Toward Critical Consciousness:
The Dynamic Consciousness of Adolescent Refugee English Learners

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Dedication

To my husband
Bob Schell

my children
Russell, Rachel, Olivia

and my middle school English learners

Acknowledgements

I have often thought to myself, “Why didn’t you do this 20 years ago?” Then I look back at my life and realize, everything has always been right on time. There is a saying “When the student is ready the teacher will appear.”

My six-year journey to this point has been one of the most pivotal seasons of my life academically, professionally, and personally. Dr. Clara Lee Brown has played a pivotal role in each those areas and I thank her for being not only my advisor, but my mentor. I especially thank her for challenging me to be more than I thought possible, to “grit it out” and to “swim in a bigger pond.” I will never be the same.

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Abstract

Thousands of migrant and refugee children with limited or interrupted formal education enroll in U.S. schools each year. Mainstream society positions them at the margins of society, by default, placing them at risk of adopting impoverished identities that preclude full participation in society. As proposed by Freire (1970/1996), critical consciousness development has been explored as a way to empower youth to become agentive in authoring their own lives. This study describes the nature of critical consciousness, or the recognition and challenge of oppression through agentive acts, expressed by adolescent refugee English learners (ELs). The ELs' perceptions of injustices in their lives formed the basis of collective interrogation and challenge of injustice in two urban middle school English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. Critical pedagogy consisting of culture circles, modeled on Freire (1970/ 1996) and Souto-Manning (2010) and thematic unit lesson plans (Brown, 2004, 2007) were implemented to draw out expressions of students' critical consciousness. Audio-recordings of culture circles, regular class sessions, and semi-structured interviews were collected and transcribed. Student writing, field notes, and the researcher's reflective journal were also collected. Thematic analysis was conducted using a template approach based on Freire's (1970/1996) critical consciousness continuum using the categories *semi-intransitive consciousness, naïve consciousness,* and *critical consciousness*. The template went through several iterations as analysis revealed Freire's categories to be insufficient in describing forms of agency and action evident in the data. The final template analysis revealed dynamic and transcategorical tendencies in the ELs' consciousness. Varying degrees of critical awareness, agency, and action were manifested simultaneously. It also became clear that students' agency and awareness levels were not aligned. As a result, this study highlights the urgency of critical pedagogy practices in ESL

classrooms. Critical pedagogy can nurture students' sense of agency, a necessary precursor of action. Teachers must afford students opportunities to grapple with injustice in a supportive environment. Students need to feel safe in voicing their opinions and concerns in order to develop a sense of agency which can help them succeed in school and become full participants in society.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction **1**
Statement of the Problem 5
Theoretical Framework 6
Purpose of the Study 9
Definition of Terms 10
Overview of Methods 10
Significance of the Study 12
Overview of Limitations 12
Organization of the Dissertation 12

Chapter Two: Review of Literature **14**
Theoretical Framework 15
Summary 24

Chapter Three: Methodology **26**
Qualitative Research 26
My Position in the Research 27
Situating the Research 30
Participant Selection 35
Pedagogical Methods 42
Semi-structured Interviews 44
Data Collection 44
Data Analysis 45
Trustworthiness 47
Limitations and Assumptions 48
Summary 49

Chapter Four: Findings **50**
Mercy 50
Chante 55
Michael 59
Yenge 63
Nathaniel 66
Summary 70

Chapter Five: Discussion **72**
Implications for Educators 72
Implications for Future Research 74
Conclusion 75

List of References **76**

Appendices **101**

Vita **115**

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Data 36
Table 2. Freire's Critical Consciousness Continuum/Template 46
Table 3. Modified Critical Consciousness Continuum Template 47
Table 4. Template Analysis - Mercy 55
Table 5. Template analysis - Chante 58
Table 6. Template Analysis - Michael 63
Table 7. Template Analysis - Yenge 67
Table 8. Template Analysis - Nathaniel 71

List of Figures

Figure 1. America 50
Figure 2. Yenge's Disagreement 66
Figure 3. Life in the United States 68

Chapter One: Introduction

The population of the United States is rapidly metamorphosing socially and culturally (Brown, 2015) as migrants fleeing oppression in regions of the world including Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East (Cepla, 2019) settle in numbers superseding that of historic European immigration. Projections indicate that the U.S. foreign-born population will reach 78 million, or nearly 20 percent, by 2060, surpassing the previous high of 14.8% in 1890 (Brown, 2015). Among other migrants are refugees, legally accepted into the United States due to credible fear of persecution in their home countries for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017). Although refugees enter the United States seeking sanctuary and prosperity, they may find both elusive in the face of anti-immigrant rancor positioning them as threats to American culture and to national and economic security (Felter & Renwick, 2017; Fryberg et al., 2011; Guiraudon & Joppke, 2004; Koser, 2011).

Evidence of the recent oppressive climate and anti-migrant/anti-refugee discourse was seen in disparaging remarks about Haiti and some African countries allegedly made by the U.S. president (Davis, Stolberg, & Kaplan, 2018). Scornful words were also lobbed in an executive order that banned visas from six Muslim countries, suspended the nation's refugee program for 120 days and cut the number of refugees allowed to enter per year from 110,000 to 50,000 (Zapotosky, Nakamura, Hauslohner, 2017). In the State of the Union address to the Congress of the United States, the president called for billions of dollars to spent for a southern border wall in order to stop illegal immigration he called an "urgent national crisis." As a result of the zero-tolerance policy concerning immigrants from Mexico and Central America, migrants

who presented themselves for asylum were turned away or separated from their families and detained by the Department of Homeland Security (Lind, 2018). Among citizens, reported hate crimes against Hispanic and Latinos alone rose 24% in 2017 and 48.6% of all hate crime victims were against Black or African Americans. Of all hate crimes, 59.6% of those reported in the United States in 2017 were based on race, ethnicity, or ancestry (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017). According to the American Bar Association (2019), "the actual number of hate crimes against immigrants and refugees is likely significantly higher, since many noncitizens are reluctant to report crimes to police.

Further evidence of anti-immigrant sentiment can be seen in laws proposed or adopted by several states in the past decade, like the Arizona Senate Bill 1070 in 2010, which endorsed the lawful arrest of individuals suspected of being undocumented (O'Leary & Sanchez, 2011). Later, Arizona, a southern United States border state with Mexico, successfully acted to ban ethnic studies in schools, via House Bill 2281 (Arizona Legislature, 2010). This occurred despite evidence that such programs contributed to increased student achievement for Mexican-American students (Dee & Penner, 2016; Cabrera, Milem, Jacquette, & Marx, 2014; Orozco, 2011; Sleeter, 2011). In a further show of anti-immigrant sentiment, thirty-two states across the nation have enacted or strengthened "English-only" laws by declaring English to be the official language, thus barring the translation of official documents into other languages and requiring all schooling to be conducted in English (U.S. English, 2016).

Nevertheless, large numbers of migrant and refugee children are enrolled in U.S. Schools each year. As a result, many public schools in the United States are representative of society's growing mosaic of culture and language (Banks, 2009). In 2015, nearly 9.5% of U.S. public school students were classified as English learners (ELs) (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2018) and the number is expected to continue growing (Bialik, Scheller, & Walker, 2018). The state of California alone has already exceeded 20% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Although studies have shown that migrant ELs are likely to adapt positively to society (Adair, 2015), anti-immigrant rhetoric, strengthened by discriminatory laws, negatively affects their educational experiences and outcomes. (Adair, 2015; Allen, Jackson, & Knight, 2012; Bartlett, L., 2015). Cummins (2000) has specifically noted a connection between anti-immigrant sentiment and academic achievement gaps in school:

> The [transformative education] theoretical framework attributes the historical patterns of underachievement among marginalized groups to the devaluation of identity that has typically been played out in the interactions between educators and students (e.g. punishment for speaking L1). This linguistic, cultural, and academic identity reflected the pattern of coercive relations of power that characterized intergroup relations in the broader society. Under these conditions, students quickly became convinced that academic effort was futile and many resisted further devaluations of their identities by mentally withdrawing from participation in the life of the school (p. 246).

Evidence of achievement gaps between mainstream students and ELs can be seen in the 2011 NAEP reading assessment in which gaps between EL and non-EL students were 36 points at the fourth-grade level and 44 points at the eighth-grade level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Moreover, only 32% of ELs scored at the basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth grade reading and 14% on fourth grade math assessments in 2017. Comparatively 72% of non-EL students scored at the basic level on reading and 43% on math (The Nation's Report Card, 2017). Ironically, in the quest to close EL's

achievement gaps, schools often implement narrow, discriminatory instruction (Adair, 2015), focused on isolated basic skills (Lam**,** 2006; Moll, 2000; Slapac & Kim, 2014; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). They attempt to fill in the gaps of migrant and refugee ELs' knowledge without leveraging the rich life experiences ELs already possess in scaffolding new learning (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017; Yosso, 2005). Bartolomé (1994), posits that attempting to address the academic failure of subordinated students is futile without addressing discriminatory practices of schools.

Academic success of migrant and refugee ELs may also be hampered by cultural disparities. The majority of teachers in the United States are predominantly White, middle-class women (U.S. Department of Education, 2017), educated in predominantly White, middle-class schools. Migrant and refugee ELs are thus immersed in classrooms designed for students who resemble the teacher (Delpit, 1995; Hammond, 2015; Emdin, 2016; Howard, 2016). White native English speaking (NES) teachers have "little or no opportunity to come of age familiar with critical-democratic practices because the classrooms they emerge from as students are predominantly teacher-centered and test-driven" (Shor, 2010, p. xvi). As a result, schools implement a hidden curriculum that educates students in ways that privilege and reproduce the knowledge, language, and cultural norms associated with the White middle class (Cammarota, 2007). Simultaneously, they decenter, exclude, and silence 'others' (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Howard, 2016; Sleeter, 2012; Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009; Paris & Alim, 2017; Yosso, 2005). Sandercock (2005) observed, "We rarely hear from those folks whom official discourse classifies as Other*"* (p. 232) as they strive to integrate into American society where they face discrimination and hostility.

Education that contributes to the widening of the achievement gap (Thomas & Collier, 2002; Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Crawford, 2004; Adair, 2015) and the nullification of rich linguistic and cultural knowledge becomes a 'subtractive' force (Bartolomé, 1994; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Valenzuela, 1999) that perpetuates inequality and disempowerment rather than an additive, equalizing force Prilleltensky, Nelson, & Pierson, 2001). ELs are effectively denied equitable opportunities that make it possible to participate fully in society (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Donnor, 2012; Ford, 2014; Holme, Finnigan, & Diem, 2016; Kim & Taylor, 2008; Parson & Turner, 2014; Rodriguez & Smith, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

In the midst of the changing demographics in the United States, it is imperative to take a critical view of practices that largely serve the interests of the White middle class (Giroux, 2011; Tejeda & Espinoza, 2003) and marginalize others. The "Discourse" of power, with a capital "D" (Gee, 2015), that positions migrant and refugee ELs at the margins of society reinforces inequality and disempowerment, even in schools that claim to redress the situation. Marginalized people often become trapped in their immediate situations and see their condition as unchangeable (Freire, 1970/1996). As a result, they may doubt their own abilities, and adapt to identities that are projected on them by the dominant class, thus perpetuating a cycle of powerlessness (Freire, 1970/1996). Powerlessness inheres with inability to make choices. Freire posits that those who have no ability to make choices about their own identities and circumstances merely adapt rather than integrate into society, becoming objects of someone else's making. Those who are able to integrate become subjects of their own making because they are able to exercise critical choices about their identities and circumstances in the process of integrating into a new society. Students like the marginalized refugee ELs in this study must

develop their capacity to actively contest injustice and transform their circumstances into one of true "liberty and justice for all" (U.S. Code, Section 4). To that end, educators awakened to systemic oppression of marginalized students must play a role in challenging the 'culture of power' (Delpit, 1995; Freire, 1970/1996; Paris & Alim, 2017; Pezone & Singer, 2003) by preparing migrant and refugee ELs to act against injustice in their lives, thereby creating the possibility for a more equitable and democratic society. Preparation begins with emancipatory education (Freire, 1970/1996) that builds upon the realities of students' lived experience and acknowledges them as critically engaged participants in the construction of knowledge (Salazar, 2013). As students begin to think in more nuanced and complex ways about social structures, they become less constrained, more agentive and able to determine their own futures (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970/1996; Diemer, et. al., 2016; hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). Emancipatory education provides opportunities for students to exercise critical consciousness (CC) to change hegemonic practices (Foley, 2007; Freire, 1970/1996; Giroux, 2003; Portelli, Shields, & Vibert, 2007). By exercising critical consciousness, migrant and refugee ELs may be able to transition from being objects of education to subjects of their own emancipation

Theoretical Framework

Critical pedagogy (CP), as posited by Freire (1970/1996), nurtures the development of CC and as such can be the catalyst for students' emancipation from oppression. Freire (1970/1996) conceived of CC as consisting of awareness of oppression and and action, to effect change upon social inequities and their causes. As such, CC is an integral part of critical pedagogy (e.g. Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Fisher, 2007; Souto-Manning, 2010). Critical pedagogy coalesced from numerous, historically held beliefs and practices concerned with

democratic, emancipatory schooling in the interest of oppressed people (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2010). It purposes to help marginalized students become critically awakened to oppression acting in their lives and to actively challenge it (Darder, et al., 2010; Freire, 1970/1996). This study was incepted to capture evidence of the CC of migrant and refugee ELs using CP as a catalyst.

Critical Consciousness

In recent years, the concept of CC and its role in adolescent development have been explored by scholars like Diemer and Blustein (2006), who found that urban youth with greater levels of CC showed greater levels of interest, aspiration, and commitment to their high school studies and future careers. Diemer and Rapa (2016) have shown that the distinct dimensions of agency, internal and external political efficacy, play a role in political actions marginalized adolescents may be inclined to consider. El-Amin et al. (2017) have explored how students can develop CC of racial oppression. Some researchers have leveraged students' CC as a catalyst for improving writing (Souryasack & Lee, 2007), language acquisition (Okazaki, 2005), and self-efficacy (Cammarota, 2007). Still others have developed scales in the attempt to define and measure the components of CC (Baker & Brookins, 2014; Shin, Ezeofor, Smith, Welch, & Goodrich, 2016; Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2014; Thomas, et al., 2014). Yet, there is no consensus on the definition of CC. Several contemporary scholars agree, however, that CC includes three dimensions: (a) critical awareness; (b) a sense of agency; (c) critical action (Berg, Coman, & Schensul, 2009; Hatcher et al., 2010; Morrell, 2003; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011).

Critical Pedagogy

Practitioners of CP create learning environments in which students and teachers together interrogate and challenge injustice and oppression at work in students' lives. Students, therefore, become subjects in their own education instead of objects of education. They are not seen as mere vessels to be filled with knowledge, but legitimate knowers who may participate in collectively creating new knowledge (Freire, 1970/1996; Salazar, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978).

Although numerous scholars, from Rousseau to Gramsci, have influenced the development of CP (Kellner, 2003), Freire, a Brazilian philosopher and educator in the mid to late 20th century, is considered the most prominent theorist in critical pedagogical thought (Christensen, 2015; Darder, et al., 2010). In his view, education is inherently political and located within the structure of society at large (Christensen, 2015; Darder, et al., 2010; Freire, 1970/1996; Giroux, 2010). Freire's emancipatory vision of education focalized issues of social agency, voice, and democratic participation. To that end, he nurtured his adult students' ability to "unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation" (Freire, 1970/1996, p. 54). His own practice positioned teachers and students as partners in problem-posing dialogic culture circles around themes related to students' lives. As a teacher, he took the role of participant-facilitator in exploring student-generated themes through the practice of 'culture circles.' In the practice of culture circles, the teacher becomes teacher-student and the student becomes student-teacher. In recent years scholars and educators have extended Freire's work to include children and adolescents (Darder, et al., 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2010), but the central tenets remain:

- Education is inherently political.

