

“Sometimes giving up is the strong thing:” How women charter school teachers remain resilient in an educational marketplace

**A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Gretchen N. Cook
May 2024**

Copyright © 2024 by Gretchen N. Cook
All rights reserved.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all women teachers. Especially, those who entered the field with hopes to make serious change. I see you, and know your struggles. I also dedicate this to all the students who have been willing to be members of my classroom, challenge my thinking, and push me to be a better teacher. I love you all and knowing that you are the soon to be leaders of this world gives me hope!

Most importantly, this is dedicated to my two beloved dog sons—Dylan and Otis. While these two are not physically on this earth to witness this accomplishment, they sat by my side for three years as I worked towards this milestone. Otis, you reminded me to stay sane and that caring for you was more important than any type of work. Dylan, you changed my life. You taught me patience, empathy, and how to accept love. Dylan, you healed me from pain.

I also dedicate this to my cat children—Maisy and Sanders. These two little sneaks have added paragraphs of nonsense to my dissertation as they run across my keyboard each time I refill my coffee. I also dedicate this to my dog son Truman. Truman and I went through teething, potty training, and his “teen” years as I worked on this behemoth. Truman you are a constant reminder that I can do anything, and to be confident in myself.

I also dedicate this to the girl I once was. I was lost. Re-storied my life to survive. To young Gretchen, thank you for bearing the burden so I could become the woman I am today. While some folks might argue what is chronicled here is fiction, it is my non-fiction and my reality. As a reader, it is your responsibility to interpret it and choose what meaning you shall take from it.

*“There is fiction in the space between
The lines on your page of memories
Write it down but it doesn’t mean*

*You're not just telling stories
There is fiction in the space between
You and reality
You will do and say anything
To make your everyday life seem less mundane."*
-Tracy Chapman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe my devotion and love of academia to Dr. Nicholas and Ms. Baron. I experienced a pivotal turning point in my educational journey in Dr. Nicholas's eleventh-grade philosophy and Ms. Baron's advanced placement English classes. Prior to this point, I was a good writer and student but did not particularly enjoy or value school. The teachers of these classes made learning real-world applicable, differentiated assignments, infused me with a thirst for knowledge, and made visible to me how the knowledge I was gaining would benefit my life. To this day, I remember everything I learned in those classes and try to model my own professional practices on those teachers. These teachers gave me an incredible gift—a passion for learning—and in my naïve teens I could not fully comprehend this privilege. This “gift” inspired a desire to pass this on to others.

I would be remiss in not thanking my powerful and compassionate committee members. Thank you to Dr. Anderson for giving me the first opportunity to produce and publish scholarly writing. You literally held me by the hand throughout the publication process. Thank you to Dr. Harper for advancing my academic writing, and continuously pushing me to improve through feedback. Thank you to Dr. Swamy for introducing me to Wacquant and changing my life with Bourdieu and Practice Theory. Most of all, Dr. Cain I would not have the experience, writing ability, and interview experience that I exit UTK with, had it not been for you taking me under your wing and providing a very inexperienced student with a wealth of opportunities. Also, thank you for always being willing to chat about Mothman. I also wish to thank Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon, who without, I would not have found my place here at UTK, and I thank her for always being there to put my obsessive thoughts at ease.

To the dedicated friends and former students who helped me bring the ethnodrama to life, thank you. I am forever grateful to life you brought to this research and the Saturday you sacrificed for me. Thank you to Caleb Cho, Cross Fuller, Jessica Summers, and Amelia Zahn.

To my parents, thank you for making school a priority. I did not appreciate it at the time but this is where I have found my place.

To my wonderful husband, Chris, thank you for calming me down when I was stressed out about due dates five months down the road. Thank you for moving across the state to support my dream, and carrying our financial burden. Most of all, thank you for sending me funny ChatGPT stories when I needed them the most, and being the best partner and animal dad I could have ever dreamed of for 29 years.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this three manuscript dissertation is to explore the habits and enduring patterns created by neoliberal structures that dictate how women teachers should behave within the culture of a charter school and uncover how participants resist and describe their own resiliency within the charter school institution. Specifically, this work is grounded in the assumption that teacher success in the labor force is inhibited by institutional rules that are ultimately harmful, and cause teachers to leave the field of teaching (Boe et al., 1997; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Peske et al., 2001; Standeven, 2022; Wenk & Rosenfled, 1992). To critique the culture of charter schools, and to interrogate systemic inequities I will explain how Practice Theory can add insight to the education process, and how agents have the possibility to change their habitus and resist (Bourdieu, 1977). The research questions that will guide this dissertation include the following: How can documentary narrative analysis be used to allow a researcher, with insider knowledge, to give voice to the stories of participants, in order to examine the neoliberal structures, inherent in charter schools, that create a habitus?; How did I use agentic action, as a woman teacher, to remake the social structure of the charter school institution?; Do women teachers resist the hidden rules of the charter school institution? If so, how?; and How do women who work as charter school teachers describe the techniques they have developed to in order to remain working as teachers?

This application will add nuance to the current research landscape, but on a broader level it introduces a new approach to considering educational policies through the bodies and fields of women teachers. This approach has the potential to provide insights into how women charter school teachers might maintain resilience in the field, and highlight the ways in which teachers who have become disillusioned with the field can make sense of their role within the charter

school field which could lead to retention in the field, and recreation and disruption of ways of policy embodiment.

Keywords: autoethnography, Practice Theory, charter school, ethnodrama, narrative

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	1
Theoretical Framework.....	17
Research Questions.....	26
Manuscript Overviews.....	29
Manuscript 1.....	30
Manuscript 2.....	36
Manuscript 3.....	40
Positionality	47
References	53
CHAPTER II.....	73
Abstract.....	74
Review of Literature	77
Theoretical Framework.....	83
The Study: The Educational Labor of Women Charter School Teachers	90
Methodology	91
Findings.....	97
Discussion.....	99
References	102
CHAPTER III	112
Abstract.....	113
Review of Literature	115
Theoretical Framework.....	121
Methodology	127
Findings.....	131
Discussion.....	143
References	151
CHAPTER IV.....	159
Abstract.....	160
Review of Literature	161
Theoretical Framework.....	165

Methodology	168
Findings.....	178
Discussion.....	186
References	193
CHAPTER V	203
References	211
APPENDICES	213
Appendix A.....	213
Appendix B	215
Appendix C	225
VITA.....	226

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the landmark introduction of the 1983 report “A Nation at Risk¹,” politicians and the public have viewed the United States education system as failing. To remedy this, U.S. education has been targeted by neoliberal education reform efforts (Hunt & Staton, 1996). Neoliberal or neoliberalism is a political approach that favors free-market capitalism, privatization, deregulation, and reduction in government spending (Spring, 2015). The education sector is introduced to neoliberalism through applying an economic theory, or marketizing, to curricular reform and schooling (Sturges, 2015). Schools are destabilized by such reforms (Sturges, 2015) and hegemonized², in that educators cannot separate their actions from institutions and the neoliberal ontological commitments that dominate the education sector (Apple, 2012). These efforts aim to privatize public education and create competition between the private and public sector, while claiming to promote excellence, efficiency, and accountability (Spring, 2015). Examples of destabilizing, privatizing reforms include school choice, voucher programs, and charter schools (Hursh & Martina, 2016). Ultimately, critics argue that neoliberalism fails to achieve its goals of efficiency and excellence because markets never work as intended and are never neutral (Hursh & Martina, 2016).

The birth of charter schools represents a great neoliberal impact on the education field. Charter schools did not emerge as a U.S. phenomenon until the mid-2000’s (Noguera & Syeed, 2020). To early charter advocates, educators could establish new schools that would disrupt and

¹ This report from the United States Commission on Excellence in Education is considered a turning point in education. It implied that the American education system was failing, and was the spark for local and national education reforms (Spring, 2015).

² Gramsci (1971) introduced the concept of hegemony. The foundation for Gramsci’s theory begins with the idea that parties have been where leaders emerge, and parties serve as an arm of the “state.” Even so, every party is representative of a social group and they function by balancing and executing their interests onto other groups. With these parties working in service to the head of the state they help give consent to state action, but there is more power in consent than in exertion on the part of the leader. However, cultural concerns are often disguised under political concerns. In simple terms, hegemony is control exerted by the dominant group and won through ideological consent.

promote innovation, and create competition in the education (Nathan, 1997). There were high hopes for charter schools to be laboratories for innovation that would develop and share new educational practices that would move the field of education forward at a rate correlating with changes occurring in the business and industrial fields (Welsh, 2006). Supporters of charter schools claim these institutions undermine the monopoly of public school districts and better serve marginalized families and communities (Chubb & Moe, 1990), which falls under the basic assumption of neoliberalism that privileges the private sector over the public.

Educators are also destabilized, and become disposed with the field by the institutional trauma inflicted by neoliberal school reforms (Standeven, 2022). Legislators put measures, such as school choice or No Child Left Behind, in place to control and surveil teachers. These measures work against teachers because they serve to control and surveil them. Teachers are negatively impacted by such surveillance, and this may cause some teachers to leave the profession (Standeven 2022; Sloan 2007). Teachers are de-skilled through accountability measures, and are viewed as mere technicians. Of course not all accountability measures are harmful, teacher practice and student performance is quantified through these efforts (Spring, 2015). However, some advocates acknowledge that these accountability measures ensure that teachers are delivering a standard curriculum to all students, but this can have negative results in added pressures for teachers, who fear they are losing control over their own curriculum and personal autonomy (Hubbard & Kulkami, 2009; Sloan, 2007). Ultimately, teachers ask less of their students to avoid student resistance and the act of following these measures leads to a narrow proficiency-based curriculum (Sloan, 2007).

To set the foundation for my work I will chronicle the impact of neoliberalism on education, provide contextualization for charter schools, illustrate the gendered experience of

teaching in the U.S., and address how Practice Theory (Bourdieu, 1977) can provide a tool to analyze how charter schools alter educational work and embody structures of labor discipline. I will complete a three manuscript dissertation, and what follows provides a basis for this work. Across this research, I will explore the habits and enduring patterns created by school institutions that dictate how teachers, particularly women teachers, should behave within the culture of a charter school and uncover how women teachers describe their own resiliency within the charter school institution. My aim is not to solve a problem but to critique the culture of charter schools, interrogate systemic inequities, and utilize Practice theory to uncover how agents have the possibility to change their habitus and resist (Bourdieu, 1977)—all in service to retain teachers in the field.

The Impact of Neoliberalism

Tenets of neoliberalism or the neoliberal state include individual property rights, the rule of law, and free markets and free trade in order guarantee individual freedoms (Harvey, 2005). Researchers have noted that neoliberalism includes the naturalization of the temporary (Sturges, 2015), a weak state (Apple, 1993), and a constant cycle of attempting to save and revamp the system (Aalbers, 2013). Additionally, the idea of neoliberalism is associated with fiscal austerity, deregulation, and reduction in government spending.

It has been criticized for posing a threat to democracy, workers' rights, self-determination, and giving too much power to corporations (Stedman Jones, 2012). Neoliberalism is not to be confused with liberalism, in the political sense. An invisible hand is extended upon the free market by guiding all forms of social action through neoliberalism, under the premise that it promotes efficiency, but it is guided by control over politics of the body, standards, values, and conduct (Apple, 1993). Public infrastructures are viewed to breed dependency and

bureaucracy, and competition offers a solution to inspire creativity and efficiency (Wilson, 2018). In theory, the construct of neoliberalism supposes that through competition, individuals, the government, and companies will desire innovation and create a better social world, where the very best people and ideas emerge (Wilson, 2018).

Hursh and Martina (2016) further clarified neoliberalism by calling it a dominant world view that favors market-based decisions and individual competition. However, they argued that neoliberalism fails to achieve these goals because markets never work as intended and are never neutral (Hursh & Martina, 2016). At a social and community level, neoliberalism acts in direct opposition to the common good (Hursh & Martina, 2016). In other words, the good or welfare of the community is replaced by the welfare of the individual. Consequently, society embraces the idea that decision making based on markets is superior to making decisions based upon individual community needs (Block & Somers, 2014). Similarly, Wilson (2018) viewed neoliberalism as a set of social, cultural, and political and economic forces that places competition at the center of the social world. The ideological project of neoliberalism masks its actual intentions. In reality, education is not deregulated but re-regulated (Aalbers, 2012).

Neoliberalism in Education

Policy makers introduce neoliberalism to the education sector by economizing education, which means school outcomes are now judged in economic terms (Spring, 2015). Broadly, the introduction of corporate structures to education permits corporate influence over school policies, quantitative measures to judge school effectiveness, curriculum based on workplace skills, and shaping behaviors in schools to meet the needs of a free market (Spring, 2015). At the micro level, the introduction of neoliberalism in America's schools creates a primarily economic function, where students are not valued for their cognitive abilities but, rather, their ability to be

future workers, rewarded by the economic system (Tyack, 1976). Fine and Fox (2013) claimed that neoliberalism diminished investments in the schools of low income communities, and, on a more traumatic level, threatened schools by navigating public resources away from youth and toward the criminalization of communities of color and poverty. The economization of education impacts teaching practice, as now the aims of teachers should be to teach skills for students to be future contributors to the workforce (Spring, 2015).

Changes in educational policy have not benefitted students and have caused harm. Hirsch and Martina (2016) argued that private actors like Bill Gates have greater influence over education than the U.S. Secretary of Education. Through his funding, the Common Core standards have been adopted in over 40 states, and he has influence over politicians, despite possessing no formal background in education, nor expertise in global initiatives (Hirsch, 2011). Multi-national corporations like Pearson now develop most standardized tests in the U.S., thereby having influence over curriculum and student learning (Hirsch & Martina, 2016). This testing data is misused to promote corporate reformers and charter schools by putting competition structures in place (Hirsch & Martina, 2016).

“Consumers” use quality measures, established through testing, to select the best school (Apple, 1993). Members of marginalized communities are disempowered by this process, because they already do not possess a lot of “consumer” power. Apple (1993) warned that these same quality measures for consumers, to select the best school, will create a system where children are ranked. By legislators, policy makers, education systems, and families granting legitimacy to market-oriented approaches, in education, it creates a situation where those who deem what is appropriate in education actually mark and rank people, thereby turning the school institution into a determinant of class (Apple, 1993). This leads to competition and national

testing that quantifies school outcomes, in order for families or consumers to choose schools based on quality, and grants free market forces full operation (Apple, 1993). Inevitably, people grant legitimacy to free market practices and this leads to an exacerbation of existing class and race divisions.

This type of social segregation could depower students, and Apple (1993) identified this as an act of hegemony. Testing data directly impacts students in another way, as it is in the interest of reformers to prove increase in student learning by manipulating standardized test passing rates (Hursh & Martina, 2016). Reformers utilize low testing scores among urban students as justification for the establishment of more charter schools and school choice, and they use this data to argue the ineffectiveness of teachers (Hursh & Martina, 2016). Students are punished rather than rewarded by accountability reform, as these reforms undervalue diversity (including learning, racial, and socioeconomic) (Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011). Reformers, enmeshed in a culture of accountability reform, consider learner diversity a threat to standardized performance indicators (Liasidou & Symeou, 2018). This is of great consequence for students who do not conform to the standard, and they are viewed as not integrable into a neoliberal society. Black and LatinX students are mostly pathologized as low-performers (Waitoller, 2020).

The education climate is negatively impacted by neoliberalism through competition, exacerbated inequities, and the de-professionalization of education. The introduction of charter schools further worsens inequities and bolsters neoliberal ideology. However, the most harmful effect of neoliberalism is on student learning and teacher quality and retention. The most obvious impact to student learning is the introduction of standardized tests, but in serving a competitive structure these do not produce gains in student learning and data is manipulated to blame teachers for ineffectiveness (Hursh & Martina, 2016). No longer are teachers crafting curriculum

tailored to meet the needs of individual students, but they must follow standardized curriculum where learning is quantified. Through neoliberalism, an education system that values the quantifying of student knowledge rather than providing care and developing a holistic learner has been established. If a student is deemed unfit by test scores or cannot learn with a given curriculum, they are pathologized and this impacts students of color the most (Golann et al., 2019). Social inequities are merely reproduced through neoliberalism, rather than using education to overcome them.

Through neoliberal reform, teacher quality is measured through quantitative data in the form of test scores and evaluations in an effort to make teaching more professional. Gotz (1990) warned against this and argued that professionalization of teaching is a cover for the reproduction of capitalism. How teachers think and act has been transformed by neoliberal education reform, due to increased accountability measures (Lipman, 2011b). In the U.S. teacher quality is determined by performance on teacher certification exams, possession of advanced degrees, and test scores (Boyd et al., 2005; Feng, 2014; Imazeki, 2005). Still, there is little correlation between these measures of teacher quality and student learning outcomes (Betts et al., 2003). Advocates for the neoliberal education reform movement believe that teacher quality will improve through more regulations, and more stringent certification and licensing measures (Angrist & Guryan, 2007). Despite more measures of quality, Berger and Toma (1994) found that states with stricter teacher quality measures had students with lower SAT scores. However, I adopt bell hooks's conception of teacher quality. Quality educators know their students, know their families, their economic status, their community, and how they are treated. They make learning joyful and their classroom a place of pleasure. They also challenge students to think

outside their own values and beliefs. Quality teachers create a place where students can reinvent themselves through knowledge (hooks, 1994).

Neoliberalism and Teacher Retention

No longer are schools a place of collaboration between teachers and students where they make sense of the world, but are now places where teachers must focus on teaching to a test and standardized curriculum (Hursh & Martina, 2016). A patriarchal tradition of authority relations in education is replicated through reform quality measures (Apple, 1993). The school is organized around a principal beholden to standards of the neoliberal state. With this structure, teachers lose control over their own work (Apple, 1993). The trend in rationalizing curricula, with created/prescribed curriculum, mostly impacts teachers. Apple (1993) addressed the state by noting that the day-to-day interests of teachers contradict the interests of the state. Just because the state wants to enact more efficient ways to organize and measure teaching, does not necessarily mean that teachers will act upon these ways. The concept of intensification sheds further light on this argument. The work privileges of educational workers and their sociability is eroded through intensification (Apple, 1993). Intensification introduces new, technical skills that a worker must adopt to keep up with the field, but results in less time to maintain one's craft. Intensification can reduce the quality of services (Apple, 1993). The use of pre-packaged curriculum is growing in the U.S. (Sturges, 2015), and as a result teachers are just getting the prescribed objectives completed rather than going above the norm and they do not have enough time to be creative. Acceptance of intensification will generate different kinds of resistance, in the form of quality of teaching (Apple, 1993).

Just because some neoliberal reform efforts look good on paper, it does not mean they are effective (Sturges, 2015). Often neoliberal measures in education are manipulated to displace

blame for unemployment and the breakdown of values from the state or government to ineffective teachers (Apple, 1993). If we examine neoliberal policy as a social practice, elements of power emerge (Levinson et al., 2009), and these social processes serve as a way to change what it means to be a teacher (Lipman, 2011b). Eventually educators who enter the field wanting to provide quality education to students, embody neoliberal policy. Actors, who did not create policy, participate and give consent to policy via actions that inform the societal norms of the school (Spillane et al., 2002). Policy embodiment is iterative and impacts individual sense-making.

Those that resist policy embodiment, leave the field of education. Currently, teachers leave the profession at high rates nationally; 44% of teachers leave the field of education within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Not only does this have real consequences for students, who are then exposed to a constant, new set of inexperienced teachers, but the profession as a whole becomes largely de-professionalized (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Bendixen et al. (2022) suggested that teacher perceptions of leadership, reform policy, and safety in the school can impact teacher retention, both positively and negatively.

Charter Schools

The birth of charter schools is a significant example of neoliberal impacts on education (Waitoller, 2020; Fabricant & Fine, 2012; Giroux, 2012). Although the future of charter schools is vulnerable with politicians beginning to shift away from advocating for them (Berkshire, 2021), charter schools remain a topic in the education sphere, especially in Southern urban cities rife with failing public school districts, gentrification, fiscal instability, reform, and racial inequalities (Buras, 2015; Gabor, 2013). According to neoliberal ideology, before education can be marketized, a range of alternatives must be established, and charter schools serve this purpose

(Lipman, 2011b). An added benefit for neoliberal and charter school advocates, individual school choice is advantageous in that it shifts blame away from the institution or reform, to the individual who has acted autonomously to select a school for their student (Hursh & Martina, 2016).

Reform-oriented individuals or organizations run charter schools, and these schools are publicly funded but operated by private entities (Lipman, 2011b). These schools still function as public schools and are beholden to follow federal laws to serve students with disabilities (Mac, 2022). In the 1980's charter schools were seen as a means to create an education alternative in poor communities of color, but this original conception was appropriated by philanthropic and corporate entities (Fabricant & Fine, 2012). Explicitly, charter leaders established charter schools to give voice to groups that have been marginalized or silenced (i.e. people of color or low socioeconomic status) (Nathan, 1997), and advocates argue that the act of shopping for schools empowers marginalized families (Mac, 2022). While charter schools introduce competition and school choice into the educational marketplace, they also follow neoliberal ontologies of competition and meritocracy with their enrollment of students with disabilities, while not being able to provide adequate services and having high suspension rates (Mac, 2022), thereby creating inequitable conditions for students. Charter schools play into tenets of neoliberalism by pushing out unwanted students by withholding services and implementing severe disciplinary practices (Collins, 2014). Therefore, the best rise to the top and this facilitates competition amongst students. In short, competition is emphasized and not student learning or satisfaction (Waitoller, 2020).

Charter schools and school choice measures create competition structures that directly impact urban families of color. These families often encounter poor public school choices in

their neighborhoods and are forced to seek out charter schools (Collins, 2014). The practices of neoliberal school reform described, demand an education marketplace where schools act as businesses competing for customers (i.e. students). Charter schools do so by promoting their competitive advantage over public schools (Mac, 2022). Even with charter schools, this structure forces students in under-resourced areas to compete for scarce resources, and this still leaves a gap. A charter school might foresee a competitive advantage but the reality is they cannot afford to actually provide service to all in the competitive education market (Mac, 2022).

School choice and charter schools also create re-segregation. Diamond and Gomez (2004) examined how middle-class Black families and white families viewed school choice as positive, as it promoted social inclusion, but working-class Black families developed a more critical view of their neighborhood schools. Through competition, only a small portion of high-performing public schools receive funding and this maintains the capital of white families in gentrifying neighborhoods and schools (Lipman 2011a, 2011b).

Historically, charter schools have marketed themselves to families of color and justified harsh disciplinary protocols, “no excuses” policies, and white-washed practices that may counter a student’s home culture as a support to student academics (Golann et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2001). Because the charter school model is privatized, there is little room for community and parent voice, and these schools, primarily serving students of color, hire white teachers or silence the voices of teachers of color (Riley & Moore Mensah, 2022). Those few charters established by Black individuals are more likely to close due to state-imposed standards (Kingsbury et al., 2022). While scholars argue that opportunities in education must be redistributed, so those who have previously been denied, have access, this does not occur in reality. Charter schools have

fewer access to resources and supports for students, and competition between schools results in few to little gains in education quality (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013).

Those who work in charter schools are impacted. Charter school teachers, particularly women, exit high-poverty, high-minority schools not because of the students they teach but because of a lack of support from the charter school, job dissatisfaction, better paying career opportunities, and lack of control over decision making (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al. 2011; Buckley et al., 2004; Gulosino et al, 2019; Ingersoll, 2001; Kelsey, 2006). Teachers remain in charter schools that provide administrative and collegial support, mentoring, and professional development (Ingersoll, 2001; Kirby et al., 1999). Newly hired charter school teachers are more likely to leave the teaching profession instead of transferring to another school (Gulosino et al., 2019).

The Experience of Women in Teaching

Prior to the 1850's, teaching in the U.S. was a vocation held primarily by men, but the cultural and social changes prevalent in the nineteenth century brought women into the teaching field and feminized teaching (Blount, 1999; Hoffman, 1981). By feminized, I mean an overrepresentation of women in the field and the movement toward socially ascribed gender norms (Blount, 1999). The industrial era ushered in labor shifts and the common school. With this shift, men took jobs in more prestigious forms of economic productivity and women began to take jobs in the common schools (Goldstein 2014; Griffin, 1997). As formal schooling gained traction, the governess naturally transitioned to the role of teacher (Clifford, 2014). Although these women were unprepared and unsupported for the discipline of urban schools and were underpaid, the education industry welcomed women (Goldstein 2014; Griffin, 1997). A major motivation for their admittance into the field was their willingness to accept less pay than men

(Tyack & Hansot, 1990), and the idea that women were the most desirable teachers because formal education should be modeled upon the mother's nurturing and instructive activities (Clifford, 2014). Since then, the prominence of women as teachers remains, as 76% of public school teachers in the U.S. are women (Walker, 2016).

Education in the nineteenth century focused on the delivery of rewards and punishment and not the relationship between teacher and student (Clifford, 2014; Rousmaniere, 1994). At the time reformers thought that to create a more humanized school, punishment needed to be more gentle and not include physical force, in other words teachers were responsible for modifying student behavior. Not only were women teachers responsible for this, but they were expected to model self-discipline by following expectations from administration (Rousmaniere, 1994). These teachers were expected to teach overcrowded classrooms, complete clerical work, manage discipline and do so without complaint (Clifford, 2014; Rousmaniere, 1994). However, the working conditions in urban schools in the 1920's provided challenges for teachers to live up to this expectation. Teachers experienced large class sizes, teaching in portables, and a lack of resources. Students struggled transitioning from their communities into a classroom, and it was challenging for teachers to impose middle-class values and teach academics, while students were struggling to adjust to the culture shift (Rousmaniere, 1994). The chaos in schools at the time was attributed to a teaching deficit, and not the class sizes, diversity of students, or working conditions, despite this teachers were not provided with supports to address classroom management (Rousmaniere, 1994).

In the current education climate, Pivovarova and Powers (2022) found that teacher attrition is 54% higher in charter schools when compared to public schools. The gender make-up of charter schools also mirrors that of public schools, according to the U.S. Department of

Education 2020 data 76.5% of charter school teachers are women (Will, 2020). Some scholars argue that teacher attrition in charter schools is due to the charter school organization's inability to meet the needs of their teachers and lack of investment in human capital (Harris, 2007; Stuit & Smith, 2012), and to lack of experience as many charter school teacher enter the field through alternative licensure programs (Boyd et al., 2011; Fry, 2009).

In general, women teachers (charter or public) lament the lack of autonomy over their lesson plans, and report having their lesson plans monitored by administrators. When they deviate from these plans, they are reprimanded (Spencer, 1986). Women believe they have no influence in school decisions, and report that they are not asked for input and do not feel respected (Griffin, 1997; Noguera & Syeed, 2020; Valli & Buese, 2007).

Women teachers perceive that male administrators have too much control over their lives, both at work and home. Work time is no longer confined to school spaces but is subjective, and is a form of social time. Snyder (2016) defined social time as the rhythms humans create as they interact in social institutions. Since work time now extends to projects outside the confines of the space of the charter school, this poses constraints for teachers who now have work invade multiple social spaces or fields, like the home. This explicitly impacts women teachers, who report that the intense workload of charter schools causes them to leave because they feel like they cannot start their own families (Olsen & Anderson, 2007). In this new labor market, work time is conflated with social time as the lines become further blurred between work and home life (Snyder, 2016), and the only way to meet the high-stakes expectations of urban public and charter schools is sacrificing personal time (Griffin, 1997; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Singer, 2020; Torres, 2014). Women teachers also report feeling isolated and perceive the establishment of cliques based on administrator favoritism (Griffin, 1997), and bullying (Kezar, 2011).

In a study of four women teachers at a charter school in the Midwest, Singer (2020) found these women met to discuss workplace hostility and issues of equity in hopes to challenge the school's policies. Ultimately, the opposition they faced from administrators caused them to be disaffected from the school (Singer, 2020). These women were concerned about the high work load, the hostile interactions with school leadership, and racial disparities in discipline at the school (Singer, 2020). The women took their concerns to administration but were faced with false promises and a non-inclusive culture. All four women chronicled that they worked late into the night, had no work life balance, and felt judged when they did not conform to a culture of workaholism (Singer, 2020). The school performatively advocated for self-care for teachers, but one teacher felt shamed for taking time for herself and recalled a story of crying in the bath after a full day of work. In another story, the women recalled how the school made the choice to renovate a new building to maintain prestige, despite the women voicing that it seemed unwise financially since the school was understaffed and under-resourced (Singer, 2020). The women lamented that the school culture was reflective of that of the school's CEO and principal—one of white, middle and upper class ideals (Singer, 2020). This led to a culture of white, upper class competition and messaged that a successful teacher would be a hyper competitive, white woman (Singer, 2020).

Gender is directly tied to teacher attrition, with women 1.3 times more likely to leave teaching than men (Borman & Dowling, 2008). While, many women teachers enter the urban and charter school fields wishing to make teaching a lifelong career, they end up leaving the field altogether due to policy, high work demands that detract from their personal life, burnout, and a feeling of stagnation (Boe et al., 1997; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Peske et al., 2001; Wenk & Rosenfled, 1992). Society expects women teachers to meet high-stakes accountability demands

while maintaining a subordinate role within the teaching field (Lightfoot, 1978), and women report that the intense workload of these schools cause them to leave because they feel like they cannot start their own families (Olsen & Anderson, 2007).

Further complicating matters, many teachers enter the charter school field through alternative licensure programs, and they are more likely to leave the field (Boyd et al., 2011). In 25 states, charter school teachers are not required to be certified and a large population of these teachers have no teacher certification (Education Commission of the States, 2018).

Compounding this issue is Teach for America (TFA). TFA is a private-sector teacher training/leadership organization that recruits, trains, and places its corps members (CMs) in low-income urban and rural schools for two years (Teach for America, 2020). In 2018, TFA sent 40% of its CMs to teach in charter schools (Waldman, 2019), and as of 2015 over 74% of CMs were women (Del Ciello, 2016). This exacerbates the already high charter turnover rates, as TFA does not envision teaching as a long-term career; rather, teaching is one stop on the path to a more meaningful and/or lucrative career at higher levels of school administration/leadership, charter school management, education policy, etc. (e.g., Anderson et al., 2022; Brewer et al., 2016; Cersonsky, 2013; Jacobsen & Linkow, 2014; Trujillo et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Analyzing Bourdieu's Practice Theory (1977). Bourdieu³ argued that culture is not the product of free will or underlying principles, but social actors (humans with agency) construct culture from dispositions structured by previous events. With this in mind, Bourdieu's theory

³ Bourdieu was part of the poststructuralist movement. He began from a structuralist stance but his work moved beyond this by challenging traditional notions of symbolic power (Robson & Sanders, 2009).

involves three major concepts-- habitus, field, and capital (Bourdieu, 1977). They converge in practice.

Bourdieu conceived of capital as a toolkit, including cultural, social, and economic capital (1977). For the aims of this work, I will not focus on economic capital because I am interested in exploring the social and cultural rules that guide the ways of being for women teachers within the field of the charter school, therefore I will only define social and cultural capital. Of note, Bourdieu believed that all forms of capital incorporate economic capital, and social and cultural capital are ultimately convertible to economic (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital references the quality and amount of resources within an individual's network, and depending on the characteristics of the network, social capital can give access to economic or cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Cultural capital is made up of social and cultural competencies, or knowledge, of a particular field. It is bound to time and location, so context is important when applying cultural and capital theories to an educational issue (Tichavakunda, 2019). In order to engage with said context, Bourdieu turned to the concept of field.

The field is comprised of complex relationships that have specific forms of cultural and social capital, and Bourdieu linked this to social worlds, with their own implicit rules. A field can be any social world, including classrooms, charter schools, etc. One's cultural and social capital also depends on the field. Both Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) noted that capital does not exist without relation to a field. Finally, the field links to habitus in that one's behavior in the field is shaped by the socialized norms reproduced in their habitus. I further explain the interaction of these concepts in Figure 1.

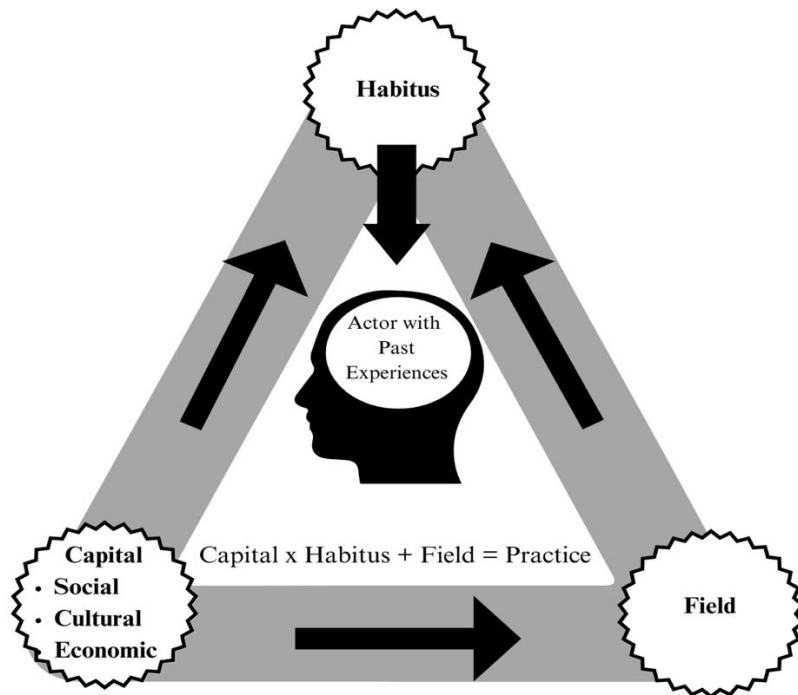


Figure 1

Practice Theory Visualization

Note. Adapted from “Project-as-Practice: Applying Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice on Project Managers,” by T. Kalogeropoulos et al., 2020, *Project Management Journal*, 51(6), 599-616.

The habitus is created through a social, rather than individual, process. This leads to enduring patterns or habits, where society becomes deposited into agents to manifest lasting dispositions or structured capacities that train social actors to believe and perform in determinant ways that guide their actions (Wacquant, 2005). Of particular note to my research, the habitus is created by the neoliberal structures of charter schools.

Within the structure of the habitus, individuals may not have identical experiences but they share relational variants. The habitus can give birth to the integration of common experiences, but personal and individual differences arise. Ultimately, for Bourdieu (1977), the habitus served as a structure to unite these experiences into some position such as class. He contended that the hallmark of practice is when something is performed through the body, in a socially constructed space, to embody the structures of the world. As such, agents must abandon notions of simple freedom or determinism. The practices of such habitus are self-regulated by the agents, and these practices are developed to cope with unforeseen circumstances. Bourdieu (1977) reasoned that agents are unconscious of these practices since the habitus is hidden under its subjective nature. Habitus creates a commonsense world, and this theory provides the framework to analyze how actors perform within the structures of habitus. This process is bidirectional, as agents are not only influenced by the structure but influence the structure as well (Bourdieu, 1977). Within the habitus, agents are constantly remaking their practices, conditions, and the self (Skeggs, 2004).

Bourdieu (1977) challenged stagnant views of culture and institutional structure by noting that culture constantly changes (Holland et al., 1998). While an institution, like the charter school, might create behavioral expectations, these moments of constraint, caused by expectations are not fully actualized until an entire interaction is complete. In simpler terms, no

matter how much ritual is involved, an agent still has control and agency in how they choose to meet or resist expectations (Bourdieu, 1977). Covert forms of agency are introduced by Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of the rules of the game and playing the game. The "rules of the game" are the cultural and social expectations created by the habitus, but agents might consciously play by the rules in order to participate or survive in a system of power (Smitherman, 2000). In doing so, playing the game becomes a performance of power and a critical perpetuation of the process of inculcation (Bourdieu, 1977). At times, there might be more to gain by obeying a rule or practice than resisting it, and it is in the best interest of the agent to obey the rule. As long as playing the game is not the normalized practice, and the agent is conscious of their agency, then they retain power (Bourdieu, 1977).

Under the new labor conditions created by neoliberal reform and charter schools, teachers can have agency, power, and serve their own interests by engaging in serious games as they pursue educational projects under these new conditions (Ortner, 2006). Ortner provided more insight to the milieu involved in Practice Theory as subjects produce their world through practice (Ortner, 2006). Following this theory, the structures of the habitus direct players how to perform and act, however do not displace agency. Ortner (2006) focused on the agentic action that remakes social structure, and brings into focus more complex forms of social relations like power and subjectivity. To Ortner, the agent is always enmeshed within relations of power and inequality, which she felt was ignored by Bourdieu (1977).

In serious games, social life is seen as something that is always played, according to cultural goals, and focuses on complex forms of social relations like relations of power (Ortner, 2006). Ortner (2006) problematized agentic action and recognized its limits. She argued that agents are always involved in social relations and can never act outside the relations with which

they are enmeshed. With this idea, all agents or social actors have the potential for agency, but, while they are engaged with others in the act of serious games, it is impossible to imagine them as completely free (Ortner, 2006). In serious games, power trumps acts of social solidarity (Ortner, 2006). While agency is universal, it is also culturally and historically constructed, so at different points in time it could look different.

Further complicating the education world, much like neoliberalism, the concept of flexible capitalism refers to the economic transformations that hit the U.S. between the 1970's and 1990's. Flexible capitalism introduced new forms of production, exchange, and human resources to change the structure of the workplace (Snyder, 2016). A tenet of flexible capitalism is that it focuses on uprooting the traditional chain of production, much like how the introduction of charter schools uprooted traditional systems of education with the introduction of competition and educational marketplace. This phenomenon is the work of the elites and policymakers in order to innovate and promote the abstract over the concrete (Snyder, 2016). New ways of production that can adapt and re-tool to an ever dynamic economy are promoted, with the intent to push out the old way of doing things (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005; Cappelli, 1995).

I can tie flexible capitalism's concept of core employees to Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital as well as habitus. Employers invest a lot of capital into their core employees—permitting them perceived decision-making power. However, core employees are presented with this illusion of autonomy so they will align with the company's mission and work towards it. This creates a habitus where overworking is the norm and a sign of dedication. In the charter school, the same culture is created where the expectation is workaholism and teachers feel judged when they do not conform to this standard (Singer, 2020). Adding to this burden, the flexibility of actual work stuff has changed. In a world where a work project can be completed

virtually or on a computer screen, this means workers can take work with them wherever they go and that becomes the expectation (Snyder, 2016). Work time is no longer confined to space but is subjective, and is a form of social time. Snyder (2016) defined social time as the rhythms humans create as they interact in social institutions. This could be compared to the habitus or ways of being that are created within the space of a charter school. However, since work time now extends to projects outside the confines of the space of the charter school, teachers are constrained as they now have work invade multiple social spaces or fields.

