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This study utilized a narrative inquiry model to explore the narratives-in-construction of seven Latinx students' lived experiences in a ninth-grade social studies class. Layered and parallel narratives constructed around critical incidents and as told by the student participants, their teacher, and the researcher were used to examine the co-constitutive nature of spaces related to literacy and history teaching and learning. Data were collected over the course of the semester-long course and included class observations, artifact collection, and critical incident think-aloud protocol interviews conducted with students three times a week. An adapted positioning analysis framework was used to examine narratives at three levels, moving from the level of participant talk to that of broader sociocultural discourses.

Four storylines emerged from the data that illustrated (a) the ways in which the teacher's instruction informed student decision-making about learning; (b) how the teacher's positioning of students determined legitimization of that decision; (c) students' agentic actions in response to the teacher's positioning; and (d) the conceptualizations of personhood that emerged. These storylines were then deconstructed using a spatial framework to examine the ways in which the Latinx students' learning spaces were expanded or constricted. Observed shifts in the borders and boundaries of spaces informed implications drawn for teaching and learning.

JOURNEYING INTO DARKNESS: SPATIALIZING LATINX STUDENTS'
LITERACY NARRATIVES IN THE IN-BETWEEN

by

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To Alberto, Atalaya, Joaquin, Kesara, Lorenzo, Ramón, and Sebastian.

Thank you for having the courage to take me on a journey into the darkness.

AND

To my children, Ashlynd and Leland.

Thank you for reminding me why journeying into the darkness

is so important in the first place.

APPROVAL PAGE

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And so again, what if? What if we refuse to convene space into time?

*What if we open up the imagination of the single narrative
to give space (literally) for a multiplicity of trajectories?*

~D. Massey (2005, p. 5)

CHAPTER I
SPACES OF DARKNESS: CENTRALIZING LATINX YOUTH

My sister stopped using a night light before I did. Or, more precisely, she brought us to that moment sooner than I would have wanted. I remember the night light, the faded bands of a rainbow an almost indistinguishable appendage arching from the plastic cloud that housed the lightbulb. It was plugged into an outlet underneath an old wooden chair that doubled both as a nightstand for our water cups and as a partition dividing my sister's twin bed from my own. Its light clearly delineated my side of the room from hers, mine with a pink quilt neatly tucked over pillows and ballet posters decorating the walls and hers with bedclothes thrown willy-nilly, dogs—figurines, pictures, stuffed animals—filling every available space.

The darkness brought by the removal of the night light at my sister's behest hinted at other differences between us—her penchant for haphazardly jumping into whatever life threw her way and my cautious and reserved approach to decision-making, her need for fitting in and my avoidance of any situation that required being social. After several nights of cowering under my blankets in the bed, imagining what other sounds of sinister doings were lurking underneath the howl of the Wyoming wind and the zipping of the power lines outside my window, I declared a somewhat questionable independence given the circumstances and moved into the basement. Being a basement room and across the

hallway from a dark, cement-floored storage area, the move didn't necessarily quell the fear but it did allow me to plug that little night light in with an excuse that sounded at least a little more plausible. It was, after all, my first time sleeping in a room by myself and I was, of course, separated from the rest of my family by an entire floor.

And so our battle over the night light ended. I doubt that if I were to bring it up at the Thanksgiving table anyone else would remember it. But the dark stayed. And that, everyone remembers. This dark was shaped by our inability to understand one another, to make peace, as it was, with our differences. Whether it was ordinary sibling rivalry, a consequence of egocentric immaturity, or something else entirely, we would be well into our adulthood and faced with our mother's death before we would truly begin to cautiously probe at the borders of what marked the differences between us.

Now, some thirty years later, as I sit with my daughter in the late-night hour, calming her fears of the dark in the glow of her night light, I am reminded of the other dark, a much more fearsome and unforgiving dark. This is the kind of dark that builds walls between countries, that shouts "terrorist" at anyone who appears Muslim, that discharges a gun at unarmed Black bodies. This is the kind of dark that "doesn't see color" and blames the victim. It is the kind of dark that silences. I am still afraid of what lurks in the dark, but, unlike the dark of my childhood, what lies in this dark is very real.

Defining the In-Between Space of Schooling

It is not, perhaps, that the dark is becoming more ubiquitous but that we are finding our way into that dark more often. In their work on *ideological becoming*, Freedman and Ball (2004) preface their discussion with a reference to Sebastião

Salgado's (2000) *Migrations*, a photography exhibit that documents the mass displacement of people in over 35 countries at the end of the twentieth century and challenges our conceptual imaginings of *nation*, *community*, and *citizenship*. Clifford Geertz, in *Uses of Diversity* (2000), contrasts the *landscapes* and *still lifes* of yesteryear with the *panoramas* and *collages* in which we live today, where "the person we encounter in the grocery store is as likely, or nearly, to come from Korea as from Iowa, in the post office from Algeria as from the Auvergne, in the bank from Bombay as from Liverpool" (p. 86). These are social spaces whose edges are ill-defined, whose borders and boundaries are in often unpredictable motion, stretching out and collapsing, colliding and merging, as movement and change shape the landscapes in which we live our daily lives. It is at these edges, and not necessarily when we are safely ensconced in the center of these spaces, that we come face-to-face with the disparities that exist around how we understand ourselves and others and the way we come to know the world around us.

The nature of technology, communication, and movement in today's world means that these insular spaces are growing smaller and becoming less available. For some, that means colliding hard with the borders and boundaries of social spaces where power and privilege may be the singular factor determining who comes out unscathed. For others, it is bewilderment and confusion at the emerging foreign shapes of their world that focus tensions at the intersection of action and inaction, acceptance and resistance. Still others may have the vision to see across these spaces and the consciousness to recognize not only the strengths of the individual spaces but also the latent power that lies within the *borderlands* (Anzaldúa, 2007). But wherever we each fall along this continuum, the

effort of bringing to fruition the actual use of diversity, or the effort of resisting it if one is so persuaded, is fraught with conflict as the collision of spaces becomes more and more inescapable. However, if we are to actually attempt the journey of leveraging diversity in the navigation of the spaces across which we live our lives, Geertz reminds us that:

[the] terrain is uneven, full of sudden faults and dangerous passages where accidents can and do happen, and crossing it, or trying to, does little or nothing to smooth it out to a level, safe, unbroken plain, but simply makes visible its clefts and contours. If . . . “[those we] need to talk with” are to confront one another in a less destructive way (and it is far from certain—the clefts are real—that they actually can) they must explore the character of the space between them. (Geertz, 2000, p.83)

This *space between* is no more present elsewhere than it is in our public schools, which bring together people with diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives under the auspices of teaching and learning (Pace, 2015). And in these spaces where conflicts emerge between what official doctrines tell us about our world and what is experienced, between what we think we know and what others know, arise struggles in what Bakhtin (1981) refers to as the *zone of contact*. Contact zones are rich spaces in which tensions between the *authoritarian discourses* of the institution of schooling and those—teachers, administrators, policymakers—who uphold its values collide with the *internally persuasive discourses* of the everyday people in the classroom (Bakhtin, 1981; Freedman & Ball, 2004; Morson, 2004; Wertsch, 2002). The process of negotiating tensions between and among discourses with historically-privileged authority and those many and varied, often unacknowledged, discourses that individuals themselves find personally persuasive is at the center of this richness, creating opportunities for ideological

becoming. In fact, Bakhtin (1981) notes that this “struggling with another’s discourse, its influence in the history of an individual’s coming to ideological consciousness” (p. 348) through social interaction is necessary for individual growth. This ideological becoming captures how we develop our view of the world, our system of ideas, and what is possible for us to learn. That is, the “other” who shares our space, who lives on the border of our own lives, is critical to our own ideological development. The more discourses we come into contact with, the more opportunities we have for learning.

And yet, my own ideological self, that which forms “the very basis of [my] ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of [my] behavior” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342) must also consider the ways in which such ideological becoming, the expansion of our own understanding of the world, must not be only for ourselves. In the tradition of Paulo Freire (1970), a true transformation of the world is defined by the process of humanizing the world, one in which we all become more fully human by participating in and with the world in critically conscious ways that recognize our own presence and that of others as being “social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons” (Salazar, 2013, p. 126). Opening space for the ideological becoming of others is a moral obligation. As educators, whether in PK-12 or higher education contexts, it is our responsibility to frame teaching and learning as central to this process of becoming. This framing demands connecting emotionally with students and promoting their overall well-being by constructing spaces that encourage the sharing of lived experiences as situated within social and political contexts and

recognizes, with compassion, those experiences that are dehumanizing (Cammarota & Romero, 2006).

Particularly and most especially for students of color, it is unsurprising that experiences of dehumanization can be common given the current accountability and standardization cultures of education in the United States (Reyes & Villarreal, 2016). Neoliberal approaches to education that commodify students and knowledge, that measure learning through statistics, that equate schools with for-profit businesses geared toward economic productivity (Au, 2009; Hursh, 2007; Savage, 2017) block the process of becoming more fully human, restricting students from acting, thinking, or reflecting on who they are and how they are positioned in the world (Freire, 1970). When students' languages, cultures, stories, histories, families, and communities are de-legitimated, or even eradicated, from the process of teaching and learning, what is human about them becomes disposable. They become, to their oppressors—in this case, the institution of schooling—"inanimate things" (Freire, 1970, p. 59).

Take for instance the scandal that occurred in the El Paso Independent School District from 2006 to 2011 when the superintendent systematically targeted students of Mexican-descent for GED-track education, artificially promoted and demoted them, or encouraged them to drop out of school (Llorca, 2012; Michels, 2012; Torres, 2012). Students particularly targeted by the district were known to have limited English proficiency or to have "Hispanic-surnames" and were, thus, positioned as testing liabilities (Reyes, 2016, p. 338). A teacher in Rankin County, Mississippi filed a complaint in 2016 with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education,

sparkling a federal probe into the alleged deletion and substitution of courses listed on the transcripts of English Language Learners (ELL) (Harris, 2017). Although students sat in the same classroom with the same teacher for Biology I and Algebra I, students were given credit only for transition courses (i.e., Pre-Biology and Transitions to Algebra), which did not require them to sit for the state test. The suit claimed that school administration reassigned students whom they assumed would struggle with the test based on race, color, and national origin and that some of these course deletions put at least one student in danger of not graduating high school. That same year a group of parents and students filed a lawsuit against Dover City Schools in Ohio, claiming that the school district discriminated against ELLs by placing high school-age students in middle school classrooms, directing students to take electives rather than rigorous core classes, sending communication to parents in a language they didn't know, and breaking state law by refusing to re-enroll students who had dropped out (Baker, 2016).

There are, of course, many other stories available at your fingertips through online media searches. And there are, of course, many other stories that remain unheard. Stories of schools and individuals who have, especially given the current social discourse and political agendas centered on immigrants and refugees in the United States, taken advantage of students and families who are made vulnerable within the institution of schooling. These stories show us the ways in which student minds, bodies, and lives have been relegated to numbers in schooled spaces, that their humanity—language, culture, history, family—has been reduced to the ways in which more-privileged others

perceive them as obstacles, hindrances, or threats to their own “successes,” however that might be defined.

But while these stories of systemic discrimination, injustice, and inequity abound in and out of print form, reporting events like these is not enough. It is not enough, as in the Rankin County suit, to use words like *alleged* and *complaint* and then fail to report any further on a federal investigation that was filed in 2017. It is not enough to label what happened in the El Paso School District a *scandal*, without examining further, in public (and not just research) spaces, why it happened and how what happened is reflective of the day-to-day lived experiences of students of color across the nation. Reports like these are not enough to encourage white, middle-class, heterosexual Americans to become critical examiners of their own history, their own role in the systematic disenfranchisement of entire bodies of peoples, and their own potential for taking action to bring about change in ways that humanize themselves and others.

In *The Uses of Diversity*, Geertz (2000) tells a story he learned from an anthropologist that he, quite logically, titled *The Case of the Drunken Indian and The Kidney Machine* (p. 79-82). Not being able to do justice to Geertz’s words, I won’t retell the story in its entirety here—it’s best read in its original version—but the gist of the story involves a rare artificial kidney machine that provided dialysis for patients in a government medical program in the southwestern United States, a group of young doctors from major medical schools largely located in the northeast, and an Indian whose drinking was “prodigious” (p. 80) by his own account. Although effective treatment required strict adherence to program elements, including diet, the queuing system

organized patients in order of need and application. This system became the catalyst for conflict between the Indian, who was always prompt for his appointments but refused to stop drinking, and the doctors, who considered the Indian an obstacle to others more deserving of using the machine for treatment. Both parties continued, unswayed by the other, until the Indian, after several years of treatment, died. Geertz concludes:

Now, the point of this little fable in real time is not that it shows how insensitive doctors can be (they were not insensitive, and they had a case), or how adrift Indians have become (he was not adrift, he knew exactly where he was); nor to suggest that either the doctors' values (that is, approximately, ours), the Indian's (that is, approximately, not-ours), or some trans-parte judgment . . . should have prevailed . . . If there was any failure here, and, to be fair, it is difficult at a distance to tell precisely how much there was, it was a failure to grasp, on either side, what it was to be on the other, and thus what it was to be on one's own . . . It is not the inability of those involved to abandon their convictions and adopt the views of others that makes this little tale seem so utterly depressing . . . It is their inability even to conceive, amid the mystery of difference, how one might get round an all-to-genuine moral asymmetry. *The whole thing took place in the dark.* (Geertz, 2000, pp. 81–82, emphasis added)

And, what is, perhaps, “so utterly depressing” about the collective stories of students of color, including those from immigrant or refugee families, in our U.S. schools is that their education also often takes place in the dark. That is not to say that there aren't wonderful things being done that notice, acknowledge, and leverage student diversity for expansive learning opportunities—the work Kris Gutiérrez et al. (2017) are doing with Latinx families in a STEM-oriented afterschool club called *El Pueblo Mágico*; the community-oriented storytelling project *Nuestros Cuentos*, directed by J. Estrella Torrez (Torrez, Ramos, Gonzales, Del Hierro, & Cuevas, 2017), that creates a space for Latinx and Indigenous youth to write and publish collaborative pieces that capture their

personal stories and histories; and, of course, the heritage language program that I have been privileged to observe that provides strengths-based learning for Spanish-speaking students and their families (Hinman & He, 2017). And it is not to say that teachers and administrators, schools, and school districts are solely at fault for creating and carrying out the kinds of acts that perpetuate inequitable and unjust educational spaces and practices. However, this work argues that they are complicit, sometimes knowingly, sometimes not, in systems of inequity and oppression that continue to situate the education of students, particularly students of color, in the dark, perpetuating pedagogies that sustain and often reward the dehumanization of students, teachers, and the communities in which they belong.