- Education must be grounded in social justice and dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering.
- Education must create the conditions for the activation of students' CC.
- Education must take students' lived experience into consideration when employing themes and posing problems.
- Authority in the classroom is dialectical, positioning teachers as teacher-students and students as student-teachers (Darder, et al., 2010; Kincheloe, 2008).

CP has been studied as a possible remedy for the failure of institutionalized education to provide equitable educational opportunities for marginalized students (Darder et. al., 2010: Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Fisher, 2007; McInerney, 2009; Stovall, 2006). CP may contribute to an ESL classroom in nurturing literate, academically successful, culturally flexible, and critically conscious ELs. CP, as practiced by Freire, poses problems using themes generated by students in order to develop students' CC and literacy skills, tools that can be used for sociopolitical action. Freire's CP, in particular, was carried out through dialogic *culture circles,* in which teacher and students learned from each other. However, no regimented method exists for CP, and, in fact, it can appear seemingly unstructured, with learning based on topics initiated by students (Souto-Manning, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this research was to capture and describe the nature of CC in migrant and refugee ELs in a critically oriented ESL classroom. Through CP that incorporated culture circles and thematic units lesson plans (TULPs) (Brown, 2004, 2007) based on students' lived experience, participating ELs had multiple opportunities to express CC through dialogue and writing. The overarching questions guiding the research were 1) How do adolescent refugee

ELs express CC through classroom discussions and written texts in an ESL classroom? and (2) What do students' expressions reveal about the nature of their CC?

Definition of Terms

action – steps taken to transform oppressive circumstances

agency – the perception of one's capacity to actively challenge perceived injustices (Diemer, et al., 2016).

critically awakened - awareness of systemic injustice

critical consciousness - represents marginalized or oppressed people's analysis of societal inequities and their motivation and action to redress such inequities (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016)

emancipatory education - education that raises students' CC and prepares them to challenge oppressive social conditions

refugees - people who flee their home country out of a credible fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group or other circumstances that have caused serious public disorder such that they require international protection (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017; United Nations, 2019).

systemic oppression/injustice - used interchangeably in this work to denote restrictive structures that dehumanize groups of people by denying them language, education, freedom to author their own lives, and any other opportunity to be equal participants in society (Young, 2009)

Overview of Methods

This qualitative study was conducted in two urban middle school ESL classes in a mid-sized city in the southeastern United States. The ESL classes included sixth, seventh, and eighth

grade students from a variety of ethnic, national, and linguistic backgrounds, all with limited or interrupted formal education. The majority of the students were refugees from violent conflicts in the African Great Lakes region or were migrants who fled economic oppression and violence in Central America.

Social learning (Vygotsky, 1978), including culture circles, shared writing, and guided reading, was regularly integrated into the classes to help build a sense of trust, and lower students' 'affective filters' (Krashen, 1982, 1985) which can greatly increase subjective understandings and hence quality of the data collected (Toma, 2000). To capture the social learning and CC of the students, class sessions organized around three themes of injustice identified by the students: (a) anti-immigrant bullying; (b) academic injustice; (c) economic injustice. Class sessions and semi-structured exit interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim in their entirety. Student writing, field notes and a researcher reflective journal were also collected.

Thematic analysis was conducted using an iterative template analysis approach (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; King, 2004; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) based on Freire's concept of CC. Freire posited three distinct levels of consciousness based on degrees of awareness and action: (a) semi-intransitive consciousness; (b) naive transitive consciousness; (c) critical consciousness. As analysis progressed, the template was modified to include types of agency and alternative forms of action. Trustworthiness of the study was enhanced through constant comparison of data to the research questions and categories on the template. Researcher reflexivity to check bias in implementation of discussions, class sessions, and analysis also added to the trustworthiness. Multiple data sources allowed triangulation of findings across data

sources (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2011). Informal member checks through questioning were conducted during class sessions and interviews.

Significance of the Study

This study addresses gaps in the literature concerning the nature of adolescent refugee ELs' CC. The study ultimately demonstrates the inadequacy of Freire's CC levels to describe the dynamic and transcategorical nature of refugee ELs' consciousness. The study also identifies the CC component of "agency" as an area in need of nurturing in this population of students. In this way, the research also adds to the literature on how and why CP might be used in an ESL classroom. Emphasis is on the importance of affording students opportunities to be successful in developing agency as they move toward CC.

Overview of Limitations

Although every part of the research design was carefully considered, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The most obvious limitations concern language barriers. I may have misunderstood or misinterpreted what students tried to express because they are not fully fluent in English and I did not speak theirs. Students may also have been uncomfortable in voicing their views because of past experiences or cultural taboos. Understanding the motivations behind refugee students' thoughts, actions, and reactions in the classroom was also a challenge because of cultural differences between groups of students and between students and me. Therefore, it is possible I could have miscategorized expressions of thought or behavior I did not understand.

Organization of the Dissertation

This work is organized into five chapters. Chapter One situates the study socio-historically and state the problem, purpose and guiding questions. Chapter one also includes the significance of the study, the theoretical framework, and outlines the study's limitations and key

terms. Chapter Two provides a review of literature pertinent to the study while Chapter Three details the research methodology and my positionality in the study. Chapter Four reports the findings of the research and Chapter Five provides a discussion of the findings, including implications for educators, and researchers.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The United States is undergoing a profound cultural shift in that the White middle-class is quickly becoming the numeric minority population. To date, they remain the power majority and the driving force in society. Since public education is an institution of the power majority, it therefore functions as a tool for propagating White middle-class norms (Apple, 2012; Goudeau & Croizet, 2016; Tierney, 2015). As a result, immigrant ELs are often subjected to curricula that do not honor or integrate their cultural ways of being and knowing (Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt, & Moll, 2011; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Hence, they are effectually rendered unseen and unheard (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). Moreover, personal and institutional discrimination (Adair, 2015) often lead to negative experiences between students and teachers. Consequently, the current educational system falls short in preparing immigrant ELs to participate as equal members of society (Lee & Walsh, 2015). As long as discrimination of this sort persists, schools will continue to constrain the practice of true democracy with their actions even as they venerate it with their words (Heath, 1992).

In order for a more just and democratic society to evolve, education must play a role in challenging the Eurocentric power structure by providing a more just, emancipatory education for marginalized students (Delpit, 1988; Freire, 1970/1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Cammarota, 2007; Paris, 2012, 2017). Freire advocates CP as an emancipatory educational practice that provides tools to help students to develop CC in order to recognize and challenge oppression, not accepting it as immutable. This review of literature examines the construct of CC and practice of CP as the grounding theories in the investigation of how adolescent refugee ELs express CC through classroom discussions and written texts in an ESL classroom.

Theoretical Framework

This research seeks to resolve the question of how English learners express CC in an ESL classroom and more specifically, what their expressions reveal about their CC. The practice of CP centers the development of CC and was thus chosen for use in this study. CP is underpinned primarily by the theoretical perspectives espoused by Paulo Freire. The following sections of this chapter review literature pertinent to this study regarding the constructs of CC and CP.

Critical Consciousness

As students begin to realize that human action creates oppression and that their own human action can transform it, they develop CC, which is manifested through changes in knowledge, perspectives and behaviors, comprised of critical awareness and critical action (El-Amin, 2015; Freire, 1970/1996; Seider, et al., 2018; Shor, 1992; Watts, et al., 2011). Freire, one of the first to conceptualize CC, describes three stages of development (Table 4) in which people through which people may transit through CC.

Semi-intransitive consciousness. In the first stage, *semi-intransitive consciousness,* people are entirely consumed with survival. They are incapable of considering anything except their physical needs and exist in a "limit-situation" (Freire, 1970/1996) in which they are not fully human, but "host" the consciousness and identities imposed by the oppressor. They are fatalistic and perceive that theirs is a "closed world from which there is no exit" (Freire, 1970/1996, p. 49). It never occurs to them that there could be an exit. In this stage, people fall prey to "magical" explanations of "objects and challenges of the environment" for which they have no explanation or control.

Naive transitive consciousness. The second stage, *naive transitive consciousness* is reached when individuals reflect on themselves, their roles and responsibilities, and begin to be

in dialogue with others. This stage is characterized by oversimplification of problems and causes, which are viewed as unwavering facts. In *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1973) Freire quotes his contemporary, Viera-Pinto (1960), "Naive consciousness considers itself superior to facts, in control of facts, and thus free to understand them as it pleases." Naïve transitive consciousness is also characterized by nostalgia for the past, an underestimation of the common man, lack of interest in investigation, fragile arguments, strong emotional style of interaction and reaction, and by the acceptance and preference of "fanciful" and "magical" explanations (Friere, 1973, p. 14).

Critical consciousness. If an individual progresses through the four stages of conscientization, s/he will ultimately arrive at *critical consciousness*, a state in which an individual not only recognizes problems, but also causality. The individual can then analyze causality for recurrent underlying themes and relationships. Critically conscious individuals also understand that causality is not fixed and "what is true today may not be so tomorrow" (Freire, 1974, p. 41). Once a critically conscious person has determined the truth of causality in a situation, s/he acts to effect positive change in the situation. Critically conscious people reject passive stances and refuse to transfer responsibility to others. They attempt to avoid distortion of the facts when thinking about problems and substitute causality for magical explanations.

Agency. Freire does not delineate a sense of agency in his continuum of consciousness levels, but hinted at its importance in saying . . . "to every understanding, sooner or later an action corresponds. Once a man perceives a challenge, understands it, and recognizes the possibilities of response, he reacts. The nature of that action corresponds to the nature of his understanding" (1973, p. 44). Many scholars acknowledge agency as an important precursor to critical action (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Watts, et al., 2011) because although people may

recognize structural injustice and oppression, they may not feel compelled to act if they believe their actions will make no difference. As such, Diemer and Rapa's (2016) deconstructed the concept of agency into *internal political efficacy* and *external political efficacy*. Internal political efficacy describes the perception that one could effect change in unjust situations individually or collectively (Watts et al., 2011). External political efficacy describes the perception that leaders are sympathetic and responsive to one's interests needs and interests (Diemer & Rapa, 2016; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006). Internal political efficacy has important implications for the students in this study because it has been shown to predict both conventional political action, such as voting, and critical action, such as protesting (American Political Science Association, Taskforce on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004; Diemer & Li, 2011; Diemer & Rapa, 2016; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006).

On the other hand, Freire acknowledged that critical reflection may lead people to determine that a particular form of action is not possible or inappropriate at a specific time. This does not negate their agency because it merely postpones action until a more appropriate time. Bandura (1977) also extended the idea of what constitutes agency in positing agentive people do not yield their behavior and thought patterns to that which environmental forces dictate, but have the ability to behave and think differently.

Alternative models and scales. Theorists continue to build on Freire's work beyond adding agency as a precursor to critical action. Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil (1999) have developed a five-stage model when working with young, African American men. The researchers renamed and augmented Freire's categories with their own, e.g "adaptive stage," which corresponds to Freire's naive transitive consciousness. The adaptive stage helped to explain "predatory, antisocial, or accommodation strategies [that] are employed to maintain a

positive sense of self and to acquire social and material rewards" (p. 263) when injustice is perceived, but seen as unchangeable. They add a "critical stage" in which the desire to learn about injustice is acknowledged as part of the process in moving to CC. In the "liberation stage," adaptive behaviors are no longer acceptable, and critical action is defined as "tangible and frequent."

Jemal (2016), acknowledged inconsistencies in the steps necessary for the development of CC and developed a scale to measure "transformative consciousness," hypothesized to have three domains: (a) awareness; (b) behavioral-response; (c) consequence. In this model, Jemal eliminates the idea of intransitive and semi-transitive consciousness and begins with the category of "awareness." Jemal's "awareness," would fall between Freire's naive transitive and CC. "Consequence," denoting an "assessment of the impact of the problem on the self, the individual's role in the perpetuation of contextual factors prohibiting change, and the individual's ability to control these issues" (p. 65), roughly correlates with agency, acknowledged by Watts in later work with Diemer and Voight in 2011.

Other scholars have developed scales for measuring CC in various contexts and groups of people (e.g. Baker & Brookins, 2014; Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2014; McWhirter & McWhirter, 2016; Thomas et al., 2014). Likert and Guttman scales to measure CC related to racial, ethnic, gender, and social inequities in general. Quantitative scales have been found to be useful for measuring the development of participants' CC by specific domains (e.g. critical awareness or agency) before and after interventions like service learning (Barrera, Willner, & Kukahiko, 2017) or participation in critically focused classrooms.

The next section reviews literature related to CP, a practice aimed at nurturing the development of CC of students by raising their awareness of systemic injustice and providing the

tools they need to take up its challenge for their own liberation (Giroux, 2019; Freire, 1970/1996; McLaren, 2000, 2003, 2005). According to sociopolitical theory, the development of CC, the goal of CP, necessarily includes simultaneous and continuous exposure to the three components of reflection, agency, and action (Watts, et al., 1999).

Critical Pedagogy

Liberating education (Freire,1985, 1996; Giroux, 2019; Peterson, 2010; Shor, 1992, 1996) or education that seeks a role in creating a more just and democratic society, is possible through the practice of CP, the most widely used term for social-justice-oriented pedagogy (Crookes, 2012). The term "critical pedagogy" was first formally used in *Theory and Resistance in Education* by Giroux (1983), but is, most associated with Freire, a Brazilian philosopher, educator, and activist during the mid- to late-twentieth century. CP, as championed by Freire (1970/1996), involves cultivating students' awareness of systematic structural inequities and sense of agency through literacy education. Literacy can then be employed in activism against situations of injustice (Freire, 1970/1996; Christensen, 2017). Freire believed that economic inequality and inequity endured by Brazilian farm workers he taught would continue as long as they did not recognize their situation (Freire, 1970/1996). He, therefore, employed CP in teaching literacy and fostering awareness and confrontation of economic injustice. Giroux (2011) described it thusly:

> At its most ambitious, the overarching narrative in this discourse [of CP] is to educate students to lead a meaningful life, learn how to hold power and authority accountable, and develop the skills, knowledge, and courage to challenge commonplace assumptions while being willing to struggle for more socially just world. . . [It] is tied to the cultivation of an informed, critical citizenry capable of

participating and governing in a democratic society. As such, it aims at enabling . . . the potential of a democratic culture (p. 6).

Freire's concept of CP draws from the critical theories of the Marxist-influenced Frankfurt School, e.g. Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm, Lowenthal, Habermas, Horkheimer, and Marcuse (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Bohman, 2005; Darder, et al., 2010). The heterogeneous conceptions developed by the Frankfurt School not only challenged the overarching social, political, and ideological structures used to oppress German workers in the Weimar Republic from 1919-1933 (Callison, 2009), but domination of all types (Darder, et al., 2010). It is important to note the heterogeneous ideas espoused by the Frankfurt School were not intended to constitute a universally applicable model of CP. Their only unifying intent was an unwavering commitment to the emancipation of oppressed people (Darder et al., 2010).

With its foundation in critical theory, CP posits that people "are essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege" (McLaren, 2009, p. 61). Hence, the primary goal of a critical pedagogue is to promote social justice in education by teaching students to think critically, to question, to observe whose cultural ways of being are considered appropriate and whose are not, and whose voices are present and whose are not in the discourse of mainstream society. Ultimately the goal is to transform the conditions that perpetuate that overarching oppressive discourse (Freire, 1970/1996; hooks, 1994; Nieto & Bode, 2011). These acts define Freire's concept of *conscientizaçoa*, or conscientization— the necessary disposition for emancipatory action (Freire, 1970/1996), which Christensen (2017), an American critical pedagogue, passionately spoke about:

> I want students to rise up into consciousness about themselves and others, to understand how both their choices and their misunderstandings have been shaped

> by a society that seeks to control them through a barrage of images and sound bites, anemic history books that lack analysis, and a curriculum that too often asks them to become 'standardized' instead of enlightened (p. ix).