While other scholars have taken up Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, there is a gap in the literature surrounding Practice Theory and techniques teachers develop to remain in the field and the educational process, and, undoubtedly, a hole when it comes to the charter school setting. In educational research, the majority of literature centers around Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction and the role of habitus in socially constructed realities. Practice Theory can help teachers become aware of how the field and habitus create social norms, and that they have agentive action to change and disrupt these norms from within. Other education scholars have dismissed Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, found the concept of habitus incoherent, and have argued that it is unhelpful in educational research (Beckman et al., 2018; Sullivan, 2002). Sullivan (2002) contended that the concept of habitus is incoherent and too nebulous and ambiguous. What this ignores is the possibility for habitus to be a valuable tool for teachers in making institutional changes from within, and the agency that they possess to do so. Like Sullivan, Beckman, et al. (2018) viewed Practice Theory as a challenge for educational researchers, as its methodology is difficult to comprehend. These authors saw value in using Practice Theory as a new approach to investigating technology practice across students' lives. However, this research only incorporated Practice Theory as it relates to students. It has been

proposed that a discourse between Practice Theory and Critical Race Theory⁴ (CRT) is needed to study inequities in education, as CRT has never fully engaged with Practice Theory (Tichavakunda, 2019). Tichavakunda (2019) found value in Practice Theory's use in educational research in that it can inform CRT, and open up possibilities for discourse between other theories and CRT to better understand racialized realities of education.

Just as Practice Theory is valuable to understand the realities of students, it is also for teachers. As noted, Bourdieu contended that the hallmark of practice is when something is performed through the body, and my research will illustrate how teaching and institutional practices become embodied practice. More time is spent in practice than actually in the social world, and I propose that my research might illustrate the burden of spending more time with the field of institutional politics rather than in the field of the classroom.

Through Practice Theory, how individual sense-making is developed is deconstructed, and this can be utilized as counternarrative. Broadly, this application introduces a new approach to considering educational policies through the bodies and fields of women teachers. Snyder (2016) argued that good work and a good life might be difficult to reckon in an era of flexible capitalism. With this in mind, I argue that resisting the charter school field might not result in overt acts of violent opposition, still may contribute to institutional projects, but agentive resistance can be minimal and transformative if teachers analyze all projects for which they are a part (Ortner, 2006). Teachers may be creative with their resistance by having a trusted mentor, choosing to independently alter their curriculum, or simply stopping work at the end of their paid

⁴ Critical Race Theory in education places both race and racism in historical and modern contexts through interdisciplinary methods. This theory challenges the discourse on race in education by analyzing how education theory, policy, and practice have been used to marginalize certain ethnic and racial groups (Teranishi, 2010).

work hours. These covert ways disrupt oppressive power structures and creating possibilities for new structures.

My research will represent an important counternarrative to the literature, which characteristically focuses on policy, culture, or students; not the individuals who teach in schools. For women, academic work is emotional labor (Cummins & Huber, 2022; Selberg, 2020). Furthermore, our understanding of the realities of surviving in a charter school, controlled by neoliberal policies that impact teacher experience and practice, is expanded. Scholars have suggested that charter schools fail to take advantage of their autonomy when it comes to practice, and there is a trend toward standardization of practice rather than innovation in charter schools (Hubbard & Kulkami, 2009). This indicates that Practice Theory is well-suited to analyze outlying incidents of autonomy in the field. Analyzing Practice Theory has the potential to offer insights into how women charter school teachers could uphold legitimacy and resilience in the field. It can also spotlight how teachers comprehend their roles within the charter school domain, potentially fostering retention, as well as reconfiguring and challenging the embodiment of policies and the structures of educational work.

While few scholars take up Practice Theory (1977) with arts-based (ABR), narrative, or autoethnographic methods, there is a natural connection to Bourdieu and arts-based methodologies. Some researchers in the arts utilize Practice Theory to explain how practice is embodied (e.g. Banks, 2012; Rimmer, 2017), and I argue that methods like autoethnography, narrative, and ABR viscerally capture the experiences and practice of actors (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). Some researchers have used Practice Theory in conjunction with ethnographic methods (e.g. Ghaffari et al., 2019; Thomas & Epp, 2019; Svensson, 2007), and these studies noted that

ethnography is a method well-suited to work with Practice Theory to capture the culture and social ways of being in a particular field (Hackley, 2019).

ABR used in tandem with Practice Theory relies on the embodied exploration of social practices, and performance methods embody and bring to life the practice that is the phenomenon of research (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). Narrative and autoethnographic methods also reveal cultural meaning and values and how these are negotiated in the field of study. Ultimately, these methods, when paired with Practice Theory, can offer a creative way to examine the complexities of social life and how practices are shaped by culture and power (Hui, 2015).

Research Questions

The purpose of my dissertation is to explore the habits and enduring patterns created by neoliberal structures that dictate how women teachers should behave within the culture of a charter school and uncover how my participants resist and describe their own resiliency within the charter school institution. Specifically, my work is grounded in the assumption that teacher success in the labor force is inhibited by institutional rules that are ultimately harmful, and cause teachers to leave the field of teaching (Boe et al., 1997; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Peske et al., 2001; Standeven, 2022; Wenk & Rosenfeld, 1992). To critique the culture of charter schools, and to interrogate systemic inequities I will explain how Practice Theory can add insight to the education process, and how agents have the possibility to change their habitus and resist (Bourdieu, 1977). I want to uncover what hidden rules are deposited into teachers and how teachers might resist these rules and alter their habitus. The research questions that will guide this dissertation include the following:

1. How can documentary narrative analysis be used to allow a researcher, with insider knowledge, to give voice to the stories of participants, in order to examine the neoliberal structures, inherent in charter schools, that create a habitus?
2. How did I use agentic action, as a woman teacher, to remake the social structure of the charter school institution?
3. Do women teachers resist the hidden rules of the charter school institution? If so, how?
4. How do women who work as charter school teachers describe the techniques they have developed to in order to remain working as teachers?

This application will add nuance to the current research landscape, but on a broader level it introduces a new approach to considering educational policies through the bodies and fields of women teachers. This approach has the potential to provide insights into how women charter school teachers might maintain resilience in the field, and highlight the ways in which teachers who have become disillusioned with the field can make sense of their role within the charter school field which could lead to retention in the field, and recreation and disruption of ways of policy embodiment.

Philosophical Commitments

My epistemological and ontological beliefs are influenced by the concept that power pervades every level of social relationships (Barker & Jane, 2016). My work utilizes both critical and post-structuralist paradigmatic orientations (Harris, 2001). I adopt these orientations because many critical post-structuralists acknowledge that policy does impact gender and racial groups (e.g., Bohrer, 2019; Foley, 2019; Harris, 2001), and recognize neoliberalism as manifestation of power (Apple, 2012; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). Particularly, critical researchers view

research as a vehicle for empowerment and social change (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011), and Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) pose a call to action that researchers must resist neoliberalism. I do seek to empower women charter school teachers, but I know that I will not be bias free because this work is inspired by my own teaching experiences.

I take the ontological stance that there is no objective truth and any supposed truth contains contradictions (Sipe & Constable, 1996). Epistemologically, I believe that reality is subjective and constructed on the basis of issues of power, and it is, ultimately, unknowable. I do not abandon critique, and ultimately know that discourse, particularly my discourse, is inseparable from myself as a researcher. My discourse is vulnerable and contingent upon time and place. Adopting this orientation is most appropriate for this research as I seek to construct meaning through reflexivity toward my experiences and those of my participants, and I wish to make meaning from these experiences to decipher how participants viewed occurrences (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005). I also accept that conversations with participants are incomplete and partial (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011).

Language is systematized by structuralism, but my focus is not on the structure but upon what is left over, which can birth to readers garnering their own interpretations from participant stories (Lather, 1992). As my methodology involves interviewing, my belief that the charter school institution is harmful will be ever-present. Having, myself, been oppressed by power in the charter system, it is impossible to mask my values as a researcher, and they are always present in my work. I am not neutral. As a former woman charter school teacher, I attempted to recreate my social world and resist the culture of the charter school institution, both consciously and unconsciously. I also left the charter school field because I felt it harmed my development as an educator, so this certainly is a bias I possess. I accept that my experiences and feelings toward

the charter school institution will influence my research. Personally, I feel some guilt leaving the charter school teaching field, because of the students I left behind. I entered the field thinking this would be my lifetime craft, and when I faced challenges I left. Maybe to alleviate my own guilt, I pursue this work to change conditions so that women teachers do not have to feel beholden by institutional structures, can perform their craft, and will remain in the field.

In my research, my aim is not to diagnose or prescribe a problem because I do not believe in an absolute truth or solution. Rather, I will provide a conduit to share the experiences of those who have worked in the charter school culture. My hope is to share stories that others might find connection to or help them reflexively explore their own realities within the charter school institution.

My critical leanings recognize that the values of the researcher are present, I know this will influence the research. Most importantly, this paradigm examines systems of power and I will explore the realities of these teachers within the cultural context of the charter school. Like Vennes (2022), Brunner (2003), and Buras (2011), I strongly believe that charter school institutions are patriarchal in nature and their very existence and rhetoric, used within these spaces, is rooted in power and domination.

Manuscript Overviews

I will complete a three manuscript dissertation (see Appendix A for individual manuscript details), and what follows outlines my methodological considerations for each manuscript. Details of each manuscript are followed by my positionality. Collectively, I use general qualitative research methods because I am seeking to explore a topic of inquiry through conducting social research (Saldaña, 2011), and I believe in multiple truths (Sipe & Constable, 1996). I use interviewing and journaling as the data collection methods across all manuscripts,

both because of their appropriateness and they are the data collection methods with which I have the most experience. Interviewing is well-suited to answer my research questions, as I want to understand how the participants themselves describe their resiliency and experiences. In the past I have conducted over 22 interviews with marginalized populations, and have been able to reflect on my practice and learn from previous interviews to improve my interview style. I value listening and connection with participants (Roulston, 2010), and interviewing captures a true picture of the experiences of my participants and the culture of the charter school setting.

Manuscript 1

The purpose of this study is to explore a methodological and analysis technique that allows a researcher, with insider knowledge of their participants, to share their stories to empower (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). I ground this work in the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu's Practice Theory (1977) and Ortner's (2006) serious games. In my own research experience, I have been forced to follow traditional ways of research where I must follow a specific format, impose my interpretations upon data to conduct an analysis, and have been told that narrative or "newer" methodologies (e.g. autoethnography, poetry, or ethnodrama) are not rigorous. Because I believe that there are no objective truths, I do not deem that researchers need to provide a discussion of an analysis (Cook & Bublit, 2023). I present the usefulness of using a documentary narrative analysis, formed from narrative methods, in order to attempt to inspire change and empower my participants. Furthermore, this approach expands understanding of the realities of surviving in a charter school, controlled by neoliberal policies and tenets of capitalism that impact teacher experience and practice (Boe et al., 1997; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Peske et al., 2001; Wenk & Rosenfeld, 1992). The research question that guides this study is as follows: How can documentary narrative analysis be used to allow a researcher, with insider

knowledge, to give voice to the stories of participants, in order to examine the neoliberal structures, inherent in charter schools, that create a habitus?

I begin with a review of literature that highlights neoliberal reform efforts that alter educational work (Olsen & Anderson, 2007), the structure of charter schools, and flexible capitalism and its impact on core employees and work time (Snyder, 2016). Next, a presentation of the theoretical framework of Practice Theory and serious games provide the lens and foundation by which to understand the habitus and enduring patterns created by school institutions that dictate how women teachers should behave within the culture of a charter school. I follow this with a description of my documentary narrative methodology and analysis, and conclude that this is a valuable tool when conducting research with participants with whom I share knowledge. I conclude with my findings and a discussion rooted in how researchers may use this methodology to subvert the tradition set forth by the academy and to consider how educational policies manifest in the bodies and fields of women teachers.

Methodology

I used narrative methodologies and my own background in documentary film to build a framework I label documentary narrative (Cook & Bublitz, 2023). I did so to help explore how my participants might describe the impact of neoliberal structures on their work habitus.

I interviewed two women charter school teachers from the Southeast United States. I label my sampling as critical opportunistic (Miles et al., 2020). I taught in the school site and worked with the teachers that were interviewed. I had easy access to these teachers and my prior knowledge of their experiences fits well with my purpose. Both participants have taught English language arts for at least three years in the charter school setting. My participants both worked in a 6-12 Title I charter school. I interviewed each participant twice using an interview guide where

I asked them about the rules that govern their practice, how they remained resilient in the teaching field, and how they were supported by administrators. In addition to interviewing, I engaged in deep hanging out, when the researcher spends time with participants in informal settings to lessen the role of being an outsider (Geertz, 1998; Woodward, 2008). To do so, I immersed myself in my participants' culture, observed participants in informal settings outside of the charter school, attended after-school happy hours, and engaged in short phone and text message exchanges. I recognize the limitations of the selection in that my familiarity with the site and participants brings with it multiple assumptions and *a priori* knowledge to the work. My tacit and external cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1980) of the school site precludes the ability to note unfamiliar patterns of behavior. It is important for ethnographers to recognize how personal experience is important in the process and that it can often be misused. Personal experience should not distract from the ethnographic story, but enhance (Lassiter, 2005). In order to gain better context of the participants' culture, I collected charter school employee handbooks, notes and texts written to me by the participants, photographs, and engaged in reflexive journaling. Through these methods, I was able to gain further contextualization of the experiences of my participants.

Documentary Narrative.

In narrative, the sharing of stories by participants conveys knowledge that is embodied within individuals and the cultures of which they are a part (Clandinin et al., 2013). Further, narrative methods seek to provide deep descriptions of participant experiences as well as the meaning that an individual gained from their experiences (Wang & Geale, 2015).

Documentary narratives are written or visual adaptations of research data in film form (Cook & Bublitz, 2023). Performance challenges researchers to review their data and select the

best medium (e.g. film, documentary, television, ethnodrama) to tell their story (Saldaña, 2003). However, the process for creating documentary narratives from data is significantly different than creating narratives, as what works in narrative structure might not work in documentary structure. This documentary narrative structure worked for my study because it did not demand significant adaptation, where I might have been tempted to overly color the story with my own experiences. This structure, like a documentary film, presents my participants' words directly without edits or distortion (Menning & Murris, 2023). There are technical writing elements (Eisner, 2001) necessary for critical artistic analysis. Such elements include story lining, shot descriptions, character development, scripting, and visual aesthetics.

In research, the use of narrative, specifically documentary narrative, permits the researcher to embrace uncertainty and ethically share participant stories with the mask of characters, camera shots, and visual descriptions (Given, 2008; Saldaña, 2003). These analyses see truth as subjective and are vehicles to present complex stories with wider social ramifications that could inspire change for the readers or audience. While data does not speak for itself, this is queered in documentary narratives, as I must ponder who the story belongs to, and characters may speak for themselves (Saldaña, 2003). Therefore, while research reflexivity is crucial it is unnecessary in the final product because the story belongs to the participant (Saldaña, 2003). Traditional forms of qualitative analysis, like coding or thematic analysis, might force data into themes and categories inevitably influenced by the researcher, to help avoid this documentary narrative captures and presents the data as it occurred in its original form. While technical elements are added, they serve to enhance the story and add cinematic effect (Saldaña, 2003). This method also recognizes that there can never be a finite representation of the data (Denzin, 2013), and what is presented is just a snapshot in time. It is my intention with this new

framework to reveal how researchers, with insider status and external cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1980), can approach working with a population with whom they are familiar.

Analysis

I first read through all of my interview transcripts without the aid of additional literature, and set aside my research question. I drew upon MacRae's (2021) work and approached my analysis as watching the data to see rather than just reading. My focus was to look at it holistically, and entangle myself in it to allow the words of my participants to transform my thinking and inspire thought (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015; MacLure, 2013; MacLure et al., 2010). This also put me in a position where I no longer held control of the data, rather the transcripts guided my thinking and analysis. The data was not inert but alive (Menning & Murris, 2023). In my second cycle of entanglement with the data, I read for inflection and emotional emphasis from my participants, of which I was not previously attuned. In my third engagement, I imagined how that might be presented in documentary form. Finally, I analyzed the data to reimagine the whole of my data as an individual with whom I was conducting a documentary film interview. With this new orientation, I was forced to listen to participant words, reflect on my own responses and connections to their stories, and reconceptualize what my participants were trying to tell me in order to craft a collective character to represent both Emma and Kameron (Saldaña, 2003). Paradigmatically, this approach to analysis aligns with my beliefs because I value combining multiple ways of knowing in research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002).

After my entanglements with the data, I began to craft the documentary "character" of Maisy, in order to further bring life to the data. Maisy is solely based upon the actual personalities of my participants, and represents the data set as a whole (Saldaña, 2003). Although

characters might be a new re-imagining of an individual, Maisy's dialogue is a reflection of my participants' actual words.

As a former documentary filmmaker, it is not random that I am drawn to this method and analysis. It aligns with the cinema vérité film style, and promotes embodied analysis (Cook & Bublitz, 2023; Menning & Murriss, 2023). Cinema vérité documentary attempts to cast light on dark places, in my research the habitus of the charter school, by only portraying reality and avoiding editorializing (Barnouw, 1993). Much like critical research, cinema vérité practitioners view this method as a vehicle for empowerment and social change (Barnouw, 1993; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). This style does not view the camera, or in this case me, as a device that inhibits humans. Rouch, one of the fore-fathers of this cinematic style in documentary, believed that the camera made people act in ways truer to their nature (Barnouw, 1993; Menning & Murriss, 2023). In my work, my shared experience with the participants made them vulnerable and comfortable to chronicle their experiences in the charter school, and while I believe truth is elusive I do think my participants were transparent in what they revealed (Sipe & Constable, 1996). I know taking the orientation of a cinema vérité documentarian allows me to reorient myself and play the role of filmmaker. By approaching the data as a documentarian, I am able to embrace uncertainty. With this analysis, I hope that one can understand the complicated relationship I had with my data as a researcher.

Entering my data collection process, I was fixated on following my interview guide, and constantly found myself recollecting my own personal knowledge of working in the charter school. Rather than actually listening to my participants, I became preoccupied with seeing my own experience reflected in their stories. While I do not proclaim an overall message that one should garner from this analysis, because the beauty of art or documentary is that readers form

their own interpretations (Saldaña, 2003), I do hope that a reader realizes that the habitus of the charter school constrained and caused harm to my participants.

I deliberately chose to include long passages from the transcripts in my analysis because I did not want my participants' stories to be edited. I chose not to edit language or words, but have reordered blocks of my participants' words to form a more linear story (Saldaña, 2003). To attend to documentary script form, I took some creative liberties by including shot descriptions that capture the emotion, stage directions to capture moments of reflection, and scene locations to give the reader a better picture of where my participants were located during our time (Eisner, 2001). As an added safety measure, the act of presenting data as a performance can serve as a shield, and present participant experiences in a form that avoids jeopardizing their safety and current positions (Chugani, 2016). I crafted my findings as a new configuration of the data in the form of a documentary script.

Manuscript 2

With this autoethnographic research, I explore the habits and enduring patterns created by school institutions, rooted in neoliberal reforms and Practice Theory (Bourdieu, 1977), that dictate how women teachers should behave within the culture of a charter school. The purpose of this research is to show how the hidden rules of the charter school habitus were deposited into me as a teacher and how I resisted these rules and altered my habitus. The specific research question that guides this study is as follows: How did I use agentic action, as a woman teacher, to remake the social structure of the charter school institution?

Methodology

I engaged in autoethnographic research. I wrote from my own perspective (Ellis, 2004; Fraser & MacDougall, 2017), and autoethnography is a method that values subjectivity and self-

expression (Pitre et al., 2013). This is an appropriate conduit for my story and research, as it allowed me the space to express my story, and provide readers with a singular case study to convey the embodied knowledge of one woman in a charter school setting (Clandinin et al., 2013). In general, autoethnography is a personal form of writing and research that uncovers the researcher's unconscious and connects the personal to the cultural and political (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Through this methodology, I used self-reflection and writing to explore my personal experiences in connection to broader political, cultural, and social meaning.

Additionally, autoethnographers demand the intertwining of theory and story—theories are not simply adopted for the purposes of fitting a story; rather, theory provides a framework to reflect upon and analyze a personal experience (Bochner, 2012; Bochner & Riggs, 2014; Jones, 2016). As such, autoethnography becomes a mechanism by which to illustrate the nuances of theory where the body rather than analysis is an agent in making meaning. Spry (2009) suggested that autoethnographic story comes from a critically reflexive location, and personal story permits researchers the reflexivity to think critically about truth, to contextualize the personal, and to center their own epistemologies and ontologies, all necessary concomitants in the construction of meaning (Ellis, 2004; Hughes & Pennington, 2017).

Autoethnography illuminates a rich diversity of voice and story, especially those representing marginalized experiences, and story permits the author to reveal hidden details and foregrounds emotional experiences to challenge the tradition of social science (Bochner & Riggs, 2014). Although history is hegemonic in that it is primarily written by the victors, autoethnography's capacity to link experience with institutions, and thus the personal with the political, foregrounds the perspectives of the oppressed and makes space for important analyses of existing power relations.

Certainly, there is danger in the institutionalization of a single story, as those characteristically legitimate master narratives at the expense of marginal perspectives that are effectively disempowered and made illegitimate. In contrast, multiple perspectives are emphasized in autoethnography, and these perspectives can increase understanding and empower (Jones, 2016), thus disrupting the status quo and, through disruption, restoring agency and dignity. Furthermore, although autoethnography is inherently personal, its positioning is not authoritative; rather, it facilitates experiential meaning-making and readers have the agency to determine if a story speaks to them and provide theoretical validation by comparing their lives to the author (Ellis, 2004; Spry, 2011). I used this method to express my own embodiment and attempt to make meaning and recreate my habitus as a means of resistance.

Methods

Regarding specific methods, I generated a research journal, based upon past journals, that outline my own traumatic experiences and those working in a charter school. Within this journal, I relay events, which were anonymized⁵, emotional ties to such events, past experiences, and general positional commitments. In order to validate and triangulate this data, I gathered additional artifacts to help check my story. These artifacts include daily planners kept from 2002-2018, social media posts on Facebook, conversations between trusted friends via Facebook Messenger and Google Chat, a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* where I document instances of physical abuse, and old diaries. These artifacts aid in situating the truth within my data, and it is important to provide representations of multiple sources (Denzin, 1978). In order to protect myself, I choose not to conduct member checks so as not to re-traumatize myself nor my student (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). I acknowledge that there are no innocent representations

⁵ All names used in my story are pseudonyms to protect the identities of any individuals to whom I refer.

since all are organized within relations of power (Adams St. Pierre, 1999). Once the reflective journal was generated, I searched for themes and wrote my story.

Analysis

My process of data analysis occurred through the writing process (Adams St. Pierre, 1999). As I wrote, autoethnography allowed me to be reflexive. The thinking that occurred while writing, produced the analysis because this is an entangled process where I connected personal experiences to broader cultural themes within the charter school (Adams St. Pierre, 1999; Guttorm et al., 2015). Haddix (2015) claimed that our words and stories are legitimate sources of knowledge. I approached my analysis in a way that showcases my story in order to bring into view conditions that shaped my experiences and gave rise to my agency, voice, and reflexivity (Pitre et al., 2013). Within my story, I identified themes and opted to include vignettes of my story that exemplified each theme. In manuscript two, I detail the following thematic elements, paying particular attention to how these themes manifest in the personal narratives I share. The major themes that emerged in the writing of my story are as follows:

- 1) Hiding: describes my experience conforming to the habitus created that was intertwined with a culture of secrecy and avoidance.
- 2) Resistance: describes my way of resisting an oppressive habitus in attempt to recreate and remake it.
- 3) Coping: describes the ways, both healthy and unhealthy, in which I attempted to cope with my current habitus in order to survive.

To illustrate each of these themes, I included vignettes of my story, which are accompanied by my own analysis of the happenings. I intentionally chose to include stories from my young adulthood to provide a holistic view of how I developed across a lifespan, how the habitus

influenced me across different social worlds (Baker-Bell, 2017), and the individual experiences I brought to the habitus. These vignettes are followed by my analytical interpretation of the contents. I do so in an effort to both showcase the story, as well as position it within the larger research and theoretical landscape.

Manuscript 3

With this final manuscript, I explore how women teachers within the charter school system describe their coping techniques to remain resilient and survive working in the charter school culture. The purpose of this study is to uncover how teachers within the charter school system describe their own resiliency, specifically, two women teaching at a charter school in the Southeast United States. Techniques for resiliency are generally defined as any practice or support that aides a teacher in developing a teacher identity and remaining in the charter school field. The research questions that guide this study are as follows: How do women who work as charter school teachers describe the techniques they have developed in order to remain in the field?; and Do women teachers resist the hidden rules of the charter school institution, and if so, how?

Methodology

I used ethnodrama (Given, 2008; Saldaña, 2003) with interviewing and deep hanging out (Geertz, 1998) as the research data collection methods.

Participants

My population consists of two women charter school teachers in the Southeast United States, with at least three years teaching experience. I label my sampling as critical opportunistic (Miles et al., 2020). I taught in the school site and worked with the teachers that were interviewed. I had easy access to these teachers and my prior knowledge of their experiences fits

well with my purpose. I have obtained a consent form for each of the two participants in the study, and this study has received Institutional Review Board approval.

Inclusion criteria for this study includes the following: participants must have at least three years teaching experience, identify as a woman, taught in a charter school, and live in the Southeast United States. There were no exclusion criteria outside of those created through the existence of inclusion criteria.

Participant one, Kameron Freeman⁶, has been teaching for eight years, five within the charter school setting. She has taught 5th, 6th, and 8th grades and all content areas. She is a straight, white, cisgender woman. Participant two, Emma Granger⁷, has been teaching for four years, all of these years teaching 6th grade English language arts in the charter school setting. Like Freeman, she is a straight, white, cisgender woman. Both participants identify as Christian in their religious beliefs, and have experienced what it is like to teach in the charter school setting, which is the experience which I want to explore (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021).

Setting

The school site where my participants worked is a Title I charter school in a Southern metro area of the United States. The School⁸ is a 6-12 charter school. The new school flooded with natural light and freshly painted walls is filled with about 700 students. Of these students, the majority are Black and share the same zip code with the school. The inviting, modern look of the school is in sharp contrast with the rigid management culture. Students line the hallways, with two feet placed in each tile square, and silently transition between classes as talking is not

⁶ A pseudonym to protect the identity of the participant.

⁷ A pseudonym to protect the identity of the participant.

⁸ A pseudonym.

permitted. A large administrative team manages student behavior through a merit and demerit system.

Data Collection

I conducted scheduled interviews via Zoom, and developed an interview guide, but focused on the words of the teachers so they could guide the conversation. I conducted two 45-60 minute interviews with each participant, for a total of 195 minutes of interview data. After interviews, I journaled to practice reflexivity and note my subjectivities. However, I resisted trying to divorce myself from our previous relationship, and this permitted me to be my authentic self in our interviews, which put both myself and my participants more at ease (Roulston, 2010).

Prior to interviewing the teachers, I worked in the school setting alongside the teachers, so I possess knowledge of the culture and have previous relationships with the teachers. I engaged in deep hanging out, when the researcher spends time with participants in informal settings to lessen the role of being an outsider (Geertz, 1998; Woodward, 2008). To do so, I immersed myself in my participants' culture, observed participants in informal settings outside of the charter school, attended after-school happy hours, and engaged in short phone and text message exchanges. I recognize the limitations of the selection in that my familiarity with the site and participants brings with it multiple assumptions and *a priori* knowledge to the work. Conducting fieldwork and interviews in a place we know is problematic. My tacit and external cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1980) of the school site precludes the ability to note unfamiliar patterns of behavior. It is important for ethnographers to recognize how personal experience is important in the process and that it can often be misused. Personal experience should not distract from the ethnographic story, but enhance (Lassiter, 2005). In order to gain better context of the participants' culture and mitigate previous connections, I collected charter school employee

handbooks, notes and texts written to me by the participants, photographs, and engaged in reflexive journaling. Through these methods, I was able to gain further contextualization of the experiences of my participants.

Analysis

Finally, in order to shift my role from a researcher to a dramatist and to share my participants' experiences with an audience (Grbich, 2013), I created an ethnodramatic performance as my primary method of analysis. Ethnodrama is a written adaptation of research data in a play script (Given, 2008; Saldaña, 2003, 2005). With this form of analysis, while research reflexivity is crucial it is unnecessary in the final product because the story belongs to the participant (Saldaña, 2003). I acknowledge that it is not entirely their story, as I selected interview quotes to use, but I did not edit their words and only reconstructed them to form a more linear story (Saldaña, 2003). Traditional forms of qualitative analysis, like coding or thematic analysis, might force data into themes and categories inevitably influenced by the researcher, to help avoid this ethnodrama captures and presents the data as it occurred in its original form. While theatrical elements are added, they serve to enhance the story and add dramatic effect (Saldaña, 2003). This method also recognizes that there can never be a finite representation of the data (Denzin, 2013), and what is presented is just a snapshot in time.

In the following section, I detail my method of analysis. I developed themes that manifest in the words of my participants and provided insights to their personal experiences.

The ethnodrama script is based upon the major themes that manifested throughout ethnodrama creation. The first theme refers to charter school teachers not receiving enough encouragement in the culture of a charter school. In the artifacts, participants noted feeling trusted, seen, spoiled, and safe as positive aspects and factors that contributed to being

encouraged. However, there are contradictions that emerged, where if these needs are not met, it may lead to feeling harmed, forced to treat students poorly, and not feeling safe enough for teachers to be their authentic self.

The second theme describes both the fruitful elements of feeling supported and developing a friendship with a teacher mentor. However, this relationship is complicated. At times, a mentoring relationship can feel collaborative, but also demeaning to the mentee.

The final theme describes the burden and expectations inflicted on participants as a result of teaching in a charter school. The very specific teaching practices of a charter school could be an aid to new teachers or could feel evaluative and intimidating. To illustrate each of these themes, I outlined the process for presenting the data in dramatic form. Each of the aforementioned themes emerge in the ethnodrama through selected acts of the play performance.

I chose ethnodrama in order to further highlight the cultural aspects within the charter school my participants worked at and to spotlight participant perspectives (Given, 2008). As an added safety measure, the act of performance can serve as a shield, and present participant experiences in a form that avoids jeopardizing their safety and current positions (Chugani, 2016). Through using only the words of the participants, I prioritized dialogue in order to center perspectives that have been silenced in order to bring awareness and open up possibilities for change. As I analyzed the data using the previous methods, I found my participants expressed both changes in their own behavior and powerful stories that challenged beliefs about teaching and education (Grbich, 2013). Considering my paradigmatic leanings, research aims, and the belief that all truth is subjective, ethnodrama is an excellent vehicle to both present stories with wider social ramifications and inspire change in the audience (Given, 2008; Saldaña, 2005). Ethnodrama disrupts tradition and reaches a wider audience, as most individuals are not

reading academic journals, and through reaching an academic and general audience I engage in audience blurring (Barone, 2002). Most importantly, I recognize that the entirety of this work is inspired by my own experiences, and that will color the play, but will serve to empower teachers and audience members (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011).

Much like traditional research, playwrights must collect data in order to answer a question and the performance represents the findings (Salvatore, 2018). To engage in this analysis, first I developed a plot, centered around the three major themes. I returned to the interview transcripts and read through them to find particularly salient quotes that supported each of the themes. McCoy (2006) referred to this process as reinterviewing the transcript. By reinterviewing, I was able to understand the deeply personal and embodied experience of my participants and synthesize these experiences to highlight the charter school habitus. To prepare the quotes, I began merging them in a manner that made sense to be presented in a dialogical play format (Saldaña, 2003). As I engaged in this process, I struggled to determine from whose perspective the story would be told (Saldaña, 2003). As it is crafted, the audience is first introduced to Emma, but I also wanted equal representation of Kameron's voice. To ease this imbalance, I chose to craft this ethnodrama in four acts that include monologues from both Emma and Kameron as well as small group scenes spliced in between. While some context needs to be provided, I intentionally did not want to re-craft participant words. To accommodate this, I added the role of a narrator to provide an omniscient voice, and Saldaña (2003) suggested that the researcher must select their role in the play. Of course this brings the researcher into the play, but it aligns with my philosophical commitments because I know I cannot be neutral and Denzin (2017) called the creation of an ethnodrama a reflexive interview where both the researcher and participants are in dialogue and connected. I do acknowledge my researcher bias

does remain as I am the instrument and hold the power in selecting which words to use in the ethnodrama, and reorder participant words to form a more linear script (Saldaña, 2003). I do this in an effort to make the text accessible to the audience, and attempt to allow my own personal experience to only enhance and not distract from the ethnography (Lassiter, 2005).

I attend to traditional theatrical components by adding stage directions and minimal props. I include emotional descriptions in the stage directions that reflect the tone of my participants from our original interviews. I made the choice to keep the characters in the same costume throughout in order to focus on the story rather than distracting elements. I rely on lighting, PowerPoint slides, and music to indicate transition within the performance. I intentionally chose to use a typewriter font to further align with a traditional script format. Of import, the music selection was a song directly mentioned by Emma in the interview transcript. While I have critical intentions with this piece, I chose to play with the absurdity by introducing each act like a *Law and Order: SVU* episode. While this might seem antithetical to the serious message of my participants, it highlights the absurdity of charter school rules, expectations, and the lack of encouragement Emma and Kameron received.

In both interviews, Kameron and Emma reveal information about one another or interactions with students, where I could not gain the perspective of the other. While the interaction in Act I Scene II is not a realistic depiction, all of the words came from my participants. Emma expresses the complicated mentor relationship she has with Kameron, but shares that she would never express how Kameron actually makes her feel. I chose to portray this scene dramatically as I envision it might occur according to Emma's recollection of events. I made the choice in Act II Scene I to reveal Kameron's feelings of a successful mentor relationship, which differ from Emma's view, through the holiday card. While this card does not

exist in reality, it is completely crafted from Kameron's words from the transcript. Similarly, in Act III Scene II I want the audience to gain an understanding of Kameron's interaction with students and why she holds such strong beliefs around treating students with dignity. I did take liberties in crafting Kameron's monologue, but the majority of the words come from her transcript. The note from Mia is entirely fictional, but I base it on a story Kameron recollects about how she poorly handled a student interaction. Act III Scene is the turning point in this drama. I acknowledge that this interaction feels like a drastic shift for Kameron, but that is intentional. I want to convey how feelings change so much over the course of a school year, and show Kameron's humanity.

Positionality

As a self-identified critical post-structuralist, taking up Bourdieu's (1977) Practice Theory, aligns well with my philosophical beliefs. Although Bourdieu moved beyond the post-structural paradigm by challenging symbolic power, he was originally a part of the post-structuralist movement (Robson & Sanders, 2009). Bourdieu crafted his theories and work in opposition to staunch structuralist like Levi-Strauss (Grenfell, 1996). Despite not widely discussed alongside poststructuralists like Lacan, Derrida, and Foucault, Bourdieu and other poststructuralists are concerned with language and power. Like Bourdieu and these poststructuralists, I am not concerned with structure but upon what is left over, and this allows readers to form their own interpretations (Lather, 1992). Practice Theory (1977) also aligns with my own personal experiences in the charter school. I felt oppressed by power in the charter system, and felt as though I became indoctrinated to the determinant ways of being of the charter school culture through following rules. Despite coming to the charter school habitus with my own experiences, that certainly influenced my experience, the ways of being in the charter school

field became intertwined with my ways of being as I executed the charter school ways of being and these became so embedded in my body through practice.

Language is systematized by structuralism, but my focus is not on the structure but upon what is left over, which can birth to readers garnering their own interpretations from participant stories (Lather, 1992). As my methodology involves interviewing, my belief that the charter school institution is harmful will be ever-present. Having, myself, been oppressed by power in the charter system, it is impossible to mask my values as a researcher, and they are always present in my work. Scholars have suggested that charter schools fail to take advantage of their autonomy when it comes to practice, and there is a trend toward standardization of practice rather than innovation in charter schools (Hubbard & Kulkami, 2009). This indicates that Practice Theory is well-suited to analyze outlying incidents of autonomy in the field. Analyzing Practice Theory has the potential to spotlight how teachers comprehend their roles within the charter school domain, potentially fostering retention, as well as reconfiguring and challenging the embodiment of policies and the structures of educational work. Practice Theory tries to capture the situated location of humans as they work through seemingly everyday interactions in their social world (Hackley, 2019), and I work to achieve this by examining the work of teachers.

Personally, I had an immediate connection to Bourdieu's (1977) Practice Theory. I first developed this connection when reading Wacquant's (2004) work about how the habitus of a Chicago boxing gym provided the conditions for the athletes to develop their skill through practice, and how the ways of being in the gym created a habitus where practice was performed through the body. Immediately, I felt as though I finally had a theoretical construct that explained many of my actions in my own life. As a child my parents stressed the importance of keeping secrets, and this became habit and part of my daily practice. As a teen, I felt control and

safety in the habitus created by my karate studio, and embodying discipline and physical actions became habits through repeated practice through the body. As a teacher, methods from Lemov's (2015) *Teach Like a Champion 2.0*⁹, promoted by the administration of the charter school, had me physically embody and bring life to the charter school habitus. Very specific movements like tracking¹⁰, control the game¹¹, and strong voice¹² became embodied practice that developed into unconscious actions in this field.

While gender plays a significant role in my work, I do not label myself a feminist. This is important to note because I am not wholly epistemologically aligned with feminist scholars, and my work should not be interpreted as a feminist piece. While I agree with post-structural feminists in that gender is socially constructed, I do not align with most feminists. My epistemology differs from their knowledge building standpoint that the world should be viewed through the lens and experiences of oppressed women (Davies & Gannon, 2005). I also wish to provide a disclaimer regarding the participants of my study—women—and gender. I believe that gender is socially constructed (Tuerk et al., 2003) and too often society segregates by gender and applies fabricated gender norms (Jones et al., 2016). In western society, human actors produce the concept of gender and legitimize it (Lorber, 2013), and I believe confining individuals to gender labels and norms creates structured inequality (Lorber, 2013). When I refer to the

⁹ Doug Lemov is the author of *Teach Like A Champion* and *Teach Like A Champion 2.0*. These texts feature strategies, vocabulary, and practices employed by effective teachers observed by Lemov. *Teach Like A Champion* outlines 49 specific techniques teachers should use to prioritize rigor and what matters most in the classroom. Both texts are widely utilized among charter schools and new teacher professional development. Lemov works for Uncommon Schools, a nonprofit organization that manages K-12 charter schools in Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey.