This isn't a new idea. Research (e.g., Cooper & Brooks, 1979; Donato, 1997; Sanchez, 1940; San Miguel, 1987; San Miguel & Valencia, 1998; Valverde & Brown, 1978) in the early 20th century began documenting, in earnest, the inequities that exist in the education of Latinx students, including segregated schools, insufficient school funding, poor or nonexistent bilingual programs, and the overrepresentation of Latinx students in vocational and special education classes. Even before *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Latinx students and their families and communities were taking a stand against issues in schools that impacted their education, as is reflected in the legal cases of *Independent School District v. Salvatierra* (1930, 1931), *Alvarez v. Lemon Grove* (1931), *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946, 1947), and *Delgado et al. v. Bastrop Independent School District* (1948) and school walkouts, including those in East Los Angeles in 1968 and San Angelo, Texas in 1910. More current work framed by theories in Latino/a

critical race theory, or LatCrit (e.g., Salinas, Fránquiz, & Rodríguez, 2016; Stein, Wright, Gil, Mines, & Ginanto, 2018), continue to examine both the educational systems in place, through legal and social lenses, that disenfranchise Latinx students and the work that is being done to resist and cultivate transformation (Valdes, 1998).

But the greater discourse framing Latinx achievement, growth, and value in the U.S. education system today remains embedded in deficit ideologies, or what Fernández (2002) calls *crisis talk*, that focus on Latinx students' unfavorable comparative performance, quantitatively speaking, according to normed indicators of academic and behavioral achievement. These include standardized test scores, drop-out and graduation rates, and disciplinary referrals. In fact, like my own first conceptions of this study, much research is situated in stories of failure emanating from public schools across the United States concerning students of color, including those with Latinx heritages. The statistics are easy to find. While the percentage of the U.S. student population that identifies as Latinx continues growing at a rate faster than that of any other ethnicity (Colby & Ortman, 2015), their “poor” performance in schools and on standardized tests continues to gain significance in terms of the overall achievement of schools across the nation. According to the 2017 Nation’s Report Card, released by the National Assessment of Education Progress, Latinx students scored more than twenty points lower than their White peers in grades 4 through 8 in both reading and mathematics. Furthermore, for every 100 Latinx students who enroll in elementary school, less than half graduate from high school in comparison to the more than 80 percent of White students who go on to graduate (Rodriguez & Arellano, 2016). Those students who do

manage to stay in school experience a disproportionate number of placements in remedial, technical, and special education programs (Pérez Huber, Huidor, Malagón, Sánchez, & Solórzano, 2006).

And so, in an attempt to resist that deficit framing, subsequent versions of papers I wrote on this topic began, not by stating the statistics, but by telling the story of Graciela Gil Valero Olivárez. As a Latinx child of an impoverished copper miner, Graciela dropped out of school as a junior, buying into the messages from teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors that students like her—that is, students of Latinx heritage—were more suited for vocational work—as secretaries, as tradesmen—than for a college education. Thirty years later, Graciela would become the first woman ever to graduate from the Notre Dame School of Law and would be appointed by President Carter to direct the Community Services Administration, thereby making her the highest-ranking Latinx female in his administration (Telgen & Kamp, 1993).

Stories like Graciela's, however, are rare and they are stories of “success” only when positioned in contrast to the thousands of other stories of “failure” experienced by Latinx students in the United States. My journey to this project made me question this particular positioning of Graciela's story. In 2016, as a doctoral student, I was invited to participate in a community-based heritage language program conducted in partnership with the local school district and the university. It was this particular project, headed by Dr. Ye He and school leaders, that led me to ask what I was missing by telling Graciela's story in this way. What was I saying about Latinx students, their communities, and the schools that served them by framing my work using her story?

Partial answers to these questions began forming my first year with the heritage language program. Families had spent the 8-week spring session identifying problems in their local community, researching the issues, and developing solutions that the mayor would later invite them to share with the city council. I listened to them share stories about their work on the projects and saw the unique knowledges, the community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), upon which they drew to envision a better future for their Latinx community (Hinman & He, 2017). They talked about ways to provide city transportation to families to increase opportunities for them to participate in city and school events, about providing bilingual services to essential community organizations like hospitals and stores, and building mobile housing that wouldn't position families as targets for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids. And they talked about accomplishing these feats through resources of their own, drawing upon the skills and strengths of their own families and communities—their understanding of the advantages of being bilingual and biliterate; their knowledge of people in the community with the skills and know-how to plan and build; and their history of grit, determination, and hope that allowed their families to survive, and thrive, during times of hardship.

Over the subsequent years of my involvement with the heritage language program, I heard the teachers talk about how beautiful the families who attended the heritage language program were, how hard-working and knowledgeable they were. I saw the principal advocate for the families and speak with passion about the work her teachers were doing. And I saw the families make a real qualitative difference in what it means to experience schooling for Latinx students in the city, from initiating the Latino Parent

Advisory Committee to partner with the superintendent in addressing the needs of the Latinx community to organizing free services, like offering legal advice regarding citizenship and school enrollment, to all community members. As a whole, the heritage language program operated by legitimating and leveraging the strengths of these Latinx families in ways that stood in stark contrast to the spaces in which I had worked before, where, as a teacher new to a high school, I had been told that I would “get to teach better classes (as opposed, I suppose, to the remedial ones I was currently assigned to teach that were three-quarters composed of Latinx students) after I had proven myself.” The work this program was doing captured exactly why I had chosen to leave the K-12 classroom for a Ph.D. that would help me do the work of challenging the kinds of discourses and learning spaces that defined the schooling experiences of so many Latinx students. And showed me what was problematic about framing the work using this particular telling of Graciela’s story.

The heritage language program isn’t a product of the numbers, designed to fix the apparent weaknesses barring higher Latinx student achievement but was instead borne from a community’s desire and activism in the pursuit of sustaining and celebrating a way of living—their languages, their cultures, their traditions and visions for the future. But the program is also neither a contrast to nor an example of Graciela’s story. There are few who know the names and stories of the families who participated in the heritage language program. Their work certainly won’t be featured in any history book, mainstream or otherwise. But Graciela, for all the greatness she is known for, is not an anomaly in the Latinx community either. It is not that she was unnaturally more

intelligent, creative, or skilled than others of Latinx heritage. She wasn't. And it is not that the families of the heritage language program or other Latinx students sitting in classrooms across the United States are failing to achieve. They aren't. Their stories are not just about their struggles. Nor are their stories just about the outcomes. Instead, they are about what happened in the darkness of the in-between, the spaces in which their stories came head-to-head with the stories of others who shared those spaces and the histories of the systems and institutions that contextualized them. What lies in the darkness of that in-between can only begin to be seen by the light of the stories that they, themselves, can tell.

As experiential knowledge has become a more legitimate source of data in qualitative research, particularly as adopted in CRT and LatCrit frameworks, storytelling/counter-storytelling have become powerful research tools giving space for students of color to name their reality and give voice to their experiences as part of a concerted effort to move toward racial emancipation (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Montoya, 1995). These stories serve to subvert dominant narratives socially constructed by Whites (Delgado, 1995) and offer alternative narratives that critically question what we think we know or understand about the lives of others (Ladson-Billings, 1998). In doing so, storytelling/counter-storytelling can be made transformative and empowering, providing opportunities for social action and change (Fernández, 2002).

Recent research, fueled by the Trump Era and its associated political and social discourses, continues to include, at least in qualitative research, the stories Latinx

students tell about their experiences in U.S. schools. The breadth of topics in educational research featuring Latinx storytelling and narrative/counter-narrative work is diverse and includes stories told (a) by students of various ages, including those in college (Pérez Huber, 2017), high school (Gonzalez, 2018), and middle school (Martinez, 2017); (b) from a variety of perspectives, including those of pre-service teachers (Salinas et al., 2016; Sosa-Provencio, Sheahan, Fuentes, Muñiz, & Prada Vivas, 2019), parents (Lechuga-Peña & Lechuga, 2018; Roxas & Gabriel, 2017), and immigrants (Osorio, 2018); and (c) within a number of contexts, including within specific content area classrooms (Barajas-López, 2014; Busey & Russell, 2016) and culturally-significant locations (Guajardo, Guajardo, Salinas, & Cardoza, 2019). Collectively, these stories work to uncover the systemic inequities that create barriers to educational achievement for Latinx students in U.S. schools while also exploring the strengths students, families, and communities draw upon to navigate the system successfully.

However, many of these narratives capture broad-stroke snapshots of the Latinx schooling experience, often as told by college-age adults. These studies use interviews as a central data collection tool for participants to reflect back upon an experience as a whole, allowing researchers to identify patterns in participants' overarching experience in school. But, while change must happen at the systems level, that change also depends upon reciprocal efforts in individual schools and classrooms. The day-to-day interactions of teachers, students, parents, and administrators are the in-between spaces, linking visions for change with actual movements for change in terms of creating more equitable systems of education for all students.

However, the nature of the daily practices and sustained structures of the classroom are particularly hardened (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) by the historicity of schooling. In high schools, where praxis is also steeped in the traditions of disciplinary instruction in schooling and teacher education is often based in colleges rather than schools of education, creating momentum for change can be even more challenging. Coming to know and understand what happens in the dark of the in-between spaces of day-to-day schooling through the stories of youth as they live it holds potential for helping us, as teacher educators, as researchers, and as activists, see how Latinx students experience and navigate schooling and identify the spaces in which we can engender the beginnings of change.

Defining the Journey into Darkness

I chose to approach this task, at least in the writing of it, in a less traditional way. In some ways, I am drawn (by my Type A personality, no doubt) to the cleanliness, the clarity, the ease in structure—Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Findings and Implications. There is a sense of safeness, a certain kind of scrabbling to belong, that lures me to its steadiness. There are all of these things in what follows. I am, after all, making an attempt at belonging.

But, in larger part, I am entranced by the power, indeed, the magic, of the words we hold—in our heads, in our hands, in our hearts. And these words are not just the words of grand speeches, of poetry and music, of timeless quotes. These are the words that are spoken on streets, in schools and homes, in passing and in confidence. These are

words that are given accidentally and with intent. They are sometimes written, sometimes spoken, and always heard.

I have always loved words, from the early children's stories my mom read to me in the coziness of bed to the provocative texts of Geertz and Bakhtin that my mentor hands me now. (I did not arrive in this field of literacy by accident.) But I didn't truly understand the power words had in this pursuit for educational change, in its guise of research and scholarly work, until recently.

Last year, at the annual conference of the Literacy Research Association (LRA), I attended a presentation by a group of twelve mother-scholars (Alley et al., 2018). It was an alternative format session. They were, although influential scholars in their own right, not the most prominent names in the field. But the room was packed. Although the attendance was probably due, in part, to the draw of openly speaking about one's motherhood in connection with scholarly pursuits (a discussion for another time), it was also about the format of the presentation.

Each of the researchers had, based on their work, constructed a video featuring their own images and voices, as well as those of their children, to tell twelve individual stories about their experiences in being both "mother" and "literacy educator." In the end, however, the session wasn't *just* about those individual stories but the collective story, the way their words intertwined with one another's and with the words of those who were both audience to and participant in the creation of this collective story. What happened in that room was about the way that we absorb the stories of others, measure them against our own, reshape what we know and understand around what we come to

know and understand from the stories of others. Salman Rushdie (1991), in his novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, captures this melding of stories and the powerful space of knowing and “being” together that takes shape through the telling:

[Haroun] looked into the water and saw that it was made up of a thousand thousand thousand and one different currents, each one a different colour, weaving in and out of one another like a liquid tapestry of breathtaking complexity; and Iff [the Water Genie] explained that these were the Streams of Story, that each coloured strand represented and contained a single tale. Different parts of the Ocean contained different sorts of stories, and as all the stories that had ever been told and many that were still in the process of being invented could be found here, the Ocean of the Streams of Story was in fact the biggest library in the universe. And because the stories were held here in fluid form, they retained the ability to change, to become new versions of themselves, to join up with other stories and so become yet other stories; so that unlike a library of books, the Ocean of the Streams of Story was much more than a storeroom of yarns. It was not dead but alive. (p. 72)

Rushdie captures beautifully what it means to live alongside and within and around the stories of others in ways that transform our own perceptions of the world and what it means to “be.” But what he also captures, perhaps without even meaning to, is the bounding of stories of a type to a certain location. Different parts of the Ocean do indeed contain different sorts of stories. For many of us, journeying into other parts of the Ocean is a rare event and, dare I say, one that, when it is made, is of the tourist variety. Although there is no way of knowing for certain at this point, I would assume that the majority of the people in that conference room at LRA were both mothers and literacy educators and that there was an ease and flow in the telling and sharing of stories. *Yes, I know! Yes, I am one of you!* But there are, we know, spaces in which that telling would have come a little harder, would have pushed against, even threatened, what it is

that others think they know and understand about being a mother, being a literacy educator, about being themselves.

And then there are those stories that are told in the dark, that are created and stored in the parts of the Ocean that few, if any, journey to except for those who are the tellers of the stories. These are often the ones that our stories veer sharply around, avoid at all cost to ourselves and others, because a melding of our stories with the stories of the dark would inextricably, eternally change the shape and color of our own stories, creating something unrecognizable to the selves that we are now.

And so the purpose of my study, of sharing the stories of the dark, is to bring others with me on my journey into this darkness. This journey is less about creating windows (Style, 1988), for there is still a sense of separateness, of being able to judge *ex parte* from the safety of one's own side of the window. It is more about *becoming*—becoming someone wholeheartedly different from the person we used to be because we have in some way, albeit limitedly and with constraint, stepped into the abyss between ourselves and others. Because hearing and telling the stories of others, to the best of our ability, is to step outside of ourselves, however briefly we may do so. Because “if we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives” (Okri, 1997, p. 46).