Inherently political education. Freire (1970/1996) contends that the educational system, as a whole, is political, whether or not teachers and students recognize or acknowledge the political aspects. He poses a pedagogy that exposes the ways in which the dominant society defines the norms for knowledge, power, desire, and experience and leads students to question those assigned meanings, particularly they relate to their evolving identities (Norton & Toohey, 2004; Paris & Alim, 2014) and relationship to the larger society (Apple, 2012; Giroux, 1998; hooks, 1994). The norms defined by the dominant society are replicated in teacher-student relationships, the curriculum, who chooses the curriculum, classroom discourse, the imposition of standardized tests, tracking policies, the physical conditions of school buildings, and attitudes toward language, just to mention a few (Auerbach, 1995; Shor, 1993). All of these aspects combined play a profound role in shaping the way students view themselves, the world, and their place in it. When the overall political environment of society serves to marginalize some, and promote the interests and well-being of others, language and education follow suit (Buttaro, 2010; Motha, 2006). Marginalized students will suffer the consequences of the dominant class's deficit attitudes towards their funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), which leads to the imposition of narrow or subtractive curricula, placement in schools with less qualified teachers, fewer supplies, and access to technology, and in buildings that are not on par with the elite of society (Giroux, 2015).

Culture circles. Freire maintained authentic emancipation from unjust circumstances as a process of humanization that must be attained through students' own reflection and action to

alter their circumstances. He therefore advocated a 'problem posing' dialogic educational framework in which the teacher would learn from students becoming a teacher-student and the students would educate their teacher, becoming students-teachers (Freire, 1970/1996). Although prescribing no particular method in his pedagogy, Freire, himself, employed a culture circle model, in which a continuous group dialogue concerning problems posed from students' lived reality ensued. Students were thus reframed as knowledgeable, critical co-investigators with the teacher (Freire, 1970/1996). The teacher's role in the culture circle, then, is to: (1) ask questions that aid students in identifying problems facing their community; (2) codify symbols that represent their life experiences; (3) encourage students' reflection on previous experiences and the role of society in creating their situations, as the basis for new academic learning and social action for change (Shor & Freire, 1987). Freire (1970/1996) describes the reframing effect of problem-posing education:

> In problem posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; the come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation (p. 64)

Problem-posing in culture circles takes the form of praxis supplying infinite topics with countless opportunities for academic learning and socially transforming action. New learning is through culture circles is grounded in students' lived experience, rendering it accessible, relevant, and encouraging (Anderson & Irvine, 1993; Macedo, 1994; Shor, 1992).

Critical pedagogy in practice. Educational research has shown the pursuit of CC development to yield positive, although different, outcomes for different groups or individual students (Diemer, et al., 2016). CC can lessen the limiting power that contextual barriers have

over educational outcomes for young people (Diemer, et al., 2016). One positive finding suggests that young people develop a stronger commitment to social justice issues (Watts, et al., 2011) and exhibit increased academic achievement and engagement when taught from a critical stance (Cabrera et al., 2014; Cammarota, 2007; Carter, 2008; Dee & Penner, 2016). A study carried out by Diemer et al. (2006) shows that developing students' CC also has positive implications for students' career development. Furthermore, when students engage in a broader, collective struggle for justice, CC can replace self-blame and feelings of isolation (Diemer, et al., 2014, 2014; Ginswright, 2010). Second language acquisition researchers have also asserted that CP is beneficial for language teaching (Benesch, 2001; Canagarajah, 1999, 2002; Morgan, 1998; Norton, 1997; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Okazaki, 2005; Pennycook, 2001; Ramanathan, 2002). Okazaki (2005) espouses CP as vital to language teaching as it prepares students to live and act in a world in which one's language can afford or deny opportunity. Critically based ESL courses can also engender meaningful dialogue, leading to the activation of CC, which may be expressed through writing (Okazaki, 2005).

Activating critical consciousness. Despite documentation of positive outcomes for students who engage their CC, El-Amin et al. (2017) notes that few researchers have studied how CC may be encouraged in the classroom. In exploring how African American students could develop CC of racial oppression, their research found that teaching the necessary language for thinking and speaking critically was a bridge to CC (El-Amin et al., 2017). Specifically, the research reveals that three main practices contribute to the development of students' CC: (a) teaching the language of inequality; (b) creating the space to interrogate racism; (c) teaching students how to critically act (El-Amin et al., 2017).

Other researchers who incorporated CC work into their studies also created the space for

interrogation of injustices that are apropos to students' lives and provided the means through which they could critically respond. Souryasack and Lee (2007) and Cammarota (2007) provide evidence of the importance of affording middle and high school students the opportunity to draw on their own lived experience in order to develop academic skills and CC. The students in their study were able to examine the topics in relation to their school and community and propose improvements or solutions to school officials and community members. The students in both studies expressed a sense of empowerment as voices for social change.

Questioning critical approaches in the classroom. Although some scholars and practitioners acknowledge the importance of CP in the development of students' CC, others question the value of such an education. For example, Eastman (1998) questions the appropriateness of introducing and implementing critical literacy into a classroom where the students' main concern is to learn English. He did not believe that beginning students could challenge the thoughts and attitudes of others. Rogers, Mosley, and Folkes (2009) ask whether critical literacy education would actually impact the lives of students and families materially. Another crucial question forwarded by critics is whether it is possible for the teacher-participant-facilitator to express their own opinions without indoctrinating students (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016). Finally, sometimes students resist engaging in critical reflection and action, deeming such activities inappropriate, irrelevant, or threatening because of values imbued in their own culture (Ko & Wang, 2009).

Summary

It is clear that as CP has evolved and been taken up as part of other theories of pedagogy and has by no means become a fixed method of teaching. In that sense, it has remained true to Freire, who never suggested that a single method was appropriate for all people in all contexts. In

fact, he did not conceive of his approach as a method (Roberts, 2000). As Freire understood teaching, methods are effective insofar as they are used by teachers who have a deep understanding of themselves and their students and are able to link new learning to students' existing funds of knowledge. Freire was acutely aware of the politics and political implications of education. He focused on activating the CC of Brazilian adults from low socio-economic status (SES) while teaching them to read and write so that they could rise up and work toward a more equitable and democratic society. Whereas Freire focused primarily on adult learners, many scholars of CP espouse its use in primary and secondary education (e.g. Apple, Bartolomé, Darder, Giroux, & McLaren).

The preceding studies exhibit the characteristics of CP as proposed by Freire and are thus informative for the current research. Collectively they lay out steps for activating CC:

- Teach the language of inequality and injustice as it is a prerequisite for thinking about and expressing CC (El-Amin, et al., 2017).
- Encouraged students to think about their situations in relation to the mainstream society.
- Explicitly teach students about ways in which others have fought for social justice and democracy.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This qualitative study, using Freire's CC continuum as a framework, examined adolescent refugee English learners' expressions of CC related to injustices that impact their lives. The research was conducted over fifteen weeks in two ESL classes in an urban middle school in a mid-sized southeastern United States city. Questions guiding the research were:

1. How do adolescent refugee ELs express critical consciousness through classroom discussions and written texts in an ESL classroom?
2. What do their expressions reveal about the nature of their critical consciousness?

The following sections describe the researcher positionality, the context of the study, a description of participants, methods of data collection and analysis, measures to assure trustworthiness, and the significance of the work.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, in general, can best be described as a "web of associated practices" (Preissle, 2006) that vary depending on context. Qualitative methods allow researchers to explore complex phenomena in a natural setting such as a classroom. This research took the form of participant observation (Hatch, 2002) using a critical paradigm, which holds the view that reality is constructed within power relations of a specific context (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hatch, 2002; Ponterotto, 2005). Participant observation studies explore specific questions that allow insight into participants' perspectives and definitions in order to understand what motivates them to act in ways the researcher has observed (Hatch, 1985). Qualitative research in natural settings inheres with uncertainty as events are not meant to be totally controlled, but observed and described. The ESL classes involved in this study experienced unexpected attrition in participant numbers due to students moving. In addition, one

entire class ceased participation when an additional ESL teacher was hired to help with the overload of students in the fifth week of the research. Incomplete written work and/or reluctance to speak led to others being excluded because of a lack of data. Therefore, the available data was greatly narrowed to that of five refugee ELs from the Great Lakes region of Africa.

My Position in the Research

Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) used the metaphors of window, sliding glass door and mirror to describe experiences afforded by books. She wrote,

> Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books. (p. ix)"

In my experience, ELs are windows to unknown worlds. Through them, I see views of worlds I have never known. Yet, what I see may be distorted somewhat by the view I bring from my own world. When I choose to turn that window into a sliding glass door, however, and walk through it, I become a part of my students' worlds and they of mine. We construct those worlds together and teach each other as we work toward English proficiency. Our vision of each other becomes clearer. As Bishop says about books, when the light is just right, the glass window turns into a mirror and I can see my own humanity in my students.

Coming to this research has been much like living metaphor of the window, the door, and the mirror. Unknown to me at the time I began teaching ESL, I was embarking on a journey to discover my own identity and position as a privileged White, mono-lingual, native-English-speaking, middle-class woman, among others as I began to know students who were different than any I had ever known. That journey continues as I continually need to check myself in reminder of that privilege and the viewpoints related to it. As difficult as it sometimes is, opportunities to trouble my own points of view allow me to grow and walk as an ally among the students and families who come and go in my life.

It would be easier for me to teach middle class White students in an affluent suburban school because I know and understand that world. It is easy to be comfortable in my surroundings and to see the world as constructed by those more like myself - a place in which every person, regardless of SES, race, or ethnicity has the chance to 'succeed' if they only work hard enough. A place in which having enough food, a warm place to live, clothes and shoes that fit, or the ability to see a doctor or dentist whenever I need it is not a concern. A place where most people speak my language and I have access to any information that I need. I did not choose to stay on the easy road in my teaching career, however. I have chosen to go through the sliding glass door and be transformed, and continually transforming, as students, colleagues, and friends help me reflect on my humanity and that of others so that we can work together to enact a more equitable future in the spirit of true democracy.

Accordingly, I see my contribution as raising awareness of inequity and injustice where I see it—even with ELs in my classroom. However, when I first began to contemplate what that would mean for my students—the possibility of outrage or dismay being triggered by discussions of racist and anti-immigrant sentiments historically embedded in U.S. society—my first instinct

was to avoid these subjects. I was considering what action, if any I should take when attended a round-table session about confronting racism in schools co-chaired by Django Paris at the National Council of Teachers of English annual convention. The following description from my memory is used by permission from Dr. Paris (personal communication, 2018). I asked the round-table participants, "Should I teach my English Language Learners about racism and inequity in America? I don't want to upset them in the classroom. I'm not sure what to do." Dr. Paris emphatically replied, "You have to! Your students are facing that [racial inequity] every day and it's better they hear it from you since you're a person they know and trust." I realized later that it was myself I was actually trying to protect. I could only help to prepare them. Whereas African American children grow up experiencing the reality of systemic racism in this country and are socialized through family and community in dealing with it (Coleman-King, 2014), African ELs have little or no preparation or way to understand the racial dynamics they face when they arrive in the United States. Therefore, I have come to the following stance: It is my responsibility to create an academically challenging environment conducive to the development and expression of CC so that my students can develop the skills they will need to author their own futures. It is from this position that I came to the work of this research.

I cannot deny that my bias in believing schools to be inequitable may cause me not to see some of the positive interactions and experiences that my students have on a day to day basis in school and out of school. They, as insiders, will most likely see innate beauty and richness in their community where I may see blight and poverty. They may relate stories of joy and happiness where I see despair. My students have their own existing life ways and others they may adopt that are unlike my own. They may place a different value on education, on material

possessions, on the possibility of college, and any number of other outward signs of societal success.

Certainly, my students and I view injustice through different lenses because of our disparate life experiences. They I certainly have their own views on what is equitable and what is not, and why and their own ways of responding to it. Diligence was required of me to try to capture their CC, and not merely replications of my own. My goal was to guide discussions in a way that do not hide my opinions, a requirement of dialogic culture circles, but also do not indoctrinate or silence students. Even though I was a teacher-participant-researcher throughout this study, my intent was to co-create learning opportunities with my students, not to create learning opportunities to be imposed on them. Therefore, I attempted to listen, guide, and teach in the classroom, and to prompt and listen during the culture circles and semi-structured interviews at the end of the research period.

Situating the Research

The School

Research was conducted in two urban middle school ESL classes in a mid-sized southeastern city of the United States. Seventy-eight percent of the students at the school were categorized as Black/African American, with 16% White, 6% Hispanic and less than 1% Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American/Alaskan. Approximately 10% of the students were English learners and 72% percent of the student body qualified for free or reduced-price school meals (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018), but all receive free meals under the Community Eligibility Provision of the National School Lunch Program (U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, 2019). Despite being a public magnet school and drawing students from around the district, the majority of students lived in public housing units

and small homes within one mile of the school. Others arrived via bus. It was notable that the staff of the school was 67% White/European American, 33% Black/African American, .2% Hispanic/Latin@, and .1% Asian/Pacific Islander at the time of the research. The head principal and one of the five assistant principals were African American females. One assistant principal was a female Latina immigrant, whose native language was Spanish. None of the teachers or administrators lived in the neighborhood. Residents of the area must drive or ride the city bus to the outskirts of the community to find a grocery store. There are, however, several convenience stores, 'dollar markets,' fast food restaurants, family-owned restaurants and liquor stores within walking distance of many homes. Even though public transportation is available, routes and schedules are limited. Many citizens walk long distances due to public transportation limitations or lack of personal transportation. Shopping for necessities like clothing is necessitates a trip outside of the community.

The middle school where the research was conducted is housed in an older building that served as the African American high school before school desegregation in the 1960's. Various additions were made over the years including a vocational wing, which now serves as a spacious related arts wing that houses band, chorus, art, dance, West African drumming, and the ESL classroom. A separate building connected by a sidewalk houses the eighth-grade classes and administration along with a community health clinic. Despite its age, the interior of the building is brightly painted with murals and positive quotes from great leaders such as Martin Luther King, Junior. The hallway floors are well kept and shine all year adding to the overall positive physical environment. Banners hung in the halls prominently displaying the school's core values: (a) Be your best; (b) Dig deep; (c) Other first; (d) Own it.

When ELs enroll at the middle school, they are placed in age-appropriate grades and receive grade-level, standards-based instruction in English in all academic and related arts classes, as required by the state. ESL, however, is substituted for their English/Language Arts (ELA) course. A translator who speaks three African languages, in addition to French and English, is able to help most of the refugee students register for classes. She also acts as a liaison between the school and the refugee parents throughout the year, keeping the parents informed about their children's progress and important events that go on at the school.

The Community

The school's surrounding community is filled with panoramic views of the city from its hilltops. The city provides public transportation and parks and there are several places of worship in the area. The community borders lie along an arterial river, near downtown shopping, theaters, restaurants and several upscale apartment and condominium complexes. In spite of these amenities, the community has its share of troubles. Violent and non-violent crime associated with gang activity and illegal drug sales is a blight on the community around the school. The city has been plagued with racial strife from its founding (Taylor, 1974) and is basically divided into Black and non-Black sections, essentially separated by two highways and the river.

Ethnic tensions arise in the Black neighborhoods between African refugee families and African Americans. Students in the study have reported incidents of denigration for speaking languages other than English in public, for adult women who continue to dress in their traditional manner, for continuing to prepare traditional meals and for not having the latest fashions or other prized material items like the latest cellphone model.

Ethnic Tension and Racialization

Within a short time of arrival at the school, African ELs experience tension with African students from other countries, ethnicities, and languages, and with African American and White students. African students often see African American students as lazy (Conteh, 2013) and disrespectful. African American students, in turn, see African students as arrogant and uncritical of racism in America (NBC News, 2015). Interpersonal behavioral norms and ways of dealing with perceived threats and shaming lead to verbal and physical conflicts at times. Some students are very quick to retaliate against an aggressor, while others are more calculating, saving their response for a more opportune setting than the classroom or school hallway.

