for extensive research into the need for culturally responsive teaching among the ranks of professional educators. As classrooms will include more students of color in the future, teachers must also be duly trained in culturally responsive pedagogy to equip them to meet the needs of the Black student majority and other minority groups in public schools’ population.

In her groundbreaking collection of essays on the existing cultural conflict in the classroom, Delpit (1988) suggested that many academic problems attributed to children of color are the result of miscommunication, as primarily White teachers and other people’s children struggle with the imbalance of power and the dynamics plaguing the education system. The crux of Delpit’s (1988) argument is that:

Power imbalances resulting from historical racial, ethnic, class, and gender conflicts influence the quality and quantity of learning and teaching that goes on in schools. Teachers and parents from disenfranchised groups develop various and often ingenious means of resisting and subverting dominant-group incursions into their ways of being and knowing (i.e., code-switching). (p. 291)

This perspective is compelling in that while abundant historical and current research is available on White educators and their need to undertake culturally responsive training to better address the needs of an oppressed Black student majority, narratives from Black educators about the problem of mis-education of Black students are absent.

In terms of modern reforms, the primary tenet of both the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of 2001 and Racing to the Top (RTTT) of 2009, was that “each state implement a plan to raise student achievement . . . [and] close the gaps in student achievement” (Hachiya, Shoop, & Dunklee, 2014, p. 57) on or before the 2013–2014 academic school year. This seemingly attainable and overarching aim stipulated increased teacher accountability, the universal implementation of Common Core State Standards, and the “use of student achievement data to make decisions about resource allocation” (Hachiya et al., 2014, p. 59). Individual school district and state flexibility in financial expenditures initially appeared to be a solution and were designed to ensure a competitive reward/punishment element for high-performing teachers and or school districts. However, the intersection between the increasingly persistent discrimination in school funding and the phenomenon of mis-education has created an unequal playing field in academic achievement gains and therefore has hindered federally sponsored school reform efforts.

Of this dilemma, Calhoun (2015) posited, “public school districts remain racially and socio-economically segregated [more than] 50 years after *Brown v. Board of Education* because the system of property tax funding incentivizes the shaping of districts according to income levels” (para. 2). Hachiya, et al., (2014) similarly cited a crippling NCLB underfunding issue, which argued the legality of “insufficient funds to support all of the requirements of NCLB” (p. 66). In 2015, the federal Department of Education showed that “the richest 25 percent of school districts receive 15.6 percent more funds from state and local governments per student than the poorest 25 percent of school districts” (2015).

In terms of federally sponsored education reforms, there have been many pieces of legislation aimed at education. According to researchers (Calhoun, 2015; Hachiya et al., 2014; Ravitch, 2015; Shapiro, 2007), few reforms, if any, have achieved the goals policy makers established. However, the most recent form of federal school reform was widely regarded as a failure in that “test scores, graduation rates and college enrollment were no different in schools that received money through the [RTTT] School Improvement Grants program—the largest federal investment ever targeted to failing schools—than in schools that did not” (Brown, 2017).

Ravitch (2015) argued:

The administration of President George W. Bush took a wrong turn by changing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) from a law devoted to equity to a law devoted to testing and accountability. The switch from ESEA to NCLB was a substitution of punishment and sanctions for direct federal aid to the

neediest districts. ESEA [was] supposed to help poor children, not convert their schools into test-prep factories or close them or privatize them. (para. 9)

As evidence of the inextricable link between mis-education, school funding, and failed school reforms, in spite of a school funding formula which “which allocates additional funds for high-needs children and grants local districts more decision-making powers” (Freedberg, 2015), only 28% of Black students and 32% of Latinos who took the Smarter Balanced assessment in California met or exceeded standards on the English language arts section. By comparison, 61% of White students and 72% of Asian American students met or exceeded standards in English language arts on the same assessment. The differences in math are even wider (Freedberg, 2015).

It is also noteworthy that the expansive performance gap between White students and their mis-educated, Black student peers is glaringly apparent in nationally documented, desperate, and even criminal attempts of educators to meet academic achievement benchmarks. As a case in point, in 2011, 44 of 56 public schools’ (Vogell, 2011) in Atlanta, Georgia were documented to have engaged in a decade-long, high-stakes testing cheating scandal, which ultimately led to the indictment and imprisonment of nine prominent Black educators. According to Jackson and Kohli, (2016) “the national media’s attention to the cheating scandal in the Atlanta Public Schools system portrayed Black teachers as criminals . . . the scapegoating of Black teachers is reflective of an unjust schooling system that perpetually fails both students and teachers of color” (p. 1). Shapiro (2007) argued that because of the implementation of No Child Left Behind legislation, and its emphasis “on test results and sanctions against schools that fail to show adequate yearly progress in their test scores,” educators and policy makers should expect

more examples of dishonest practices by both teachers and school administrators. Shapiro's study of mis-education laments a "competitive, test-driven, and grade-obsessed" (Shapiro, 2007, p. 8) school environment, which lessens the focus upon authentic education or the intrinsic value of learning.

Ultimately, the continuing prevalence of mis-education represents the collective failure of federal and state education policy makers to offer landmark education improvements. "Much more needs to be learned about how to equitably and effectively educate students of Color and teachers of Color are deemed a necessary part of that educational reform process" (Jackson, Johnson, & Persico, 2015, p. 1). The absence of diversity in the teaching workforce, the failures of national reforms, and the increasing inequality in school funding formulas demonstrated the need for research that includes narrative input from Black educators that can lead to effective plans to improve education from the grassroots, practitioner level up to the policy level.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the pervasive problem of the mis-education of Black students through the lens of three generations of Black educators as a means to provide the audience of educators and policy makers insight into this age-old phenomenon and inspire advanced inquiry to expand upon the design of a liberation-infused pedagogical praxis to bridge the achievement gap. *Praxis* is a Greek word that means moving back and forth in a critical way between reflecting and acting on the world.

Lozenski (2017) argued:

The achievement gap and subsequent foci on the quantitatively measured deficits of black youth have amounted to one of the least productive conversations in

contemporary education discourse, given that the amount of time, energy, and resources spent on the issue have barely made an impact. (p. 163)

There is sufficient justification for the premise that an investigation examining the impact of mis-education from a study of the narratives of Black educators, rather than through the traditional means of studying the deficits of Black students themselves would yield socially significant findings. The problem the researcher addressed in this study was the perception of chronic mis-education of Black students. The researcher wanted to explore the adequacy of investigation and treatment of the perceived issue. The researcher also wanted to examine the level of significance placed on it, particularly as a phenomenon of twenty-first century pedagogy.

Research Questions

The following research question will guide this study:

1. How do the lifelong educational experiences of Black educators contribute to an understanding of the education of Black students?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

The rationale, relevance, and overarching significance of this study pertains to examining the problem of the mis-education of Black students from the informed lens of Black educators as a viable counter analysis to traditional, external studies on Black students' underachievement. "Within the ever-developing, intersecting, and overlapping contexts of globalization, top-down policy, mandates, and standardization of public and higher education, many conceptualize and position practitioner research as a powerful stance and a tool of social, communal, and educational transformation" (Ravitch, 2014).

“The academic performance of Black students, when compared to their White peers, has consistently confounded educators nationwide” (Morton, 2011, p. 1). The achievement gap has become a national crisis, which has led to significant attempts at educational reforms. However, Ravitch (2015) acknowledged the shortcomings of recent educational reforms. Significant evidence (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Howard, 2015; Ravitch, 2015;) suggested that all modern federal education reforms, including No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTTT), have failed to inspire systemic academic improvements as intended and instead have more negative implications than positive effects.

Many researchers have investigated and attempted to bridge the achievement gap affecting Black students. Hunt (2015) concluded, “The only way that we’re ever going to raise the achievement of African American children living in ghettos, substantially, is to desegregate those ghettos. Make sure that more children are attending schools that are predominantly middle-class” (para. 3). Thus, Hunt’s (2015) argument is one of desegregation as a tool to affect the abysmal achievement levels of Black students. Further, Ravitch (2015), offered these suggestions: restore the original purpose of the ESEA; equity for poor children and the schools they attend; designate federal aid for reducing class size, for intensive tutoring by certified teachers, and for other interventions that are known to be effective; and finally, to raise standards for those entering teaching.

Additionally, a 2013 Black Enterprise-hosted symposium, created to improve the quality of American public education, determined there is a universal obligation and responsibility for business leaders, politicians, and education policy makers to collaborate on the development of comprehensive education reform that will engage students and

prepare them for the rigor of the twenty-first century workforce. If former President Obama's (2009) contention that "the future belongs to the nation that best educates its citizens" (para. 9) was accurate, then the United States is increasingly falling behind the academic performance of other nations. Despite this seemingly urgent need, Strauss (2013) argued that current school reforms make America less, not more, competitive on an international scale. Strauss concluded, "we have broken schools that are producing underachieving students, causing U.S. students to lose ground to young people in other industrialized nations, thereby rendering America less competitive." Though Strauss was referring to the condition of U.S. education in general, the pervasive mis-education of Black students is a significant component of the U.S.'s diminished competitiveness, thereby making it a topic worthy of study.

Overwhelmingly, educational reform efforts have failed Black students (Anderson, 2017; Barton, 2004; Gordon, 2016; Ladson-Billings 2014). Current pedagogical theory and research is based upon outdated socio-political constructs and is therefore limited in addressing how twenty-first century race and class dynamics shape educational policy reform. The pedagogical field requires innovative curriculum frameworks, relevant data, and improved methodologies to achieve significant improvements in the educational landscape for the underserved at-risk student population of Black students. This insight supports the contention that a scholarly study of mis-education could serve to advance a liberating praxis to bridge the achievement gap for the Black students overwhelmingly affected by the phenomenon of mis-education. As such, the researcher in this study investigated the multiple ways the traditional educational model disproportionately informs the mis-education of Black students. Additionally, the researcher developed

insights using a combination of comparative research, interviews, data analysis, and observation methods to foster qualitative inquiry into the phenomenon of mis-education and the possible creation of a liberating pedagogical model.

Definition of Terms

The study contains the following terms as defined below:

Table 1

Terms and Definitions

Terms	Definitions
<i>Mis-education</i>	A wrong or deficient education; to educate improperly
<i>Achievement Gap</i>	The achievement gap in the United States refers to the observed, persistent disparity in measures of educational performance among subgroups of U.S. students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity, and gender.
<i>School-to-Prison-Pipeline</i>	A disturbing national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Many of these children have learning disabilities or histories of poverty, abuse, or neglect, and would benefit from additional educational and counseling services. Instead, they are isolated.
<i>Micro Aggression</i>	A statement, action or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle discrimination against members of a marginalized group. Occurs in the form of commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color.

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

The primary postulate guiding this research study is that mis-education exists and deleteriously affects Black students in K–12 institutions. The researcher’s assumptions

included the honesty and candor of participants. Further, the researcher ensured that all research procedures were inductive. The researcher employed controlled passion for the topic and attempted to implement what Denzin and Lincoln (2011) refer to as a critical interpretive approach which is well suited to critical race theory research strategies in that “we value passion, we invite criticism and we seek to initiate a discourse of resistance” (p. xiii). The researcher also faced several health limitations, including recent physical disability that curtailed her ability to meet face-to-face with participants. Another limitation was the recall reliability of participants who are retired educators or elder, veteran educators. The researcher attempted to avoid all potential obstacles through close monitoring and or additional interview sessions, as deemed necessary. The delimitations for this study included the small sample size of participants, Blacks of varying generations with pedagogical experience, informal (home) setting to conduct all participant interviews, and the researcher as primary data collection instrument (3-stage, audiotaped interviews).

Summary

The problem of the mis-education of Black students has its foundations in the early era of American education and represents the most fundamental conundrum of the present-day educational landscape. Despite generations of the potential mis-education of Black students in American schools, the problem of mis-education has neither been adequately investigated nor treated as the most significant, widespread phenomenon of twenty-first century pedagogy. Further, as Lozenski (2017) stated, “for a people whose historical self-interest has been in contradiction with the interests of the state as inscribed by law, the purpose of education is different than for those whose self-interests are congruent with that of the state” (p. 172). Any expectation that the historical ills of mis-

education will dissipate without the concerted self-interest of Blacks in education is unrealistic. Therefore, a qualitative, narrative study of mis-education is warranted.

Gillborn (2014) conducted a critical race analysis of American schools and education reform and concluded “education is one of the principal means by which White Supremacy is maintained and presented as normal in society” (p. 26). In this context, the far-reaching implications of the mis-education of Black students are observable through the components of school funding inequities, teacher education, public policy/reforms, and the school-to-prison pipeline. There may be a widespread desire to counter the deleterious effects of mis-education upon the Black student population through well-intentioned measures to close the achievement gap. However, the literature review search did not uncover any current, qualitative studies devoted to examining the dilemma of mis-education through the narrative voice of Black educators.

The researcher designed this study to address a gap in the literature concerning the intimate, personal, and professional narratives of Black pedagogical professionals to understand the problem of mis-education from within the culture under study. The researcher used participants’ narratives as Espino did, to “reshape, reframe, and transform discourses of deficiency to those of empowerment and resistance in K–12 education, postsecondary education, and graduate school” (2012). A study devoted to examining the pervasive problem of the mis-education of Black students through the lens of three generations of educators is both a timely and appropriate means to inspire advanced inquiry into the long, documented history of mis-education. The researcher’s findings in this study will be a resource to expand upon the design of a liberation infused pedagogical praxis to bridge the achievement gap.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

The researcher's primary purpose for this literature review is to provide comprehensive insight into a wide array of relevant literature to underpin the argument that the persistent mis-education of Black students has failed to receive adequate research attention or treatment as the most significant, widespread phenomenon of twenty-first century pedagogy. The researcher built this study on the context and setting of the participants' lived feelings, actions, and beliefs. The problem the researcher addressed in this study was the perception of chronic mis-education of Black students. The researcher wanted to explore the adequacy of investigation and treatment of the perceived issue. The researcher also wanted to examine the level of significance placed on it, particularly as a phenomenon of twenty-first century pedagogy. The researcher's purpose for this study was not only to examine the pervasive problem of mis-education of Black students, but also to inspire advanced inquiry to expand upon the design of a liberation infused pedagogical praxis to begin to bridge the achievement gap.

This literature review is organized to explore aspects of the mis-education of Black students in the context of the following research question:

1. How do the lifelong educational experiences of Black educators contribute to an understanding of the education of Black students?

The review begins with an examination of the conceptual frameworks that informed and guided this inquiry. These frameworks are critical race theory (CRT), transformative learning theory (TLT), and narrative/counter-narrative. This literature review contains an explanation of the historical context and modern currency by which the

formation and social construct of race, White privilege and supremacy, and the resulting systemic mis-education of Black students exists in America. The chapter contains an examination of how inequities like school funding intersect with race and class to comprise the achievement gap. In addition, this chapter includes a review of comparable research suggesting that high rates of imprisonment in the Black population and the large disparities between the population of Black inmates and those from other racial groups are too often correlated with Black student's failures in schools, rather than by students' behavior or any other factor (Skiba, 2014).

Conceptual Framework

Ravitch and Riggan (2012) described a conceptual framework in this way:

A conceptual framework should argue convincingly that (1) the research questions are an outgrowth of the argument for relevance, (2) the data to be collected provide the researcher with the raw material needed to explore the research questions, and (3) the analytic approach allows the researcher to effectively respond to (if not always answer) those questions. (p. 7)

Research examining why the chronic mis-education of urban Black students persists requires an initial exploration of how U.S. society constructs its beliefs on race. CRT proponents define race as a “social construction . . . products of social thoughts and relations” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7).

According to Cole (2017), “until we address the presence of racism as a fundamental defining characteristic of the education system, the present situation is unlikely to change in any meaningful sense, irrespective of superficial rhetorical commitments to inclusion, civil rights and social justice.” As such, examining race as a

social construct and as a precursor to any analysis of mis-education is appropriate. Cole's work supports the notion of racism as fundamental to the institution of education and includes a comparative analysis of the inequalities in the educational system of the U.K. as similar to U.S. educational practices and policies.

Likewise, Gillborn (2014) concluded, "education is one of the principal means by which White Supremacy is maintained and presented as normal in society." Therefore, it follows that education could have been historically used as a tool to inform the mis-education and the persistent achievement gap on Black students. Certainly, addressing the inequities of racism from an early, educational context has far reaching implications in terms of combatting the dynamics of racism in U.S. society.

In terms of the readiness of teachers to respond positively to diversity training, Forrest, Lean, & Dunn, (2016) indicated, "classroom teachers are overwhelmingly supportive of cultural diversity, multicultural education and strategies to combat racism and discrimination, and these views hardly vary across the different geographic zones of the city, unlike attitudes within the general community" (p. 628). Also, Chandler (2017) argued that in shifting the focus from individual acts of racism, "we can then focus on how structures in our society (i.e., schools, government, law, race relations and media) over-determine the racial landscape" (p. 9) and otherwise establish racial rules for American society. From the context of these modern researchers, race is not to be merely considered a component of skin color but rather a manifestation of how we treat one other. If one attests that race is indeed a social construct, then perhaps one can also believe racism and privilege can be deconstructed. If this belief is accurate, it can spur the development of a praxis for a liberating educational paradigm that is later accessible to Black students. The

goal of the researcher in this study is that this dissertation is the starting point for enabling the Black community to exercise its ability and responsibility for lasting educational change.

Critical race theory. The orientation and perspective of CRT's proponents is that it challenges the dominant discourse on racism in education and puts "race at the center of critical analysis" (Roithmayr, 1999, p. 1). CRT provides many tools to help educators level the playing field for marginalized students and offers a reasoned starting point, sufficient to frame the perspective of this initial research. Though the first published application of CRT to education occurred 20 years ago (Capper, 2015), using CRT to examine the presence of racism in education remains relevant and widely used today as a theoretical framework.

Bradbury (2014) contended CRT helps increase understanding of the institutionalized racism in schools. In fact, researchers can apply the identity performance theories of CRT "to interrogate practices of discrimination at the micro-level of the classroom" (Bradbury, 2014). Ultimately, the researcher in this study employed the use of CRT as a methodological tool to enhance understanding of racism in education and to demonstrate how educators can counteract the everyday practices of discrimination in schools.

Crichlow (2015) argued, "the increasing diversity of our classrooms means we must learn to work with, and across, cultural, racial and gendered differences, without falling into diversity management" (p. 189). The dimensions of social, economic, and racial justice, as viewed through study participants' lived experiences, are relevant to an analysis of mis-education. As a conceptual framework, CRT combined with the oral

histories and powerful, personal testimonies of educators' serves to validate the lived experiences of mis-education as the target population has experienced it. Further, the researcher designed this study to be useful as a strategy for the targeted audience of study participants, Blacks in pedagogy, to frame discussions and educational policy around social justice and democracy for Black students.

A thorough analysis of existing literature on CRT revealed that while “policy insiders across party lines increasingly acknowledge educational gaps” (Bertrand, Perez, & Rogers, 2015, p. 23); pedagogical researchers regard the inequity of the achievement gap in very different ways. Though some researchers critique academic achievement disparities through a lens of school structure, others use a discourse of blaming the victim or criticizing impoverished or working-class families of color for their consistently poor educational outcomes. For example, in a recent study on the complex relationship of maintaining systemic racism and classism in education, Bertrand et al. (2015) uncovered covert mechanisms of policy discourse that uphold the presence of racism in education. Drawing upon a unique data set of interviews with 50 education policy makers in the United States, Bertrand’s et al., (2015) findings offered compelling possibilities for policy changes supportive of educational equity.

Moreover, Dumas (2014) conducted a study on schooling as a site of Black suffering and argued that critical policy researchers ask questions about who benefits from (and who is hurt by) specific interventions, and whose interests and values are reflected in the common sense about schooling and in decisions made about allocation of resources. “More specifically, critical race scholars contend that racism is permanent, and that race informs education policy in ways that maintain white supremacy at the expense of people

of color” (Dumas, 2014, p. 27). Ultimately, Dumas’ narrative study theorized the ways that race manifests in the teaching of Black, particularly male, students. The study concludes with recommendations for research at the nexus of race, education and social suffering.

Parker (1998) explored the utility of CRT in qualitative research in education with the assertion that “the presentation of definitive race-neutral legal interpretations of narratives vs. counter-stories of race is discussed with summary attention paid to the implications for qualitative research on race and education” (p. 47). This statement suggests that both the narrative and the counter-narrative form would offer substance to a study of the problem of the mis-education of Black students. The research aim of studying a problem from within the culture group most impacted by the problem is warranted and ideal for the CRT framework. Ultimately, CRT is an appropriate framework to examine the mis-education of Black students because not only does it pertain to the historical, social, and political contexts in which education exists, it also helps researchers illuminate the role of race and White supremacy in cyclically fostering inequities in educational outcomes for Black youth and other people of color.

As a further testament to the use of CRT in educational studies, according to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), “the CRT movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power” (p. 2). As such, in the historic vein of CRT’s practical use, the researcher in this study engaged Black pedagogy professionals in a narrative analysis of their personal and professional experiences that have the capacity to inform, if not transform, the relationship of other educators with Black students. As such, although CRT began as a movement

with explicit application in the law, its relevance in the current pedagogical context cannot be undervalued. Certainly, CRT scholarship encompasses and borrows from a myriad set of sociopolitical and philosophical critiques that challenge the objective reality of mis-education that the Black student population experiences.

According to Ladson-Billings (1998), CRT's usefulness in understanding education inequity was still very much in its infancy in the late 90s, but since that time, its context has been applied to many educational issues. In modern application, countless educators now use CRT to comprehend issues of school discipline, achievement tracking, curriculum, and educational history (Anderson & Dixson, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Parker, 2015; Stovall, 2016). Modern researchers have concluded the lived realities of the racism that confronts Black students in the educational system "compel both theoretical and practical development of research in education that confronts—rather than sidesteps—the structures of injustice and oppression" (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 259).

Additionally, McGee and Stovall (2015) utilized the CRT framework in education to highlight the extent to which the mental health concerns of Black students in predominantly White institutions go undetected. McGee and Stovall posited that although CRT's proponents have unmasked and attacked the racial trauma experienced at all levels of the educational system, the connection of CRT to mental health and wellness research are still in its embryonic stages. McGee and Stovall's argument was relevant to this study because CRT scholars like educators; need to incorporate a liberating praxis to address a fuller spectrum of Black students' racial experiences to counter mis-education. There are mental and even physical health and wellness implications of students having been mis-educated from grades K–12, and CRT is ideal for identifying and understanding this

trauma. Inasmuch as the researcher in this study endeavored to explore the feasibility of a liberating praxis to help identify and foster strategies to support Black students in the process of healing from multiple forms of trauma from mis-education they experienced in school, CRT was appropriate to examine the full breadth of the study participants' encounters with mis-education.

Many profound and meaningful learning experiences take place in facing a problem or dilemma; therefore, developing a liberation pedagogy that is transformative could lead to deep learning. The researcher in this study embraced the tenets of transformative learning theory (TLT) because they describe the learning required to bring about substantive change. Ultimately, each of the theoretical orientations of CRT and TLT combined with the narrative inquiry design provided the framework for this study.

Transformative learning theory. In 1978, Mezirow introduced TLT to help explain how adults change the way they interpret the world. Mezirow outlined “two major domains of learning with different purposes, logics of inquiry, criteria of rationality and modes of validating beliefs” (Mezirow, 2000b, p. 8). These domains are instrumental and communicative learning. The two instructional platforms resonate most in adult learning, and distinguishing between both forms of learning to understand their unique applications in the context of a qualitative, narrative study of the mis-education of Black students is important.

Appropriate insight into each of the two domains of learning begins in an acknowledgement of the definitions of each concept and concludes in recognizing how both domains are best utilized in adult learning discourse and application. TLT's epistemological lens proved an invaluable asset to the researcher in this study because the

qualitative, narrative style is noted for “relational-dialogue, deep engagement and connectivity with and beyond one’s world” (Mezirow, 2003, p.6).

Mezirow (1997, p. 6) defined instrumental learning as “learning to manipulate or control the environment or other people to enhance efficacy in improving performance.” The mode of inquiry in instrumental learning is to use empirical research (gaining knowledge through direct or indirect observation) and then arriving at a conclusion through a process of experimentation. Mezirow later expanded upon the definition of instrumental learning by adding, “problem solving and inquiry follow a hypothetical-deductive logic” (2000a, p. 9). Therefore, the researcher in this study employed instrumental learning to explore participants’ beliefs as well as weigh the evidence derived from analyzing the interview data of the study participants. Moreover, instrumental learning is conducive to qualitative research studies and relates to education by way of the value inherent in testing innovative instructional practices and curriculum prior to formal, widespread implementation.

On the other end of the adult learning spectrum of TLT is communicative learning. This partner-dependent form of learning, “involves at least two persons striving to reach an understanding of the meaning of an interpretation or the justification for a belief” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6). This domain differs from instrumental learning because it occurs in cooperation with outside resources (communicating with others) and requires abductive reasoning logic. “Abductive reasoning is reasoning from concrete instances to an abstract conceptualization. To understand communicative learning, qualitative research methods are appropriate” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 59). The researcher in this study believes the TLT platform could prove useful in improving communication between the researcher and

study participants by “becoming aware of the assumptions, intentions and qualifications of the person communicating” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 59).

Given that TLT includes two components, instrumental and communicative learning – each form must be explored in terms of possible relevance to this study. “TLT [and] narrative learning . . . frame adult experiences in new and exciting ways. These types of learning can involve a simple transformation of belief or opinion or a radical transformation involving one’s total perspective; learning may occur abruptly or incrementally” (Foote, 2015, p. 85). Instrumental learning stems more from an individual pursuit (i.e., confirming the validity of existing beliefs and testing the validity of a series of internal arguments); it differs greatly from communicative learning, which requires critical reflection through an interactive discourse. “In communicative learning, emphasis is on critical reflection and critical self-reflection, assessing what has been taken for granted to make a more dependable, tentative working judgment” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 60).

Additionally, Mezirow provided four components of transformative education: personal, relational, institutional, and global. Based upon this broad context, instrumental learning aligns with the personal or institutional components because elements of these two styles are “personal, understanding, belonging and seeking institutional environments, processes and tools for transformation” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 6). Alternatively, communicative learning is analogous to the relational capability of transformative education. Communicative learning is noted for “relational-dialogue, deep engagement and connectivity with and beyond one’s world” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 6). While the instrumental and communicative domains of learning do not pertain to every aspect of this

study, full knowledge of the alternate frames of reference cements the capability for analyzing participant narratives in a sound, scientific manner.