The Telling of Stories and Narrative Inquiry

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) assert that stories, or narratives, are “a fundamental structure of human experience” (p. 2). As such, they are at the center of our source of knowledge and understanding. Although the stories we tell can often be fragmented, conflicting, and sometimes even spurious, it is the fluidity and changeability

of such stories that allow us to construct cohesive, continuous narratives of our lives (Bansel, 2013). We are, after all, complex creatures whose words are not easily translated into action, whose perceptions are influenced by time and context. We re-read, often, our worlds and ourselves and these re-readings are played out in the stories we tell and then re-tell of ourselves and of others. Nevertheless, in each and in every form, we embody these narratives as who we are in the world.

Narrative inquiry is, therefore, something more than merely a narrative representation of data, a telling of stories that is then examined from some other methodological stance. Instead, narrative inquiry requires that we make certain ontological and epistemological commitments, ones that ground our very understanding in narrative itself. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) established three such ontological and epistemological orientations that distinguish narrative inquiry from narrative research and narrative analysis, that is, that we view experience as being relational, continuous, and social.

First, narrative inquirers are distinctly oriented toward an understanding that all knowledge has its roots in being-in-relation (Caine, Estefan, & Clandinin, 2013). The stories that we tell and re-tell stem from our being-in-relation with others, with spaces, with the world. From moment to moment, this being-in-relation can shift and change shape, affecting how it is that we view and understand. But each of these moments of being-in-relation are valid places of being and of knowing. So the stories contained herein as told to me by the Latinx youth are as equally valid as (though they may be distinctly or minutely different from) the stories they tell their friends, their teachers, or

their families. Each moment of storytelling reflects their being-in-relation with their teacher, their peers, class content and activities, and, of course, with me. Their telling of their stories to me changes, inevitably, their telling of those stories in the present, their re-telling of those stories in the future, and the way that they embody them moment-to-moment. There is also recognition that the stories told are not their stories alone. They are, instead, stories that are co-composed in the spaces between us within a “stream of experience that generates new relations that then become a part of future experience” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 41). That is, while the youths narrate their stories, I am experiencing and interpreting them and this experiencing and interpreting, in turn, influences their telling in complex, overlapping ways that affect future actions and reinterpretations of past experiences for both of us.

This process of co-composing can seem problematic in that, through a researcher’s re-interpretation and re-telling of the story, the experience of the teller can be badly misrepresented, particularly when researcher and teller are operating from different frames of experience. This leaves researchers with particular ethical responsibilities for conducting narrative inquiry *with* participants through a process of co-interpretation, co-writing, and member checking. However, great benefits can also arise from operating within the relational in-between spaces of narrative inquiry, particularly in the possibilities for profound change that exist in moving toward new ways of knowing and understanding (Caine et al., 2013). In these in-between spaces, we ask “who” rather than “what” (Arendt, 1958) and are asked to consider context and relationship, time, and

space. We are asked to play a game of believing, one in which we must become a part of another's story as a way of coming to know them and giving them voice (Elbow, 1986).

The second ontological and epistemological orientation of narrative inquiry is one of continuity. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe continuity as:

the idea that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences. Wherever one positions oneself in that continuum—the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future—each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future. (p. 2)

That is, every story told is simultaneously a beginning, middle, and end. Every story is selective and partial. The telling of a story reaches into the past and draws upon past experiences while also opening new possibilities for the re-telling of that past. Every story stretches into the future, informs actions that lead to re-visions of what the future is and might become. Therefore, the stories of the Latinx youth I've written here cannot be told just within the context of their present moment in class. Those moments don't exist in isolated singularity. Their telling, and, thus, my telling, are a blend of past, present, and future, where a single event in the class's present draws upon and shapes both past events and imaginings of the future.

This incompleteness of a single story, or even of all stories, is important to consider as we listen to the stories the Latinx youth tell. A story, and the unique weaving of past, present, and future in a telling, are significant to understanding who the student is in that moment-in-time. This incompleteness requires that we, the listeners, suspend what we think we know and understand about the student in other moments-in-time at the same time that we consider what we know and understand across all of their moments-in-

time. Contradictions, irregularities, and blank spaces are, rather than indicative of methodological error or weakness, inherent in the process of narrative telling. The stories they—indeed, that we all—tell are constantly shifting, re-shaping, and moving in relation to what is understood of the past, present, and future; however, there are also limitations to what the listener can know of what the teller draws upon to tell the story. There can be a richness and sense of depth to the data collected and shared in narrative inquiry but there cannot be completeness.

The final quality marking the ontological and epistemological orientation of narrative inquirers is a belief in the social nature of narrative as our source of knowledge and understanding. That is, narrative inquirers consider our embodied narratives as reflective of our individual selves, but also of “the social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives within which individuals’ experiences were, and are, constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 18). So, while the stories of the Latinx youth that are told here are, in part, their own, they are also other. Their stories are and continue to be, in ways, inseparable from the myriad spaces that make up their past and present worlds, from the much larger collective story that history has written about them and others to the stories-of-the-future they tell together and of themselves.

This social quality of narrative inquiry also demands that listeners attune to the situatedness of each narrative. It requires that listeners acknowledge where the stories are told, to whom they are told, and in what context. It must, particularly in this case, consider what it means to speak, what it means to remain silent, and what the costs or gains of doing either might be. Again, the responsibility falls on the researcher to

position the telling of stories in safe spaces—physically, mentally, and emotionally. Therefore, while I asked students to share their stories, I did so at times of their choosing and in places of their choosing. They didn't tell stories where peers or teachers could overhear, except for those who chose a friend as a narrative co-composer because that space felt safe. I spent time building relationships with students before engaging them in interviews and I worked to make myself vulnerable in the process. But while these strategies hold potential for alleviating some of the influences of social relationships on the telling of stories, it must be recognized that they cannot, wholly or even in part, erase the historically- and socially-constructed dynamics of those relationships.

These three qualities of narrative experience—that it is relational, continuous, and social—are central to understanding the positioning of narrative inquiry in the field of research methodology. However, its nature of openness, of incompleteness, and of dependency can, especially through a quantitative perspective, lend narrative inquiry a feel of softness and laxness, something much more suited to story time than rigorous scientific inquiry. Connelly & Clandinin's (1990) reminder that narrative inquiry “brings theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on . . . experience as lived” (p. 3) helps us reframe this argument. Like all research that is qualitatively-oriented, quality may be discussed more in terms of transparency, verisimilitude, and transferability than validity, reliability, and generalizability (Maxwell, 2013).

Although what exactly constitutes high quality for each of these measures is widely-debated, in terms of narrative inquiry, I draw upon Loh's (2013) recommendations for addressing three aspects—trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and

utility—in planning and conducting research. Briefly, trustworthiness can be defined as a level of confidence in the researcher’s collection of data, interpretation of data, and methodological framing of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Verisimilitude “makes it possible for others to have access not only to our lives when our stories are about them but also to the lives of others” (Eisner, 1997, p. 264) and utility refers to the usefulness of a study to the fields of research and teaching.

Many of Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) original techniques for establishing trustworthiness apply here, including engaging in persistent observation, using thick description, and prolonging researcher presence at the site. The ways in which I met these criteria are addressed throughout the study. However, Loh (2013) particularly recommends establishing trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and utility by triangulating the processes of member checking, peer validation, and audience validation. Member checking provides opportunities for participants to examine the researcher’s observations and interpretations and give feedback on alternative interpretations. In this study, participants reviewed their individual profiles and were given opportunities to add, delete, or change information to better represent their experiences. This was particularly vital in this study, where my narrative frame—White teacher-researcher—was different from and granted me more privilege and power than the narrative frame of the participants—Latinx youth-student.

However, Kvale and Brinkman (2009) indicate that, sometimes, observations and interpretations drawn from a researcher’s perspective may “go beyond [participants’] self-understanding” or knowledge (p. 253). In this study, where the purpose was also to

draw upon theoretical ideas for interpreting the lived experiences of Latinx youth in the political, social, and cultural contexts of schooling, many of the themes and implications moved beyond the youth's ability to provide feedback. Thus, it was important that I check my interpretations at this level with those of critical friends, particularly that of my mentor, expert in the telling of others' stories, and a peer, who brought her extensive understanding of equity and social justice education to my work. These critical friends examined a variety of versions of this study, from raw data and participant profiles to interpretations of critical incidents and, of course, the full presentation of these ideas in this dissertation.

The final component of triangulation, audience validation, was the most challenging to incorporate in this study. Although getting participant and mentor feedback seemed a natural part of the process of making sense of the stories I heard from the Latinx youth, getting the approval of an audience similar to those I was writing about was problematic. This was, in part, because my ontological and epistemological commitments meant that I couldn't expect any one of the individual stories to "ring true" (Loh, 2013, p. 7) with a wider audience. These are the stories of the students in this study. Their stories are valid whether or not others feel their own experiences are reflected within them. But the other, much larger piece, is that this study is also written for those who don't share similar experiences. That is, I hope that the narratives of the Latinx youth herein draw my readers into in-between spaces, between their own lived realities and those of the students in the study. Thus, I approached audience validation through the sharing of interpretations and written portions of the piece with peers in both

research and teaching settings and measured that validation through the presence of critical questioning and discussion about and beyond study data and interpretations.

And so, my reader, I invite you into this community, one composed of the seven student participants, their teacher, and myself, as well as those who have already participated in peer and audience validations. You also have a responsibility. As you read the narratives of these Latinx youth and explore our interpretations of those experiences, I ask that you sit with their words, with their voices. To aid you in doing so, I have, to the best of my ability, included the actual words of the students who participated in the study. Their voices are not separate from the rest of the text, set apart by quotation marks and discourse markers like “he said” and “she said.” Instead, as often as possible, their words are the main text, italicized to indicate that the words are theirs and not my interpretation of them. In doing this, I hope to immerse you in a space that allows you to actively seek out tensions—tensions in the words of students and teacher, tensions between your world and theirs, and tensions in the representation of both. Their stories are always worth telling but it is through you, through your work in classrooms, with teachers, and in scholarly research, that their stories gain momentum and build power in the collective telling. It is through you that we begin to bring others with us into the in-between. To orient you toward this work and as a conclusion to this chapter, I provide a detailed explanation of the study—its purpose and research questions—followed by an overview of each chapter.

Study Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study is to centralize the voices and narratives of Latinx youth. It creates space for them to share the *moments* that make up their schooling experiences and reflect on how their own thinking and decision-making sustain and disrupt the trajectory built from those experiences. At the same time, this study works to bring others—teachers and administrators, teacher educators, and researchers—into the dark spaces of day-to-day schooling for Latinx students. In centering the students’ narratives, the study works to critically examine the taken-for-granted spaces that so many educators, who are largely White and middle class (Morrell, 2010), unintentionally normalize as part of the schooling experience. The deliberate positioning of student narratives alongside that of the classroom teacher’s highlights the conflicts and tensions that occur in the learning spaces and the ways that each chooses to navigate them. These points of tension allow us to critically examine the co-constitutive and complex nature of learning spaces as they are and re-imagine, through the student perspective, how the day-to-day work that we might do in in-between spaces open new and expanded spaces for teachers and students to disrupt the expectations that have been historically held in schools for Latinx youth.

To this end, the study was guided by the following major questions: *How does the teacher envision the teaching of literacy and history and what does this mean for the kinds of literacy spaces he wants to intentionally construct in class? How are these intentional spaces constructed and how do they position Latinx students?* The teacher’s envisioning of learning spaces is layered, built upon the borders and boundaries of his

own knowledge and experience; district, state, and federal expectations for schooling; and historicized practices in education, history, and literacy. What it is that he feels he *can* do and what it is that he *wants* to do are inextricably related, expansive and bounded all at the same time. While the teacher is ultimately responsible for the spaces constructed in his class, it is also important to keep in mind that there are other spaces, out of his immediate control, acting upon him, his class, and the people and interactions occurring within it.

Nevertheless, this envisioning of the teaching of history and literacy inherently influences the spaces that the teacher tries to intentionally construct in class. This construction is evident in the arrangement of student desks in the classroom, the placement of physical materials, and the construction and availability of resources and other tools for learning. It is evident in the teacher's creation of his own curriculum and in the curriculum handed to him from department, school, and district entities. And it is evident in the way he talks about teaching history and literacy, in the activities he designs to promote student learning, and in his interactions with and expectations for students. Envisioning encompasses the construction of all spaces—the perceived, the conceived, and the lived.

It is the influence of how the teacher envisions and constructs learning spaces that is at the center of my inquiry into these questions. Even if the ways that the teacher envisions the class are not fully enacted in the actual construction of learning spaces, the teacher's intentions still work to position students very specifically. This positioning defines what it means to be a student in his class. They communicate expectations for

engagement and dictate what can be learned and how it can be learned. As the teacher, his intentions possess the power to establish what counts as valid participation in learning, including what is accepted as valid knowledge, valid communication, and valid goals and measures of learning success.

However, it is this very act of validation of some forms of participation and not others that positions students differently based upon gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, among others. With recognition that none of these identity markers operate in isolation, I focused on the ways that the teacher's intentions for constructing learning spaces positioned Latinx students. That is, I wondered how the teacher's envisioning influenced his discourses about and toward Latinx students, how his discourses were or were not reflected in the discourses the class embodied, and what these discourses meant for literacy spaces available and accessible to Latinx students.

How do Latinx students in the class position themselves and others in relation to teacher-constructed literacy spaces? How does this positioning work to accept, contest, and resist teacher-constructed spaces and what do these actions mean for the ways in which literacy spaces become co-constructed by Latinx students? By high school, most students have already positioned themselves and their peers in particular ways in relation to school in general and to literacy specifically. This positioning often results in more or less hardened ways of responding to the spaces of institutionalized schooling, including the demands of teachers and administrators, content and task, and interaction. However, the particularities of teacher-constructed spaces can expand or limit the kinds of positions that students can and do take up, both those that are taken up in legitimate class spaces

and those that are taken up in what Goffman (1961) calls the *underlife*. It is often here where students contest teacher-constructed spaces and positioning by either attempting to disrupt normed roles and structures or fit within “existing institutional structures without introducing pressure for radical change” (p. 199).

Although Gutiérrez, Rymes, and Larson (1995) remind us that these contestations most often go unnoticed or unacknowledged in dominant discourses and thus rarely alter established power relations, the ways in which students accept, resist, and contest spaces and positioning (re)shape the nature of class activities. That is, while the teacher may be *envisioning* and even *constructing* a space one way, students are actively *living* it in others. This negotiation among teacher and students, even when unnoticed or unacknowledged, continually (re)constructs learning spaces. At any one moment, class spaces cannot be defined as that of either teacher or student but as that of both.