Although the African refugee ELs in the study come from several nations, ethnicities, cultures, and languages, they all face the one marker that coalesces them in the eyes of the dominant culture of the United States – race. Perhaps for the first time in their lives, they are confronted with a negatively charged notion of Blackness (Coleman-King, 2014; Lombardi, 2014; Ogbu, 2004; Waters, 1999) rooted in the African slave trade of the 18th and 19th centuries and associated with today's African-Americans. Governmental and non-governmental institutions perpetuate this single ascribed identity when they ask Black African individuals to declare their race as 'Black/African American' on official forms (Cohn, 2015).

Despite the government's imposition of a single identity, African refugee experience tensions with African Americans, in part because they have no collective history of slavery and oppression at the hands of White European Americans (Conteh, 2013). Most African refugees have had few, if any, negative experiences with White people before coming to the United States. They have likely had positive relationships, knowin them as doctors, nurses, volunteers, or missionaries (Conteh, 2013). In addition, they are usually relieved to be in a country that

offers relative safety and freedom. African Americans, however, have grown up with generations of stories of slavery, racism, and the fight for civil rights in the White dominated society. Furthermore, they have experienced the legacy of racism in their own lives. Therefore, they resent Black Africans who come into the country, able to take advantage of rights hard won by African Americans, with no collective memory and seemingly no problems dealing with White Americans.

Perhaps equally difficult for Black immigrant students is that they come to be associated with negatively imposed Black identity by way of racial profiling and negative stereotypes (Coleman-King, 2014; Waters, 1999). Ogbu and Simons (1998) assert, that negative "system factors," like those experienced by African refugees in America, lead minority groups to develop coping mechanisms in order to protect their psyche. African American peers, for example, may pressure Black immigrants to avoid acting White and conform to a youth subculture, characterized by low motivation, weakened parental control, and diminished connections with community (Rong & Brown, 2002; Waters, 1999). This type of subculture is contrary to the culture of the students in this study, who highly respect parental authority and view duty to family and community as fundamental (eCALD, 2019). Some parents fear that their children will assimilate into what they view as an African American culture of pathology (Lombardi, 2014). This fear was apparent when one African mother pleaded with me to help her son stay focused on his studies because she claimed "we are losing our children." Inevitably cultural differences lead to strained relations between African refugees and African Americans.

Teacher Challenges

White teachers in the school are often baffled by the conflicts between African American students and African students, expecting them to bond because of a common heritage. At least

two Black teachers in the school, however, have taken it upon themselves to talk with small groups of African American and African ELs about their conflicts, common heritage, slavery, and civil rights. They want to build understanding between the groups in order to stem incidents of verbal and physical assault. Teachers at the school also face the challenge of remembering which are not native English speakers and may still face some stumbling blocks in the classroom, especially when they have had limited and/or interrupted formal education. When students' social language has developed, they can become invisible as English learners because they resemble the majority of students in the school. This can lead teachers to a belief that they do not need differentiated or modified instruction and assessment. It can also lead to misidentification for Special Education.

Participant Selection

Three of my ESL classes, or a total of 22 students, were originally chosen for participation in this research making the selection one of convenience. However, only five actively participated in the entire study and as such became the focus of the research analyses. The five students were from some of the hundreds of thousands of African families who fled their home countries after political and ethnic conflicts turned violent. They found refuge in camps in Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, safety was often illusive as violence, and physical and drug abuse arise as a result of desperation due to a lack of sufficient resources and jobs (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019). Many times, only temporary shelters are available and health care providers struggle to meet the needs of so many in situations riddled with malnutrition, disease and injury. In addition, education in the camps is basic, often held under trees with few materials, especially in Tanzania (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019).

Students' own accounts paint a grim picture of family members or friends killed before, during, or after their escape from their homeland or who died due to lack of medical care. One family's entire goat herd was killed by militia shooting from helicopters and their home was burned. The student related that his family had no food, no money, and that he could not attend school. Another family slept on the floor of the police station the night before they fled their country because armed militia was going house to house terrorizing civilians. Several students' bodies bore visible scars of injuries for which there was little medical care within the camps. Some had to leave fathers, mothers, brothers, or sisters behind in the camps when they came to the United States. The National Council of Child Traumatic Stress Network (n. d.) identifies these experiences as detrimental to students' coping skills and physical, mental, and emotional development.

The African students in the study ranged in age from 11 to 15 years and represented several language groups. Four of the students were in eighth grade and one in sixth, as shown in Table 1. The eighth grade ELs were all members of the same ESL class while the sixth-grade student was a member of a different ESL class. The following sections describe each of the five students included in the study.

Table 1. Participant Data

Name	Gender	Age in years	Grade	Country of Origin	Length of Time in U.S. Schools in years	English proficiency level as of 03/22/2018
Mercy	Female	14	8	Rwanda	4	4.0
Chante	Male	15	8	Rwanda	3	1.5
Michael	Male	11	6	Tanzania	6	4.0
Yenge	Female	15	8	Burundi	2	1.9
Nathaniel	Male	14	8	Uganda	less than 1	1.5

Mercy

Fourteen-year-old eighth-grader, Mercy, came to the United States with her family from Rwanda. They speak Kinyarwanda. The family first settled in a major city in the southeastern United States. She and her brother attended an immigrant education center there. Her family had heard through a network of friends and relatives that our city was more affordable and arrived at our school a few days after the first semester of the academic year began. Mercy did not seem to like being at our school and often referenced her previous school and how much she missed the teachers there. She also spoke of missing Rwanda and her extended family members. She was keenly aware of many Americans' perception of Rwanda after the genocide of 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu people 100 days in 1994 and wished others could see the good in her country because "that was a long time ago." Even so, Mercy, herself, demonstrated hostility toward two female ESL classmates from another ethnic group and often exchanged spiteful words with them. The school's translator confirmed that the girls were from cultures with a long history of animosity toward each other.

Mercy had limited and interrupted education and was semi-literate in Kinyarwanda. She has been enrolled in U.S. schools since 2014 and had sufficient English to consistently earn top grades in her academic courses. By the end of the school year, her teachers recommended for her for honors courses in high school. Her WIDA composite English proficiency level was 3.9, or between *developing* (3.0) and *expanding* (4.0). Her listening score, unlike all other participants was a 6, or *reaching,* which indicates a native-like proficiency level. The can-do descriptors (WIDA, 2012) that most describe Mercy's abilities other than listening included paraphrasing and summarizing ideas presented orally, identifying topic sentences, main ideas, and details in texts, and composing texts that include an introduction, body, and conclusion (pp. 8-9).

Chante

Chante, a fifteen-year-old eighth-grade boy, who is taller and broader than any of his classmates, came to the United States from Rwanda with his father, older brother, and younger sister. He speaks Kinyarwanda and Swahili, in addition to his developing English, but can only read and write in English. Chante's family first resettled in a nearby state with a large immigrant population and immigrant education center. There they learned about life in the United States, the adults attended ESL classes and the children attended a school in which all content was taught by licensed ESL teachers. After three years, the family, like Mercy's decided to move to our city because friends had spread the word that it was more affordable. Chante's older brother, however, stayed behind to work. Chante often spoke of him and talked of going to visit him during the summer. He shared YouTube videos of his brother rapping with the class. Chante's father, a Christian pastor, did not always approve of this activity, however, because of coarse language often involved.

Chante, like many of the refugee students at the school, had more African than America friends. His American friends were teammates on the school soccer team. During the school year Chante was involved in several physical conflicts with American students because he refused to ignore insults or threats hurled at him. He also learned several insulting phrases in English and did not hesitate to use them when confronted. Although I never witnessed him initiating a confrontation, his reactions sometimes resulted in him being placed in in-school suspension.

Chante had limited and interrupted education like most of the other students and struggled especially in math and social studies. His composite English Language Proficiency (ELP) level, as determined by the WIDA ACCESS assessment was 1.7, or between *entering* (1.0) and *emerging* (2.0). In the language of WIDA can-do descriptors (WIDA, 2012), Chante

could be expected to follow multi-step oral commands or instructions, describe routines and everyday events, communicate in social situations, locate main ideas in a series of simple sentences, follow text read aloud, extend "sentence starters" with personal information, connect simple sentences, and complete graphic organizers with personal information (pp. 8-9).

Michael

At the time of the study Michael was 11 years old and in the sixth grade. He liked to joke and make the other students laugh. Michael arrived in the United States as a baby and did not remember his birth country of Tanzania and all of his siblings were born in the United States. Michael spoke Kirundi with his family at home, but stood out from most of his African peers in that his accent and mastery of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) was more like his African American peers. Additionally, his mannerisms, dress, detailed knowledge of the most desirable cultural artifacts, and his love of hip-hop, placed him among his African American peers. However, after six years in school, Michael still does not read or write well enough in English to meet the requirements of the state to exit the ESL program. Michael has many American friends, unlike most of his ESL classmates. He has excellent grades and most of his teachers laud his efforts in class, but he was frequently in trouble at school for fighting and "roasting," i.e., insulting others.

His WIDA composite English proficiency level is misleading at first glance at a 2.6—emerging. However, his listening level is a 6, native-like, and his oral skills are a 4.2, expanding. Michael's reading, 1.8, entering, and writing, 2.3, emerging, keep him in ESL. According to the WIDA (2012) can-do descriptors, Michael could be expected to give brief oral content-based presentations, locate main ideas in a series of simple sentences, and produce short paragraphs with main ideas and some details (pp. 8-9).

Yenge

Yenge, at 15, was of a much smaller and more delicate, but lanky build than the other girls in her class. Several teachers wondered if there had been a mistake about her age when she first arrived in her seventh-grade year, directly from Burundi. She spoke Kirundi and Swahili, but was not literate in either. When she arrived, Yenge knew enough English to be able to meet her basic needs in school.

From the beginning, she worked diligently and wanted all of her work to be perfect. She had little patience for the younger boys who arrived at the same time as she and did not seem at all serious about school. She was quick to ask questions in whatever way she could, striving to make herself understood. Perhaps more than any other student, she was also quick to tell me when she did not understand. Her determination has led her to develop English more quickly than some of her peers and also to earn top grades and the admiration of her teachers. Yenge seemed happy most of the time, but she was one of the two girls who regularly exchanged verbal barbs with Mercy. Until Mercy came to the school, I had not seen that behavior from Yenge.

Yenge's composite English proficiency score was 2.8, or between emerging and developing. Her listening, 3.9, and speaking, 3.2, at the developing level helped lift her emerging reading and writing scores of 2.4. As such, Yenge was able to identify main ideas and details of oral discourse, substantiate opinions with reasons and evidence, locate main ideas in a series of simple sentences, extend sentence starters, complete graphic organizers, and give opinions, preferences and reactions along with reasons (WIDA, 2012, pp. 6-8).

Nathaniel

Nathaniel, a tall and slim, 14-year-old eighth-grader, arrived in September, a few weeks after school had started. He came directly from Uganda, with no prior stay in another state.

Nathaniel learned to speak some English in in Uganda, but his handwriting revealed he had not been writing English letters long. He also had difficulty with numerals. Nathaniel did not speak much about his family except for his father, whom he called "Daddy." In fact, Nathaniel listened more than he spoke most of the time, only offering his opinions on the most controversial subjects, in contrast to the other students in the class.

Nathaniel expressed his relief at being in the United States where he said he did not have to worry about the police following him everywhere. He felt secure here. Nathaniel dressed neatly with a tucked in polo shirt, belted slacks, and dress shoes during his first week, but was devastated when African American students laughed at his clothes. He quickly began to wear t-shirts and sneakers with his slacks, and later began to wear jeans.

Nathaniel was a serious student who did all of his assignments in ESL no matter how long it took him. When other students took advantage of a few minutes of free time, he continued to work. He could not understand why the American students in the school often did not do their homework and spoke disrespectfully to teachers and each other. He relayed a story about being beaten with a stick if one were to exhibit such behavior at school in Uganda.

Nathaniel's composite English proficiency level, according to WIDA was 1.9, or between entering and emerging. His listening score was the highest of the sub-scores at a 3.2, or *developing.* The can-do descriptors (WIDA, 2012) suggested that Nathaniel could associate oral language with past, present, and future time frames, state main ideas of classroom conversation, locate main ideas in a series of simple sentences, extend "sentence starters" with personal information, and complete graphic organizers with personal information (pp. 8-9).

Pedagogical Methods

Whereas the aim of research using a critical paradigm is generally agreed upon, there is no agreed upon 'critical methodology' (Morrow & Brown, 1994). Instead, the theories and methods are bound within the specific context and determined in light of what seems useful in advancing more equitable situations in that context (Asghar, Ellingthon, Rice, Johnson, & Prime 2012). For this research, culture circles (Freire, 1970/1996; Souto-Manning, 2010) and thematic unit lesson plans (TULPs) (Brown, 2004, 2007) were used in the classroom to activate critical awareness among students and to foster its development.

Culture circles

Throughout the fifteen-week study, culture circles (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2010), first described by Freire (1970/1996), were employed as a vehicle for fostering dialogue among and with the students. Culture circles presuppose the political nature of education and the value of dialogue. (Freire, 1970/1996; Souto-Manning, 2010). Students' lived experiences are not only valued, but central to the process of recursive meaning construction through problem posing and solving. Although there is no prescriptive formula for implementation, the following commonly incorporated aspects were used in this study:

- identification of generative themes, or injustice, in students' lives
- codification of themes through relevant articles, reports, and pictures
- problem posing
- dialogue
- problem solving that leads to action

At the beginning of the semester, in August, culture circles were introduced to the students as a regular classroom practice. Many were already familiar with restorative circles,

which are operated in a similar manner, but have a different function. Culture circles respect (a) everyone's right to their opinion; (b) everyone's right to speak without being interrupted; (c) everyone's right to choose not to speak; (d) everyone's right to respectfully agree or disagree with one another. After practicing culture circle procedures several times, open ended questions about life in students' immediate environments of school were posed (Souto-Manning, 2010). From these initial culture circles, situations that elicited the most response as generative themes were chosen as the basis for TULPs (Brown, 2004, 2007).

Thematic Unit Lesson Plans

TULPs are highly effective in teaching English literacy for ELs (Brown, 2004, 2007) and can be used in conjunction with culture circles to promote further discussion and learning about the generative themes identified in the initial culture circles. TULPs in this study were developed to promote opportunities for the practice and development of CC and the development of English literacy. The themes of the TULPs were: (a) bullying; (b) academic injustice; (c) economic injustice. Our student teacher, from a local university, chose "community problems" as a theme for a unit she taught.

The TULPs in this study codified the three themes in the form of articles, videos, pictures, and single words (Freire, 1970/1996; Souto-Manning, 2010) to activate and further develop students' critical awareness. Throughout the fifteen-week study, WIDA English Language Development Standards (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007) and state content area standards were incorporated and appropriately leveled thematic reading materials were chosen. Speaking and writing assignments in the form of presentations, lists, paragraphs, and persuasive essays were designed to afford students opportunities to express their critical awareness and participate in critical action.

Semi-structured Interviews

At the end of the study, in December, the students participated in a semi-structured interview for the purpose of ascertaining their perception of the critical units' influence on their critical awareness and sense of agency, using the questions in Appendix A. Because the nature of qualitative research is flexible, semi-structured interviews can vary from the interview guide to pursue a particular interest that may have surfaced in the course of the interview. (Cohen, et al., 2007; Hatch, 2002; Flick, 2014). Modifications were made according to individual student needs in keeping with the purpose of the original questions.