¹⁰ Tracking is *Teach Like A Champion 2.0* technique #4. With this technique teachers are intentional about how they scan their classrooms in order to prevent distractions.

¹¹ Control the game is *Teach Like A Champion 2.0* technique #23. With this technique teachers ask students to read aloud frequently, but manage the process to ensure fluency, accountability, and engagement.

¹² Strong voice is *Teach Like A Champion 2.0* technique #56. With this technique teachers affirm authority through intentional verbal and nonverbal habits, especially at moments when control is needed.

“gendered” experience of teaching, I refer to the impacts on any individual who identifies as a woman (Catalpa & McGuire, 2018).

A tenet of my research is centering the voices of all marginalized groups, and I believe that truth in discourse is contingent upon the individual. I believe that any marginalized population—be it women, people of color, the queer community, or animals—deserve to have a place in research. I do align myself with feminist scholars like Mayo, Grumet, and Chernin, because I can personally identify with some of their claims.

Mayo (1999) argued that women disidentify with gender because they perceive the world as being post-gender. In forming identity, women experience disidentification because they feel old problems of gender do not exist. With this belief, disidentification denies and refuses to acknowledge history, but this is not false consciousness but merely a way of survival (Sculz, 2020). Women, who disidentify, blame harm on their own deficits. In my own experience, I disidentified and blamed poor working conditions or oppression within the school on my inadequacies as a teacher. As a result, I was unable to connect with my colleagues over shared experiences, and formed an identity against gender rather than combating power (Mayo, 1999; McClain & Cokley, 2017).

I also align with Grumet (1988), who posited that the structure of schools mimics the patriarchal structure of the family, and constrains the freedom of women. During my time as a middle school teacher and middle school administrator in a charter school I did not always feel as though I was supported, especially as a woman. As a teacher at the aforementioned school, I had three male administrators. My “coach” was one of these administrators. I could not describe our relationship as one of coach and coachee. A coach fosters the talents someone already has and motivates. A coach takes natural talent and shapes it. A coach is respected. A coach knows

they are only as successful as their players. My coach was more of a manager. He told me what to do and came into my classroom to check that I had completed his directives. He had a hidden list of rules, and, like a father, made sure I followed them.

Despite my distaste for these fatherly rules, I desperately sought to follow them and to be praised for doing so as a teacher. According to Chernin (1985), women recognize their mother's unfulfilled ambitions and lean to the patriarchy in an attempt to escape the maternal and make up for her mother's disappointments. By continuing to seek male or leadership approval at a school, women give consent to be dominated by the male patriarchy and assimilate to the dominant or required culture of the school.

My own mother is a former teacher, and, if I'm honest with myself, I never respected my mother. I thought she was a teacher because she liked kids, and I felt that she was good at teaching 8-year-olds how to do crafts but was not intelligent enough to be a scholar or to wrestle with the big ideas like I did. I thought she threw away her life when she left the teaching field upon my birth. I always viewed her as a bit of a freeloader. She had the benefit of my father's money and could just hang out at home doing nothing, I guess I forgot that she homeschooled me and cared for her father when he developed Alzheimer's. When she would tell me about her time in graduate school, I always thought she wasted her life, abandoned academia, and valuable work to just be a mother. The resentment I held toward my mother solidified my constant need for approval and workaholism.

Twenty years later and with adult eyes, I think my loathe for my mother has transformed to self-loathing. I set out to be the best teacher. I attended every professional development opportunity, engaged in research, and was determined to not just be a teacher but to be a teacher and scholar. I wanted to have quantifiable indicators of my success as a teacher and to be praised

by my administrators. Although I was a good teacher, I abandoned my craft. I stayed up until the wee hours of the morning crafting lesson and coaching plans, and never saw my partner and friends. Teaching was all-consuming and not sustainable. I see now that perhaps my mother left teaching for the same reasons I did, and this is why I engage in this work. I want teaching to be sustainable. Excellent educators should not feel as though their only option is to leave the classroom due to reforms, institutional rules, and exhaustion.

Please see Appendix A for individual manuscript details.

References

- Aalbers, M. B. (2012). Subprime cities and the twin crises. In M. B. Aalbers (Ed.) *Subprime cities: The political economy of mortgage markets*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Aalbers, M. B. (2013). Neoliberalism is dead...Long live neoliberalism! *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(3), 1083-1090.
- Adams St. Pierre, E. (1999). The work of response in ethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28(3), 266-287.
- Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., & Mazzeo, C. (2009). *The schools teacher leave*. University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Anderson, A., Thomas, M. A. M., & Brewer, T. J. (2022). Teach For America influence on non-TFA teachers in TFA-hiring schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 30(98), 1-26.
<https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.30.6163>
- Angrist, J. D., & Guryan, J. (2007). Does teacher testing raise teacher quality? Evidence from state certification requirements. *Economics of Education Review*, 27(2008), 483-503.
- Apple, M. W. (1993). The politics of official knowledge: Does a national curriculum make sense? *Teachers College Record*, 95(2), 222-241.
- Apple, M. W. (2012). Controlling the work of teachers. In M.W. Apple (author), *Knowledge, power, and education: The selected works of Michael W. Apple* (pp. 116-131). Routledge.
- Baker-Bell, A. (2017). For Loretta: A black woman literacy scholar's journey to prioritizing self-preservation and black feminist-womanist storytelling. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 49(4), 526-543.
- Banks, M. (2012). MacIntyre, Bourdieu and the practice of jazz. *Popular Music*, 31(1), 69-86.
- Barker, C., & Jane, E. A. (2016). *Cultural studies theory and practice* (5th ed.). Sage Publications

Inc.

Barnouw, E. (1993). *Documentary a history of the non-fiction film* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Barone, T. (2002). From genre blurring to audience blending: Reflections on the field emanating from an ethnodrama. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 33(2), 255-267.

Barone, T. & Eisner, E. W. (2012). *Arts based research*. Sage Publications.

Beckman, K., Apps, T., Bennett, S., & Lockyer, L. (2018). Conceptualising technology practice in education using Bourdieu's sociology. *Learning, Media, and Technology*, 43(2), 197-210.

Bendixen, L. D., Plachowski, T., & Olafson, L. (2022). Criticalizing teacher perceptions of urban school climate: Exploring the impact of racism and race-evasive culture in a predominately white teacher workforce. *Education and Urban Society*, 00(0), 1-26.

Berger, M. C., & Toma, E. T. (1994). Variation in state education policies and effects on student performance. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 13(3), 477-491.

Berkshire, J. C. (2021, September 10). Charter schools' scary future. *The New Republic*.
<https://newrepublic.com/article/163507/charter-schools-scary-future>

Betts, J. R., Zau, A. C., & Rice, L. A. (2003). *Determinants of student achievement: New evidence from San Diego*. Public Policy Institute of California.

Block, F., & Somers, M. R. (2014). *The power of market fundamentalism: Karl Polanyi's critique*. Harvard University Press.

Blount, J. (1999). Manliness and the gendered construction of school administration in the USA. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 2(2), 55-68.

Bochner, A. P. (2012). On first-person narrative scholarship: Autoethnography as acts of

- meaning. *Narrative Inquiry*, 22, 155-164.
- Bochner, A. P., & Riggs, N. A. (2014). Practicing narrative inquiry. In P. Leavy (Ed.). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 195-222). Oxford University Press.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (2016). *Evocative autoethnography writing lives and telling stories*. Routledge.
- Boe, E., Bobbitt, S. A., Cook, L. H., Whitener, S. D., & Weber, A. L. (1997). Why didst thou go? Predictors of retention, transfer, and attrition of special and general education teachers from a national perspective. *The Journal of Special Education*, 30, 390-411.
- Bohrer, A. J. (2019). Response to Barbara Foley's 'Intersectionality: A Marxist critique.' *New Labor Forum*, 28(3), 14-17.
- Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, E. (2005). *The new spirit of capitalism*. Verso.
- Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. (2008). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(3), 367-409.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1972).
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. University of Chicago Press.

- Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(2), 303-333.
- Brewer, T. J., Kretchmar, K., Sondel, B., Ishmael, S., & Manfra, M. (2016). Teach For America's preferential treatment: School district contracts, hiring decisions, and employment practices. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(15), 1-38.
<https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.24.1923>.
- Brunner, C. C. (2003). Invisible, limited, and emerging discourse: Research practices that restrict and/or increase access for women and persons of color to the superintendency. *Journal of School Leadership*, 13, 428-450.
- Buckley, J., Schneider, M., & Yi, S. (2004). *The effects of school facility quality on teacher retention urban school districts*. National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities.
- Buras, K. (2011). Race, charter schools, and conscious capitalism: On the spatial politics of whiteness as property (and the unconscionable assault on Black New Orleans). *Harvard Educational Review*, 81(2), 296-331.
- Buras, K. L. (2015). *Charter schools, race, and urban space: Where the market meets grassroots resistance*. Routledge.
- Cappelli, P. (1995). Rethinking employment. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 33(4), 563-602.
- Catalpa, J. M. & McGuire, J. K. (2018). Family boundary ambiguity among transgender youth. *Family Relations*, 67, 88-103. DOI:10.1111/fare.12304

- Cersonsky, J. (2013). The hidden truth behind Teach For America's political empire. *Salon*.
http://www.salon.com/2013/09/17/the_truth_behind_teach_for_americas_political_empire/
- Chernin, K. (1985). *The hungry self: Women, eating, and identity*. Times Books.
- Chubb, J. E., & Moe, T. M. (1990). *Politics, markets, and America's schools*. Brookings Institution.
- Chugani, C. D. (2016). Recovered voices: Experiences of borderline personality disorder. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(6), 1016-1034.
- Clandinin, D. J., Steeves, P., & Caine, V. (Eds.). (2013). *Composing lives in transition: A narrative inquiry into the experiences of early school leavers*. Emerald Group Publishing.
- Clifford, G. J. (2014). *Those good Gertrudes: A social history of women teachers in America*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Collins, K. M. (2014). A disability studies in education (DSE) analysis of corporate based educational reform: Lessons from New Orleans. In D. Connor, J. Valle, & C. Hale (Eds.), *Practicing disability studies in education: Acting toward social change* (pp. 217 – 233). Peter Lang Publishing.
- Cook, G. N., & Bublitz, S. R. (2023). The Ship of Theseus: Unsilencing and methodological considerations when working with queer populations. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, 12(4), 77-101.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell Báez, J. (2021). *30 essential skills for the qualitative researcher* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Cummins, M. W., & Huber, A. A. (2022). Documenting emotional labor: An exercise in critical communication pedagogy. *Journal of Autoethnography*, 3(2), 187-202.

- Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Vasquez Heilig, J. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13(42), 1-51.
- Davies, B., & Gannon, S. (2005). Feminism/Post-structuralism. In B. Somekh & C. Lewin (Eds.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 318-325). Sage.
- Del Ciello, D. (2016, January 20). Teach for America: Growing more diverse. *Education Week*.
<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/teach-for-america-growing-more-diverse>
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *Sociological methods: A sourcebook* (2nd ed.). McGraw Hill.
- Denzin, N. K. (2013). "The death of data?". *Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies*, 13(4), 353-356.
- Denzin, N. K. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry under fire: Toward a new paradigm dialogue*. Routledge.
- Diamond, J. B., & Gomez, K. (2004). African-American parents' education orientations: The importance of social class and parents' perceptions of schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 36(4), 383-427.
- Education Commission of the States. (2018). *Charter schools: Do teachers in a charter school have to be certified?* <https://ecs.secufo.force.com/mbdata/mbquestNB2C?rep=CS1720>
- Eisner, E. (2001). Concerns and aspirations for qualitative research in the new millennium. *Qualitative Research*, 1(2), 135-145.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I a methodological novel about autoethnography*. Alta Mira Press.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity:

- Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733-768). Sage.
- Fabricant, M., & Fine, M. (2012). *Charter schools and the corporate makeover of public education: What's at stake?* Teachers College Press.
- Feng, L. (2014). Teacher placement, mobility, and occupational choices after teaching. *Education Economics*, 22(1), 24-47.
- Fine, M., & Fox, M. (2013). Accountable to whom? A critical science counter-story about a city that stopped caring for its young. *Children and Society*, 27(2013), 321-335.
- Foley, B. (2019). Intersectionality: A Marxist critique. *New Labor Forum*, 28(3), 10-13.
- Fraser, H. & MacDougall, C. (2017). Doing narrative feminist research: Intersections and challenges. *Qualitative Social Work*, 16(2), 240-254.
- Fry, S. (2009). Characteristics and experiences that contribute to novice elementary teachers' success and efficacy. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 36(2), 95-110.
- Gabor, A. (2013, September 20). The great charter tryout: Are New Orleans's schools a model for the nation—or a cautionary tale? *Newsweek*. Available: <http://mag.newsweek.com/2013/09/20/post-katrina-the-great-new-orleans-charter-tryout.html>
- Geertz, C. (1998, October 22). Deep hanging out. *The New York Review*. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1998/10/22/deep-hanging-out/>
- Ghaffari, M., Hackley, C., & Lee, Z. (2019). Control, knowledge, and persuasive power in advertising creativity: An ethnographic practice theory approach. *Journal of Advertising*, 48(2), 242-249.
- Giroux, H. (2012). *Education and the crisis of public values: Challenging the assault on*

- teachers, students, and public education*. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Given, L. M. (Ed.) (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. SAGE.
- Golann, J. W., Debs, M., & Weiss, A. L. (2019). "To be strict on your own": Black and Latinx parents evaluate discipline in urban choice schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56(5), 1896-1929.
- Goldstein, D. (2014). *The teacher wars: A history of America's most embattled profession*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Gotz, I. (1990). *Zen and the art of teaching*. J.L. Wilkerson Publishing Company.
- Graham, L. J., & Jahnukainen, M. (2011). Wherefore art thou, inclusion? Analysing the development of inclusive education in New South Wales, Finland and Alberta. *Journal of Education Policy*, 26(2), 263-288.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell Smith Trans.). International Publishers.
- Grbich, C. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis an introduction* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- Grenfell, M. (1996). Bourdieu and initial teacher education: A post-structuralist approach. *British Educational Research Journal*, 22(3), 287-303.
- Griffin, G. (1997). Teaching as a gendered experience. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 48(1), 7-18.
- Grumet, M. R. (1988). Conception, contradiction, and curriculum. In B. Thayer-Bacon, L. Stone, & K. M. Sprecher (Eds.). *Education feminism classic and contemporary readings* (pp. 87-109). State University of New York Press.

- Gulosino, C., Ni, Y., & Rorrer, A. K. (2019). Newly hired teacher mobility in charter schools and traditional public schools: An application of segmented labor market theory. *American Journal of Education*, 125(4), 547-592.
- Guttorm, H., Hohti, R., & Paakkari, A. (2015). “Do the next thing”: An interview with Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre on post-qualitative methodology. *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology*, 6(1), 15-22.
- Hackley, C. (2019). *Qualitative research in marketing and management*. Routledge.
- Haddix, M. (2015). *Cultivating racial and linguistic diversity in literacy teacher education: Teachers like me*. Routledge.
- Harris, P. (2001). Towards a critical post-structuralism. *Social Work Education*, 20(3), 335-350.
- Harris, D. (2007). Should I stay or should I go? Comparing teacher mobility in Florida’s charter and traditional public schools. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 82(2/3), 274-310.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford Academic.
- Hoffman, N. (1981). *Woman’s “true” profession: Voices from the history of teaching*. Feminist Press.
- Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Jr., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Harvard University Press.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.
- Hubbard, L., & Kulkarni, R. (2009). Charter schools: Learning from the past, planning for the future. *Journal of Educational Change*, 10(2–3), 173–189.
- Hughes, S. A., & Pennington, J. L. (2017). *Autoethnography process, product, and possibility for critical social research*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Hui, A. (2015). Theorizing art/design and intervention in practice theory: A visual ethnographic

- inquiry into the work of a Hong Kong artist and designer. *The Design Journal*, 18(4), 625-645.
- Hunt, S. L., & Staton, A. Q (1996). The communication of educational reform: A nation at risk. *Communication Education*, 45(4), 271-292.
- Hursh, D. (2011). The Gates Foundation's interventions into education, health, and food policies: Technology, power, and the privatization of political problems. In P. E. Kovacs (Ed.), *The Gates Foundation and the future of U.S. "public" schools* (pp. 39-52). Routledge.
- Hursh, D., & Martina, C.A. (2016). The end of public schools? Or a new beginning? *The Educational Forum*, 80(2), 189-206.
- Imazeki, J. (2005). Teacher salaries and teacher attrition. *Economics of Education Review*, 24(4), 431-449.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-534.
- Ingersoll, R. M., Merrill, E., Stuckey, D., & Collins, G. (2018). *Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force*. Updated October 2018.
- Jackson, A. Y., & Mazzei, L. A. (2011). *Thinking with theory in qualitative research viewing data across multiple perspectives*. Routledge.
- Jacobsen, R., & Linkow, T. W. (2014). National affiliation or local representation: When TFA alumni run for school board. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(69), 1-28.
- Johnson, T., Boyden, J. E., & Pittz, W. J. (2001). *Racial profiling and punishment in US public schools: How zero tolerance policies and high stakes testing subvert academic excellence and racial equity*. Applied Research Center.
- <https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/pdf/208cpdf.pdf>

- Jones, S. H. (2016). Living bodies of thought: The ‘critical’ in critical autoethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(4), 228-237.
- Jones, T., Smith, E., Ward, R., Dixon, J., Hillier, L., & Mitchell, A. (2016). School experiences of transgender and gender diverse students in Australia. *Sex Education Sexuality, Society, and Learning*, 16(2), 156-171. DOI:10.1080/14681811.2015.1080678
- Kalogeropoulos, T., Leopoulos, V., Kirytopoulos, K., & Ventoura, Z. (2020). Project-as-practice: Applying Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice on project managers. *Project Management Journal*, 51(6), 599-616.
- Kelsey, K. D. (2006). Teacher attrition among women in secondary agricultural education. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 47(3), 117-129.
- Kezar, A. (2011). Grassroots leadership: Encounters with power dynamics and oppression. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 24(4), 471-500.
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2002). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In K. Hayes, S. R. Steinberg, & K. Tobin (Eds.). *Key works in critical pedagogy* (pp. 285-386). Springer.
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2011). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In K. Hayes, S. R. Steinberg, & K. Tobin (Eds.), *Key works in critical pedagogy. Bold visions in educational research* (pp. 285-326). Sense Publishers.
- Kingsbury, I., Maranto, R., & Bradley-Dorsey, M. (2022). Charter school closing inequities: Do automatic closures target Black charter entrepreneurs and Black students? *Race Ethnicity and Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13613324.2022.2088721
- Kirby, S. N., Berends, M., & Naftel, S. (1999). Supply and demand of minority teachers in

- Texas: Problems and prospects. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 21(1), 47-66.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2015). *Reconceptualizing qualitative research methodologies without methodology*. Sage.
- Lassiter, L. E. (2005). *The Chicago guide to collaborative ethnography*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Lather, P. (1992). Critical frames in education research: Feminist and post-structural perspectives. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 87-89.
- Leavy, P. (2015). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. Guilford Press.
- Lemov, D. (2015). *Teach like a champion 2.0: 62 techniques that put students on the path to college* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Levinson, B. A. U., Sutton, M., & Winstead, T. (2009). Education policy as a practice of power theoretical tools, ethnographic methods, democratic options. *Educational Policy*, 23(6), 767-795. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904808320676>
- Liasidou, A., & Symeou, L. (2018). Neoliberal versus social justice reforms in education policy and practice: Discourses, politics and disability rights in education. *Critical Studies in Education*, 59(2), 149-166.
- Lightfoot, S. L. (1978). *Worlds apart: Relationships between families and schools*. Basic Books.
- Lipman, P. (2011a). Contesting the city: Neoliberal urbanism and the cultural politics of education reform in Chicago. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 32(2), 217-234.
- Lipman, P. (2011b). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. Routledge.

- Lorber, J. (2013). "Night to his day": The social construction of gender. In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, C. Castañeda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters, & X. Zúñiga (Eds.). *Readings for diversity and social justice* (3rd ed.) (pp. 323-329). Routledge.
- Mayo, C. (1999). Gender disidentification: The perils of the post-gender condition. In R. Curren (Ed.), *Philosophy of education* (pp. 356-364). Philosophy of Education Society.
- Mac, S. (2022). Neoliberalism and inclusive education: A critical ethnographic case study of inclusive education at an urban charter school. *Critical Education*, 13(2), 1-21.
- MacLure, M. (2013). Researching without representation? Language and materiality in post-qualitative methodology. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26(6), 658-667.
- MacLure, M., Holmes, R., MacRae, C., et al. (2010). Animating classroom ethnography: Overcoming video-fear. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(5), 543-556.
- MacRae, C., & MacLure, M. (2021). Watching two-year-olds jump: Video method becomes 'haptic'. *Ethnography and Education*, 16, 263-278.
- McClain, S., & Cokley, K. (2017). Academic disidentification in black college students: The role of teacher trust and gender. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 23(1), 125-133.
- McCoy, L. (2006). Keeping the institution in view: Working with interview accounts of everyday experience. In D. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional ethnography as practice* (pp. 109-126). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Menning, S. F., & Murris, K. (2023). Reconfiguring the use of video in qualitative research

- through practices of filmmaking: A post-qualitative cinematic analysis. *Qualitative Research*, 0(0), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941231206755>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis a methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Miron, G., & Applegate, B. (2007). *Teacher attrition in charter schools*. The Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice.
- Nathan, J. (1997). *Charter schools: Creating hope and opportunity for American education*. Jossey-Bass.
- Noguera, P. A., & Syeed, E. (2020). *City schools and the American dream 2: The enduring promise of public education*. Teachers College Press.
- Olsen, B., & Anderson, L. (2007). Courses of action: A qualitative investigation into urban teacher retention and career development. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 5-29.
- Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and social theory culture, power, and the acting subject*. Duke University Press.
- Peske, H. G., Lieu, E., Johnson, S. M., Kauffman, D., & Kardos, S. M. (2001). The next generation of teachers: Changing conceptions of a career in teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(4), 304-311.
- Pitre, N. Y., Kushner, K. E., Raine, K. D., & Hegadoren, K. M. (2013). Critical feminist narrative inquiry advancing knowledge through double-hermeneutic narrative analysis. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 36(20), 118-132.
- Pivovarova, M. & Powers, J. M. (2022). Staying or leaving? Teacher professional characteristics and attrition in Arizona traditional public and charter schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 30(19), 1-23.

- Richardson, L., & Adams St. Pierre, E. (2005). Writing a method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 959-978). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Riley, A. D., & Moore Mensah, F. (2022). “My curriculum has no soul!”: A case study of the experiences of Black women science teachers working at charter schools, *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 34(1), 86-103.
- Rimmer, R. (2017). Negotiating the rules of engagement: Exploring perceptions of dance technique learning through Bourdieu’s concept of doxa. *Research in Dance Education*, 18(3), 221-236.
- Robson, K. & Sanders, C. (2009). *Quantifying theory: Pierre Bourdieu*. Springer Dordrecht.
- Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research*, 10, 199-228.
- Rousmaniere, K. (1994). Losing patience and staying professional: Women teachers and the problem of classroom discipline in New York City schools in the 1920s. *History of Education Quarterly*, 34(1), 49-69.
- Saldaña, J. (2003). Dramatizing data: A primer. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(2), 218-236.
- Saldaña, J. (Ed.) (2005). *Ethnodrama: An anthology of reality theatre*. AltaMira.
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. Oxford University Press.
- Salvatore, J. (2018). Ethnodrama and ethnotheatre. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Handbook of arts-based research* (pp. 267-287). Guilford Press.
- Selberg, R. (2020). The ‘crisis of care’ and the neoliberal restructuring of the public sector: A

- feminist Polanyian analysis. In K. Fakier, D. Mulinari, & N. Räthzel (Eds.). *Marxist-feminist theories and struggles today: Essential writings on intersectionality, labour and ecofeminism* (pp. 167-186). Zed Books.
- Singer, J. (2020). Oppressive staff dynamics at an intentionally diverse urban charter school. *Educational Studies*, 56(3), 248-268.
- Sipe, L., & Constable, S. (1996). A chart of four contemporary research paradigms: Metaphors for the modes of inquiry. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 1(1996), 153-163.
- Skeggs, B. (2004). Exchange, value and affect: Bourdieu and 'the self'. *The Sociological Review*, 52(2), 75-95.
- Sloan, K. (2007). High-stakes accountability, minority youth, and ethnography: Assessing the multiple effects. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 38(1), 24-41.
- Smitherman, G. (2000). *Black talk: Words and phrases from the hood to the amen corner*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Snyder, B. H. (2016). *The disrupted workplace: Time and the moral order of flexible capitalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Spencer, D. A. (1986). *Contemporary women teachers: Balancing school and home*. Longman.
- Spillane, J., Reiser, B., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing policy implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, 72, 387-431. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543072003387>
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). Ethnography and culture. In J. P. Spradley (Ed.), *Participant observation*. Waveland Press.
- Spring, J. H. (2015). *Globalization of education: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

- Spry, T. (2009). Bodies of/as evidence in autoethnography. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 1(4), 603-610.
- Spry, T. (2011). Performative autoethnography: Critical embodiments and possibilities. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.) (pp. 497-511). SAGE Publications Inc.
- Standeven, K. (2022). *Predestined failure and systemic trauma in neoliberal school reforms; A story of institutional dispossession* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of California Santa Cruz.
- Stedman Jones, D. (2012). *Masters of the universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the birth of neoliberal politics*. Princeton University Press.
- Stuit, D. A., & Smith, T. M. (2012). Explaining the gap in charter and traditional public school teacher turnover rates. *Economics of Education Review*, 31(2), 268-279.
- Sturges, K. M. (2015). Curriculum testing on the persistent fringes: Neoliberal policy and the new regime of Title I high school reform. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 46(2), 129-146.
- Sullivan, A. (2002). Bourdieu and education: How useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers? *The Netherlands' Journal of Social Sciences*, 38, 144-166.
- Svensson, P. (2007). Producing marketing: Towards a social-phenomenology of marketing work. *Marketing Theory*, 7(3), 271-290.
- Szulc, L. (2020). Digital gender disidentifications: Beyond the subversion versus hegemony dichotomy and toward everyday gender practices. *International Journal of Communication* [Online], 5436+. <https://link-gale->

com.utk.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/A644651640/LitRC?u=knox61277&sid=bookmark-LitRC&xid=4fe89b7f

Teach for America. (2020). *About TFA*. Teach for America.

<https://www.teachforamerica.org/what-we-do/our-work>.

Teranishi, R. T. (2010). Asian Pacific Americans and critical race theory: An examination of school racial climate. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35(2), 144-154.

Thomas, T. C., & Epp, A. M. (2019). The best laid plans: Why new parents fail to habituate practices. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 46(3), 564-589.

Tichavakunda, A. A. (2019). An overdue theoretical discourse: Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Critical Race Theory in education. *Educational Studies*, 55(6), 651-666.

Torres, A. C. (2014). Is this work sustainable? Teacher turnover and perceptions of workload in charter management organizations. *Urban Education*, 51(8), 891-914.

Trujillo, T., Scott, J., & Rivera, M. (2017). Follow the yellow brick road: Teach For America and the making of educational leaders. *American Journal of Education*, 123, 353-391.

Tuerk, C., Menvielle, E., & de Jesus, J. (2003). If you are concerned about your child's gender behaviors: A guide for parents. Retrieved from

<http://www.childrensnational.org/files/PDF/>

DepartmentsandPrograms/Neuroscience/Psychiatry/GenderVariantOutreachProgram/GVParentBrochure.pdf

Tyack, D. B. (1976). Ways of seeing: An essay on the history of compulsory schooling. *Harvard Educational Review*, 46(3), 355-389.

Tyack, D. B., & Hansot, E. (1990). *Learning together: A history of coeducation in American public schools*. Yale University Press.

- Valli, L., & Buese, D. (2007). The changing roles of teachers in an era of high-stakes accountability. *American Educational Research Journal*, 44(3), 519-558.
- Vennes, H. (2022). *Overcoming self-sabotage: The self-sabotaging behaviors that impact the career development of female charter school superintendent/CEOs* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Massachusetts Global.
- Wacquant, L. (2004). *Body and soul notebooks of an apprentice boxer*. Oxford University Press.
- Wacquant, L. (2005). Habitus. In J. Beckert & M. Zafirovski (Eds.). *International encyclopedia of economic sociology* (p. 316). Routledge.
- Waitoller, F. R. (2020). *Excluded by choice: Urban students with disabilities in the education marketplace*. Teacher College Press.
- Waitoller, F. R., & Kozleski, E. B. (2013). Working in boundary practices: Identity development and learning in partnerships for inclusive education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(1), 35-45.
- Walker, T. (2016). Snapshot of the teaching profession: What's changed over a decade? *NEA Today*, 1199. Retrieved from <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/snapshot-teaching-profession-whats-changed-over-decade>
- Wang, C. C. & Geale, S. K. (2015). The power of story: Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 2(2), 195-198.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2015.04.014>
- Welsh, J. A. (2006). *Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Wenk, D., & Rosenfeld, R. A. (1992). Women's employment exit and reentry. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 11, 127-150.

- Will, M. (2020, April 14). Still mostly white and female: New federal data on the teaching profession. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/still-mostly-white-and-female-new-federal-data-on-the-teaching-profession/2020/04>
- Wilson, J. A. (2018). *Neoliberalism: Key ideas in media and cultural studies*. Routledge.
- Woodward, K. (2008). Hanging out and hanging about: Insider/outsider research in the sport of boxing. *Ethnography*, 9(4), 419-560.

CHAPTER II
INTENSE AND FURIOUS: THE EDUCATIONAL LABOR OF WOMEN
CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHERS

Abstract

Neoliberal structures, flexible capitalism, and educational labor create a charter school habitus that is potentially harmful for women teachers. In this work, I explore a methodological and analysis technique to support a researcher working with participants of whom they have extreme insider knowledge and shared experiences. I highlight neoliberal reform efforts that alter educational work, the structure of charter schools, and flexible capitalism and its impact on core employees and work time. I use Practice Theory and serious games to analyze the habitus and enduring patterns created by school institutions that dictate how women teachers should behave within the culture of a charter school. I follow this with usefulness of using a documentary narrative analysis, formed from narrative methods, to share participant stories with the goal of empowerment. Practice Theory and serious games is explored through my documentary narrative analysis that presents findings in the form of a documentary script. I conclude with recommendations for future research and a discussion that presents the usefulness of the documentary narrative methodology.

Key Words: Documentary narrative analysis, charter schools, teachers, flexible capitalism, neoliberalism

“I feel like I’ve texted you this a thousand times, but I don’t think you realize how incredible a boss you are/were. I was so spoiled to work under someone kind, gracious, intelligent, and who mostly didn’t sexually harass me (I’m joking). I’m so grateful for who you made me as a teacher and how you changed me as a person. I seriously think of you every day. You are so smart that you could be incredibly prideful, but you’re not; and so hard-working that you could be incredibly demanding and unforgiving, but you’re not.”- Kameron

This is an excerpt of a note written to me by a former co-worker and teacher I coached. It always feels great to receive outright praise like this, especially in a field like education where authentic praise, not in the form of test scores, is rare. However, why does a teacher have to thank me for just being a good human? Why does a teacher have to thank me for not sexually harassing her? Why is it rare in education to receive authentic praise? In my old years I fear I am becoming crotchety but, pessimistically, I feel like I know the answer to all the above questions—because the system is set up to benefit old, white, men. Sadly, this is becoming my answer more and more frequently. Like in most institutional realms, an examination of the neoliberal structures embedded within charter school institutions is desperately required homework.

The purpose of my study is to explore a methodological and analysis technique that allows a researcher, with insider knowledge of their participants, to share their stories to empower (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). I ground this work in the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu’s Practice Theory (1977) and Ortner’s (2006) serious games. In my own research experience, I have been forced to follow traditional ways of research where I must follow a specific format, impose my interpretations upon data to conduct an analysis, and have been told

that narrative or “newer” methodologies (e.g. autoethnography, poetry, or ethnodrama) are not rigorous. Because I believe that there are no objective truths, I do not deem that researchers need to provide a discussion of an analysis (Cook & Bublitz, 2023). I present the usefulness of using a documentary narrative analysis, formed from narrative methods, in order to attempt to inspire change and empower my participants. Furthermore, this approach expands understanding of the realities of surviving in a charter school, controlled by neoliberal policies and tenets of capitalism that impact teacher experience and practice (Boe et al., 1997; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Peske et al., 2001; Wenk & Rosenfled, 1992). The research question that guides this study is as follows: How can documentary narrative analysis be used to allow a researcher, with insider knowledge, to give voice to the stories of participants, in order to examine the neoliberal structures, inherent in charter schools, that create a habitus?

I begin with a review of literature that highlights neoliberal reform efforts that alter educational work (Olsen & Anderson, 2007), the structure of charter schools, and flexible capitalism and its impact on core employees and work time (Snyder, 2016). Next, a presentation of the theoretical framework of Practice Theory and serious games provide the lens and foundation by which to understand the habitus and enduring patterns created by school institutions that dictate how women teachers should behave within the culture of a charter school. I follow this with a description of my documentary narrative methodology and analysis, and conclude that this is a valuable tool when conducting research with participants with whom I share knowledge. I conclude with my findings and a discussion rooted in how researchers may use this methodology to subvert the tradition set forth by the academy and to consider how educational policies manifest in the bodies and fields of women teachers.

Review of Literature

Educational Work

With the introduction of neoliberal¹³ education reform efforts, aiming to privatize public education based on the seeming advantages of the private sector (Spring, 2015), education is a place of labor rather than learning. Through neoliberalism, public institutions, like schools, are turned into agents of market competition (Davies, 2014) through the introduction of reforms like school choice policies, voucher programs and charter schools, and competition. In the education world, laborers (i.e. teachers) are exploited by rules imposed by neoliberal reforms, rooted in capitalism and marketization (Cotter, 2020). Specially for women teachers, through neoliberalism elements like gender are reduced to irreducible differences in the education sector to normalize competition practices and adjust women to labor exploitation (Cotter, 2020). The neoliberal measures of austerity reduce the complex understanding of the woman laborer (Cotter, 2020), and, in education, results in teachers, who entered the world of education wanting to provide high-quality learning, becoming harmed by policy and disillusionment with the field (Standeven, 2022). Accountability measures in education like evaluation, high-stakes testing, and competition, informalize the labor of teaching and view educators as mere technicians (Vieira Trópia, 2020; Valenzuela, 1999).

No longer are schools a place of collaboration between teachers and students where they make sense of the world, but are now places where teachers must focus on teaching to a test and standardized curriculum (Hursh & Martina, 2016). The introduction of reform quality measures replicates a patriarchal tradition of authority relations in education (Apple, 1993). The school is organized around a principal beholden to standards of the neoliberal state. With this structure

¹³ Neoliberal or neoliberalism is a political approach that favors free-market capitalism, privatization, deregulation, and reduction in government spending (Spring, 2015).

there is a loss of control over one's own work as a teacher (Apple, 1993). Apple (1993) addressed the state by noting that the day-to-day interests of teachers contradict the interests of the state. Just because the state wants to enact more efficient ways to organize and measure teaching, does not necessarily mean that teachers will act upon these ways. The concept of intensification sheds further light on this argument.

The work privileges and sociability of educational workers is eroded and destroyed through intensification (Apple, 1993). The concept of intensification introduces new, technical skills that a worker must adopt to keep up with the field, but results in less time to maintain one's craft. The quality of services is reduced by intensification (Apple, 1993). The use of pre-packaged curriculum is growing in the U.S. (Sturges, 2015), and as a result teachers are just getting the prescribed objectives completed rather than going above the norm and they do not have enough time to be creative. If workers accept intensification, it will generate different kinds of resistance, in the form of quality of teaching (Apple, 1993).

Just because some neoliberal reform efforts look good on paper, it does not mean they are effective (Sturges, 2015). If we examine neoliberal policy as a social practice, elements of power emerge (Levinson et al., 2009), and these social processes serve as a way to change what it means to be a teacher (Lipman, 2011b). Eventually educators who enter the field wanting to provide quality education to students, embody neoliberal policy. Actors, who did not create policy, participate and give consent to policy via actions that inform the societal norms of the school (Spillane et al., 2002). Policy embodiment is iterative and impacts individual sense-making.

Those that resist policy embodiment, leave the field of education. Currently, teachers leave the profession at high rates nationally; 44% of teachers leave the field of education within

their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Not only does this have real consequences for students, who are then exposed to a constant, new set of inexperienced teachers, but the profession as a whole becomes largely de-professionalized (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Bendixen et al. (2022) suggested that teacher perceptions of leadership, reform policy, and safety in the school can impact teacher retention, both positively and negatively.

Charter Schools

Charter schools, introduced to create market competition, are run by reform oriented individuals or organizations and are publicly funded but private entities operate them (Lipman, 2011a). The emergence of these schools is indicative of a notion that they provide a better alternative to the persistent failure of public schools (Lipman, 2011a). Heavily influenced by neoliberal reforms, charter schools are changing the structures and practices of educational work in the United States. The introduction of charter schools further exacerbates inequities and bolsters neoliberal ideology. However, the most harmful effects of neoliberalism are on student learning, teacher quality, and retention. Teachers, who resist structural expectations, leave the field of education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, teacher turnover rates are 18.5% higher in charter schools compared to a 13.4% rate in public schools (Gulosino et al., 2019), and 76.5% of charter school teachers are women (Will, 2020). These high turnover rates also mirror the ideology of numerical flexibility, where employment is temporary and employers easily adapt to adjust the composition of their workforce (Snyder, 2016).