Therefore, this set of questions sought to examine the ways in which class literacy spaces became co-constitutive through the positions and moves (i.e., active acceptance, rejection, and contestation) that Latinx students, both individually and as a collective, took up over the course of the semester. If the discourses of teacher-constructed spaces determined what forms of knowledge and knowledge representation would be legitimized in class activities, I wondered what spaces, structures, and positions Latinx students would take up and which they would contest, and what they understood to be the reasons behind those decisions. I questioned the ways in which these decisions influenced the trajectory of literacy learning—for each individual student, for Latinx students, and for the class as a whole—in the context of this specific class.

How do the co-constitutive literacy spaces in the class and the ways in which students are positioned and position themselves influence their developing conceptions of personhood? What implications do these conceptions of personhood have for teaching and learning in this class? Bloome and Beauchemin (2016) explain that “constructions of personhood influence how teachers and students conceptualize their shared lives together, think about their academic and cultural work, their role within and outside the classroom, and how they negotiate issues of morality and rationality in their everyday lives” (p. 158). As teacher and students negotiate (re)constructions of learning spaces and, in the process, (re)position themselves and others within those spaces, they continue to develop perceptions of themselves in relation to others, thus altering how they imagine being together with others in class. These imaginings are played out in their interactions, from the kinds of discourses leveraged to communicate with and about others and the physical positioning of bodies to the ways in which they understand themselves and others to exist in relation to class content and activities. These conceptions of themselves and others are not confined to class spaces but extend beyond to shape the interactions of communities of people, just as those communities shape the interactions of a class. Thus, conceptions of personhood have implications for teaching and learning, as well as ethical and moral implications for our being together in both in- and out-of-school spaces.

Thus, my purpose here was to explore Latinx students’ moment-to-moment understandings of who they were in relation to their peers, their teacher, and class content. I wanted to know how these understandings compared to how their teacher understood them to be and how both shaped and were shaped by negotiations of tensions

in spatial construction and positioning. I wondered what messages, across moments in time, Latinx students received from their teacher about who they were in class and how the teacher's intentionality, or lack of intentionality, in shaping those messages played out in instructional planning and implementation. I wanted to observe, and become, in some way, a part of the class underlife to hear and see how students understood what was happening in class and how they thought about and chose to respond to it. And, in the end, I wanted to position these seven student narratives of life in the in-between within the larger implications of the work that is being done in classrooms on a daily basis, often unknowingly, at the intersection of personhood and learning spaces.

These questions and the study purpose guide the structure of the stories and discussions included in subsequent chapters; however, they are not addressed in isolated sections but are, rather, integrated throughout, reflecting the dialogic, interconnected nature of spatiality, positionality, and conceptions of personhood within the complex context of teaching and learning. It is my hope that I can do justice to this complexity by interweaving issues in theory and practice with the very real experiences of students and teacher through narratives, both of individuals and the collective, that are reciprocally-constructed—rather than linear—and flow from chapter to chapter in ways that expand our thinking about what it means to learn in in-between spaces. Thus, each chapter herein should be viewed as another layer to the narratives rather than as the next part of the story or as discussion or interpretation of what came before. In the conclusion of this chapter, I provide an overview to help you think about the work each chapter does to build upon our layers of understanding, keeping in mind your charge of engaging with

the narratives in ways that allow you to surface tensions in the in-between and sit with them as you consider their implications for teaching and learning.

In Chapter 2, I begin by telling the story of the Latinx student participants through descriptions of the varying spatial contexts that press in upon the teaching and learning taking place in class. Consistent with conceptualizations of space as something that is active and relational, these spaces are positioned as secondary characters in the telling of the Latinx youths' stories. They are an active force in the becoming of students that are central to motivating their decision-making, defining the elements at play in critical moments in the classroom, and probing at some of the invisible borders and boundaries shaping student and teacher interactions. By examining these spaces in Chapter 2, we begin a journey into the in-between, where “what space is made of, how it constructs those who construct it, and its political implications” (Sheehy & Leander, 2004, p. 1) are not just a part of lived experience but a power that historically and socially shapes the trajectory of that lived experience.

Chapter 3 functions as a snapshot of the Streams of Story. In keeping with the epistemological and ontological orientations of narrative inquiry, the stories of the Latinx youth in this study are told in parallel with my own story and that of their teacher. Although the Latinx students' stories are centralized, these other stories are weaved into the telling, not only to highlight what is similar or different about our experiences and perceptions, but to capture what happens when we collide into one another in and across spaces and how we each make sense of that moment of collision and what comes after. This weaving together of stories illustrates the ways in which the Latinx students and

their teacher position themselves and each other to reinforce and push against the borders and boundaries of class spaces, encapsulating how the living and telling of our stories inevitably change the shape of the lives and stories of others and the spaces that we inhabit together.

In Chapter 4, I explore the convergences and divergences in the stories the Latinx youth have to tell to surface tensions and examine how conflict is introduced, defined, negotiated, and played out in class spaces. Tensions that are legitimized for teaching and learning are distinguished from those that are not and I explore the ways in which both are embodied in the lived experiences of Latinx students in in-between spaces. Rising tensions and their embodiment in interactions between students and teacher establish ways of being together in class that build upon how they come to define who they are in relationship to one another and, in return, how learning spaces continue to be shaped by these conceptualizations of self and others.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I look across the spaces at play and deconstruct them, using Soja's (1996) conceptual framework on spatiality, to identify where the Latinx youth's access to spaces for learning were constricted or expanded. In particular, I examine the roles teacher and students play in the co-construction of teaching and learning in ways that make (or don't make) space for the Latinx youth. I center discussion on the potential for creating Thirdspaces as originating from the work of students at the borders and boundaries of learning spaces but also emphasize the responsibility of adults—educators and researchers—for taking up spaces of tension with the purpose of facilitating change in educational practice. Here, I argue for the taking up of tension through four specific

moves that enable us to work towards seeing capaciously. These moves also encourage us to think about the ways in which the layering and paralleling of narratives can contribute to our visioning of instructional practices, in both K-12 schools and higher education, that nurture this objective of being able to see capaciously. In consideration of the class at the center of the study, this argument recognizes the power of leveraging student storytelling as a way to begin noticing, acknowledging, and defining tensions that help teachers support learning from in-between spaces.

This work in the generative space created by tension begins by recognizing the resourcefulness, the strength, and the agency of students in in-between spaces. By hearing their stories, we have taken the first step in “conceiv[ing], amid the mystery of difference” that Geertz (2000, p. 82) mentioned, how we might even begin to engage teachers, and, indeed, ourselves, in making sense of and engaging with whatever asymmetries exist in our individual contexts and across educational systems. But this work cannot be done without our students. The stories I share here are unknowable without the students who told them to me and our work towards equity and justice is impossible without their agreement to bring us into their stories with them. Thus, this work is not only a story about what lies in the dark but a story of my *own* journey into the dark in the hopes that together—as teacher educators, scholars, and advocates—we can strengthen our skills to do this kind of work and make such journeys a path well-traveled by all but especially by those charged with teaching and caring for our children.

CHAPTER II

IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING: SPACE, PLACE, AND BODY

The difficulty with telling a story is that it can only ever be a *part* of the story.

When I arrived at Beechville High School¹ (BHS) that cool morning at the end of January, the new semester was just beginning for the students who peppered the lawn and stairway in front of the brick building, waiting for the first bell of the day to warn them that they should begin making their way to class. But despite the newness of the semester, the richness of stories already lived was a nearly-palpable entity. This history was evident in the hush-voiced conversation of two girls commiserating over the English teacher they had been assigned and in the mix of languages spoken as a boy called out to his friend across the schoolyard to ask in Spanish what the school was serving for breakfast and his friend answered in English. It was evident in the presence of the police officer posted at the front of the building, in the hurried pass of a bagged lunch out a car window by a parent, and in the large lettering at the top of the three-story building displaying the name of the school and accompanied by five stone panels of images etched below it—the Greek theater masks, a Western music staff, an open book and the Lamp of Knowledge, a collection of sport’s equipment, and two gears with a microscope.

¹ The names of all people and places in this study are pseudonyms.

But their stories were also about more than I could see or hear. They were about their beliefs in God or Allah, about their families' hopes for the future, and, of course, about all the little moments in the classroom that led them to this place here as they walked into their first class of the new semester at BHS. So, while I wanted to capture the moments that would occur in the classroom over the next 18 weeks, I was aware as I climbed the steps to the school's entrance, that I was beginning in the middle of their stories and that everything that came before, and everything that would happen during the duration of my study, both in this space and others, influenced who the students were becoming in class. To understand their stories, I needed to understand the spaces in which the students and the teacher lived—the openness of those spaces, their borders and boundaries, and the places in which they overlapped and collided.

In his foundational work on spatiality, titled *La Production de l'espace*, Henri Lefebvre (1991) introduced space as a worldview and praxis, one that positioned space as part of a trialectic with sociality and historicity. In reference to this meta-philosophy, Lefebvre described what he considered to be a *connaissance* of space:

Space is becoming the principal stake of goal-directed actions and struggles. It has of course always been the reservoir of resources, and the medium in which strategies are applied, but it has now become something more than the theatre, the disinterested stage or setting, of action. Space does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena, be they raw materials or the most finished of products, be they businesses or "culture". Rather, it brings them all together and then in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately by enveloping it. The result is a vast movement in terms of which space can no longer be looked upon as an "essence", as an object distinct from the point of view of (or as compared with) "subjects", as answering to a logic of its own. Nor can it be treated as result or resultant, as an empirically verifiable effect of a past, a history, or a society. Is space indeed a medium? A milieu? An intermediary? It is doubtless all of these, but its role is less and less

neutral, more and more active, both as instrument and as goal, as means and as end. (pp. 410–411)

While Historicality and Sociality have traditionally been privileged as lenses from which to consider knowledge formation in fields like Western philosophy, science, historiography, and social theory (Soja, 1996), Lefebvre (1991) argued that the production of space is particularly useful for opening opportunities for change through social and political action. That is, all actions, interactions, and discourses are enacted within spatialized dimensions that then act upon a constructed (spatialized) “reality.” Space is thus situated as socially-produced, both individually and collectively, and intrinsically tied to issues of power, politics, and criticality, a challenge to its previous marginalization as something external to Historicality and Sociality. Rather than acting as a “container” or “stage” (Soja, 1996, p. 44), the setting in which history and social life are lived, Spatiality is instead inseparable from Historicality and Sociality in understanding our way of being-in-the-world, of actively participating in construction and product, of the process of “becoming.”

Thus, by nature, space must also be both medium and product in this study, an essential element of the “becoming” of individual participants and the class as a collective. The spaces across which the students and teacher live their lives, and the histories and social practices of those spaces, are intrinsically tied to who they perform as in the classroom, how they interact with one another, what is understood to be teaching and learning, and what can be learned and by whom. Simultaneously, the spaces of the classroom reach beyond the walls of the school to (re)shape individuals, families, and

communities and their ways of being, both in terms of their own imaginings for who they have been/are/could be and the ways in which others have seen/see/could see them. Thus, there is no context for this study in the way that context has been traditionally presented in research. Rather, the spaces acting upon and being acted upon by the participants and the class as a collective are simultaneously a product *of* class interactions and a force *shaping* class interactions. The traditional research components of context and data become nearly indistinguishable, although by necessity class spaces are privileged in the presentation and discussion of data because of the limitations of both a realistic research agenda as well as my own knowledge of the multiplicity of spaces in which the students and the teacher participate. However, a knowledge of some of the spaces interacting with class spaces is needed to understand the borders and boundaries, conflicts and tensions, and positioning of and by both students and teacher that occurred across the duration of the study.

Politicized Spaces and the Lived Experiences of Latinx Families in Schools

When I began this study in January of 2018, Donald Trump was just entering the second year of his term as president. The effects of some of his earliest policy changes were still rippling through the Latinx community of the city of Beechville. Although the previous year the Latino Advisory Council, composed of parents of Latinx school-aged children in Beechville, had approached the superintendent with their concerns regarding the ability of students who were not born in the United States to attend school, fear was still reverberating as families heard stories about an increase in the frequency of ICE raids across the country, and students worried about returning home after school to find

that a parent had been deported. Given the demographics of the city and the district schools, which respectively reported a 24 percent and 46 percent Hispanic/Latino population in 2018, Beechville was still heavily feeling the repercussions of federal political agendas concerning immigrants and immigration, particularly those focused on the border between México and the United States. National discourses were focused on the state of racial relations in the United States, including the perception that racist and racially insensitive acts were on the rise under the Trump administration (Horowitz, Brown, & Cox, 2019).

For the Latinx population in the United States, these issues manifested in continued conflict regarding the reinstatement of the Tucson Unified School District's Mexican-American studies program, culminated in 2012 following a state ban of ethnic studies, even after a federal court ruled the law racist and unconstitutional. They are evident in the United States' response to Hurricane Maria's destruction of its Puerto Rican territories and in the critique of the treatment of migrants crossing the U.S.-México border to seek asylum, including reports of unjust detainment procedures, separation of families and children, and the failure to provide safe and sanitary holding facilities. Politically and socially, Latinx people, regardless of legal status, are commonly painted as criminals or members of violent gangs, as uneducated thieves stealing jobs from hardworking American people, or as undocumented immigrants looking to have anchor babies (i.e., a child with birthright citizenship, giving a potential advantage to family who may also be seeking citizenship) (Everard, 2018).

The discourses of these larger political, economic, and social spaces matter as they stretch their influence into the day-to-day lived experiences of Latinx students in U.S. classrooms. Oftentimes this is reflected in curricular and instructional planning that intentionally or unintentionally exclude; the placement of students in courses and programs based on assumptions of ability and future potential; and the formulation of policies that, however well-intentioned they are perceived to be, are not inclusive or equity-centered. Equally harmful, or perhaps more so due to their covert nature, are the ways in which these larger discourses frame the development and negotiation of *conceptions of personhood* of and by teachers and students.