Data Collection

The literature review revealed effective methods of data collection for shedding light on students' expression of CC as: (a) participant observation; (b) artifact collection; (d) participant interviews; (e) field notes. As such, data collected for this research included field notes of classroom observations, reflective researcher journal, student writing, audio-recorded culture circles, other class sessions, and audio-recorded student semi-structured exit interviews. Data collection for the study took place over 15 weeks of the first semester of the 2018-2019 academic year. Three weeks of the semester were not used for research to allow time at the beginning of the semester for students to get acclimated to classroom routines and for any unforeseen circumstances. Informed parental consent and student assent forms were translated into students' home languages and explained to the students in class. The translations were sent home along with copies in English. All students returned their consent and assent forms signed, giving permission for them to participate in the study with the assurance of their anonymity through the use of pseudonyms.

As the teacher-participant-researcher (Freire, 1970/1996), I captured the culture circle

discussions and spoken assignments via audio-recordings and later transcribed them verbatim in their entirety. The final individual semi-structured interviews were treated in the same manner. To create clean data texts, I corrected spelling and punctuation in students' writing for ease of the reader, but did not correct grammar since I wanted their voices to be evident as much as possible. Prior to inclusion in this report of findings, classroom conversations were cleaned to remove extraneous comments. Clarification was added in brackets as needed to aid in understanding and readability and students who did not participate in all class discussions and submit written work were excluded from the final data set.

The transcribed audio-recorded discussions, data from field notes, and the reflective researcher journal were tracked by date, class period, grade level, and codes applied. Transcribed interviews were collected and tracked by date and student name. Finally, written assignments were collected, transcribed and tracked via date, student name, and the topic.

Data Analysis

Thematic analyses were conducted using an iterative template analysis approach (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; King, 2004; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014. Whereas a purely inductive approach is a "bottom up" process with codes emerging from the data, the template analysis approach is primarily deductive, framing data into a predetermined construct using codes taken from research, theory, or the data itself (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Fereday & Muir-Chochrane, 2006; King, 2004; Miles et al., 2014). Chosen codes are applied to the data before connections are made between data and corroboration ensues (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Template analysis is, however, an iterative approach as well, in that inductive codes are added as they emerge from the data and a priori codes may eventually be deemed an ill fit as the process continues (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Miles et al., 2014).

The template used in this study included codes and categories based on Freire's concept of CC as shown in Table 2. Freire conceptualized CC on a continuum in three distinct levels based on the degree of awareness and action: (a) semi-intransitive consciousness; (b) naive transitive consciousness; (c) CC. Since Freire defined CC as awareness of systemic injustice and action to redress it, each level of the continuum was, thus, further analyzed according to *awareness* and *action* for clarity of differentiation. Specific characteristics of awareness were then identified for each level of consciousness, but action, per Freire, was only included at the level of CC. For example, awareness at the semi-intransitive consciousness level is characterized by survival instincts and fatalism (Freire, 1970/1996, 1973) whereas action to challenge injustice does not exist at this level. At the naive consciousness level, systemic injustice is not perceived, but individual injustices are. Blaming of specific groups or individuals for those injustices is common. Finally, at the CC level, people are awakened to systemic injustice in their lives, experience agency as internal and/or external political efficacy (Watts et al., 2011) and take positive transformative action to change oppressive circumstances and contribute to a more just society (Freire, 1970/1996).

As analysis progressed, the data revealed expressions of agency, self-efficacy, and action that did not fit the existing template. Table 3 illustrates the changes that were made to the

Table 2. Freire's Critical Consciousness Continuum/Template

	Semi-intransitive	Naive transitive	Critical Consciousness
Awareness	Survival mode Fatalism	Recognition of injustice on an individual level May blame specific group or individual for injustice	Aware of systemic injustice Does not transfer responsibility for action to others
Action	None	None	Transformative

Table 3. Modified Critical Consciousness Continuum Template

	Semi-intransitive	Naive transitive	Critical Consciousness
Awareness	Survival mode	Recognition of individual injustices only	Aware of systemic injustice
	Fatalism	May blame specific group or individual	
Agency	None	Internal self-efficacy	Internal political efficacy
		External self-efficacy	External political efficacy
Action	None	Uncritical action/reaction	Unyielding to oppressors' expectations
			Deferred until possible or appropriate
			Transformative

template, through several iterations, to account for the non-conforming data. On the critical consciousness level, *unwillingness to yield one's behavior and thought patterns to those dictated by oppressors* (Bandura, 1977), was added as a descriptor of agency. Action was also expanded on the CC level to include *deferred until possible or appropriate*—action deferred because of impossibility or inappropriateness at a specific time (Freire, 1970/1996). *Internal self-efficacy* and *external self-efficacy*, adapted from Watts et al. (2011), were added as a type of agency on the naive transitive level. An inductive description of action, *uncritical action/reaction,* was also added to the naive transitive level to account for uncritical, individualistic action or reaction.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of the study was enhanced in several ways, the most important of which was researcher reflexivity to check bias in implementation of lessons, discussions, and in analysis. Constant comparison of data to the research question and characteristics of each category on the continuum guided coding decisions. In addition, the use of multiple data sources allowed better insight into students' CC (Maxwell, 2012; Yin, 2011), and triangulation of findings across data sources (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2011). Informal member checks

were also conducted with participants during classroom circle discussions, individual writing conferences, and semi-structured interviews in the form of clarifying questions (Cho & Trent, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Limitations and Assumptions

Although the theoretical framework and research design for the proposed study were carefully considered and steps taken to enhance trustworthiness, certain general assumptions and limitations must be acknowledged. Perhaps most important of all is the challenge of understanding the motivations behind refugee students' thoughts, actions, and reactions in the classroom. Because this study attempts to describe critical awareness, forms of agency, and forms of action, based on verbal and written expressions, it is possible that I might miscategorize a behavior I do not understand. Freire's CC continuum was developed to describe consciousness of economically oppressed Brazilian people. It may not accurately portray the developing consciousness of African ELs, who may view their new environment positively and see injustices as isolated barriers to overcome (Waters, 1999).

Specific to this research are several limitations related to language barriers and the inherent power differential in the teacher/researcher-student relationship. It should also be noted that since the students were English learners, it was often necessary to ask clarifying questions, which could be seen as member checking, but risked being leading as well. It is possible that students confirmed thoughts I reflected back to them in clarification as a way to please me or because they did not know how to accurately express their thoughts. The fact that I am not multilingual precluded unimpeded communication with my students. Finally, the methods I used in the classroom to elicit and encourage the expression of CC included culture circles and other

collaborative work. It is possible that students' spoken and written words may have been influenced by others in the class, and not have been a true reflection of their own thoughts.

Summary

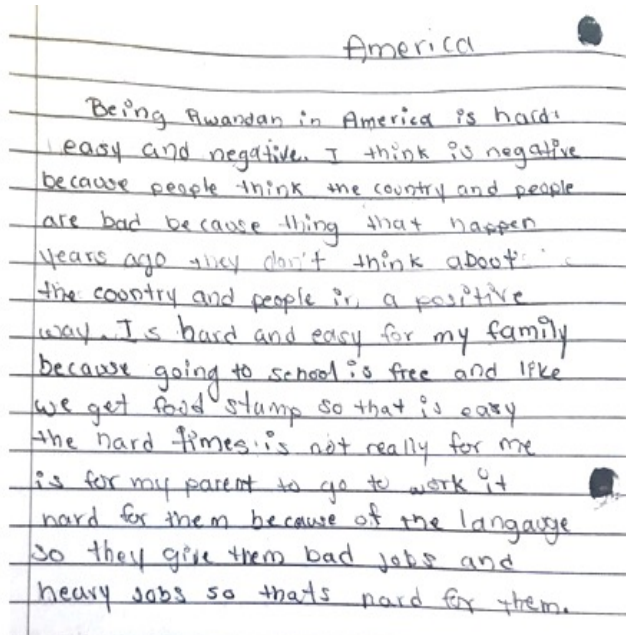
This qualitative study was conducted in two urban middle school ESL classes with African refugee students from a variety of ethnic, national, and linguistic backgrounds. All had limited or interrupted formal education. Their English proficiency levels ranged from "entering" to "developing," or a one to three on a six-point scale. Culture circle discussions and thematic units were organized around three themes of injustice identified by the students: (a) bullying' (b) academic injustice; (c) economic injustice. Class sessions and semi-structured exit interviews with each participant were audio-recorded. All audio-recorded data were transcribed verbatim in their entirety. Student writing, field notes and researcher thoughts recorded in a reflective journal were also collected. Thematic analyses were conducted using an iterative template analysis approach based on Freire's concept of CC. Several iterations of the template resulted in various types of agency and alternative forms of action being added. Trustworthiness of the study was enhanced through researcher reflexivity to check bias and constant comparison of data to the research question and template and. Multiple data sources allowed triangulation of findings across data sources (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2011). Informal member checks were conducted during class sessions and interviews.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter reports the findings of the study regarding the nature of consciousness expressed by five adolescent refugee ELs. Iterative template analyses based on Freire's CC continuum allowed the distillation of complex data into meaningful descriptions. Overall, the data revealed the complex nature of CC development and led to the conclusion that Freire's continuum, although useful as a basis, is insufficient in itself to describe the transcategorical and dynamic tendencies of the refugee ELs in the study. None of the students fit perfectly at all times into any of Freire's (1970/1996) original continuum categories of semi-intransitive consciousness, naive transitive consciousness, or CC. The following sections demonstrate the transcategorical and/or dynamic nature of each student's expression of consciousness.

Mercy

As shown in Figure 1, Mercy expressed critical awareness, a characteristic of CC,


America

Being Rwandan in America is hard easy and negative. I think is negative because people think the country and people are bad because thing that happen years ago they don't think about the country and people is a positive way. Is hard and easy for my family because going to school is free and like we get food stamp so that is easy the hard times is not really for me is for my parent to go to work it hard for them because of the langauge so they give them bad jobs and heavy jobs so thats hard for them.

Figure 1. America

concerning two injustices when writing about her life in America,. She was particularly disheartened at prejudicial views Americans have of her country of Rwanda and its people after the genocide of Tutsi and moderate Hutu people in 1994. Field notes from a culture circle discussion in September note,

> She rejected the label "African" in favor of her nationality, "Rwandan."
>
> Mercy said that she hates it when people associate Rwanda with the bad things (Chante used the word genocide) . . .She doesn't like it when people (teachers, she said) ask her whether she is Hutu or Tutsi. . . She thinks it is none of their business who she is.

Mercy's resistance to identifying as "African" and to allowing others to know whether she is "Hutu" or "Tutsi" shows that she does not want to be pre-judged based on others' perceptions. She is critically aware that Americans have preconceptions about Rwandans, but shows no sense of agency to change it. She merely claims that it is none of their business. However, she does, in another sense, express an unwillingness to yield to value-laden labels that others would ascribe to her, a type of critical action. In this situation, then, she shows a transcategorical disposition of consciousness.

Mercy was also critically aware of the system that keeps her parents from having access to better jobs. Mercy realizes that although English is the gateway to economic and workplace advancement, her parents have few if any opportunities to learn. In a class discussion, she claimed that her parents had "like one month" of English lessons when they first arrived in the United States and that she knows it takes "more than five years" to become fluent in English.

I wrote in the field notes that day, "Mercy is the one who voiced the opinion that parents need longer to learn English in order to get better jobs." The implication is that she is critically cognizant that her parents may be trapped in low-paying, manual labor jobs indefinitely.

In conjunction with her critical writing about life in the United States, Mercy also participated in a class discussion of a refugee father, portrayed in an article, who worked multiple low wage jobs in order to afford the tuition of an online school so that his children could learn English more quickly. He hoped the classes would help his children learn English well enough to secure college admission and live their dreams. He was adamant that they not feel pressured to work during high school or enter the workforce right after high school to help support the family. In response Mercy concluded,

> [The father] chose a good choice because he let his children have the opportunity to be who they wanted to be when they grow up. He let them live the dreams . . . she could help them when she didn't go [was finished with] to school [college]."

Mercy later agreed with her classmates that the children in the article would help their father because they believe that a family can work to solve its own problems even when circumstances are not ideal. When asked what she would do in the children's situation, she answered emphatically that she would "Absolutely!" go back to help her family after college. In the sense that Mercy believed that given time families can overcome their own problems and that she would be willing to help her own parents if needed, she demonstrated a sense of "internal self-efficacy," a characteristic of naive transitive consciousness. Mercy, thus, revealed the transcategorical nature of her developing consciousness. She was critically aware of economic and workplace hardships related to language barriers, a characteristic of CC. However, characteristic of naive transitive consciousness, she exhibited internal self-efficacy (see Table 4)

in imagining a way to overcome the problem as suggested by Waters (1999). The actions of families to solve their own problems over time cannot be deemed "critical" in the Freirean sense However, given their historical persecution by those in power, their efforts can be seen as a form of resistance designed to ensure the survival and prosperity of the family in the long-term—an ultimate victory.

In contrast to expressions of transcategorical consciousness, Mercy presented a dynamic, or changing, consciousness regarding bullying. Many students in the ESL classes at the school reported being bullied "because of where they're from," as sixth-grade Michael stated, and "every time," as Chante claimed. Field notes from the first culture circle discussion in late August indicate:

> They went into some detail about why they came to American and they do not understand why the Black Americans (their term) make fun of them . . . White Americans try to act like the Black Americans and do the same thing.

Mercy, however, did not view these hostilities enacted by American students in the same way. As Waters (1999) documented concerning West Indian immigrants, Mercy was inclined to see "prejudice and discrimination as more isolated occurrences, and as temporary barriers to be overcome, rather than as permanent, pervasive symptoms of a society that has over enmity toward [her]" (p. 147). Mercy claimed,

> Mercy: Here, it's not like they bully. They just don't say. . ., they just say mean stuff and even like one African person does it, it seems that everybody does it too.
>
> Teacher: Say that again.
>
> Mercy: Like for example, like someone who's African did to them then they can go "Africans does this." Not everybody does that.

Teacher: But not everybody, does it?

Mercy: No.

Even though many of her classmates saw bullying as being anti-African, or anti-immigrant, Mercy's perception of bullying as individually focused and mostly verbal places her awareness in the category of naive consciousness, according to the template based on Freire's (1970/1996) work. Her attempt to ignore bullies also shows a lack of self-efficacy in changing the situation, but rather a resignation to it, or a fatalistic viewpoint. In a class discussion, she offered the following:

Mercy: Me, I don't really care about the other students. If they say something, it doesn't bother me.

Teacher: So, what do you do when they say something?

Mercy: I leave them alone. Just keep talking. I don't care because it doesn't touch me. . .Word does not hurt me, action does.

The fact that Mercy said "Here, it's not like they bully," and later "Word does not hurt me, action does" may indicate a time in her past in which she was physically assaulted, thus making verbal bullying seem to be of no consequence. In any case, she deemed it not worth engaging those who "say mean stuff."

In her expression of awareness on the topic of bullying, Mercy falls in the category of naive transitive consciousness with no sense of agency or self-efficacy to change the situation. she also falls in the category of semi-intransitive consciousness as shown in Table 4. Therefore, in addition to a transcategorical nature, Mercy's consciousness is dynamic: it shifts depending on the circumstance.

Table 4. Template Analysis - Mercy

	Semi-intransitive	Naive Transitive		Critical Consciousness	
Awareness	Survival mode	Recognition of individual injustices only	X	Awakened to systemic injustice	X
	Fatalism	May blame specific group or individual			
Agency	None	Internal self-efficacy	X	Internal political efficacy	
		External self-efficacy	X	External political efficacy	
Action	None	Uncritical action/reaction		Unyielding to oppressors' expectations	X
				Deferred until possible or appropriate	
				Transformative	

Chante

Chante's perceptions of academic injustice are exemplars of the transcategorical and dynamic nature of developing consciousness (see Table 5). He offered his viewpoints during a culture circle discussion one day, described in the field notes:

> I am thinking about student responses to the question "What do these photos [of report cards with low grades] make you think, or what do you think when you look at these?" . . . They put all the blame on the student at first with statements like, "They are not trying," even though they complain about teachers who do not help them. It seems there is a disconnect in their mind about this. Chante's statement differed [did not blame the student] – he said [the student] "needs help."