Concerning the similarities between the instrumental and communicative learning domains, each component of Mezirow's TLT provides a structure and process through which to better understand adult growth and development. Although unique in their application and purpose, both domains involve the development of an expanded worldview for adult learners. The most apparent commonality between the two domains of learning is that both involve a form of discourse. According to Mezirow, "Ideally, communicative learning involves reaching a consensus" (1997, p. 6). Mezirow also theorized that communicative learning engages in "discourse to validate what is being communicated . . . discourse, as used here, is a dialogue devoted to assessing reasons presented in support of competing interpretations, by critically examining evidence, arguments and alternative points of view" (1997, p. 6). Communicative engagement in dialogue, which includes examining alternative points of view and reaching a consensus, resembles the process of discourse involved in instrumental learning. From an instrumental learning perspective, "We transform our frames of reference through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which our interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7). Many adults have unknowingly adopted a narrow worldview based upon their own unique background(s), culture, and experiences. Therefore, critically reflecting on previous assumptions and engaging in personal discourse that ultimately results in transformation is imperative in adult instrumental learning.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of exposure to the communicative and instructional learning domains is the capacity to think critically and to make sound, autonomous decisions. Mezirow promoted the idea that “thinking as an autonomous and responsible agent is essential for full citizenship in democracy and for moral decision making in situations of rapid change” (1997, p. 7). Certainly, critical thinking is an asset for any individual to contribute to society through capable service in the workforce. However, leaders in society surpass the prototypical dictates of industrial work and embrace the innovation of being “autonomous, socially responsible thinkers” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 8). Within the lens of the two domains of learning, Mezirow challenged adults (and those who educate them) to adopt a transformative learning ideology that expands beyond the introductory, instrumental realm to embrace the more advanced, communicative learning model. Both domains are important, though Mezirow emphasized:

The educator’s responsibility is to help learners reach their objectives in such a way that they will function as more autonomous, socially responsible thinkers. Helping people to learn to achieve a specific, short-term objective may involve instrumental learning. For them to achieve their goal requires communicative learning. (1997, p. 8)

Essentially, as researchers navigate the instrumental and communicative learning domains, adults must learn to think critically and employ what is otherwise referred to as “emotional maturity—awareness, empathy and control” (Mezirow, 2000a, p. 11). The development of emotional maturity is crucial in being empowered to engage in effective forms of discourse that are inherent in all facets of transformative learning. In engaging in discourse, researchers are encouraged to recognize that “discourse is not based on winning

arguments; it centrally involves finding agreement, welcoming difference, trying on other points of view, identifying the common in the contradictory, tolerating the anxiety implicit in paradox, searching for synthesis and reframing” (Mezirow, 2000a, p. 13). To adopt an all-encompassing transformative learning ideal, learners must acknowledge the value of both domains of learning and be mindful that the “full development of the human potential depends on values such as freedom, equality, tolerance, social justice, civic responsibility and education” (Mezirow, 2000b, p. 16).

Transformative learning as applicable in this study of mis-education is a process characterized by “examining, questioning, validating, and revising our perspectives” (Cranton, 2006, p. 23); transformative learning may also be “understood as a continuous effort to negotiate contested meanings” (Mezirow, 2000a, p. 3). People seem to form worldview perspectives or meaning constructs as they grow and develop. Consequently, individuals develop “uncritically assimilated ways of knowing, believing, and feeling” (Cranton, 2006, p. 23). Traditionally, Mezirow (2000a) cautioned that education should stress “contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions, and validating meaning by assessing reasons” (p. 3). The questioning of previously unquestioned perspectives or assumptions is when transformational learning takes place and learners gain new insights. Exploring contested meanings drives the individual to form new more critically sound positions.

Tintiangco-Cubales, A., Kohli, R., Sacramento, J., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., & Sleeter, C. (2014) studied the intersection of transformative learning and ethnic studies, and they provided recommendations for practice and research in the interest of supporting effective ethnic studies instruction in K–12 classrooms. Tintiangco-Cubales

et al. “examined ethnic studies from the prospective of a 2013 resolution to implement new meaning perspectives in the San Francisco Unified Schools” (Tintiangco-Cubales, et al., 2015, p. 104). Given the exemplar of the Tintiangco-Cubales study, TLT was useful in this study of the mis-education of Black students for determining what experiences trigger significant awareness and action on the part of the adult research participants.

Narrative and counter-narrative. The methodological framework for this study of mis-education is narrative inquiry. Patton (2002) identified two foundational questions that researchers who use narrative inquiry attempt to address: (a) “What does the narrative or story reveal about the person and world from which it came?” and (b) “How can this narrative be interpreted so that it provides an understanding of and illuminates the life and culture that created it?” (p. 115). Narrative inquiry is primarily concerned with storied texts. Narratives may be presented in several formats, including life histories, biographies, and interview transcripts. Another qualitative approach, phenomenology, influences the narrative inquiry approach. Narrative inquiry intersects with phenomenology in that both illuminate the lived experiences of participants in the research process.

As evidence supporting the need for a narrative analysis of Black teachers, Warren (2015) analyzed how a Black teacher at a suburban high school in the Midwestern United States negotiated professional relationships through culturally relevant discourse. Specifically, the researchers’ subject of study, Anthony Bell, was the only Black male teacher participating in a classroom discourse analysis study group at a diverse suburban high school. Bell’s analyses of his own teaching, student teacher work, the study group,

and the school index themes in critical race theory in education informed the conclusion that culturally relevant discourse improves outcomes for teachers of Black students.

The findings of previous studies of teachers who recalled their own academic challenges early in their careers suggest a positive interrelationship between a biography (Knowles, 1992) that includes academic struggles, the theoretical constructs of grit (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007), and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). In this context, current educational practices and the scant body of literature devoted to a qualitative, narrative study of Black educators to examine the mis-education of Black students, through their own unique experiences, was warranted.

Narratives serve context-specific functions and are dynamic reflections of how individuals recall their experiences. The purpose of narrative research is to understand participants' experiences and their relationships with other correlates and outcomes, not the veracity of the memories. Further, narratives are subjective constructions that have objective impacts. For example, individual differences in autobiographical narratives are associated with the successful maintenance of sobriety among alcoholics (Dunlop & Tracy, 2013), and individual differences in the trajectory of narrative development precede changes in mental health among psychotherapy clients (Adler, 2012).

Researchers may collect narratives from participants in either oral or written formats. The researcher in this study collected oral narratives to produce more elaborate content that allowed for follow-up questioning and establishing rapport to make participants comfortable, which helped facilitate disclosure. Certainly, written responses may produce briefer and in many cases more coherent responses, as well as facilitate the sharing of sensitive information or stories for which participants might desire more

anonymity (McCoy & Dunlop, 2016). However, the researcher designed this study to illuminate the effects of mis-education on Black students and thus benefitted from the study participants' rich, unedited, and immediate responses.

Ellis and Geller (2016) conducted a narrative study based on stories told by Black adolescents experiencing homelessness. Ellis and Geller replicated prior research (Aviles, 2008; Barton, 2004) in that they offered insights into the students' lived experiences and described the challenges students faced in negotiating the urban education system, particularly when plagued by homelessness. Ellis and Geller concluded educational and social service systems frequently place barriers, and blame, that impede the academic achievement of homeless youth. The participants in Ellis and Geller's study offered their perspectives from within the dominant narrative, meaning the participants wondered what was wrong with the children instead of what was wrong with society or the education system. This research study of mis-education was an intentional attempt to shift the perspective from placing the blame upon the victimized students who suffer mis-education to an in-depth exploration of what occurs within the education system. Specifically, the study included the voices of Black educators who possess a keen awareness of mis-education and are qualified to contribute to filling the knowledge gap on this phenomenon.

Additionally, CRT empowers the use of storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives as ways to "cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.144). The researcher in this study applied the narrative and counter narrative research form as a means to focus on study participants' own pedagogical experience and career stories. Counter-narrative refers to the stories that naturally arise from the vantage point of those who have been

historically marginalized. Participants verbalizing their experiences of mis-education helped the researcher understand how they overcame traditional assumptions and dialogs about racism in education. From this context, the use of the biographical narratives of Black educators can be engaged as a counter-hegemonic way of thinking about and approaching theory-research-practice-policy connections to the problem of mis-education.

The counter-narrative framework challenges researchers to broaden common ideologies of educational reform to include the complex, integral experiences of Black educators as a contribution to inform pedagogical policy. The effect of a counter-narrative is to empower and give agency to the marginalized community of Blacks in America. By telling their own stories in their own words, Blacks in pedagogy offer alternative points of view to influence policy, thus helping to create the potential for complex educational reform and close the achievement gap. As Mora stated,

Only if we create the conditions where all those involved in social interactions have a space to tell their stories in their own terms will we find effective ways to engage in empowering dialogue leading to sustainable solutions to today's crises.
(2014)

The researcher conducted this study to gain further insight into the phenomenon of mis-education. Further justification and argument to pursue an in-depth investigation into the mis-education of Black K–12 students requires a review of relevant literature and methodologies to incorporate the rigor of scholarly investigation. The researcher concluded that a copious review of the literature through the lens of CRT and TLT, combined with storytelling or the voice of authority in narrative/counter-narrative, would guide and focus this research appropriately.

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

Blau (2004) argued that in schools, the concept of race perpetuates White dominance, and historic and economic issues produce crucial differences between Black and White cultures. According to Blau (2004), ignoring these differences in social position leads Whites to the harmful fiction that race is irrelevant. Thus, while asserting racial tolerance, many Whites are, in fact, accepting the racial privilege that accompanies the inaccurate assumption that people of all cultures have the same opportunity. The prevalence of a belief in White dominance is significant in the historical context of education because the flawed assumption that all students are the same and have been afforded a level playing field further exacerbates the achievement gap between White and Black students in K–12 education. Blau (2004) contended Black students who continue to suffer the effects of mis-education suffer largely because of an ignorance or blatant unwillingness to accept the historic disabilities of racism and economic oppression.

Blau's (2004) phenomenological work is significant in that as a White educator, her 10 years of rigorous research was conducted under the umbrella of a diverse training program that afforded her "with a range of experiences in black communities that whites rarely have" (Blau, 2004, p. 16). After having experienced what Blau (2004) described as "cruel, raw, racial hatred" (p. 16) first-hand, as a resident in the ghettos of Chicago during her doctoral studies, these unfavorable experiences provided an incentive for her principal engagement in this scholarly research. Blau's (2004) research drew extensively from the work of ethnographers and theorists and her research questions were intentionally framed to compare Black and White high school students because Blau (2004) concluded, "black-white relations are most emblematic of the complexities involving intergroup relations in

the United States” (Blau, 2004, p. 8). The value of this literature source was integral to this study of mis-education in that it fostered rich, quantitative analyses using large, longitudinal databases to examine the dynamic of race, as it exists in the public school system. Ultimately, Blau’s (2004) study offered compelling evidence that American schools are settings that perpetuate the mis-education of Black students and reinforce White privilege.

Arguably, the progressive education canon has not yet begun to appropriately reflect the indelible insights of Black educators; therefore, thoughtful analysis on the present state of the mis-education of Black students is lacking. Dawson (2014) penned an account of mis-education from his informed perspective as a student grappling with the relevant theme of invisibility in education. As observed through the context of a student able to articulate his sense of disempowerment, Dawson’s own first-hand indictment of today’s educational system was damning in his realization that “I was constantly reminded of the difficulties of wearing both identities: Black and American. Despite the push to merge both identities, I—and other minority students—continue to feel invisible when these experiences are told from a limited purview” (Dawson, 2014). Dawson argued for the inclusion of prioritized instructional alternatives that counter hegemonic educational norms meant to control student thinking and behavior. Ultimately, Dawson offered support for an internal, cultural study of mis-education in his argument that current curriculum norms usurp agency, replace student values, and diminish student goals among Black students in particular. Additionally, Dawson (2014) addressed a “duality to my learning, or double consciousness (how Blacks view themselves through their eyes and in

the eyes of dominant white society), [which] has had a lasting impact on my education.” Clearly, Dawson related to prevalent mis-education themes of duality and invisibility.

In an auto-ethnographic study, Warren (2014) provided a viable counter to the prevalence of mis-education in his recommendation for the development of a pedagogy that accounts for the creativity and innovation of Black youth, and Black males in particular. By his own admission, Warren (2014) endeavored to turn the tide of the mis-education of Black students through his reformed teaching practices in the Chicago School System. Warren (2014) critiqued his own pedagogical beliefs and those of his colleagues and administrators to uncover the ease with which he and his peers “unconsciously reproduced inequitable schooling conditions for Black children, despite sharing their race” (Warren, p. 135, 2014). Ultimately, Warren’s (2014) personal narrative outlined challenges he sought to overcome that resulted in empowering him to be more critical of the gaps between students’ social and cultural perspectives and that of teachers.

Warren (2014) sought to “emphasize the development of a pedagogy that a) accounts for the creativity and innovation of Black youth and b) prioritizes instructional alternatives that counter hegemonic educational norms” (p. 149). Essentially, Warren (2014) posited the unique perspective of Black teachers as part of the problem contributing to the mis-education of Black students. Moreover, Black teachers are solely accountable (rather than partially instrumental), in crafting a cure-all solution to the ills of mis-education proliferating America’s schools. Warren (2014) capitalized on Woodson’s sub-premise that Black teachers somehow “perpetuate and maintain racial subordination in subtle, invisible ways” (p. 135). Specifically, Warren (2014) argued “Woodson’s (1933) mis-education thesis is used to name the reasons for the disjuncture in perspective

between Black teachers and Black students, through an exploration of one Black male's teaching practice [his own] in Chicago." Warren (2014) concluded, "The divergence in perspective I brought to my classroom as a result of my teacher training was further exacerbated by the feelings of inadequacy and racial subordination I experienced in the workplace" (Warren, 2014, p. 138). Warren's (2014) work proved useful to this study because of his unique, informed perspective on mis-education.

Taken collectively, both Dawson's (2014) and Warren's (2014) works are useful to this study as insightful primary resources that pertain to the validity of exploring authoritative accounts of Black educators from within the pedagogical community who are capable of contributing to an understanding of the problem of mis-education. Though the Black pedagogical voice was scarce and largely underrepresented in the literature, Dawson's (2014) and Warren's (2014) work focused on the credibility of the Black educators' voice. Such scholarship aimed at understanding the problem of mis-education of Black students through the lens of Black educators. Though scant and admittedly limited, existing research informed the foundational basis for engaging the problem of mis-education from a scholarly, narrative inquiry research study approach.

In other sources of relevant literature, Shapiro (2007) explored the ideological and attitudinal functions of schools in the U.S. Shapiro offered a qualitative analysis of the role of education in producing and maintaining general attitudes and values that contribute to "competitive, socially unequal, consumerist, and self-oriented culture" (Shapiro, 2007, p.2). Further, Shapiro touched on the mis-education of Black students by highlighting "the many students in school (typically of lower income and disproportionately Black) who fared much less well at school in terms of their academic success" (pp. 4—5), and his

conclusion reflected a focus on education's general role in supporting a more critically reflective, socially responsible, and compassionate culture overall. However, Shapiro failed to investigate the problem of mis-education as a cultural and educational phenomenon.

Humphries and Iruka (2017) posited that

Potentially preventing the educational gaps of Black students . . . requires intentional shifting from solely focusing on educational gaps to one that focuses on specific practices and policies that must be implemented to ensure that Black children are afforded the opportunities to meet their potential. (p. 29)

The researcher in this study investigated and attempted to help bridge the divide that exists between teachers, both Black and White, and Black students in K–12 schools as a means to turn the tide of mis-education and inform an alternative, liberating praxis.

Initially, the researcher chose phenomenology for this inquiry because based upon the review of relevant literature, the researcher determined that veteran researchers, like those cited (Blau, 2004; Dawson, 2014; Pryor 2014; Warren, 2014), overwhelmingly employed the phenomenological or ethnographic methodology to explore similar topics and to use research practices such as interviews, essays, field notes, and valid data-gathering and storage methods. Phenomenology is a form of philosophical inquiry using the disclosure of an object or experience to a public audience (Pryor, 2014). A phenomenology of mis-education, therefore, would examine mis-education through developing an in-depth understanding of the experience of individuals. To describe the elements of the mis-education of Black K–12 students in public spaces of education, the researcher initially considered the phenomenological method to give a view into the

aspects, profiles, absences and presences, and identity of this experiential phenomenon. However, Pryor's work also demonstrated why phenomenology was not an appropriate method for this study. Pryor (2014) offered a series of phenomenological essays as an attempt to answer, like Hegel, what the spirit of "the Black experience looks like." However, Pryor's admission that he "did not find anyone that commemorated Woodson's contribution to scholarship in researching mis-education" (p. 6) lacked applicability to this study on the mis-education of Black students. Instead, his comparative literature study highlighted a series of essays from Dubois, Hegel, Fanon, and Malcolm X. While thoughtful, Pryor's examination failed to make a significant contribution to addressing the pervasive problem of Black students who endure the ills of mis-education.

After determining that phenomenology was not an appropriate method for this study, the researcher explored an alternate, narrative research design approach. Narrative inquiry was functional based upon the conclusion that mis-education is a phenomenon, which warranted additional study, and which other researchers (Gillborn, 2014; Humphries & Iruka, 2017; Jayakumar, 2015; Lozenski, 2017; Shapiro, 2007) explored. Moreover, because mis-education as it is used in the context of this study is derived from Carter G. Woodson's (1933) seminal work, *The Mis-education of the Negro*, a narrative study was best suited to determine the continuing or modern presence of this phenomenon. Of the many benefits of a narrative inquiry approach, "inquiry may focus on the experiences of the individual, or seek to illuminate larger-scale social narratives" (Dwyer & Davis, 2016, p. 3).

Summary

Based on this ongoing review of literature, which the researcher used to develop a unique conceptual framework using CRT, TLT, and narrative/counter narrative to understand the mis-education of Black students in K–12 schools, there was sufficient justification for the premise that an investigation examining the problem of mis-education through the lens of several generations of Black educators would yield socially significant findings. Ultimately, this complex literature review (Machi & McEvoy, 2012) defined a research problem and provided strong support for pursuing a formal study to answer the sole research question:

1. How do the lifelong educational experiences of Black educators' contribute to an understanding of the education of Black students?

In conclusion, the educational system and modern reforms have failed Black students because they have not bridged the achievement gap, thus comprising the problem of chronic mis-education. The researcher in this study of the problem of mis-education contributed to a scant body of available empirical research on how to close the achievement gap for Black students. The researcher used a combination of comparative research, surveys, interviews, data analysis, and observation methods to examine the mis-education of Black students through the lens of three generations of Black educators. The study findings constitute a significant contribution to the scant body of research in the field of education. Such insights could help determine how to inspire advanced inquiry into expanding upon the design of a pedagogical praxis to begin to bridge the achievement gap for Black students in the U.S.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction to Methodology

In this study, the researcher employed a qualitative research design approach instead of a quantitative approach because the qualitative design aligned with the research goals. Veteran researchers overwhelmingly employ qualitative, narrative inquiry to explore similar topics and to engage in exemplary research practice. The narrative inquiry design best fit the purpose of this study because the task of gathering unique, personal narratives allowed the researcher to become deeply immersed in the cultural experiences of Blacks and empowered an in-depth study of mis-education. Further, the researcher favored a qualitative research design approach over a quantitative design because of the nature of this study. Specifically, an exploratory qualitative study inclusive of a verbal narrative was effective for exploring a pervasive pedagogical phenomenon in the twenty-first century: the mis-education of Black students. “Statistical research and related examination of trends are insufficient to address the increased dilemma of failing schools and educational inequality. Rather it is more appropriate to study how humans interact ... [by] gathering data through observations and in-depth discussions” (Lichtman, 2012, p.4). The problem of mis-education, which has been documented in the literature to be a highly complex phenomenon impossible to elucidate through quantitative means, is therefore best examined through a qualitative analysis of narratives collected from targeted study participants.

In that “qualitative research strives to collect, integrate, and present data from a variety of sources of evidence” (Yin, 2016, p. 9), the researcher triangulated data sources to enhance the credibility of the study’s results. The study was qualitative in that the

researcher relied upon the convergence of interviews, observations, document analysis, and field notes to answer the research questions. The researcher studied the target participants in their natural setting and through the context of their unique, lived experiences. Research in educational settings ideally aims to study various aspects of human behavior or research a problem. The problem the researcher addressed in this study was the perception of chronic mis-education of Black students. The researcher wanted to explore the adequacy of investigation and treatment of the perceived issue. The researcher also wanted to examine the level of significance placed on it, particularly as a phenomenon of 21st century pedagogy.

This chapter contains an articulation of how the researcher's methodology converted to sound research practice through (a) outlining the nature of the design, (b) restating the research questions driving the study, and (c) rationalizing the conceptual frameworks chosen to best organize and support the research premise. Moreover, the chapter contains the researcher's detailed explanation for choosing a qualitative design, the design's limitations and delimitations, the data analysis procedures, and expected findings from the study prior to conducting the research. The researcher secured approval from Concordia's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to starting data collection.

Research Question

Qualitative data, such as that generated from interviewing educators about their personal and professional experiences in the context of a study of the mis-education of Black students, was particularly powerful in illuminating key insights on the research topic. According to Wagner (2009),

Seeing the faces and hearing the stories, hopes, and opinions of those in our own community moves us emotionally, reminds us of the moral imperative behind our work, and enables us to see the information as living in three dimensions instead of in just one. (p. 3076)

Given the multi-faceted research benefits of this rich and three-dimensional context, the researcher analyzed participants' narratives in order to elucidate the problem of the mis-education of Black students and answer the following research question:

1. How do the lifelong educational experiences of Black educators contribute to an understanding of the education of Black students?

Nature of the Design

Narratives can be utilized to “cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.144). Further, narrative inquiry empowers an in-depth study of mis-education, and literature supports the researcher's use of narrative inquiry for scholarly purposes like those in this study.

Moreover, narrative inquiry is ideal for addressing how Black students exist as a part of an underprivileged and mis-educated demographic.

The researcher's conclusions in this study were based upon the personal and pedagogical experiences of a small group of retired and active educators. While researchers (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Mora, 2014; Ravitch, 2014) have investigated educational obstacles facing students, specific research into mis-educated Black students is scant. By opting to tell their stories in their own words, Blacks in pedagogy, such as the research participants, offered alternative points of view to influence policy, thus helping to

create the potential for complex educational reform and close the achievement gap. Mora (2014) stated,

Only if we create the conditions where all those involved in social interactions have a space to tell their stories in their own terms, will we find effective ways to engage in empowering dialogue leading to sustainable solutions to today's crises. (p. 12)

According to Ravitch, "within the ever-developing, intersecting, and overlapping contexts of globalization, top-down policy, mandates, and standardization of public and higher education, many conceptualize and position practitioner research as a powerful stance and tool of social, communal, and educational transformation" (2014). From this context, the researcher's use of the oral narratives of Black educators constituted a counter-hegemonic way of thinking about and approaching theory-research-practice-policy connections to the problem of the mis-education of Black students. Drawing on participants' own experiences with mis-education provided a counter-point to traditional assumptions and dialogs about racism in education.

Through the narrative inquiry design approach, researchers can weave a cohesive story by capturing the depth of experiences and the voice of a small number of participants. Haber-Curran and Tillapaugh (2014) used extensive interviews, copious document analysis, and appropriate themes to highlight the multiple tensions the Black student population experiences in educational institutions. While Haber-Curran and Tillapaugh may not have mentioned mis-education specifically, the challenges they highlighted might be analogous to mis-education. Thus, their qualitative narrative study was useful to this research.

Specifically, the narrative research design approach was useful for illustrating how educators' own personal and professional experience might otherwise inform the mis-education of Black students. Keen insights culled from several experienced, knowledgeable participants have the capacity to inform the best practices of curriculum, instruction, and future practice to contribute to effectively closing the achievement gap for an at-risk population. Ultimately, the researcher in this study sought to contribute to a relatively non-existent body of literature, as derived from within the culture itself, to ameliorate widespread education inequities for Black students who have experienced mis-education.

Historical Roots of Narrative Inquiry and Conceptual Frameworks

According to Denzin (1989), a general scope of the field of narrative research includes “method, life, self, experience, epiphany, case, autobiography, ethnography, auto-ethnography, biography, ethnography story, discourse, narrative, narrator, fiction, history, personal history, oral history, case history, case study, writing presence, difference, life history, life story, self story, and personal experience story” (p. 27). In the context of this study, the narrative inquiry design fostered the methodical collection and interpretation of the oral histories or narratives of the participants' lived experiences.

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) argued research that seeks to address achievement inequities for Black students or any other marginalized groups often reflect the majority viewpoint. Undoubtedly, a phenomenological study containing only the viewpoints of educators and policy makers from the majority demographic would lead to an incomplete understanding of the mis-education of Black students. In this study, the researcher employed multiple forms of narrative inquiry and counter-narratives, wherein personal

stories are juxtaposed against common majority assumptions to disrupt flawed master narratives.

Similarly, Sarcedo, Matias, Montoya, and Nishi (2015) used narrative inquiry and counter-storytelling to understand the impact of race/class micro aggressions on minority students. However, Sarcedo et al. focused on first-generation, low-income college students; thus, the authors did not sufficiently comprehend the gap of Black students in K–12 institutions. The researcher in this study built on the limited presence of narrative inquiry inspired literature and scholarship, thus helping to combat widespread education inequities for Black students in the K–12 setting. Specifically, the researcher used narrative inquiry through the Critical Race Theory (CRT) contextual framework to impart the story of Black mis-education from the participants’ informed perspective. Although the researcher explored other research frameworks, the researcher determined CRT was best suited to posit a narrative study of mis-education.

Drawing upon the value of contemporary narrative research, Ross and Moore (2014) explored the use of a methodology entitled Biographical Narrative Interpretive Methods (BNIM) in their research on motivations for trade union learning. Their explicit use of BNIM was intended to get further inside the felt world and lived life of the union learner. Similarly, the researcher in this study explored the lived experience of Black professionals in pedagogy. However, instead of the modern application of BNIM, the researcher culled narrative inquiry research through application of the CRT lens. Ross and Moore concluded:

Educational deficit, employability, ways of learning and collectivism motivate union learners and BNIM, though problematic, exposes a raw subjectivity in union

learner agency and motivation which may not be fully invoked in traditional interview approaches, and which is of interest methodologically to multiple research fields including industrial relations. (p. 459)

Therefore, in using the narrative inquiry approach rather than a BNIM approach, the unstructured interview techniques the researcher employed in this study revealed both educational and employability deficits of Blacks as a consequence of their mis-education.