Oftentimes in the literature such defining of oneself and others is discussed in terms of *identity*. But, although the ways in which identity has grown in conceptualization as something that is fluid and multidimensional, not altogether enduring, it is rooted in perceptual associations of fixedness and constancy as a set of characteristics that are learned or biologically based (Preece, 2015). Personhood, on the other hand, captures the moment-to-moment ways in which we construct ourselves and others and is closely associated with narrative telling as a form of naming the kinds of persons who inhabit our world and the qualities they possess (Bloome, Newell, Hirvela, & Lin, 2019). Bloome and Beauchemin (2016) define personhood as “how a culture or subculture (such as a classroom) conceptually defines ‘person,’ including what attributes are associated with a person, variations in types of persons, agency, and the conception of a person regarding a degree of being an autonomous unit (an individual) versus being a member of a social group” (p. 154). The nuanced and subtle negotiations of personhood

among people in a shared timespace are performed through languaging, not as an assessment of language competency but as an act of communication and interaction; individual and collaborative construction of academic and cultural work; and role negotiation, among others. These acts of constructing personhood have implications for how teachers and students “are together with each other in the classroom” (Bloome & Beauchemin, 2016, p. 158.).

Particularly in terms of the present study, what’s important about this “being together” element of personhood is that it is constructed through a series of individual but linked moments of togetherness rather than through a singular, telling moment that then solidifies the state of all future togetherness. Undoubtedly, there are historical and social influences, both in terms of the larger, more encompassing spaces of cultural interaction and their sociopolitical implications and in terms of the day-to-day living of school and home life that shape the relationship between teacher and student(s). However, because perceptions of being together are composed of moments, the opportunity for creating change that is capable of altering the construction of personhood remains possible. The actions and reactions teachers and students take in response to one another are, to differing degrees, open, flexible, and changeable.

By the time I began this study, Beechville City Schools (BCS) already had an extensive history in conceptualizing, planning for, and acting upon how they might shape the being together of their teachers and Latinx students. Over the previous 15 years, the BCS Latinx population had increased by more than 23% to constitute nearly 47% of the student body while the total school population had increased by less than 5%. More

Latinx students attended district schools than students of any other ethnicity, with some of the elementary schools serving a school population that was nearly 65% Latinx. BHS reported that 44% of their student body identified as Latinx. In addition, nearly 42% of the students in the district reported speaking a native home language other than English, with 96% of those identifying as Spanish-speakers. According to district records, 32% of students with a home language other than English were enrolled in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program for the 2017-18 school year. In contrast, just over 5% of the staff across the district, including those in instructional and non-instructional positions, were Latinx. The majority (82.89%) reported being Caucasian.

Social and Cultural Spaces of the Latinx Beechville Community

Across the duration of the study, I conducted a number of semi-formal interviews with school faculty and administration, as well as key personnel at the district, to examine the ways in which spaces beyond the classroom were shaping teacher and student conceptualizations of being together. Interviewees included BHS's principal and assistant principal; the chair of the department in which the study was conducted, along with other teachers within that department; several ESL teachers who also served as liaisons between the school and the Latinx community; and the Director of Elementary Education at the district level who had previously served in the district both as a principal and an ESL teacher and who was intrinsically involved in increasing access and educational opportunities for Latinx students. Because my involvement in the district extended to other projects as well, I also had the opportunity to speak informally with the

superintendent and assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, the Director of Federal Programs and ELs, and several teachers across other school locations.

A small city located in southeastern United States, Beechville is the ancestral home of the Keyauwee Indians and named after the state governor who was presiding when the city was founded in the late 1700s. The arrival of the railroad in the late 1800s fueled the beginnings of a textile manufacturing industry that would support a booming city well into the 1900s. However, by the early 2000s, the Great Recession and the exportation of manufacturing overseas, mainly to México and Central America where the cost of production was far cheaper, had caused most companies to downsize or shut down. The economic downturn eventually led to the closing of a wire plant owned by a popular rubber company, resulting in a loss of over 300 jobs held by mostly longtime employees. By 2008, Beechville was named one of the fastest dying towns in America.

It was during this time that the Latinx population of Beechville began to grow, increasing to nearly 24%. In the 2018 census, over 14% of the population reported being foreign-born, with 92% of those reporting an origin country in Latin America, making Spanish the second most commonly spoken language in the city. By 2012, thanks to the “Made in America” movement that had gained strength across the nation and entrepreneurial businesses birthed of economic hardship, Beechville began a slow recovery. Still, in 2018, nearly 23% of the population of Beechville live in poverty and 74% of students received free and reduced lunch rates for the 2017-18 school year.

However, according to the district’s Director of Elementary Education and several of the teachers I spoke with, who were themselves part of the Latinx community of

Beechville, the influx of Latinx people into the city has and continues to have a significant impact on the community, its businesses, and its schools. They tell me that, while country of origin varies widely within the Latinx community of Beechville, the majority are immigrants from states in the south of México, particularly Veracruz but also including Guerrero and Estado de México. They report that immigrants from these regions tend to be very family-oriented and often have more than two children, contributing to the continued growth of Beechville and its schools. They are also largely connected to the Catholic Church, making the parish in Beechville (and a neighboring city) a central community organization.

These teachers and administrators tell me that, although it is not nonexistent, racial tension is not nearly as evident in Beechville as it is in surrounding counties and that the community's warm welcome to Latinx immigrants (something that one interviewee attributed to the city's Quaker roots) was a large part of what drew them to Beechville. Early in the rise of the Latinx population in the state, Beechville had one of the only districts that funded an ESL Directorship. The district has and continues to prioritize ESL education, including providing extensive trainings for helping teachers support ESL students and funding key positions, like ESL lead teacher, for those with expertise in the field. As mentioned earlier, the district offers a Spanish heritage language program that follows a two-generational model and is supported through the collaborative efforts of one of the middle schools, a local university, and the community. Although not officially associated with the school district because of its location in a nearby church, a second heritage language program is offered to families near the other

middle school. In addition, several of the elementary schools also offer a Spanish-English dual-language immersion program.

Those I spoke with were well-aware of the rampant deficit perspective of Latinx students as low achievers but felt that BCS was largely free of such discourse. Instead, they believed that those who worked in the schools valued Latinx students as unique individuals who “bring something to the table that we can learn from” (Interview, Director of Elementary Education). A number of district personnel, school administrators, teachers, and parents continue to work to bridge the experiences of the Latinx community with the schools and the wider community of Beechville. These efforts include installing a Latinx school board member, initiating a Latino Parent Advisory Board that meets with the superintendent quarterly to inform her of issues pertinent to the Latinx community of Beechville, ensuring that all schools had interpreters available so that students did not have to broker conversations between schools/teachers and their families, and finding ways to celebrate community diversity through Heritage Night and an annual International Festival.

But the identity of the Latinx population in Beechville is changing. While many are still newcomers to the United States, there are more who are now second-generation. For BCS, this means working with parents who have been (or at least partially been) through the U.S. school system. They define this generation of Latinx students as continuing to have a strong work ethic but now with the resources to be academically-focused. Latinx students are graduating high school; they are going to college, including some of the state’s most prominent universities. But with these changes come a new set

of challenges. Educators in the district say they have seen a shift in the identifiers that Latinx students use; while “Mexican” used to be the most common identifier, students are now more likely to use “Latino” or “Hispanic.” In a district where most of the teachers are monolingual and White and still struggling to understand the implications of the process of second language acquisition for classroom praxis, they also now face the additional problem of a new generation of students whose loss of heritage language proficiency has made it much more difficult for families to communicate and for students to maintain cultural connections.

The Director of Elementary Education explained this to me in terms of the work of Project Eñye (Cox, n.d.), a resource developed to support the first-generation bicultural development of Latinos who are American-born children to parents from Spanish-speaking countries. These children occupy the in-between spaces of not being American enough for mainstream U.S. schools and communities and not being Latinx enough for their families. He believes that, while the work of the school district has been equity-centered, it still has growth to make in terms of providing equitable educational opportunities that recognize and are responsive to the unique needs of the specific Latinx families who live and attend schools in Beechville. For the administrators and teachers I spoke with, this means establishing strong collaborations with the university, local churches, the Latinx community, and its own teachers to support the growth and development of Latinx leaders from the Beechville community who can lead grassroots efforts to implement equity-centered changes in the BCS system for Latinx students and their families.

A Literacy Frame in the Study of Space

These were my understandings of the larger spaces at play for Latinx students in BCS when I began this project. Many of these were what drew me to the school district when I began searching for a location for my work. If I wanted to understand the co-constitutive nature of spaces for Latinx students that extended opportunities for learning, then a district that was developing in their awareness of and response to the unique aspects of teaching and learning with Latinx families was a pragmatic place to start. But I had additional questions that would shape where and when I conducted the research.

To begin with, it was evident that much of the district-focused work being done with Latinx students and their families was being done in the lower grades. The dual-language immersion and heritage language programs were all conducted in the elementary and middle schools. By all accounts, there were more bilingual teachers working in the elementary schools than the middle and high schools. To date, I know of little that was happening at the high school, which was the only secondary school serving students in the district, besides rumor of a now-defunct service-focused club for Latinx students that no one at the school knew anything about. In light of the content-focused education of secondary teachers, and in conjunction with increased pressures from high-stakes testing and accountability measures, I wondered what shape the district's mission would take both in the high school and in individual class spaces.

In addition, my interest in the high school was particularly focused on the framing of literacy instruction in content area classrooms and the affordances (and constraints) of this decision for the construction of learning spaces for Latinx students. This interest

stems from two places. First, no matter what personal definition of literacy is adopted, literacy is central to the kind and quality of learning that can be done in a content area class. Second, the literacy model selected has implications for how students are positioned, both as literate people and as general learners in class spaces.

In practice, these two considerations are closely related. While more traditional definitions of literacy conceptualize it as a process, one that is socially and linguistically detached, more progressive conceptualizations define the act of engaging in literacy as involvement, emphasizing the cultural and social roots that are inherently present in all reader, writer, and text interactions (Brandt, 2011). In addition, research in new literacies and 21st century literacy skills consider the skills, strategies, and dispositions required for navigating information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a central component of literate knowledge (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). But this study operates within an even wider frame, one that includes nonrepresentational activity and the living of life through signs, objects, and bodies in ways that consider sensation, affect and emotion, and movement as literacy activity (Leander & Boldt, 2012). Viewed through this lens, literacy encompasses the actions and interactions, individual and shared texts, languages and discourses, and content and instruction that occur in class spaces and influences what is learned, how it is learned, and why it is learned.

But it is the who that is particularly significant when it comes to understanding the connection between the construction of learning spaces and literacy conceptualization. Expansive definitions of literacy lie at the heart of Street's (1984) distinction between literacy as an autonomous model and literacy as an ideological

model. In the autonomous model, literacy is viewed as a set of technical skills to be acquired, largely by transmission, and the ability and ease with which this acquisition is made has social and cognitive consequences. That is, someone who has not acquired these technical skills fully is granted less social status and may be positioned as less intelligent than those who have the skills, such that the introduction of literacy to urban youth or to people perceived as poor or illiterate has the effect of improving their cognitive skills, economic prospects, and ability to be participating citizens in society. In classrooms, this positioning has very real consequences for students, including in curriculum and instruction that is more likely to be rote, low-order, and passive (Hall, Burns, & Edwards, 2011). In this model, literacy is considered neutral and universal.

In contrast, the ideological model positions literacy as socially- and culturally-constructed. That is, the ways in which people engage with literacy is rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, and being (Street, 1984). Embedded in social practice, literacy—how it is conceptualized and what it means to be literate—is dependent upon context or, I might posit, space. For it is not just the context of a literacy practice, which suggests that the practice is determined by some sort of indifferent and lifeless entity—a one-way cause-and-effect—but a complex, living, shapeable and shaping space that gives definition to particular practices by particular people in particular places and at particular moments in time. This has significant implications for the impact of decision-making regarding the implementation of instructional models for literacy, including in the content areas, on the positioning of learners and teachers in the

classroom, a phenomenon that emphasizes the ways in which teaching and learning are intricately tied to power and power structures (Street, 2001).

Moghaddam and Harré's (2010) work on positioning theory examines the role power structures play in positioning, which they define as "how people use words (and discourse of all types) to locate themselves and others" (p. 2). This positioning includes the act of attributing rights and duties and is "based on the principle that not everyone involved in a social episode has equal access to rights and duties to perform particular kinds of meaningful actions at the moment and with those people" (Harré, 2012, p. 193). Positions, once taken up, become the vantage point from which the world is viewed, and they are associated, through the discursive practices of the position, with particular images, metaphors, storylines, and concepts (Davies & Harré, 1990). These associations have socially-inscribed normative constraints (and affordances) (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009) which shape the narratives that are, and can be, told about one's life, both by oneself and by others.

In terms of literacy learning spaces in schools, students and teachers position others and themselves in any number of ways but this positioning is dependent, in part, on the instructional approach utilized for literacy instruction. For adolescent literacy instruction in the content areas, research has focused on two principle approaches—content area literacy and disciplinary literacy. Content area literacy conceptualizes literacy, particularly the processes of learning to read and write, as developmental and normative (Davidson, 2010). As such, instruction is based on the explicit teaching of strategies and skills that are considered hierarchical. Thus, foundational skills must be

fully developed before students are able to engage in activities involving higher-order processing. This approach also distinguishes between the cognitive demands of a text and its content. That is, proponents of the approach believe that the cognitive requirements of reading and writing texts are the same, regardless of discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012), and so the skills and strategies necessary for effectively comprehending and constructing texts are universal to all texts and across all contexts (Fang & Coatoam, 2013).

The content literacy approach to instruction has received some criticism, particularly over the last decade, in terms of its positioning of students. Because it presents a narrow view of the ways in which students can develop as literate beings and participate in literacy activities, it heavily constrains the kinds of narratives students are able to tell about their literate lives both in and beyond school. Specifically, the literacy identities available to students in these spaces are often limited to only a few positions (Hall, 2012). That is, one is typically either a “good reader” or a “struggling reader.” Rooted in skill proficiency, literacy narratives emerging from content area literacy approaches often fail to consider the variety and depth of literacy practices students can and do engage in beyond the types of traditional practices privileged in schools (O’Brien, Stewart, & Beach, 2009).