Chante's struggle with reading and math and unsuccessful attempts to get help from the teacher left him with a measure of critical awareness concerning academic injustices faced by ELs. Frustrated with having to read long grade-level passages in English and resentful that he had no accommodations, Chante complained,

Chante: Miss, I know what. He got . . . She got a lot of reading.

Yenge: Yeah, he got a lot of reading.

T: A lot of reading?

Yenge: Mm hmm.

Chante: And then and when you ask teacher to read for you she say Mm Mm [no] . . . and like she just say "I'm coming and she don't."

Chante knew that he and the other ELs in his class needed support in reading and were not getting it, so he blamed the teacher. He also expressed frustration and resentment concerning math. He knew his prior education had been limited and that he did not have the background knowledge required to succeed in grade level math. In his interview, he clearly expressed critical awareness of this injustice facing students like him with limited or interrupted formal education in his interview:

Teacher: Tell me something that you have learned this year about justice and injustice, that means what's fair and what's not fair. What's something that you learned?

Chante: I learned this. Math. It's hard to do.

Teacher: It's hard to do math and that is not fair? How is that not fair?

Chante: 'Cause I didn't know much.

Teacher: Ok. So, who do you think can help you with that?

Chante: The teachers.

Teacher: How could they help you?

Chante: For they come and teach me. Teach me how do math. Teach me numbers.

Chante wanted to be taught the prerequisite concepts and skills necessary for accessing grade level content and could not understand why the teachers could or would not allow him to work on a lower level. Naiveté of larger educational systems, like standards based learning, and high stakes testing, that sometimes constrain teachers, kept him from seeing past the immediate system. His perception of injustices in reading and math highlight the complexity of "awareness" and its capacity to be transcategorical, as seen in Table 5.

Chante's actions in response to perceived academic injustices were dynamic in nature, changing over the course of the semester. Early in the semester, he evidenced no sense of self-efficacy in asking teachers for help. He implied that raising his hand for help was risky because of other students' reactions. He adapted by finding a more English-fluent friend on whom to rely. Chante spoke of the unfairness of his situation:

> Chante: It was not fair 'cause when you raise your hands . . . you're afraid to raise your hand because you think they will laughing at you because you cannot say word good . . . And they laughing at you.
>
> Teacher: So, who do you think can help you with that? Is there anybody who could help you with that?
>
> Chante: Yeah. The student who help me. He help me everything.

In his interview at the end of the semester, however, Chante revealed a shift to both internal and external self-efficacy, traits of naïve consciousness. As he learned more English and began to overcome his fear of raising his hand, he developed a sense of internal and external self-efficacy in the classroom, which led to getting more help from the teacher:

> Teacher: Is there anything you can do about it?

Chante: Mm. Raising my hand and . . .

Teacher: You can raise your hand.

Chante: . . . and talk to the teacher.

Teacher: Mm hmm. Do you do that?

Chante: Yeah, now I do the, I raise my hand and tell teacher what is right and what is not right.

Teacher: Uh huh, and when you do that, does the teacher help you?

Chante: Yeah. Help a little bit.

Chante's example demonstrates the urgency of fostering ELs' sense of agency in the classroom and continuing to nurture its development so that they may be agentive in all aspects of their lives.

Table 5. Template analysis - Chante

	Semi-intransitive	Naive Transitive		Critical Consciousness	
Awareness	Survival mode	Recognition of individual injustices only		Awakened to systemic injustice	X
	Fatalism	May blame specific group or individual	X		
Agency	None	Internal self-efficacy	X	Internal political efficacy	
		External self-efficacy	X	External political efficacy	
Action	None	Uncritical action/reaction		Unyielding to oppressors' expectations	
				Deferred until possible or appropriate	
				Transformative	

Michael

Michael's most salient expressions of consciousness were around bullying, or harassment, that occurs at school. Michael had been in the United States since he was a baby, which seems to play a role in his view of bullying. He offered his thoughts in terms of the "cool group" and "not cool group," more in line with the descriptions of the nature of bullying offered by native born students. The fatalistic viewpoint he expressed places him in the category of semi-intransitive consciousness. In his interview, Michael shared his thoughts concerning bullying by using an example of the "cool group" versus the "non-cool group":

> Teacher: You have discussed and written about several problems, including bullying, low and minimum wage jobs, and working conditions for some people, can you think of any other problems, or things that are not fair in our country, or town, or school?
>
> Michael: Life is not fair.
>
> Teacher: Well tell me a little more.
>
> Michael: . . . to people. Like there's this cool group and there's this non-cool group and the cool group can mess with the non-cool group and they have nothing to do with it. Like they can't do nothing to protect theirself 'cause they're the bullies.
>
> Teacher: Who are the bullies?
>
> Michael: The cool people.
>
> Teacher: And the non-cool people can't do anything to protect themselves? Is that what you're saying?

Michael: But if somebody stands up for them, it would be way better. If, for life.

Teacher: It would be. Do people? Is there anyone that will stand up?

Michael: I don't really know nobody who gonna stand up.

Teacher: Why not?

Michael: 'Cause most people wanna be with the cool kids.

Teacher: So, do you have a better chance of being with the cool kids if you don't stand up?

Michael: No. You can't, if you were do that then they might, it's a lower chance that, less chance that you won't be with the cool kids.

Teacher: OK. Let's say we have a group of cool kids and they're picking on a group of not cool kids. They're bullying them. OK? If somebody from the not cool kids stands up to the cool kids and said "Hey, leave us alone! You don't know what you're talking about. You've got it all wrong." What would happen?

Michael: They might get into a fight or arguing something.

Teacher: OK. So then, what if we have that same thing happening and none of the non-cool kids say anything. Then what will happen?

Michael: They gonna keep on, keep on bullying.

Teacher: So, basically there's no way out if it. Is that what you're telling me? It's just going to keep happening even if somebody stands up?

Michael: Yeah.

Michael described a situation in which he saw no alternatives. Whether or not the non-cool group acted on their own behalf or not, the bullying would continue. The only choice was how to deal with it in order to "survive." In this case, survival might not mean literal physical survival, but

mental and emotional in the sense of preserving one's self-esteem, or dignity. In a class discussion, Michael shared one of his own experiences of being a "not-cool kid" which resulted in him dealing with denigration by neither reacting nor acting to change the situation, but by not overtly acting. In this way, he may have preserved his self-esteem or dignity:

> T: So, this guy [a Muslim student whose friend had been bullied for wearing a hijab to school] was trying to help them understand, but it didn't work, did it? Michael number three is you. Tell us about being bullied for something you wear.
>
> S1: I got bullied by um friends. I mean not even friends, classmates. So, I was walking the third-grade hallway and he over her playing with all his friends. He walked up to me and said "Why don't you got Jordans?" [a brand of shoe] I said "My mom, Because I don't." And then he started making fun of me and started pushing me.
>
> T: OK. And what did you do about it? Did you do anything?
>
> S1: I didn't do nothing. I didn't do nothing back. I didn't do nothing.

Michael, now in the sixth-grade however, has developed different responses. He has developed a sense of internal self-efficacy in such situations, which empowers him to take up for himself, as he claimed in his interview:

> T: OK. In that situation, [students making fun of other students] do you ever go tell the teacher that "this is happening and I need some help?"
>
> S: No, because I don't really care about what they do. I care about ME . . .I always take up for myself. It's nobody gonna stop me from taking up for myself 'cause somebody wanna do something, we good. I don't really care.

This internal self-efficacy, however, leads him to act or react uncritically resulting in him being placed in in-school suspension for a day or more at a time. Field notes from the study indicate, "Michael is in PASS [in-school suspension] today and tomorrow so he could not start working on his persuasive letter." I had also written in the reflective journal,

> Michael got in trouble today for fighting in the cafeteria. Evidently, he and another boy were 'roasting' each other and it turned ugly. He told his story about not responding to the kid about the Jordans in third grade, but I'm guessing he has more confidence now. On the other hand, I don't know what the roasting was about. Does it depend on the situation? Maybe self-efficacy and agency are only available to a person in certain situations depending on past experiences.

Although self-efficacy may be seen as a good and useful trait, it led Michael to react uncritically to harassment. Michael, undoubtedly, sees few choices of ways to act in the face of hostile confrontation. My reflection notebook includes the following:

> The students seem to have little control over anything in their lives. What can they control? How they react. So, they react most often by ignoring, avoiding, "running away," or fighting – basically the old "fight, flight, please, or freeze."

In the third-grade incident, Michael chose to "freeze," but in the sixth grade he is more willing to fight. His fatalistic viewpoint of bullying coupled with his sense of internal self-efficacy and uncritical reactions illustrate transcategorical tendencies between the levels of semi-intransitive and naive transitive consciousness as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Template Analysis - Michael

	Semi-intransitive		Naive Transitive		Critical Consciousness
Awareness	Survival mode		Recognition of individual injustices only	X	Awakened to systemic injustice
	Fatalism	X	May blame specific group or individual		
Agency	None		Internal self-efficacy External self-efficacy	X	Internal political efficacy External political efficacy
Action	None		Uncritical action/reaction	X	Unyielding to oppressors' expectations Deferred until possible or appropriate Transformative

Yenge

Yenge often listened during discussions and only occasionally added to the conversation. Field notes corroborate this and note a possible cause:

> Yenge added very little as usual. I think she has a lot to say—from her body language and the look in her eyes, but she won't. Raul [a Latino classmate] makes fun of her almost every time she tries to speak. I'm not sure why he chooses her to pick on.

Although she used few words, Yenge's participation in the class discussion of a refugee father who sacrificed for his children to attend online English classes provides a glimpse into her thoughts. In the course of the discussion she inferred that the father could not find a better job because he does not know English, revealing her critical awareness of the problem. She went on to say that refugee parents in her own community cannot attend English classes offered by the school for adults because of their work schedule:

> Teacher: The father is sacrificing a lot. Why can he not get a better job? Why is he having trouble?

Yenge: No English.

Teacher: No English. So why doesn't he just take time to learn English? . . .

Chante: Because he have to do his work.

Teacher: Can he come home and study after work? . . .

Yenge: No.

Vana: He will be tired.

Chante: Because he need time for sleep . . .

Continuing the conversation, I asked the students about the availability of English lessons to their parents when they first arrived in the United States:

Teacher: . . . when you come into this country, do your parents get SOME English lessons?

Yenge: Sometimes.

Teacher: Sometimes.

Mercy: Like one month.

Teacher: One month is not enough. Do you know how long, on average, it takes to learn English?

Mercy: More than five years.

Teacher: Yes.

Yenge: Ten! My mother

Teacher: Ok. So, I've noticed like we have English classes here at the school and sometimes,

Yenge: No, we don't.

Teacher: . . .well, they are for adults. Sometimes I look in there and there are four or five adults and sometimes I look in there are there's just one.

Nathaniel: What?!?

Teacher: So . . .

Yenge: Yeah, a lot of parents, they have go to work.

Even though Yenge was critically aware of the problems caused by not speaking English well enough to find higher paying jobs, her response to the idea of worker strikes and protests for higher pay seemed to be more fatalistic and survival focused. After reading an article about workers demanding a living wage of $15.00 per hour by protesting, she considered both the employers' and employees' points of view. On the graphic organizer shown in Figure 2, she wrote to the prompt "Employers should pay more." Yenge agreed with the employees that people needed more money to pay for things. However, the employers' stance that positions would be cut if they had to pay more caused her to be fearful. In her view, it was better not to risk losing a job even if it paid too little. Concerning Yenge and other students' viewpoint on this topic I wrote in my reflection journal:

> Thus far they [students] have not come up with suggestions for using persuasion in any form. They could not imagine that a strike or protest would work because they assumed that a person would lose a job if they refused to show up for work. Mercy's brother even suggested that business owners would go hire relatives to work rather than give into demands.

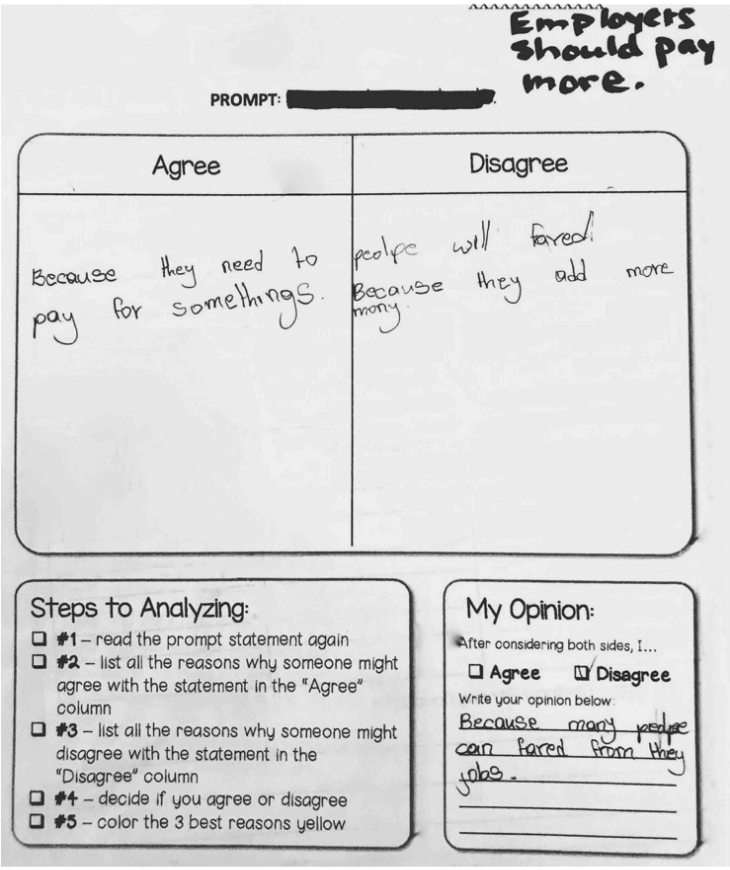


Figure 2. Yenge's Disagreement

It was literally a matter of physical survival to have a job, even a menial one with little pay. Thus, as shown in Table 7, Yenge's awareness, belonging both to CC and semi-intransitive consciousness at once, shows that she has a tendency toward transcategorical characteristics like her peers.

Nathaniel

Nathaniel was the newest member of the class, arriving in September, shortly after the research period began. His participation in culture circle discussions and writing opportunities was sparse for several weeks until he began to feel more comfortable.

Table 7. Template Analysis - Yenge

	Semi-intransitive		Naive Transitive	Critical Consciousness	
Awareness	Survival mode	X	Recognition of individual injustices only	Awakened to systemic injustice	X
	Fatalism	X	May blame specific group or individual		
Agency	None		Internal self-efficacy	Internal political efficacy	
			External self-efficacy	External political efficacy	
Action	None		Uncritical action/reaction	Unyielding to oppressors' expectations	
				Deferred until possible or appropriate	
				Transformative	

He related one incident of bullying when he first arrived at school, but overall did not see it as a pressing problem for him. In fact, he did not indicate a feeling that anything he had experienced in the United States to date had been unjust. An excerpt from his interview illustrates his thinking:

> Teacher: OK. Since you have been in the United States, can you think of things that are not fair to certain groups of people who live here?
>
> Nathaniel: Everything is good.
>
> Teacher: It's good. OK. Everything you see seems to be OK?
>
> Nathaniel: Mm hm [Yes}

Nathaniel was happy to have good schools, protection, friends, and transportation in the United States as evidenced by his writing in a graphic organizer (Figure 3).