Charter schools erode the relationship between teacher and student and turn teaching into a field of production. So the labor acts of a craft are now controlled by market practices (Bourdieu, 1973). The rules created by the academic market over teacher labor are legitimized by teachers investing in these practices in order to obtain profits (i.e. more students) in the market

(Bourdieu, 1973). While these practices of efficiency and competition might contradict the interests of teachers, this educational marketplace succeeds through indoctrination that normalizes these practices of labor (Bourdieu, 1973). Teachers have unconsciously bought into this by commodifying their practice and through their own schooling have deeply internalized market and neoliberal practices (Anderson & Arce-Trigatti, 2021). So the legitimization of the academic market by teachers is one that is unconscious, and teachers are seemingly unaware of the harm caused by these neoliberal structures.

The birth of charter schools is a significant example of neoliberal impacts on education (Waitoller, 2020; Fabricant & Fine, 2012; Giroux, 2012). Charter schools remain a topic in the education sphere, especially in Southern urban cities rife with failing public school districts, gentrification, fiscal instability, reform, and racial inequalities (Buras, 2015; Gabor, 2013). According to neoliberal ideology, before education can be marketized, a range of alternatives must be established, and charter schools serve this purpose (Lipman, 2011b).

While charter schools introduce competition and school choice into the educational marketplace, they also follow neoliberal ontologies of competition and meritocracy with their enrollment of students with disabilities, while not being able to provide adequate services and having high suspension rates (Mac, 2022). Charter schools play into tenets of neoliberalism by pushing out unwanted students by withholding services and implementing severe disciplinary practices (Collins, 2014). Therefore, the best rise to the top and this facilitates competition amongst students.

Flexible Capitalism and Work

Further complicating the idea of educational work, Snyder (2016) drew on the idea of flexible capitalism. Much like neoliberalism, the economic transformations that hit the U.S.

between the 1970's and 1990's are representative of flexible capitalism. The structure of the workplace is changed by the new forms of production, exchange, and human resources introduced by flexible capitalism (Snyder, 2016). A tenet of flexible capitalism is that it focuses on uprooting the traditional chain of production, much like how the introduction of charter schools uproots traditional systems of education with the introduction of competition and an educational marketplace. This phenomenon is the work of the elites and policymakers to innovate and promote the abstract over the concrete (Snyder, 2016). This system desires to push out the old way of labor to implement new ways of production that can adapt and re-tool to an ever dynamic economy (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005; Cappelli, 1995).

In flexible capitalism, employers invest a lot of capital into their core employees—permitting them perceived decision-making power. However, this illusion of autonomy is provided so that the core employees will align with the company's mission, work towards it, and alter their own view of themselves (Apple, 2005, 2007; Snyder, 2016). This creates an audit culture where overworking is the norm and a sign of dedication, and a business model is invoked in fields like education and healthcare (Apple, 2007). The charter school creates the same culture where the expectation is workaholism, and teachers feel judged when they do not conform to this standard (Singer, 2020). Flexible capitalism alters time and institutions of labor imprint patterns on the life and imaginations of the workers (Snyder, 2016).

Adding to this burden, the flexibility of actual work stuff has changed. In a world where a work project can be completed virtually or on a computer screen, this means workers can take work with them wherever they go, and that becomes the expectation (Snyder, 2016). Work time is no longer confined to space but is subjective, and is a form of social time. Snyder (2016) defined social time as the rhythms humans create as they interact in social institutions. However,

since work time now extends to projects outside the confines of the space of the charter school, this poses constraints for teachers who now have work invade multiple social spaces or fields, like the home. This explicitly impacts women teachers, who report that the intense workload of charter schools causes them to leave because they feel like they cannot start their own families (Olsen & Anderson, 2007). In this new labor market, work time is conflated with social time as the lines become further blurred between work and home life (Snyder, 2016).

The new workplace is a gendered place that disrupts a moral life, and one that creates an audit culture where individuals change their own view of self (Apple, 2005, 2007). The pressures and surveillance of work create especially unequal pressures on women, compared to males because of their dual roles in the workplace and home (Blair-Loy, 2003; Hochschild, 1989). Research regarding the workload of women teachers in charter schools supports this, as workloads lead to burnout and women teachers have fewer resources for support when encountering hardships than their male counterparts (Wenk & Rosenfeld, 1992). Women are 1.3 times more likely to leave educational work than men (Borman & Dowling, 2008). The high-pressure, tenuous work environment created by flexible capitalism makes it unsustainable (Snyder, 2016). The new workplace, guided by flexible capitalism and neoliberalism, seeks out young workers who desire to innovate and worry about class mobility (Scott, 2017). For the charter school, these new workers are plentiful and the institution is unconcerned with high attrition rates.

Snyder (2016) argued that good work and a good life might be difficult to reckon in an era of flexible capitalism. He is interested in a moral life and how workplaces can invite workers to have a good life. With this in mind, I still argue that resisting the charter school field might not result in overt acts of violent opposition, still may contribute to institutional projects, but

agentive resistance can be minimal and transformative if teachers analyze all projects for which they are a part (Ortner, 2006). Teachers may act as independent agents to remake their social structure by expressing dissent towards neoliberal, capitalistic practices of the charter school.

Theoretical Framework

Analyzing Bourdieu's Practice Theory (1977). Bourdieu¹⁴ argued that culture is not the product of free will or underlying principles, but is actively constructed by social actors, humans with agency, from dispositions structured by previous events. With this in mind, Bourdieu's theory involves three major concepts-- habitus, field, and capital (Bourdieu, 1977).

Bourdieu conceived of capital as a toolkit, including cultural and social capital (1977). Social capital references the quality and amount of resources within an individual's network, and depending on the characteristics of the network, social capital can give access to economic or cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). For the aims of this work, I will not focus on economic capital, and only define social and cultural capital. Cultural capital is made up of social and cultural competencies, or knowledge, of a particular field. It is bound to time and location, so context is important when applying cultural and capital theories to an educational issue (Tichavakunda, 2019). In order to engage with said context, Bourdieu turned to the concept of field.

The field is comprised of complex relationships that have specific forms of cultural and social capital, and Bourdieu linked this to social worlds, with their own implicit rules. A field can be any social world, including classrooms, charter schools, etc. One's cultural and social capital also depends on the field. Both Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) noted that capital does not

¹⁴ Bourdieu was part of the poststructuralist movement. He began from a structuralist stance but his work moved beyond this by challenging traditional notions of symbolic power (Robson & Sanders, 2009).

exist without relation to a field. Finally, the field links to habitus in that one's behavior in the field is shaped by the socialized norms reproduced in their habitus.

The habitus is created through a social, rather than individual, process. This leads to enduring patterns or habits, where society becomes deposited into agents to manifest lasting dispositions or structured capacities that train social actors to believe and perform in determinant ways that guide their actions (Wacquant, 2005). Of particular note to my research, the habitus is created by the neoliberal structures of charter schools.

Within the structure of the habitus, individuals may not have identical experiences but they share relational variants. Ultimately, for Bourdieu (1977), he contended that the hallmark of practice is when something is performed through the body, in a socially constructed space, to embody the structures of the world. As such, agents must abandon notions of simple freedom or determinism. The practices of such habitus are self-regulated by the agents, and these practices are developed to cope with unforeseen circumstances (Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus creates a commonsense world, and this theory provides the framework to analyze how actors perform within the structures of habitus. These agents are not only influenced by the structure but influence the structure as well (Bourdieu, 1977).

To further clarify the value of Practice Theory as applied to my phenomenon of interest, I will provide examples of Bourdieu's conception of capital, field, and habitus as they manifest in the educational process of the charter school institution. Following Bourdieu, in the charter school social capital refers to the relationships teachers have with their colleagues and administrators (Bourdieu, 1977). The stronger the bonds of these networks, the more teachers have access to resources, individual agency to act in their classrooms, and possible pay raises. A teacher's strong social network with administrators allows freedom and could possibly lead to

less administrator oversight. Cultural capital refers to a teacher's knowledge of the institutional rules of the charter school; understanding ways of behavior that guide the charter school; commitment to competition; and relationships with families, students, and charter school staff. In the charter school, the field is comprised of both the charter school itself and the teacher's individual classroom. With more social and cultural capital, a teacher can gain more agency within the field, but their function within these fields is dependent upon their relationships, school, and adherence to curriculum. Teacher behaviors within the charter school and their classrooms are shaped by the habitus created by the charter school institution. Charter school teachers do not create the ways of being within the school, rather they are created through institutional traditions, administrative rules, school culture, and the policies that rule the charter school. These are socially created ways of being that gradually indoctrinate teachers to act, think, and feel in particular ways dictated by the charter school.

While each teacher will have different experiences and bring their own life experiences to the school, the habitus functions to create social norms to unite these teachers. Specifically, teachers come to the charter school with varied education, backgrounds, and aims; but these social norms, like classroom management systems, curriculum, dress codes, and evaluations, become unconscious embodied practice for teachers. As a charter school teacher, eventually all fall into practicing instruction and classroom management in the same way as dictated by the norms of the charter school habitus (Hubbard & Kulkami, 2009). Strict classroom management systems are created to help the teacher deal with unforeseen student behaviors, and eventually all teachers will enforce these same practices as they become conditioned in the habitus. While this creates the world intended by the administrators of the charter school and the dictates of

neoliberalism, teachers could work against these social norms and operate differently to gradually change solidified norms of a habitus to recreate.

Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of the rules of the game and playing the game, introduce covert forms of agency. The "rules of the game" are the cultural and social expectations created by the habitus, but agents might consciously play by the rules in order to participate or survive in a system of power (Smitherman, 2000). In my context, a teacher might play by the rules of the school, seemingly falling in line with expectations, in order to gain capital. In doing so, playing the game becomes a performance of power and a critical perpetuation of the process of inculcation (Bourdieu, 1977). At times, there might be more to gain by obeying a rule or practice than resisting it, and it is in the best interest of the agent to obey the rule. As long as playing the game is not the normalized practice, and the agent is conscious of their agency, then they retain power (Bourdieu, 1977). In education, teachers might be motivated to play the game in pursuit of activism to re-create more equitable spaces within the school institution, specifically charter schools beholden to neoliberal practices.

Under the new labor conditions created by neoliberal reform and charter schools, teachers can have agency, power, and serve their own interests by engaging in serious games as they pursue educational projects under these new conditions (Ortner, 2006). Ortner provided more insight to the milieu involved in Practice Theory as subjects produce their world through practice (Ortner, 2006). Following this theory, the structures of the habitus direct players how to perform and act, however do not displace agency. Ortner proposed a variation of Bourdieu's Practice Theory with her theory of serious games. She critiqued Bourdieu, in that she believed the concept of habitus focused too much on what society deposits in the agent, and not enough on power and individual agency (2006). Ortner's serious games focuses on the agentic action that

remakes social structures, and brings into focus more complex forms of social relations like power and subjectivity. To Ortner, the agent is always enmeshed within relations of power and inequality, which she felt was ignored by Bourdieu (1977).

In serious games, social life is seen as something that is always played, according to cultural goals. Ortner's conception of serious games goes beyond "playing the game" and the "rules of the game", and focuses on more complex forms of social relations like relations of power. In education, these actors can influence and change this structure in the field of their classrooms, or create and recreate, according to Ortner, through the role of a mentor or trusted advisor to help subvert the oppressive habitus. Through techniques for resiliency (García et al., 2022; Keese et al., 2022; Picucci & Laughlin, 2019; Noddings, 1988) a teacher agent can subvert systems of power and inequality within school institutions.

Ortner's serious games does problematize agentive action and recognizes its limits. While Ortner (2006) acknowledged agency, she argued that agents are always involved in social relations and can never act outside the relations with which they are enmeshed. With this idea, all agents or social actors have the potential for agency, but, while they are engaged with others in the act of serious games, it is impossible to imagine them as completely free (Ortner, 2006). In my context, the teacher agent is always embedded in relations with other teachers, students, and families in solidarity. On the opposite end, these same agents are always embedded in relations of power, inequality, and competition. In serious games, power trumps acts of social solidarity (Ortner, 2006). Where Ortner greatly differs from Bourdieu is the concept of power. She believed that agency and social power are very closely linked (2006).

Ultimately for Ortner (2006), if individuals are embedded with one another in acts of solidarity or rivalry, the agency they do have is in actuality negotiated, as they are never free

agents. “They do not have the freedom to formulate and realize their own goals in a social vacuum, but also in the sense that they do not have the ability to fully control those relations toward their own ends,” (Ortner, 2006, p. 152). In the charter school, while teachers might take agentive action they are ultimately doing so because of social structures created by the charter school. These teachers might take social action but they are doing so in order to play into or against the cultural games the institution creates, and by doing so replicate ideological underpinnings like the competition structures of neoliberal reform. Ortner (2006) concluded that the pursuit of individual projects in playing serious games might result in the subordination of others, but those subordinates also have the possibility of their own projects and agency. So a charter school teacher, who might take action by breaking a school rule, puts their colleagues as subordinates and potentially might cause them to be subject to further rules or punishment. Both resistance and agency are always in service of projects, and aim to pursue cultural goals whether for good or bad (Ortner, 2006).

Seminally, by applying Practice Theory (1977) and serious games (2006) to the experiences of women teachers in the charter school field, we are given the tool to make sense of the world of charter school teachers and new possibilities may be considered by examining how educational policies manifest in the bodies and fields of female teachers (Ndu, 2022). Teaching is emotional labor, but illuminating the structures that attempt to normalize it has the possibility to inspire women charter school teachers to step out, resist, and act autonomously to disrupt the market and habitus formed by the charter school institution.

On a different plane, Anyon (2014) described the ways collective engagement can empower social movements and facilitate agency, despite Ortner’s (2006) contention that solidarity removes individual agency. When teachers mobilize collectively, gaining both social

and cultural capital, to challenge systems of oppression in schools, they effectively advocate for themselves, press their claims, and disrupt existing power structures. Ultimately, these theories have the potential to illuminate incidents of autonomy in the charter school field and could open up possibilities for how women teachers might make sense of their role within the charter school field, disrupt policy embodiment, recreate their social/work worlds, and hopefully remain in the education field.

This work is guided by the above described concepts, but the real aim is to explore a methodological and analysis technique that allows me, a researcher with insider knowledge and shared identities with my participants, to use my participants' stories to examine the structures in a charter school that create a habitus rife with flexible capitalism, auditing, and neoliberalism. Because the methodology I label as documentary narrative (Cook & Bublitz, 2023) is new, it is essential to explain my philosophical commitments prior to examining the methodology.

Positionality

My epistemological and ontological beliefs are influenced by the concept that power pervades every level of social relationships (Barker & Jane, 2016). In my work I combine critical and post-structuralist perspectives (Abes, 2009; Harris, 2001; Lather, 2006), and see value in combining multiple ways of knowing and methodologies in the context of this research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). I adopt these orientations because many critical post-structuralists acknowledge that policy does impact gender and racial groups (e.g., Bohrer, 2019; Foley, 2019; Harris, 2001), and recognize neoliberalism as manifestation of power (Apple, 2012; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). Particularly, critical researchers view research as a vehicle for empowerment and social change (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011), and Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) pose a call to action that researchers must resist neoliberalism. Through the use of a new methodology I am

resisting tradition as an act of countering neoliberalism. I do seek to empower women charter school teachers, but I know that I will not be bias free because this work is inspired by my own teaching experiences.

In my efforts to share the stories of educators, like myself, I know that this is realistically untenable to engage in this work without bias, and my critical leanings recognize I will never achieve complete elimination of myself from the research. In light of my post-structural leanings, I still feel uneasy with my researcher identity because it is rooted in power. Structuralism seeks to systemize language, but my focus is not on the structure but upon what is left over, which can facilitate deciphering the possible truths that lie within these participant stories (Lather, 1992). As my methodology involves interviewing and re-storying, I recognize the contradiction in that my values as a researcher are ever-present. I choose not to impose my own interpretations or analysis on the experiences of my participants because my aim is not to diagnose or prescribe a problem. My hope is to share their experiences, in order to share a story and methodology that others might find use in or explore their own understanding of their realities. What follows is not an edict that documentary narrative is the best methodology, but I will show how this methodology is used in my work, share an example, and provide suggestions for other researchers who might find this method beneficial when working with participants with whom they share identities.

The Study: The Educational Labor of Women Charter School Teachers

The purpose of this study was to explore how the neoliberal structures, inherent in charter schools, create a habitus. I interviewed two charter school teachers and analyzed their experiences through the lens of Practice Theory (Bourdieu, 1977) and serious games (Ortner, 2006). Previous to interviewing the teachers, I worked in the school setting alongside them, so I

possessed knowledge of the culture and had previous relationships with the teachers. I struggled with this work because my participants' stories were clouded by my own distaste for the charter school. During my time as a middle school teacher and middle school administrator in a charter school I did not always feel as though I was supported, especially as a woman. As a teacher at the aforementioned school, I had three male administrators. My "coach" was one of these administrators. He told me what to do and came into my classroom to check that I had completed his directives. He had a hidden list of rules, and, like a father, made sure I followed them. I desperately sought to follow them and to be praised for doing so as a teacher, and succumbed to workaholism and a constant need for approval. Although I was a good teacher, I abandoned my craft. Teaching was all-consuming and not sustainable. My work life and home life were enmeshed. Excellent educators should not feel as though their only option is to leave the classroom due to reforms, institutional rules, and exhaustion. To mitigate my own experience, I used documentary narrative to analyze the stories of my participants.

Methodology

I used narrative methodologies and my own background in documentary film to build a framework I label documentary narrative (Cook & Bublitz, 2023). I did so to help explore how my participants might describe the impact of neoliberal structures on their work habitus.

I interviewed two women charter school teachers from the Southeast United States. I label my sampling as critical opportunistic (Miles et al., 2020). I taught in the school site and worked with the teachers that were interviewed. I had easy access to these teachers and my prior knowledge of their experiences fits well with my purpose. Both participants have taught English language arts for at least three years in the charter school setting. My participants both worked in a 6-12 Title I charter school. I interviewed each participant twice using an interview guide where

I asked them about the rules that govern their practice, how they remained resilient in the teaching field, and how they were supported by administrators. In addition to interviewing, I engaged in deep hanging out, when the researcher spends time with participants in informal settings to lessen the role of being an outsider (Geertz, 1998; Woodward, 2008). To do so, I immersed myself in my participants' culture, observed participants in informal settings outside of the charter school, attended after-school happy hours, and engaged in short phone and text message exchanges. I recognize the limitations of the selection in that my familiarity with the site and participants brings with it multiple assumptions and *a priori* knowledge to the work. My tacit and external cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1980) of the school site precludes the ability to note unfamiliar patterns of behavior. It is important for ethnographers to recognize how personal experience is important in the process and that it can often be misused. Personal experience should not distract from the ethnographic story, but enhance (Lassiter, 2005). In order to gain better context of the participants' culture, I collected charter school employee handbooks, notes and texts written to me by the participants, photographs, and engaged in reflexive journaling. Through these methods, I was able to gain further contextualization of the experiences of my participants.

Documentary Narrative

In narrative, the sharing of stories by participants conveys knowledge that is embodied within individuals and the cultures of which they are a part (Clandinin et al., 2013). Further, narrative methods seek to provide deep descriptions of participant experiences as well as the meaning that an individual gained from their experiences (Wang & Geale, 2015).

Documentary narratives are written or visual adaptations of research data in film form (Cook & Bublitz, 2023). Performance challenges researchers to review their data and select the

best medium (e.g. film, documentary, television, ethnodrama) to tell their story (Saldaña, 2003). However, the process for creating documentary narratives from data is significantly different than creating narratives, as what works in narrative structure might not work in documentary structure. This documentary narrative structure worked for my study because it did not demand significant adaptation, where I might have been tempted to overly color the story with my own experiences. This structure, like a documentary film, presents my participants' words directly without edits or distortion (Menning & Murris, 2023). There are technical writing elements (Eisner, 2001) necessary for critical artistic analysis. Such elements include story lining, shot descriptions, character development, scripting, and visual aesthetics.

In research, the use of narrative, specifically documentary narrative, permits the researcher to embrace uncertainty and ethically share participant stories with the mask of characters, camera shots, and visual descriptions (Given, 2008; Saldaña, 2003). These analyses see truth as subjective and are vehicles to present complex stories with wider social ramifications that could inspire change for the readers or audience. While data does not speak for itself, this is queered in documentary narratives, as I must ponder who the story belongs to, and characters may speak for themselves (Saldaña, 2003). Therefore, while research reflexivity is crucial it is unnecessary in the final product because the story belongs to the participant (Saldaña, 2003). Traditional forms of qualitative analysis, like coding or thematic analysis, might force data into themes and categories inevitably influenced by the researcher, to help avoid this documentary narrative captures and presents the data as it occurred in its original form. While technical elements are added, they serve to enhance the story and add cinematic effect (Saldaña, 2003). This method also recognizes that there can never be a finite representation of the data (Denzin, 2013), and what is presented is just a snapshot in time. It is my intention with this new

framework to reveal how researchers, with insider status and external cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1980), can approach working with a population with whom they are familiar.

Quality and Ethical Commitments

As someone who has been harmed by the institutional structures of the charter school, I do not want to do harm to my participants. To attend to this, I purposely scheduled multiple interviews in order to provide participants with space and time to process any negative emotions that might emerge. The greatest harm that could come to my participants is that their identity and school site be revealed. I created pseudonyms to protect participants, and the documentary narrative acts as a an safety measure (Chugani, 2016).

A challenge faced by researchers is how to apply ethical decision making to real-life problems, and following conditions for respect for persons can help face this challenge (Whiteford & Trotter, 2008). There are three guiding conditions for respect for persons—respect for individual autonomy, free will, and self-determination. With those in mind, I took the following are four actions: assuring that participation is voluntary, determining that individuals recruited into the project are competent to participate, preserving confidentiality for participants, and providing a thorough and accurate informed consent process (Whiteford & Trotter, 2008).

Ethically, I believe that history has silenced populations like my participants and it is necessary to combat institutional silencing (Trouillot, 1995). However, unsilencing still must be done with confidentiality. I have also maintained research integrity by adhering to proper qualitative design and methodology.

I obtained a consent form for each of the two participants in the study, and this study received Institutional Review Board approval. I practiced reciprocity by fostering the relationship I developed with the participants, and shared pieces of my own identity and

vulnerability with them. In this spirit, I shared privilege by sharing the study with my participants and engaged in member checking to ensure participants felt accurately represented. My hope is that through this sharing, my participants recognize their own resiliency and share these techniques with colleagues in order to keep women teachers in the charter school setting. I have had to question how I benefit from the experiences and stories shared by my participants. In order, to avoid any form of silencing, I will offer co-authorship credentials if the study is published in an academic journal (Cain et al., 2022). I acknowledge I am crafting the academic writing of this piece, but I have given the space to their actual words, without changing them, in order to have their voices and messages conveyed, without my interpretations.

Analysis

I first read through all of my interview transcripts without the aid of additional literature, and set aside my research question. I drew upon MacRae's (2021) work and approached my analysis as watching the data to see rather than just reading. My focus was to look at it holistically, and entangle myself in it to allow the words of my participants to transform my thinking and inspire thought (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015; MacLure, 2013; MacLure et al., 2010). This also put me in a position where I no longer held control of the data, rather the transcripts guided my thinking and analysis. The data was not inert but alive (Menning & Murris, 2023). In my second cycle of entanglement with the data, I read for inflection and emotional emphasis from my participants, of which I was not previously attuned. In my third engagement, I imagined how that might be presented in documentary form. Finally, I analyzed the data to reimagine the whole of my data as an individual with whom I was conducting a documentary film interview. With this new orientation, I was forced to listen to participant words, reflect on my own responses and connections to their stories, and reconceptualize what my participants were trying

to tell me in order to craft a collective character to represent both Emma and Kameron (Saldaña, 2003). Paradigmatically, this approach to analysis aligns with my beliefs because I value combining multiple ways of knowing in research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002).

After my entanglements with the data, I began to craft the documentary “character” of Maisy, in order to further bring life to the data. Maisy is solely based upon the actual personalities of my participants, and represents the data set as a whole (Saldaña, 2003). Although characters might be a new re-imagining of an individual, Maisy’s dialogue is a reflection of my participants’ actual words.

As a former documentary filmmaker, it is not random that I am drawn to this method and analysis. It aligns with the cinema vérité film style, and promotes embodied analysis (Cook & Bublitz, 2023; Menning & Murris, 2023). Cinema vérité documentary attempts to cast light on dark places, in my research the habitus of the charter school, by only portraying reality and avoiding editorializing (Barnouw, 1993). Much like critical research, cinema vérité practitioners view this method as a vehicle for empowerment and social change (Barnouw, 1993; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). This style does not view the camera, or in this case me, as a device that inhibits humans. Rouch, one of the fore-fathers of this cinematic style in documentary, believed that the camera made people act in ways truer to their nature (Barnouw, 1993; Menning & Murris, 2023). In my work, my shared experience with the participants made them vulnerable and comfortable to chronicle their experiences in the charter school, and while I believe truth is elusive I do think my participants were transparent in what they revealed (Sipe & Constable, 1996). I know taking the orientation of a cinema vérité documentarian allows me to reorient myself and play the role of filmmaker. By approaching the data as a documentarian, I am able to embrace uncertainty.

With this analysis, I hope that one can understand the complicated relationship I had with my data as a researcher.

Entering my data collection process, I was fixated on following my interview guide, and constantly found myself recollecting my own personal knowledge of working in the charter school. Rather than actually listening to my participants, I became preoccupied with seeing my own experience reflected in their stories. While I do not proclaim an overall message that one should garner from this analysis, because the beauty of art or documentary is that readers form their own interpretations (Saldaña, 2003), I do hope that a reader realizes that the habitus of the charter school constrained and caused harm to my participants.

I deliberately chose to include long passages from the transcripts in my analysis because I did not want my participants' stories to be edited. I chose not to edit language or words, but have reordered blocks of my participants' words to form a more linear story (Saldaña, 2003). To attend to documentary script form, I took some creative liberties by including shot descriptions that capture the emotion, stage directions to capture moments of reflection, and scene locations to give the reader a better picture of where my participants were located during our time (Eisner, 2001). As an added safety measure, the act of presenting data as a performance can serve as a shield, and present participant experiences in a form that avoids jeopardizing their safety and current positions (Chugani, 2016). What follows is a new configuration of the data in the form of a documentary script.

Findings

My findings in the form of a documentary script are presented in Appendix B.

Theoretical Reflections

Throughout the interview, Maisy lamented the time spent on compliance and it is clear that she entered education with the desire to what is best for students. The new world of educational labor has created schools where teachers are focused on observations, compliance, and control (Hursh & Martina, 2016; Snyder, 2016). The administration of the school provided the illusion of investing in Maisy through observations but this was merely to align her with their mission. She noted that she was never genuinely praised for her work until she said she was going to leave the school, and feeling untrusted by administration. The administration of the school very clearly was aligned with flexible capitalism and created a culture or habitus where workaholism was viewed as a sign of dedication. When Maisy needed time for self-care, she felt shamed for trying to protect her own mental health, and very much felt judged when she chose to not overwork herself when administration gave her the cold shoulder (Singer, 2020).

Work is altered by flexible capitalism because work is no longer confined to the walls of a school or workplace (Snyder, 2016). Maisy realized that this intense work load and the blurring between work and home time was unhealthy, which led her to leave the charter school field. She realized that this type of work is not sustainable, and like many women (Olsen & Anderson, 2007), recognized that she could not balance a home life or motherhood with a work life that invaded multiple spaces.

In the final scene of the documentary shooting script, Maisy demonstrated both agency and playing the game (Bourdieu, 1977; Ortner, 2006). Maisy noted the cultural and social expectations created by the charter school along with very regulated rules. Maisy played the game in the manner she chose to enforce these rules. She recalled how she realized that students were happier and better learners when they were given freedom. Within her classroom, Maisy

provided freedom, but gave the illusion to school administration that she was following expectations by telling students to make sure they followed dress code or walked a certain way when they left the safety of her classroom walls. By playing by the rules of the game, Maisy created a system to survive in charter school power relations (Bourdieu, 1977; Smithermann, 2000). In the public eye of administration it was easier to appear like she was following expectations in order to avoid chastisement. However, she retained her power because playing by the rules was not her norm and she was conscious of her actions (Bourdieu, 1977).

Discussion

As a former charter school teacher, who left the field, I do not believe I have the position or privilege of drawing any interpretations nor proclaiming finite recommendations. Like Rouch (Barnouw, 1993), I am a vehicle for presenting what my participants want myself and readers/audience members to know. There is no need for my added analysis because my role is not to create history nor conclusions, but to empower stories for change (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). The story/script speaks for itself. I reckon this with voluptuous and paralogical validity (Lather, 1993).

Like Lather (1993), I believe that my data is always incomplete and as a researcher I must continue to engage with my data and work reflexively. In this work, I attend to voluptuous validity by reflecting on my positionality, communicating with my participants, and ultimately deciding that, despite my shared experiences, I can never completely understand their stories from my position, several years removed from working within charter school culture (Lather, 1993). I understand my belief is a contested position, and recognize this tension (Lather, 1993). I also recognize that there are differences and contradictions within my work. I want to combat power, but realize this does not happen as I still retain power through my act of writing and

crafting the script (Lather, 1993). With this orientation, I aim to subvert traditions of the academy that serve up the expectation of researcher discussion and findings. However, I will highlight suggestions for other researchers who might find documentary narrative beneficial when working with participants with whom they share identities.

By rethinking the traditional modes of research and presenting a new framework for methodology I have subverted the traditions of the academy about what research should look like. Similarly, I am playing by the rules in following traditional research tropes like a review of literature, theoretical framework, and methodology. However, I am conscious of this practice and am subverting the traditional and taking agency with my form of analysis. By queering the methodological process, this method introduces a more emancipatory form of research (Duran et al., 2022) and hopefully alters my own academic habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). Other researchers hoping to share stories, in a manner other than narrative, may adopt this unique approach to uproot typical research formats, how research is read, and be more emancipatory. I recommend this method as a way to entangle readers with participants' messages, as it differs so much from tradition that it might influence readers to truly focus on the message rather than the mechanics of style.

I found this method to be creatively and intellectually fulfilling. I took events that on the surface might seem ordinary and captured the intensity of them from the participants perspective. Osgood (2023) called on researchers to offer alternative ways of seeing the banal. Documentary narrative captures the messiness and force of the ordinary to examine wider ramifications in the social world (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2013).

My hope with this piece is to open up a possibility for researchers to explore new ways of methodologically approaching research, and not merely perpetuating a cycle rooted in power. I

still value the original research format, but if education wishes to be emancipatory and a place of collaboration we must alter the habitus, not merely reproduce the tradition, and take a radical position to adopt new methodologies. Much like Maisy's agency in leaving the charter school field and altering her habitus, I am altering my own habitus in an attempt to un-mesh myself from relations of power with the documentary narrative approach.

References

- Abes, E. S. (2009). Theoretical borderlands: Using multiple theoretical perspectives to challenge inequitable power structures in student development theory. *Journal of College Student Development, 50*(2), 141–156.
- Anderson, A. B., & Arce-Trigatti, A. (2021). Creating & commodifying the neoliberal self: A Weberian analysis of an international education course. In T. J. Brewer & W. G. Harman (Eds.), *The commodification of American education: Persistent threats and paths forward*. Myers Education Press.
- Anyon, J. (2014). *Radical possibilities public policy, urban education, and a new social movement* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Apple, M. W. (1993). The politics of official knowledge: Does a national curriculum make sense? *Teachers College Record, 95*(2), 222-241.
- Apple, M. W. (2005). Education, markets, and an audit culture. *Critical Quarterly, 47*(1-2), 11-29.
- Apple, M. W. (2007). Schooling, markets, race, and an audit culture. *Counterpoints, 2007*(305), 27-43.
- Apple, M. W. (2012). Controlling the work of teachers. In M.W. Apple (author), *Knowledge, power, and education: The selected works of Michael W. Apple* (pp. 116-131). Routledge.
- Barker, C., & Jane, E. A. (2016). *Cultural studies theory and practice* (5th ed.). Sage Publications Inc.
- Barnouw, E. (1993). *Documentary a history of the non-fiction film* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

- Bendixen, L. D., Plachowski, T., & Olafson, L. (2022). Criticalizing teacher perceptions of urban school climate: Exploring the impact of racism and race-evasive culture in a predominately white teacher workforce. *Education and Urban Society*, 00(0), 1-26.
- Blair-Loy, M. (2003). *Competing devotions: Career and family among women executives*. Harvard University Press.
- Boe, E., Bobbitt, S. A., Cook, L. H., Whitener, S. D., & Weber, A. L. (1997). Why didst thou go? Predictors of retention, transfer, and attrition of special and general education teachers from a national perspective. *The Journal of Special Education*, 30, 390-411.
- Bohrer, A. J. (2019). Response to Barbara Foley's 'Intersectionality: A Marxist critique.' *New Labor Forum*, 28(3), 14-17.
- Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, E. (2005). *The new spirit of capitalism*. Verso.
- Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. (2008). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(3), 367-409.
- Bourdieu, P. (1973). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In R. Brown (Ed.). *Knowledge, education, and cultural change: Papers in the sociology of education* (pp. 71-112). Routledge
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1972).
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. University of Chicago Press.

- Buras, K. L. (2015). *Charter schools, race, and urban space: Where the market meets grassroots resistance*. Routledge.
- Cain, L. K., Williams, R. E., & Bradshaw, V. (2022). Establishing data quality in qualitative research: Trustworthiness and a lack of consensus. In Ivankova, N. (Ed.) *International encyclopedia of education* (4th ed.). Elsevier.
- Cappelli, P. (1995). Rethinking employment. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 33(4), 563-602.
- Chugani, C. D. (2016). Recovered voices: Experiences of borderline personality disorder. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(6), 1016-1034.
- Clandinin, D. J., Steeves, P., & Caine, V. (Eds.). (2013). *Composing lives in transition: A narrative inquiry into the experiences of early school leavers*. Emerald Group Publishing.
- Collins, K. M. (2014). A disability studies in education (DSE) analysis of corporate based educational reform: Lessons from New Orleans. In D. Connor, J. Valle, & C. Hale (Eds.), *Practicing disability studies in education: Acting toward social change* (pp. 217 – 233). Peter Lang Publishing.
- Cook, G. N., & Bublitz, S. R. (2023). The Ship of Theseus: Unsilencing and methodological considerations when working with queer populations. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, 12(4), 77-101.
- Cotter, J. (2020). The ‘flat ontology’ of neoliberal feminism. In K. Fakier, D. Mulinari, & N. Räthzel (Eds.). *Marxist-feminist theories and struggles today: Essential writings on intersectionality, labour and ecofeminism* (pp. 51-69). Zed Books.

- Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Vasquez Heilig, J. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13(42), 1-51.
- Davies, W. (2014). *The limits of neoliberalism: Authority, sovereignty and the logic of competition*. SAGE.
- Denzin, N. K. (2013). “The death of data?”. *Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies*, 13(4), 353-356.
- Eisner, E. (2001). Concerns and aspirations for qualitative research in the new millennium. *Qualitative Research*, 1(2), 135-145.
- Fabricant, M., & Fine, M. (2012). *Charter schools and the corporate makeover of public education: What’s at stake?* Teachers College Press.
- Foley, B. (2019). Intersectionality: A Marxist critique. *New Labor Forum*, 28(3), 10-13.
- Gabor, A. (2013, September 20). The great charter tryout: Are New Orleans’s schools a model for the nation—or a cautionary tale? *Newsweek*. Available: <http://mag.newsweek.com/2013/09/20/post-katrina-the-great-new-orleans-charter-tryout.html>
- García, C., Badia, A., & Clarke, A. (2022). The identity of the teacher as a mentor of student teachers. In C. Monereo (Ed.), *The identity of education professionals: Positioning, training, and innovation* (pp. 133-154). Information Age Publishing.
- Geertz, C. (1998, October 22). Deep hanging out. *The New York Review*. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1998/10/22/deep-hanging-out/>
- Giroux, H. (2012). *Education and the crisis of public values: Challenging the assault on teachers, students, and public education*. Peter Lang Publishing.

- Given, L. M. (Ed.) (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. SAGE.
- Gulosino, C., Ni, Y., & Rorrer, A. K. (2019). Newly hired teacher mobility in charter schools and traditional public schools: An application of segmented labor market theory. *American Journal of Education*, 125(4), 547-592.
- Harris, P. (2001). Towards a critical post-structuralism. *Social Work Education*, 20(3), 335-350.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1989). *The second shift*. Avon Books.
- Hubbard, L., & Kulkarni, R. (2009). Charter schools: Learning from the past, planning for the future. *Journal of Educational Change*, 10(2–3), 173–189.
- Hursh, D., & Martina, C.A. (2016). The end of public schools? Or a new beginning? *The Educational Forum*, 80(2), 189-206.
- Ingersoll, R. M., Merrill, E., Stuckey, D., & Collins, G. (2018). *Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force*. Updated October 2018.
- Keese, J., Waxman, H., Asadi, L., & Graham, M. (2022). Retention intention: Modeling the relationships between preparation and support and novice teacher decisions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 110, 1-15.
- Kincheloe, J., & McLaren, P. (2002). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In K. Hayes, S. R. Steinberg, & K. Tobin (Eds.). *Key works in critical pedagogy* (pp. 285-386). Springer.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2015). *Reconceptualizing qualitative research methodologies without methodology*. Sage.
- Lassiter, L. E. (2005). *The Chicago guide to collaborative ethnography*. The University of Chicago Press.

- Lather, P. (1992). Critical frames in education research: Feminist and post-structural perspectives. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 87-89.
- Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *Sociology Quarterly*, 34(4), 673-693.
- Lather, P. (2006). Paradigm proliferation as a good thing to think with: Teaching research in education as wild profusion. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(1), 35-57.
- Levinson, B. A. U., Sutton, M., & Winstead, T. (2009). Education policy as a practice of power theoretical tools, ethnographic methods, democratic options. *Educational Policy*, 23(6), 767-795. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904808320676>
- Lipman, P. (2011a). Contesting the city: Neoliberal urbanism and the cultural politics of education reform in Chicago. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 32(2), 217-234.
- Lipman, P. (2011b). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. Routledge.
- Mac, S. (2022). Neoliberalism and inclusive education: A critical ethnographic case study of inclusive education at an urban charter school. *Critical Education*, 13(2), 1-21.
- MacLure, M. (2013). Researching without representation? Language and materiality in post-qualitative methodology. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26(6), 658-667.
- MacLure, M., Holmes, R., MacRae, C., et al. (2010). Animating classroom ethnography: Overcoming video-fear. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(5), 543-556.