Additionally, Scott and Rodriguez (2015) posited the racial identity epistemology as the theoretical lens through which mis-education can be studied. Scott and Rodriguez included results from a larger phenomenological study on Black academic persistence and career aspirations in education and used the narratives of three Black male educators to examine “the dimensions of how power and privilege operate in the stereotype of threat” (p. 712) to draw conclusions on mis-education. Given the relative similarity of the racial identity epistemology to CRT, the researcher determined that a single, racially centered conceptual framework would be appropriate for the study of mis-education. As such, the researcher used CRT framework to complement the narrative design and topic of study while not replicating an existing approach.

Finally, the researcher examined journal articles, books, and scholarly material that included themes of mis-education, qualitative narrative inquiry methods and CRT although there was a conspicuous lack of previous research on mis-education. Emergent themes within the literature, as cited in chapter 2, included the school-to-prison pipeline, unequal school funding, and the achievement gap for Black students. Ultimately, the researcher discovered that scholars have used a variety of epistemological and methodological methods, to analyze the experiences of historically underrepresented

populations of Black students across the educational setting. Furthermore, the researcher applied the educational framework of transformative learning theory (TLT) in this study to demonstrate robust links between the content of the educators' narratives and CRT. In this vein, TLT constituted the basis for a complementary, in-depth analysis of the mis-education of Black students.

Alternative Methodological Designs

A wide variety of perspectives on the mis-education and resulting under-achievement of Black students is available. Given the numerous publications focused on addressing the achievement gap, one would assume that this topic has received more than enough research attention. However, Caduri (2013) argued that scholarship exhaustively detailing the problem of mis-education from outside of the culture being studied fails to contribute to a feasible understanding of the problem or solution. Caduri argued in favor of the ethnographic use of the biographical narrative via "the inclusion of teachers' [own] stories about their pedagogical practice" to establish a foundation to accept narrative researchers' findings. Given the breadth of existing research, the researcher in this study initially considered attempting to conduct a study of the educational inequality of an entire ethnic group of people, (i.e., people, that is, an ethnographic approach. However, the researcher eventually decided an ethnographic design approach would be insufficient for fulfilling the study's purpose, given the expansive scope and potential long-term investment.

Ethnography is rooted in cultural anthropology and requires that a researcher be immersed within the culture he or she is studying. Creswell (2013) asserted ethnography is a design suited to study the culture of an interconnected group of people while noting

that study findings are typically recorded in narrative form. Given that intensive immersion and extensive face-to-face involvement with participants of the target culture and a natural participation in their settings and social worlds are characteristics of ethnography, the researcher in this study initially believed a combination of ethnographic and auto-ethnographic approaches would lead to a successful study. However, ethnographic study involves time-consuming, lengthy research to be able to define and understand people's everyday norms, rituals, and routines in detail, and that was not the researcher's aim in this study of the mis-education of Black students. Thus, based upon extensive time constraints involved in the ethnographic form of research, the researcher deemed narrative inquiry to be the most effective means to address the problem of mis-education and to contribute to the scholarship in the field of pedagogy.

Perhaps the most significant benefit of using narrative inquiry instead of ethnography is that interviews may be conducted over weeks, months, or even years, yet the final narrative is not required to be in chronological order. Rather, a narrative story can be skillfully woven together with themes and the ability to reconcile conflicting stories and highlight tensions that might not otherwise be apparent through other methodological approaches. Daiute (2014, p. 18) avowed, "narrating interweaves diverse perspectives of people with varied influence, experience, knowledge, and goals." This fluid ability of narration empowered the researcher to focus on participants' lived stories instead of becoming overwhelmed with the norms of an entire culture group. Moreover, using narrative inquiry enabled the researcher to analyze intricate discourse gathered using open-ended research questions.

The theoretical rationale for the use of the narrative design has been documented elsewhere (Adler, Lodi-Smith, Philippe, & Houle, 2016; Habermas & Reese, 2015; McAdams & McLean, 2013; McLean & Syed, 2016). Nonetheless, the researcher in this study sought to evaluate the narrative approach for its feasibility in a study of mis-education through the lived experience of Black educators. Despite the rather limited scholarly criticism that the stories people tell about their lives are not necessarily regarded as scientific, accurate, or even credible, (Brushwood Rose & Granger, 2013; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007) overwhelming evidence in the literature suggests narratives serve their own context-specific function. The relative value of the narrative design was apparent in the combined purpose of the research, the research population, and the sampling method for study participants.

Research Population and Sampling Method

The researcher crafted this study to encourage participants to share their chronological, intimate stories to contribute to an increased understanding of the effects of mis-education. The qualitative method was uniquely fitting to address the research question of how Black students experience being educated, based upon an analysis of the combined, wide ranging pedagogical experiences of Black educators who readily identify with the phenomenon of mis-education. Therefore, a random sampling of participants, which is common for quantitative studies, was not appropriate for the unique needs of this qualitative study. The researcher in this study selected the population via purposeful and criterion-based sampling (Robinson, 2014) of the selected population and included multi-part, intimate, in-depth, one-to-one conversations developed using the research questions. This process allowed the participants to willingly share their life experiences. The results

evolved through active engagement in conversational dialogue, and as study participants shared the stories that arose from answering the interview questions, the researcher collected the data that informed this study.

The population for this study included Blacks educators from ages 35–85 and with varying levels of education. These criteria encompassed a variety of participants with diverse, relevant experiences and cultural similarities. Creswell (2013) demonstrated that qualitative researchers do not always know the number of people in the research beforehand; indeed, the sample may change in size or type during the research. In this sense, sampling goes on until saturation has been achieved, or until no new information has been generated. Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Walker, 2012), or when there is no longer an ability to obtain new information (Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L., 2006). The researcher believed conducting qualitative interviews with a small group of targeted participants would demonstrate that the phenomenon of mis-education is complex and that copious analysis of the data generated from five participants would reach the point of saturation for this study of mis-education.

Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) suggested data saturation could occur within the first twelve interviews and after that point, very few new phenomena are likely to emerge. However, modern researchers (Baker, Edwards, & Doidge, 2012; Mason, 2017) suggest that it may also take only a few interviews, 3–5 to be exact, to demonstrate that a phenomenon is more complex or varied than previously thought. Baker, Edwards, & Doidge (2012) acknowledge that in order to decide how many qualitative interviews is enough to ensure validity, the researcher must interrogate the purpose of their research.

Baker, Edwards, & Doidge (2012) further attest that a very small sample can produce a study with depth and significance depending on the initial and emergent research questions and how the researcher conducted the study and constructed the analysis. Mason (2017) also identifies the need within qualitative research to build a convincing analytical narrative based on ‘richness, complexity and detail’ rather than on statistical logic. Each of these sources affirmed the validity of the researcher’s belief that saturation occurs when the addition of new participants does not result in identifying new information or perspectives.

The sample or research population consisted of two university professors who have prior K–12 experience and specific insight into the lack of preparedness of their Black students in university environments. The sample population also included three K–12 educators who have extensive experience working with Black students in varying elementary, middle, and high school institutions. The specific geographic setting for the study is the metropolitan Detroit, MI area. The sample group had a diverse age and gender profile to reflect the target population of Black educators. This researcher ultimately concluded that combining narrative inquiry with a small group of well versed, experienced participants would allow for the opportunity to understand a community or culture group.

Even more fitting for contemporary research, Creswell (2013) believed small sample sizes are appropriate within qualitative studies, which supports the choice of the researcher in the current study to limit the sample size to five participants. Researchers (Ranney, Meisel, Choo, Garro, Sasson, & Morrow Guthrie, 2015) agree that reaching saturation without approaching data overload and delving so deeply as to cause new

phenomena to emerge is important. For qualitative studies, Creswell (2013) recommended that researchers include a minimum of six participants. However, because of time constraints and other limitations and delimitations, the researcher focused on the stories of only five participants. There are rules to govern an appropriate sample size in qualitative research; therefore, the researcher ensured the qualitative sample size complemented the research design, the time allotted, and the resources available to conduct this study of the mis-education of Black students.

Moreover, because one of the primary goals of qualitative research is to gain a meaningful and in-depth understanding of a specific group of people (in this study, Blacks in America), or type of individual, the researcher in this study deemed educators (those who are admittedly more attuned to the effects of their own educational experience) as ideal to gain insight into the phenomena of mis-education. The researcher uncovered central themes, core elements, and shared experiences that are common among the distinct group of educators chosen for this research study. Their unique input simplified analyses to fit the time constraints related to this study and allowed for timely gathering of narrative data to engage the study.

Instrumentation

The researcher in the study was the primary data collection instrument and recorded the open-ended questions and answers gleaned from interviews with study participants after receiving their written consent. To avoid influencing the data collected from participants, the researcher bracketed her personal opinions, beliefs, and personal experiences as distinct from that of others. Bracketing identified the researcher's beliefs, preconceptions, and assumptions about the research topic and separated her personal

narrative throughout the study as a means for self-reflection and external review. The researcher used this strategy to increase rigor and to reduce bias.

Other forms of instrumentation are questions, field notes, journals, observations and analytic assessments of data as gleaned through one-on-one interviews. Further, recording interviews enhances their usefulness. Cancino, Faúndez, and Besoain (2017) found that using a polyphonic listening device enhanced the researchers' reflexivity in the sense that it opened multiple options for extensive analysis and spawned a systematic writing exercise as a way of building and disseminating the knowledge learned from study participants.

Likewise, Creswell (2013) posited that qualitative researchers typically use audio recorders to record in-depth interviews for transcription. The researcher in this study used her iPhone voice recorder to record the interviews, thus helping to organize the copious data analysis that is required in qualitative research. The purposefully selected sample population adhered to the pre-identified selection criteria of age, geographic location, and pedagogical experience.

Data Collection

After receiving IRB approval, the researcher obtained written consent from each participant signifying their ability and willingness to be involved in the study as well as their understanding of the researcher's purpose for the study and data collection procedures. The researcher's first step in the data collection protocol was to establish a conversational rapport with each of the study participants by properly orienting herself as the primary researcher, outlining the purpose of the study, building conversational ease through small talk, and by otherwise setting the stage for a successful interview prior to

engaging the actual research interview (please reference the full interview protocol in Appendix B). As stated earlier, the primary form of data analysis was face-to-face interviews inclusive of both research questions and open-ended inquiries as driven by the participants' answers. Moustakas (2001) advanced the notion that such heuristic interviews should not be limited by time constraints but rather governed by the participants' need to "tell his or her story to a point of natural closing" (p. 264).

The use of the several pre-determined, open-ended interview questions empowered the participants to create unique options for responding and voicing their perspectives about education as informed scholar-practitioners. Creswell, J.W. and Creswell, J.D. (2017) outline the merit of the open-ended interview data collection method in studies in which the researcher "seeks to examine an issue related to oppression of individuals . . . stories are collected of individual oppression using a narrative approach" (p. 17). This introductory step of building rapport included encouraging each participant to determine the interview location and time, selecting their own pseudonyms to encourage ownership of the data and to protect their identities, and the completion of formal consent forms as a pre-cursor to providing a brief overview of the use of recording devices during the interview.

The second step of data collection was to gather the data needed for the study by eliciting the answers to the research questions and documenting any corresponding stories while exploring participants' emotions, themes, and coherence. "Narrative questions are concerned with the explicit content of stories (e.g., emotional language), the implicit content of stories (e.g., themes), and the structural aspects of stories (e.g., coherence)" (Adler et al., 2017, p. 9). Consequently, the primary data collection tool was interviews

with study participants whose life experiences and unique demographics (age, gender, and ethnicity) appropriately complement that of the cultural group under study. Reflection-based questions occurred later in the interview as a way of synthesizing participants' answers and giving the researcher a methodical follow-up opportunity to clarify statements participants made at various points in their interview.

The final step in the three-stage interview protocol was to close the interview session by formally thanking the study participants for their candor and closing the interview with conclusive measures. In this final stage, thanking the interviewee and ensuring that their input was clear for future study analysis was imperative. Although the participants informally agreed in advance to the interviews, ensuring the participants' comfort level with the personal information presented during the interviews was still important. Ultimately, all data collection methods were grounded in the scientific, methodological procedure of "focusing on studying one or two individuals, gathering data through the collection of their stories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering (or using life course stages) the meaning of those experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 54).

The psychological well being of study participants is paramount in narrative inquiry, and the researcher organized the consent, data collection, and debriefing procedures with this in mind. Given that the reporting of one's personal narrative can be both a taxing and emotional experience, the researcher gave ethical consideration to the fact that "narratives cannot be anonymized in the same way other types of data can" (Adler et al., 2017, p. 11). Consequently, throughout the interview, the researcher strove

to allow the authentic voice of the study participants to illustrate broader trends and contribute to the scholarship on the mis-education of Black students.

Identification of Attributes

Attributes are characteristics of an observable object/phenomenon under study. The characteristics of the problem of mis-education are not fully identified because of a conspicuous lack of previous research. One characteristic observable in the phenomenon of mis-education is that “ignorance is a societal inevitability manifested in diverse forms that may be perpetuated or even actively constructed through processes of mis-education” (Angulo, 2016, p. 374). To the extent that the mis-education of Black students manifests as a combination of an ignorance or callous disregard of cultural norms, lowered expectations for Black student performance, and practical application of various forms of institutionalized racism—inequitable school funding, racist micro aggressions, the school-to-prison-pipeline and failed federal reforms—the primary attribute of mis-education is that it is an educational phenomenon, which fails to conform to the unique needs of Black students. Perhaps the most significant component of Woodson’s (1933) original diagnosis of mis-education, is the constructive critique of the absence of Black history as a base of knowledge for future study. Thus, the collaborative design of a liberation-infused pedagogy to incorporate the Black experience at the center of learning, is warranted.

The research questions in this study emerged and evolved based on information the researcher found. For example, the researcher initially had five research questions but condensed those to two questions and fused both of these into a single query based upon the progression of this research study. The literature review was continuous and comprehensive of a cross section of pertinent studies and research sources to inform the

problem. Lastly, as earlier referenced, the researcher selected the study participants based on the purposeful selection criterion.

Modern research on the attribute of narrative methodology as revealed in Kelchtermans's (2016) work in interviewing educators further offered legitimacy for narrative discourses for modern practitioners and for former teachers to think about and substantively discuss their career experiences. The data collection protocol was an attribute of this study and the researcher intended the interviews to challenge the prevalent hegemony of at-risk, Black student performance discourses in education, which employ the assumptions of individuals who have little knowledge of mis-educated, Black youth. Through the unstructured interview, study participants were empowered to counter flawed themes of mis-education by offering their own personal and professional experience as an example to study this phenomenon.

Narrative Analysis

The practice of people sharing stories about their life experiences has rapidly gained legitimacy in educational research. Creswell (1998) introduced seven elements of narrative research that represent the aspects of a narrative study and suggested criteria that researchers might use to assess the quality of a narrative project: individual experiences, chronology of the experiences, collecting individual stories, restorying, coding for themes, context, setting, and collaboration with participants. The researcher in this study employed all seven characteristics as appropriate but prioritized the "restorying" or "retelling" phase in narrative data analysis.

To maintain both the quality and rigor of research "issues of trustworthiness, narrative truth, verisimilitude and utility need to be attended to, for any narrative study to

ensure its quality” (Loh, 2013, p.3). One of the researcher’s aims in this study of mis-education was to demonstrate the ways in which content analysis could be used to analyze social scientific data, such as that derived from interviews. Babbie (2013) highlighted the modern association between content analysis and interview documentation in that content analysis is “the study of recorded human communication” (p. 295). Further, educational investigations, in general, have paid too little attention to teachers’ voices. An increasing number of scholars are suggesting, however, that narrative research offers a way to hear teachers’ voices and begin to understand their culture from the inside” (Cortazzi, 2014, p. 1).

Kellam, Boklage, Coley, Walther, and Cruz (2017) described a narrative analysis method that draws on narration and literary studies by moving structural narrative analysis from a focus on examining the linguistic parts of narratives to understanding thematic structures that comprise the whole narrative. In their study designed to explore the role of emotion as a core aspect of connected ways of knowing in engineering student learning, Kellam et al. determined a:

Reliable way to construct smooth stories (with attention to the structures of stories)
... [to] compare trajectories of student experiences [and to use] narratology as a way to do structural analysis to see emergent patterns across participant narratives that is independent of the specific context of that student. (p. 70)

Undoubtedly, during data analysis the separate data sources the researcher collected had to be summarized and integrated into a unified portrait. According to Cooper (2016), “data analysis demands that the researcher distinguish systematic data patterns from noise or

chance fluctuation” (p. 7) to synthesize the study results, interpret the cumulative evidence, and determine the conclusions the data warrants.

The narrative inquiry approach studies lives, respecting and understanding lived experience as an integral source of knowledge. Clandinin (2013) stated

Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people’s lives, both individual and social. (p. 18)

Clandinin (2013) concluded, “Narrative inquiry begins and ends with a respect for ordinary lived experience” (p. 18). Expanding on this concept, Creswell (2013) elaborated on the characteristics of narrative inquiry. For Czarniawska (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 73), narrative inquiry is understood as spoken or written text giving an account of an event, action or series of events, actions that are chronologically connected.

Data analysis is crucial in qualitative research because it influences both the quality and applicability of the results. Specifically, the researcher used data reduction and coding techniques to organize the raw data from this study. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) suggested qualitative data reduction analysis refers to the process whereby the mass of qualitative data researchers may obtain from interview transcripts, field notes, observations, etc. is reduced and organized via coding, writing summaries, discarding irrelevant data, and so on. The researcher in this study extensively reviewed and reread

the qualitative data and searched for statements that fit into any of the categories utilizing the open coding system of:

- *Valid*—they should accurately reflect what is being researched.
- *Mutually exclusive*—the codes should be distinct, with no overlap.
- *Exhaustive*—all relevant data should fit into a code.

Research on reliable data analysis procedures for qualitative studies describes that qualitative researchers, in general, favor the detailed dissemination of research results, including an outline of how the analysis was done, and summarizing the epistemological foundations that sustained the study's findings. Therefore, the researcher developed a chronological yet detailed data analysis approach in this study.

Limitations of the Research Design

The primary limitation of a qualitative research approach is that findings cannot be extended to a wider population with the same degree of certainty that researchers can generalize in quantitative analyses. The limitations of the narrative design of this study are apparent in the small sample size. The use of a small group of participants typically mandates the development of a contingency plan if one, or more, of the participants withdraw from the study. In this study, the researcher recruited a sample size of five participants knowledgeable about the problem of mis-education, realizing that including the input of this small number of targeted participants was ideal for this study. However, the researcher also acknowledges the potential limitations of a small sample size of study participants and that future research may benefit from more participants in a larger confirmatory study (Hackshaw, 2008, p. 1141).

The small number of study participants was also warranted by the type of research problem under investigation and emanated from the aforementioned lack of reliable data on the mis-education of Black students from the unique perspective of Black pedagogy professionals. Ultimately, a combination of logistical factors and the existing gap in the literature required the researcher to limit the scope of analysis to a feasible number of study participants. The absence of available research on the mis-education of Black students similarly presents a limitation while underscoring the need for further research.

The potential disability-derived accessibility limitations of the researcher are also being disclosed given that a long-term, physical injury affected her access to prospective study participants. Specifically, the researcher sustained severe injuries (multiple fractures to the femur and tibial plateau) that limited her mobility and required a series of reconstructive surgeries that considerably impaired her physical ability between the period of February, 2015–October, 2017. Though not believed to be permanent, this limitation shifted the prospective study from an intended study group of 12–20 participants to extensive use of one-on-one interviews (with a small group of well-informed study participants with a wealth of life experience) as best suited to the needs of this study. If it had been feasible, the potential focus group discussion would have had the following advantages: it is both a cheaper and more expedient manner of obtaining valuable data, and colleagues and friends may be more comfortable in voicing opinions in each other's company than on their own with the researcher as the intimidating authority figure.

Additionally, the focus group environment might have empowered participants with an opportunity to react to the opinion of others with which they may disagree or of which they are unaware. Holloway, Wheeler, and Holloway (2012) suggested, “the

dynamic interaction among participants stimulates their thoughts and reminds them of their own feelings about the research topic” (p. 117). Additionally, within the confines of a focus group, all participants might have had an opportunity to ask questions, which may have in turn, engendered much more information than did the individual interview format the researcher chose to employ. Finally, the researcher acknowledges that self-reported data as gleaned from participant interviews is limited and may contain potential sources of bias in that data can rarely be independently verified.

Validity

In terms of both the credibility and dependability of the data, the researcher (as the primary data collection tool) ensured the study is inclusive of an objective point-of-view. For example, study participants were intentionally asked to reference their own *educational* experiences, and that of their students, without regard to the notion of mis-education as the phenomenon under study. This measure removed any bias and results-based conclusions or references, which might elicit responses with a negative connotation thereby reducing the likelihood of qualitative evidence geared toward predetermined, narrative content. Further, the researcher empowered participants to maintain ownership of their voices, and duly control their level of participation in the study. To further establish the credibility of the study, the researcher was transparent, straightforward, and used language appropriate to the task. Furthermore, no part of this study was biased against persons because of sexual orientation, racial group, gender, age, or disability. Finally, the researcher acknowledges the importance of sharing the research design and corresponding data with the participants, so that they might determine for themselves the credibility of the study. According to Creswell (2014), appropriate “strategies for sharing

include providing copies of reports to participants and stakeholders, making reports available on websites and publishing studies in multiple languages, where needed” (p. 100).

Expected Findings

The expected findings of this study before research commenced were that the participants would offer evidence from their personal and professional experience to attest to and support the existing phenomenon of mis-education as a prevalent problem affecting Black students in K–12 institutions. Additionally, the researcher expected this study to reveal that overwhelmingly, educational reforms have not met the needs of Black students and have failed to bridge the achievement gap, not only in Detroit, but also across the nation. Moreover, the researcher predicted this study might also contribute to current pedagogical theory and research in that the traditional instructional techniques and methods to teach Black students are based upon outdated socio-political constructs. Certainly, the pedagogical field requires innovative frameworks and relevant data, and the field would benefit from a new, liberating pedagogical praxis to achieve significant improvements in the educational landscape for the underserved at-risk student population of Black students being mis-educated in K–12 schools.

Additionally, the researcher assumed that one or more of the study participants, because of their distinct life experiences, generational life experiences, and educational backgrounds, were likely to conclude that mis-education is prevalent among Black students. Participants were selected on the belief that their educational experiences would be similar to that of the target population. Despite the research questions being framed to only inquire about how participants’ and Black students experience education, so as not to

unduly influence the premise of mis-education, the researcher anticipated that each participant would possess first-hand, practical knowledge of how their lives have been similarly impacted by a poor and abject educational foundation in K–12 institutions. The researcher expected the participants' candid and detailed input would prove invaluable to the study findings because of the diversity of their life experience. Further, the researcher assumed participants' input would be vital because of their distinct role in serving as testaments to the premise driving this study that though mis-education has not been treated as a phenomenon in twenty-first century education, suffering the effects of mis-education may manifest as a permanent detriment to Blacks.

The anticipated benefit of this study was that it could foster future qualitative inquiry into the creation of an innovative pedagogical model to aid researchers, educators, and policy makers in improving academic achievement outcomes of Black students more effectively. The presence of mis-education in schools warrants an alternative pedagogical approach to ensure the successful education of Black students. The researcher intended the study to foster sound qualitative inquiry using a combination of comparative research, interviews, document analysis, and observation methods.

Ethical Issues

To earn the approval of Concordia University's IRB, the researcher must guarantee the protection of study participants prior to conducting interviews or collecting data. As an ethical safeguard, the researcher committed to ensuring the standard protections that minimize risk to study participants, including the practice of maintaining detailed field notes of in-depth participant interviews and observations; and written transcripts of interviews so that there is a documented record of each of the researcher's interactions

with the participants. Finally, the researcher protected the confidentiality of participants and conveyed the true purpose of the study without deception.

Maintaining confidentiality of information collected from research participants means that only the investigator was able to identify the responses of individual subjects. The researcher provided confidentiality of the information collected from research participants through narrative interviews in that the study does not include any links between individual responses and participants' identities. The researcher avoided collecting identifying information of prospective research participants when it was not essential to the study protocol.

Specifically, to protect participants' confidentiality, the researcher used study codes on data documents (e.g., interview transcripts) instead of recording identifying information. Further, the researcher kept a separate document that linked the study code to subjects' identifying information locked in a separate location that only the primary investigator could access. Further, the researcher protected study participants' confidentiality through encrypting identifiable data and removing face sheets containing identifiers (e.g., names and addresses) from interview documents containing data from study participants. Finally, the researcher stored data documents within locked locations and assigned security codes to all computerized records; the researcher will keep all study data for three years after the completion of all research activities. After three years, the researcher will shred and recycle paper records. Records stored on a computer hard drive will be erased using commercial software applications designed to remove all data from the storage device.

Chapter 3 Summary

According to Cloonan, Fox, Ohi, and Halse (2016), critical, detailed analysis of pedagogies for teachers' own intercultural learning experiences is "largely absent in education research," in stark contrast to the overwhelming attention to developing students' intercultural capabilities and theoretical policy analyses. As such, there is a valid argument that this narrative inquiry of educators may contribute to pedagogy and policy as a future means to showcase the evidence that research into the mis-education of Black students in K–12 institutions must be firmly rooted in the work and lived experiences of the teachers' career stories, as was accomplished within this study.