Given that school personnel commonly conflate language proficiency with academic ability and considering the mismatch between the diverse family and community cultures of Latinx students and the often White, middle class culture of schools, it is not presumptuous to assume that many, if not most, Latinx students would

be positioned by schools and teachers as “struggling.” Indeed, one must only visit a couple classrooms in schools to recognize the demographic differences among Advanced Placement (AP) and honors courses and remedial courses. In this respect, BHS is no different. Historical records indicate that, despite the fact that nearly half of the school is Latinx, White students are still 2.4 times as likely to be enrolled in at least one AP class as Latinx students. The typical AP course and gifted program at BHS features a composition that is more than 60% White and less than 30% Latinx.

Content literacy instructional approaches that label students based upon their proficiency with a limited and specific set of skills, as determined by state exams or other standardized assessments, promulgate such problematic placement practices as these. Furthermore, because many school-based policies set expectations that all teachers, not just those in the English language arts, know who has been identified as a struggling reader, these labels become particularly difficult to escape. In saying this, I am not denouncing the efforts of schools to ensure that all students receive the support they need to be successful and to hold accountable the educators responsible for providing that support. This is important. Rather, I am complicating the decision-making processes and practices that determine student placement based on those labels and the ways in which schools and teachers, knowingly and unknowingly, make assumptions about student ability and motivation based on labels and position students in classrooms accordingly.

Disciplinary literacy, on the other hand, is considered by many to offer a wider variety of literacy identities, including in schooled contexts. Because it works to redefine literacy beyond decoding and comprehending the printed word to “coming to understand

the norms of practice for producing and communicating knowledge in the disciplines” (Moje, 2008, p. 100), literacy conceptualization and practice can look and feel very different from one discipline to another. Situated within a sociocultural framework largely influenced by Lev Vygotsky, disciplinary literacy assumes that each individual discipline is grounded within its own unique historical and social culture (Davidson, 2010). That is, members of individual disciplines engage in social, semiotic, and cognitive practices (Fang, 2012) that have become solidified and legitimated over time (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

The goal of disciplinary literacy instruction, then, is defined as engaging students in the actual processes content experts use to negotiate tasks in their particular discipline, supporting their understanding of the cognitive secrets, ways of thinking about the world, and methods for solving problems that are unique to each disciplinary culture (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014). In this way, literacy learning becomes a kind of disciplinary socialization, a way of apprenticing students into the world of disciplinary practices (Brozo, Moorman, Meyer, & Stewart, 2013; Fang, 2014; Gutiérrez, 2008). Only then can students develop an understanding of the “nuanced processes of a discipline [that] make it possible for them to engage independently in the disciplines they study” (Brozo et al., 2013, p. 355), empowering them to both negotiate and create texts in discipline-appropriate ways (Draper & Seibert, 2010).

This kind of approach to literacy instruction constructs spaces in which opportunities for reshaping the meaning of school literacy become available. In broadening ideas about what constitutes a text, by expanding the ways in which students

can envision being literate and doing literacy, and in exploring the intersection of home, school, career, and social literacies (among others), a disciplinary literacy approach expands the types of literacy identities and narratives in which students can engage. By guiding students to discuss and critically reflect upon the literacy identities they have chosen to enact, teachers and schools can help students construct and reconstruct the ways in which they engage with texts, rethink and reconfigure their literacy identities, and explore the kinds of literacy narratives they imagine for their future (Hall, 2012).

A History Frame in the Study of Space

With these considerations for literacy in mind, I sought access to BHS with the objective of examining the ways in which literacy learning spaces were (re)constructed through the (re)positioning of Latinx students and their teacher in those spaces and in terms of how these spaces and positionings informed their developing and durable conceptions of personhood. Given the well-developed research literature on historical literacy (e.g. Achugar & Carpenter, 2012; Damico, Baildon, Exter, & Guo, 2009; Montesano, 2010; Wineburg & Reisman, 2015), specifically in terms of disciplinary literacy instruction, I had requested to conduct my project in a history class. Situating the study in this space offered several affordances in consideration of the research purpose. First, the content of a history class lends itself to examinations of conceptualizations of personhood, on both a whole class and individual level, in terms of the past and present. This relationship is reshaped and rewritten as students and teacher define and redefine their own personhood, and that of others, through the instructional lenses that frame the study of history and historical people and events. That is, how the study of history comes

to be defined and the implications this definition has on understanding historical events and people influences how students and teacher position themselves and one another in relation to the concepts being learned. In fact, the study of history particularly lends itself to critically examining and questioning this positioning in the first place. What stories are told about history and why are they told in this way? What does this telling mean for how we are together? What does this telling mean for who I am in relation to who you are?

In addition, although Common Core State Standards and other similar initiatives have worked to position literacy more centrally in discipline-specific instructional practices at the secondary level, integrating literacy with content learning in social studies has a well-established and pronounced history. This solid foundation includes extensive work in research-to-practice as is evident in the role historical literacy pedagogy plays in instructional and professional development materials designed for AP World and U.S. History, the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG), and The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History's Teaching Literacy through History program.

Wineburg's (1991) seminal study comparing the thinking of practicing historians with that of high school seniors when evaluating primary and secondary sources included some of the first work in the field that examined how research in disciplinary literacy might transfer to classroom practice. Differences in thinking revealed three heuristics that historians and students drew upon differently when evaluating historical evidence—corroboration, sourcing, and contextualization. Wineburg (1991) considered these

heuristics to be “sense-making activities” serving several functions, including resolving contradictions, seeing patterns, and distinguishing among types of evidence.

As the first heuristic, corroboration involves comparing information across documents as a measure of validity and plausibility. It considers the incompleteness of historical knowledge in telling the stories of historical events and people while taking into account that every telling reflects a specific point of view. The second heuristic, sourcing, is defined by the use of the document source as tool for evaluating its truthfulness and accuracy. That is, the source of the document serves as a cue for identifying the ideology that likely underlies the author’s telling of the story. Key sourcing information also includes the date and place in which the document was created and how these details might influence the information included in the document and the stance the telling takes. In addition, for expert historians, sourcing the document activates textual schemata (Anderson, 1977), particularly in terms of genre, that contribute to the readers’ ability to weigh the truthfulness of the information included in the document. Finally, contextualization, the third heuristic, requires that the time and space in which events occurred be considered in evaluating primary and secondary sources. At its most basic level, this includes placing an event within a chronological sequence that considers what preceded and followed the event, how long the event lasted, and the amount of time that passed prior to its documentation.

However, in Wineburg’s (1991) study, there was also a distinct difference in the epistemological and ontological stances historians took toward the discipline of history in comparison to their student counterparts. These stances foundationally defined their

approach to evaluation tasks in terms of purpose and vision. For example, historians adopted orientations that considered truth subjective and historical knowledge limited. Therefore, not only was it impossible to know all the facts about an historical event, thinking one *should* know was fallacious to begin with. Every telling of an event must be considered in terms of the inherent bias of the teller, including bias arising from the teller's positionality and motive for telling. These beliefs about the nature of knowing in the discipline of history was reflected in the practices of historians, who moved within and across texts fluidly and spoke about texts as "social exchanges to be understood" (Wineburg, 1991, p. 83). In contrast, students read texts in a linear fashion, treating each as a vehicle that conveyed a bit of information that could be unequivocally added to bits of information gathered from other texts.

The results of Wineburg's (1991) work is probably unsurprising to most. Of course the cognitive processes of historians look different from those of high school seniors; students are students and historians have dedicated their careers to becoming experts in their field. In fact, there is no shortage of literature critiquing disciplinary literacy approaches, like historical thinking, for proposing that curriculum and instruction should engage novices in the work of experts (e.g., Dunkerly-Bean & Bean, 2016; Heller, 2011). In particular, Fagella-Luby, Graner, Deshler, and Drew (2012), in one of the most cited critiques, argue that disciplinary literacy cannot replace the teaching of foundational literacy skills, which many students struggle to apply to grade-level texts. Furthermore, they suggest that as the literacy demands placed on secondary students continue to increase, these struggling readers are placed at an even higher risk of failing.

But, at its heart, historical thinking is not about career preparation; rather, it is about preparing students for the “vocation of the citizen” (Wineburg & Reisman, 2015, p. 637). Although content area reading teaches essential skills for comprehension at the foundational level, it does not apprentice students into spaces of knowledge production. Wineburg and Reisman (2015) argue that the historical thinking heuristics are not strategies but a *weltanschauung*, or a way of understanding the world. Therefore, students are not put at risk by learning historical thinking skills but by *not* learning historical thinking skills.

As an example, consider the events of 2014 in the Rialto (California) Unified School District where a group of eighth-grade teachers culled a set of “credible” documents reflecting the debate over whether the Holocaust was real or a hoax. One of those documents, claiming that the diary of Ann Frank was fake and pictures of corpses were actually murdered Germans, led students to deny, in their graded essays, that the Holocaust had occurred (Yarbrough, 2014a; Yarbrough, 2014b). The students and their teachers had failed to source the document, which came from the *Institute for Historical Review*, a website developed by a recognized Holocaust denial group associated with Aryan supremacists, and which referenced Fred Leuchter, whose claims of a career as chief engineer specializing in the design and fabrication of execution equipment have been proven false. Although this example may be more extreme (but not to be glossed over in a fake news culture), it certainly demonstrates the necessity of learning to source, even for those who do not plan on a future career in the field of history.

However, beyond the alignment of my study purpose and rationale with theoretical work in historical literacy, conducting my research in a history class was also methodologically beneficial, particularly in terms of participant selection. A study focused on the lived experiences of Latinx youth in in-between spaces meant that I needed to draw my participants from a diverse group of students who were also representative of the larger Latinx student body at BHS. As with most secondary schools across the nation, the most diversity existed in classes at BHS that were required for graduation and that had fewer tracking options (i.e., remedial, regular, honors, AP). Officially, only about 13% of BHS's students were enrolled in at least one AP course and, although Latinx students made up nearly half the school population, only a quarter of the students enrolled in AP courses were Latinx.

But I didn't need numbers to tell me what I could see visually as I moved across school spaces to conduct interviews with faculty and administration, where an AP course of overwhelmingly White students took place directly across the hallway from a class on the regular track that was only 25% White. In addition, courses offered in social studies listed no prerequisites, in contrast to courses in both English and mathematics, which began tracking in middle school, and courses in science, which offered only one course free of prerequisites.

Eliminating advanced-track courses, as well as elective courses like Psychology, left World and American History, which were required for all freshmen and sophomore students, respectively. Final selection of a class and teacher rested on a combination of teacher consent and the recommendations of the administration and department chair.

Mr. Wallace, who was one of three teaching regular-track World History, met both of those requirements. In fact, a certificate dated January 2018 hung on the wall behind Mr. Wallace's desk above the BHS tardy policy reading: *Doing a great job stepping right in and immediately creating a challenging reading and writing intensive class that pushed students to achieve. He has also always been available and willing to collaborate with his colleagues. He has been a great addition to the Beechville High School team.* The certificate was signed by the principal and two of the three assistant principals.

As the certificate indicated, this was Mr. Wallace's first year at BHS but the 2017-18 school year marked his twenty-fifth year teaching. His experience encompassed five different schools across four districts, including a year at BHS early in his career. He had spent three years at the middle school level and 21 years at the high school level. Although he focused his time and efforts on world history education, he had experience teaching an array of disciplines under the umbrella of social studies, including American history, civics, U.S. and world geography, and law. Despite this being his first year back at BHS, Mr. Wallace invited me in to conduct my research project in his second block World History class.

In consideration of space, it was important for me to remember, as I conducted the project, that the culture of the social studies department was one of the elements acting upon (and, of course, being acted upon by) Mr. Wallace's class. There were nine teachers, including Mr. Wallace, in the department. Only one teacher was female and all nine were White. The department chair, who was a 19-year veteran of teaching (all at BHS), served as the district's lead mentor and content coach while pursuing her master's

degree in library science at a nearby university. Over the course of the year I spent at BHS, I had the opportunity to speak with and observe several of the teachers in the department, including the department chair. I also had myriad opportunities to observe and take part in the team's daily interactions, from hallway conversations between classes to in-the-moment problem-solving exchanges during class. These observations and interviews revealed several important qualities of the department that informed the work Mr. Wallace was doing in his class, as well as my own project on learning spaces.

First, the department had a shared vision for the work they did. Above all, they wanted to ensure that everyone had a “sense [that] what we’re doing matters” (Interview, Department Chair). In an era of standardized testing, this meant, for these teachers, that they advocated for the importance of teaching social studies in school despite the fact that none of their classes were subject to state assessment and so often lacked the attention—in funding and time—that other content areas received. For example, many of the teachers expressed frustration with the school’s practice of assigning co-teachers and teaching assistants only to courses subject to state testing, particularly when many of their classes included a high number of ELLs and students with exceptionalities.

In practice, many of the teachers worked to communicate the message that social studies mattered by incorporating into their instruction activities and assignments that encouraged students to make connections among course content, current events, and the impact both have on their personal lives. In history courses in particular, understanding that social studies mattered meant being a “good historian,” especially in terms of being

capable of examining evidence to “make an educated choice, to tell the junk from the truth” (Interview, History Teacher).

The second most evident quality of the department was their shared approach to serving Latinx students, whom they acknowledged in conversation as making up nearly half of their student population. For those students who had limited English proficiency, the onus for providing instructional support seemed to lie almost entirely on the three ESL teachers at BHS. The ESL faculty seemed to be held in high regard by the social studies department but, again, had little opportunity to be in classes that did not involve a high-stakes testing subject.

The department chair shared that, while teachers were expected to differentiate and provide modifications for Latinx students in their classrooms, decisions about how to do so were made on an individual basis. Another teacher in the department, who was in his sixth year of teaching and had some knowledge of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) as a tool for supporting English learners’ content and language development, explained that he provided visuals and captioned videos for English learners but did not provide additional supports for students who were considered proficient in English. He admitted that “it gets a little hectic modifying for all students.”

Most of the teachers in the department thought more work needed to be done to provide Latinx students a higher quality experience at BHS. The sixth-year teacher, the newest on the team, shared that he had been told that Latinx parents in this community were “very trusting of the school, that they’re not going to be checking in as often because, you know, not that they don’t care but because they’re very trusting.” He

indicated that this belief regarding Latinx parents, in conjunction with scheduling and language barriers, led to a weaker relationship between the school and its Latinx community. He considered outreach a particular area where BHS could grow. In addition, the team also shared that they had limited resources to provide support to Latinx students. For example, the school library contained few books featuring Latinx people even though the department chair, in a teacher action research project she had conducted the previous year, had learned that 24 out of 25 of the top readers in the school were Latinx students.