- MacRae, C., & MacLure, M. (2021). Watching two-year-olds jump: Video method becomes 'haptic'. *Ethnography and Education*, 16, 263-278.
- Menning, S. F., & Murris, K. (2023). Reconfiguring the use of video in qualitative research through practices of filmmaking: A post-qualitative cinematic analysis. *Qualitative Research*, 0(0), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941231206755>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis a methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Ndu, M. (2022). Examining Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus, and field in women's health research in Nigeria: A feminist perspective. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 1-6.
- Noddings, N. (1988). An ethic of caring and its implications for instructional arrangements. In B. Thayer-Bacon, L. Stone, & K.M. Sprecher (Eds.). *Education feminism classic and contemporary readings* (pp. 137-149). State University of New York Press.
- Olsen, B., & Anderson, L. (2007). Courses of action: A qualitative investigation into urban teacher retention and career development. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 5-29.
- Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and social theory culture, power, and the acting subject*. Duke University Press.
- Osgood, J. (2023). Down on the ground: The material memoir of the posthuman childhood researcher. In J. Osgood (Ed.). *Postdevelopmental approaches to childhood research observation* (pp. 39-54). Bloomsbury.
- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2013). Politicizing transitions in early childhood. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 3(3), 221-229.

- Peske, H. G., Lieu, E., Johnson, S. M., Kauffman, D., & Kardos, S. M. (2001). The next generation of teachers: Changing conceptions of a career in teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(4), 304-311.
- Picucci, A. & Laughlin, T. (2019). *Evidence-Based coaching: Key drivers of scalable improvement district-wide*. New Teacher Center.
<https://newteachercenter.org/resources/evidence-based-coaching-report/>
- Robson, K. & Sanders, C. (2009). *Quantifying theory: Pierre Bourdieu*. Springer Dordrecht.
- Saldaña, J. (2003). Dramatizing data: A primer. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(2), 218-236.
- Scott, M. (2017). 'Hipster capitalism' in the age of austerity? Polanyi meets Bourdieu's new petite bourgeoisie. *Cultural Sociology*, 11(1), 60-76.
- Singer, J. (2020). Oppressive staff dynamics at an intentionally diverse urban charter school. *Educational Studies*, 56(3), 248-268.
- Sipe, L., & Constable, S. (1996). A chart of four contemporary research paradigms: Metaphors for the modes of inquiry. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 1(1996), 153-163.
- Smitherman, G. (2000). *Black talk: Words and phrases from the hood to the amen corner*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Snyder, B. H. (2016). *The disrupted workplace: Time and the moral order of flexible capitalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Spillane, J., Reiser, B., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing policy implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, 72, 387-431. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543072003387>

- Spradley, J. P. (1980). Ethnography and culture. In J. P. Spradley (Ed.), *Participant observation*. Waveland Press.
- Spring, J. H. (2015). *Globalization of education: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Standeven, K. (2022). *Predestined failure and systemic trauma in neoliberal school reforms; A story of institutional dispossession* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of California Santa Cruz.
- Sturges, K. M. (2015). Curriculum testing on the persistent fringes: Neoliberal policy and the new regime of Title I high school reform. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 46(2), 129-146.
- Tichavakunda, A. A. (2019). An overdue theoretical discourse: Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Critical Race Theory in education. *Educational Studies*, 55(6), 651-666.
- Trouillot, M.R. (1995). *Silencing the past power and the production of history*. Beacon Press.
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. State University of New York Press.
- Vieira Trópia, P. (2020). Women in Brazil's trade union movement. In K. Fakier, D. Mulinari, & N. Räthzel (Eds.). *Marxist-feminist theories and struggles today: Essential writings on intersectionality, labour and ecofeminism* (pp. 263-275). Zed Books.
- Wacquant, L. (2005). Habitus. In J. Beckert & M. Zafirovski (Eds.). *International encyclopedia of economic sociology* (p. 316). Routledge.
- Waitoller, F. R. (2020). *Excluded by choice: Urban students with disabilities in the education marketplace*. Teacher College Press.

- Wang, C. C. & Geale, S. K. (2015). The power of story: Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 2(2), 195-198.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2015.04.014>
- Wenk, D., & Rosenfeld, R. A. (1992). Women's employment exit and reentry. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 11, 127-150.
- Whiteford, L. M., & Trotter II, R. T. (2008). *Ethics for anthropological research and practice*. Waveland Press, Inc.
- Will, M. (2020, April 14). Still mostly white and female: New federal data on the teaching profession. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/still-mostly-white-and-female-new-federal-data-on-the-teaching-profession/2020/04>
- Woodward, K. (2008). Hanging out and hanging about: Insider/outsider research in the sport of boxing. *Ethnography*, 9(4), 419-560.

CHAPTER III
“EVERYTHING WOULD BE OKAY”: RESISTING AND REMAKING
THE HIDDEN RULES FOR SURVIVAL IN A CHARTER SCHOOL

Abstract

I autoethnographically explore my experiences through the habits and enduring patterns charter school leaders create to dictate how teachers, particularly women teachers, and students should behave within school culture. I contextualize my experiences primarily through Bourdieu's Practice Theory (1977), alongside existing literature on teacher retention, education policy research, and charter schools. My story allows me to examine how teachers can use their agentive action to remake social structures and resist the hidden rules of the charter school through three main themes; hiding, resistance, and coping. I explore these themes through autoethnographic vignettes before discussing implications for practice and recommending self-exploration and inward reflection as a quicker route to social change than direct institutional change.

Keywords: autoethnography, practice theory, Bourdieu, charter school, teacher

“There are no true stories: there are only facts, and the stories we tell ourselves about those facts.” – Becky Cooper (2020)

This manuscript chronicles my teaching career—one plagued with violations of the personal and intertwined with a culture of secrecy and hidden rules to control me. What follows are my facts, and the stories I tell about them.

In Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977) Practice Theory he introduces the idea of habitus. The habitus is created through a social process, and this leads to enduring patterns, where society becomes deposited into agents to manifest lasting dispositions or structured capacities that train social actors to think, feel, and act in determinant ways that guide their actions (Wacquant, 2005). With this autoethnographic research, I explore the habits and enduring patterns created by school institutions, rooted in neoliberal reforms and Practice Theory (Bourdieu, 1977), that dictate how women teachers should behave within the culture of a charter school. Within the theoretical frame of Practice Theory, agents have the possibility to change their habitus and resist (Bourdieu, 1977). The purpose of this research is to show how, as a teacher, the hidden rules of the charter school habitus were deposited into me, and how I resisted these rules to alter my habitus. I ground my work in the assumption that institutional rules and culture inhibit teachers, are ultimately harmful, and cause teachers to leave the field of teaching. While the intent behind habitus is to create structure, an individual’s personal experience influences it. Because my experiences as a young adult always influence me, I intentionally include stories of my life before teaching, in the charter school, to demonstrate how these past experiences provided me with the capital to repeatedly influence my habitus across different social worlds. The specific research question that guides this study is as follows: How did I use agentic action, as a woman teacher, to remake the social structure of the charter school institution?

I will explore this through my own autoethnographic account, crafted by my myself, a cisgender woman, who worked in charter schools for seven years. I focus on my own personal experiences and the culture within an urban charter school in the Southeast United States. I begin with a review of literature that contextualizes neoliberal reforms, teacher retention, and charter schools. I follow this with an overview of Bourdieu's Practice Theory (1977), and describe my methodology. I conclude with my findings in the form of autoethnographic vignettes, and discuss the connection between my experiences to broader social, cultural, and political issues and interrogate systemic inequities in charter schools.

Review of Literature

To set the foundation for my work I will chronicle the impact of neoliberal reforms in education, highlight the teacher retention crisis, and provide contextualization for charter schools. This research is of local and global importance because of the teacher retention crisis, with 44% of teachers leaving the field within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Teacher turnover rates in charter schools compound this issue, with turnover being 18.5% when compared to a 13.4% rate in public schools (Gulosino et al., 2019).

The Impact of Neoliberalism

Simply put, the private sector is privileged over the public sector in neoliberalism. Tenets of neoliberalism include the naturalization of the temporary (Sturges, 2015), a weak state (Apple, 1993), and a constant cycle of attempting to save and revamp the system (Aalbers, 2013). Additionally, practices like fiscal austerity, deregulation, and reduction in government spending are associated with neoliberalism. Not only does neoliberalism extend an invisible hand on the free market by guiding all forms of social action under the premise that it promotes efficiency, but it is guided by control over politics of the body, standards, values, and conduct (Apple,

1993). Under neoliberalism public infrastructures are viewed to breed dependency and bureaucracy, and competition offers a solution to inspire creativity and efficiency (Wilson, 2018). In theory, the belief that undergirds neoliberalism is that through competition, individuals, the government, and companies will facilitate more innovation and create a better social world, where the very best people and ideas emerge (Wilson, 2018).

Neoliberalism in Education

Policy makers introduce neoliberalism to the education sector by economizing education, which means school outcomes are now judged in economic terms (Spring, 2015). Broadly, the introduction of corporate structures to education permits corporate influence over school policies, quantitative measures to judge school effectiveness, curriculum based on workplace skills, and shaping behaviors in schools to meet the needs of a free market (Spring, 2015). At the micro level, the introduction of neoliberalism in America's schools creates a primarily economic function, where students are not valued for their cognitive abilities but, rather, their ability to be future workers, rewarded by the economic system (Tyack, 1976). Fine and Fox (2013) claimed that neoliberalism diminished investments in the schools of low income communities, and, on a more traumatic level, threatened schools by navigating public resources away from youth and toward the criminalization of communities of color and poverty. The economization of education impacts teaching practice, as now the aims of teachers should be to teach skills for students to be future contributors to the workforce (Spring, 2015).

By society granting legitimacy to market-oriented approaches, in education, an audit culture is created (Apple, 2007). Those who deem what is appropriate in education need production of evidence to actually mark and rank people, thereby turning the school institution into a determinant of class (Apple, 1993, 2007). This leads to competition and national testing

that quantifies school outcomes, in order for families or consumers to choose schools based on quality, and grants free market forces full operation (Apple, 1993). Inevitably, this leads to an exacerbation of existing class and race divisions.

Students are directly impacted by testing data in another way, as it is in the interest of reformers to prove increase in student learning by manipulating standardized test passing rates (Hursh & Martina, 2016). Urban students with low testing scores provides justification for the establishment of more charter schools and school choice, and the same data is utilized to argue the ineffectiveness of teachers (Hursh & Martina, 2016). Accountability reform has created a harmful culture where diversity (including learning, racial, and socioeconomic) is punished rather than rewarded for students (Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011). Rather than celebrating learner diversity, it is considered a threat to standardized performance indicators (Liasidou & Symeou, 2018). This is of great consequence for students who do not conform to the standard, and they are viewed as not integrable into a neoliberal society. Black and LatinX students are mostly pathologized as low-performers (Waitoller, 2020).

Through neoliberal reform, teacher quality is measured through quantitative data in the form of test scores and evaluations in an effort to make teaching more professional. Gotz (1990) warned against this and argued that professionalization of teaching is a cover for the reproduction of capitalism. Teachers' thoughts and actions are transformed by neoliberal education reform, due to increased accountability measures (Lipman, 2011). In the U.S. teacher quality is determined by performance on teacher certification exams, possession of advanced degrees, and test scores (Boyd et al., 2005; Feng, 2014; Imazeki, 2005). Still, there is little correlation between these measures of teacher quality and student learning outcomes (Betts et al., 2003). Neoliberal education reformers believe that teacher quality will improve through more

regulations, and more stringent certification and licensing measures (Angrist & Guryan, 2007). However, hooks's (1994) provides an alternate conception of teacher quality. Quality educators know their students, know their families, their economic status, their community, and how they are treated. They make learning joyful and their classroom a place of pleasure. They also challenge students to think outside their own values and beliefs. Quality teachers create a place where students can reinvent themselves through knowledge (hooks, 1994).

Neoliberalism and Teacher Retention

No longer are schools a place of collaboration between teachers and students where they make sense of the world, but are now places where teachers must focus on teaching to a test and standardized curriculum (Hursh & Martina, 2016). The introduction of reform quality measures replicates a patriarchal tradition of authority relations in education (Apple, 1993). The school is organized around a principal beholden to standards of the neoliberal state. With this structure there is a loss of control over one's own work as a teacher (Apple, 1993). The trend in rationalizing curricula, with created/prescribed curriculum, mostly impacts teachers. Apple (1993) addressed the state by noting that the day-to-day interests of teachers contradict the interests of the state. Just because the state wants to enact more efficient ways to organize and measure teaching, does not necessarily mean that teachers will act upon these ways.

Just because some neoliberal reform efforts look good on paper, it does not mean they are effective (Sturges, 2015). Often neoliberal measures in education are manipulated to displace blame for unemployment and the breakdown of values from the state or government to ineffective teachers (Apple, 1993). If we examine neoliberal policy as a social practice, elements of power emerge (Levinson et al., 2009), and these social processes serve as a way to change what it means to be a teacher (Lipman, 2011). Eventually educators who enter the field wanting

to provide quality education to students, embody neoliberal policy. Actors, who did not create policy, participate and give consent to policy via actions that inform the societal norms of the school (Spillane et al., 2002). Policy embodiment is iterative and impacts individual sense-making.

Those that resist policy embodiment, leave the field of education. Currently, teachers leave the profession at high rates nationally; 44% of teachers leave the field of education within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Not only does this have real consequences for students, who are then exposed to a constant, new set of inexperienced teachers, but the profession as a whole becomes largely de-professionalized (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Bendixen et al. (2022) suggested that teacher perceptions of leadership, reform policy, and safety in the school can impact teacher retention, both positively and negatively.

Charter Schools

The impacts of neoliberalism are vast and negatively impact the education climate, create competition, exacerbate inequities, and de-professionalize education. The introduction of charter schools further worsens inequities and bolsters neoliberal ideology. Charter schools remain a topic in the education sphere, especially in Southern urban cities rife with failing public school districts, gentrification, fiscal instability, reform, and racial inequalities (Buras, 2015; Gabor, 2013). According to neoliberal ideology, before education can be marketized, a range of alternatives must be established, and charter schools serve this purpose (Lipman, 2011).

Reform-oriented individuals or organizations run charter schools, and these schools are publicly funded but operated by private entities (Lipman, 2011). These schools still function as public schools and are beholden to follow federal laws (Mac, 2022). In the 1980's charter schools were seen as a means to create an education alternative in poor communities of color, but

this original conception was appropriated by philanthropic and corporate entities (Fabricant & Fine, 2012). While charter schools introduce competition and school choice into the educational marketplace, they also follow neoliberal ontologies of competition and meritocracy with their enrollment of students with disabilities, while not being able to provide adequate services and having high suspension rates (Mac, 2022).

The competition structures created by school choice measures and charter schools directly impact urban families of color. These families often encounter poor public school choices in their neighborhoods and are forced to seek out charter schools (Collins, 2014). The practices of neoliberal school reform described, demand an education marketplace where schools act as businesses competing for customers (i.e. students). Charter schools do so by promoting their competitive advantage over public schools (Mac, 2022). Even with charter schools, students in under-resourced areas are forced to compete for scarce resources, and this still leaves a gap. A charter school might foresee a competitive advantage but the reality is they cannot afford to actually provide service to all in the competitive education market (Mac, 2022).

Historically, charter schools have marketed themselves to families of color and justified harsh disciplinary protocols, “no excuses” policies, and white-washed practices that may counter a student’s home culture as a support to student academics (Golann et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2001). Because the charter school model is privatized, there is little room for community and parent voice, and these schools, primarily serving students of color, hire white teachers or silence the voices of teachers of color (Riley & Moore Mensah, 2022). Charter schools have fewer access to resources and supports for students, and competition between schools results in few to little gains in education quality (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013).

This application will add nuance to the current research landscape, but on a broader level it introduces a new approach to considering educational policies through the bodies and fields of women teachers. The autoethnographic account I present represents an important counternarrative to the literature, which characteristically focuses on policy, culture, or students; not the individuals who teach in schools. For women, academic work is emotional labor and autoethnography allows for recognition of oppression through emotional reflexivity and performative listening (Cummins & Huber, 2022). Additionally, by utilizing this approach I will expand my understanding of the realities of surviving in a charter school, controlled by neoliberal policies and hidden rules that impact teacher experience and practice.

Theoretical Framework

I will analyze the findings of this research using Bourdieu's Practice Theory (1977). Bourdieu¹⁵ argued that culture is not the product of free will or underlying principles, but is actively constructed by social actors, humans with agency, from dispositions structured by previous events. With this in mind, Bourdieu's theory involves three major concepts-- habitus, field, and capital (Bourdieu, 1977), and these concepts converge in practice.

Bourdieu conceived of capital as a toolkit, including cultural, social, and economic capital (1977). For the aims of this work, I will not focus on economic capital because I am interested in exploring the social and cultural rules that guide the ways of being for women teachers within the field of the charter school, therefore I will only define social and cultural capital. Social capital references the quality and amount of resources within an individual's network, and depending on the characteristics of the network, social capital can give access to economic or cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Cultural capital is made up of social and cultural

¹⁵ Bourdieu was part of the poststructuralist movement. He began from a structuralist stance but his work moved beyond this by challenging traditional notions of symbolic power (Robson & Sanders, 2009).

competencies, or knowledge, of a particular field. It is bound to time and location, so context is important when applying cultural and capital theories to an educational issue (Tichavakunda, 2019). In order to engage with said context, Bourdieu turned to the concept of field.

The field is comprised of complex relationships that have specific forms of cultural and social capital, and Bourdieu linked this to social worlds with their own implicit rules. A field can be any social world, including classrooms, charter schools, etc. One's cultural and social capital also depends on the field. Both Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) noted that capital does not exist without relation to a field. Finally, the field links to habitus in that one's behavior in the field is shaped by the socialized norms reproduced in their habitus.

The habitus is created through a social, rather than individual, process. This leads to enduring patterns, where society becomes deposited into agents to manifest lasting dispositions or structured capacities that train social actors to think, feel, and act in determinant ways that guide their actions (Wacquant, 2005).

Under the new labor conditions created by neoliberal reform and charter schools, teachers can have agency, power, and serve their own interests by engaging in serious games as they pursue educational projects under these new conditions (Ortner, 2006). Ortner provided more insight to the milieu involved in Practice Theory as subjects produce their world through practice (Ortner, 2006). Following this theory, the structures of the habitus direct players how to perform and act, however do not displace agency. Ortner (2006) focused on the agentic action that remakes social structure, and brings into focus more complex forms of social relations like power and subjectivity. To Ortner, the agent is always enmeshed within relations of power and inequality, which she felt was ignored by Bourdieu (1977).

In serious games, social life is seen as something that is always played, according to cultural goals, and focuses on complex forms of social relations like relations of power (Ortner, 2006). Ortner (2006) problematized agentive action and recognized its limits. She argued that agents are always involved in social relations and can never act outside the relations with which they are enmeshed. With this idea, all agents or social actors have the potential for agency, but, while they are engaged with others in the act of serious games, it is impossible to imagine them as completely free (Ortner, 2006). In serious games, power trumps acts of social solidarity (Ortner, 2006). While agency is universal, it is also culturally and historically constructed, so at different points in time it could look different. Related to serious games, Bourdieu (1977) introduced covert forms of agency with the rules of the game and playing the game. The “rules of the game” are the cultural and social expectations created by the habitus, but agents might consciously play by the rules in order to participate or survive in a system of power (Smitherman, 2000). At times, there might be more to gain by obeying a rule or practice than resisting it, and it is in the best interest of the agent to obey the rule. As long as playing the game is not the normalized practice, and the agent is conscious of their agency, then they retain power (Bourdieu, 1977).

Finally, Bourdieu (1977) contended that the hallmark of practice is when something is performed through the body and my story illustrates how teaching and institutional practices become embodied practice. My reflexive analysis will demonstrate how the charter school institution/field creates a habitus of how the hierarchy wants the school and teachers to operate. Following this theory, the structures of the habitus direct players how to perform and act. However, these actors can influence and change this structure in the field of their classrooms, or

create and recreate, according to Ortner (2006), to help subvert the oppressive habitus and provide capital in the field.

Positional and Paradigmatic Commitments

As a scholar of cultural studies, this transdisciplinary tradition informs many of my epistemological and ontological beliefs. Cultural studies is a cluster of ideas and practices, that provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity or institutional sites in society (Barker & Jane, 2016). Most relevant to this study and my beliefs is the central concept of the discipline—power, which pervades every level of social relationships (Barker & Jane, 2016).

This study utilizes a post-structuralist paradigmatic orientation. I take the ontological stance that truths are socially constructed systems of signs, and these truths contain their own contradictions (Sipe & Constable, 1996). Epistemologically, I believe that, not only, is reality subjective and constructed on the basis of issues of power, but, ultimately, it is unknowable. Using autoethnography, I recognize that what is true to me in my stories, might not be the same truth to others. My stories represent a snapshot in time, and depending on time and place my stories might change. Adopting this orientation is most appropriate for this research as I seek to construct meaning through reflexivity toward my own experiences, and recognize that the meaning I make now might change with time.

As part of my methodology is autoethnography, my values as a researcher are ever-present. Using my own experiences in a non-linear way, my aim is not to diagnose or prescribe a problem. Rather, I will analyze the ways I remade my social structure and use agentive action to resist the charter school institution. My hope is to open up my vulnerabilities, in order to share my story that others might find use in or explore their own understanding of their realities within

the charter school institution. I also embrace and value the fact that once my story is on paper, the interpretations of readers might be different from my own. The beauty of art and story is that it allows readers to identify in their own way and find their own truths.

As a former woman charter school teacher, I attempted to recreate my social world and resist the culture of the charter school institution, both consciously and unconsciously. I also left the charter school field because I felt it harmed my development as a woman educator, so this certainly is a bias I possess. Most specifically, I strongly believe that charter school institutions are patriarchal in nature and that their very existence and rhetoric, used within these spaces, is rooted in power and domination. Personally, I feel some guilt leaving the charter school teaching field, because of the students I left behind. I entered the field thinking this would be my lifetime craft, and when I faced challenges I left. Maybe to alleviate my own guilt, I pursue this work to change conditions so that women teachers do not have to feel beholden by institutional structures, can perform their craft, and will remain in the field.

I would be remiss in not including my battle or cohabitation with mental illness as a part of who I am. While I did not realize it until an adult, I battled mental illness from the time I was five. As I grew older and my body began to change, I began to resent it. Desperate to control my weight I became bulimic. I started to relish this secret habit. I would gorge myself on sweets in my room and secretly escape to the bathroom to purge. I created a complicated routine of secretly binging and purging that my friends and parents never knew about. No matter how out of control my life felt, I knew I could control what remained in my body. I battled this secret for fifteen years and to this day have never told my parents about it. This secrecy is something that has been instilled in me from a young age and is why I believe in the importance of sharing the personal with others.

Secrecy has played a huge role in shaping my identity. Growing up, the example was set for me never to reveal what happens behind closed doors. From a very young age, my parents instilled in me the idea that secrets are protection. It carried me throughout my life. I never told my parents when I was feeling mentally unwell, I never would tell my parents if I had a boyfriend, and even when I was in dangerous situations I would never reach out to my parents for help. I became scared to reveal anything to my parents for fear of being judged or getting in trouble. These rules for being, deposited in me at a young age, formed the habitus that guided my actions as I grew into young adulthood and became a teacher. As a teacher, I desired to remake my habitus and did not want secrecy to regulate my actions so I took agentic action to avoid this.

Had it not been for my childhood or my mental illness, I know I would not have been a good teacher. These pieces of my identity allowed me to connect with my students and teachers; and understand the importance for a child/teacher to have a trusted adult. While I did not share the same identities as my students, especially, or teachers, I found that through joint trauma I was able to establish trust and have a shared sense of identity with them. It also made me a safe place for students and teachers to reveal their emotional and life struggles. The culture of secrecy I grew up in, allowed me to be open with my students and teachers because everyone can connect with someone's experience. My identity and my past experiences are central to how I approach my research. My past experiences provide me with the capital to change my current life. As a researcher, I believe it is vital to fully share one's personal story, rather than masking it, in hopes that others might learn from my own story. Additionally, I believe there is collective learning and the potential for others to remake their current state of being through the sharing of my personal stories.

Methodology

I engage in autoethnographic research as I write from my own perspective (Ellis, 2004; Fraser & MacDougall, 2017), and autoethnography is a method that values subjectivity and self-expression (Pitre et al., 2013). This is an appropriate conduit for my story and research, as it allows me the space to express my story, and provide the readers with a singular case study to convey the embodied knowledge of one woman in a charter school setting (Clandinin et al., 2013). Humans are storytellers and are shaped by narratives, those we hear and tell ourselves (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Ellis, 2004). Through telling stories, researchers put meaning into story which is a primary goal of autoethnography (Bocher & Ellis, 2016). In general, autoethnography is a personal form of writing and research that uncovers the researcher's unconscious and connects the personal to the cultural and political (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), while evoking emotion to inspire readers to make a personal connection to the researcher (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). Through this methodology, I use self-reflection and writing to explore my personal experiences in connection to broader political, cultural, and social meaning.

Additionally, autoethnographers demand the intertwining of theory and story—theories are not simply adopted for the purposes of fitting a story; rather, theory provides a framework to reflect upon and analyze a personal experience (Bochner, 2012; Bochner & Riggs, 2014; Jones, 2016). As such, autoethnography becomes a mechanism by which to illustrate the nuances of theory where the body rather than analysis is an agent in making meaning. Spry (2009) suggested that autoethnographic story comes from a critically reflexive location, and personal story permits researchers the reflexivity to think critically about truth, to contextualize the personal, and to center their own epistemologies and ontologies, all necessary concomitants in the construction of meaning (Ellis, 2004; Hughes & Pennington, 2017).

Autoethnography illuminates a rich diversity of voice and story, especially those representing marginalized experiences, and story permits the author to reveal hidden details and foregrounds emotional experiences to challenge the tradition of social science (Bochner & Riggs, 2014). Although history is hegemonic in that it is primarily written by the victors, autoethnography's capacity to link experience with institutions, and thus the personal with the political, foregrounds the perspectives of the oppressed and makes space for important analyses of existing power relations. Certainly, there is danger in the institutionalization of a single story, as those characteristically legitimate master narratives at the expense of marginal perspectives that are effectively disempowered and made illegitimate. In contrast, autoethnography's emphasis on multiple perspectives can increase understanding and empower (Jones, 2016), thus disrupting the status quo and, through disruption, restoring agency and dignity. Furthermore, although autoethnography is inherently personal, its positioning is not authoritative; rather, it facilitates experiential meaning-making and readers have the agency to determine if a story speaks to them and provide theoretical validation by comparing their lives to the author (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Ellis, 2004; Spry, 2011). This method lets me express my own embodiment and attempt to make meaning and recreate my habitus as a means of resistance.

Methods

Regarding specific methods, I generated a research journal, based upon past journals, that outline my own traumatic experiences and those working in a charter school. Within this journal, I relay events, which were anonymized¹⁶, emotional ties to such events, past experiences, and general positional commitments. In order to validate and triangulate this data, I gathered additional artifacts to help check my story. These artifacts include daily planners kept from

¹⁶ All names used in my story are pseudonyms to protect the identities of any individuals to whom I refer.

2002-2018, social media posts on Facebook, conversations between trusted friends via Facebook Messenger and Google Chat, a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* where I document instances of physical abuse, and old diaries. These artifacts aid in situating the truth within my data, and it is important to provide representations of multiple sources (Denzin, 1978). In order to protect myself, I choose not to conduct member checks so as not to re-traumatize myself nor my student (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). I acknowledge that there are no innocent representations since all are organized within relations of power (Adams St. Pierre, 1999). Once the reflective journal was generated, I searched for themes and wrote my story.

Quality and Ethical Commitments

There are many quality indicators I attend to in order to ensure rigor, richness, and validity in the study. Most relevant to this study, I practice voluptuous validity by acknowledging that I can never completely understand myself and my topic (Cain et al., 2022). In effort to mitigate this, I constantly reflected upon my identity and the perspective I brought to this work. I know that absolute truth is elusive, and acknowledge ironic validity within this study. My research is an act of simulation (Cain et al., 2022; Lather, 1993), and my stories are facts to me and a recollection of my experiences, but I recognize the tensions between my account versus the account of others in my responsibility to be an objective researcher.

I practice relational ethics by attending to safety measures, like using pseudonyms for participants (Cain et al., 2022). As aforementioned, I engaged in triangulation of data in order to boost the credibility of my findings (Patton, 1999). In addition to my personal artifacts, I gathered multiple sources of data that included the perspectives of other individuals around me at the time of these occurrences. Reflexivity and autoethnography are forever intertwined, and I

attended to reflexivity by examining my own paradigmatic commitments, my emotional connection to the data, journaling, and talking with friends (Cain et al., 2022; Peshkin, 1988).

Analysis

My process of data analysis occurs through the writing process (Adams St. Pierre, 1999). As I write, autoethnography allows me to be reflexive. The thinking that occurs while writing, produces the analysis because this is an entangled process where I must connect my pre-teaching personal experiences to broader cultural themes within the charter school (Guttorm et al., 2015). Haddix (2015) claimed that our words and stories are legitimate sources of knowledge. I approach my analysis in a way that showcases my story in order to bring into view conditions that shaped my experiences and gave rise to my agency, voice, and reflexivity (Pitre et al., 2013). Within my story, I identify themes and opt to include vignettes of my story that exemplify each theme. With this manuscript, I detail the following thematic elements, paying particular attention to how these themes manifest in the personal narratives I share. The major themes that emerged in the writing of my story are as follows:

- 1) Hiding: describes my experience conforming to the habitus created that was intertwined with a culture of secrecy and avoidance.
- 2) Resistance: describes my way of resisting an oppressive habitus in attempt to recreate and remake it.
- 3) Coping: describes the ways, both healthy and unhealthy, in which I attempted to cope with my current habitus in order to survive.

To illustrate each of these themes, I include vignettes of my story, which are accompanied by my own analysis of the happenings. I intentionally chose to include stories from my young adulthood to provide a holistic view of how I developed across a lifespan, how the habitus

influenced me across different social worlds (Baker-Bell, 2017), and the individual experiences I brought to the habitus. Importantly, I choose to be extremely vulnerable in the vignettes in order to be evocative and put what has been silenced into words (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). These vignettes are followed by my analytical interpretation of the contents. I do so in an effort to both showcase the story, as well as position it within the larger research and theoretical landscape.

Findings

The kind of girl you have sex with and not the kind of girl you date

I had spent all of my sophomore year of college pining over The Boy. The first day I saw him waiting for wind ensemble practice wearing a Rage Against the Machine t-shirt, I was hooked. I did everything in my power to gain his attention. I VERY conspicuously started playing my own Rage Against the Machine cd without headphones whenever I was around him. I went to his dining hall and asked to sit at his table. I even got my friend to find his AIM messenger name so I could begin cleverly messaging him to win his affections.

Somehow my awkward junior high attempts at wooing worked, and The Boy became part of my friend group. We played Dungeons and Dragons together. We started a band together. He even came to my house for Thanksgiving. Finally, one night after our Wednesday D & D game my roommate said, "If you don't tell him how you feel directly, I'm going to tell him. I can't listen to you talk about how much you LIKE him anymore." It was raining and late but it was now or never. I quickly ran out of our house and sprinted up the hill to catch up to The Boy before he reached his dorm. I reached him and punched him on the back (my idea of being cool). "What?" he yelled. "I need to tell you something. Can we talk?" We went to the campus gazebo to shield ourselves from the rain. Brevity and getting to the point is not my strong suit and it was definitely not my strength as an awkward 18 year old.

Gretchen: "We have been friends for a long time. We like the same music and we have all the same friends."

The Boy: "Okay."

Gretchen: "I think you need to know that I like you."

The Boy: "I like you too."

Gretchen: "No, like I really like you, like I want you to be my boyfriend."

Long, excruciatingly awkward pause.

The Boy: "Gretchen, I kinda knew that already. The thing is you are cool but you are the kind of girl you have sex with and not the kind of girl you date."

Despite my shock I quickly replied, "I understand. Well, I still want to be friends."

We continued our friendship and despite such an offensive statement, I did not feel offended. Instead, I decided to embrace this label of "the kind of girl you have sex with." I was not that type of girl. I had barely kissed a boy. I had never had sex, in fact the idea of sex terrified me. After drinking two Zima's freshmen year and puking in the dorm bathroom, I did not even drink. I started drinking, dressing provocatively, and lost about 20 pounds. I embraced my new identity and realized I was more fun and garnered more attention if I was drunk or high. I started actively seeking out drugs because this was cool. I put myself in dangerous and violating situations

I started meeting boys online through Friendster. It was dangerous. I didn't know these guys and would randomly meet them at their homes. My favorite became The Skater, a local cashier at the liquor store. In my mind it was a wonderful, transactional relationship. I could hook up with him and get alcohol. I was 18 and he was 25. It felt dangerous and cool. I also felt powerful. I was using my sexuality to get what I wanted. I didn't really like him but I liked what

he could provide to me, and, more importantly, I liked that it made good old The Boy a little bit jealous. I lost my virginity to The Skater after a night of driving around in the back of a van drinking Steel Reserve and capfuls of rum. I was the aggressor. This felt like something I needed to just get over and done with if I was to fulfill my reputation of “being a girl you have sex with.” We did it. It was painful. It was gross. I didn’t like it. But I awoke the next morning feeling proud of myself. I had accomplished a milestone and gotten something I feared out of the way. However, after that night I never hung out with The Skater again. I accomplished my mission and felt powerful that I was in control. I did not take his calls. I used him. I felt incredibly liberated in that my parents did not know about my new, secret life. They would be horrified but drinking, using drugs, and having sex felt like the ultimate freedom from their oppressive ways.

This story illustrates both hiding and coping. My intention was both to conform to the habitus of which I was a part and attempt to live within it. In order to gain social and cultural capital, I acted out sexually and conformed to the label of “the kind of girl you have sex with.” My social environment and friends created a social world made up of patterns. These patterns became deposited into me and guided my actions, thoughts, and feelings. One could contend that I was practicing to be “the kind of girl you have sex with,” but I was not without agency. I was still able to self-regulate my habitus by making intentional choices to act out, whether or not I was conscious of these practices.

To cope with a romantic loss, I developed habits that were normalized within my habitus. While Bourdieu (1977) might not view my dangerous actions as agentic, he might view my social capital as weak since the social world created by friends was one that placed me in an objectively harmful place. However, he would agree that the patterns I developed, created by the ways of being in my social environment, indoctrinated me to behave in a certain way that helped

me gain social and cultural capital in the college world/field. He would contend that the habits I developed to cope with romantic loss, certainly influenced by past experiences, functioned to create social norms that unite young people in the college environment of which I was a part. I quickly learned, by acting out sexually, I garnered attention in the college space, and this was a norm for being. Of course a tenet of Practice Theory is that practice is performed through the body, I used my own body to practice the norms of my environment. However, Ortner (2006) would view my choices to act out as agentic action that allowed me to recreate my world and engage in playing the game of social life. This experience and these choices would later guide my actions as a teacher as I played the social life game. Because of the intentionality behind my actions, I possessed agency in remaking my habitus.

This was perfect. I was in love.

Towards the end of my sophomore year, I met The Musician. We loved all the same music. He was an artist. He drove a maroon Camaro. He had two dogs. He played guitar. We spent hours on the phone, telling each other everything. The long, all-night phone calls that felt euphoric continued for a week. Finally, he asked me to go to a concert with him. Just the two of us. Alone. I was so excited. After the concert, which felt magical--- The Musician held my hand. I walked into my house and felt like Molly Ringwald in a John Hughes film. This was perfect. I was in love. My phone rang ten minutes later. It was The Musician. He told me not to say anything because he just needed to get something off his chest. He asked me to be his girlfriend, and of course I accepted. This was my first adult, official boyfriend. The Musician and I became enmeshed over the next few months. I didn't see it at the time but I was changing. I never hung out with my friends, I started skipping classes, and I completely changed my appearance. The

Musician said he liked punk girls. I dyed my hair black and traded my American Eagle clothes for ratty band t-shirts and Dickies.

The start of that summer felt magical. The Musician moved into my apartment. The minute both of us ended our work day, we would hole up watching movies in my apartment or aimlessly drive around town looking for something to do. I was in love. To me, The Musician represented freedom from my parents. I finally had someone to take care of me and protect me from them. We had already determined we were going to get married. In my naïve mind a marriage meant that my parents could no longer control my life. In July, things started to change.

Things got bad. Fast. I had never noticed his temper before. One day his car broke down and somehow it was my fault. He yelled at me and started punching the car. I was scared. I had never been around violence or outward anger. In my family, we kept our emotions locked tightly away never to expose them to the outside world. I had a terrible relationship with my parents. My parents controlled all aspects of my life but my parents were never abusive. All of this was truly unthinkable for me. I was overwhelmed.

Once I asked him to hang up his towel on the rack after taking a shower and he flew into a rage. He pinned me on my futon and screamed that all I did was complain and nag. He beat my head repeatedly on the metal frame of the futon until I started crying. He left. I didn't know what to do. It was summer. None of my friends were around. I couldn't call anyone. I definitely couldn't tell my parents. They would tell me this was my fault and they definitely didn't know The Musician was living with me. If I told them they would yell at me for living with a boy, having sex, and disobeying their rules. Hours later, The Musician returned with roses (I hate flowers, always have so I don't know why he thought this would win me over). He apologized, he cried. I

*held him and assured him it was okay and I would help him change through my love. This became the weekly pattern of our relationship. I began documenting every instance of abuse and my own thoughts of suicide in my ragged copy of *The Catcher in the Rye*...it was the only safe space I had. The Musician would never touch a book. I coped by only hanging out with my cat, and throwing myself back into the bulimia that plagued me as a teen.*

On the night of March 4, 2003, The Musician threw me in a trash can when I sent him into a rage because I made fun of a song he chose to play on his Tuesday night college radio show. My friend was there. My friend told me I needed to get away. I knew this was true. My friends took me on a trip and I told The Musician he needed to get all of his stuff out of my apartment (that I had quickly packed up while he was in class) before I returned. We were over. I made a clean break but The Musician did not. For the remainder of my college career, he stalked me, left dead animals on my front stoop, would purposely enroll in the same classes I was taking, and would tell anyone on campus that I was a crazy bitch. I started to reform old friendships, and was moving on with my life. By my senior year, I felt like I had escaped The Musician and was finally getting to have a fun college experience. School was going great, I ran the college radio and television stations, and my thesis won an award. I felt healthy again. I was dressing the way I wanted. I started to feel pretty and confident for the first time in years.