Furthermore, the overall design and data collection methods as presented are sound, feasible, and consistent with a viable study to impact educational policy and improve upon decision making related to modern educational reforms. The expected findings and ethical considerations of the narrative inquiry as presented may be sufficient to advance educational enhancements to counter the prevalence of mis-education in all its forms. Keen insight as culled from a few crucial, hands-on participants has the capacity to inform the best practices of curriculum, instruction, and future practice to contribute to effectively closing the achievement gap for an at-risk population. Ultimately, the researcher sought to contribute to a relatively non-existent body of literature, as derived from within the culture itself, to ameliorate widespread education inequities for Black students who have experienced mis-education.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction to Data Analysis

The problem the researcher addressed in this study was the perception of chronic mis-education of Black students. The researcher wanted to explore the adequacy of investigation and treatment of the perceived issue. The researcher also wanted to examine the level of significance placed on it, particularly as a phenomenon of twenty-first century pedagogy. The convergence of in-depth narrative interviews, participant observations, and field notes were utilized to answer the sole research question: How do the lifelong educational experiences of Black educators' contribute to an understanding of the education of Black students? The researcher interacted with five participants in their natural setting and explored the mis-education of Black students through the context of their unique, lived experiences. The integral contribution of Black educator narratives is crucial to a study of the mis-education of Black students because:

What we know from decades of research and what we've learned from working with black leaders for decades, is that representation matters and reform efforts flourish and endure when the intended beneficiaries not only have a seat at the table, but are at the head of that table leading movements. (Anderson, 2017, para. 2)

The analysis stage of a narrative inquiry study admittedly presented particular challenges. Namely, to maintain the rigorous goals of a self-prescribed yet sound research field experience timeline, the researcher had to engage in the overwhelming joint tasks of simultaneous data collection and analysis. Suter (2012) made the following observation in his text *Introduction to Education Research: A Critical Thinking Approach*:

The main point that Merriam emphasizes is that data analysis and data collection occur simultaneously; otherwise it not only is “overwhelming” but also jeopardizes the potential for more useful data and valuable findings. Making good sense of data as it comes in (its interpretation) is a process of organization, reduction, consolidation, comparison, and reconfiguration. One has to “break the code,” so to speak. (p. 360)

For this research study, the researcher employed narrative inquiry by gathering the events and educational experiences in the lives of Black educators while simultaneously using narrative analytic procedures to produce chronological, explanatory stories.

Undoubtedly, finding the most suitable method of data analysis and presentation of the qualitative research findings takes time and effort. “As researchers, we pay attention to both the content of the narration (the *told*) and the structure of the narration (the *telling*)” (Josselson, 2013, p. 14). Making the best use of the data collected and representing participants’ narratives in a coherent and meaningful way were both critical for achieving the goals of this study. To accomplish the goal of scientifically examining the chronic mis-education of Black students as narrated through the life experiences of Black educators, the narrative research technique of restorying was employed so that key elements in the narrative (time, place, plot) could be placed in a chronological sequence. Further, the researcher used Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal’s (2004) techniques for analysis of narrative-biographical interviews as well as Mertova and Webster’s (2009) techniques for analyzing critical events. These techniques were crucial to crafting each final narrative summary in a manner designed to honor the empowered voice of the Black educators who were study participants.

Description of the Sample

Interviewing participants whose life experiences and demographics (age, gender, and ethnicity) appropriately complemented that of the cultural group under study was crucial to the data analysis. The population for this study included Blacks educators from ages 35–85 and with varying levels of education. The criteria for the targeted sample of study participants encompassed a variety of Black educators with diverse, relevant experiences and cultural similarities. The use of pre-determined open-ended questions empowered the participants to create options for responding, thus empowering them to voice their experiences and perspectives on the education of Black students as an informed participant, through the lens of their own past educational experience combined with the valuable insight of having been in the classroom as a professional educator. Moreover, the inclusion of both seasoned, veteran educators combined with that of Trina, a younger, similarly well-educated and informed participant with professional experience with students from the K–12 and post-secondary population ultimately enhanced the study’s findings.

The researcher conducted five participant interviews in the Metropolitan Detroit, MI area to engage in practical application of the methodology, research question, and five interview questions. Three of the interview participants were female and two were male. Four of the participant interviews were conducted within the privacy of the homes of each participant, and one took place in the living room of the principal investigator to accommodate logistical and timing issues. The interview participants represented the diverse disciplines of K–12 and post-secondary educators with additional, varied experience in the following unique capacities: elected political office, grassroots

community activism, museum education, and law. Three of the interview participants were veteran educators with at least 15 years of experience in education, while two interview participants had less than six years of experience as educators. Two of the five study participants were education administrators with valuable experience both in the classroom and in leadership positions.

According to Ennis (2016), “in a life history approach the researcher explores the person’s life, usually focusing on the cultural norms that influenced the individual” (p. 26). Using the revealing life history approach that Ennis outlined, the researcher worked most closely with participants #2 and #5. Participant #2 is a professor emeritus and former elected official, who provided rich stories of her life spanning from early elementary school years through the completion of a bachelor’s degree and culminating with her current capacity as a local college professor. Participant #5 is in his 80s and possesses a sharp mind and memory, and shared stories about the differences between his early, Southern school and life experiences in comparison to his later educational experiences in MI. The ease and candor with which both respondents shared of their unique biographical and life narrative(s) served as a primary contributor to the chronology of a life informed, fueled, and driven by educational pursuits. Through all respondents, but particularly these two, the researcher was able to glean stories from lives well lived and an intentional commitment to ensure all students’ educational success and the success of Black students in particular.

Participant #1 holds a Juris Doctorate degree and works as both a respected attorney and adjunct professor at a local college while also pursuing multiple charitable community endeavors. This respondent’s unique personal story as both a student and

professor proved an invaluable resource to this study, given her keen insight on her early educational pursuits and their impact in determining her later career path and motivation to teach. The final two participants, participants #3 and #4 respectively, represented a unique pair of retired and current educators who spanned professional, administrative, and volunteer (museum docent) capacities. Collectively, the insights of this diverse group of educators' informed unique perspectives on the education of Black students through a combination of the narratives from their own schooling and or as gleaned through practical pedagogical experience.

Research Methodology and Analysis

After identifying the purpose and specific qualitative methodology for the study and engaging a targeted selection of prospective research participants, the researcher posed narrative research questions to each participant and utilized the study participants' interview content to co-construct the narrative data. With the goal of eliciting useful narrative data content, the researcher had to establish an interactive, personal, and collaborative process characterized by a caring, trusting relationship between her and the participants. At the outset of the study, the study participants received information about obtaining their signed consent and how they would have an empowered voice in their own narrative story because the researcher intended only to employ active listening and follow-up questions to the information that they willingly presented themselves. One element which was not predicted before the researcher engaged the field research component of this study was that the scope of each participant's narrative would not merely be limited to their educational journey, as initially believed, but would encompass their entire lives based upon the extent of personal biography each person was willing to share.

The explicit steps used to collect data for this research study were as follows: the researcher elicited narratives from each of the five study participants that reflected both their personal and professional experience. Following the initial interview with each participant, the researcher engaged in the immediate transcription of audiotaped interviews to engage the process of restorying, or retelling the individual's story. The goal of the restorying process was to re-construct past, present, and future places or settings, to describe their story, and analyze each story for critical themes. The researcher carefully completed this protocol with each study participant. To ensure the researcher collaborated with each participant and storyteller in all phases of research, the initial interview was followed by either additional visits or phone call(s) to clarify narrative information crucial to crafting a complete chronological timeline of events. The final stage in the data collection protocol was to write a story about the participant's personal, professional, and social experiences to attempt to fashion the events in a chronology of their relevant life experiences. The data collection process was both ontological and epistemological, in the sense that there was an attempt to better understand the phenomenon of mis-education through the narrative interviews and to capture participants' realities of having been educated as a Black student. Ultimately, each participant interview and the research questions were an explicit attempt to understand the phenomenon of Black students' mis-education.

The researcher spent five weeks, from September 2017 to mid-October, 2017, actively engaged in the field research protocol, which entailed collecting and analyzing the research for this study. The narrative research methodology started with scripted interview prompts about elementary, middle, and secondary school memories. The goal in

this step was that participants would be inspired to use the rich tapestry of their educational experiences to include both their own failures and successes as students. These prompts served as a way for the participants to construct a biographical narrative in various times in their lives as students (see Appendix A for the interview protocol). The participant interviews were designed around three categories: (a) the teachers' autobiographical narratives, (b) their own educational narratives, and (c) professional philosophies and stories of teaching Black students. The interviews were largely informal to empower study participants to explore both their personal and professional narratives (Alsup, 2006) and although the researcher had a plan for each narrative interview, the intention was for discussions to be flexible and unscripted in nature.

Originally, the researcher intended to explore each participant's story in a series of three short interview sessions so as not to fatigue the participant and to let the topic of their own educational narratives simmer in their minds between sessions to perhaps elicit more stories to share. However, because of at least one participant's time constraints, multiple interviews were not always feasible. Further, several participants were eager to share and complete their stories, so the researcher was able to complete most interviews in two sessions. The researcher conducted only one interview that followed the original three-part model. Approximate interview/discussion time totaled one and a half-hour to two hours, (or 45 minutes per session).

Labov and Waletzky's (1977) sociolinguistic research stimulated the researcher's focus on the participants' oral narratives of personal experience. Labov and Waletzky (1977) demonstrated that the effort to understand narrative is amenable to a formal framework with a clear beginning, middle, and end. According to Labov and Waletzky

(1977), people's narratives represent an attempt to convey the most important experiences of their own lives. As such, narrators do not manufacture events or elaborate upon the experience of others, but share their own truths, which in turn, offer insight into both serious and momentous life experiences. In this study on the mis-education of Black students, the sharing of the participants' own truths occurred in an interesting manner, often placing their critical events at the forefront of their stories, so the researcher endeavored to craft a clear beginning, middle, and end to each educator's unique narrative story. Given the formal framework to analyze narratives, duly evaluating appropriate issues of reportability and credibility was appropriate.

The concept of the most reportable event as shared in an oral narrative is significant to an organizational analysis of a narrative. "It is clear that the reportability of the same event will vary widely depending on the age, experience, and cultural patterns of the speakers, and even more importantly, the immediate social context" (Labov & Waletzky, 1997, p. 2) of the participant speaker. According to Labov and Waletzky, it is normal for a narrative of personal experience to include "the most reportable event in their immediately relevant biography" (1997, p. 2). Finally, regarding credibility, there is an implication that "the more reportable the events of a narrative, the more effort the narrator must devote to establishing credibility" (Labov & Waletzky, 1997, p.3). Thus, the credibility of all study participants was best achieved through a candid and objective rendering of their own biographical narratives.

Additionally, through an exploration of a social constructionist methodology, the chronic mis-education of Black students must be "filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 24) of each of the

five participants. A narrative inquiry methodology empowered the opportunity to examine the data collected in relation to the social construction of participants' early educational experiences and to explore how participants' narratives regarding education, and the indelible impact of their life experience might illuminate the mis-education of Black students as a demographic. "Narrative as texts, as fiction, as records of interview, or experience represents the way in which we have chosen to order and interpret our experience, and are set to reveal the nature and extent of our interests and needs" (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 9).

Consistent with Mertova and Webster (2007), a critical event is defined as an unplanned and unstructured event that significantly impacts the professional practice of an academic. The event can be internal or external in nature and can be either because of professional practice or from other personal experiences. The impact of this type of event on academics' perception of their professional practice might have entirely or considerably changed their perception of what they do or even the lens through which they see the world. Consequently, a critical event can only be identified retrospectively and has a unique illustrative and confirmatory nature regarding the identified phenomenon. As an example of how data of this type can be collected, for this study, the researcher elicited critical events in the professional practice of the participants through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the individual participants.

In narrative analysis, texts are analyzed within their social, cultural, and historical context from many different perspectives. They are deconstructed to reveal "powerful discourses, hierarchies, presuppositions, deliberate omissions and polar opposites" (Hunter, 2010, p. 50). Similarly, the researcher analyzed interviews in terms of the unique

critical events each participant provided. Interviews, on average, took between 30 and 45 minutes. The researcher recorded, transcribed, and line-numbered each interview to allow for tracking of particular issues back to the original transcript(s); the researcher also analyzed each interview to extract the critical events in the interviewees' professional practice. According to Webster and Mertova (2007) "a critical event is almost always a change experience. This change experience can come about as a storyteller encounters some difficulty in integrating their idealized worldview" (p. 75). A researcher created outline of each of the study participant's critical event(s) has been recorded and included the highlights in the presentation of data and results as a thematic summary of data.

In terms of a specific data analysis protocol, following each interview, the researcher immediately transcribed the audiotapes, summarized participants' narratives in their own words, and developed a chronology of their earliest referenced educational experiences to their most current experiences as educators. This specific protocol is referred to as restorying. Ollerenshaw and Creswell defined restorying as "gathering stories, analyzing them for key elements of the story, and then rewriting the story to place it within a chronological sequence" (2002, pg. 332). The process of restorying includes transcribing the raw audiotaped data, reading the transcript, analyzing the participant's story to understand their lived experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), and then retelling the story. Next, the researcher subscribed to steps Smith and Austin (2015) developed. Smith and Austin advised researchers to reduce data by using a variety of strategies to process data "(e.g., coding, concepts, categories, trends/patterns)." They also recommended analyzing or interpreting data by assessing and revising earlier conclusions.

The researcher based her final analysis methodology on Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal's (2004) analysis of narrative data. These authors drew a distinction between actual events and narratives, arguing that narratives must be based on some form of perception or observation of real events (Rosenthal & Fisher-Rosenthal, 2004). They proposed a six-stage process of analysis: an analysis of biographical data, thematic analysis, re-construction of the case history (or life as it was lived), an analysis of individual texts, a process of comparison between a narrative and life as lived, and the formation of different types of narratives. After conducting individual interviews with each participant, the researcher employed Rosenthal and Fisher's Rosenthal's methodology of analysis to triangulate the data. Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) identify four types of triangulation. Among the types of triangulation, the researcher used theory and perspective triangulation in applying multiple theoretical perspectives to examine and interpret the data. This step was imperative given that triangulation of data is central to narrative research credibility.

Finally, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) offered many tips on successful interview techniques, such as encouraging and prompting the most detailed stories possible from participants, which the researcher strived to do in her interviews. Furthermore, all participants received a clear briefing and debriefing to ensure they were comfortable and aware of what was happening. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) also recommended devoting time immediately after the interview to reflect and record any non-verbal nuances or impressions because that information may be forgotten (p. 129). This immediate, post-interview reflection period proved invaluable because the researcher was able to journal impressions gleaned from body language and facial expressions. The researcher also

followed Kvale and Brinkman's suggestion that researchers ask for a story in narrative interviews. They pointed out that the role of the interviewer in a narrative interview is to stay as quiet as possible and only speak as affirmations or to encourage further details. This advice confirmed the researcher's belief that she was a co-creator of the narrative because any verbal or non-verbal influence from the interviewer helped to produce the narratives. Similarly, in her study of abuse survivors, Montalbano-Phelps (2004) highlighted several aspects that must be attended to before narratives can be successful. Those aspects include the teller's willingness and ability to narrate a story, the context of the telling, and the "teller-listener interactions" (p. 11). Finally, the researcher asked study participants to choose their own pseudonyms to encourage ownership of the data and to protect their identities.

Summary of the Findings

Participant 1—"Trina" Critical Event Summary: Separate and Unequal.

Despite an impressive career and academic portfolio, a summary of Trina's unique educational narrative is most aptly referred to as separate and unequal as a means to classify educational experiences in such diametrical opposition to the other. In addition to serving as an adjunct professor of Law at a Detroit metropolitan area community college, Trina also serves as a partner in a large, Detroit-based law firm where she represents financial institutions on legal issues related to banking, finance, secured loans, loan originations, commercial real estate transactions, multi-state financing, and litigation. As the youngest study participant, with more extensive experience in law than in education, the researcher considered that Trina's knowledge of teaching, and of teaching Black students in particular, might be limited to the most recent three to four years of her

experience. As such, gleaned the impact of Trina's own educational experiences was regarded as vital. Given the researcher's inability to juxtapose her early personal narrative content with her professional teaching experiences, the bulk of the session was devoted to her biographical narrative content. As a postscript to the full narrative interview, the participant offered insights into both the elementary students she mentors and the college-age students to whom she teaches basic law and legal writing.

Admittedly the most unique educational background of all respondents, the bulk of Trina's K-12 education was earned in a non-traditional combination of both private and public schools in Detroit, MI and in the state of NJ because of her family history of cross-country relocation. Trina recounted being the youngest of four children born to college-educated parents, and according to her interpretation of the family values, college was always at the forefront of her and her siblings' expectations. Her most notable childhood memory was the divorce of her parents in her early adolescence; however, she quickly dismissed any negative implications of this event and recalls being only mildly affected by the split, save the rather abrupt move from Detroit to the East Coast of the U.S. Despite the family change, Trina insisted that education was still considered a priority in the household where her mother now assumed the role as the primary breadwinner.

Perhaps most notable in terms of schooling was the non-traditional, African-centered and self-described nurturing atmosphere where Trina spent the bulk of her elementary and middle school years in comparison to what she referred to as the cold atmosphere of her ethnically diverse, magnet school of choice experience in grades 9-12. Her primary years were spent in a small, private, and independent African-centered school in Detroit where Trina has fond memories and boasts of a solid foundation. Though her

parents' divorce lowered the family's financial status from middle to working-class, and this might have prompted her transfer to public schools, she stated that education was a clear priority and preferred investment. Therefore, she and her elder brother kept attending this unique, African centered school after the parents split up, while only the eldest two children were transferred to the public school setting. Trina then notably skipped over her high school years to admit that she had especially fond memories of her undergraduate years at a historically Black college/university (HBCU), where she is proud to have been recently honored as one of the "40 under 40" rising superstars of her beloved alma mater. While noting the initial omission of her high school years, Trina went on to proclaim her family's pride in her acclaimed law and educational career, and spoke candidly and without reserve throughout the course of the entire interview session.

In terms of her early educational experiences, Trina stated, "Most of my time was in a school that had a Pan-African teaching curriculum and so all of my teachers were African American and taught from an African-centered perspective." When asked to expand upon the impact of this educational experience, Trina concluded that learning about African history and experience as the norm afforded her a stronger academic foundation than many of her peers (as she had come to recognize later in life), and that this experience positively impacted her later success in school as well as her personal and professional life. Though much of her educational experiences were marked by achievements and early successes, Trina did recount the residual negative impact and critical experience of having been wholly embarrassed and publicly reprimanded by a high school history teacher who resented her references to ancient Egypt when learning about (the standard issued H.S. curriculum) of Greece and Rome. Reportedly, a seemingly strict

and unapproachable European teacher made a lasting, unfavorable memory when “she stopped the class, gave a speech and used my question as an example.” Essentially, the teacher publicly scolded that “people should not walk through the world with blinders on that will allow them to only see the world in black and white,” while Trina remembered being thoroughly mortified by what she described a “chilling” experience.

When asked to reveal how that encounter might have impacted later educational experiences, Trina responded, “I didn't want to speak up anymore. I felt singled out. My classmates were laughing at me after she gave this speech. And I already had insecurity issues, so that didn't help. I guess I felt like I had done something wrong for asking that question.” In retrospect, Trina suspected that although this incident occurred in her ninth grade World History course, her academic confidence, love of learning, and general curiosity may have suffered until her second year in college when an enthusiastic Biology professor captured her interest with such impassioned lectures and laboratory displays that she was even inspired her to consider a career in science instead of pursuing her dream of becoming a lawyer.

As a salient point of reference, there was a dramatic shift from the positive impact that Trina's early African-centered schooling and later HBCU-based undergraduate studies had to her very chilling and negative experiences in her high school years. Trina's narrative hints at the disparate impact of a separate and unequal educational experience for those Black students who have been exposed to two educational settings. After referencing another critical high school experience of failing a course in a manner she concluded was unfair and based upon race, Trina appeared to harbor a sense of disdain for the rigor and lack of warmth visible in her high-performing, high school setting. Though

she did not blame the school's teachers and administrators entirely with her claim, "My high school years were just so awkward in general," there is significance in the varying experiences of Trina's educational past. To summarize her final thoughts on the education of Black students, Trina emphatically defended her belief that, "We are at a disadvantage when our education occurs at the hands of others" and that Blacks would benefit from the kind of education she was blessed to experience, that which placed her African American experience at the center of the learning process.

In terms of the specific technique that Trina proposed to avoid the perpetuation of the mis-education of Black students, a phenomenon she does agree to be a salient factor in the present educational landscape, is the conscious inclusion of the historical value of Africans to every core subject area as a means to render academics relevant to Black students. Marks and Tonso (2006) similarly argued, "One way to counter social injustice and regain a sense of community and ethnic self-worth is African-centered education". Trina believes that this practice is particularly crucial for the instruction of elementary students, but should not be discounted as valuable all the way through the college and post-graduate years. In Trina's professional opinion as an educator, she believes that "Any course of study which references the contributions of Africans to humanity affirms the self-esteem of Black students and personalizes education in a more engaging and interesting manner." This belief is echoed and supported by countless scholars (Asante, 1991; Durden, 2007; Ginwright, 2004; Jamison & Carroll, 2014) and is therefore worthy of exploration as a viable counter to mis-education.

Participant 2—"Assata" Critical Event Summary: Portrait of an American Girl. Born the eldest of 10 children to a set of loving, actively engaged, and doting

parents, of an expansive, lower-class family—Assata offered a rich tapestry of life and educational experiences. Of all study participants, Assata offered the most descriptive, complete recall of all 5-study participants. Many of Assata’s early life experiences and her rich, narrative content proved invaluable to this body of research. Assata’s love of education started before she ever entered school because her mother encouraged her inherited love of reading. She remembered being read to aloud from newspapers, Jet Magazines, Sunday-school Bible stories, and even an entire Cheerios cereal box while eating breakfast. As early as age 4, Assata was blessed to be able to indulge in her passion of reading at the nearby public library where she would frequently be accompanied by one of her parents. As soon as she was school age and able to safely travel alone, reading alone at the local public library became Assata’s daily pastime. Her love of reading translated into high academic performance, and Assata recalled loving school and receiving frequent praise from her teachers for being smart and well behaved. She fondly recalls having participated in “Spelling Bee” competitions throughout her early elementary years and of winning several of these competitions easily because of her natural prowess in reading. For Assata, the most significant and memorable component of these championship spelling bouts was not the medal, trophy, or school recognition, but that her father (who never took off work from one of his two jobs as a sanitation worker and taxicab driver), was not only present to witness her compete, but beamed with pride from the audience as she won her fifth-grade spelling competition. This intimate, birds’ eye view to such poignant life memories and positive, even storybook educational experiences, inspired this researcher to request conducting a multiple-part series of

narrative, biographical interviews with this willing and eager study participant. Assata readily agreed and complied with this request.

During the initial narrative interview, the researcher learned of the very diverse educational background Assata experienced as a highly motivated learner in school. In her primary years, she had as many teachers of European descent as she did African Americans, and she recalls that her teachers, without exception, had very high expectations of her and her peers academically. Having benefitted from what she described as a “robust education” on the west side of Detroit, Assata related that her teachers told her she was “wise beyond her years” and was double promoted in the second grade to join a third-grade classroom to ensure continued academic rigor and student interest. Assata remembered being expected to achieve both inside her home and by her teachers and community stakeholders within her African-Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) church home, and she was successful in attaining the high expectations communicated to her, even after the double promotion. As the eldest of ten children, born as “stair-steps” to use Assata’s colorful language to suggest their closeness in age, there were many, early responsibilities in the home that made school a sort of refuge for such a bright young girl. She recalled that when she was not in school or at home helping with the children and around the house, she went to church (often with her maternal grandmother) and that in addition to often being assigned to read aloud from the Bible to her beloved grandmother, she had wonderful childhood memories, overall.

As a pertinent case of the rich diversity of her early educational profile, Assata recalled having had a memorable third-grade music class wherein she was taught how to read musical notes. The class was rigorous even though it was an elective course and she

remembered that choir, instruments, and musical history were all components of this favored class. In fourth grade, she reminisced about a course unique to even the present-day curriculum, entitled auditorium class, in which she and her classmates had to memorize The Gettysburg Address and to recite this historic speech or other legendary poems on stage in front of an attentive audience. She cited this experience as having prepared her for careers as both an educator and public official. In retrospect, Assata recognized each of these rich educational memories, all experienced in the Detroit Public Schools setting, as unique components of her early educational biography.

Though she made no initial distinction between the equally high expectations of her K–3 primary teachers of both White and Black cultural groups, Assata was careful to acknowledge that as she progressed through late middle school, and throughout high school, her White teachers were more noticeably strict from a behavioral standpoint, while her Black teachers were warmer, more nurturing, and seemed to maintain the same high academic achievement expectations and standards that she had grown accustomed to from her early years as a student. This tradition of universal high expectations from all teachers was evident in middle school, but was much more glaringly apparent in her high school years. Assata referenced that academic achievement was the universal expectation and norm and did not recall her teachers commending her for her intelligence or high academic performance beyond the elementary years.

When prompted to share any negative reflection(s) of her educational journey, she paused and then recounted a very traumatic experience that occurred during a brief stint in a private, Catholic school in Detroit in the eighth grade. Assata's positive memories far outweighed any negative experience, and the researcher is uncertain if this incident would

have been shared without prompting. Because of her primary years of high academic performance, Assata was afforded an opportunity to attend a local Catholic school during the middle school years. Assata recounted that on one occasion her active, involved Mother stopped at the school (unannounced) to deliver a lunch and happened to walk behind two nuns watching the (primarily Black) children play during recess on the playground. Assata's mother overheard one nun say to the other, "just look at the little heathens." After Assata's mother loudly cleared her voice, she stated, "Well, well, well . . . I only came by to drop off a lunch but obviously I am right on time and need to pull my children out of this school—immediately." The impact upon Assata was that though she excelled in her classes in this even more rigorous and strict school setting, it was heartbreaking to learn that she had been regarded as "less than human" by the women of God she had so openly admired and loved. When asked if there were any lasting implications from the experience, though she had only learned about the account second-hand from her mother's detailed description, Assata countered, "I became conscious of attempts to recognize oppressive attitudes from those around me, so even though sometimes people's evil intentions were hidden, I was able to pick up nuances and remained undeterred by the harsh reality of racism."

Within the course of her high school tenure, which started in the mid-1960s, Assata noticed a rather depressing shift from a driven, college preparatory curriculum at her neighborhood public high school to a less desirable litany of trade-centered courses. She recalled that her high school was formerly an all-White high school, but as the racial composition of the metropolitan Detroit area changed over time, school enrollment increasingly reflected more diversity with the inclusion of higher numbers of Black

students. This change was significant from Assata's point of view because the abrupt population shift within the city of Detroit, commonly referred to as White flight similarly marked the abrupt retirement or transfer of nearly all of the primarily Jewish staff. Soon thereafter, the growing diversity of the school also prompted a shift in the school's curriculum offerings. Specifically, Assata recalled:

I was taken aback when in the midst of my high school years I began to realize that as I entered high school, I could take one of 13 languages . . . I took Latin. But, by the time I graduated, those thirteen languages had been cut down to only French and Spanish. I was actually the last student to be enrolled in Latin II. I realized, even then, that there was something wrong with that.