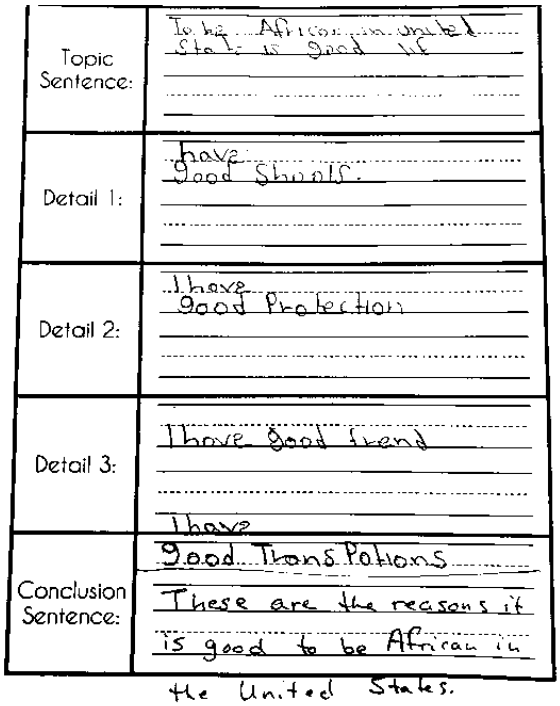


Figure 3. Life in the United States

Field notes indicate that Nathaniel felt protected in the United States because in Burundi, the police "follow me all places" insinuating that the police in his home country were a cause of concern and not protective.

Being a new arrival undoubtedly influenced Nathaniel's perception of justice and injustice in his personal life. However, he revealed a deep awareness of the implications of homelessness at an individual and national level. He and his partner, Chante, chose to address solutions to homelessness as a project for class. In this initial discussion with the student teacher in charge of the project, Nathaniel proposed a solution of giving homeless people money:

Miss Sally [student teacher]: What am I looking at Nathaniel?

Nathaniel: Problems talks to solution argue. [laughs]

Miss Sally: So, this is the problem?

Nathaniel: Mm hmm.

Miss Sally: Homelessness. What is your solution?

Nathaniel: Give them money.

Miss Sally: [Reading Nathaniel's paper] Homelessness. Homeless need some money and food. Homeless to get money.

During his class presentation of the community problems and proposed solution, however, it was apparent that he and Chante had reconsidered the feasibility of giving enough money to change the circumstances of homeless people. Their new proposal called for collective action in the form of letters to the president:

Nathaniel: Chante and I have identified the problem of homeless in our community. . . They don't have the place where they have a place to meet. Our solution is to, our solution to the problem is to make a group of many people to write a letter for, to the President. Our solution can help them by telling the president if he give them a place to live it can make the country to go success. I am going to empower them to think that teach them they don't have the homeless the country will not go.

Miss Sally: Alright. Woo! First we clap 'cause he did awesome. Good job Nathaniel! OK, now it's question time.

Mercy: Why would you want to help homeless people because some homeless it's their own fault to be homeless, so why do you want to help the people who wants to be homeless anyway?

Nathaniel: Because if they are homeless, it it's the country's problem because sometimes if they were not homeless, their children can be equal as people in our country.

Nathaniel's critical awareness of problems associated with homelessness extended to the notion of inequality, the welfare and future of homeless children, and the welfare of the nation in general. Concerning agency, his words expressed a sense of internal and external political efficacy in that he proposed a letter writing campaign to the president. The circumstances for this proposal must be taken into account, however, before determining his agentive consciousness level. The students were asked to identify problems to propose solutions, which allowed for critical thinking and choice. However, though Nathaniel had previously spoken of his concern for homeless people, he had never proposed a solution, only immediate temporary help like donating food. It is unlikely that Nathaniel would have proposed to a letter-writing campaign to the president of his own volition. Although Nathaniel was clearly aware of systemic injustice, the extent of his internal and external political efficacy was, thus, unclear and are indicated by question marks in those categories in Table 8.

Summary

This study reveals developing consciousness to be a complex process in this study. Freire's CC continuum provided a foundation for analyses of CC, but was not adequate in itself to describe its transcategorical and dynamic nature. None of the students in the study fit perfectly at all times into either template based on Freire's (1970/1996) original or the modified continuum. At times the characteristics of awareness, agency, and action may belong to more than one category at a time. At times, one component may belong to one category and another component to another category. The other variance shown is the potential for components to

progress independently of each other from lower levels to higher levels. Overall the refugee ELs' movement toward CC tended to be dynamic and transcategorical, making it difficult to fully capture and accurately analyze using categories based on Freire's notions of semi-intransitive, naive transitive, and CC.

Table 8. Template Analysis - Nathaniel

	Semi-intransitive		Naive Transitive	Critical Consciousness	
Awareness	Survival mode	X	Recognition of individual injustices only	Awakened to systemic injustice	X
	Fatalism	X	May blame specific group or individual		
Agency	None		Internal self-efficacy	Internal political efficacy	?
			External self-efficacy	External political efficacy	?
Action	None		Uncritical action/reaction	Unyielding to oppressors' expectations	
				Deferred until possible or appropriate	
				Transformative	

Chapter Five: Discussion

This study was undertaken in the midst of an immigration wave numerically reminiscent of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Brown, 2015; Office of Immigration Statistics, 2019). Unlike historic European immigration, however, the current wave of immigrants is largely composed of oppressed peoples from regions of South America, Central America, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, (Cepla, 2019). The demographic shift is challenging the norms and structure of mainstream American society. As mainstream society resists both demographic and cultural shifts, unjust treatment of non-European immigrants proliferates (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017).

Freire (1970/1996), posited that true societal transformation resulting in equitable economic and political opportunity must come from those who are oppressed by the existing system. For those who are oppressed to become equal participants in society, however, they must be able to transform oppression in their lives (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970/1996; Giroux, 2003; hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). The 2018 United States congressional election of Ilhan Omar, a former Somali refugee from Minnesota, demonstrated that transformation is possible, if not complete, for students from refugee backgrounds. Thirteen percent of Congress members are, in fact, immigrants or children of immigrants (Geiger, 2019) further affirming the possibilities for students from various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds to overcome oppression and gain a more equitable position in society.

Implications for Educators

Oppression is not only the act of a tyrant as thought of in the traditional manner, but can also be restrictive structures that dehumanize groups of people by denying them language, education, freedom to authors their own lives, and any other opportunity to be equal participants

in society (Young, 2009). CP provides a framework for emancipatory education that can help move migrant and refugee ELs toward CC in which they discover their own voices and take up their own power to transform oppressive societal structures (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Fisher, 2007; Freire, 1970/1996; Souto-Manning, 2010).

It is important to understand the nature of adolescent refugee ELs' CC in order to better serve them through CP in the classroom. Therefore, this study aimed to capture students' expressions of consciousness in ESL classes in which CP was practiced. Data analysis revealed that refugee ELs' levels of awareness, agency, and action did not always align each other within a specific category of consciousness identified by Freire, i.e. semi-intransitive, naive, or CC. Furthermore, some students' awareness could exist at more than one level at the same time.

These findings show the complexity of students' developing CC and also call into question the lens through which we view CC. For example, Mercy exemplified the view that it is better to forego the expedient, (e. g. having adolescents work to help support the family) for the promise of something better in the future (e. g. children helping to support the family after). Although this could not be defined as showing a sense of action to change economic injustice, it does propose a solution through which the family unit may ultimately prosper, thus "beating the system" in the long run. Waters (1999) posits that West Indian immigrants often see injustices as isolated barriers to overcome, and that they most often approach action individually rather than collectively. Drawing from her example, then, it is important to consider CC as being variable according to culture. Therefore, categorizing a person's consciousness using preconceived notions of what constitutes critical action may paint an incomplete or inaccurate picture.

No matter how we describe critical awareness and action, however, a sense of agency, is the precursor. The findings in this study indicated the students' sense of agency needed

bolstering. Agency can be understood as having two components, internal and external political efficacy (Diemer & Rapa, 2016). Those who have a sense of internal political efficacy believe they can successfully challenge unjust situations individually or collectively (Watts et al., 2011). External political efficacy, however, describes the belief that those in power legitimize one's interests and needs. (Diemer & Rapa, 2016; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006).

Internal political efficacy is particularly important for marginalized people to develop because it has been shown to predict both conventional political action, such as voting, and critical action, such as protesting (American Political Science Association, Taskforce on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004; Diemer & Li, 2011; Diemer & Rapa, 2016; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006). Internal political efficacy, may by extension, predict students' willingness to advocate for themselves in the classroom. Without external political efficacy, however, internal agency will at some point dissipate. When people advocate for change, but are constantly met with resistance, they may acquiesce to the status quo. Accordingly, if students' voices are not legitimized by teachers and administrators, they may never gain a sense of internal agency. As a result, they will not likely succeed in school or become full participants in society. Thus, this study highlights the urgency of practicing CP to nurture students' sense of political efficacy in ESL classrooms, a sentiment resonated by Sarroub and Quadros (2015): "ultimately at stake are individuals and collectives of individual's access to and savvy negotiation of teaching and learning practices that aid them to succeed in spite of institutional constraints and power structures (p. 258)."

Implications for Future Research

The limitations of this research suggest possibilities for future studies in the area of CC, especially as it pertains to adolescent ELs of color with limited or interrupted formal education.

Further research is needed to describe CC and its manifestations in various cultural contexts. Long term ethnographic studies capturing the dynamic process of movement toward CC in varying cultural contexts would also inform educators' efforts to nurture the development of CC among diverse groups.

Conclusion

As the demographic makeup of the nation changes, more and more students are subjected to an education that does not prepare them to fully participate in society. The educational system largely privileges the knowledge, and cultural ways of White middle-class America, virtually shutting out those who are becoming the numeric majority. If we truly value democracy with "liberty and justice for all" (U.S. Code, Section 4), then we must enact an education that provides the tools for marginalized students, like the refugee ELs in this study, to develop their CC. Only with CC can they act against oppressive systems and propose more just systems. Freire (1970/1996) believed that only through the work of the oppressed could society be made just. He also believed they needed education to aid them in that endeavor. It is imperative for educators to take up this call to provide an equitable, emancipatory education for English learners with limited or interrupted formal education for the future life of our nation and all the people who make it up.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Now that we have finished our problem and solution units and you have discussed and written about three different problems, can you think of other problems in the community, state, or country that are related to inequality, inequity, or injustice?
2. Who could help with that? (If the answer is not *me* or *we*, ask What could we/you do?)
3. Think back to the time before we started the _____ unit. Did you recognize the problem you just told me about then? Follow up - What did you notice about that problem before the unit? How is that different from how you think about it now?
4. What did you learn about inequality, inequity, and injustice that you did not know before?
5. Before we started this unit, did you ever think about doing something to help solve the problems you see in the community? Follow up - Can you give me an example?
6. Now that we have finished this unit, do you feel that you are more or not more confident in acting to solve a community problem? Follow up -Please tell me more about that.
7. Now that we have finished this unit, are you more likely or not more likely to become involved acting against inequality, inequity, and injustice? Follow up- Please tell me more about that.

Appendix B

Overview of Thematic Unit Lesson Plans

Unit Topic: Problems and Solutions **Sept. 4 – Dec. 14, 2018**

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Essential Question: How do people work to solve problems (injustice) they see in social contexts?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Subunit 1</td><td>Subunit 2</td><td>Subunit 3</td><td>Subunit 4</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bullying</td><td>Low wages</td><td>Language Barriers in School</td><td>Community Problems Project (Student Teacher in charge)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Subunit 1: Bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">WIDA ELD Standard 1:
ELs Communicate for social and instructional purposes with the school setting.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">TN State Standards: Mental, Emotional, & Social Health
8.MESH.2 Identify a variety of nonviolent ways to respond when angry or upset.
8.MESH.3 Analyze techniques that are used to pressure someone to engage in or be a target of violent behavior.
8.MESH.6 Design nonviolent solutions to conflicts based on respect for others.
8.MESH.7 Utilize family, school, and community resources to avoid or reduce menta l , social, and emotional health risks (e.g., bullying, harassment).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Content Objective:
Students will identify situations at school that trigger anger and nonviolent strategies for reaching a solution.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Language Objectives:
1. Students will write complete sentences and converse orally about bullying by using structures such as “_____ is an example of bullying.” “Bullying makes me feel _____” When I am bullied, I can _____.” “I was bullied when _____” “I reacted by _____.” I could have reacted by___.”</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Culture Circle Prompt:
What is bullying?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Supports for Language Objectives:
1. Sentence starters
2. graphic organizers</td><td colspan="2">Supports for Content Objective:
BrainPop Video</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Materials:
1. Scholastic article about LuLu, 2. LuLu’s website, 3. News ELA article about bullying of Muslim students</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Extension: Scholastic Article on teens from Stoneman-Douglas High School – collective action focus</td></tr>
</table>

Subunit 2: Low wages

WIDA ELD Standard 5:
ELs communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

TN State Standard: Social Studies - Economics
2.1 Describe the purpose of a budget
3.18 Analyze how people interact with their environment to satisfy basic needs and wants, including: housing, industry, transportation, and communication

Content Objective:
Students will understand the purpose of a budget.
Students will understand the concepts of minimum wage and living wage.

Language Objectives:
1. Students will use oral language to talk about income and expenses in relation to budget.
2. Students will explain their agreement or disagreement with the statement "Employers should pay more" orally and in writing.

Culture Circle Prompt:
What are things families have to pay for?

Supports for Language Objectives:	**Supports for Content Objective:**
Sentence frames: 1. A paycheck is a form of _____. 2. _____ is an expense. 3. I have money in my budget for_____. 4. I do not have money in my budget for ___. 5. I agree that _____ because _____. 2. 6. I disagree that _____ because _____.	1. YouTube videos of families working to stay within their budget. 2. Online game "Spent."

Materials:
1. Packet of scenarios and exercises – wages per hour/week/month vs. cost of living
2. News ELA article about fast food worker protest for $15 per hour.

Subunit 3: Language Barriers in Schools
WIDA ELD Standard 2: ELs communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.
Content Standards: ELA 6.W.TTP.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. a. Introduce claim(s). b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, sufficient evidence; acknowledge alternate or opposing claim(s). c. Organize the reasons and evidence clearly and clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons. d. Use credible sources and demonstrate an understanding of the topic or source material. e. Craft an effective and relevant conclusion that supports the argument presented. f. Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary. g. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. h. Use varied sentence structure to enhance meaning and reader interest. i. Establish and maintain a formal style.
Content Objective: The students will identify ways they can advocate for ELs' education locally, regionally, and nationally.
Language Objectives: The students will orally and in writing: a) identify struggles they perceive in their own educational experience b) identify possible solutions c) lay out the necessary steps to reach the solution.
Culture Circle Prompt: 1)What do you think of when you look at these pictures. (Various pictures of report cards with low grades)
Supports for Language Objectives: 1. Teacher will write students' thoughts about pictures on chart paper to be displayed during the unit. 2. Vocabulary and sentence stems. 3. Graphic organizers for writing arguments.
Materials: News ELA article: Slow English learners get help in California/Bilingual kids get help learning English Center for American Progress Report (Adapted): Preparing All Teachers to Meet the Needs of English Language Learners

Subunit 4: Community Problems and Solutions (Student Teacher's Unit)
WIDA ELD Standard 2: ELs communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.
Content Standards: ELA 4.RI.CS.5 Describe the overall structure of events, ideas, and concepts of information in a text or part of a text. [Focusing on the structure of problem & solution]
Content Objective: The students will identify problems in the community and suggest solutions.
Language Objectives: 1.The students will identify problems in the community and suggest solutions in writing 2. Students will present their problem and solution orally to the class
Culture Circle Prompt: Cesar Chavez found things that were not right and he protested to fix them. My question for you is "Are there things in your community that happen around you that are not right?"
Supports for Language Objectives: 1. Cloze paragraph: _____ and I identified the problem of _____ in our community. Our solution to the problem is to _____. We are going to encourage others to help by _____. 2. Graphic organizer
Materials: Laptops for researching solutions.