Eventually I started dating again. I knew I could not date anyone that went to our school because The Musician would harass them. Instead, I dated someone who lived hours away that I had met at a concert. He was nice—boring but nice. Most importantly he was safe. He had a normal family. Through all this, The Musician was always in the background. I knew he was following us every time The New Boyfriend came into town to visit me. When The New Boyfriend did visit, I would wake up in the morning and see The Musician's car parked down the street. It

all came to a climax when The New Boyfriend and I went to dinner at Olive Garden. I was driving and saw The Musician behind us the whole time. I thought we had lost him after dinner but spotted his car in my rearview mirror as we took the highway home. I told The New Boyfriend, "Don't freak out but I think The Musician is following us." The New Boyfriend reassured me that surely it was a coincidence. We got home and settled in for a night of movies and Bacardi O, when I saw a figure storming past my back door. "Oh shit, he's here. Lock the door. Lock the door." The New Boyfriend was confused. I ran to close my front door but The Musician's arm jutted through before I could do so. The New Boyfriend stepped up and I told him to go into the other room. I would handle this. My mission was to get The Musician out of the apartment. I said I would talk to him if he would step outside. He was in a rage. He went outside but just started belittling me. He was shaking me. I told him it was over. He needed to leave me alone, and I threw out an empty threat to call the police. He turned to leave and I thought everything was fine. He pivoted and pinned me up against the screen of the giant picture window in my living room and pulled out a knife. I knew that knife. It was one of my kitchen knives from the set my parents had given me when I moved in. How did he get it? It clicked. He had been sneaking into my house when I wasn't home. I had noticed things misplaced and missing but ignored it. He pressed the knife to my throat but I knew he wasn't going to do anything, or maybe I had resigned myself to letting him do something. Then this would finally be over. Two things happened, my elderly neighbor came outside to smoke and The New Boyfriend emerged from the apartment with the phone in his hand. The Musician quickly let me go and took off. I reassured The New Boyfriend I was fine, this was normal, I knew how to handle The Musician, let's continue with our fun night.

In my heart, I knew things were never going to change. I was going to be followed, bothered by The Musician forever. The next week The New Boyfriend went away on a two week long trip. Through my work at the radio station I got free tickets to see Liz Phair—the catch was that the music director had to go with me. The Musician was the music director. It was stupid but I went with him. The lure of Liz Phair outweighed the danger. I also knew that he would be on his best behavior in public and The New Boyfriend was out of town so maybe that would cool his rage. The concert was amazing. The time with The Musician felt like old times. I remembered why I liked him. He was fun and our conversation was easy. We got back to town and he insisted on walking me to my door. Things seemed OKAY so I allowed him to come in and hang out for a bit. I must have fallen asleep because the next thing I remember was him on top of me on my futon, and my Dickies dress pulled up. I closed my eyes and willed myself back to sleep. He was gone the next morning and I told myself I imagined last night. That morning I emailed The New Boyfriend and told him that things just weren't working out and we needed to break up. I knew I would never escape The Musician and it was no use to drag anyone else into it. I only had a few months before I would graduate. I could get through this until then. I could move away and be free of my parents and The Musician. For my own safety and sanity, I went to The Musician and told him we should get back together. He was thrilled. In fact, things got a lot easier since I was dating him. I didn't feel paranoid nor live in fear of when he was going to show up. I didn't actually tell any of my friends that we were dating because I was ashamed.

The night before my graduation I was packing up the final pieces of my apartment. Immediately after the graduation ceremony, my parents were packing up all my things in their truck and I was moving back in with them for the summer. In three short months, I would be moving to Memphis--- free of The Musician and free of my parents. I would have escaped. At 1

am The Musician called me. I knew he was freaking out because I was leaving and moving out of his grasp. On this call The Musician began by saying, “You should get a pregnancy test.” “What?” I had purposefully resisted having sex with him even though we were back together. I would get him drunk and avoid it at all costs. He proceeded, “Remember that night after Liz Phair? I had sex with you.” I was stunned. I mean I subconsciously knew it had happened but had put it out of my mind. He told me he thought it was okay because we had had such a fun time at the show, and he thought I wanted it. He said I was asleep so he didn’t think I would mind. I didn’t argue. I didn’t cry. I said “Okay”. I told him I would say goodbye to him before I left the next day. I never thought of this again. I was about to escape and could put all of this behind me. If I just kept this a secret everything would be okay.

Here I both hid and resisted within this story. The cultural capital that The Musician provided me gave me a path to gain freedom from my parents, but the social rules, that were so deeply engrained in me by my parents, prevented me from escaping a habitus with The Musician that was rife with abuse and negative psychological impact. I learned that if I wanted to maintain freedom from my parents then I could not reveal the abuse I was experiencing. However, this form of hiding also served as a powerful coping mechanism for me. Although unhealthy, I learned that I could remake my habitus, that was characterized by abuse, by continuing to date The Musician. By making this decision or playing the game, which most would find unthinkable, I was able to regain some form of control in my own life and establish some feeling of safety. Hiding would continue to be a coping mechanism I relied upon in my professional world.

The school felt like she was okay

I had coached the girls on the Destination Imagination¹⁷ team for three years and knew them long before that. Although I was not a mother, these girls felt like my daughters. They even called me Mama Cookie. I always felt like I needed to protect my students but the pull was even stronger with these girls.

December 7, 2016: The high school principal reached her arm out of the middle school principal's office and quickly pulled me in. I entered and she immediately told me to sit. No one else was in the room. As usual, I thought I was being fired. Any time I was pulled into an unexpected meeting with administration I thought I was being fired. The principal informed me that the parents of The Girl, one of my Destination Imagination team members, were in the next room with police. The Girl had been sexually assaulted during Destination Imagination practice in my office last night. It was all captured on video. I felt sick, I was shaking, but I tried to hold it together. I hate myself that instead of asking about The Girl, I immediately wanted to cover my ass. I explained that I left the team to work on some tasks for competition because I was called away to an IEP meeting. They were in high school and I thought they would be fine. I told them to stay in my office and lock the door. The principal assured me that I was not being blamed and that they would be handling the matter. She told me who the boy was, who assaulted The Girl, and I made it clear there was no reason for him to be in my office on the middle school side of the building. I left the room and immediately ran into The Girl's mother. We hugged and cried. I begged for forgiveness and apologized. Did I have a right to do this? Her child was harmed because of me. She assured me that she did not blame me.

¹⁷ Destination Imagination is a creative competition for young people that teaches creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration.

I was overwhelmed with worry and guilt for the next few weeks. Shortly after the incident The Girl informed me that the boy was back in her class and they had been placed in a group together. She shared that girls were harassing her and calling her a slut. I was pissed. Fuck this. I was going to fix this. I reported all of this to the principal who assured me that the administrative team was taking action.

I was nauseous. I thought of all the times I felt uncomfortable with boys and men and just stayed silent. The Girl was so brave.

February. As far as I could tell nothing had been done. The Girl was not mentally well. Every day she would get passes to come to my office crying. The young man was still around her all the time. She did not understand why she was being punished by her peers and the school for speaking up. I went to administration, the school executive director, and the board with my concerns, reports of The Girl's harassment, and questioned why if the police charged the young man he was not facing punishment by the school. I was informed that if they expelled the young man then he would be faced with attending an alternative school, and it was difficult for Black young men to recover from this. I asked how The Girl was supposed to recover from her assault when she had to sit in the same class with him? I was told The Girl was smart and resilient and the school felt like she was okay.

I was getting nowhere and felt like I needed to protect The Girl since I had failed her before. I worked in news before teaching so I reached out to my reporter friends at a local station. I was going to force the school into action by exposing this. The reporters warned me this was dangerous and I could lose my job even if they took measures to hide my identity. While I cared about losing my job, I cared more about the cycle of secrecy and hiding anything negative that was so deeply intertwined with the culture of the school. I could not share this

decision with anyone. I felt anxious and scared. My husband thought I was being dramatic. He didn't understand.

After the story came out, the school scrambled to put a positive spin on things. Rather than helping The Girl, it turned into a witch hunt to find out who the whistle blower was. Every day I came to work I would consciously try not to use the words I spoke in the interview, I changed my posture, and I even tried to speak in a different cadence. I would sit in my office waiting to be called into the executive director's office. No one ever thought it was me. Instead they accused The Girl's mother of going to the news. I ended up just causing more trauma for The Girl. This wasn't my story to tell. My exposure did not cause change. Instead, the school continued to mask this with inflated numbers about college acceptance rates, bringing in competing news stations to cover student concerts, and letting the boy remain in The Girl's classes. Two months later the boy assaulted another girl and was finally expelled.

I still feel guilt with this and acknowledge my part in harming The Girl. This girl who wanted to be a pediatrician ended up graduating, not attending college, and remained living at home with her parents. I blame myself. The Girl changed after that year. I know it is selfish to blame myself, but it was also selfish to tell a story that wasn't mine.

Here, I outline the extreme psychological toll that teaching, and especially my need to protect and care for my student took on my professional and personal life. For me, the school climate and administration, created a hidden set of rules where secrecy was the norm. Protecting the reputation of the school was privileged over protecting the safety of teachers and students. This experience also made me connect to my own unhealthy coping mechanisms surrounding my own experiences of abuse, but provided me with the impetus to resist and remake my social world, although this process took time. My initial compliance with hiding the incident was due to

poor social capital with administrators and fellow teachers, who were not as outraged by this incident as myself. I was indoctrinated how to think within the confines of the charters school by the socially created ways of being created by institutional traditions, administrative rules, and school culture. However, I entered the school with my own life experience of abuse, and with that cultural capital I was able to resist a habitus that functioned to create norms and control teachers. Although I feel guilt for telling a story that was not mine, I was able to exert agentic action to remake my social structure to illuminate the power and subjectivity of the school by going to the news.

Discussion

The habitus can give birth to the integration of common experiences, but personal and individual differences arise (Bourdieu, 1977). In my case, the personal differences I had with the school manifested because of my experience with men and abuse. Ultimately, for Bourdieu (1977), the habitus served as a structure to unite these experiences into some position such as class. He contended that the hallmark of practice is when something is performed through the body, in a socially constructed space, to embody the structures of the world. As such, agents must abandon notions of simple freedom or determinism. The practices of such habitus are self-regulated by the agents, and these practices are developed to cope with unforeseen circumstances.

However, Bourdieu (1977) reasoned that agents are unconscious of these practices since the habitus is hidden under its subjective nature. A commonsense world is created by the habitus, and this theory provides the framework to analyze how actors perform within the structures of habitus. These agents are not only influenced by the structure but influence the structure as well

(Bourdieu, 1977). Within the habitus, agents are constantly remaking their practices, conditions, and the self (Skeggs, 2004).

To deviate from Bourdieu and adopting Ortner's (2006) serious games, Ortner focused on the agentic action that remakes social structure and illuminates complex forms of social relations like power and subjectivity. My stories illustrate this conception. While, I was always enmeshed within relations of power and inequality, in the form of my parents, The Musician, or the school, I was able to act as my own agent to remake my social structure. While other scholars (Beckman et al., 2018; Sullivan, 2002), have dismissed the usefulness of Practice Theory and its forms in the world of education research, my stories show its relevance when considering how teachers, with their own individual experiences, in a charter school may use agentic action to resist the institutional and patriarchal norms of the charter school (Apple, 1993).

To further clarify the value of Practice Theory as applied to my phenomenon of interest, I will provide examples of Bourdieu's conception of capital, field, and habitus as they manifest in the charter school institution. Following Bourdieu, in the charter school social capital refers to the relationships teachers have with their colleagues and administrators (Bourdieu, 1977). The stronger the bonds of these networks, the more teachers have access to resources, individual agency to act in their classrooms, and possible pay raises. A teacher's strong social network with administrators allows freedom and could possibly lead to less administrator oversight. In my story, I did not possess these networks. The administration dismissed my concerns and thought, because of my low status that I would not take action—I would simply conform to their norms, particularly those that limit community voice (Riley & Moore Mensah, 2022). In the personal story I share, "This was perfect. I was in love", I did possess social capital and was, eventually, able to remove The Musician from my home with the help of my social network.

Cultural capital refers to a teacher's knowledge of the institutional rules of the charter school, understanding ways of behavior that guide the charter school, and relationships with families, students, and charter school staff. In the charter school, the field is comprised of both the charter school itself and the teacher's individual classroom. With more social and cultural capital, a teacher can gain more agency within the field, but their function within these fields is dependent upon their relationships, and school and content knowledge. I was slow to take action to protect The Girl because I was, firstly, afraid of breaking the rules of the school and the competitive culture of the school made me fearful of losing my job (Apple, 1993; Hursh & Martina, 2016).

Teacher behaviors within the charter school and their classrooms are shaped by the habitus created by the charter school institution. My behavior within the confines of the school had been crafted for years, and I knew I needed to follow the rules in order to be considered a good employee. I was scared and for my safety in the school or in my harmful relationships, playing the game and obeying a rule benefited me more than resistance (Bourdieu, 1977). I conformed to a culture of secrecy, both because of the norms set by the school and my own familial experience. Charter school teachers do not create the ways of being within the school, rather they are created through institutional traditions, neoliberal reform, administrative rules, school culture, and the policies that rule the charter school. These are socially created ways of being that gradually indoctrinate teachers to act, think, and feel in particular ways that are dictated by the charter school (Apple, 1993; Hursh & Martina, 2016). While each teacher will have different experiences and bring their own life experiences to the school, the habitus functions to create social norms that will unite these teachers. Specifically, teachers come to the charter school with varied education, backgrounds, and aims; but these social norms, like

classroom management systems, dress codes, and evaluations, become unconscious embodied practice for teachers. As a charter school teacher, eventually all fall into practicing instruction and acting in the same way as dictated by the norms of the charter school habitus (Hubbard & Kulkami, 2009). I was finally able to resist due to my own varied background and experiences. My own experience with abuse caused me to viscerally re-experience this trauma with *The Girl*. Eventually, I resisted the norms of the charter school habitus as I relied on my own past experience to remake my habitus.

Other research has applied Practice Theory (Bourdieu, 1977) only to students (Tichavakunda, 2019) but this theory is a valuable tool to understand the realities of teachers. As noted, Bourdieu contends that the hallmark of practice is when something is performed through the body and my stories illustrate how teaching and institutional practices become embodied practice. My ways of being as a young woman in an abusive relationship were embodied, so much so that I allowed my own body to be violated in order to conform to my way of being. In the school, I was directed how to perform and act, but was able to influence and change this structure to help subvert the oppressive habitus and gain capital in the field (Ortner, 2006).

As one final point, the absence of authentic social relations in both my personal and school stories, which was actively crafted by the administration, *The Musician*, and my parents, inhibited myself from developing a true sense of identity. It was only through resistance by acting out, remaining with an abusive partner to avoid harm, and exposing the school to the news, that I was able to form a true identity. Schools must provide caring, supportive, and collaborative environments for teachers and students in order to foster freedom and advance practice (Bendixen et al., 2022). The administration of the school, however, promoted what amounted to fractured identities—a loss of personal, core identity—in order to maintain control

over its teachers and students. This sort of orientation, however, prevents meaningful consensus-building, disempowers teachers, and in so doing inhibits transformational change.

Anyon (2014) described the ways in which collective engagement can empower social movements and facilitate agency. When teachers mobilize collectively, gaining both social and cultural capital, to challenge systems of oppression in schools, they effectively advocate for themselves, press their claims, and disrupt existing power structures. Should schools really be the transformational, safe institutions that they so often claim, they must create the conditions for meaningful social relations and a social world that does not seek to norm but allows room for teachers and students to take agentic action to make and remake their social worlds. Schools need to look inward to dismantle the patriarchal, oppressive, and neoliberal structures embedded in these institutions. With more collective social action and resistance the world of teaching could become more professionalized, and could become a habitus that seeks to normalize resistance, freedom, and safety. I also recommend self-understanding and looking inward as a quicker route to social change than direct institutional change (Ellis, 2004).

Limitations & Implications

While this work is grounded in my own experience, there are some limitations. I did not engage in member checking because I needed to emotionally protect myself. While I did triangulate the data with the use of planners, journals, online conversations with friends, and social media posts, I chose to not directly reach out to the subjects I include in my stories. Ethically, I did not feel comfortable reaching out to The Girl as I knew her experience traumatized her, and I did not want to disrupt her life (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). However, I did anonymize these subjects to hide their true identities.

Of course, one limitation of autoethnography is the reality that as soon as words hit paper, the story becomes a recollection of the past. Certainly truth is an evolving process, and what happens in the past mutates as the storyteller grows and reflects. Time will inevitably influence what becomes important in a story (Ellis, 2004). Some of the accounts recalled occurred 20 years ago, and my experience and time has certainly influenced what I now deem important in my story (Fraser & MacDougall, 2017). Additionally, the inherently personal nature of autoethnography introduces bias. My own negative experiences in the school introduce bias to my story, and the deeply personal and vulnerable incidents I recount are certainly colored by time and the harm caused to me.

Hughes and Pennington (2017) propose three approaches to legitimizing autoethnography—links to existing qualitative constructs, traditional qualitative methodology, and use of professional association standards. Coming from a post-structuralist paradigm, in general, I reject the notions of legitimization. However, I did connect this work with key qualitative research requirements by explaining the methodology, my ontological and epistemological commitments, connecting it to educative research, and explaining my subjectivities to aim at addressing fairness. This work does not “legitimize” by following traditional qualitative methodology as described by Hughes and Pennington (2017). My methodology made clear that I was a member in the social world under study, I practiced reflexivity through the writing of my story and data analysis, I made myself visible in my stories, and I connected literature to the broader social phenomenon I set out to study.

However, one limitation is that I did not engage in dialogue with others. For the reasons aforementioned concerning member checking, I felt that I could appropriately understand my social world without being in dialogue or relation with others. One could also view a lack of a

measurement tool in data analysis as a limitation, as this is a standard set forth by the American Educational Research Association's 2006 reporting standards but I adhere to the ideology that the thinking that occurred while writing produced the analysis because this is an entangled process (Guttorm et al., 2015; Adams St. Pierre, 1999).

Overall, this process was incredibly therapeutic as it allowed me to write and be reflexive about specific occurrences that I had kept hidden from myself and others, and it served as a way of self-healing (Baker-Bell, 2017; Goodson, 2019). There is importance in the sharing of stories with others in order to exert social change, and autoethnographic research allows the linking of the personal with the political and does not pathologize the people whose experiences are shared (Fraser & MacDougall, 2017). Specifically, writing about The Musician permitted me the reflexivity to view myself not as a victim but as an agent with power. Recounting The Girl's story also complicated my original thoughts, as I now wonder whether I had the right to out her story to the news. However, I also recognize that just because this work was therapeutic for me, it does not mean that others will find value in it (Ellis, 2004).

The greatest challenge in this process occurred at a personal level as I uncovered artifacts to validate my experiences. Unexpected emotions and memories emerged, but this forced me to confront the past in a productive way (Ellis, 2004). It was also challenging to lay myself out, so to speak, and expose my own faults, errors, and secrets. However, once the process was complete this was an incredibly liberating experience as it allows me to own my story, and my act of sharing was one of resistance (Baker-Bell, 2017). Ultimately, I have realized that, despite theoretical reasoning, none of the chronicled incidents should have happened. I did not ask to be a part of these social worlds, but in these situations I was forced to take action, be it harmful or helpful. No one should experience the social worlds that The Girl and I faced. With my work, it

is not my intent to aim towards generalizability but I want to offer insight into my world and provide understanding of my experiences (Fraser & MacDougall, 2017). Ultimately, my goal is to open up my own vulnerabilities for others to explore their own realities and understandings or find connection and meaning to my stories.

References

- Aalbers, M. B. (2013). Neoliberalism is dead...Long live neoliberalism! *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(3), 1083-1090.
- Adams St. Pierre, E. (1999). The work of response in ethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28(3), 266-287.
- Angrist, J. D., & Guryan, J. (2007). Does teacher testing raise teacher quality? Evidence from state certification requirements. *Economics of Education Review*, 27(2008), 483-503.
- Anyon, J. (2014). *Radical possibilities public policy, urban education, and a new social movement* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Apple, M. W. (1993). The politics of official knowledge: Does a national curriculum make sense? *Teachers College Record*, 95(2), 222-241.
- Apple, M. W. (2007). Schooling, markets, race, and an audit culture. *Counterpoints*, 2007(305), 27-43.
- Baker-Bell, A. (2017). For Loretta: A black woman literacy scholar's journey to prioritizing self-preservation and black feminist-womanist storytelling. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 49(4), 526-543.
- Barker, C., & Jane, E. A. (2016). *Cultural studies theory and practice 5th Edition*. Sage Publications Inc.
- Beckman, K., Apps, T., Bennett, S., & Lockyer, L. (2018). Conceptualising technology practice in education using Bourdieu's sociology. *Learning, Media, and Technology*, 43(2), 197-210.

- Bendixen, L. D., Plachowski, T., & Olafson, L. (2022). Criticalizing teacher perceptions of urban school climate: Exploring the impact of racism and race-evasive culture in a predominately white teacher workforce. *Education and Urban Society*, 00(0), 1-26.
- Betts, J. R., Zau, A. C., & Rice, L. A. (2003). *Determinants of student achievement: New evidence from San Diego*. Public Policy Institute of California.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1972).
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. University of Chicago Press.
- Bochner, A. P. (2012). On first-person narrative scholarship: Autoethnography as acts of meaning. *Narrative Inquiry*, 22, 155-164.
- Bochner, A. P., & Riggs, N. A. (2014). Practicing narrative inquiry. In P. Leavy (Ed.). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 195-222). Oxford University Press.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (2016). *Evocative autoethnography writing lives and telling stories*. Routledge.
- Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2005). Explaining the short careers of high-achieving teachers in schools with low-performing students. *American Economic Review*, 95(2), 166-171.
- Buras, K. L. (2015). *Charter schools, race, and urban space: Where the market meets grassroots resistance*. Routledge.

- Cain, L. K., Williams, R. E., & Bradshaw, V. (2022). Establishing data quality in qualitative research: Trustworthiness and a lack of consensus. In Ivankova, N. (Ed.) *International encyclopedia of education* (4th ed.). Elsevier.
- Clandinin, D. J., Steeves, P., & Caine, V. (Eds.). (2013). *Composing lives in transition: A narrative inquiry into the experiences of early school leavers*. Emerald Group Publishing.
- Collins, K. M. (2014). A disability studies in education (DSE) analysis of corporate based educational reform: Lessons from New Orleans. In D. Connor, J. Valle, & C. Hale (Eds.), *Practicing disability studies in education: Acting toward social change* (pp. 217 – 233). Peter Lang Publishing.
- Cooper, B. (2020). *We keep the dead close: A murder at Harvard and a half century of silence*. Grand Central Publishing.
- Cummins, M. W., & Huber, A. A. (2022). Documenting emotional labor: An exercise in critical communication pedagogy. *Journal of Autoethnography*, 3(2), 187-202.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Vasquez Heilig, J. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13(42), 1-51.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *Sociological methods: A sourcebook* (2nd ed.). McGraw Hill.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I a methodological novel about autoethnography*. Alta Mira Press.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733-768). Sage.

- Fabricant, M., & Fine, M. (2012). *Charter schools and the corporate makeover of public education: What's at stake?* Teachers College Press.
- Feng, L. (2014). Teacher placement, mobility, and occupational choices after teaching. *Education Economics*, 22(1), 24-47.
- Fine, M., & Fox, M. (2013). Accountable to whom? A critical science counter-story about a city that stopped caring for its young. *Children and Society*, 27(2013), 321-335.
- Fraser, H. & MacDougall, C. (2017). Doing narrative feminist research: Intersections and challenges. *Qualitative Social Work*, 16(2), 240-254.
- Gabor, A. (2013, September 20). The great charter tryout: Are New Orleans's schools a model for the nation—or a cautionary tale? *Newsweek*. Available: <http://mag.newsweek.com/2013/09/20/post-katrina-the-great-new-orleans-charter-tryout.html>
- Golann, J. W., Debs, M., & Weiss, A. L. (2019). “To be strict on your own”: Black and Latinx parents evaluate discipline in urban choice schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56(5), 1896-1929.
- Goodson, L. (2019). Revealing our superpowers: An autoethnography on childhood abuse and how it shapes educators. *Educational Considerations*, 44(2), 1-9.
- Gotz, I. (1990). *Zen and the art of teaching*. J.L. Wilkerson Publishing Company.
- Graham, L. J., & Jahnukainen, M. (2011). Wherefore art though, inclusion? Analysing the development of inclusive education in New South Wales, Finland and Alberta. *Journal of Education Policy*, 26(2), 263-288.

- Gulosino, C., Ni, Y., & Rorrer, A. K. (2019). Newly hired teacher mobility in charter schools and traditional public schools: An application of segmented labor market theory. *American Journal of Education*, 125(4), 547-592.
- Guttorm, H., Hohti, R., & Paakkari, A. (2015). "Do the next thing": An interview with Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre on post-qualitative methodology. *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology*, 6(1), 15-22.
- Haddix, M. (2015). *Cultivating racial and linguistic diversity in literacy teacher education Teachers like me*. Routledge.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.
- Hubbard, L., & Kulkarni, R. (2009). Charter schools: Learning from the past, planning for the future. *Journal of Educational Change*, 10(2-3), 173-189.
- Hughes, S. A., & Pennington, J. L. (2017). *Autoethnography process, product, and possibility for critical social research*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Hursh, D., & Martina, C.A. (2016). The end of public schools? Or a new beginning? *The Educational Forum*, 80(2), 189-206.
- Imazeki, J. (2005). Teacher salaries and teacher attrition. *Economics of Education Review*, 24(4), 431-449.
- Ingersoll, R. M., Merrill, E., Stuckey, D., & Collins, G. (2018). *Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force*. Updated October 2018.
- Johnson, T., Boyden, J. E., & Pittz, W. J. (2001). *Racial profiling and punishment in US public schools: How zero tolerance policies and high stakes testing subvert academic excellence and racial equity*. Applied Research Center.
- <https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/pdf/208cpdf.pdf>

- Jones, S. H. (2016). Living bodies of thought: The 'critical' in critical autoethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(4), 228-237.
- Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *Sociology Quarterly*, 34(4), 673-693.
- Levinson, B. A. U., Sutton, M., & Winstead, T. (2009). Education policy as a practice of power theoretical tools, ethnographic methods, democratic options. *Educational Policy*, 23(6), 767-795. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904808320676>
- Liasidou, A., & Symeou, L. (2018). Neoliberal versus social justice reforms in education policy and practice: Discourses, politics and disability rights in education. *Critical Studies in Education*, 59(2), 149-166.
- Lipman, P. (2011). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. Routledge.
- Mac, S. (2022). Neoliberalism and inclusive education: A critical ethnographic case study of inclusive education at an urban charter school. *Critical Education*, 13(2), 1-21.
- Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and social theory culture, power, and the acting subject*. Duke University Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5 Pt 2), 1189.
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity—one's own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(7), 17-21.
- Pitre, N. Y., Kushner, K. E., Raine, K. D., & Hegadoren, K. M. (2013). Critical feminist narrative inquiry advancing knowledge through double-hermeneutic narrative analysis. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 36(20), 118-132.

- Riley, A. D., & Moore Mensah, F. (2022). "My curriculum has no soul!": A case study of the experiences of Black women science teachers working at charter schools, *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 34(1), 86-103.
- Robson, K., & Sanders, C. (2009). *Quantifying theory: Pierre Bourdieu*. Springer Dordrecht.
- Salinger, J. D. (1945). *The catcher in the rye*. Bantam Books.
- Sipe, L., & Constable, S. (1996). A chart of four contemporary research paradigms: Metaphors for the modes of inquiry. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 1(1996), 153-163.
- Skeggs, B. (2004). Exchange, value and affect: Bourdieu and 'the self'. *The Sociological Review*, 52(2), 75-95.
- Smitherman, G. (2000). *Black talk: Words and phrases from the hood to the amen corner*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Spillane, J., Reiser, B., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing policy implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, 72, 387-431. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543072003387>
- Spring, J. H. (2015). *Globalization of education: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Spry, T. (2009). Bodies of/as evidence in autoethnography. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 1(4), 603-610.
- Spry, T. (2011). Performative autoethnography: Critical embodiments and possibilities. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.) (pp. 497-511). SAGE Publications Inc.

- Sturges, K. M. (2015). Curriculum testing on the persistent fringes: Neoliberal policy and the new regime of Title I high school reform. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 46(2), 129-146.
- Sullivan, A. (2002). Bourdieu and education: How useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers? *The Netherlands' Journal of Social Sciences*, 38, 144-166.
- Tichavakunda, A. A. (2019). An overdue theoretical discourse: Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Critical Race Theory in education. *Educational Studies*, 55(6), 651-666.
- Tyack, D. B. (1976). Ways of seeing: An essay on the history of compulsory schooling. *Harvard Educational Review*, 46(3), 355-389.
- Wacquant, L. (2005). Habitus. In J. Beckert & M. Zafirovski (Eds.). *International encyclopedia of economic sociology* (p. 316). Routledge.
- Waitoller, F. R. (2020). *Excluded by choice: Urban students with disabilities in the education marketplace*. Teacher College Press.
- Waitoller, F. R., & Kozleski, E. B. (2013). Working in boundary practices: Identity development and learning in partnerships for inclusive education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(1), 35-45.
- Wilson, J. A. (2018). *Neoliberalism: Key ideas in media and cultural studies*. Routledge.

CHAPTER IV
“THE WAY WE FEEL THE BURDEN:” HOW WOMEN TEACHERS
REMAIN RESILIENT IN THE CHARTER SCHOOL SETTING

Abstract

I have prepared this ethnodramatic script and performance to explore how teachers within the charter school system describe their own resiliency, specifically, two women teaching at a charter school in the Southeast United States. While scholars have historically examined teacher retention, to date, our field lacks existing literature surrounding the experiences and perspectives of women charter school teachers and the skills they must develop to cope with their circumstances. In this study, I interviewed two women charter school teachers and analyzed the stories they shared utilizing ethnodrama and created an ethnodrama script to demonstrate my findings. This script will demonstrate how my participants processed their experiences and highlight the often unhealthy and destructive coping mechanisms they used to simply persist within their classrooms.

Keywords: ethnodrama, charter school, teacher, resiliency, Practice Theory

In the early 20th century, women became teachers as a transition between their father's home and their husband's home. Seemingly, they had control of their classrooms but were still controlled by men administrators (Quantz, 1985). Despite the new millennium, not much has changed. Coupled with this, teachers not doing enough to help their students succeed is the dominant narrative in education, and to hold teachers accountable assessment measures like the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and high-stakes assessments are needed. Something is wrong with the teacher, not the system.

With this research, I explore how women teachers within the charter school system describe their coping techniques to remain resilient and survive working in the charter school culture. The purpose of this study is to uncover how teachers within the charter school system describe their own resiliency, specifically, two women teaching at a charter school in the Southeast United States. Techniques for resiliency are generally defined as any practice or support that aides a teacher in developing a teacher identity and remaining in the charter school field. The research questions that guide this study are as follows: How do women who work as charter school teachers describe the techniques they have developed in order to remain in the field?; and Do women teachers resist the hidden rules of the charter school institution, and if so, how? First, I present a review of literature that contextualizes women in teaching, charter schools, and neoliberal reforms. I outline my theoretical framework, rooted in Bourdieu's (1977) Theory of Practice, and I follow this with a description of my methodology and ethnodramatic analysis. I conclude with my findings and a discussion rooted in Practice Theory.

Review of Literature

This research is important because of the current teacher retention crisis. Currently, teachers leave the profession at high rates nationally; 44% of teachers leave the field of

education within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll et al., 2018). According to the U.S. Department of Education, teacher turnover rates are 18.5% higher in charter schools compared to a 13.4% rate in public schools (Gulosino et al., 2019). Not only does this have real consequences for students, who are then exposed to a sort of revolving door of inexperienced teachers not invested in teaching for the long haul, but the profession as a whole becomes largely de-professionalized (Bendixen et al., 2022; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Standeven 2022; Sloan 2007). Compounding this issue is Teach for America (TFA). TFA is a private-sector teacher training/leadership organization that recruits, trains, and places its corps members (CMs) in low-income urban and rural schools for two years (Teach for America, 2020). In 2018, TFA sent 40% of its CMs to teach in charter schools (Waldman, 2019). This exacerbates the already high charter turnover rates, as TFA does not envision teaching as a long-term career; rather, teaching is one stop on the path to a more meaningful and/or lucrative career at higher levels of school administration/leadership, charter school management, education policy, etc. (e.g., Anderson et al., 2022; Brewer et al., 2016; Cersonsky, 2013; Jacobsen & Linkow, 2014; Trujillo et al., 2017).

Women in Teaching

Due to the cultural and social changes prevalent in the nineteenth century, women entered the teaching field at high rates (Blount, 1999; Hoffman, 1981). Women were willing to accept less pay than men, and this was a major motivation for their admittance into the field (Tyack & Hansot, 1990). Since then, the prominence of women as teachers has remained. With this comes the antiquated view that women are the born educators of children (Clifford, 2014). Teaching is perceived as less of a job and more of a mission or personal commitment (Rousmaniere, 1994).

Historically, once women began to hold the majority of teaching positions schools began placing men in administrative positions to control the women teaching force that began to

dominate the field (Vennes, 2022). Gender constructs negatively impact women's career progression in the teaching field, as they are held to norms and standards that align with the white male narrative (Brunner, 2003). Women are 1.3 times more likely to leave teaching than men (Borman & Dowling, 2008). While women leave the field at higher rates than men, there is no significant difference between men and women teacher attrition in charter schools (Buck, 2023; Miron & Applegate, 2007).

For women, teaching in urban public and charter schools is complicated. The construct of gender is especially prominent in education, and Lather (1987) argued that it is paramount to take gender under consideration when trying to understand the work lives of teachers. Women teachers are tasked with caring for the home and family, while holding the dual role of a dedicated professional (Darling-Hammond, 1985). Society expects women teachers to meet high-stakes accountability demands while maintaining a subordinate role within the teaching field (Lightfoot, 1978).

Charter Schools

In the current education climate, charter schools are the embodiment of neoliberal educational reform efforts (Fabricant & Fine, 2012; Giroux, 2012; Waitoller, 2020). By definition, charter schools are publicly funded schools, operated privately, and concentrated in urban areas (Lipman, 2011). While charter schools introduce competition and school choice into the educational marketplace, they also follow neoliberal ontologies of competition and meritocracy and are ultimately harmful to students in urban schools (Mac, 2022). The gender make-up of charter school teachers also mirrors that of public schools, according to the U.S. Department of Education 2020 data 76.5% of charter school teachers are women (Will, 2020).

Much of the research indicates that charter school teachers, women in particular, exit high-poverty, high-minority schools not because of the students they teach but because of a lack of support from the charter school (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al. 2011, Buckley et al., 2004). Teachers remain in charter schools that provide administrative and collegial support, mentoring, and professional development (Ingersoll, 2001; Kirby et al., 1999).

Even though charter schools are located in communities of color, their hiring practices are not reflective of the population, and are staffed by a majority of white teachers and the few teachers of color are often silenced (Riley & Mensah, 2022; White, 2016). White (2020) found charter schools primarily hire white, women teachers because they are hesitant to push against school practices and curriculum. As an added covert benefit, white ideologies and practices are normalized by hiring white teachers (Noguera & Syeed, 2020).

Women teachers perceive male administrators have too much control over their lives, both at work and home (Griffin, 1997). Women must sacrifice personal time to meet the high-stakes expectations of urban public and charter schools (Griffin, 1997). This also contributes to a sense of isolation for women teachers, and cliques established based on administrator favoritism (Griffin, 1997). Women teachers who take discreet action to make changes for social justice are often faced with risk like ostracization or losing their job (Marshall & Anderson, 2008; Ryan, 2016; Singer, 2020).

Historically, scholars have focused on specific teacher groups (e.g., Brewer & deMarrais, 2015; Pennington, 2007; Rodriguez, 2009; Thomas, 2018), but have failed to center techniques for resiliency that women charter school teachers develop to cope with their circumstances. Despite the current research and public prominence of ongoing debates about neoliberal reform, there is limited scholarship on the ways in which women charter school teachers live or embody

these practices in traditional charter schools (Thomas, 2018). While all teachers face significant challenges as they navigate their roles in charter schools, unlike previous work this study focuses on how women charter school teachers embody charter school practices, and this embodiment will be linked to Pierre Bourdieu's Practice Theory (1977). Practice Theory in its entirety is mostly taken up in the fields of anthropology and sociology (Ortner, 2006), and other education scholars have utilized only the cultural reproduction pieces of this theory as it relates to education (Beckman et al., 2018; Sullivan 2002).

This application will add nuance to the current research landscape, but on a broader level it introduces a new approach to considering educational policies through the bodies and fields of women teachers. The accounts presented here have the potential to provide insights into how women charter school teachers might maintain legitimacy and resilience in the field, and highlight the ways in which teachers can make sense of their role within the charter school field which could lead to retention in the field, and recreation and disruption of ways of policy embodiment.

Theoretical Framework

In Practice Theory, Bourdieu¹⁸ (1977) argued that culture is not the product of free will or underlying principles, but is actively constructed by social actors, humans with agency, from dispositions structured by previous events. With this in mind, Bourdieu's theory involves three major concepts-- habitus, field, and capital (Bourdieu, 1977). Practice or enduring actions are solidified when field, habitus, and capital converge (see Figure 2).

¹⁸ Bourdieu was part of the poststructuralist movement. He began from a structuralist stance but his work moved beyond this by challenging traditional notions of symbolic power (Robson & Sanders, 2009).