During the course of the narrative reflection, Assata wondered, "Who decided that vocational technical, auto training, and trades were acceptable or preferential to my college prep curriculum?" Ultimately, Assata deduced that the college preparatory curriculum that she had been exposed to, as a highly motivated student in the still diverse student population in high school in her early years was no longer an option as the curriculum had been "dumbed down" by the time her younger siblings became high school students in her junior and senior years. Assata then quickly abandoned her openly critical, negative reflection of the perceptible curriculum shift in high school to share an enthusiastic account of her later educational progress and experiences.

Assata shared her college experiences openly and with trademark enthusiasm. She related a most memorable tale of her composed and confident character as a sixteen-year-old becoming acclimated with her fast-paced and rigorous, state college setting. Assata went in and requested a job at the local Kresge lunch counter and was hired on the spot to

serve as a short-order cook and dishwasher. Further, this first job led to her meeting her future husband, a college football player, because he was a frequent visitor to the diner. From this experience, Assata learned how to manage her time, save money, exude competence, and serve customers. She found each of these virtues to be of great benefit to her undergraduate tenure. Assata admitted that it was undoubtedly humbling to serve people after working so hard to maintain her studies, but she had no shame in working and doing her part to avoid calling home to her parents for financial assistance because she recalled that they had already made great financial sacrifices to support sending her away from home to college.

After speaking about her memorable college days, the interview concluded and appropriately transitioned our lengthy narrative content into our third and final narrative interview (held several days later), which centered on Assata's political and pedagogical career and later included reflections on the education of Black students from her professional capacity as an educator. The diversity of Assata's rich educational background coupled with her career as a local elected official, a Christian Minister, and now a college Professor emeritus proved invaluable to the data culled for this research study. Assata stated emphatically that "The difference between Black students and others I have encountered is that Black students must feel valued, receive unfettered love and affirmation of their natural genius in order to best learn and tap into their high academic achievement abilities." When asked why she included nurturing as a component of Black students' educational success, Assata quickly replied "Because Black students suffer the effects of oppression and have an increased need to build trust in order to thrive academically."

As we concluded the narrative discourse, the researcher was very pleasantly surprised to learn that this study participant was both fortunate and proud to have a popular toy doll to be patterned after her own coming of age experiences as a Detroit girl maturing during the Civil Rights Era. Given her prominence as a local activist and public servant, Assata was referred to serve on the advisory board of a multinational toy company, and urged to share her Detroit upbringing with her peers as possible inclusion in an African-American book and doll collection. This content empowered her to be vocal about her attendance at the “Walk to Freedom March” in Detroit with her great-grandmother as a 9-year old girl in 1963. This vivid experience, along with her unique childhood, made her a valuable contributor in the authentic creation of a doll and corresponding children’s book. Assata recounted that she contributed relevant childhood experiences—the Detroit Motown experience, the Detroit Rebellion and participation in historic, Civil Right Era marches—to her coveted company role on the national board of the toy company. Finally, Assata recounted that her deeply strong spiritual faith, enduring love from Bigmama’s (an affectionate name for her Grandmother’s, both maternal and external), and her rich educational history is what inspired her to give back through her role as an educator and contributor to the success of Black students.

When asked whether there were any suggestions she could offer to ensure the increased academic achievement of Black students, in particular, Assata replied rather matter-of-factly “Excellence is achieved through character, commitment and family values before it is ever transmitted through the secondary modes of reading, writing and math.” According to Assata, all educators of Black children must morph themselves into hands-on social workers capable of addressing the needs of the student prior to trying to reach

them through an academic medium. The idea that educators must adopt a whole child approach to facilitate the well-rounded success of Black students is not new and has been promoted by scholars (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Parsons, 2005; Spring, 2016; Ware, 2006). Delpit (1988) argued that Black students have different needs that are not being met in the educational system. In an Education Week article outlining the benefits of valuing students' cultural strengths, Viadero (2016) quoted Delpit (1988), who stated,

Those with good intentions say that they want to create an educational system that would be best for my children, because what's best for my children will be best for everybody's children. The difficulty is that all children don't have exactly the same needs. (2016, para. 12)

Essentially, Assata's educational philosophy to counter mis-education is best summarized as a form of all-inclusive instruction, which rejects a myopic approach to the academic achievement of Black students in isolation from their other wide-ranging needs.

Participant 3—"Bernard" Critical Event: One of the Lucky Ones. Bernard's interview was a portrait of the possibilities to thrive in education with the encouragement and support of an educator who sees the prospect of a pupil's bright future more clearly than the pupil does. Bernard stated he was always a high performer in school and loved educational pursuits, but as one of twelve children, with a father who worked on the railroad, the thought of attending and paying for college was unrealistic. Growing up as the second eldest in his family, Bernard reflected about his early beginnings in a small city in Arkansas and credited his large family as the source of his early life confidence and success. While his elder sister was more responsible in helping around the house with chores and cooking, as the eldest son of such a large family, Bernard held many mature

responsibilities like working odd jobs, taking charge of his younger brothers and sisters, and shielding them from the garter snakes which the children would often encounter while playing in their large rural yard area. Regarding his educational profile, he remembered that his earliest lessons took place in his home with a very loving, patient, caring, and nurturing mother who often quoted the Bible or explained recipes while cooking.

Later, Bernard loved school and recalled thriving in the academic atmosphere. His earliest school memories were of doing very well in both science and math (his favorite subject) and that his confidence grew over time because his studies came very easily to him. The first teacher he remembered having in school was very strict and had high expectations for Bernard and his peers. He recalled often earning perfect attendance awards because he loved school so much, he was rarely if ever, absent. Bernard also recalled that he performed exceptionally well on statewide math tests in Arkansas, which is where the family lived until he was in eighth grade. His fondest memory of his early days in school was being in third or fourth grade and being sought out by his elder sister's teacher and asked to work out a math problem in front of a class at least two grades ahead of his. Bernard "got a kick out of being thought of as a brainiac and doing advanced math didn't embarrass me at all, but I'm sure my sister got tired of seeing her little brother in her classroom." After chuckling from this fond memory, Bernard recalled that his parents rarely attended school functions because his father was too busy working and his mother was always occupied with the younger children at home. Despite this apparent lack of support or pressure to excel, Bernard recounted that he felt a kind of intrinsic motivation to perform well in school.

In spite of his proven mathematical strengths and his early school success, Bernard stated he followed the general curriculum throughout school until a high school counselor in his public school in Michigan inquired about why, in light of his high grades, he chose not to take more challenging courses? He admits that this had never been a thought or concern but he readily accepted the challenge and hoped that he might earn an academic scholarship to the state's top university. Bernard ultimately considers himself as "one of the lucky ones" because this thoughtful guidance counselor noticed his high academic performance and assessed him as worthy of a more rigorous curriculum than what he was currently taking. This unsolicited, external assessment of his worth was Bernard's first signal that college was even a possibility. If not for the school counselor, Bernard believes he would have followed the traditional line of merely graduating high school and working in a factory, as did most of his friends. Bernard remembered that essentially the only students from his high school who even considered (or had the coveted opportunity) to have access to a college education, were those involved in an Upward Bound program, which was a program designed for low-income students to ensure academic preparation for collegiate studies. He considers it a clear demonstration of his pre-destined and divinely blessed life's path that he was able to later serve as the Director of a college bridge program in a local university setting prior to having taught for years on the post-secondary level.

In terms of his long tenure as an educator and even as a school administrator, Bernard always encouraged students, and Black students in particular, to find extracurricular interests or mentors in school to help "round out the academic experience" and essentially make school more attractive and practical as a stepping stone. Bernard

was the first in his immediate family to attend and ultimately graduate from college, and he believes that he set a non-traditional example of success for many of his brothers and sisters, who later pursued a college education through athletic and academic scholarships. Later in his career working with college students, Bernard often willingly shared his own educational successes and failures with his students as a means to demonstrate that he could identify with whatever struggles they encountered at home or in school. His ultimate inspiration for teaching came from another educational mentor who went on to earn a doctorate and teach at the collegiate level. Bernard's mentor suggested he pursue education or social work so that he could help others, which was a perfect fit for Bernard's personality and talents. Ultimately, in the same manner his high school counselor had helped to make college attainable; Bernard's other well-educated mentor, is credited with having laid the groundwork for his successful teaching career on the college level.

In terms of curriculum and instruction techniques of unique value to educating Black students, Bernard believes that it is incumbent upon educators to teach with more innovation than they were taught themselves. He embraced technological enhancements to the educational profession and laments the hesitation of some of his peers to adopt a growth mindset in order to keep up with trends and best practices of curriculum and instruction. Specifically, Bernard favors the cross-curricular infusion of the core subjects and project-based learning for engaging student interest and notes the integration of math and science to the humanities as a particular tactic of interest to Black males. This opinion is echoed by Laboy-Rush (2011) who believes the cornerstone of a sound, inquiry-based curriculum is in the successful implementation of science and math driven projects. Project-based learning can increase student's interest in science, technology, engineering,

and math (STEM) because innovative projects frequently involve students solving authentic problems, working in collaboration with others, and building solutions to real-world dilemmas. Research tells us that students learn best when encouraged to construct their own knowledge of the world around them (Satchwell & Loepp, 2002).

Participant 4–“CC” Critical Event: It’s Never Too Late to Start Over. CC was adamant about the value that her family placed on education. By her own admission, neither her father or mother received a formal education, but that did not diminish their intellect or decrease the value that education had in her family. She recalled, with spirited laughter, that her mother supported her children’s educational pursuits but would have been satisfied for the children to help her around the house too. It was her father who openly made going to school every day a requirement for her and her six siblings because “He knew that if you were educated, you were going to be something in your life and you could pass a legacy on to your own children.” This affirmation was a significant starting point of the interview because it placed education at the forefront of her biographical narrative. The narrative interview began in memorable fashion because of the coffee and mouthwatering, homemade pound cake that CC prepared for the occasion. CC engaged an intriguing conversation detailing her personal and professional biographical narrative, which led to insights into the mis-education of Black students.

After speaking briefly about her upbringing as one of the older girls in a large family of seven children, the researcher learned that CC had fond childhood memories and great stories of her Detroit upbringing. After stating that her family migrated north to Michigan when she was very young and that her father worked in a wide variety of blue-collar positions throughout her childhood, CC went on to relate several stories of the

unique period and circumstances within which she grew up. Her mother was very popular among other wives and mothers in their neighborhood. CC has fond memories of her house being a bustling environment and constant meeting place for neighbors, other children, and for hosting large family gatherings. Fond recollections of her mother making mouthwatering roasted peanuts and hot water cornbread, her hard-working father giving the children ice cream treats (when earned with good behavior), and her mother's talent of skillfully playing a grand piano the family had somehow acquired launched a spirited discussion with the researcher.

Generally thoughtful and very candid in her reflections throughout the lengthy interview, CC bypassed any memories of her early educational narrative to recount her best and worst memories of middle school instead. This glaring omission was noteworthy and caused the researcher to prompt her for further details. Yet, when more probing questions failed to elicit any additional insight, the researcher concluded that either a loss of the early memories of school or a rather telling, significant pre-occupation with the middle school years was the cause of this omission. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher determined that an especially significant, even traumatic, critical event experience was what focused the bulk of CC's biographical narrative of her own educational history squarely on her middle school years.

According to CC's recollection, in either sixth or seventh grade, she had a teacher whose racism made her class virtually unbearable and as a result, most of CC's negative experiences in school could be centered on this sole classroom teacher. "She looked at us with disdain, wouldn't call on us for questions and this lowered my self-esteem and made me dread going to school." When probed as to who the us in her reference referred to, CC

sharply replied “the Black students, of course.” As she commenced with the horrors of this memorable classroom experience, CC admitted that despite her best attempts to forget the unpleasantness of this particular year, the impact of the negative experience was palpable. During the year in question, the descriptions of negative experiences were plentiful, but perhaps the most telling was the fact that the teacher “just let it be known early on that she did not like Black children.” What was most sad and unfair from CC’s vivid memory and point of view was that even though this teacher was openly prejudiced, she had the power to teach sixth, seventh, and eighth grade intermittently, so that eventually *all* the students enrolled in the very diverse and small, public school would be forced to be subjected to this woman as their homeroom teacher, at some point during their middle school tenure.

When asked about specific incidents, CC shared that the teacher would disregard even the presence of she and other Black students and would even resort to hitting them as a form of punishment in several worst-case scenarios. When asked to detail her reaction to such occurrences, CC recounted feelings of general unworthiness and described the isolation she frequently experienced in class. CC added that following a particularly memorable incident where she was singled out and embarrassed in class, her first inclination was to share the information her parents. After enduring weeks of suffering, CC recalled finally mustered the courage to share her growing hatred of school and to her recollection, her parents were both optimistic and dismissive in the sense that they said something to the effect that she should “overlook the teacher’s behavior because she [CC] was better than that.” While she remembered feeling grateful that her parents had listened to her because they were always busy, she also thought that this advice would be difficult

to implement. “Mama and daddy didn’t know how bad it was and there was no way of convincing them that there were no redeeming qualities to being in that woman’s class.”

CC recalled going through a period of daily daydreaming in school to try to deflect any negative attention. This action ultimately backfired because once the teacher discovered that any of her Black students was not on task, CC recalled that they would be publicly embarrassed and this would destroy that day and possibly “negatively color the remainder of that week”. The daily horror of being forced to exist in such a hostile educational environment seemed to predominate our narrative interview and was described as unending until CC recalled an incident toward the end of the school year at her middle school when this teacher could not escape the consequences of her racist, immoral behavior. Specifically, a Black boy had been accused of talking back and being disrespectful “when the teacher took it upon herself to whip him mercilessly” with a wooden paddle, outside in the hallway. This action resulted in a threat of physical harm later that same week from the boy’s parents and before the school year ended, the teacher was finally transferred out of their school. Though she had no idea whether the teacher’s removal was forcible or voluntary, CC described the elation she felt at finally having a few weeks of respite from the daily isolation and threat of embarrassment she experienced in school. CC’s only regret was that the teacher’s transfer had not come sooner in her middle school career.

CC’s favorite memory of school was that her high school Literature teacher made learning fun and exciting, so this was the subject in which CC admitted she excelled most. The highly motivated English literature teacher would tell stories to motivate students to read a famous author or poet and from this manner of teaching, CC constructed visions of

traveling to Paris and Rome even though she had never left the comfort of the classroom. She attributed her present-day love of reading novels of all kinds to this teacher, “a small White woman who clearly loved teaching and who loved all of her students, without exception.” The enthusiasm with which CC shared her fond memories of this teacher made it clear that the teacher had left a lasting and positive impact. CC credited this positive experience with fostering her later desire to become a Para-professional (teacher’s aide) and with her ability to judge and appreciate each person “for [their] individual value and approach and not to have been jaded by her negative experience with my earlier, racist teacher.” Moreover, CC attributed both the negative and positive educational experiences in her own life with her present volunteer pursuit of inspiring creative ways to reach every museum visitor that she strives to educate on aspects of history and culture.

Though not explicitly stated during the interview, the researcher deduced that CC’s animated narratives reflected more of the personal rather than the professional or educational, which prompted a question about how CC had shifted from the role of a student to that of a young adult trying to negotiate life, family, and career. With prompting, CC volunteered that she became pregnant with her eldest daughter Gina while still enrolled in high school, and as a result, she dropped out of school, which was standard practice during the time. She does not reflect upon feeling shame or outside judgment due to her unplanned pregnancy, because this was a fairly common occurrence for girls in their teenage or young adult years. CC then admitted that she “ended up dropping out of school to marry the father, who wasn’t really my boyfriend at the time, but could be considered my first love” and this is when she launched into a newfound, treasured role as a wife and mother. The next period that CC described in vivid detail was that of her musician

husband earning a living by securing a variety of performance gigs around the city, which allowed the new couple to move out of her parent's home and into their own house with a yard and a promise of a better life for the three children they would eventually have.

Though a difficult period in her life history because of the heavy financial constraints and lonely periods when her husband and the band would travel, CC recalled her years as a young wife and mother fondly. She described that time as a necessary "time of growth and maturity for the woman that I would soon become." This statement offered a glimpse of the inner strength and hidden aspirations of a spirited, strong-willed and intelligent woman. Eventually, CC opted to return to cosmetology school and earn a trade license to work in a salon and to support their growing family. Years later, this same drive and determination prompted her to pursue a GED and to volunteer initially as a nurse, but after determining that teaching was a better fit for her, she worked in local public schools as a classroom aide and teacher's assistant. Of her valued work in education, CC believes it is important to give back and admonishes that Blacks must work hard to dispel an angry Black woman paradigm and to prove that "we have so much more within than just being wives and mothers."

Given her unique instructional roles as both an elementary teacher's aide and as a long-term museum educator, CC was adamant in her belief that museums, like the site where she currently volunteers, must be regarded as authentic educational institutions. CC stated that while it may not be feasible for the public school curriculum to reflect the full range of the Black experience, historic exhibits and colorful museum lessons are crucial to the positive, academic development of Black students. She cites frequent field trips to various museums as a practice whereby hands-on learning can take place and suggests that

an interactive exhibit is likely to inspire other aspects of a students' interest and multiple intelligences than a traditional classroom lecture would accomplish. According to Vallance (2004) "museum programs, in shaping their very malleable subject matters into formats responsive to various backgrounds, have a special appeal to diverse audiences" (p. ii). A paradigm shift from annual visits to a museum to the widespread incorporation of science, art and historical exhibit content on a more readily incorporated basis, offers a unique approach to engaging Black students in advanced learning pursuits.

Participant 5—"William" Critical Event: The Choice is Clear, Choose Wisely.

Williams's childhood was one he categorized as typical of Black youths who grew up in the Jim Crow South during the Great Depression of the 1930s and in the years preceding World War II. As a young person and second youngest of eight children born to a hard working father and "crafty" mother, William's parents showed him love and affection, taught him family values, and routinely disciplined him when needed. The notable components of his childhood memories were that he was a self-described "bad" or mischievous child and that his strict parents emphasized education, religious faith, and hard work. Despite his busy father often holding multiple jobs to support the large family, William knew that his childhood pattern of bad behavior would result in serious consequences; therefore, he set his mind on no longer seeking negative attention and following a straight and narrow path. During his rich narrative biography, William's fond memories of childhood were interspersed with vivid memories of hard work in a factory or as a street sweeper, raising a close-knit family and his ultimate philosophy of life, which can be summed up as a series of choices of which each person is advised to choose

wisely. According to William, “Life is about choice, and for me it was go to school, go to work, join the service [military], or go to jail.”

In terms of William’s educational narrative, which the researcher had to piece together from the deluge of interview transcript documentation about his life in general and other personal biographical reflections, he attended all-Black schools in the then segregated public educational system of his rural county in Mississippi. Based on his best recollection of early school experiences, attending the segregated public school meant long walks to school for him and his older siblings; he suspected that the walk was more than a mile and a half each way, so in his opinion his education was hard earned, both literally and figuratively.

In terms of the schoolhouse (as he referred to it) itself, he recalls his school had few resources and operated with a combination of outdated textbooks, few teachers (he suspected were underpaid), large classes, and small classrooms without laboratories and supplies for the study of biology, chemistry, and physics, which were some of his favorite subjects. Despite these marked deficiencies in resources, William described himself as an average student and recalled studying hard, paying attention, and enjoying school; though he admits he did his best to stay away from the temptation of mischief with some of his school friends. When asked about his early future career aspirations and or other pleasant memories of school, William quickly offered that his eldest Sister Cammie was most “serious” about school and because she later went on to marry well and work in reputable jobs for years thereafter, she was the one with career aspirations. He readily admitted to “taking life as it came” and in this sense, his narrative biography was comprised of a complex variety of life and educational experiences. Admittedly, the researcher could

only deduce the details of William's multifaceted narrative to the extent that he was able to recall or willingly share.

It is noteworthy that William often referenced the racially segregated and potentially dangerous era in which he grew up, in the Jim Crow South, throughout his narrative biography. This was telling from a research analysis perspective because it was representative of the inextricable impact that life outside of school, had on the educational experience. Based on his vivid recollections of the physical violence and or bouts of racial discrimination Blacks faced in his rural county, William was clearly unable to escape the horrors of undisguised racism. He recounted that despite the countless attempts of his older brother Sonny to both protect him from harsh realities and otherwise teach him how to act in public to avoid potentially fatal repercussions from Whites, William was not oblivious to the dangerous, tense nature of the times. During his early years in school William recalled that he, his elder siblings and neighbors were forced to walk pass the spectacle of the lynched, decaying remains and bloodied clothing of a man who had been recently, and very publicly lynched. Apparently long after the body of this man, (rumored to have been murdered by a White mob) had been removed from a tree, the man's bloodied clothing lay in the field for months as a painful reminder of the tragic occurrence in his community and William recalls seeing this fear-inducing and gruesome artifacts on his long, daily walks to and from school.

This early life experience undoubtedly left a very painful and indelible impact upon the psyche and impressionable world perceptions of a young William. There were perceptible changes in William's level of comfort and his narration vocal tones (from excited to somber and serious), as he recounted this telling memory of his early days in

elementary school in Mississippi. From a data analysis perspective, it became clear that these kinds of stories of life experience, in general, would be interwoven with William's school memories throughout the moving narrative interview, as the overarching theme of oppression was somewhat inseparable in his own memories from school and early life experiences. In retrospect and based upon observational notes from this narrative interview, William would often drift in and out of such stories centered on his life experience and spent considerable time discussing the racial atmosphere of the time in which he grew up. Ultimately, William recalled that moving North in fourth or fifth grade (he could not be certain of his age, only his approximate grade) brought hope for a "better, more stable life" away from the threat of violence that plagued his family prior to their relocation.

When pressed to share the most significant change he recalled between the education he received in Mississippi and what he encountered in Michigan, William was quick to note that there were more plentiful supplies and school resources in Detroit. "The whole atmosphere was shiny and new", William recalled "and this was my chance for a fresh start in school." He looked forward to attending a popular neighborhood school once his family moved to Detroit, and he recalls being excited about the availability of greater school resources and more diverse classes and lessons. Then William's narration abruptly became less animated and somewhat pained as he reflected that once he became an elementary school student in Detroit, he realized he was the only Black boy in his class. This is a point that William recalled painfully, and when asked if he felt isolated as a result of being the only Black male in class, he responded "well, naturally I felt sort of out of place . . . and had to learn to be independent and a loner in a lot of ways." He and his

fellow two, Black female classmates did their best to keep up with the rigorous studies they encountered. The most telling and relevant data from this portion of the narrative interview was that once the move to Detroit became official, two of his elder brothers were forced to work “to help Daddy with the bills and upkeep of the house” while only he and the younger siblings were afforded the opportunity to continue going to school. The irony of this circumstance was significant not because it was inconsequential. On the contrary, this statement offered direct insight into William’s own educational narrative, because it foreshadowed a seemingly common and forced alternative between being a student and breadwinner. This was a choice, which ultimately became central to William’s own narrative experience.

During his rather brief recollection of both his middle and high school years, William did not offer any specific educational memories or anecdotes from this period but admitted he enjoyed reading and worked hard to pass all classes. His early love of science courses had been replaced with active participation in a newfound extracurricular activity, acting, which became William’s real passion until he was forced to drop out of high school prematurely to contribute to the family’s household income. After deciding to drop out of school, William summoned the courage to ask the owner of the local neighborhood Laundromat for a job. In this first job opportunity, William recalled building his knowledge base in new ways and boosting his own confidence through his previously undiscovered, impressive work ethic and expanded responsibilities in life. After working in several roles at the laundry for approximately three years, he married and started a family of his own with his beloved wife of 62 years, with whom he raised three children. Shortly thereafter, he sought out a more lucrative and long-term position for his growing

financial obligations and began to work his way up the blue collar laborer ladder in the assembly line of a dangerous yet, well staffed local foundry. He rose from an entry-level maintenance position to become the foreman after many years of hard work. Though the researcher was unable to determine from the single, in-depth narrative interview whether William was working at the laundry or the foundry when he chanced upon the opportunity to earn 40 college credits in a local trade initiative, his recall of this fact marked our return to the educational portion of William's biographical narrative.

William's narrative culminated in the knowledge that the decisions he was forced to make about working as opposed to going to school, later spurred his decision to attend college. He reiterated he was not interested in joining the military, which due to the prominence of the war in Vietnam, was a popular choice for many of his peers during the time. Therefore, after a friend told him about the opportunity to attend college (while still working). William was intrigued and decided, "Naturally, even while I worked and supported my family, I wasn't a fool and so I jumped at any chance to return to school." Classes at the private Catholic college in Detroit afforded William critical life exposure and experiences that ultimately contributed to his development as an emerging activist and eventual leader of the Deacons for Defense, which was an activist Civil Rights organization widely known for armed self-defense and regarded as an early template for the Black Panther Party for Self Defense (n.d.).

William regarded his unique assortment of varied educational and life experiences with pride and he said they contributed to "making a man out of me" when others were just wasting their time on what he referred to as "foolishness." His brief stint as a professional educator was referenced fondly as an opportunity to work with students in

grades 8–12 and inspired by his desire to “give back” by becoming a positive influence on “Other Black boys who assumed that school was not the most promising life choice.”

William described himself as a self-taught engineer and proponent of television production (the trade he had learned in the college degree program initiative), and he went on to help lay the foundation for a long-running local Public Television series entitled “For My People.” William taught many young people functional skills, love and respect for the arts so that they might too have options outside of military service and or imprisonment. Regarding the importance of education for Black students, William believes school is the “great equalizer” in terms of affording Black people the opportunities that others might take for granted. His narrative was meaningful as a lesson in modern American history and in the unique value that Black educators often bring to the profession after having many years of career and life experience.

William touted the knowledge of and ability to tap into student interest as the most effective way to counter the mis-education of Black students. Whether effective instruction is achieved through acknowledging the students’ intrinsic love of music, performing arts, robotics or the study of auto mechanics, William proposes that teachers explore what motivates students outside of school as the primer to educating them. Though William neglected to elaborate on the concept, Villegas and Lucas (2002) argue that teachers can make school more affirming for students by “knowing about the lives and interests of their students and designing instruction that builds on what their students already know, while stretching them beyond the familiar.” This instructional method was certainly effective in transforming William’s educational experience, which capitalized

upon his love of engineering and an interest in television production, to contribute to the development to an urban educator.