Appendix C

Dear Parent,

I am the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher at Vine Middle Magnet School. I am also a doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee. I am researching how English Learners express awareness of injustice in society and how they choose to challenge it with my support as their English teacher. My research will be shared in professional conferences and publications.

I am requesting your permission to use recordings and student work that were collected as part of our regular classroom procedures during the past semester for research purposes. The students have identified and discussed problems that affect them, their family, or community. I developed English lessons including reading writing, speaking, and listening related to the topics they identified. I will be the only person to listen to the recording.

I am also requesting permission to interview your student about what they learned. The interview will take no longer than 30 minutes. If your child feels uncomfortable answering questions at any time, he/she may ask me to stop the interview.

I will meet with the students at a convenient place and time that we both agree on and that will not interfere with their classes. I will audio-record the interview to help me remember what your child says. Your child and I will be the only people to listen to the recording. The recording will be stored on a flash drive in a locked cabinet at Vine Middle Magnet School until the end of the school year. After that, it will be stored in a locked cabinet at The University of Tennessee for three years and then destroyed according to university rules.

Your child's participation may help teachers understand how to help your child more. The data from the study will be used in my dissertation and may be published or presented at professional meetings, but all names will be kept confidential.

I will answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 865-594-4461 and robin.schell@knoxschools.org or my faculty advisor, Dr. Clara Lee Brown, at 865-974-4146 and cbrown26@utk.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant you may contact the University of Tennessee IRB Compliance Officer at utkirb@utk.edu or (865) 974-7697.

Please sign the attached form and return it to me at Vine Middle Magnet School, if you will allow your child to participate.

With kind regards,
Robin Schell
Vine Middle Magnet School
865-594-4461
robin.schell@knoxschools.org

Study Title: Fostering Critical Consciousness in English Learners through Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy
Researcher: Robin Schell

I have read the information above and understand that Mrs. Schell wants to use my child's recorded and written words in her study and the she wants to interview my child.

□ Yes – I give permission for my child's words and written work to be used. My child may participate in an interview with Mrs. Schell

-OR-
□ No – I do not give permission for my child's words or written work to be used. I do not want my child to participate an interview.

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

_____
Print Parent/Guardian Name

_____ _____
Child's Name Age

Assent (for your child)

I have read or been told about the information above. I give Mrs. Schell permission to use my words in the recorded class discussions for her research. I also give her permission to use my class work. Lastly, I agree to answer questions about my learning this semester and will let her use my answers in her research.

My parent/guardian has given me permission to participate. I have been told that I do not have to participate, even if my parent/guardian says that it is okay. I have been told that I can stop answering questions if I am uncomfortable and nobody will be mad at me.

□ Yes – I want to participate in the study.

-OR-

□ No – I do not want to participate in the study.

_____ _____
Child's Signature Date

_____ _____
Print Child's Name

Appendix D

Babyey nkunda,

Njye nd'umwarimu w'Icyongereza cy'abava hanze kw'ishuri rya Vine Middle. Ndi n'umunyeshuri utegura impamyabushobozi y'ubu dogiteri kuri Kaminuza ya Tennessee. Ndimo gukora ubushakashatsi kubijyanye n'ukuntu abiga icyongereza bomenya kandi bagasobanura akarengane kari muri sosiyeti n'ukuntu bohitamo kutakemera bafatanije nanjye nk'umwarimu wabo. Ubushakashatsi bwanjye buzavugwa mu ma nama y'akazi hamwe no mu binyamakuru.

Ndimo gusaba uruhusa ryo gufata amajwi no gukoreshya mu bushakashatsi iby'abanyeshuri bakoze mw'ishuri mu gihembwe gishize. Abanyeshuri baragaragaje ibibazo bafite kandi banabiganiraho, kimwe n' iby'imiryango yabo, ni bya Kominoti. Ubwo nahita nkora ibyigwa byo gusoma, kwandika no kumva, bijyanye nibyo bavuze, Ni njye gusa uzumva ibyafashwe.

Ndasaba kandi uruhusa rwo kubaza umunyeshuri wawe kubyo bazaba bamaze kwiga. Uko kumubaza ntibizarenza iminota 30. Nimba umwana wanyu yumva bitamumereye neza gusubiza ibyo bibazo, ashobora kumbwira nkahagarika kumubaza.

Nzabonanira n'abanyeshuri ahantu tubona ko twese hatubangukiye hamwe no kw'isaha twumvikanyeho, ariko itabangamiye ibyigwa. Nzajya mbifata amajwi kugira ngo nzabashye kwibuka ibyo tuzaba twavuganye. Njyewe n'umwana wawe, ni twe bantu gusa tuzumva ibyo nzaba nafashe. Ibyafashwe byose bizabikwa mu kabati gafunze neza kwi shuri rya Vine Middle kugeza umwaka w'ishuri urangiye. Nyuma bizabikwa imyaka itatu mu kabati gafunze kuri Kaminuza ya Tennessee, hanyuma bazabishwanyuza bikurikijwe amategeko ya Kaminuza.

Ugukorana n'umwana wawe bishobora gufasha abarimu gusobanukigwa neza uko bomufasha kurushaho. Ibyo tuzageraho nzabikoresha mu gitabo ndi kwandika kandi bishobora kwandikwa cangwa kuvugwa mu ma nama y'akazi, ariko nta zina na rimwe rizavugwa.

Nzasubiza buri kibazo muzaba mufite kuri ubu bushakashatsi. Mushobora kumbona kuri 865-594-4461 no kuri robinschell@knoxschools.org cangwa ku mujyanama wanjye Dr. Clara Lee Brown kuri 865-974-4146 cangwa cbrown26@utk.edu. Nimba mufite ikibazo kubyerekeye uburenganzira bwanyu mu gukorana natwe, mwobaza uwubishinzwe kuri Kaminuza ya Tennessee mu biro bya IRB Compliance cangwa utk97irb@utk.edu no kuri (865)974-76

Musabwe gushira umukono ku rupapuro rukurikira mugahita murugarura kuri Vine Middle Magnet School

Murakoze Cyane
Robin Schell
Vine Middle Magnet School
865-594-4461
robin.schell@knoxschools.org

Umutwe w'igitabo: Fostering Critical Consciousness in English Learners through Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy
Umushakashatsi: Robin Schell

Nasomye ibyo mwatubwiye hejuru aha kandi nasobanukiwe ko Mrs. Schell ashyaka kuzafata amajwi umwana wanjye, akagira ibyo amubaza kwandika n'ibyo azamubaza gusubiza.

 Yego – Ntanze uruhusa rwo gukoreshya ivyo umwana wanjye yavuze nibyo yanditse. Umwana wanjye ashobora gukorana na Mrs.Schell mubyo amubaza.

-CANGWA-

 Oya – Ntabwo nemeye ko ibyo umwana wanjye yanditse cangwa yavuze babikoreshya. Sindanashyaka ko umwana wanjye akorana na Ms. Schell mu byo ababaza.

_____	_____
Umukono w'Umubyeyi/Umurezi	Itariki
_____	
Amazina y'umubyeyi/Umurezi	
_____	_____
Amazina y'Umwana	Imyaka

Ibimureba (Umwana wawe)

Narabisomye cangwa narabibwiwe ibijyanye nibyo mwavuze hejuru aha. Mpaye uruhusa Mrs. Schell akoreshye mu bushakashatsi bwe ivyo yafashe turi kuganira. Muhaye kandi uruhusa akoreshye ibyo nakoze mw'ishuri. Icya nyuma, ndemeye kuzasubiza ibibazo bijyanye n'uko niga muri iki gihembwe kandi nzamureka akoreshe ibisubizo byanjye mu bushakashatsi.

Ababyeyi /abarezi banjye barampaye uruhusa ryo gukorana nawe. Barambwiye ko nubwo baba barabyemeye, ko atari itegeko ngo mbijyemwo. Barambwiye ko nshobora guhagarika gusubiza ibibazo igihe cyose numva bitamereye neza, ko nta n'umwe uzandakarira.

□ Yego – Ndashyaka kuba mu bushakashatsi.

-CANGWA-

□ Oya – Ntabwo nshyaka kuba mu bushakashatsi.

_____	_____
Umukono w'umwana	Itarik

Appendix E

Date/Tarehe: 12/03/2018
Mzazi mpenzi,

Habari,

Jina langu ni Mrs Robin Schell, mimi ni mwalimu wa Kingereza(ESL) kwenye shule la Vine Middle school. Niko pia mwanafunzi kwenye chuo kikuu cya UT ninapo malizia PHD yangu.
Mpango wangu ni kuchunguza wanafunzi wa kingereza **kueleza ufahamu wao kuhusu kunyanganywa haki yao (Injustice)** katika jamii(communaute) kama mwalimu wao wa Kingereza. Utafiti wangu utatumiwa **kwenye mikutano ya kitaalamu na machapisho. (Publication)**

Nataka kuwaomba nyinyi wazazi kuwaruhusu watoto wenu, ili niweze kutumia recodi tulipo tumia kipindi cya shule kilichopita(last trimester).

Tunaitaji wanafunzi watatue shida inayowazunguka wao na familia yao na mazingira yao. Wanafunzi wataongea kuhusu vitu tafauti. Masomo wanafunzi wanayopata hapa yanawasaidia kwa kujifunza kingereza kwani hapa wanajifunza kusoma, kuandika, kuongea na kusikiliza somo kuhusu vitu mbali mbali.
Ni mimi mwenyewe tu mwalimu wao nitakao sikiliza iyo audio, sitayatangazia watu wengine.

Nataka kuwaomba pia ruhusa ya kuwaoji wanafunzi wangu kuhusa yale tuliojifunza. Muda ya kuwaoji itakua kipindi cya dakika makumi tatu(30 minutes). Mwanafunzi asipojisikia huru kujibia anaweza kuomba kuachia hapo kuongea.

Nitakutana na wanafunzi mahali tutakapotayarisha na kwa masaha tutakapo wasiliana.Na iyi mpango haitawazuia masomo yao ya kila siku.
Nitachukua sauti yao kwenye audio ili niweze kukumbuka yale wanafunzi walioniambia.Ni mimi tu na wanafunzi wangu tutakao sikiliza iyo audio, kiisha iyo audio itawekwa kwenye shule ya vine Middle school mpaka mwisho wa mwaka huu wa masomo. Kabla ya hapo, iyo audio itawekwa kwenye chuo kikuu cya UT(University of Tennessee). Iyo audio itawekwa kwenye kabati inayofungwa.Kabla ya myaka mitatu, iyo audio italazimishwa waibomoe kwani itakua imemaliza wakati iliotakiwa. Hiyo ni sheria ya chuo kikuu cya UT.

Mupango huu wa kujifunza utasaidia walimu wa watoto wenu kutatua ginsi ya kuwafundisha watoto wenu vema kuzidia. Majina yote ya wanafunzi yatawekwa siri.
Nitajibia swali lolote munalo kuhusu mupango huu. Munaweza kunipigia simu kwenye namba 865-594-4461 na email yangu ni robin.schell@knoxschools.org wala mwongozi wangu kwenye chuo kikuu cya UT, jina lake ni Dr. Clara Lee Brown, unaweza kumupigia simu kwenye: 865-974-4146 na e-mail yake ni cbrown26@utk.edu.
Ukiwa na swali lolote kuhusa haki zako unaweza kuwasiliana na Chuo kikuu cya UT. (University of Tennessee IRB).
Compliance Officer at utkirb@utk.edu wala piga namba ya simu:
(865) 974-7697.

Tafadhali, saini fomu zilizokamatishwa hapa na uiturudishie kwenye shule ya Vine Middle school kama unakubali mtoto wako afatilie mupango huu wa kujifunza.

Asante,
Wenu, Mwalimu wa Kingereza(ESL)
Robin Schell

 NDIYO- Nimekubali mtoto wangu ashiriki wala aje kwenye somo hili.

-AO-

 HAPANA- Sitaki mtoto wangu ashiriki wala aje kwenye somo hili.

Saini ya Mzazi,
Hapa chini: Parent/Guardian Signature

Tarehe:

---

jina lako_____
Print Parent/Guardian Name

Majina ya mtoto_____ Myaka yake:

***KUHUSU MWANAFUNZI (UHAKIKISHO)**

Nimekwisha kusoma na nimeambiwa kuhusu maelezo kwenye barua. Nimefahamu kwamba maongezi haya yatakamatwa kwenye audio . Na tutakusanya kazi zote wanafunzi watakavyo fanya.

Wazazi wangu wamenipa ruhusa ili nishirikie kwenye mafunzo haya. Na wakati wote sijisikie huru kujibia kwenye swali lolote ninaweza nikaomba kuachia hapo. Hakuna wowote atakaye nikasirikiya wala kunipa alama mbaya shuleni (bad grade, point za mubaya).

 NDIYO – Nitashirikia kwenye mafunzo haya

-WALA-

 HAPANA– Sitaki kusherekea kwenye mafunzo haya.

Saini ya mutoto/Mwanafunzi

Tarehe

_____ _____
Child's Signature Date

Appendix F

KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS
ANDREW JOHNSON BUILDING

Bob Thomas, Superintendent

February 12, 2018

Robin Schell
7104 W. Arbor Trace Dr. #309
Knoxville, TN 37909

Robin Schell:

You are granted permission in to contact appropriate building-level administrators concerning the conduction of your proposed research study: *Fostering Critical Consciousness in African Refugee English Learners through Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy.* Final approval of this research study taking place within the Knox County School system is contingent upon acceptance by the principal(s) at the site(s) where the study will be conducted. Include a copy of this permission form when seeking approval from the principal(s).

In all research studies, names of individuals, groups, or schools may not appear in the text of the study unless specific permission has been granted through this office. The principal researcher is required to furnish this office with one copy of the completed research document.

Good luck with your study. Contact me at 865-594-1735 if you need further assistance or clarification of the research policies of Knox County Schools.

Sincerely,

John Beckett
Director
Research and Evaluation

Project Number: 171827

P.O. Box 2188 • 912 South Gay Street • Knoxville, Tennessee 37901-2188 • Telephone (865) 594-1800

Appendix G

Vine Middle Magnet School

1807 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue
Knoxville, Tennessee 37915
Phone: 865.594.4461 • Fax: 865.594.1702
knoxschools.org/vinems

Cindy White
Principal
Daniel Champion
Joe Lancaster
Denise Neal
Assistant Principals
Clarence Swearengen
Campus Manager & Athletic Director

March 26, 2018

Robin Schell
745 Park Lane
Greeneville, TN 37743

Dear Robin:

It is without reservation that I approve your request to conduct research as proposed in your request to Knox County School and in accordance with the Director of Research and Evaluation of Knox County Schools, John Beckett.

As stated by Mr. Beckett, names of individuals, groups, or the school may not appear in the text of the study unless the Office of Research and Evaluation grants permission. You must furnish the Office of Research and Evaluation one copy of the completed research document.

Good luck in your study and I am looking forward to learning the outcomes. Please contact me at 865-594-4463 if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Desirée Jones
Principal,
Vine Middle Magnet School

Vita

Robin Schell is a second career English as a Second Language teacher, having previously taught instrumental music. She was born and now lives in East Tennessee, but spent most of her formative years Central Florida. She attended high school in Florida and North Carolina. Her bachelor's degree was earned in 1985 at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina and her master's degree in 1987 at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. After many years of teaching music and managing her family's small business, Robin decided to pursue teaching English as a Second Language and enrolled in classes at East Tennessee State University in order to get her additional licensure. She taught ESL for three years before beginning her doctoral degree in ESL education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Robin continued to teach in a public school throughout her doctoral studies and also served as a graduate assistant for one year. She taught ESL courses at the university and supervised student teachers. This dissertation marks the completion of her Ph.D. in Education with a concentration in Literacy Studies and specialization in ESL.