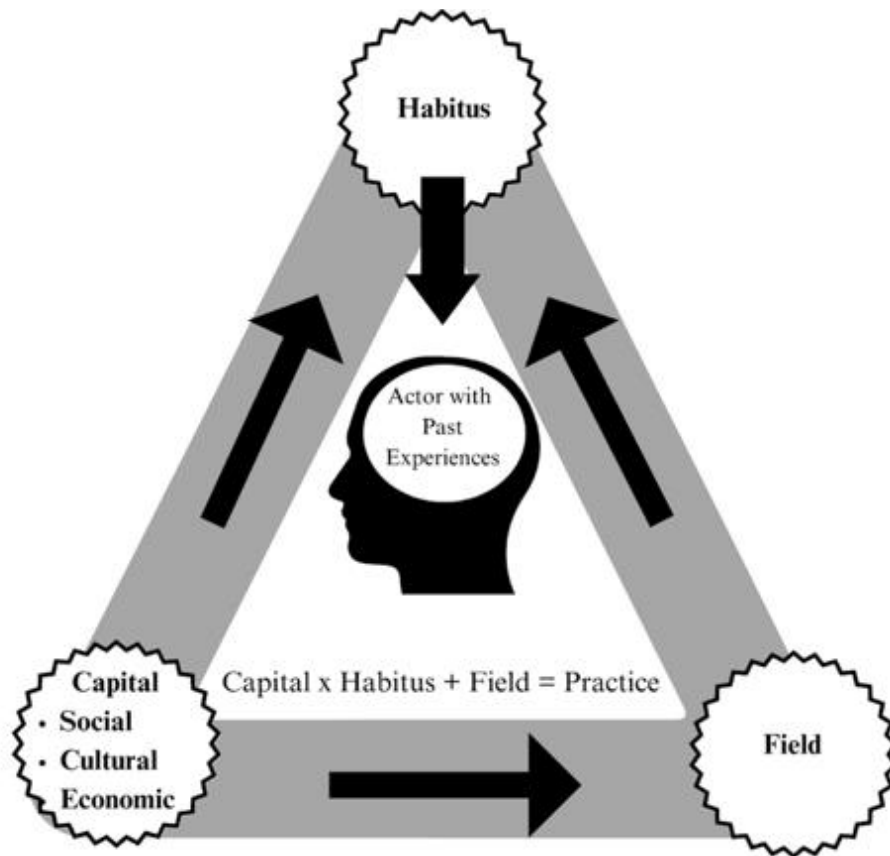


Figure 2

Practice Theory Visualization

Note. Adapted from “Project-as-Practice: Applying Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice on Project Managers,” by T. Kalogeropoulos et al., 2020, *Project Management Journal*, 51(6), 599-616.

Bourdieu conceived of capital as a toolkit, including cultural and social capital (1977). One's cultural and social capital depends on the field—capital does not exist without relation to a field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Finally, the field influences one's behavior as it shapes the socialized norms reproduced in their habitus. The habitus is a system of schemes that allows for individual agency and innovation but it sets limits upon this, and should not be confused as mechanical reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977). In other words, society deposits itself into actors through habitus, forming lasting dispositions or structured capacities that train actors to think, feel, and act in determinant ways, guiding their actions (Wacquant, 2005).

Within the structure of the habitus, individuals share relational variants, but they may not have identical experiences. Ultimately, Bourdieu (1977) contended that the hallmark of practice is when something is performed through the body, in a socially constructed space, to embody the structures of the world. As such, agents must abandon notions of simple freedom or determinism. Agents self-regulate the practices of such habitus, and these practices are developed to cope with unforeseen circumstances.

While an institution, like the charter school, might create behavioral expectations these moments of constraint caused by expectations are not fully actualized until an entire interaction is complete. In simpler terms, no matter how much ritual is involved, an agent still has control and can have agency in how they choose to meet or resist expectations (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu (1977) introduced covert forms of agency with the concepts of the rules of the game and playing the game. The “rules of the game” are the cultural and social expectations created by the habitus, but agents might consciously play by the rules in order to participate or survive in a system of power (Smitherman, 2000). In my context, a teacher might play by the rules of the school, seemingly falling in line with expectations, in order to gain capital. In doing so, playing

the game becomes a performance of power (Bourdieu, 1977). At times, there might be more to gain by obeying a rule or practice than resisting it, and it is in the best interest of the agent to obey the rule. As long as playing the game is not the normalized practice, and the agent is conscious of their agency then they retain power (Bourdieu, 1977).

As noted, Bourdieu contended that the hallmark of practice is when something is performed through the body and my research will illustrate how teaching and institutional practices become embodied practice. More time is spent in practice than actually in the social world, and I propose that my research might illustrate the burden of spending more time with the field of institutional politics rather than in the field of the classroom.

Methodology

For this study, qualitative research methods are appropriate because I seek to explore a topic of inquiry through conducting social research (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021), and I do not believe in an absolute truth (Sipe & Constable, 1996). I use interviewing and deep hanging out (Geertz, 1998) as the research data collection methods to accomplish this exploration, both because of its appropriateness and it is the best method to answer my research questions, as I want to understand how the participants themselves describe their resiliency. I value listening and connection with participants, and through interviewing I have an opportunity for my participants to share their experience of the culture of the charter school setting. I will add to my data collection by analyzing cultural artifacts of the charter school where my participants work.

Participant Description

My population consists of two women charter school teachers in the Southeast United States, with at least three years teaching experience. I label my sampling as critical opportunistic (Miles et al., 2020). I taught in the school site and worked with the teachers that were

interviewed. I had easy access to these teachers and my prior knowledge of their experiences fits well with my purpose. I have obtained a consent form for each of the two participants in the study, and this study has received Institutional Review Board approval.

Inclusion criteria for this study includes the following: participants must have at least three years teaching experience, identify as a woman, taught in a charter school, and live in the Southeast United States. There were no exclusion criteria outside of those created through the existence of inclusion criteria.

Participant one, Kameron Freeman¹⁹, has been teaching for eight years, five within the charter school setting. She has taught 5th, 6th, and 8th grades and all content areas. She is a straight, white, cisgender woman. Participant two, Emma Granger²⁰, has been teaching for four years, all of these years teaching 6th grade English language arts in the charter school setting. Like Freeman, she is a straight, white, cisgender woman. Both participants identify as Christian in their religious beliefs, and have experienced what it is like to teach in the charter school setting, which is the experience which I want to explore (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021).

Setting

The school site where my participants worked is a Title I charter school in a Southern metro area of the United States. The School²¹ is a 6-12 charter school. The new school flooded with natural light and freshly painted walls is filled with about 700 students. Of these students, the majority are Black and share the same zip code with the school. The inviting, modern look of the school is in sharp contrast with the rigid management culture. Students line the hallways, with two feet placed in each tile square, and silently transition between classes as talking is not

¹⁹ A pseudonym to protect the identity of the participant.

²⁰ A pseudonym to protect the identity of the participant.

²¹ A pseudonym.

permitted. A large administrative team manages student behavior through a merit and demerit system.

Data Collection

I conducted scheduled interviews via Zoom, and developed an interview guide, but focused on the words of the teachers so they could guide the conversation. I conducted two 45-60 minute interviews with each participant, for a total of 195 minutes of interview data. After interviews, I journaled to practice reflexivity and be aware of my subjectivities. However, I resisted trying to divorce myself from our previous relationship, and this permitted me to be my authentic self in our interviews, which put both myself and my participants more at ease (Roulston, 2010).

Previous to interviewing the teachers, I worked in the school setting alongside the teachers, so I possess knowledge of the culture and have previous relationships with the teachers. I engaged in deep hanging out, when the researcher spends time with participants in informal settings to lessen the role of being an outsider (Geertz, 1998; Woodward, 2008). To do so, I immersed myself in my participants' culture, observed participants in informal settings outside of the charter school, attended after-school happy hours, and engaged in short phone and text message exchanges. I recognize the limitations of the selection in that my familiarity with the site and participants brings with it multiple assumptions and *a priori* knowledge to the work. Conducting fieldwork and interviews in a place we know is problematic. My tacit and external cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1980) of the school site precludes the ability to note unfamiliar patterns of behavior. It is important for ethnographers to recognize how personal experience is important in the process and that it can often be misused. Personal experience should not distract from the ethnographic story, but enhance (Lassiter, 2005). In order to gain better context of the

participants' culture and mitigate previous connections, I collected charter school employee handbooks, notes and texts written to me by the participants, photographs, and engaged in reflexive journaling. Through these methods, I was able to gain further contextualization of the experiences of my participants.

Analysis

Finally, in order to shift my role from a researcher to a dramatist and to share my participants' experiences with an audience (Grbich, 2013), I created an ethnodramatic performance as my primary method of analysis (See Appendix C for performance). Ethnodrama is a written adaptation of research data in a play script (Given, 2008; Saldaña, 2003, 2005). With this form of analysis, while research reflexivity is crucial it is unnecessary in the final product because the story belongs to the participant (Saldaña, 2003). I acknowledge that it is not entirely their story, as I selected interview quotes to use, but I did not edit their words and only reconstructed them to form a more linear story (Saldaña, 2003). Traditional forms of qualitative analysis, like coding or thematic analysis, might force data into themes and categories inevitably influenced by the researcher, to help avoid this ethnodrama captures and presents the data as it occurred in its original form. While theatrical elements are added, they serve to enhance the story and add dramatic effect (Saldaña, 2003). This method also recognizes that there can never be a finite representation of the data (Denzin, 2013), and what is presented is just a snapshot in time.

In the following section, I detail my method of analysis. I developed themes that manifest in the words of my participants and provide insights to their personal experiences.

The ethnodrama script is based upon the major themes that manifested throughout ethnodrama creation. The first theme refers to charter school teachers not receiving enough encouragement in the culture of a charter school. In the artifacts, participants note feeling trusted,

seen, spoiled, and safe as positive aspects and factors that contribute to being encouraged. However, there are contradictions that emerge, where if these needs are not met, it may lead to feeling harmed, forced to treat students poorly, and not feeling safe enough for teachers to be their authentic self.

The second theme describes both the fruitful elements of feeling supported and developing a friendship with a teacher mentor. However, this relationship is complicated. At times, a mentoring relationship can feel collaborative, but also demeaning to the mentee.

The final theme describes the burden and expectations inflicted on participants as a result of teaching in a charter school. The very specific teaching practices of a charter school could be an aid to new teachers or could feel evaluative and intimidating. To illustrate each of these themes, I outline the process for presenting the data in dramatic form. Each of the aforementioned themes emerge in the ethnodrama through selected acts of the play performance.

I chose ethnodrama in order to further highlight the cultural aspects within the charter school my participants worked at and to spotlight participant perspectives (Given, 2008). As an added safety measure, the act of performance can serve as a shield, and present participant experiences in a form that avoids jeopardizing their safety and current positions (Chugani, 2016). Through using only the words of the participants, I prioritized dialogue in order to center perspectives that have been silenced in order to bring awareness and open up possibilities for change. As I analyzed the data using the previous methods, I found my participants expressed both changes in their own behavior and powerful stories that challenged beliefs about teaching and education (Grbich, 2013). Considering my paradigmatic leanings, research aims, and the belief that all truth is subjective, ethnodrama is an excellent vehicle to both present stories with wider social ramifications and inspire change in the audience (Given, 2008; Saldaña,

2005). Ethnodrama disrupts tradition and reaches a wider audience, as most individuals are not reading academic journals, and through reaching an academic and general audience I engage in audience blurring (Barone, 2002). Most importantly, I recognize that the entirety of this work is inspired by my own experiences, and that will color the play, but will serve to empower teachers and audience members (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011).

Much like traditional research, playwrights must collect data in order to answer a question and the performance represents the findings (Salvatore, 2018). To engage in this analysis, first I developed a plot, centered around the three major themes. I returned to the interview transcripts and read through them to find particularly salient quotes that supported each of the themes. McCoy (2006) referred to this process as reinterviewing the transcript. By reinterviewing, I was able to understand the deeply personal and embodied experience of my participants and synthesize these experiences to highlight the charter school habitus. To prepare the quotes, I began merging them in a manner that made sense to be presented in a dialogical play format (Saldaña, 2003). As I engaged in this process, I struggled to determine from whose perspective the story would be told (Saldaña, 2003). As it is crafted, the audience is first introduced to Emma, but I also wanted equal representation of Kameron's voice. To ease this imbalance, I chose to craft this ethnodrama in four acts that include monologues from both Emma and Kameron as well as small group scenes spliced in between. While some context needs to be provided, I intentionally did not want to re-craft participant words. To accommodate this, I added the role of a narrator to provide an omniscient voice, and Saldaña (2003) suggested that the researcher must select their role in the play. Of course this brings the researcher into the play, but it aligns with my philosophical commitments because I know I cannot be neutral and Denzin (2017) called the creation of an ethnodrama a reflexive interview where both the

researcher and participants are in dialogue and connected. I do acknowledge my researcher bias does remain as I am the instrument and hold the power in selecting which words to use in the ethnodrama, and reorder participant words to form a more linear script (Saldaña, 2003). I do this in an effort to make the text accessible to the audience, and attempt to allow my own personal experience to only enhance and not distract from the ethnography (Lassiter, 2005).

I attend to traditional theatrical components by adding stage directions and minimal props. I include emotional descriptions in the stage directions that reflect the tone of my participants from our original interviews. I made the choice to keep the characters in the same costume throughout in order to focus on the story rather than distracting elements. I rely on lighting, PowerPoint slides, and music to indicate transition within the performance. I intentionally chose to use a typewriter font to further align with a traditional script format. Of import, the music selection was a song directly mentioned by Emma in the interview transcript. While I have critical intentions with this piece, I chose to play with the absurdity by introducing each act like a *Law and Order: SVU* episode. While this might seem antithetical to the serious message of my participants, it highlights the absurdity of charter school rules, expectations, and the lack of encouragement Emma and Kameron received.

In both interviews, Kameron and Emma reveal information about one another or interactions with students, where I could not gain the perspective of the other. While the interaction in Act I Scene II is not a realistic depiction, all of the words came from my participants. Emma expresses the complicated mentor relationship she has with Kameron, but shares that she would never express how Kameron actually makes her feel. I chose to portray this scene dramatically as I envision it might occur according to Emma's recollection of events. I made the choice in Act II Scene I to reveal Kameron's feelings of a successful mentor

relationship, which differ from Emma's view, through the holiday card. While this card does not exist in reality, it is completely crafted from Kameron's words from the transcript. Similarly, in Act III Scene II I want the audience to gain an understanding of Kameron's interaction with students and why she holds such strong beliefs around treating students with dignity. I did take liberties in crafting Kameron's monologue, but the majority of the words come from her transcript. The note from Mia is entirely fictional, but I base it on a story Kameron recollects about how she poorly handled a student interaction. Act III Scene is the turning point in this drama. I acknowledge that this interaction feels like a drastic shift for Kameron, but that is intentional. I want to convey how feelings change so much over the course of a school year, and show Kameron's humanity.

Positional and Paradigmatic Commitments

Most relevant to this study and my beliefs is the central concept of the discipline—power, which pervades every level of social relationships (Barker & Jane, 2016). My positionality makes centering the voices of marginalized groups a tenet of my research. Having, myself, been oppressed by power in the charter system, it is impossible to mask my values as a researcher, and they are always present in my work.

This study utilizes both critical and post-structuralist paradigmatic orientations. I take the ontological stance that truths are socially constructed systems of signs, and these truths contain their own contradictions (Sipe & Constable, 1996). Epistemologically, I believe that, not only, is reality subjective and constructed on the basis of issues of power, but, ultimately, it is unknowable. This orientation is appropriate as I seek to construct meaning through reflexivity toward my experiences and those of my participants, and I wish to make meaning from these experiences to decipher the reality of the participants' occurrences (Richardson & Adams St.

Pierre, 2005). I also accept that conversations with participants are incomplete and partial (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011). My critical leanings recognize that the values of the researcher are present, I know this will influence the research. As a former woman charter school teacher, I left the charter school field because I felt it harmed my development as an educator, so this certainly is a bias I possess.

Ethical and Quality Commitments

As someone who has been harmed by the institutional structures of the charter school, I do not want to do harm to my participants. To attend to this, I purposely scheduled multiple interviews in order to provide participants with space and time to process any negative emotions that might emerge. The greatest harm that could befall my participants is the potential reveal of their identity and school site. I created pseudonyms to protect participants, and an ethnodrama acts as a safety measure (Chugani, 2016). I also take the stance that this work is one of collaborative ethnography (Lassiter, 2005), as I made sense of my participants' experiences with them rather than observing from afar. I practice the commitments of collaborative ethnography by having ethical and moral responsibility to participants, being honest about my fieldwork and interview process, engaging in dialogue with participants, and sharing my writing with participants (Lassiter, 2005).

A challenge faced by researchers is how to apply ethical decision making to real-life problems, and following conditions for respect for persons can help face this challenge (Whiteford & Trotter, 2008). With those in mind, I took the following are four actions: assuring that participation is voluntary, determining that individuals recruited into the project are competent to participate, preserving confidentiality for participants, and providing a thorough and accurate informed consent process (Whiteford & Trotter, 2008).

While I believe I could discuss many quality indicators I attend to ensure rigor, richness, and validity in my study. I think the following indicators are most relevant to this work: ironic validity, Lyotardian paralogy, reflexivity, and critical subjectivity. Considering my post-structural orientation, I know that I can never know the absolute truth and acknowledge ironic validity within my study, and my research is an act of simulation (Lather, 1993; Cain et al., 2022). My attention to Lyotardian paralogy means that I embrace the complexity and tensions of research and understand that there can never be complete closure (Lather, 1993). My analysis through ethnodrama is a recreated representation of what I discovered in my data collection process. I also acknowledge the tensions between my relationship with my participants and the responsibility to be an objective researcher. By attending to Lyotardian paralogy, I have explored these tensions through reflexive journaling, multiple cycles of analysis, and employing an analysis strategy that recognizes both conflicting perspectives (Cain et al., 2022).

Through the use of reflexive journaling and exploration of my epistemological and ontological beliefs, I have become aware that I was too focused on my own objectives rather than what the data wanted me to realize (Cain et al., 2022). I also engage in this process critically by introspectively examining how I came to this research process and fully disclosing this in my positionality (Lincoln, 1995). I acknowledge my own privilege in being able to share the stories of my participants from a position of privilege and safety, as there is no risk to me in sharing their stories.

Findings

“The Way We Feel The Burden”²²

Act I Scene I

The lights come up on Emma, as she sits writing in her journal. Emma is a 25-year-old white woman. Emma looks young and naïve, the only honest way to describe her. Emma is dressed awkwardly. We can tell she is a new professional. She has attempted a professional make-up look with a severe red lip. A PowerPoint slide displays in simple white text on a black background “STR”.

NARRATOR

The narrator speaks off-stage.

In the education system, surviving teaching with no encouragement is considered especially heinous. In The Charter School, the dedicated teachers who serve students without receiving breaks, encouragement, or dignity are members of an elite squad known as the Southern Teacher Residency. These are their stories.

“Law & Order SVU” clink clink sound effect plays.

Emma is a brand new teacher beginning her career at The Charter School in one of the most economically devastated zip codes in the United States. Emma is part of a faith-based alternative teacher licensure program called The Southern Teacher Residency, or STR. Despite her lack of experience, Emma is thrilled to be a new teacher. This naiveté could be a benefit or barrier, we don’t yet know. As a part of STR, Emma serves as a resident teacher and will work as a co-teacher for an entire year, in the class of a veteran teacher. The veteran teacher serves as her mentor and is named Kameron. Emma and Kameron teach sixth grade reading together.

EMMA

Emma pauses writing in her journal to look up and address the audience.

So I did it![excitedly] I’m in a teacher prep program that's focused on high need schools called Southern Teacher Residency. [pauses] It’s like Teach For America with a little bit of a different model. But I think that there's a sense of calling that a lot of teachers feel when they go into high need schools. I think there's a sense of like, righteousness, or like duty, and this... I don't know, it's really multilayer. I think there's like... [pauses, squishes up face to think] I'm having a hard time phrasing it because there's good things, there's bad things. We have been talking about like students are hurt when teachers keep leaving the classroom and so when teachers leave mid-year it really hurts kids.

²² Link to performance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbdphlIJLtc>.

The school I am at, I think, my group of kids had three different teachers teaching math LAST YEAR [with emphasis]. I feel like this just reinforced this narrative for them that like, we're bad, like, and we can get teachers to leave. Or like, we're *so bad* [with emphasis] that teachers leave us just like, um, it didn't create a positive narrative for them. So I think that I am learning that the best thing you can do is keep showing up [smiles, looks proud of herself]. I know I [great accent on this] don't want to let kids down.

Pauses to write more in journal.

In my case, I feel a sense of calling to the classroom and to working towards educational equality. I feel like this is a Christian duty. However, I think on the other side of that [pauses to form words], there's a danger of like becoming this white Jesus who thinks they're like saving or like doing something good for kids. You know, I grew up Christian and I wanted to be like a missionary. And then I realized that that wasn't... I realized that there was a lot of injustice, and that I believe the love of God looks like righting wrongs in the world. And so I want to be a part of the work of correcting educational inequity. [looking directly at audience] God's love is shown through making things in the world, right?

Looks up from journal to address audience.

Of course, definitely the students I love. I think if I'm being honest, I came into education for the content, because I'm such a nerd [laughs nervously] and I love reading so much. But now that I work with kids, I do love them so much in seeing them engage with material and learning and watching their brains literally grow!

I really lucked out coming to STR, and I have really clicked personally and professionally with my mentor teacher, which is just such a blessing [clasps hand over heart] and she is really teaching me everything I know. But also, I think sometimes she is just throwing me to the wolves, [uncertain and hesitant] but that is baptism by fire, right?

Lights fade to black.

Act I Scene II

The lights come up on Emma and Kameron. Kameron and Emma are engaging in a lesson debrief. Emma is seated and Kameron is standing above her. Kameron is a confident white woman. She exudes command of a room. She is dressed meticulously and very professionally—almost too professional for a middle school teacher. She wears no make-up and glasses. As she

speaks to Emma, an adult, her tone is that of a teacher voice. A PowerPoint slide displays in simple white text on a black background “Nuanced Mentoring Relationships”.

NARRATOR

The narrator speaks off-stage.

It is now December. The shine of teaching has worn away.
Emma is beginning to question whether she wants to stay in education forever.

“Law & Order SVU” clink clink sound effect plays.

*Emma breaks the fourth wall and speaks to the audience. Emma is clearly upset and frantic.
Kameron is frozen in place.*

EMMA

I get it, we're all humans. So we definitely all make mistakes. My grandpa just passed away. I just have a lot going on. And I love my mentor, but sometimes she can't... [sighs] she is not the most sensitive person.

Transition to Kameron and Emma's lesson debrief. Kameron unfreezes.

KAMERON

[speaking matter of fact, there is no kindness in her tone] So you came to me without any education training and you need guidance.

EMMA

[looking down at her hands] I know, I bombed the lesson today.

KAMERON

You're right, that was horrible. What is going on? [places hands on desk and leans over Emma]

EMMA

If I'm being honest, I'm not in a good place. My grandpa just died and I'm really struggling. [finally looks up to meet Kameron's gaze] I can't always pull it together and be on for students.

KAMERON

[without skipping a beat, almost clips Emma's last word] Okay, but the things you did were wrong. Things are not okay. I know you are not okay but you need to be accountable!

EMMA

[begins to slowly cry]

KAMERON

[pretending like she doesn't notice Emma's tears] Granger, we want to be reflective practitioners as teachers, it's easy to be biased reflective practitioners, I think. And so having another person in the room, like me [with emphasis], is helpful to your practice.

EMMA

Kameron, I'm just triggered by the constant observations from you and from STR. I feel like I always have a critical eye on me. I know saying that 'this feels traumatic' is dramatic, but that is how it feels [raises voice]! All of this is hard for me to get over and I know it's a good thing, but I absolutely hate it [rises up halfway from chair with this statement]!

KAMERON

[unphased and without missing a beat, in a tone without affect] It is dramatic. You need to leave home at home when you are at work.

EMMA

I feel like I'm getting beat down every single day because we're, we're our own biggest critics. We see all the things that are going wrong. OKAY! I GET IT! [yelling, almost pleading] You don't need to put any more pressure on me. [pauses] Ugh, I just feel very, very beat down, very depleted.

Kameron and Emma freeze.

Lights fade to black.

Act II Scene I

The lights come up on Emma. She is standing alone with a letter in her hand. It is a cute, holiday card.

Emma breaks the fourth wall and speaks to the audience. Emma seems much more confident than the last time we saw her.

EMMA

Interesting [sarcastically], I just received this letter from Kameron. She really has pushed me this year. I have to remember she is human too and makes mistakes. Ultimately, I love her... I just wish she was always this sensitive [sighs].

Emma reads letter.

EMMA

Dear Granger,
Mentoring you has probably been my favorite thing I've done professionally. I am so grateful to have you as a co-teacher! You really are a gifted teacher. You didn't come in

with any education training, but you are so naturally gifted. You have great raw material to tweak rather than having to build a teacher out of scratch. I personally enjoy working with you, because I feel like it has given me a way to look at my own teaching. So it has made me better. I value our relationship so much, and getting to help another adult grow professionally really gives me life! I feel like this has been the most I've grown as a teacher. Take time for some self-care over break!

-Freeman

“Law & Order SVU” clink clink sound effect plays.

Lights fade to black.

Act III Scene I

Lights fade up on Emma and Kameron chatting casually over coffee. They are seated across from one another. Their body language is relaxed. Emma is sitting criss cross applesauce in her chair, and Kameron has her legs crossed. They are not in a school setting. A PowerPoint slide displays in simple white text on a black background “Feeling the Burden of Teaching in a Charter School”.

EMMA

I feel like my life is falling apart. Teaching is taking a toll on my relationships and it's not worth it to me [shakes head]. I want to be a human first, before any type of career [waves hands]. I have no energy to put into relationships. I come home from school and just isolate myself.

KAMERON

[nods head sympathetically, speaking in a motherly tone] Can you talk to your friends? I know they are going through the same stuff with STR.

EMMA

Kameron, my social circle is non-existent. I'd LOVE to go to therapy, but I don't even have the time to do basic things like go to the doctor, go to the dentist, take care of myself in any way because there's such a pressure to be here [taps repeatedly on table], to be on. You take a day off from school, I think there's a lot of shame that is perpetuated that I don't agree with!

KAMERON

And yeah, I don't know... it really is an all-consuming career. What is most important to me is to be a human first-- no matter what job I'm in. I will never put my work before my personal life.

EMMA

Honestly, this all just feels so hopeless [slaps hands in lap]. I'm really struggling. I'm sorting that out. I think I love education and I think I want to stay in education [long

pause]. But the reality is I am struggling with burnout and struggling with finding effective strategies to maintain sanity and student dignity in the classroom.

KAMERON

I get that. The only thing I can find to turn off after work is drinking. I've definitely started to drink more during my time at school. [almost like a disclaimer] Not like in like a scary way, just like a-- I need to relax and need aid in doing so.

EMMA

[snaps fingers] Yes! I feel like I am sacrificing my healthy life for the good of students. My mental health is deteriorating. I'm not in a place to do good work. Sometimes I wonder if I can do this job and have a relationship. What if I want a boyfriend or want to get married? [Kameron nods] When I get home, I totally disassociate. Eventually, I want to become a mom, and I don't think I could do this job as a mother.

KAMERON

It is hard. I'm also becoming just disillusioned with charter schools, in general. Of the expectations. Just, I mean, the prison feel, the white teachers, the Black kids [Emma nods in agreement]. I think I am to a point where I don't think this system is redeemable. That sounds dark but it is how I feel [long pause, Kameron looks down]. I need a place to feel human.

EMMA

That! [excitedly and speaking quickly] I counted all the texts from 6th grade to 12th grade and there was, I believe, two primary texts that were authors of color, and they weren't books.

KAMERON

Granger, I know. That is super problematic to me, and I, I met with people at the school to try to express that and I was told a number of things [extreme roll of the eyes]. I understand the desire to teach kids things that are canon, but I think there's a way to hold both-- of reflecting students in texts and, um, holding to the canon, which is obviously problematic. I expressed it to EVERYBODY that I thought it was problematic. And ultimately that was, I did feel listened to and heard, but I felt ultimately that the school went with the choice they went with [throws up hands in frustration]. So I felt like my voice was heard, but that it wasn't. I'm not gonna feel comfortable teaching kids this stuff. It's all white people, and [with staccato] that. Is. A. Problem.

Both sigh exasperated.

KAMERON

Is there anything you are doing that is actually healthy to cope with all of this?

EMMA

Ha! It depends on the week or the season, but I'm, my constants are always physical exercise is very important to me. Just my introvert time. Like, my prayer time is very important to me. I think those are my three constants.

KAMERON

[wistfully] I'm glad you have that. You need to prioritize YOU as a person to be a better, more competent teacher.

Lights fade to black.

Act III Scene II

The lights come up on Kameron. She is standing alone with a crumpled piece of notebook paper in her hand. She is no longer her confident self. She is visibly upset and her body language expresses defeat. Her shoulders are slumped and she struggles to make eye contact

Kameron breaks the fourth wall and speaks to the audience.

KAMERON

I'm devastated. I received this note from a student, Mia, today. It really reinforces that the strategies I am supposed to use do not focus on student dignity, and instead focus on seeking control. Mia has been a wake-up call [pauses and looks around]. I've been focused on student compliance and not student dignity. Ultimately, it's undignified to an adult to not be dignified to a student. And so I think when that relationship is based on power, it ultimately erodes the dignity of both parties. I'm ashamed I treated her this way. It's just, I was feeling like I was under an avalanche of work and feedback and expectation. And so this feeling of kind of like doggy paddling to keep my head above water [rushes her speech], and then, like a student's behavior became such a big moment. All Mia did was throw a paper ball at me and I made it very adversarial. I know that I reacted poorly.

Kameron reads letter in monotone.

Ms. Freeman:

I wanted to let you know that you really hurt my feelings. I also want to apologize for throwing that paper ball at you. I know it was wrong, and if someone did that to me, I would go off!

But I don't understand why you sent me out of the room just because I slammed my binder. I was at a level 10 of stress, and I just needed a moment. I felt like you disrespected me by calling me out in front of the whole class. For me, yelling just turns up my stress. When you yelled, it set me off. I know it was wrong to throw a paper ball at you but I just couldn't control my stress and I felt disrespected. I have regrets, and I'm sure you do too.

Sincerely,
Mia

“Law & Order SVU” clink clink sound effect plays.

Lights fade to black.

Act IV Scene I

Lights fade up on Emma and Kameron. Emma and Kameron stand side by side as equals—a sharp contrast to Act I. They both break the fourth wall and speak directly to the audience. They are both resolute and final in their monologues. Taylor Swift’s “It’s Time To Go” plays softly in the background. A PowerPoint slide displays in simple white text on a black background “Charter School Teachers Not Receiving Enough Encouragement”.

EMMA

It has felt very, not even, I don't think burdening is the correct word, but it's almost to the point where it is completely soul sucking to me. Just this sense of dread I feel coming into the building. I know I'm a good teacher, but I think what I'm in right now is not sustainable for the long term for my mental health, my physical health, or even my personal life.

I finally started going to therapy. Therapy has helped me realize I just know deep in my soul that my time is done. I think teaching for years isn't sustainable. I'm so burnt out by it. It's never, it's not really the kids, they're kids. I expect them to be children. But I really do feel as though it's more of the external pressures that are placed on me. It's just that constant feeling of not being trusted, there's always the assumption that you did something wrong when something happens in the classroom or outside of it.

You know this is cheesy but there's this Taylor Swift song it's called “It's Time To Go”, and literally, just I think it says it so well. I don't really have the words for it but I just know deep in my soul it's time for me to go.

What is sad is that I've never felt so valued as when I said, ‘I'm not returning.’ Now, everyone wants to praise me and tell me I'm a good teacher. [emphatically] Where was that months ago? If you're constantly going to put me down and throw me under the bus, then NO, you don't deserve me and value me.

KAMERON

I do think that a lack of encouragement is a huge contributing factor to teacher burnout and why so many teachers are fleeing, because I have so many roommates who come home crying every day because their bosses are so mean to them, and they're always doing something wrong. And it's just never good enough. I just, that's something I'm really feeling passionately about-- teachers need to be encouraged and affirmed. We don't need more feedback. We need just like you're doing the best that you can and that's good.

Lights fade to black. Music fades up on “and you know in your soul when it’s time to go” and out.

-Fin-

Discussion

After analyzing the data using ethnodrama, my definition of resiliency is different. Where I originally conceived of resilience as something that develops teacher identity and keeps a teacher in the charter school field, I now possess a more nuanced perspective—one that includes aspects of teacher efficacy, positive aspects of teaching, and subverting school policy. Leaving the charter school field does not indicate a lack of resilience. Originally, I believe I conflated coping and resilience. With my original conception, one might argue that both Kameron and Emma are not resilient since they both left The School. However through the lens of Practice Theory, both commit the ultimate act of resistance, using a healthy coping technique, by leaving. As evidenced in the analysis, themes of resiliency are not as prevalent as anticipated and through cycles of analysis more powerful themes emerged like not receiving enough encouragement, nuanced mentoring relationships, and feeling the burden of teaching. While these themes do not directly name resiliency, they do encompass both healthy and unhealthy coping techniques and acknowledge how attempts at resiliency or resistance were thwarted by the charter school institution.

Within the structure of the habitus, individuals may not have identical experiences but they share relational variants. In the cases of Emma and Kameron, the personal differences they have with the school manifest because of their experiences with their residency program, previous beliefs held about education, and opinions on how students should be treated with dignity. Ultimately, for Bourdieu (1977), the habitus served as a structure to unite these experiences into some position such as class. Kameron and Emma are united as teachers at The

School. Bourdieu (1977) contended that the hallmark of practice is when something is performed through the body, but individuals can develop practices to cope with unforeseen circumstances. Kameron and Emma cope by drinking, turning to faith, or leaving the school entirely. The habitus is comprised of cognitive and motivating structures, in Kameron and Emma's situation in the form of school expectations, that allow agents to produce practices in response, for Kameron and Emma turning to faith or leaving the school entirely, to the demands placed upon them of a situation. However, Bourdieu (1977) reasoned that agents are unconscious of these practices since the habitus is hidden under its subjective nature, which explains why both Kameron and Emma take some time to come to the realization that they are disillusioned with charter schools.

The ethnodrama, in its form, further highlights the intricacies of the habitus. We can conceive of the habitus of being comprised of backstage and frontstage behaviors. Backstage behaviors are the motivating structures, previous experiences, and subversive coping mechanisms to remake the habitus. These "backstage behaviors" are shown in the individual monologues, and Act III Scene I in the play. The frontstage behaviors are how agents conform to the hidden rules and the determinant ways of being created in the habitus, which specifically is demonstrated in Act I Scene II where Kameron upholds the expectations of The School. Additionally, through the act of performance both the performers and the audience enter an embodied space, and potentially embody the structures of performance (Gannon, 2005).

Both Kameron and Emma "play the game" (Bourdieu, 1977). Specifically, in Act III, Kameron and Emma act as independent agents to remake their social structure by expressing dissent towards the practices of the charter school, the white-washed curriculum they are expected to teach, and by voicing their disagreements with school leaders. Publicly, they seemingly comply with school rules to gain capital or survive, but they retain agency by

expressing dissent. While Kameron and Emma are still bound to the culture of the school, they ultimately remake their social structure through coping mechanisms like faith, drinking, and seeking out moments of fun that are the antithesis of their life within the charter school field.

While other scholars (Beckman et al., 2018; Sullivan, 2002), have dismissed the usefulness of Practice Theory and its forms in the world of education research, this ethnodrama shows its relevance when considering how teachers in a charter school may use agentive action to resist the institutional and patriarchal norms of the charter school. While not overt, patriarchal norms emerge in the white-washed curriculum mentioned by Kameron, the shame that comes when a teacher takes a day off, and the student teacher relationship Kameron describes that is based on power. Kameron and Emma “play the game” (Bourdieu, 1977) by expressing their disagreement with the practices of the charter school and teaching a curriculum they oppose. Even the act of complaining to one other, as shown in Act III Scene I, is a form of resistance because through their social capital and bond, Kameron and Emma feel comfortable to share disagreement with The School’s practices. Both also resist the norms of the school by engaging in behaviors like drinking or having fun that seem to be in direct opposition to the rigid rules of the school. Both Kameron and Emma perform the ultimate resistance by leaving the charter school field in Act IV in order to protect themselves, thereby showing conscious agency to retain their power (Bourdieu, 1977).

Following Bourdieu, in the charter school social capital refers to the relationships teachers have with their colleagues and administrators (Bourdieu, 1977). In this ethnodrama, Emma expresses the value of having Kameron as her mentor and the network of STR in Act I Scene I. While the audience later discovers this is a nuanced relationship, which is an unexpected finding, this social capital provides both Emma and Kameron with a trusted confidant to share

their frustrations. Kameron has the confidence to voice her disagreement about curricular decisions made by school leadership in Act III Scene I due to her social capital. We see that both Kameron and Emma possess cultural capital as shown through their knowledge of curriculum and how students should be treated in a dignified way. In Act III Scene II, Kameron has the self-awareness and knowledge to recognize that her treatment of Mia is wrong. Cultural capital refers to a teacher's knowledge of the institutional rules of the charter school, understanding ways of behavior that guide the charter school, and relationships with families, students, and charter school staff. In the charter school, the field is comprised of both the charter school itself and the teacher's individual classroom. Although Kameron upholds work expectations of the school and policies to manage student behavior, we see an epiphany moment in the ethnodrama (Grbich, 2013), where she begins to see the error in her ways, and we can imagine that this will lead her to take action to respect student dignity in the future.