Presentation of the Data and Results

Table 2

Participant Data

Study Participant	Participant demographics	Background
Participant 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Generation X (age 35–49) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K–12 education in a combination of Detroit private and public schools and New Jersey public schools Undergraduate degree in business in PA • JD in Law in MI • Practices finance law in large MI firm • Teaches Law in local community college in Detroit • Mentors in a public, elementary school • Active in civil, cultural, and community activities
Participant 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Baby Boomer (age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K–12 education in Detroit public & private schools

	50–71)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergrad degree in Journalism • Honorary doctorate from MI institution • Community activist/leader • Retired elected official in MI • Ordained minister • Former secondary teacher • Currently teaches English in local community college in Detroit
<hr/>		
Participant 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Baby Boomer (age 50–71) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K–12 education in Arkansas & Benton Harbor, MI public schools Undergraduate degree in social work in MI • Masters in Education and Public Administration in MI • Retired educator and administrator after 25 years
<hr/>		
Participant 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Silent Generation (age 72–89) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K–12 education in both Mississippi and Detroit • Highest grade completed, 11th grade

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife, mother, and homemaker in Michigan • Licensed cosmetologist • Worked as an elementary school teacher's aide • Volunteer enthusiast with experience in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, schools and the grassroots community • Active museum educator (docent) for the past decade
Participant 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Silent Generation (age 72–89) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K–12 education in Mississippi • Highest grade completed, 10th grade • Returned to school via alternative means and earned a degree • Leader, Deacons for Defense • Taught television production & mechanical trades • Community activist/leader

Table 3

Thematic Summary of Results: Critical Events

Theme	Critical Event	Participant
Early Elementary	Loved school/majority of educational experiences were positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trina • Assata • Bernard
	Nurturing, African-centered or Southern, all-Black education paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trina • Bernard • William
	Early education and childhood in the South (Mississippi), marked by typical experiences of Black youths who grew up in the Jim Crow South during the Great Depression of the 1930's and in the years preceding World War II.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC • William
Middle School	Departed all-Black educational paradigm marking initial encounters w/ racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trina • Bernard

-
- William

Pivotal encounter with racial discrimination in private, Catholic school

- Assata

- CC

Pivotal encounter with racist teacher and discriminatory practices in late elementary-early middle school in Detroit

- William

Recalls being the sole African American male in the classroom after moving to Detroit from the South in 4th or 5th grade; often felt isolated, but driven to perform well for future life prospects and family recognition

- Bernard

- William

Remembers being in awe of the expanded resources and classroom offerings once relocating to Detroit from the South

High School	Became disillusioned with Eurocentric curriculum and course offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trina • Assata
	Plagued by lowered expectations from teachers who seemed distant and or cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assata • CC
	Disillusioned by education and sought work and or family pursuits as a means of personal success; later earned degree through alternative means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC • William
	Embarrassed publicly by teacher and considered this a chilling experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trina
	Considered college a long shot or impossibility until an impact educator (counselor) or unique opportunity (college recruitment) invested in his success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernard • William

College/Formal	Attended a local university and felt thoroughly	• Assata
Education Path	prepared for the rigor	• Bernard
	Attended college on a full academic scholarship	• Bernard
	Attended an HBCU and felt embraced, nurtured by affirming atmosphere	• Trina
	Developed a newfound love of science in college because of a high level of teacher interest	• Trina
	Returned to seek a GED after having earned a Cosmetology license and spending years as a mother and homemaker	• CC
	Attended a private, Catholic college and earned credits in an alternative program designed for minority students while working full-time and raising his family	• William

Story of	Felt less trustful of Whites, even those who	• Assata
Failure(s)	<p>appeared nice, after experiencing discrimination and then being abruptly withdrawn by her mother from a Catholic school where she was briefly enrolled</p>	
	<p>College preparatory courses offered in 9–10th grades were no longer available and replaced by vocational or trade classes as high school diversity reflected more Blacks and fewer Jewish students; evidence of curriculum tracking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assata • Bernard
	<p>Earned a less than favorable and subjective grade for being vocal about curriculum omissions</p>	• Trina
	<p>Once witnessed parents threaten a White teacher with physical harm for having beaten a Black student and showing consistent</p>	• CC

discrimination towards the participant and
other Black students

Though each participant refuted the significant
or lasting negative impact of his/her own mis-
education, each described incidents of
discrimination and/or feelings of isolation and
or invisibility in their segregated schools; thus,
this dichotomy is certainly worthy of mention
(as it references a pattern of mis-education to
which Blacks are seemingly unconscious)

- Trina
- Assata
- Bernard
- CC
- William

Once teased by a classmate (outside of
school), who witnessed her and her siblings
selling roasted peanuts outside Tigers Stadium
for being poor; socio-economics had a
negative impact upon schooling options

- Assata
- Bernard
- William
-

Wishes he had never left high school, but once

- William

	he learned that an extra income was needed at home, he promptly dropped out and went to work at a neighborhood laundry	
Story of	Uniquely singled out by teachers for having	• Assata
Success(es)	had the untapped aptitude for high academic performance and encouraged to pursue college	• Bernard
	The vast majority of school memories were fond/pleasant; considers the bookend experiences of Black, nurturing institutions in early elementary and later in college as joint “Blessings”	• Trina
	Considers her entire educational track and life in general as charmed and indicative of one who is expected to give back a portion of what she was afforded in life	• Assata
	Believes his life would have assumed an entirely different trajectory had it not been for a seemingly chance encounter with a	• Bernard • William

counselor and opportunity that propelled him
towards college and career

Considers education particularly important for
Black women who must dispel an angry Black
woman paradigm and to prove that “we have
so much more within than just being wives
and mothers”

- CC

Family or
personal crisis

Moved cross-country due to parental divorce
and out-of-state job prospects

- Trina

Dropped out of school prematurely due to an
unplanned pregnancy and/or work obligations
to support their family

- CC
- William

Plagued by the common, discriminatory
practice of being retained a grade upon
moving from Arkansas to Michigan

- Bernard

A commitment to education and very strong

- William

work ethic were preferable to the common alternative of incarceration, which affected many of his peers

Pursuit of professional teaching position	Exposed to many educators in the family, she was inspired to give back through education following retirement from elected office and public service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assata
	Mentorship of young law students and several elementary students who struggled (with reading in particular), sparked a desire to teach a legal writing course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trina
	Career path was proposed by his mentor, who had earned a doctorate and went on to teach a collegiate level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bernard
	Sought a teaching career after having earned a non-traditional education and through an innate desire to give back	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CC• William

Chapter 4 Summary

“Personal narratives are situated communications. They occur in distinguishable contexts of interaction and can be used for a wide range of pragmatic functions” (Montalbano-Phelps, 2004, p. 1). The stories participants choose to share informed the researcher’s insights about the educators’ perspectives and how they want to represent themselves. To paraphrase Coles (1989), there is genuine curiosity embedded in the teachers’ narratives. Narrative inquiry is about understanding and honoring the complexities of experience, and understanding the dynamics between individual experience and contexts that shape experience. “Narratives reach out to the past, are rooted in the present, and turn an eye to the future; narrative evolves with changes and shifts in time, place, and interactions. Narrative, as both phenomenon and form of inquiry, is a perspective that provides illuminating ways of viewing the world” (p. 20). Studying the nuanced complexities of the personal and professional narratives of Black educators revealed that their own experiences included tangible encounters with mis-education and shaped their teaching approach to Black students in the classroom.

The biographical narratives of each of these study participants not only encouraged the researcher as a knowledge seeker but also as an educator and storyteller. The primary aim of the entire data analysis protocol was to analyze data thoroughly in a wide variety of documented, research-specific methods to guarantee the scientific credibility of study findings. The decision to re-story each narrative to present it chronologically and to outline critical events, illustrated how the method was viable in examining the education paradigms of Black educators. The researcher determined this narrative inquiry method was particularly well suited to investigations of complex, human-centered, and culture-specific environments, such as examining the mis-education of Black students. Space

limitations meant that only meaningful examples of each type of critical event were highlighted to demonstrate the full breadth of the education of the Black educators and to inform the education of Black students in proper context. Using narrative inquiry to identify and categorize the critical events of each participant's life helped identify a range of issues that could be common to Blacks in pedagogy as well as issues that are more culture-specific, particularly in the case of educating Black students. These issues were summarized as the main research findings.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) avowed the central purpose of using the narrative inquiry methodology is to grasp the perspectives of people who are both living their stories and reflecting upon their lives by analyzing data as study participants talked through and explained their experiences. In this study, the researcher focused on participant's educational and life experiences that shaped their perceptions of the mis-education of Black students. Participants shared a range of perspectives on their own education as well as the panacea of techniques that may serve Black students in general. The findings from this research highlight that more extensive narrative inquiry of Black educators is both warranted and invaluable because of its emphasis on the participants' perspectives and the insight each narrative offers to bridge the achievement gap for Black students' future success in school.

The research was crafted to encourage participants to share their intimate, narrative stories to contribute to an increased understanding of the effects of mis-education. The researcher determined the qualitative, narrative inquiry method was most appropriate for addressing the research question of how the lifelong educational experiences of Black educators could contribute to an understanding of the mis-education of Black students.

Narrative inquiry allowed the researcher to analyze the combined, wide ranging pedagogical experiences of Black educators who readily identify with the phenomenon of mis-education because of their own varied experiences. Overall, the data collection and analysis methods ensured qualitative rigor through the explicit use of multiple visits and interviews with several of the five participants. In addition, the researcher grounded her methodology and analysis techniques in theory and reflected a diverse and exemplary sample of targeted participants. Though the full range of data analysis summary findings will be explored in more explicit detail in Chapter 5, a comparative analysis of the narrative summaries and critical events highlighted thus far clearly indicates that any pre-conceived conclusions about the mis-education of Black students requires both a revision of earlier conclusions and a troubling affirmation of a phenomenon that requires more in-depth study.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

In the first chapter, the researcher introduced the study and discussed the many forms of mis-education that Black students navigate daily in K–12 schools. Chapter 1 contains an outline of the reasons why emancipatory pedagogies are important for the successful education of Black students. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature focusing on a liberation-driven and more culturally responsive pedagogy, including the ways that scholars have theorized transformative pedagogies (Shin & Raudenbush, 2011; Warren, 2014; Woodson, 1933; Zirkel & Johnson, 2016). Chapter 2 also includes the theoretical perspectives that guided this study: critical race theory, transformative learning, narrative and counter narrative. Chapter 3 features the researcher’s rationalization for using the qualitative methodology as well as her data collection methods and narrative design of the study. Chapter 4 includes the narratives of the five study participants and the critical event themes that emerged upon an initial analysis of the data. In Chapter 5, the researcher concludes the dissertation by presenting a full evaluation and summary of the narrative study results, discussing the implications of this study, and providing recommendations for further research.

Educators share an interest in preparing students to be successful, productive members of an empowered community and of society at large. A sound K–12 education offers students a strong, academic foundation to accomplish this goal. However, for Blacks, schools too often fail to meet their objectives and thus Black students suffer mis-education at alarming rates (Gillborn, 2014; Humphries & Iruka, 2017; Jayakumar, 2015; Lozenski, 2017; Shapiro, 2007). The researcher used narrative, chronological re-storying

techniques and critical event analysis to study the biographical narratives of five Black educators that demonstrated qualitative insight into the problem of mis-education.

The premise driving this qualitative investigation is that Black educators can substantively contribute to educational policies pertaining to closing the achievement gap, and assist in thoughtfully re-imagining research-driven strategies to ensure success for Black students to counter the historic effects of mis-education. Furthermore, while copious research has been devoted to widespread education reform, the problem of the mis-education of Black students lacks a substantial body of research. The persistent research gap in examining the existing problem of the mis-education of Black students motivated the researcher in this study because this area had either been ignored or grossly under-examined in qualitative studies.

In examining the education of Black students through the unique lens of Black educators believed to be uniquely poised to provide qualitative insight into this problem, the researcher reflected on the salient issues discovered in the narratives of the five study participants. Combining the results of the literature review and the lived experiences of the key participants provided thick descriptions of educational experiences to overwhelmingly support the premise of the mis-education of Black students. The unique voices and corresponding critical events derived from the personal and professional lives of these accomplished Black educators created a rich narrative of common experience that had implications beyond just one person's feelings and realities to inform the entire pedagogical community. The researcher's goal is that scholars, teachers, and pedagogical policy makers will gain valuable insights from these implications.

Summary of the Results

Through copious documentation and critical analysis, prevalent themes arose from participant narratives and an analysis of common, critical events. These themes were: (a) Black teachers uniquely experienced vestiges of mis-education in their own educational backgrounds as they faced insidious forms of racism, (b) teachers sought to interrupt and or counteract the racism that their White teachers' and peers exhibited through a conscious self-determination to obtain an education, (c) teachers encouraged students to use their voices and various support platforms to overcome prevalent forms of educational oppression, and (d) teachers benefit from engaging in emancipatory pedagogies in overt and covert ways depending on the teaching context to strengthen Black students' chances for academic success. Each of these themes is sufficient to constitute evidence of mis-education as a problem uniquely affecting Black students.

The researcher in this study did not reflect upon all of the mis-education claims and perceptions facing Black students, but instead focused on how five Black educators navigated these perceptions, persevered through their own educational challenges, and were each able to determine the benefits of earning a sound education. Each participant provided narrative insight into their individual and purposeful decision(s) to become educators and offered instructional strategies, which might academically support Black students and contribute to prescriptive steps that can increase the educational success of this group. In addition to the themes outlined above, the researcher in this study confirmed that Black students face inordinate obstacles in their educational experiences including, but not limited to, outdated and exclusionary curriculums, underfunded and or ill-equipped schools, and oppression based on their race and socio-economic class.

Ultimately, this study served to illustrate the mis-education the participants experienced in their educational journeys.

Discussion of the Results

The convergence of educators' biographical narratives served to inform what can be concluded as an unavoidable form of mis-education during the course of the educational trajectory for Black students. Based upon the recurring themes evident in participant narratives, the researcher concluded there are common forms of mis-education that appear to be unavoidable for Black students. While the unique balance of educational success was different for each Black educator who participated in this study, the elements of faith, self-determined academic and career aspirations, and family support played a significant role in each individual's success in school as a student and later in their career(s) as educators of Black students in urban schools.

Although the researcher limited this study to Black educators from the Detroit metropolitan area, Detroit's history is representative of the great migration of Blacks from the southern region of the U.S. to the North and is therefore reflective of the larger Black experience. The historic, great migration to the city of Detroit is not unlike that of many other American cities in that the apparent economic advantages provided compelling reasons for migrating north from the south, where post-slavery sharecropping offered little hope for family security, upward mobility, or a fulfilled life. For example, during the very first Detroit census in 1920, the city's Black population only comprised 5% of the residents (Galster, 2012, p. 99). However, the Detroit Urban League calculated that 1,000 Blacks per month arrived via train in search of employment opportunities for Black men in industrial labor and that "the 1920s generated almost a tripling of the Black population

[from 40,838 immigrants] to 120,066 . . . the highest growth rate of all large cities”
(Galster, 2012, p. 99).

Ultimately, the researcher identified common motivating factors and traits among the participants that constituted an encounter with mis-education, likely to be indicative of a widespread pattern. Cortazzi (2014) theorized that while narrative analysis can be viewed as a window on the mind, “analyzing narratives of a specific group of tellers, [opens] a window on their culture” (p. 2). In this sense, these reflective personal biographies of Black educators enhance perspective and inform conclusions about the mis-education of the collective of Black students. Common educational experiences helped participants to reflect upon practice, determine their personal and professional callings and described what an appropriate counter to mis-education might resemble for other Black students and educators in urban schools and communities.

Conclusion 1: Black teachers experienced vestiges of mis-education in their educational backgrounds as they faced insidious forms of racism. Though each participant might appear unaffected by mis-education on the surface level, each participant’s description of instances of covert and or overt discrimination, feelings of isolation and or invisibility, and negative educational experiences left memorable, seemingly lifetime effects. Subtle references to the stigma of racism and the way it plagued each of the five study participants, during various portions of their academic journey emerged as a common theme in the narratives. For example, Trina did not recount having had any negative academic experiences prior to being enrolled in her integrated, magnet school of choice institution for grades 9—12. In this accelerated high school setting, which required that all students be tested and deemed accelerated prior to

admission Trina recounted a teacher who refused to acknowledge her attempts to answer questions and or contribute to the academic discussion in a core subject course.

Additionally, she received a failing course grade for inquiring about the omission of Egypt from African history during a class discussion.

Trina stated that these incidents had a lasting impact and a chilling effect upon her otherwise stellar academic record and left an indelible impact upon her entire educational experience. She recalled that the failing grade was a blemish upon her overall grade point average and while she feared that this would tarnish her opportunity for an academic scholarship to college, it also decimated her trust in White people in general. Most importantly, one of the lasting, even psychologically scarring effects of this adolescent encounter was that it also prompted Trina to self-bridle her intellectual capacity for fear of retribution during the remainder of her high school years.

Additionally, Assata and CC each experienced oppression in their early educational years as they revealed they were exposed to discrimination in a similarly direct manner. In the case of Assata, she was abruptly dis-enrolled from a private Catholic institution when her mother overheard two nuns calling her and the other Black students heathens. Widely regarded as a historic institution in the heart of a predominantly Black Detroit community, this Catholic school was primarily comprised of the Black children of working or middle-class Black families, but Assata was admittedly, permanently impacted by the abject discrimination and mis-education she encountered. After having heard the disparaging commentary, her mother's immediate and justifiable reaction to dis-enroll Assata and two of her younger siblings, was a lesson in second-class citizenship and the importance in one's own self-worth that had lasting implications on Assata's psyche.

What was particularly memorable about this memory for Assata is that when she inquired as to the cause of her mom's anger and haste in removing them from school that day, she recalled her mother emphatically stating, "We refuse to pay for disrespect." The fact that Assata's mother did not attempt to shield her (as the eldest child of 10) from the knowledge of why she and her closest siblings were starting in a new, vastly different, public school environment during the mid-year was also instructive. In retrospect, having later been exposed to the actual, revealing comments that prompted the abrupt school withdrawal, Assata admitted to learning a harsh life lesson very early in life and of feeling a mixture of sadness and anger at being thought of as less than by the very nuns she had admired for their spiritual discipline and distinction. This encounter left an enduring impact upon Assata, as she admitted to a healthy distrust of overly patronizing Whites and learned to discern the presence of prejudice and bias from subtle nuances in the behaviors of those outside her ethnicity.

Likewise CC, though raised in an entirely different generation and much more aware of the racial intolerance which marked the era in which she was educated, recalled being tortured by the daily onslaught of racism at the hands of a single school teacher. CC's experience with mis-education was in the form of overt name-calling, abject disregard for her academic contributions in class, public embarrassment, threats of physical violence and general disdain for she and the other Black students in her classroom. Although this teacher was eventually transferred for having whipped a Black male student in her class, CC admitted the mental damage this teacher wrought had already been done and that as a result, she would forever be aware of the dehumanization of oppression, high costs of learning and the use of tolerance in the face of ignorance.

CC's parents' advice to ignore her teacher's behavior and to rise above it for the sake of obtaining the education she could somehow glean from an overt racist helped her to understand that many Blacks simply code-switch or internalize the negative effects of such behaviors. This fueled CC's belief that many Blacks suffer later in life due to traumatizing school experiences like hers and she grew to appreciate the value of higher education, as a means to counteract educational injustice.

Bernard and William similarly recounted similarly revealing comparisons of having received an early education in the South and continuing their studies in Michigan, when their families respectively migrated north. Specifically, Bernard excelled in his all-Black school in Arkansas as evidenced by his frequent visits to upper-level classrooms to solve advanced math equations. However, despite this early distinction for keen intellect, he recalled that his academic readiness was questioned and challenged upon his family's move to Michigan. Bernard explained that his teachers in Michigan overwhelmingly assumed his southern accent and prior education was somehow indicative of a grossly deficient set of foundational skills and this prejudice fueled an assumption that he would be unable to keep up with his eighth-grade peers. During the course of his narrative interview, Bernard referenced that it was common practice to be held back at least one grade upon transferring schools from the rural South; therefore, his parents had to intervene on his behalf to advocate for his natural intelligence and ability. Only after having been subject to testing in all core subjects to determine his academic readiness and performance level was Bernard permitted to enroll in his rightful grade. Bernard was noted as declaring that this incident had no lasting effect on him and was simply par for the course for the time period. However, the incident is worthy of reference and a depth

of analysis as an indicator of a questionable and common pattern of tracking, a vestige of mis-education where Black students are concerned.

Likewise, William recounted the harsh realities of psychologically enduring the effects of racism and oppression first-hand as he, his siblings, and neighbors were inescapable witnesses to the horrific aftermath of the crime of lynching during his early days as a student living in the South. During the course of his impressionable early years and educational journey, William is haunted by his exposure to the harsh realities of witnessing the lynched, decaying remains and clothing of a Black man in Mississippi juxtaposed against the seemingly carefree experience of attending a nearby, all-Black neighborhood school in Michigan. William's memories of living in his Detroit neighborhood and attending MI public schools were admittedly positive. Namely, he recalled specific details of his family's migration to a close-knit, all-Black neighborhood in Detroit known as Black Bottom, of which William stated he has pleasant memories. However, it is noteworthy to reference William's common refrain that his life options were limited to: obtaining an education, joining the military, jail or even death. It is conceivable that such a bleak forecast of life paths would not have included the premature finality of death, were it not for William's early intersection with the inhumane crime of lynching.

Taken collectively and given participants' universal narrative evidence of common experiences with institutionalized oppression, as either students or as children living in the even more insidious, hostile environment of America, there is a compelling degree of validity to support the premise of mis-education. The primary evidence to support the conclusion that Black students' continue to be mis-educated in 2018 is the convincing and

recurrent narrative evidence that Black teachers continue to consciously differentiate the instruction of Black students to account for the pivotal need to counteract the effect of racism in society. The frequency and all-encompassing manner in which Black educators also experienced vestiges of racism and overt oppression when they were students, is indicative of a larger phenomenon of mis-education, which has been perpetuated for generations, without a proper diagnosis or prescription to ameliorate the dilemma.

Conclusion 2: Teachers sought to interrupt and/or counteract the racism that their White teachers and peers exhibited through a conscious self-determination to obtain an education. During the narrative interviews, several participants spoke of overcoming obstacles to their academic success through strong spiritual faith and self-determination, family support, a belief in their own self-worth, and the will to achieve in school. CC had a pivotal encounter with a racist teacher during her late elementary school years in Detroit. Despite being publicly ridiculed and made to feel undervalued by this openly hateful and discriminatory power figure, CC bore the months of abuse and received affirmation from her parents that she should “overlook the teacher’s behavior because she was better than that.” Though this advice failed to address the prejudiced behavior in a reactionary or confrontational manner, the lesson CC gleaned from her parents was that she need not stoop down to the level of the ignorance and oppression she might face in life, but should instead choose to persevere despite the obstacles hindering her. What was especially telling about CC’s narrative was that she later found the strength to defy the odds against her and to accomplish so much in life. CC credited the positive example of a well-educated elder sister as well as her parents’ and her husband’s support for her desire to embrace more than her coveted roles as a housewife and mother for her

success. She credited the same sources for inspiring her to go back to school to pursue a GED and to ultimately pursue an educational path to include an elementary school support staff role and current distinction as a skilled museum docent.

Academic scholars have shown that Black students and other underrepresented ethnic groups are often challenged with academic adjustment difficulties that their White counterparts do not experience in the school setting (Gardner, Barrett, & Pearson, 2014; Ross, Powell, & Henriksen, 2016). In the current study, CC's entire classroom environment represents the theme of mis-education. However, both Bernard's and William's difficulty in acclimating to the stark differences between school systems in the South, as compared to those in the mid-western United States, constituted evidence of their own academic adjustment challenges. These subtle mis-education fueled experiences, along with the negative repercussions that Trina encountered in her high school setting and the skilled trade course offerings that both Assata and Bernard encountered; seem to mirror a pattern of lowered expectations, isolation and discrimination that Black students uniquely experience in U.S. classrooms in 2018. Research reveals mis-education is apparent in that Black students often lack a sense of belonging and describe experiencing alienation, resistance, and a different dominant culture (Gardner et al., 2014; Heaven, 2015; Owens et al., 2010; Rush, 2012).

William related he felt obligated to drop out of school prematurely to contribute to his family's income. While this may be a common dilemma for others faced with income limitations, Black students pursuing educational goals seem to disproportionately dropout of school and struggle with balancing educational requirements with the socio-economic and societal pressures of contributing to their own and their family's survival (Noguera,

P., 2003; Williams, 2015). According to Williams (2015) fewer than 60% of Black males earned high school diplomas in 2013, compared to a 65% graduation rate for Latino males and an over 80% graduation rate for White males. Further, the opposition between educational pursuits and earning potential is a struggle that people in oppressed cultures experience much more frequently than people in dominant cultures. Gardner, Barrett, and Pearson (2014) referred to this level of internal conflict as a bi-cultural dilemma. Namely, the experience of constantly navigating between the dominant culture and the demands of one's own minority culture, or living a bi-cultural existence, can be extremely stressful (Gardner et al., 2014). After years of working and contributing to his family, William sought to return to school to build a better life for he and his family and to avoid the prevalent traps of prison or premature death, which was the unfortunate fate of many of his peers. William credited his activism as a local leader in the Deacons for Defense as well as his family support as mitigating factors in his successful return to school and in obtaining an education despite the obstacles he faced as a student.

Along with academic mal-adjustment issues, Black students often feel the need for greater instructional support and institutional connectedness (Owens et al., 2010). According to Trina's narrative, she felt some of her teachers and classmates did not take her academic contributions to class discussions very seriously. She said, "I was always getting laughed at or challenged when I would speak. That made me feel like I had to explain what I said more than I noticed other people did. So I stopped talking. My participation went down." William shared a similar sentiment in expressing, "Even after going back to school, there was always a lingering thought or feeling that I have to perform twice as well to prove that I too, belonged at this school and in my studies."

Similarly, Bernard was required to test in all core subject areas in order to prove his grade-level worthiness in middle school and without the intervention of a counselor; he would never have been enrolled in college preparatory courses in high school. However, despite these obstacles comprising systematized, tangible forms of mis-education, each of the study participants achieved their goal of earning a diploma or alternative certification to lay the foundation to later fulfill their career aspirations as educators.