The final departmental quality that informed curricular and instructional decision-making was the team's orientation toward literacy in the social studies classroom. The teachers unanimously and unequivocally considered literacy a key element for student success in social studies. In general, engaging in literacy in their classrooms meant reading, writing, and speaking/discussing. The teachers expected that their students would be able to summarize readings and assessed their understanding through quizzes. There was a heavy emphasis across disciplines in the social studies department in integrating document analysis activities into instruction and assessment. This process was described as being able to read, both textually and visually, a set of documents on a single topic—an event, a person, an idea (e.g., democracy) for the purpose of drawing a conclusion about that topic.

A Return to Place and Body through Space

Although this discussion of spaces is limited given the expansiveness of spaces in which students and teachers live their lives, it provides an overview of some of the spaces

central to making sense of the stories students tell in the following chapters about living in the in-between. Our nascent understanding of these spaces frames the actions, interactions, discourses, and performances of students and teacher; however, before their stories can be told, a return to our discussion of spaces and the trialectic of Spatiality, Historicity, and Sociality is warranted. In particular, although space is, in general, a messy, abstract concept (and certainly, in many ways, defies categorization), an introduction to the trialectics of space is helpful for reading and analyzing the spaces constructing and being constructed by the students and teacher in this study.

Spatial research, in its current form, has been defined by three particularly influential “founding fathers”—Henry Lefebvre (1991), Edward Soja (1989, 1996), and David Harvey (1989, 1996, 2006). Collectively, these social geographers developed a trialectical model for understanding space, consisting of what has come to be termed First Space, Second Space, and Thirdspace. Although Harvey’s (2006) model differs slightly from that of Soja (1996) and Lefebvre (1991), they are similar in concept.

First Space, or what has been alternatively termed perceived or absolute space, is an embodied space. It is defined by the physical and the material, as well as by the movement among and between participants and the tools they construct. Directly sensible, First Space is open to description and a kind of standardized measurement. Harvey (2006) describes First Space as *place*. It is constituted by schools, individuals and their collective communities, and by geographical and political-economic maps.

Second Space, or what Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996) called conceived space and Harvey (2006) called relative space, is a mental and represented space.

Characterized by a mode of production, Second Space is the most dominant space in any society. It is here that ideologies and epistemologies are constructed. It is in this space that power structures are produced and individuals and collectives are positioned within them. Second Space is typified by the discursive systems (i.e., language and other sign-making systems) that are employed in making sense of space. In the world of education, Second Space is constituted by the development and pedagogical purposes of official school curricula, the habits of mind that define the disciplines taught in classrooms, and the ways in which knowledge can be validated and thus perpetuated.

Finally, Thirdspace can be defined by hybridity. Alternatively termed a lived/social (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996) or relational space (Harvey, 2006), Thirdspace contests any tendency to essentialize First and Second Spaces as binaries. It is, at once, both distinct from and co-constitutive of the other two components of spatiality. By “othering” or “thirthing” space (Soja, 1996), it becomes possible to conceive it as limitless, as unbounded by the ways in which any one individual or group embodies it. Soja (1996) asserted:

Everything comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowledgeable and unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and unconsciousness, the discipline and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history. (p. 56-57)

At this intersection of Thirdspace, the official scripts of the normative Second Space collide with the unofficial scripts of lived experiences (Gutiérrez et al., 1995) and from this collision inevitably arise tensions and conflicts (Bakhtin, 1981; Freedman &

Ball, 2004). While these moments of conflict can be dismissed or simply perceived as disruptive, they can also carry the potential for constructing spaces where authentic interaction and learning can occur (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejada, 1999). If, in those moments of conflict, a dialogue can occur that acknowledges the heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981) nature of classroom discourse and interaction, then space can be constructed for multiple voices and perspectives to be legitimated and for the official and unofficial scripts of the classroom to become intertwined (Gutierrez et al., 1995).

It is in this hybridity of Thirdspace that teaching and learning can become more equity-oriented, that it can begin to embody the ideals of a more democratic education (Gutiérrez, 2008). It creates the potential for the construction of more dynamic and situated educational practices that encompass the ways of knowing the world that all students and families bring to the classroom (Campano, 2005; Pahl & Kelley, 2005). By acknowledging conflict, by actively contesting and resisting normative spaces, these very same spaces can be re-appropriated and official scripts destabilized as members of a space work collectively to (re)imagine and (re)embody what it means to be knowledgeable, what it means to be literate, and what it means to live one's own life.

Various metaphors for the Thirdspace exist. For example, Moje (2004) claimed that there are three that are consistently employed in the research literature on space. First, Thirdspace can be envisioned as a bridge that connects the knowledge and discourses of nondominant students with the more conventional academic ones of the classroom. Thirdspace can also be conceived as a navigational tool, one that empowers those in it to cross within and between different discourse communities. The third and

final metaphor situates Thirdspace as a conversation between competing knowledges and discourses with the purpose of facilitating cultural, social, and epistemological change.

However, these metaphors and their subsequent uses in theoretical work on Thirdspace have come under heavy criticism. Gutiérrez (2008) argued that some of these conceptualizations of Thirdspace reduce local literacies to superficial momentary celebrations that are quickly forgotten in the day-to-day work of schooled spaces. The metaphor of the bridge is particularly problematic as it maintains the positioning of local literacies as subordinate to the White, middle-class literacies legitimated in traditional schooled spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008). This works in opposition to Thirdspace, narrowing learning spaces rather than opening them to diverse ways of knowing and producing knowledge. Instead, Gutiérrez argued that Thirdspaces are forward-looking spaces that bring together the knowledges of home, community, and school. Paris (2012) emphasized that this bringing together of multiple knowledges should be done “in meaningful ways that do not devalue either [local or school knowledge] in the process of school learning and access” (p. 94).

Thirdspaces that provide for this kind of expansive learning (Engeström, 1996) enable students who are typically marginalized in schooled spaces to become producers of social practices that challenge, resist, or reject the power structures and ideologies that work to peripherally position them (Handsfield, Crumpler, & Dean, 2010; Fitts, 2009; Hinman & He, 2016). This space then situates learners in ways that empower the construction of alternative knowledges, potentially transforming spaces by challenging

the traditional hierarchy of power and expertise and the cultural positioning of nondominant students (García & Leiva, 2014).

CHAPTER III

IN THE STREAMS OF STORY: HEARING THE VOICES IN THE IN-BETWEEN

Long before he was awarded the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary for “columns which consistently champion ordinary citizens,” Jimmy Breslin, who was, at the time, a journalist with the *New York Herald Tribune*, wrote what was arguably one of the most transformational pieces in the field of journalism, laying the foundation for a style of reporting that would later be referred to as the “Gravedigger Theory” in *New Journalism* (Dennis & Rivers, 2017; McEvoy, 2018). It was while waiting in the packed White House press office for updates on John F. Kennedy’s upcoming burial in November of 1963 that Breslin determined that his story would not be written in any traditional format. Instead, in the midst of a media frenzy focusing on the Kennedy family and the grieving of a country over the assassination of a president positioned as a visionary political and social leader, Breslin went in search of “the guy who dug Kennedy’s grave” (McEvoy, 2018, para. 8).

“Digging JFK Grave was His Honor” (Breslin, 1963) has since become a model text in journalistic writing that illustrates Breslin’s aptitude at capturing unexpected stories that are both at the heart, and still at the periphery, of major events. The article features Clifton Pollard, a World War II private turned equipment operator at Arlington

National Cemetery, making \$3.01 an hour. Breslin begins by describing Pollard's day—the call he received at breakfast to come dig a grave; his efforts to save some of the rich dirt from the grave to fill in machine tracks so nice grass would grow; and his absence from the burial because he was behind the hill, digging graves for \$3.01 an hour. He contrasts these snapshots with images at the center of so many other media reports—a dead president in his wife's lap; Jacqueline Kennedy's walk to the casket; and the way Lyndon Johnson averted his gaze during the burial. Weaved through the entire telling was Pollard's repeated phrase of, "You know, it's an honor just for me to do this."

Certainly the success of Breslin's article with the general public was, in part, because it told a story with the magnitude of a president's assassination but it did so in a way that invited the common man and woman, not in the inner circle of political culture, to also feel the impact of Kennedy's death and to, in fact, be a part of, rather than just an observer of, the events of that day. But from a journalistic standpoint, Breslin's success hinged on finding the untold story, on envisioning what else could exist beyond the carefully-constructed snippets given to the media by those in Kennedy's inner circle. It was a story that expanded the meaning of Kennedy's death and of a nation's grieving of that death. From this work grew discussions centered on visible news and invisible stories in journalism and strategies that could ensure a systematic approach to finding those invisible stories. The Gravedigger Theory, based on Breslin's article, is one such strategy, and encourages actively switching perspectives—talking to experts and talking to those on the front lines or even adopting roles (e.g., historian, mystery writer) to explore a topic through a different lens (Sweeney, 2002).

Telling the invisible story, however, does not come without its pitfalls. Despite winning the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary and the George Polk Award for Metropolitan Reporting, both coveted awards in the field of journalism, Breslin received pointed criticism for work that was “marred by mistakes in names, embellished quotations, emotional sidings with one party to a dispute, and highly colored versions of events” (Dennis & Rivers, 2017, p. 34). In particular, he was accused of relying too heavily on New Journalism composites, like “Klein the Lawyer (a sleazy attorney), Marvin the Torch (an arsonist for hire), and Fat Thomas (a four-hundred-plus-pound bookie)” (Alter, 2017, para. 6), as characters in his stories. And, as Breslin began to learn, telling someone else’s story, especially those whose lives are lived on the periphery, is laden with responsibility. For Breslin, who had been lauded for “pummel[ing] the privileged and defend[ing] the down-and-out in tough, bare-knuckled columns,” the repercussions of that responsibility landed heavily when, in the 90s, some of his work was also questioned as racist and sexist (Getlin, 1990, para. 1).

The responsibility of telling the largely invisible stories of the Latinx students in the in-between spaces of schooling weighs heavily on me as well. Over the course of the semester that I spent with the seven students participating in this study, I have become invested in them, in the strengths they brought to the classroom, in the stories they told me, and in wanting to share what I have come to understand about them with others. And therein lies the danger as well. Because, as we all do, I have an inclination to interpret these students’ experiences and stories through a particular ideological lens that reflects my own positioning in the world, both physically, based on location in space, place, and

time, and conceptually, based on, among others, race, gender, class, and sexuality (Stone-Mediatore, 2003).

I am coming to understand, in ways that Breslin likely did not, how my knowledge, or lack of knowledge, of privilege and power are shaped by this positionality and by the master narratives that situate these privileges as being natural. Here, I adopt Solórzano and Yosso's (2002) definition of master narratives as "stories that carry layers of assumptions that persons in positions of racialized privilege bring with them to discussions of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination" and that name these privileged social locations "as natural or normative points of reference" (p. 28). Failure to understand the power of the master narrative and one's own positioning within that narrative can be destructive. Montecinos (1995) asserted that the "master narrative essentializes and wipes out the complexities and richness of a group's cultural life . . . engender[ing] not only stereotyping but also curricular choices that result in representations in which fellow members of a group represented cannot recognize themselves" (pp. 293-294).

My work, including on this project, has taken me on a personal journey, one that is, no doubt, not over. I have traveled not only into the in-between spaces in which others' stories are constructed, but into the dark spaces of my own knowledge of self. I was raised in a color- and culture-blind world where overlooking racial, ethnic, and cultural identities was framed as a form of niceness. In fact, I remember interviewing for a volunteer position in college to mentor local children and being asked the question about what I thought about working with people of diverse races and cultures. I

answered somewhere along the lines of, “It doesn’t matter to me, I don’t really see color. Everybody needs to be treated equally.” And then I taught in classrooms where the consequences of race/ethnicity, language, and culture became more apparent in school placement, in student achievement, and in discipline.

As a new doctoral student, I thought little about the impact of race and culture on my research. (I wasn’t going to do research that involved race and culture anyway.) As an emerging researcher, I began by questioning whether or not, as a White, middle class person, I could even conduct research with Communities of Color. And then there came a pivotal moment, a conversation with a Latinx, immigrant teacher from the Heritage Language Academy, who shared with me how she had originally gotten involved because she was the only one who was bilingual at the time and how she had stayed for so long because she loved it, thought it was important work, but also because *there was no one else to do the work*. In that moment, I began to truly question my own responsibility for doing the work of creating change in a system of privilege from which I had benefitted while contributing to the disenfranchisement of others.

The question about who can and should conduct research with Communities of Color is not unique to me but has long been a part of discourse in educational research centered on equity, power, and privilege (Banks, 1998; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Tillman, 2002). Milner (2007) asserts that researchers need not come from the racial or cultural communities they are studying but that approaching the research from an outsider perspective requires certain responsibilities on the part of the researcher, most notably being “actively engaged, thoughtful, and forthright regarding tensions that can surface

when conducting research where issues of race and culture are concerned” (p. 388). A knowledge of these potential tensions and how to negotiate them demands a certain level of cultural knowledge that allows the researcher to notice, interpret, and validate the narratives of others in the study (Tillman, 2002) while addressing the misinformation and stereotypes we have internalized about ourselves and others (Tatum, 2001). Failure to actively engage in critical thought and action can result in research that perpetuates misinformation, misinterpretations, and misrepresentations of the Communities of Color participating in our research. Milner (2007) classifies these dangers as: (a) those that are seen (explicitly emerge as a result of researcher decision-making; (b) those that are unseen (implicit or invisible); and (c) those that are unforeseen (unanticipated).

Although the potential for these dangers to emerge cannot be fully controlled in the process of conducting research with Communities of Color, Milner (2007) provides a framework to guide researchers in building racial and cultural consciousness within the study and to support them in considering, noticing, and working through the seen, unseen, and unforeseen dangers that may emerge in inquiry. This framework includes five interrelated components: researching the self, researching the self in relation to others, engaged reflection and representation, and shifting from self to system. In the following section, I describe the components of Milner’s framework and explore the ways in which I employed each in the process of hearing, interpreting, and telling the stories of the seven Latinx students in this study. I then turn to the narratives themselves.