As the ethnodrama unfolds, Kameron and Emma seem unafraid of losing their job and are open about voicing their opposition to the school's expectations for teacher behavior. Teacher behaviors within the charter school and their classrooms are shaped by the habitus created by the charter school institution. In Act II Scene II, Kameron's behavior for incredibly high expectations of Emma, that disregards her humanity, demonstrate years of behaviors and actions shaped by the habitus created by The School. Kameron's behavior within the confines of the school had been crafted for years, and her high expectations for Emma were what she knew was necessary to follow the rules in order to be considered a good teacher. Charter school teachers do not create the ways of being within the school, rather they are created through institutional traditions like behavioral and curricular expectations. These traditions might not have originated intentionally, but by the The School upholding them for years, and new teachers

entering the charter school field and falling in line with expectations, these traditions remain. These are socially created ways of being that gradually indoctrinate teachers to act, think, and feel in particular ways that are dictated by the charter school. These ways of being cause teachers to abandon characteristics of consciousness like free will, sanity, and rationality, in order for the body to conform to the habitus (Oates, 2006; Wacquant, 2004). While each teacher will have different experiences and bring their own life experiences to the school, the habitus functions to create social norms that will unite these teachers. Through their mentoring relationship, coping mechanisms, and recreation of their classroom field, Emma and Kameron were able to resist due to their experiences outside of school through therapy, coping mechanisms like drinking or reliance on faith, and the social and cultural capital they possess to be free to gain another job. Eventually, both resist the norms of the charter school habitus and rely upon their own experience to remake their habitus by leaving the charter school field.

Both Kameron and Emma embody the practice of the charter school to such a severe degree that their feelings of shame, overwhelming workloads, and lack of encouragement become their norm. They both resort to unhealthy coping mechanisms like social isolation and drinking in order to conform to the school's way of being or merely being able to function in the charter school field. While The School directs them how to perform and act, they influence and change this structure to subvert the oppressive habitus and gain capital in the field by their own subversive coping mechanisms (Ortner, 2006).

As one final point, although Act I Scene II and Act III Scene I demonstrate the nuanced mentoring relationship between Kameron and Emma, ultimately, these authentic social relations, provide them both with the support to resist, have agentive action, and help them both craft a sense of identity. Through self-reflection in the form of notes from students, analysis of poor

curricular choices, and recognition that their treatment within the school is harmful, through the resistance of leaving the school both teachers actualize their true identities. Schools must provide caring, supportive, and collaborative environments for teachers and students in order to foster freedom and advance practice. While the administration of The School promotes a loss of personal, core identity to maintain control over its teachers and students, Kameron and Emma resist this through their own experiences with coping and mentoring. This sort of orientation, that purposely avoids praise and inflicts unattainable expectations, taken by The School, however, prevents meaningful consensus-building, disempowers teachers, and in so doing inhibits transformational change.

One might conclude that the way to maintain resiliency and a sense of identity in the charter school field is to simply leave. This confirms Standeven's (2022) research that neoliberal reform efforts, in the form of charter schools, create institutional trauma that results in dispossession, i.e. leaving the charter school field.

Through the application of Practice Theory to the experiences of teachers in the charter school field, in this study women charter school teachers, we have a tool to make sense of the world of charter school teachers and new possibilities may be considered by examining how educational policies manifest in the bodies and fields of women teachers (Ndu, 2022). In Act III Scene I, Emma expresses a difficulty faced by many women teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1985; Lather, 1987, Lightfoot, 1978)—she fears teaching will not allow her to have a family. Kameron and Emma's stories certainly demonstrate that teaching is emotional labor, and their ability to step out, resist, and act autonomously disrupts the standardization of practice desired in charter schools (Hubbard & Kulkami, 2009).

When teachers mobilize collectively, gaining both social and cultural capital, to challenge systems of oppression in schools, they effectively advocate for themselves, press their claims, and disrupt existing power structures (Anyon, 2014). I recommend that Practice Theory has the potential to illuminate incidents of autonomy in the charter school field. Should we examine this further, it could open up possibilities for how women teachers might make sense of their role within the charter school field, disrupt policy embodiment, recreate their social worlds, and hopefully remain in the field. With more collective social action and resistance the world of teaching could become more professionalized, and could become a habitus that seeks to normalize resistance, freedom, and safety.

References

- Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., & Mazzeo, C. (2009). *The schools teacher leave*. University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Anderson, A., Thomas, M. A. M., & Brewer, T. J. (2022). Teach For America influence on non-TFA teachers in TFA-hiring schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 30(98), 1-26.
<https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.30.6163>
- Anyon, J. (2014). *Radical possibilities public policy, urban education, and a new social movement* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Barker, C., & Jane, E. A. (2016). *Cultural studies theory and practice* (5th ed.). Sage Publications Inc.
- Barone, T. (2002). From genre blurring to audience blending: Reflections on the field emanating from an ethnodrama. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 33(2), 255-267.
- Beckman, K., Apps, T., Bennett, S., & Lockyer, L. (2018). Conceptualising technology practice in education using Bourdieu's sociology. *Learning, Media, and Technology*, 43(2), 197-210.
- Bendixen, L. D., Plachowski, T., & Olafson, L. (2022). Criticalizing teacher perceptions of urban school climate: Exploring the impact of racism and race-evasive culture in a predominately white teacher workforce. *Education and Urban Society*, 00(0), 1-26.
- Blount, J. (1999). Manliness and the gendered construction of school administration in the USA. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 2(2), 55-68.
- Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. (2008). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(3), 367-409.

- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1972).
- Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. University of Chicago Press.
- Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(2), 303-333.
- Brewer, T. J. & deMarrais, K. (2015). *Teach For America counter-narratives alumni speak up and speak out*. Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Brewer, T. J., Kretchmar, K., Sondel, B., Ishmael, S., & Manfra, M. (2016). Teach For America's preferential treatment: School district contracts, hiring decisions, and employment practices. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(15), 1-38.
<https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.24.1923>.
- Brunner, C. C. (2003). Invisible, limited, and emerging discourse: Research practices that restrict and/or increase access for women and persons of color to the superintendency. *Journal of School Leadership*, 13, 428-450.
- Buck, D. (2023, January 5). Charter school teacher turnover and retention. *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*. <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/commentary/charter-school-teacher-turnover-and-retention>
- Buckley, J., Schneider, M., & Yi, S. (2004). *The effects of school facility quality on teacher retention urban school districts*. National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities.

- Cain, L. K., Williams, R. E., & Bradshaw, V. (2022). Establishing data quality in qualitative research: Trustworthiness and a lack of consensus. In Ivankova, N. (Ed.) *International encyclopedia of education* (4th ed.). Elsevier.
- Cersonsky, J. (2013). The hidden truth behind Teach For America's political empire. *Salon*.
http://www.salon.com/2013/09/17/the_truth_behind_teach_for_americas_political_empire/
- Chugani, C. D. (2016). Recovered voices: Experiences of borderline personality disorder. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(6), 1016-1034.
- Clifford, G. J. (2014). *Those good Gertrudes: A social history of women teachers in America*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell Báez, J. (2021). *30 essential skills for the qualitative researcher* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1985). Valuing teachers: The making of a profession. *Teacher's College Record*, 87(2), 205-218.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Vasquez Heilig, J. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13(42), 1-51.
- Denzin, N. K. (2013). "The death of data?". *Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies*, 13(4), 353-356.
- Denzin, N. K. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry under fire: Toward a new paradigm dialogue*. Routledge.
- Fabricant, M., & Fine, M. (2012). *Charter schools and the corporate makeover of public education: What's at stake?* Teachers College Press.

- Gannon, S. (2005). "The tumbler": Writing an/other in fiction and performance ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(4), 622-627.
- Geertz, C. (1998, October 22). Deep hanging out. *The New York Review*.
<https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1998/10/22/deep-hanging-out/>
- Giroux, H. (2012). *Education and the crisis of public values: Challenging the assault on teachers, students, and public education*. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Given, L. M. (Ed.) (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. SAGE.
- Grbich, C. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis an introduction* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- Griffin, G. (1997). Teaching as a gendered experience. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 48(1), 7-18.
- Gulosino, C., Ni, Y., & Rorrer, A. K. (2019). Newly hired teacher mobility in charter schools and traditional public schools: An application of segmented labor market theory. *American Journal of Education*, 125(4), 547-592.
- Hoffman, N. (1981). *Woman's "true" profession: Voices from the history of teaching*. Feminist Press.
- Hubbard, L., & Kulkarni, R. (2009). Charter schools: Learning from the past, planning for the future. *Journal of Educational Change*, 10(2-3), 173-189.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-534.
- Ingersoll, R. M., Merrill, E., Stuckey, D., & Collins, G. (2018). *Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force*. Updated October 2018.
- Jackson, A. Y., & Mazzei, L. A. (2011). *Thinking with theory in qualitative research viewing data across multiple perspectives*. Routledge.

- Jacobsen, R., & Linkow, T. W. (2014). National affiliation or local representation: When TFA alumni run for school board. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(69), 1-28.
- Kalogeropoulos, T., Leopoulos, V., Kirytopoulos, K., & Ventoura, Z. (2020). Project-as-practice: Applying Bourdieu's Theory of Practice on project managers. *Project Management Journal*, 51(6), 599-616.
- Kirby, S. N., Berends, M., & Naftel, S. (1999). Supply and demand of minority teachers in Texas: Problems and prospects. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 21(1), 47-66.
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2011). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In K. Hayes, S. R. Steinberg, & K. Tobin (Eds.), *Key works in critical pedagogy. Bold visions in educational research* (pp. 285-326). Sense Publishers.
- Lassiter, L. E. (2005). *The Chicago guide to collaborative ethnography*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Lather, P. (1987). The absent presence: Patriarchy, capitalism, and the nature of teacher work. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 14(2), 25-38.
- Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *Sociology Quarterly*, 34(4), 673-693.
- Lightfoot, S. L. (1978). *Worlds apart: Relationships between families and schools*. Basic Books.
- Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(3), 275-289.
- Lipman, P. (2011). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. Routledge.

- Mac, S. (2022). Neoliberalism and inclusive education: A critical ethnographic case study of inclusive education at an urban charter school. *Critical Education*, 13(2), 1-21.
- Marshall, C., & Anderson, A. L. (2008). *Activist educators: Breaking past limits*. Routledge.
- McCoy, L. (2006). Keeping the institution in view: Working with interview accounts of everyday experience. In D. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional ethnography as practice* (pp. 109-126). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis a methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Miron, G., & Applegate, B. (2007). *Teacher attrition in charter schools*. The Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242084603_Teacher_Attrition_in_Charter_Schools
- Ndu, M. (2022). Examining Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus, and field in women's health research in Nigeria: A feminist perspective. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 1-6.
- Noguera, P. A., & Syeed, E. (2020). *City schools and the American dream 2: The enduring promise of public education*. Teachers College Press.
- Oates, J. C. (2006). *On boxing (Reprint Edition)*. Harper Perennial Modern Classics.
- Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and social theory culture, power, and the acting subject*. Duke University Press.
- Pennington, J.L. (2007). Silence in the classroom/whispers in the halls: Autoethnography as pedagogy in white pre-service teacher education. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 10, 93-113.

- Quantz, R. A. (1985). The complex visions of female teachers and the failure of unionization in the 1930s: An oral history. *History of Education Quarterly*, 25(4), 439-458.
- Richardson, L., & Adams St. Pierre, E. (2005). Writing a method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 959-978). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Riley, A. D., & Moore Mensah, F. (2022). “My curriculum has no soul!”: A case study of the experiences of Black women science teachers working at charter schools, *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 34(1), 86-103.
- Robson, K. & Sanders, C. (2009). *Quantifying theory: Pierre Bourdieu*. Springer Dordrecht.
- Rodriguez, D. (2009). The usual suspect: Negotiating white student resistance and teacher authority in a predominantly white classroom. *Cultural Studies—Critical Methodologies*, 9(4), 483-508.
- Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research*, 10, 199-228.
- Rousmaniere, K. (1994). Losing patience and staying professional: Women teachers and the problem of classroom discipline in New York City schools in the 1920s. *History of Education Quarterly*, 34(1), 49-69.
- Ryan, J. (2016). Strategic activism, educational leadership and social justice. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 19(1), 87-100.
- Saldaña, J. (2003). Dramatizing data: A primer. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(2), 218-236.
- Saldaña, J. (Ed.) (2005). *Ethnodrama: An anthology of reality theatre*. AltaMira.
- Salvatore, J. (2018). Ethnodrama and ethnotheatre. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Handbook of arts-based research* (pp. 267-287). Guilford Press.

- Singer, J. (2020). Oppressive staff dynamics at an intentionally diverse urban charter school. *Educational Studies*, 56(3), 248-268.
- Sipe, L., & Constable, S. (1996). A chart of four contemporary research paradigms: Metaphors for the modes of inquiry. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 1(1996), 153-163.
- Sloan, K. (2007). High-stakes accountability, minority youth, and ethnography: Assessing the multiple effects. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 38(1), 24-41.
- Smitherman, G. (2000). *Black talk: Words and phrases from the hood to the amen corner*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). Ethnography and culture. In J. P. Spradley (Ed.), *Participant observation*. Waveland Press.
- Standeven, K. (2022). *Predestined failure and systemic trauma in neoliberal school reforms; A story of institutional dispossession* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of California Santa Cruz.
- Sullivan, A. (2002). Bourdieu and education: How useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers? *The Netherlands' Journal of Social Sciences*, 38, 144-166.
- Teach for America. (2020). *About TFA*. Teach for America.
<https://www.teachforamerica.org/what-we-do/our-work>.
- Thomas, M. A. M. (2018). "Policy embodiment": Alternative certification and Teach For America teachers in traditional public schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 70, 186–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.11.011>
- Trujillo, T., Scott, J., & Rivera, M. (2017). Follow the yellow brick road: Teach For America and the making of educational leaders. *American Journal of Education*, 123, 353-391.

- Tyack, D. B., & Hansot, E. (1990). *Learning together: A history of coeducation in American public schools*. Yale University Press.
- Vennes, H. (2022). *Overcoming self-sabotage: The self-sabotaging behaviors that impact the career development of female charter school superintendent/CEOs* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Massachusetts Global.
- Wacquant, L. (2004). *Body and soul notebooks of an apprentice boxer*. Oxford University Press.
- Wacquant, L. (2005). Habitus. In J. Beckert & M. Zafirovski (Eds.). *International encyclopedia of economic sociology* (p. 316). Routledge.
- Waitoller, F. R. (2020). *Excluded by choice: Urban students with disabilities in the education marketplace*. Teacher College Press.
- Waldman, A. (2019, June 18). How Teach for America evolved into an arm of the charter school movement. *ProPublica*. <https://www.propublica.org/article/how-teach-for-america-evolved-into-an-arm-of-the-charter-school-movement>
- White, T. (2016). Teach for America's paradoxical diversity initiative: Race, policy, and Black teacher placement in urban public schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(1), 1-42.
- White, T. (2020). Charter-ing a different course: A critical policy framework to support Black women in marketized cities and schools. *Theory Into Practice*, 59(4), 358-369.
- Whiteford, L. M., & Trotter II, R. T. (2008). *Ethics for anthropological research and practice*. Waveland Press, Inc.
- Will, M. (2020, April 14). Still mostly white and female: New federal data on the teaching profession. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/still-mostly-white-and-female-new-federal-data-on-the-teaching-profession/2020/04>

Woodward, K. (2008). Hanging out and hanging about: Insider/outsider research in the sport of boxing. *Ethnography*, 9(4), 419-560.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In chapter one, I identified the purpose of this work to explore the habits and enduring patterns created by neoliberal structures that dictate how women teachers should behave within the culture of a charter school and uncover how my participants resist and describe their own resiliency within the charter school institution. I achieved this purpose across each manuscript and gleaned some important implications and recommendations for research.

In chapter two, through the application of documentary narrative analysis I found that charter school culture, rooted in neoliberalism, creates a harmful habitus that caused harm to my participants. However, these women teachers were able to exert agency and remake their habitus by playing the game. While still enmeshed in relations of power with administrators, my participants found ways to subvert institutional rules but outwardly seemingly falling in line with school expectations. Through the presentation of my own autoethnographic case study in chapter three, I found that my own past experiences influenced my actions in the charter school habitus. Yes, the charter school culture was harmful, but my behavior within the school had been developed across a lifespan. I did use agentic action to remake the social structure of the charter school, but only through trauma that mirrored my earlier life experiences was I able to employ agency. In chapter four, I discovered that women teachers do resist the hidden rules of the charter school, but this resistance manifests in the form of leaving the field, which is consistent with national teacher retention data (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Gulosino et al., 2019). While I found that my original definition of resilience was flawed, my participants did share techniques that helped them cope with working in the charter school environment like faith, exercise, having a mentor, drinking, and ultimately leaving the field of teaching in the charter school.

Implications and Recommendations

Implications for Teacher Education and Policy

Across all three manuscripts, I provide insight into how women charter school teachers experience their culture and how they have become disillusioned with the field. The most important implication of this body of work is that unless the habitus or culture of the charter school changes, teachers will continue to leave the field. The socially constructed ways of being that gradually indoctrinate teachers to act, think, and feel in particular ways that are dictated by the charter school (Apple, 1993; Hursh & Martina, 2016). While each teacher will have different experiences and bring their own life experiences to the school, the habitus functions to create social norms that will unite these teachers, in both helpful and harmful ways. However, teachers can remake the habitus.

I recommend that these norms may be disrupted through authentic social relations cultivated within the charter school culture. While I do not intend to solve this issue, conditions will not change without collective social action. When teachers mobilize collectively, gaining both social and cultural capital, to challenge systems of oppression in schools, they effectively advocate for themselves, press their claims, and disrupt existing power structures (Anyon, 2011; 2014). One obvious aid could be more vast implementation of teacher unions, but of course a lack of unionization in teaching is intentional and this deficit severely impacts working conditions for the women who dominate the field (Anyon, 2011). However, the 2019 Chicago teachers strike and union (Royal Pratt et al., 2019) has shown us that women teachers are interpreting their teaching culture as harmful and when workers interpret their conditions as causing struggle, they become willing to engage in social action (Anyon, 2011). Through engagement in protest and social action, identities transform and teachers can remake their

culture (McAdam et al., 2001), furthermore this leads to groups crafting a collective identity as social change agents (Anyon, 2011).

Teacher education programs must provide instruction in social foundations. By moving beyond strictly pedagogical instruction, teachers might be exposed to theory and interdisciplinary knowledge that would help them confidently enter school fields. Educators must be aware of the kind of social world in which they live, survey its forces, see the opposition in forces, and decide which of these forces are antiquated and which will lead to a better future (Dewey, 1935). Additionally by providing pre-service teachers with multiple placement settings to practice their craft, they might have a better conception of different education fields like the public, private or charter school (Grenfell, 1996). With this cultural capital in the form of knowledge, teachers may be able to restructure the pedagogical habitus formed through training and bring it with them to the schooling habitus of their choice.

Should schools really be the transformational, safe institutions that they so often claim, they must create the conditions for meaningful social relations and a social world that does not seek to norm but allows room for teachers and students to take agentive action to make and remake their social worlds. Schools need to look inward to dismantle the patriarchal, oppressive, and neoliberal structures embedded in these institutions. With more collective social action and resistance the world of teaching could become more professionalized, and could become a habitus that seeks to normalize resistance, freedom, and safety. I also recommend self-understanding and looking inward as a quicker route to social change than direct institutional change (Ellis, 2004), and a way of self-healing.

One surprising finding across all manuscripts, is that both myself and my participants were so engaged in acts of solidarity through serious games that despite leaving the charter

school, we still were conditioned to feel guilt with our departures. Through neoliberal governmentality (Foucault, 2008), work altered our psyches. Education policy is often reflective of the economic world and marketization, and not what is best for teachers and students. The new world of educational labor prioritizes teacher surveillance over student learning and teacher well-being (Hursh & Martina, 2016; Synder, 2016). Policymakers need to enact education reform that values institutional knowledge, and prioritizes supplementing education through professionalism, providing more time for teacher planning, and implementing supports to make teacher work not extend beyond classroom walls.

While all participants, including myself, took agency to leave, we are still influenced by the determinant ways of the charter school habitus that conditioned us how to think and act. A running theme throughout all the chapters is that a work load that extends beyond the charter school walls is not sustainable and cannot be reckoned with a healthy personal life. Most importantly, all participants, including myself, eventually remake their habitus, become unafraid of job lost, and resist through voicing opposition and leaving the teaching field.

Implications from Participants

Both Kameron and Emma name that their place of work is a charter school and this is a place to serve low income students, “Most of my experience has been in charter middle schools. Only taught in a charter school, low income, under resourced.” This statement seems to contradict the neoliberal intent of charter schools, in that they should create market competition (Lipman, 2011). However, this is in-line with the efficient tenet of neoliberalism. Charter school creators, following neoliberalism, want to maximize competition and innovation but do so as cost efficiently as possible (Lipman, 2011; Spring, 2015).

Kameron and Emma also describe that they do not see their career as long-term in education because of the habitus created where charter school actors have socially created a space where over-working is the norm. Emma states:

I don't think I want to stay in education forever. It has felt very, I don't think burdening is the correct word, but over these past couple of years I think what I'm in right now is not sustainable for the long term for my mental health, my physical health, or even my personal life. The tolls I've seen it take on my relationships-- it's not worth it to me. I want to be a human first, before in any type of career.

Teachers in these spaces are conditioned to these expectations and expected to perform in this manner. Interestingly, Kameron and Emma show their agency by engaging in serious games (Ortner, 2006) and despite their habitus using their agency to imagine a career outside of education. Their desire to leave education correlates with teacher turnover rates in charter schools (Gulosino et al., 2019). Sadly, this is becoming a norm because charter school operators engage in numerical flexibility and see employees as temporary and know they can easily replace their workforce (Snyder, 2016).

Kameron and Emma repeatedly speak of student dignity being disregarded in the charter school. Kameron states:

I think in a lot of my time at charter schools, I noticed that the strategies that are celebrated in a lot of charter schools often seem to not be focused on student dignity and lend to teachers seeking control over relationships. So a lot of times charter schools are focused on compliance and success and not on student dignity.

A large portion of their day is beholden to upholding practices created by the charter school habitus that regulate student bodies. Both speak to neoliberal and charter school aims to create

meritocracy, but also relying upon inequitable practices to push out unwanted students and following harsh discipline (Collins, 2014). Even the movements of students are held accountable and quantified through the use of the demerit and merit system, which embraces the neoliberal concept of accountability to facilitate the best students rising to the top (Collins, 2014).

The most vital recommendation for charter schools, gleaned from Kameron and Emma, is that teachers need encouragement. Kameron simply states that if teachers are given praise then they might remain in the field:

I do think that a lack of encouragement is a huge contributing factor to teacher burnout and why so many teachers are fleeing... And it's just never good enough. I just, that's something I'm really feeling passionately about-- teachers need to be encouraged and affirmed. We don't need more feedback. We need just like you're doing the best that you can and that's good.

Recommendations for Research

A significant finding is that non-traditional forms of analysis like documentary narrative, autoethnography, and ethnodrama allowed me to capture the visceral experience of working in a charter school as a woman. Additionally, the application of Practice Theory (Bourdieu, 1977) and serious games (Ortner, 2006) to the experiences of women teachers in the charter school field provides a tool to make sense of the world of charter school teachers and new possibilities may be considered by examining how educational policies manifest in the bodies and fields of women teachers (Ndu, 2022). Practice Theory has the potential to illuminate incidents of autonomy in the charter school field. Should we examine this further, it could open up possibilities for how women teachers might make sense of their role within the charter school field, disrupt policy embodiment, recreate their social worlds, and hopefully remain in the field.

Researchers need to more often adopt these approaches in order not to replicate a cycle of tradition rooted in power and to radically subvert traditional forms of research in order to authentically share the experiences of marginalized participants, in this case women teachers.

References

- Anyon, J. (2011). *Marx and education*. Routledge.
- Anyon, J. (2014). *Radical possibilities public policy, urban education, and a new social movement* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Apple, M. W. (1993). The politics of official knowledge: Does a national curriculum make sense? *Teachers College Record*, 95(2), 222-241.
- Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. (2008). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(3), 367-409.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1972).
- Collins, K. M. (2014). A disability studies in education (DSE) analysis of corporate based educational reform: Lessons from New Orleans. In D. Connor, J. Valle, & C. Hale (Eds.), *Practicing disability studies in education: Acting toward social change* (pp. 217 – 233). Peter Lang Publishing.
- Dewey, J. (1935). The teacher and his world. *The Social Frontier*, 1(4), 7.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I a methodological novel about autoethnography*. Alta Mira Press.
- Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of bio-politics: Lectures at the College De France, 1978-79*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Grenfell, M. (1996). Bourdieu and initial teacher education: A post-structuralist approach. *British Educational Research Journal*, 22(3), 287-303.

- Gulosino, C., Ni, Y., & Rorrer, A. K. (2019). Newly hired teacher mobility in charter schools and traditional public schools: An application of segmented labor market theory. *American Journal of Education*, 125(4), 547-592.
- Hursh, D., & Martina, C.A. (2016). The end of public schools? Or a new beginning? *The Educational Forum*, 80(2), 189-206.
- Lipman, P. (2011). Contesting the city: Neoliberal urbanism and the cultural politics of education reform in Chicago. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 32(2), 217-234.
- McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of contention*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ndu, M. (2022). Examining Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus, and field in women's health research in Nigeria: A feminist perspective. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 1-6.
- Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and social theory culture, power, and the acting subject*. Duke University Press.
- Royal Pratt, G., Leone, H., Perez, Jr., J., & Anderson, J. (2019, October 17). CPS strike is officially on as teachers union, Chicago mayor fail to reach a last-minute deal. *The Chicago Tribune*. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-cps-strike-school-canceled-chicago-public-schools-20191016-hgm4s6o6cvcffhtn5iatp2ilei-story.html>
- Snyder, B. H. (2016). *The disrupted workplace: Time and the moral order of flexible capitalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Spring, J. H. (2015). *Globalization of education: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Manuscript Details

Manuscript Title	Target Journal	Length Restrictions	Research Questions	Methodology
A Habitus of Neoliberalism: How Charter School Teachers Persist in an Era of Flexible Capitalism	<i>Symbolic Interaction</i>	Abstract: 200 words Length: 10,000 words	How can documentary narrative analysis be used to allow a researcher, with insider knowledge, to give voice to the stories of participants, in order to examine the neoliberal structures, inherent in charter schools, that create a habitus?	Documentary Narrative
“Everything would be okay:” Resisting and Remaking the Hidden Rules for Survival in a Charter School	<i>The Qualitative Report</i>	Abstract: 200 words Length: 45 pages (inclusive of references)	How did I use agentive action, as a woman teacher, to remake the social structure of the charter school institution?	Autoethnography
“The Way We Feel The Burden:” How Women Teachers Remain Resilient In The Charter School Setting	<i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i>	Abstract: 150 words Length: 40-45 pages (inclusive of references and tables)	How do women who work as charter school teachers describe the techniques they have developed in order to remain working as teachers?	Ethnodrama

			Do women teachers resist the hidden rules of the charter school institution, and if so, how?	
--	--	--	--	--

Appendix B

Chapter 2 Findings

SCENE	VIDEO	AUDIO
1 The Setup: Maisy	<u>B-Roll:</u> Shots of the exterior of The School that juxtapose the modern, state of the art campus with windows that span the two storied building, welcoming banners, and uniformed students milling about with the economically devastated landscape that surrounds it, including dilapidated houses, corner stores, and gang graffiti tagging every business. Cut to wide shots of The School’s amphitheater. Finish with a zoom in on The School’s creed posted on the wall of a classroom. <u>Text:</u> “Intense and Furious: The Work of a Charter School Teacher” <u>Maisy Interview:</u> Maisy, 26 years old, sits on a student desk. The desk is small but Maisy’s small frame sits comfortably. Maisy looks more like a middle school student than an adult. The setting is Maisy’s 6th grade classroom, and she is on her planning period. She is frazzled after a long day of teaching, and stray hairs poke out from her headband and stick to her flushed face. Maisy wears an oversized hoodie with the text “Sixth Grade. Best Grade!”	<u>Maisy Interview:</u> Maisy performs a soundcheck and awkwardly fidgets during the lighting test. She states her name, where she is from, and how long she has been teaching.

	scrawled across the front. There is a giant Yeti mug of coffee, a Coke, and a Sugar-free Red Bull placed on the desk in front of her. A student is in the back of the classroom hanging up exemplar student work.	
2 The Charter School Structure: Maisy	<u>Location:</u> Maisy's classroom. <u>Maisy Interview:</u> Maisy is in the same location as scene 1. <u>Interviewer:</u> Sits across from Maisy in a swivel office chair. Gretchen is in her late thirties, white, and is dressed formally, which is in stark contrast to Maisy. Gretchen and Maisy know one another and Gretchen tries to appear more professional to distance their familiarity with a blazer, styled hair, and make-up. <u>Shot:</u> Camera frames Maisy from the desk up for a medium shot. Gretchen is not in the shot.	<u>Interviewer:</u> Let's begin. What type of schools have you taught in throughout all your years of teaching? <u>Maisy:</u> Most of my experience has been in charter middle schools. Only taught in a charter school, low income, under resourced. Does that matter? <u>Interviewer:</u> Yeah. <u>Maisy:</u> Title One. So four of those years were charter middle schools. <u>Interviewer:</u> What are your career aspirations? <u>Maisy:</u> Great question [sips from Yeti]. I think I'm sorting that out. I don't think I want to stay in education forever. It has felt very, I don't think burdening is the correct word, but

	classrooms taking attendance. Shot of a classroom of middle schoolers reciting the school creed. <u>Shot:</u> Camera frames Maisy from the desk up for a medium shot. Gretchen is not in the shot.	which is a little weird, basically went through the values of the school. The students have to recite it. There were a lot of tasks that you had to achieve kind of in that morning-- like attendance, but also like ensuring all students were in uniform, ensuring all students were prepared for the day, a lot of kind of, I guess, compliance tasks were taken care of. Then I teach four periods of reading, and depending have either one or two planning periods. I also run what we call brain breaks, but they are some of the most stressful times. They are really like very well regulated restroom breaks, with teachers like inside the restroom managing student behavior. Anywhere we went like we walked the students in lines, a lot of talk about like two feet in one block, and very firm expectations for what those lines look like or what your shirt tail looks like in the line or coming out of the restroom. There's a lot of micromanaging like students' even like body. Like if their shirt was tucked in, like where they're bo- like body parts were, and like um arms like, but I think something that felt very heavy throughout the day was the level to which I was managing students' behavior, but like really also bodies of like, how they stood in line, how they sat in their chairs. It created a high tension, high intensity environment. I was not technically required to supervise lunch, but there was like an assumption that you did, and kind of like judging this if we didn't. So when the students went to their specials, the entire grade level team would have a planning period. After all the classes are done for the day, I manage dismissal. Um, two days a week I was required to do after school tutoring. During the days I was also required to manage behavior. We had a system of merits and demerits, but it was about basically like points that students earned or lost based on their behavior. We keep track of this on a clipboard on a piece of
--	---	--

		paper. At the end of the day, those are required to be like entered into a system that keeps track of student behavior points and rewards or punishes students based on their number of points. That is later posted in the hallway, so students can see the number of points for the week. It is posted publicly and sent home to parents with a whole list, like multiple pages long of each of their positive and negative behaviors for the week. We can leave at 3:30, and I am the first one out the door every day. 3:30 hits and I'm literally sprinting out the front.
3 Educational Labor: Maisy	<u>Location:</u> The outdoor patio of an eatery. <u>Maisy Interview:</u> Maisy is seated at a wrought iron table with a spicy margarita. She seems a little more relaxed at an off-campus location. <u>Interviewer:</u> Sits across from Maisy at the table. Gretchen is dressed casually today. <u>Shot:</u> Maisy from the waist up.	<u>Interviewer:</u> When do you feel like you get praise or acknowledgement from administration? <u>Maisy:</u> I have, when I said I was leaving The School. It's just I've never felt so valued as when I said, "I'm not returning." Then I feel like people really come out and say well, but you're so good. <u>Interviewer:</u> When we chatted Tuesday, you mentioned trust. Tell me about a time where you felt like you weren't being trusted? <u>Maisy:</u> I'm just gonna be really honest with you. On Tuesday morning, our first day back from kids, two administrators came through to walk through to make sure kids were on task. And that really, I felt so untrusted in that moment. That really frustrated me and made me feel very untrustworthy because I just want to say, "I'm the least of your worries at

	<u>B-Roll:</u> Shots of administrators standing in the back of classrooms with clipboards. <u>Shot:</u> Full shot of interviewer and Maisy. <u>Shot:</u> Cut to single shot of Maisy. <u>Shot:</u> Full shot of interviewer and Maisy.	the school. Surely, I'm doing my job.” I understand observations, but that was, that just felt like a petty check to come in and make sure that kids were doing what they're supposed to do when I made sure they were. I think their intentions are good. The way they execute it feels very diminishing to teachers. If you're constantly going to put me down and throw me under the bus, then no, you don't have best interest for students, because if you want to help students, you need to help me, not put me down. <u>Interviewer:</u> Another thing I wanted to clarify, um, you had brought up the phrase “shame.” I think you said it two times when we spoke last time. What do you mean by “shame?” <u>Maisy:</u> Yes. Well, there was one day I was on the verge I, it was truly a mental health day. I was on the verge of a panic attack. And so that morning I called in. I said, “I, I cannot come to school today. I just need a day.” And that whole day, trying to give my mind a break, I just felt overwhelming guilt because I wasn't there, and I kept getting text messages asking for materials, asking questions and things. Instead of, I just wanted to say print off a packet, you know, and the day that I got back, no one on the administrative team spoke to me. I usually hear a “Good morning” or “Hey, how's it going?” It was completely silent from all three, and that, I mean, I noticed that and that was horrible to me. <u>Interviewer:</u> For sure. <u>Maisy:</u> I just think the amount of apologies that everyone gives whenever they have to miss a day is absurd. It's not worth the guilt and the shame that will come from asking for a day off. I think it's worse in the charter school setting for sure.
--	--	--

	<u>Shot:</u> Tight zoom on Maisy.	<u>Interviewer:</u> [off-camera] You mentioned when we were talking earlier, that you will be leaving The School. Why are you choosing not to stay? <u>Maisy:</u> Um, a couple of reasons. The main one is my mental health. I have my own mental health struggles. And I think that it is not a conducive environment to being able to do the work. I am pouring out every ounce of what I have, and I got married this year. It became evident like the disassociation I was doing at home was like, when I lived on my own nobody noticed, and then when I was married, my like dissociation when I got home became really evident. When I got home, I just would like watch TV for hours and plan, you know, and like I just like, didn't engage with myself. Being married made me see that. Because it's not like my time at home was more valuable once I was married. It was just that I didn't have someone to see that. I also want to become a mom, and I don't think I could do this job as a mother. I also just became really disillusioned with charter schools in general of the expectations. And so ultimately, I saw between needing to find a place where I felt human, needing to find a place where I could mother another human, needing to find a place that was dignified to kids academically, needing to find a place that was dignifying to kids behaviorally. I think that's ultimately why I need to end up going on my path.
4 Playing the Game: Maisy	<u>Location:</u> The outdoor patio of an eatery. <u>Maisy Interview:</u> Maisy is seated at a wrought iron table with a spicy margarita. She seems a little more relaxed at an off-campus location. <u>Interviewer:</u> Sits across from Maisy at the table.	

	Gretchen is dressed casually today. <u>Shot:</u> Maisy from the waist up. <u>Shot:</u> Full shot of interviewer and Maisy. <u>Interviewer:</u> When you disagree with a school policy or a school rule, what do you do? <u>Maisy:</u> So my first year, I did not have as much of a critical eye towards the school's policies. It was like, "Oh, this is so much better." It was very much emphasized that like everyone being on the same page was like absolutely essential to like the school, like running. Shirts got to be tucked in. Through that year, and then especially through my other years, I figured out that like I don't care if anybody's shirt is tucked in, or like, I don't care if you're wearing an out of dress code sweatshirt, as long as it doesn't say like FU. So like I learned how to hold lines that mattered to my teaching, and not hold and then appear to my school as if I were holding lines that matter to the school. So it would be like in even that year, I think I learned that like in the classroom like okay, I don't care what's going on like, but "Okay, it's time to go. Like let's be sure our shirts are tucked." Um like gum spit out, whatever. And so I think there's a balance there, because the level of rules are not realistic to actually hold up all the time in your classroom. <u>Interviewer:</u> So what gave you that confidence to kind of realize like, I'm going to hold rules that matter in my classroom and then, you know, we'll make it appear like we're, we're toeing the line. What gave you that confidence? <u>Maisy:</u> Um, I think I just learned that when I gave kids more freedom, they were better like, like behaviorally, academically. They behaved better. They were happier in class. They produced more meaningful work. <u>Interviewer:</u> I'm going to call these the secret violations of rules, where you, you noted like in your classroom, as long as they're meeting like your rules that are important or your lines
--	--

		that are important, it's okay, but like, then we're going to put on our hallway hat... When, when you committed maybe these like secret violations, did anything happen to you as a result? Like were you in any way chastised by administration? <u>Maisy:</u> We have what is called fidelity checks. Someone comes in and like count the number of binders that are under chairs or whatever. So the kids kind of know when someone came in, to fix those things. But the dynamic was, like if one person's not doing it, then like, kids feel like they can have their shirt untucked in other classes and like, what if they do [sarcastically]? It's never, it's not really the kids, they're kids. I expect them to be children. I expect them to come to me with things. But I really do feel as though it's more of the external pressures that are placed on me. And I know that's from, from admin, and I know that they have people higher up placing pressures on them. And so then it just dwindles down. So I understand that, but it's just that constant feeling of not being trusted, have always kind of that assumption that you did something wrong when something happens in the classroom or outside of it. And so I think that is what really depletes teachers is that lack of trust, that lack of just appreciation, right? It's like I know when things go wrong. It's just that constant burden of the pressure in that you're never doing good enough. <u>Interviewer:</u> I know we're getting towards the end of our time. But before we close out, is there anything that you would like to add to this conversation or anything you want to make sure that I know? <u>Maisy:</u> I don't think so. I always get nervous. I don't want to ever be dishonoring someone in something that's going to be written down. I don't want to disparage anyone. I think that the people I've worked with have always been
	<u>Shot:</u> Cut to single shot of Maisy. <u>Fade to black.</u>	

		doing their best for students and I don't want to go on like it. Everyone's doing the best they can. I'm done.
--	--	--

Appendix C

Ethnodrama Recording

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbdphIILtc>



VITA

Gretchen N. Cook is a doctoral candidate in cultural studies in education in the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education at The University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Her research interests fill three buckets— women teacher identity formation and patriarchal structures in charter schools, critical animal studies, and LGBTQ+ studies. She adopts the methodologies of autoethnography and ethnography with the aim to share her stories as a means of opening up vulnerabilities and to help others find connection to her experiences. She serves as a graduate teaching assistant at the university, and teaches Cultural Studies 200: Survey of International Education.