Despite the multiple, early obstacles to their educational progress, the educators in this study universally exhibited strength through conscious self-determination to obtain an education and an enduring commitment to ensure the academic success of Black students. Given the narrative results of the educational experiences of all five of the educators within the study, it is conceivable that Black students similarly endure discrimination, negative racial climates, lowered expectations, marginalization, and a lack of affirmation of their individual value. Further, the narrative inquiry analysis of participant interviews and scholarship provide overwhelming support for the conclusion that Black teachers in this study sought to interrupt and/or counteract the racism that their White teachers' and peers exhibited through a conscious self-determination to obtain an education.

Conclusion 3: Teachers encouraged students to use their voices and various support platforms to overcome educational oppression. The convergence of educator narratives demonstrated that spending time and energy constantly processing and enduring others' discriminatory actions, and then trying to modify their behavior to prove they are equal, can impair Black students' self-confidence and diminish their will to achieve academically. Keels, Durkee, and Hope (2017) examined the association between school-based micro-aggressions and poor academic achievement. The narratives of Black

educators combined with the CRT lens is appropriate to explain how the inevitability of racism, in the unique form of racial micro-aggressions, emerges in the daily experiences of Black students in predominantly White or even integrated educational settings. Pérez Huber and Solorzano (2015) utilize CRT to explain how everyday forms of racism can be analyzed as racial micro-aggressions and provide a framework for understanding how the responses of people of color can be a powerful tool for identifying, disrupting, and dismantling the racism that marginalizes, subordinates and excludes oppressed people in and outside of education.

Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) defined micro-aggressions as subtle insults that may be verbal or nonverbal and are directed towards others, particularly minorities. Though appearing in the form of subtle and often unchallenged insults, Solórzano et al. purported that micro-aggressions are pervasive forms of racism that reinforce notions of Black inferiority. For example, three participants, Trina, Assata, and Bernard experienced forms of mis-education expressed as curriculum-based micro-aggressions, which had the potential to limit their collegiate prospects and options for success. Moreover, Trina and CC contended that they frequently experienced micro-aggressions in their respective day-to-day interactions with others in school. Reportedly, each of these experiences often resulted in them feeling like unwelcome, second-class citizens in their schools. Participants in turn, counteracted such micro-aggressions by internalizing the negative effects, risking reprimand through speaking out, remaining open to the unexpected support of their teachers and mentors, or through their use of other support platforms.

Assata and Bernard were able to overcome oppression and the negative implications of mis-education through the utilization of various support platforms. For

example, Assata admitted the college preparatory courses offered in 9th and 10th grades were no longer available and were replaced by vocational and or trade classes as her high school's diversity reflected more Blacks and fewer Jewish students. Assata's assertion about the changing demographics at her Detroit high school is consistent with the timing of the White flight phenomenon, which was taking place at this time in U.S. history. According to *The Washington Post*, "Detroit's neighborhoods and their demographics changed drastically and quickly after the 1967 riots. White residents fled by the thousands, affecting municipal infrastructures, tax bases and jobs. It set the stage for similar urban race-related exoduses around the country" (Salenger, 2013, para. 5).

Admittedly, the abrupt shift from college preparatory courses to a largely vocational, technical focus would have sharply limited Assata's (and other Black students') college prospects if she had been educated just a few years later. If it were not for the unexpected support of two of Assata's mentors, an elder English department head and an Upward Bound program recruiter, Assata conceded that college would never have been an option for her. Assata similarly cited the presence of elders, mentors, and teachers who are dedicated support bases for many Black students as the defining point for their future life success.

Assata expressed a significant theme of her narrative in a follow-up interview when she recounted how blessed she was to have several teachers "Who looked beyond where we were into what we might be" as a testament to best express those who served as guides during her educational experiences. In her final year of high school, after having taken all of her required core classes, Assata chose to take a choir course as an elective until an observant teacher (who was aware of Assata's intellectual capacity) steered her

towards a more rigorous astronomy course, which would improve her college readiness and bolster her college application. Moreover, she related memories of a dynamic drama teacher who exposed her to the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance era and encouraged her to perform in a stage play entitled “Rebel Without a Cause.” These early educational opportunities would not have been possible without the unsolicited support of caring educators and mentors. Each of these activities admittedly influenced her later decision to pursue an undergraduate Journalism degree at a local state college and inspired her to contribute to the success of other youth as an educator.

Assata, like Bernard, initially believed that her university’s academic rigor made college admission unlikely. However, it was the pivotal intervention of educational mentors, who had recognized their distinct academic promise and made college education within their reach. An Upward Bound mentor convinced Assata that though college could be a financial challenge, it was the next logical progression for a scholar of her academic strengths. Meanwhile, the head of the English Department took Assata under her wing and launched her into a role as the editor of her high school newspaper in her junior and senior years of high school. This mentor also helped Assata understand that earning a degree was possible despite her poor, working-class family background. Independent of one another, these observant, vocal educators encouraged Assata to apply for UM, where she was subsequently accepted and studied Journalism. Assata never forgot the powerful influence that educators had on her own growth and development. She stated,

I would not have applied and been accepted to the best college in the state on my own. That’s exactly why young people need mentors, and we should assert ourselves into their lives even if it doesn’t look like they’re listening.

Similarly, Bernard believes his life would have assumed an entirely different trajectory had it not been for an unexpected encounter with a high school counselor who recognized his academic strengths and propelled him towards college. Although Bernard had not participated in sports, the counselor suggested he seek extra-curricular involvements like football to make him a more well rounded student and attractive as a college applicant. The counselor also encouraged him to strive beyond the remedial curriculum track of the general high school courses he was taking at the time. Though Bernard admitted he never recognized nor acknowledged that two, separate tracks of academic classes even existed at his Michigan high school, the counselor promptly enrolled him in advanced, college preparatory courses which were nearly filled with peers from other ethnic backgrounds. After this, the counselor closely monitored his academic progress throughout the remainder of his high school tenure and directed him towards local scholarships to supplement his college application and attendance fees. This experience taught Bernard that he was blessed and uniquely privileged, and he considered himself fortunate in comparison to many of his peers who eventually started families and worked in the auto factory or performed a variety of other blue-collar jobs. However, upon prompting from the researcher, Bernard also suggested that Black students might not always be designated or sought out by others as exceptional and worthy of being duly enrolled in college preparatory courses. Thus, Black students are required to be self-confident, aggressive and intentionally seek out platforms and sources of support to capitalize upon college scholarships and other unique opportunities in life.

Of the proposed instructional strategies valuable in overcoming mis-education, the consistent theme evident in William, CC, and Trina's narrative was that student voices

have great value, students must always be prepared to stand up for what they believe in, and students must pursue their career aspirations with exceptional performance to overcome the vestiges of oppression to which Black people are uniquely subjected. William felt that being in the right place is pivotal, and by this he alluded that “school is preferable to the streets or jail.” William placed considerable ownership on Black educators who have themselves, overcome obstacles and stated that he encourages his own students to seek out and take advantage of opportunities they would not have otherwise been aware of. William gleaned inspiration from his experience with college admission and with acceptance into a skilled trades program as a part of his life plan that was not scripted or self-chosen, but which became an option through having earned an education and being open to new experiences.

In the case of CC, she recalled being plagued by lowered expectations from teachers who seemed distant and or cold as a young student in an integrated school, but she refused to use that as an excuse for why she later dropped out of school. Though CC will readily admit the damaging effects of internalizing oppression, given her first-hand experience with overt forms of mis-education, she insists that Black people in general and young Black students in particular, are resilient and capable of overcoming any perceived obstacles to their progress. An eternal optimist, CC credited her academic success to her love of reading and enhanced vocabulary, which made certain humanities classes easy for her and translated into a overall, lifelong zeal for learning. She stressed the unwavering support of her family as a constant motivator and stated she never considered a support role as an educator as an achievable goal, because she knew she could have easily settled

for being a housewife and mother without a career if she had not maintained focus upon returning to pursue her educational goals.

Similarly, though Trina was admittedly disillusioned with the Eurocentric curricula and course offerings she encountered in her advanced placement high school, it was her courage to speak out in opposition to curricular omissions that influenced her later decision to successfully pursue a career in law. Trina advised that self-confidence and a willingness to advocate for oneself serves to immensely benefit the future educational aspirations of Black students. She recognizes the pivotal role of an engaged parental support base to Black students' success and referenced the bleak educational outlook and limited career opportunities likely to be experienced by one of her elementary student mentees. According to Trina, due to a marked absence of parental support during the primary years, her young mentee significantly struggles with reading and a host of other academic subjects in school. She noted that this early elementary student has been earmarked for Special Education and has already been retained in one (and potentially 2) grades. However, as a testament to the ability of other underprivileged, Black students to thrive despite insurmountable educational odds, and given a solid support base of support—Trina's one-on-one mentorship of this low-performing and high-needs student have resulted in the identification of various platforms of support. This advocacy has the capacity to counteract the negative effects of a deficient education and improve both the educational and career trajectory of an at-risk student.

Ultimately, based upon the comprehensive content of the biographical narratives and proposed solution-oriented strategies of each of the 5 study participants, there is salient support for the conclusion that all teachers have the capacity to effectively

encourage Black students to use their voices and various support platforms to overcome micro aggressions and prevalent forms of educational oppression.

Conclusion 4: Teachers benefit from engaging in emancipatory pedagogies in overt and covert ways depending on the teaching context to strengthen Black students' chances of academic success. The biographical narratives and compelling voices of the Black teachers who participated in this study led the researcher to conclude that developing a new pedagogy is necessary to describe the ways in which Black teachers engage emancipatory pedagogies to counteract the deleterious effects of the mis-education of Black students. While many of the participants' professional practices echoed their own positive educational experiences as Black students or pro-actively countered the forms of mis-education they had personally experienced; much of what these teachers were able to individually impart offered unique insight into innovative ways to reach Black students more effectively. Whether subconsciously or by intentional design, the participants of this study engaged in what can be referred to as a liberating pedagogy, and each fervently encouraged and wholly expected their students, particularly their Black students, to achieve academic and professional success, by any and all liberation focused means necessary.

The adoption of a liberating praxis in educating Black students as a viable counter to forms of mis-education was apparent in the way study participants interacted with their respective students. Trina attested to building a reciprocal culture with her students, meaning she overtly sought student feedback to inform the instructional content. She recounted that students who might be intimidated by independent assignments, due to their academic deficiencies, flourish under the auspices of collaborative work and benefit from

exercising a preferred mode of instruction. Student choice has long been heralded as a best practice of instruction (Branstetter, 2017; Marzano, Pickering, & Heflebower, 2011) because it increases student-centered ownership of learning and heterogeneous ability grouping and as such, this provision empowers greater academic success for all students. Similarly, Assata stated her commitment to building strong, lasting relationships with her students. According to Assata, these relationships must often expand beyond traditional teacher and student boundaries to embrace an extended family level support of students' life goals and persistent personal and or academic obstacles. Understanding these aspects of her students' lives allows Assata to offer resources and referrals to help her students succeed. Bernard insisted that student value not be tied to academic achievement and success; rather, he asserted students' active engagement in special pursuits outside of the classroom are what give school unique value and priority for students, particularly low-income, Black students. CC and William emphasized utilizing their own lives as examples of the pitfalls of early pregnancy and or family and work obligations that might prevent students from completing their education. CC and William stressed supporting students, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with a host of comprehensive services (therapy, health, school guidance counselors, social workers, and referrals to external community agencies) that schools have at their disposal.

Teachers who engage in a liberating pedagogy of transformative education understand racism to be “a means by which society allocates privilege and status” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 21). According to the participants in this study, teaching a culturally relevant and responsive curriculum to their students is a required component of the more traditional, standards-based curriculum. The components that study participants

proposed as crucial to the academic success of Black students are to help promote their positive self-image, bring awareness to the way students might navigate oppressive systems, and equip students with the critical thinking skills needed to live successful lives outside of school. Additionally, research from Milner (2016), Aronson and Laughter (2016), and Grain and Land (2017) supported the notion that Black educators have long been instrumental in cultivating socially and politically responsive Black students and in enabling greater academic performance levels. Social and political responsiveness was also important to Hope and Spencer (2017), who considered civic engagement as a coping response to systems of inequality faced by racial minority children. Community and civic activism positively affects Black students' interpretation of self-worth (Hope and Jagers, 2014; Hope, Keels & Durkee, 2016; Kahn and Spote, 2008; Lin, Lawrence, & Snow, 2015) and thus scholars should examine civic engagement as a proactive coping method to counteract the presence of mis-education and the negative effects of its systemic presence.

While the researcher in this study confirmed some earlier premises regarding the mis-education of Black students in K—12 schools, she also uncovered some refreshing, valuable insights to discourage a monolithic view of the Black educational experience. Although none of the narratives were identical, the participants communicated enough notable similarities in their school and professional experiences for the researcher to draw conclusions about what strategies and tactics might enhance the educational prospects of minority students, and Black students in particular. For example, although the fact that Blacks have historically suffered educational inequities in integrated public schools is well-established, (Johnson, 2014; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Rothstein, 2015; Shemerinsky, 2014) one interesting and related conclusion drawn from this research was

that Black educators attest to having had positive experiences in all Black school settings. For example, the participants related they had positive educational experiences in non-integrated schools. Moreover, they had these experiences despite the all-too often presence of inferior materials and infrastructure in those schools. Their success could be attributable to the investment their own Black educators made in teaching and mentoring them. This finding was central to the theme that teachers benefit from engaging in emancipatory pedagogies in overt and covert ways depending on the teaching context to strengthen Black students' chances of academic success.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

Three theories shaped this study. First, the researcher used critical race theory (CRT) to examine Black educators' experiences and create a platform for them to counter narratives that distort Black people's historical experiences in education (Bradbury, 2014; Crichlow, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Additionally, CRT empowered the researcher's use of storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives as ways to "cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 144). Furthermore, the researcher used two additional theories to examine how the educators constructed, narrated, and performed their personal and professional identities in educational spaces to inform the mis-education of Black students: transformative learning (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2000; Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2014) and narrative-counter narrative (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Patton, 2002).

Theories are lenses researchers use to identify and solve problems as well as understand and explain social reality (Schwandt, 2014). The researcher in this study focused on the experiences of Black teachers as they prepared Black students to live in a

society in which they are apt to encounter institutionalized racism in many forms and at many levels (Feagin, 2014; Garran, 2017; Kwate & Goodman, 2015; Marable, 2015; Miller & Tatum, 2017); therefore, she knew that critical race theoretical perspectives would be most suitable to frame this study. The researcher wanted to incorporate a theoretical perspective that included a focus on race and valued the participants' prior cultural knowledge as well as the researcher's own. Further, the researcher desired to frame each narrative chronologically and provide the participants with an unencumbered opportunity to tell their own stories. These priorities led the researcher to utilize CRT in constructing this study.

Through the lens of CRT, relying solely on the biographical narratives and personal and or professional educational experiences of the study's five participants is not necessary to understand the high priority status of mis-education that affects Black students in public schools across the U.S. For example, Yancy (2016) highlighted the blatant racism that occurred in Jena, Louisiana in 2006 as one of many instances of overt racism that Black students experience in interracial school settings. Specifically, after Black students chose to sit under a tree in a schoolyard which had been unofficially segregated and deemed for Whites only by a large mass of the student body, three nooses were found hanging from the tree branches the next day as a definitive message. Yancy (2016) argued

In response to the nooses found hanging in the so-called "white tree", a space of whiteness, a white woman in the area reported that there are no race problems in Jena. About the nooses she said "the nooses? I don't even know why they were

there, what they were supposed to mean.” There are pranks all the time, of one type or another . . . and it just didn't seem to be racist to me. (p. 21)

The relevance of this incident was the national level of attention garnered for a systemic and embedded form of mis-education encountered by the students in Jena, Louisiana.

While their narratives indicated each of the study participants’ encountered mis-education, their stories are not uncommon; many Black students across the U.S. have experienced or witnessed similar occurrences (Allen, 2013; Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Harper, 2015; Tatum, 2017). In the example from Jena, LA mentioned above, the state Board of Education dubbed the hanging of the nooses as merely a youthful prank and the three White males determined to be responsible for the hangings received only several days of school suspension. Undoubtedly, the dismissive responses that study participants and these students’ families in Louisiana received after having encountered such violating forms of discrimination only serve to perpetuate an increasingly common theme that devalues appropriate widespread attention to the educational experience of Black students. Considering these ideas, the researcher situated the current study within the conceptual framework of CRT. The researcher’s use of the CRT lens aided in interpreting such acts of violence against Black students in the proper context of “habituated modes of white denial, structured ignorance, white bonding and disrespect for black people” (Yancy, 2016, p. 21), that are endemic of mis-education.

Furthermore, the transformative learning perspective was appropriate to this study because narrative inquiry fueled the exploration of new understandings, the synthesis of new information, and the integration of these insights throughout personal and professional spheres that led educators to a broader, more inclusive approach in addressing

issues of student learning and equity. Transformative learning is a process of critical self-reflection that can be stimulated by people, events, or changes in context that challenge the learner's basic assumptions of the world. Cranton (1994) reported that through transformative learning, "Values are not necessarily changed, but are examined. Their source is identified, and they are accepted and justified or revised or possibly rejected" (p. 146). Ultimately, the transformative learning lens allowed for critical reflection on the cognitive processes of how study participants responded to a narrative inquiry, the specific content of what each participant reflected on, and how their biographical experiences and thinking framed their own approach in the classroom. This process served to create a depth of understanding into the mis-education of Black students.

Based on data collected for this study, the researcher concluded the widespread adoption of a liberation-driven and transformative pedagogy offers Black students an opportunity "to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1994, p. 17). Freire's (1994) work offered both a practical and theoretical approach to emancipatory education. He urged educators to adopt and develop an "ontological vocation" (p. 12), a theory of existence that views people as subjects, not objects, who are constantly reflecting and acting on the transformation of their world so it can become a more equitable place for all to live. This approach is particularly relevant for Black students who suffer the negative effects of mis-education, yet must still learn to navigate a productive and successful adult life and remain capable of counteracting the institutionalized oppressive forces present in society.

Mezirow (1998) argued the purpose of adult development is to realize one's agency through increasingly expanding awareness and critical reflection. He also argued

the educational tasks of critical reflection involve helping adults become aware of oppressive structures and practices, develop tactical awareness of how they might change those oppressive structures and practices, and build the confidence and ability to work for collective change. Similarly, Freire (1994) was concerned about a significant “social transformation, a demythologizing of reality, and an awakening of critical consciousness whereby people perceive the social, political, and economic contradictions of their time and take action against oppressive elements” (Brown, 2004). Thus, the importance of critical reflection to problem solving as well as the transformative need for learners to take action against limiting forces in society empowers them to otherwise become a transformative agent of their own freedom from oppression.

Limitations

Although results of this narrative study provide a springboard for an increased understanding of the mis-education of Black students, some limitations require consideration. One characteristic of qualitative research is that findings are not always transferable because the results may be unique to these participants (Merriam, 2009). The researcher used multiple techniques to increase the credibility, transferability, and dependability of this narrative study (Merriam, 2009). The researcher strengthened the study’s credibility through two practices: (a) multiple interviews and an appropriate lapse of time between interviews; and (b) audiotaped interviews that were transcribed after each interview and analyzed promptly after themes had emerged. The researcher supported the transferability using thick and rich descriptions of participant stories, the researcher’s theoretical orientation and context, and research processes. The researcher enhanced the study’s dependability through transparency. Finally, to maintain the confidentiality of the

participants, the researcher assigned pseudonyms to each participant (Merriam, 2009). Another limitation existed because all participants lived in and received education in Michigan; the results may reveal a bias toward Black educators from this area, and therefore may not be transferable to Black educators nationwide.

An unanticipated limitation during the research field experience was that one participant was inaccessible, in person, for the scheduled interview. Specifically, the researcher's disability and use of a walker prevented the convenience of home access to 1 of the 5 participants, William, who resided in a condominium complex that was inaccessible without climbing many stairs. Thus, the researcher conducted this participant interview in two stages as opposed to three, and both interviews took place over the phone. William related most of his narrative in the first interview; the researcher used the second interview, which took place approximately 1 week following the original session, to clarify aspects of his biographical narrative and ensure the accuracy of the narrative details gathered. Altering the preferred interview protocol necessitated the researcher taking copious notes during the interview.

Results from the evaluation evidenced a mix of strengths and weaknesses epistemologically, and therefore methodologically, in narrative educational research. In terms of limitations or weaknesses, the participants often shared their narratives in a non-linear fashion, so the researcher was required to attempt to fill gaps in biographical history or evidence through follow-up questioning or logical inference. Further, the researcher was concerned the retrospective accounts from the elder and or retired educator participants about their own educational experience would be scant or more difficult to

recall; however, each narrative was rich, substantive, and grounded in authentic participant experience and vivid history.

Implication of the Results for Practice

The implications for further research include a need for extensive qualitative and quantitative research focused on the mis-education that Black students experience in K–12 institutions. Additionally, there is a need for qualitative research exploring the creation of a liberation-infused, transformative pedagogy to better enable the increased academic success of those students who are underserved or mis-educated in American schools. If current and future educational leaders are to foster successful, equitable, and socially responsible learning and accountability practices for all students, then substantive changes are warranted in a wide variety of educational communities. Specifically, education policy makers should require teachers and administrators to complete professional development training programs focused on cultural responsiveness and awareness.

Another meaningful implication of the results for practice is that the participants' rich, biographical narratives have the potential to add to the scant body of research and literature devoted to how to more effectively educate Black students while also providing a counter-narrative to the dismal portrayal of Black students' educational limitations, (Cook & Ludwig, 1998; Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013; Zirkel & Pollack, 2016). "Black teachers' shared approaches to effective teaching for students historically underserved in classrooms provide a rich, albeit still largely untapped, resource for teacher-educators and others vested in pushing against these persistent race-based educational disparities" (Hayes, Juarez & Escoffery-Runnels, 2014). Cortazzi (2014) theorized that the nature of teachers' knowledge is inextricably linked to teachers'

narratives and “what teachers know and learn is crucial to our understanding of educational processes and how children may be taught” (p. 8). Finally, the oral and life histories of study participants have helped the researcher to comprehensively reflect in more nuanced ways, and solidify the importance of her voice as a Black, female administrator in helping to prepare teachers to meet the needs of culturally diverse students.

Undoubtedly, the most significant implication for future practice includes the adoption of a liberation-driven and transformative pedagogy to counteract the effects of the mis-education of Black students. Freire (1994) identified a challenge in education as one of equipping students to be successful and counteracting the existence of educational oppression. This challenge is still relevant in 2018. Both Hooks (2014) and Freire (1994) propagated beliefs in the ideological elements of a liberating praxis for Black students who exist in a racist, sexist, and classist society. Therefore, the proposed use of an alternative and liberating pedagogy to overcome the effects of Black students’ mis-education is not a new concept.

A liberation-infused and transformative pedagogy most closely aligns with the historical legacy of Woodson (1933). This preeminent scholar desired to counteract the age-old tradition of mis-education and believed that Black students needed an academic foundation that considered fighting against their oppression as a component of their learning. Similarly, among study participants there was a consensus that Black students must be made aware of not only overt and institutional oppression, but also its’ more subtle, insidious forms like micro aggressions, to counteract the evils of oppression effectively. Finally, a liberating pedagogy honors and respects Black students’ unique

experience, which is what the teachers in this study sought to do in their respective classrooms. In respective narrative response(s), each participant in this study referenced the importance of cultural innovation in lesson design and classroom instruction. Hooks (2014) also affirmed the need for teachers to adopt an ideology of liberation pedagogy:

Teaching is a performative act. And it is that aspect of our work that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the unique elements in each classroom . . . Teachers are not performers in the traditional sense of the word in that our work is not meant to be a spectacle. Yet it is meant to serve as a catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged, to become active participants in learning. (p. 11)

In their own creative manner, each participant affirmed their confidence in Black students' ability to triumph over the obstacles they may encounter on their educational journeys.

Recommendations for Further Research

Many Black educators, like the researcher in this study, chose to intentionally work in urban schools and communities because they feel a great responsibility and calling to educate high-need populations of underserved and underprivileged students. As professionals, educators are charged with communicating instructional content in an intellectually engaging, personally relevant, and culturally appropriate way to equip well-rounded individuals of future generations. Furthermore, as persons of color, it is particularly incumbent upon Blacks in education to ensure the forward progress of Black students so that this historically marginalized group is prepared for college, career, and an empowered life. However, despite this universal obligation, Black educators are not exempt from propagating mis-education and thus accompany the widespread pedagogical

community in failing to address the achievement gap for Black students, who are arguably the most educationally disadvantaged group.

Moreover, according to Ladson-Billings (2006), the very term *achievement gap* suggests that the problem of mis-education resides with the academically low-performing students, not school systems and curriculums, as the source of the gap. Scholars have inordinately focused on the victims or students themselves as contributing to the achievement gap rather than examine the problem of the mis-education of Black students as a means to close the gap. Ladson-Billings (2006) argued, “The pedagogical practices of teachers, as well as the standards used to guide those pedagogical practices, contribute to either the exacerbation or the narrowing of the gap” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 11). Therefore, the traditionally embedded institutionalized oppression of an entire educational system, and its corresponding curricula, practices and the policy makers and educators who comprise the system, are the most glaring patrons of the mis-education of Black students.

Future research should extend the scholarship devoted to the phenomenon of the mis-education of Black students, by replicating this study to ensure that a wealth of valuable, narrative research informs future practice. The implications of this study echo other studies that focused on Black educators’ lived experiences and instructional practices and such insight is an invaluable resource in devising solutions to mis-education. The findings of this study demonstrate that the school-to-prison pipeline deserves individual study of its own depth and significance to further examine the correlation between mis-education and the rapid growth of America’s prison industrial complex. Study findings also offer implications for research in teacher education and preparation

programs, curriculum, and instruction in PK–12 as well as education policy. Using CRT as the theoretical perspective that guided this study allowed the researcher to comprehend the ways that participants responded to the presence of racism, encounters with mis-education and the ways in which they shared their counter-narratives. With these ideas in mind, the researcher generated four themes from the data: (a) participants uniquely experienced the vestiges of mis-education as they faced insidious forms of racism during the course of their educational journey, (b) participants sought to interrupt the racism that their White teachers’ and peers exhibited, (c) participants encouraged students to use their voices and various platforms to speak about their oppression, and (d) participants engaged emancipatory pedagogies in overt and covert ways depending on the social context and the teaching context. Callous disregard of the findings of this study and other intentional research-based attempts to counter the deleterious effects of the mis-education of Black students would mean “for many black children in the United States schooling [will continue to be] a site of suffering” (Dumas, 2014, p. 4).

Addressing the School-to-Prison Pipeline. While the United States contains only 5% of the world’s population, the U.S. has 25% of the world’s prisoners (NAACP, 2017). According to the Criminal Justice Fact Sheet, prison populations have effectively quadrupled since 1980 (NAACP, 2017). Further, Blacks have been incarcerated at a rate six times that of Whites (Wilson, 2014). Potter, Boggs and Dunbar (2017) argue that the growth of punitive school discipline in U.S. schools has created an inequitable system of school punishment that is reflective of the development of the school-to-prison pipeline (p. 70). Potter et al., (2017) further attest that current school discipline practices negatively affect student academic growth in the classroom as a result of an increase in suspensions

and expulsions. This fact leads one to conclude that the culture of incarceration, which permeates U.S. society, and disproportionately affects Black people, is an unavoidable factor in public schools.

School punishment disparities contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline and are disproportionately experienced by Black students (Potter et al., 2017; Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014; Skiba, 2014; Wilson, 2014; Quinlan, 2016). “Black students are disproportionately suspended from class, starting as early as preschool” (Quinlan, 2016), according to new data from the U.S. Department of Education from all public school districts during the 2013—2014 school year. Rates of incarceration and inordinate rates of school punishment are understood as a contributing factor to mis-education because research shows that classroom misbehavior is directly correlated with academic frustration and that low-performing students fall even further behind when suspended, thus putting them at risk for increased failure in school (Balfanz, Burns, & Fox, 2015).

Though not acknowledged as an obstacle from the participants of this study, Smith and Harper (2015) stated,

From the data available, we know that Black students are disproportionately suspended, expelled, and referred to the criminal justice system by schools. The overuse of these punishments and their disproportionate use on students of color are serious problems that we have to address right now. (p. 2)

The school-to-prison pipeline can be viewed as a result of racially profiling Black students, particularly Black males, and criminalizing their behavior. An appropriate recommendation for further research is to increase research into the link between low-academic performance levels and increased disciplinary referrals. Additionally, increased

teacher/administrative training is warranted to empower educators with the tools to deescalate and mitigate excessive school punishments of Black students and other at-risk student populations. Further, there must be a thorough analysis of the feasibility of zero tolerance policies to determine whether existing discipline practices fuel the school-to-prison pipeline and contribute to mis-education or aid in alleviating the phenomenon. Explicit school-to-prison pipeline remedies will involve complicated and interrelated factors of teaching, learning, and school discipline but must be addressed in future pedagogical policy.

Accountability, Teacher Education, School Funding, and Reforms. There is a compelling argument to suggest that few gains have been made to significantly and positively impact the inescapable reality of mis-education for Black students in K–12 schools across the nation. In a recent study centered on correcting prevalent issues in Detroit’s school system, Lake, Jochim, and Dearmond, (2015) concluded,

Detroit parents still have very few high-quality options, despite a number of different reform interventions, including putting a state-appointed emergency manager in charge of the district, pulling the lowest-performing schools into a statewide turnaround district, and allowing a significant number of charter schools to operate. (p. 1)

Detroit has received nationwide attention for its failing schools (Sugrue, 2014), both public and charter, and despite a history of both private and government corruption and mismanagement, large numbers of failing school districts continue to operate without the proper checks and balances to ensure a positive educational outcome for the students enrolled in these institutions (Zernike, 2016). Yet, the problem of mis-education and

persistently low-performing Black students is not limited to particular cities, states, or locales. Therefore, education policy makers at the national level must study previous, failed attempts at education reform and then forge coherent and effective solutions to reduce the prevalence of mis-education of Black students across the U.S.

There is an overarching belief that Black students' academic excellence is largely dependent upon a positive view of their ethnic group identity and self-worth (Aldridge, Ala'i and Fraser, 2016). The National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) reinforced this ideology when it committed to developing scholarship solely on the underachievement of Black students. Though dated, this scholarship was cited as relevant by modern authors King, Akua and Russell, (2013) who cite the continuing validity of a culturally responsive curriculum. The NABSE (1984) argument for culturally responsive curriculum states:

African American children must be given the opportunity to experience an appropriate cultural education which gives them an intimate knowledge of and which honors and respects the history of our people . . . this means preparing students for self-knowledge and for becoming a contributing problem-solving member of his or her own community. No child can be ignorant of or lack respect for his or her own unique cultural group and meet others in the world on an equal footing. (p. 23)

While making Black students more knowledgeable of their history (Asante, 1991; Woodson, 1933) is certainly important in this kind of pedagogy, it is not the foundational principle of this potentially liberating praxis. Because reflection alone does not produce change, Freire (1994) advocated for the necessity of action based on reflection. Policy

praxis involves inductive and deductive forms of reasoning. It also involves dialogue as a social process with the objective of “dismantling oppressive structures and mechanisms prevalent both in education and society” (Freire & Macedo, 1995, p. 383).

The research implications for this study largely stem from the fact that only a minute fraction of the research literature focuses on the mis-education of Black students. There is even less scholarship devoted to the problem of mis-education through the unique lens of Black educators; therefore, future studies could fill this prevalent research gap. More importantly, educators must replace outdated curricula with a more inclusive and liberating praxis, for Black students in particular. The insidious combination of an absence of diversity in the teaching workforce, the failures of national reforms, and the increasing inequality in school funding formulas demonstrate the need for extensive narrative research from the lens of Black educators that can improve education from the grassroots, practitioner level up to the policy level. Boutte (2015) encouraged educators to move beyond conventional approaches of teaching and learning, and to embrace “an emancipatory manner that is liberating for students and teachers alike” (p. 10).

In discussing the prolonged mis-education of Black students, Giroux (1988, p. 2) stated the problem raises “fundamental questions about how educators and schools contribute to these problems . . . how can we make schooling meaningful so as to make it critical and how can we make it critical so as to make it emancipatory?” Teacher education programs need to evolve and reflect the increasing diversity in public schools. Ogay and Edelman (2016) stated, “An online consultation of teachers revealed that 66% of the respondents felt that they were ill-prepared to address diversity in the classroom.” Therefore, advancing this idea from Ogay and Edelman (2016) is crucial:

Culture is to be understood as an everyday, socially symbolic practice. It is a way to understand how individuals in their specific social conditions of life symbolically acquire their own lifestyle and attribute a unique meaning to their own life.

By their own overwhelming admission, teachers must be equipped with the tools to address the increasing diversity of America's schools and to effectively turn the tides of the persistent problem of the mis-education of Black students. Including rigorous diversity and multi-cultural instructional certification requirements is appropriate when educating teachers on meeting the needs of the student cultures, which are dominant in today's public schools (Forrest, Lean, & Dunn, 2016).

Giroux and McLaren (1989) referenced the importance of culturally responsive teaching or the pedagogy of difference in that educators must understand how their own identities are constructed and be social critics able to dissect or analyze our society:

It is important that educators come to understand theoretically how difference is constructed through various representations and practices that name, legitimate, marginalize, and exclude the cultural capital and voices of various groups in American society; similarly, a pedagogy of difference needs to address the important question of how the representations and practices of difference are actively learned, internalized, challenged, or transformed. (p. 142)

In this context, all educators, even the 82% of teachers who are White (Vilson, 2015), are capable of empowering students from backgrounds different than their own by challenging dominant paradigms through curriculum design and instructional delivery.

Block (2015) subscribes to a belief in the pedagogy of difference and practices culturally responsive teaching methods. Block attests it is impossible to teach honestly and reflectively without a clear understanding of the social construction of identity. A self-identified White teacher in a classroom full of diverse students from backgrounds different than his own, Block stated “some of my own knowledge of self is that mainstream U.S. society treats whiteness as normal, a default setting” (para. 7). Fueled by this acknowledgement, Block surmised that White teachers *can* bridge the cultural divide by adopting classroom practices and pedagogies that “liberate, transform and empower” (2015) all students. He challenges each of his White peer educators to build an anti-racist classroom and create a safe environment “to discuss and [utilize] tools to navigate these large social issues that affect so many of them daily” (2015, para. 5).

Further, in order for educators to reject the traditional methods of teacher education that contribute to the mis-education of Black students, teacher education programs must embrace schools as sites for all students to become empowered, active, and critical thinkers. “Teaching about culture in teacher training is a challenging task; the concept is particularly complex, and pre-service as well as in-service teachers are not necessarily interested in the theoretical debates about it” (Ogay & Edelman, 2016, p. 389). However, teachers must be taught to understand how the dominant school culture functions as a microcosm of racist society and ensure the academic success of underserved populations, like mis-educated Black students, through conscious affirmation of others’ own cultural experiences. Giroux (1988) insisted that this includes teachers’

Examining their own cultural capital and examining the way in which it either benefits or victimizes students. Thus, the central questions for building a critical

pedagogy are the questions of how we help students, particularly from the oppressed classes, [and] recognize that the dominant school culture is not neutral and does not generally serve their needs. (p. 7)

Timely adoption of this culturally relevant model in teacher education and renewed reform efforts challenges the dominant assumptions in traditional educational practices that unwittingly contribute to the mis-education of Black students.

Inequity in school funding remains an equally prevalent theme in mis-education. Current U.S. Education Secretary DeVos stated, “the notion that spending more money is going to bring about different results [in academic achievement] is ill-placed and ill-advised” (Barnum, 2017). However, there is a wealth of compelling research to dispute this unfounded opinion. A recent study published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (Jackson, et al., 2015), found that court-ordered increases in school spending resulted in students’ attending college at higher rates and earning more money as adults. Specifically, “a 10% increase in per pupil spending each year for all 12 years of public school leads to 0.31 more completed years of education, about 7% higher wages, and a 3.2 percentage point reduction in the annual incidence of adult poverty; effects are much more pronounced for children from low-income families” (Jackson, et al., 2015). Likewise, another school funding analysis demonstrated that when states duly increased education spending, they saw substantial increases in scores on the federal NAEP exam (Barnum, 2017).

Mis-education linked inequity is not limited to per-pupil-funding allotments however, a recent study alleged “textbooks that mis-educate students about evolution and climate change may be in wide use in private schools that receive public funding through

voucher or tax-credit schemes” (Branch, 2017). This revealing study demonstrated that textbooks touted evangelical rhetoric as fact or scientific truth. As a result, students were taught among other misinformation, “climate change was a hoax, and . . . that evolution has no real scientific basis (Branch, 2017, para. 4).” This intentional form of mis-education is prevalent in 2018 and also mirrors the findings of this research, in that a study participant was publicly rebuked by her high school teacher for challenging the validity of the textbook fictional account of the country of Egypt as separate from the continent of Africa.

Specifically, the researcher in this study recommends more research studies that seek to interrogate and understand how Black teachers uniquely contribute to the lives of their students, beyond the mere delivery of instructional content. Study findings reflected the overwhelming use of scaffolding and differentiation strategies in teaching Black students in order to effectively counter the debilitating effects of life in a racist, institutionally oppressed society. Yet many of these practices are not documented but driven of a common experience of mis-education. According to King, Akua, and Russell (2013), copious forms of mis-education are not only visible in our outdated curricula, textbooks, and school organization, but in teacher education as well. King et al. (2013) advocated for education policy that is not grounded solely on Eurocentric ideals. Additionally, they argued

Attention to how the curriculum contributes not only to outcome inequity but also how pedagogy undermines the academic and cultural excellence of Black students, as well as their agency and self-determination, should replace the present preoccupation with racialized performance gaps. (p. 26)

Researchers could consider for future study, as informed by this research, several specific concerns. First, while identity and culture are organically nurtured and formed in the home, the inevitability of racism and forms of mis-education faced in the school system constitute an assault on Black students' ability to successfully navigate academic achievement and or to counteract racism in society, thus teacher education programs must explicitly weave culturally responsive tactics, diversity and social activism into teacher education programs. Second, in-depth examinations of how Black teachers construct aspects of their personal and professional identities will inform all educators to better understand the sociocultural contexts in which Black students learn in urban educational settings, thus enabling educators to better meet the needs of Black students. Finally, as a means to overcome the overwhelming presence of isolation and alienating school experiences often encountered in traditional institutions, Black students should be increasingly encouraged to explore alternatives to compulsory education (in the forms of home-schooling or independent, African-centered institutions). Ultimately, Black students must be universally expected to achieve the academic excellence they are capable of, regardless of school enrollment. Academic achievement must be nurtured through the provision of learning environments more congruent with the values, traditions, lifestyles and symbols of Black families and via the proliferation of positive images and African-centered, inclusive accounts of history throughout the K–12 educational trajectory.

For such future research studies to be conducted in the most ethical manner conceivable, some substantial changes must first take place in the field of educational research. The first of these changes involves who conducts the bulk of research studies about Black educators. The researcher doubts this study would have produced similar

data had the researcher conducting the study not been Black. Therefore, more scholarly, Black researchers are necessary to conduct narrative inquiry research on Black teachers and Black students for several, compelling reasons. The most significant reason is that Black participants are not likely to be as candid in discussing their intimate biographical experiences and beliefs with researchers who are not Black, for fear of mis-interpretation or contributing to stereotypes fueled by master narratives. Studies (Smith, 2010; Swetlitz, 2017) indicate that Black research participants are far more likely to trust Black researchers with whom they have a shared experience and fate. The educators who participated in this study trusted the researcher implicitly, because they knew that she would understand them and tell their stories in a way that affirmed them.

The second potential consideration for educational research is that Black researchers are likely to interpret data differently from researchers who are not Black, in that Black researchers might be more likely and better able to bracket their own cultural pre-conceptions and thus analyze and interpret data more honestly and reach more valid conclusions. Having come from the same culture and having had similar experiences as the participants allowed the researcher to analyze the data in ways that would be much comprehensive, and arguably more valid, from someone who had not had at least some of the life experiences the participants discussed. Often, vulnerable populations are exposed to research that is driven by dominant epistemologies, research methodologies and socio-cultural lenses that can exacerbate their vulnerability, negating their socio-cultural reality” (Harvard, 2010). Thus, embodying the culture of the research participants allows one to collect and analyze data in ways that honors the participants’ cultural experience and allows participants to feel secure enough to trust the researcher with more intimate and

scientifically useful data. “Given that the researcher is the qualitative research instrument, it is important to consider your personality, demographic background, traits, and preferences” (Tracy, 2012) in order to ensure compatibility, suitability, yield and feasibility in research findings.

Conclusion

The purpose and significance of this study was that it conveyed the prevalent problem of the mis-education of Black students in American education and enabled the larger audience of pedagogical practitioners and policy makers to obtain keen insight into how the phenomenon exists and deleteriously impacts society. Educators will profit from both reading and utilizing this study of educator narratives to acknowledge the inherent bias in the current delivery of instruction. Moreover, educators could use the findings in this study to resist succumbing to the very same limitations dictated by race and class to render Black students as a permanent underclass subject to the lowered expectations of K–12 education. Policy makers could use the findings to critique the institutionally embedded system of mis-education and to spur adoption of a more inclusive pedagogical model designed to increase the multifaceted success of Black students. Unless educators and policy makers understand the mis-education of Black students in the United States as a series of continuous struggles against structural White supremacy (Anderson, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), through both synchronic (snapshot) and diachronic (over extended periods of time) analyses (Gutiérrez & Stone, 2000), then future pedagogical reforms are likely to only address the symptoms of Black students’ mis-education, rather than to aggressively censure the causes.

Through use of a narrative inquiry methodology to collect the pivotal, unique, and personal stories of people often overlooked and underrepresented in research, the researcher in this study contributed to the larger realm of scholarly literature in the field of modern critical race theory and non-conformist, twenty-first century education refinement. The researcher in this study engaged Black pedagogy professionals in a narrative analysis of their personal and professional experiences that have the capacity to inform, if not transform, the relationship of other educators with Black students. Study findings, drawn from the unique fiber of Black culture, countered common and flawed majority themes of the mis-education of Black students and will contribute to the inadequate body of research on this topic. Certainly, answers to the research question as culled from skilled practitioners in the field of education contributed significantly to the virtually non-existent body of research in this field. Such insights offer the potential to determine how to best inspire advanced inquiry to expand upon the design of a pedagogical praxis to begin to bridge the achievement gap for Black students nationwide.

There is little argument on the premise that every child in the United States deserves a first-class education. Unfortunately, many Blacks, as well as other minority groups and low-income families, live in a system of “structured inequalities” (Friere, 1998; Mehan, 2012) in which the very places they live, work, shop, entertain, and go to school have been purposefully designed to marginalize them to the periphery of society. In terms of schooling, this structured inequality has manifested itself through disparities in academic achievement, otherwise regarded as the achievement gap, or via the pervasive problem of mis-education. Academically, Black students have fared appreciably worse than their White counterparts on standardized tests and have been treated inequitably in

American schools and classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Edwards, McMillon, & Turner, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Sleeter, 2012).

Data from this study suggests it is likely that remedies to the ongoing problem of Black students' mis-education are available in the untapped resource of Black educators' unique experiential and affirming pedagogical practices. Study participants' approaches to overcoming structured inequalities in schools inform a larger paradigm capable of countering the widespread effects of mis-education by explicitly honoring the unique Black experience of students. Perhaps Black students consistently underperform academically because the educational system has consistently failed to create learning environments in which disenfranchised populations of students receive the practical and tacit knowledge they need to overcome any obstacle. This study's findings suggest that even the best and brightest among the Black students enrolled in public K–12 schools in Detroit mirrors the experience of Black students across the nation, in that they have reached a point of saturation with traditional curricula and educational approaches because these methods either dampen or thoroughly extinguish their epistemological curiosity. The widespread academic underperformance of the Black, K–12 student demographic suggests that they no longer benefit from traditional curricula and educational approaches (Nieto, 2015; Wiggan & Watson-Vandiver, 2017). Freire & Macedo (1995) asked,

If students are not able to transform their lived experiences into knowledge and to use the already acquired knowledge as a process to unveil new knowledge, they will never be able to participate rigorously in a dialogue as a process of learning and knowing. In truth, how can one dialogue without any prior apprenticeship with the object of knowledge and without any epistemological curiosity? (p. 17)

Thus, it is incumbent upon educators to intentionally and universally counter the effects of mis-education by employing tenets of Freire's liberation pedagogy, designed to value, both theoretically and practically, the unique experience of oppressed Black students to render academic achievement an attainable goal.

Moreover, Anderson (2017) stated,

What we know from decades of research and what we've learned from working with black leaders for decades, is that representation matters and reform efforts flourish and endure when the intended beneficiaries not only have a seat at the table, but are at the head of that table leading movements. (para. 2).

Blacks in education play a crucial role in counteracting the mis-education of Black students. Modern researchers support the notion that a strong Black identity is linked to improved educational outcomes and higher academic achievement for Black students (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016; Shin & Raudenbush, 2011; Zirkel & Johnson, 2016) and the researcher in this study proved that better educational outcomes can be achieved through affirmation of and sensitivity to the Black experience. Participants in this study asserted the importance of high expectations and upholding positive beliefs regarding Black students' competence on both a personal and professional level.

Although there is scarce qualitative research about mis-education in general and how Black educators can contribute to a liberation infused pedagogy that better speaks to the unique needs of Black students, the results of this study provide a springboard to understand the specific and unique dynamics that affect how educators effectively overcome the vestiges of mis-education with their students. Data points from this study provide preliminary evidence that despite having written competencies, ethics, standards,

and having earned advanced degrees, modern educators are ill-prepared to address the intersections of race and class that inform the mis-education of Black students. Therefore, advanced research must be devoted to the unique needs of Black students, and that research must include Black educators who are uniquely well versed in the Black educational experience.

Overall, study findings indicated that Black teachers experienced mis-education and racism in their own educational backgrounds, sought to interrupt the racism that their White teachers' and peers often exhibited, learned to embrace and engage in emancipatory practices as dictated from their past experiences, encouraged students to use their voices and other platforms to speak about their oppression, and engaged emancipatory pedagogies in overt and covert ways depending on the teaching context. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has determined that the participants of the study engaged in a culturally responsive and liberation-based pedagogy designed to ensure the empowerment and well-rounded education of their Black students. Implications for future study include enhanced studies of other consequences of mis-education such as the school-to-prison pipeline and failed education reforms. These results pertain to the need for an inclusive, liberation pedagogy and educators courageous enough to challenge the current status quo in pedagogy. Undoubtedly, critical, transformative leaders enter the education field with a level of idealism regarding student abilities and should desire to counter the status quo by balking at traditional pedagogy and opting to work for social change and social justice (Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Cochran-Smith, 1998; Oakes & Lipton, 2002).

Representing and interpreting another's voice is not a simple task and needs to be done with respect and humility. The researcher is admittedly indebted to each of her participants for entrusting her with their intimate, biographical narratives. To offer justice to both the study participants' lives and to honor the scientific nature of the qualitative research tradition, the researcher used a critical event analysis method that suited the breadth of the narrative data and that aligned to insights of the phenomenon of Black students' mis-education. Additionally, as an educator of more than 23 years, including separate tenures as a teacher, an instructional coach, an assistant principal (and for the past several years as an elementary administrator), the researcher has seen the "achievement gap" widen and felt beholden to my ancestors, colleagues and other educators, to be a part of the solution rather than to continue to exist as a microcosm of the problem.

This research study of the mis-education of Black students was an intentional attempt to shift the perspective from placing the blame upon the victimized students who suffer mis-education, to an in-depth exploration of what occurs within the institutionalized system of education. Ultimately, this study confirmed Woodson's contention that a failure to address the antiquated presence of Black students' mis-education would result in the increasing, inescapable detrimental effects of modern mis-education for Black students in American schools. Woodson aptly predicted that a continued disregard for the Black experience would render true education virtually unattainable in the U.S. school system and theorized that Black students would be increasingly alienated in an educational system unfit to meet their distinct needs. Certainly, these themes were evident in this narrative study of educators whose input has duly warranted a widespread examination of the pervasive problem of mis-education.

“Action is an integral and indispensable component of transformative learning” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 209). As such, the adoption of a transformative pedagogy will empower future educators, policy makers, and leaders to be proactive versus reactive, to embrace a courageous counter to the mis-education of Black students, and to engage in what Fine, Weiss, and Powell (1997) referred to as opportunities for “creative analysis of difference, power and privilege” (p. 249). Certainly, giving up on the masses of mis-educated Black students is not an option. Noguera (2003) challenges all educators to restore the hope that urban schools can be significantly improved.

Moreover, Noguera (2003) queried,

I fundamentally believe that educating all children, even those who are poor and non-White, is an achievable goal, *if* we truly value all children. Of course, that is the real question: Does American society truly value all of its children? (p. xii).

The default position for educators, parents, policy makers, and Black students themselves should be to improve the educational trajectory for America’s persistently low-performing demographic of Black students. Although the ultimate outcome of appropriate remedies to stem the tide of mis-education lies beyond the scope of this qualitative, narrative study, the solutions must be a priority and collective vocation for all stakeholders. Bogotch (2002) found that educators who act on their passionate beliefs can and do make a difference. Based on the findings of this study, a liberation-based and culturally responsive pedagogy must be designed to ensure the enduring empowerment and well-rounded education of Black students in American schools. This must be a collective vocation of all stakeholders, in that liberation pedagogy has the capacity to counter mis-

education and ensure that “learning is a place where paradise can be created ... [thus, framing] education as the practice of freedom” (Hooks, 2014, p. 207).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Take me back through the history of your life that brought you to a career in education.
3. Can you describe some details of what you have gained from your career in education?
4. Is there anything else you wish to add?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol Form

Dissertation Topic of Study: Educate to Liberate: Exploring Educator Narratives to Examine the Mis-Education of Black Students

Date _____

Time _____

Location _____

Interviewer _____

Interviewee _____

Release form signed? _____

Three-stage Interview Procedure

- 1. Establish rapport** – Introduce self, project, build rapport *formal completion of consent forms and introduction to the use of recording devices
- 2. Gather information** – Evoke stories, explore emotions, engage questions/answers
* Reflection based questions occur later in the interview as a way of bridging all that has been learned and empowers the opportunity to clarify statements that were made at different points early on in the interview.

Question: You said earlier that _____, could you clarify why this is _____

- 3. Close** – Thank and wrap-up * thank the interviewee: this is the point in the interview where you are coming to a close and it should be clear. This does not have to be the end of the interview, simply thank them for their time and follow up with letting them know how helpful they have been.

Here, you may also ask them for final thoughts on the interview and find out how they felt about the entire process. Finally, ask if they have any questions for you. Be sure to leave enough time at the end so that you can allow yourself to fully answer their questions while possibly asking the interviewee additional questions if they are raised.

Notes to interviewee:

Introductory Script

Hello _____! My name is Nefertari (Nikki) and I am an Education Doctoral student from Concordia University, Portland. I'm here to learn about the mis-education of Black students and specifically, how your biography/personal narrative helps us to better understand the experience of Blacks in education from the student's perspective as well as from your unique professional capacity.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. The purpose of this interview is to learn about your own life history, particularly your educational experiences as a child leading up to your professional experience as an educator. There are no right or wrong answers, or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you really think and how you really feel. If it's okay with you, and only with your expressed permission, I will be audio recording our conversation since it is difficult and distracting to write down everything while simultaneously carrying an attentive conversation with you.

Everything you say during the course of this anticipated three-stage interview, will remain confidential, meaning that only myself and my dissertation chairperson/committee, will be aware of your answers for the purpose of educational study or so that we know whom to contact should we have further follow-up questions after this interview.

Thank you, in advance, for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research and in helping grow all of our professional practice, as educators.

Approximate length of Interview #1: 30-45 minutes, five essential (research) questions

Research Question(s):

1. How do your life experiences relate to an understanding of the education of Black students?
2. What are the effects of education on Black students' lives?

Reflection by Interviewer

- Closure
 - Thank you to interviewee
 - Reassure confidentiality
 - Ask permission to follow-up _____

Notes to interviewee:

Closing Script

Provide my contact information and relay to the interviewee that there may be a subsequent contact if there is a need for you to clarify information, ask additional questions, or perform member checking or “soliciting feedback from one’s respondents on the inquirer’s findings” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 88).

Appendix C: Statement of Original Work

Statement of Original Work

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University-Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*

A. Nefertari A. Nkenge

Digital Signature

Adwoa Nefertari A. Nkenge

Name (Typed)

February 2, 2018

Date