Conducting Research with Students of Color: A Framework for Narrative Work

Knowing Oneself and Others

The first component of Milner's (2007) framework, *researching the self*, supports researchers' racial and cultural consciousness when conducting a study with Communities of Color by asking the researcher to engage in asking critical questions of her/himself. These questions can include those about the researcher's racial and cultural heritage and how that background influences what the researcher notices and how s/he interprets the actions and experiences of others. These questions are meant to elicit critical thought about the role of the researchers' ideologies, beliefs, epistemologies, and practices in how the study is designed and implemented, including in the collection, analysis, and presentation of data on Communities of Color.

The second component of the framework, *researching the self in relation to others*, builds on the researcher's knowledge of self but puts that knowledge in direct relation to what the researcher knows and understands about the cultural, racial, and historical background of the participants in the study. Understanding the self in relation to others engages the researcher in asking questions about what s/he knows about the racial and cultural heritages of the participants and how their backgrounds shape how they experience the world. The researcher must consider how participants' ways of knowing are consistent or inconsistent with her/his own and what that means for balancing perspectives, interests, and agendas in the research study.

Certainly, researchers overtly writing their subjectivities into their research has grown in popularity, particularly in qualitative research where certain epistemological

and ontological stances hold that no design, implementation, analysis, or presentation of data can be completely objective but is, rather, indicative of a researcher's own ideological belief system. This transparency in positionality is intended to "invite multiple and even dissenting readings" in which the reader can critically question what it is that the researcher observed and interpreted about participants and their experiences (Nelson, 2005, p. 318). However, this level of subjectivity, although helpful for the reader, does not do enough in research with Communities of Color to resist the master narratives that may be at play in the design and implementation of a study and to address the dangers that Milner (2007) describes as potential threats to the participants.

So, although transparency is certainly part of my goal in the description of my own positionality and the presentation of participants' narratives, I also operationalized the first two components of Milner's (2007) framework through reflective memos that were written throughout the entire research process. Although this kind of memoing is often used in the process of conducting qualitative research, I focused this set of memos on exploring the questions raised by Milner's (1997) framework. This included explicitly naming the ways in which my identities frame my interpretation of the world and, more specifically, informed the decisions I made in the design and implementation of this study, from the literature I used as framework to the questions I asked participants, the spaces I asked them in, and the ways I asked them. I have made portions of those memos explicitly visible in the telling of my own narratives of the students and teacher participating in the study, including the time-space contexts through which that journey has taken me.

To complete my memos for *researching the self in relation to others* I also needed to intentionally engage with the community in which I conducted the study. I approached this task in multiple ways, beginning with conducting online research about Beechville and its people, examining sources that included city websites, newspaper articles, and census profiles, among others. Knowing that the writers of these documents were equally vulnerable to master narratives, I asked questions about who was written about, by whom, and for what reasons.

I also had the privilege of already being immersed in the Latinx community at Beechville, thanks to the work of the Heritage Language Academy. So, although I had only one semester in the classroom to conduct my study, I had at the time, what was essentially five years of engagement with its Latinx community. I used my knowledge of the community for this work, as well as to extend the network of people from whom I could learn about the Latinx community in the area. I spent time talking with Latinx parents of students enrolled in the district's schools; Latinx teachers who taught in their classrooms; and Latinx leaders who served as administrators, liaisons with the community, and district personnel (See Appendix A). And, of course, I spent time talking, and just being with, the seven students in the study. I had already been in Mr. Wallace's classroom for a semester, becoming familiar with the culture of the school and classroom. By the time my seven participants entered the classroom, I was ready to devote my time to learning about them. See Appendix B for a comprehensive summary of the research phases.

The first three months of the study were just about being together. In sight of the students, I never took on the role of teacher, although, quite obviously, there was no escaping the fact that I was a White adult in their classroom. At first, I spent time in a student desk at the back of the room and simply observed. After the first few weeks, they tested (I could see them watching me) to see how I might react—if they complained about Mr. Wallace, if they pulled out forbidden food, if they threw out an expletive here or there. Eventually, they no longer worried about trying to hide their phones behind books and computer screens or in laps. My presence no longer deterred those students in close proximity to me from reaching out to one another during a quiz to check what responses others had given. Then, they began including me in occasional conversations. At first, they were simple. “Is it still raining outside?” “Can you hand me that textbook?” And then they were about what they did over the weekend and what they thought about the student walkout. Then I was watching videos on phones, asking about an audition, following up on an argument between friends, listening to a complaint about a failed quiz. These conversations were rarely about class or learning or Mr. Wallace. Those talks would come later, in interviews. Instead, these conversations were about listening to the students, hearing what was important to them, and seeing their experiences through their eyes when they were in full control of when they would talk and what they would talk about.

The insights I garnered from conversations with the Latinx community of Beechville and the seven student participants I worked with were essential to my memo writing. Their understandings of what it means to be Latinx in Beechville are the core of

Chapter 2, in which I constructed a figurative *contact zone*, as Bakhtin (1971) would say, between my own ideologies, as represented by my research framework, and the lives lived by the Latinx community in Beechville. This contact zone reflects the tensions I found in my memos and puts those tensions under scrutiny as I move into the narrative work of Chapter 3.

Reflection and Representation

Milner's (2007) third component of the framework for working with Communities of Color, *engaged reflection and representation*, captures the ways in which a single interaction or experience can be interpreted differently by researcher and participants and, thus, calls for researchers and participants to engage in reflection about interactions together. In representation, this means that the researcher's and participants' voices must be equally heard, neither narrative privileged over the other. In essence, both voices must serve as narrative and counter-narrative in the study's findings and interpretations. Milner (2007) argues that using counter-narratives and narratives as complements can add layers of depth to understanding a single moment or interaction. I have operationalized this component in my research in distinct ways, most notably in (a) the use of critical incidents for interviews following adapted retrospective think-aloud protocols; (b) the co-construction of narratives and member checks with participants; and (c) the representation of multiple narratives/counter-narratives—my own, the teacher's, and the students'—in the telling of their stories.

In this study, I define a critical incident as “mostly straightforward accounts of very commonplace events that occur . . . which are critical in the . . . sense that they are

indicative of underlying trends, motives, and structures” (Tripp, 1993, p. 24–25). The concept of critical incidents originated in the work of David Hargreaves (1995), who argued that school cultures serve as a “reality-defining function” (p. 189). That is, the culture of the school plays a role in the way that teachers, students, and other educational stakeholders define their reality and, thus, also plays a role in the way that they might “make sense of themselves, their actions, and their environment” (p. 189). Critical incidents, then, are considered linked to events or situations that lead to a period of reflection (Schön, 1987, 1991, 1995). They need not be big dramatic events but small everyday events that occur in every school and in every classroom; however, they take on significance because of the meaning given to them by the person who experienced them (Angelides, 2001). Furthermore, because they provoke particular responses, they tend to have significance for identity formation (Measor, 1985) and can contribute to an understanding of cultural assumptions and the deeper culture of a classroom and school (Angelides, 2001).

Typically, critical incidents are identified by the teacher (Tripp, 1993) or the researcher (Angelides, 2001). However, this practice does not honor the voices of Communities of Color, nor my responsibility to give voice to the counter-narratives they might offer to complement my understanding of classroom events and interactions. For this study, it was essential that the student participants select their own critical incidents. There is precedence for such practice in educational studies, including Williamson, Koro-Ljungberg, and Bussing’s (2009) work in which teens with attention deficit/hyperactivity

disorder (ADHD) reported their own critical incidents. These incidents were then analyzed in comparison to those identified by teachers, parents, and researchers.

For this study, I trained student participants on critical incident identification, most particularly by thinking about critical incidents as a moment that stood out—because of its uniqueness or its ordinariness—or one in which an emotion, whether positive or negative, was elicited (See Appendix C). Following a kind of gradual release model, I, across several weeks, provided students with examples of critical incidents, modeled naming critical incidents in the class from my own perspective, and had them individually practice critical incident identification. These critical incidents were not followed by interviews but, instead, we used what would become the interview space to engage in conversation about the process of identifying a critical incident. Once we were fully engaged in the interview phase, students recorded, by the end of each class period, a critical incident. The following day, or at the next best opportunity, I engaged student participants in interviews about their critical incident following an adapted retrospective think aloud protocol (See Appendix D).

Retrospective protocols simply occur after the event has been experienced or the decision made (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Kuusela & Pallab, 2000). Think-aloud, or verbal protocol, interviews are geared towards eliciting verbalized accounts of how participants approach a problem; they then aim to capture participants' problem solving techniques and interpretations during those experiences (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Kuusela & Pallab, 2000). This provides rich, qualitative information regarding how participants reason their actions in specific situations and includes elicitation of “what”

content, as well as “why” and “how.” This protocol is often used in educational psychology, particularly consumer studies, and has been adapted for this project by including questions designed to help participants verbalize *how* they experience an event and the emotions or interpretations that may be associated with that event.

Over the course of this study, the students participated in three background (i.e., personal, school, and home) interviews, one final reflective interview, and between ten and twelve² retrospective think-aloud interviews on critical incidents. Only one student, Alberto, had a significantly different number of critical incident interviews. In his case, there were only four interviews due to an unusually high number of absences. However, I made the decision to include him in the final analysis and write-up because of the significant amount of information I received in the interviews I did conduct, in addition to the ways in which my narrative and Alberto’s counter-narrative linked his absences to his schooling experiences.

Following the completion of all interviews, I began the process of crafting students’ narrative profiles. Seidman (2006) defines these profiles as a rich, dense narrative description of the participants’ experiences and the meaning they construct from those experiences. These profiles work to tell participants’ stories in a narrative form that includes a beginning, middle, and end and offers some sense of conflict and resolution.

As a particularly fitting approach for the purpose of this study, profiles present participants in context and explore their intentions and motivations within that context by

² The number of critical incident interviews conducted differed slightly across individual students because of absences and/or because I did not want to interrupt students who were still finishing assignments, including quizzes, tests, or essays with strict deadlines.

using participants' own words, words that reflect their consciousness and that are at the heart of this qualitative study. As an analysis tool, profiles work to "find and display coherence in the constitutive events of a participant's experience, to share the coherence the participant has expressed, and to link the individual's experience to the social and organizational context within which he or she operates" (Seidman, 2006, p. 120).

I began the process of crafting participant narratives by reviewing all interview transcripts for each individual participant and highlighting those passages that were of interest, reducing the data for analysis and interpretation, particularly by eliminating extraneous data, including my own comments and questions (Wolcott, 1994). Following the initial reduction of data, the remaining passages were reorganized into one document for each participant in the order in which they appeared in the transcripts. This new document was then reviewed and the most compelling passages underlined. What was compelling was determined using basic narrative structure that included the beginning (what was important to the student), middle (what conflicts or tensions the student experienced), and end (how the student tried to resolve the conflict and what that meant for learning). From these underlined passages, I crafted each participant's narrative.

Seidman (2006) emphasized the importance of writing these profiles in first person and in the words of the participant, avoiding the trap of expropriating participants' experiences for the researcher's own purposes. To differentiate between what are my words and what are the words of participants, I use a consistent system of notation. That is, all words in italics are the participants' and any words not in italics are mine. I attempted to minimize the number of words that were my own, using them only for

transitions or to clarify a referent when needed. These profiles were presented to participants for member checking and participants were asked to change any description they felt was inaccurate, add information they felt was left out, or request the exclusion of certain data points.

However, to fulfill the demands of Milner's (2007) framework for representation, I needed to ensure that all narratives were given space in my findings and interpretations. Thus, I repeated the process for constructing narrative profiles but this time did so through Mr. Wallace's transcripts. I identified any passage in which he spoke about one of the participants, combined these passages into separate documents for each participant, and then underlined compelling passages based on the narrative structure of beginning, middle, and end (i.e., exposition, conflict, and resolution). From these passages, I constructed Mr. Wallace's narrative of each student and himself. And then, once again, I repeated the process a final time using my own memos to construct my narratives of each student and Mr. Wallace. Throughout the remainder of this paper, these narratives/counter-narratives will be intertwined and placed in parallel with one another to form the core of analysis and interpretation, emphasizing the ways in which these words, these narratives, capture a complexly-layered understanding about what it means to be these Latinx youth in this particular time and space.

Shifting From the Self to the System

Milner's (2007) final component in the framework guiding the process of conducting research with Communities of Color is *shifting from the self to the system*. He suggests that researchers "contextualize and ground their personal or individualistic,

new and expanded consciousness to take into consideration historic, political, social, economic, racial, and cultural realities on a broader scale” (p. 397). Questions researchers can pose here include those focused on the contextual nature of race and culture in the study and the systemic and organizational barriers and structures that shape the community’s experiences, both locally and beyond.

In fulfilling Milner’s (2007) final component in data, I employed a positioning analysis within and across narratives told in the study. This structured analysis consists of three layers of analysis that shift from examination of the local, contextualized talk of participants in their narratives to the representation of wider politicized discourses in their words. In the final level of analysis, positioning analysis calls for a look at the ways in which localized talk and politicized discourses inform identity development, although, to meet the needs of this study, I adapt structured analysis to shift from a focus on identity to a focus on conceptualizations of personhood.

Storytellers and the Lived Experience

Our lives are, in many ways, lived in the telling of stories. We make sense of and give meaning to our experiences by telling our everyday and not-so-everyday stories. Tahir Shah’s (2007) famous quote is not wrong in saying that, “Stories are a communal currency of humanity” (p. 151). For there is magic in storytelling,

in the depths of the Peruvian Amazon, and in the teahouses in Turkey, in India and Afghanistan . . . in Papua New Guinea and in Patagonia, in Kenya’s Rift Valley, in Namibia and Kazakhstan [and] their effect is always the same . . . We cannot help but let them in. With words they enchant us, teach, us, pass on knowledge and wisdom. (Shah, 2007, p. 151)

It is incumbent for us to remember, however, that this act of storytelling is itself firmly embedded in our social and cultural histories and heritages. Although a story can feel neutral—a simple retelling of what happened—the content of a story and, indeed, the very structure of that story is, like the critical incident, colored by our cultural assumptions, our ways of knowing and seeing the world. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) remind us, our stories are situated—in the individual, within the institutional, and within the societal. And so it becomes essential that, in narrative inquiry, we—the researcher and the participants—engage in relationships that *narrate* rather than simply *observe*. Guinier and Torres (2002) expand on this by defining *narrate* as “an active process of creating a story that is both explanatory and motivational, as opposed to merely descriptive” (p. 18). In approaching narrative work in this way, the narrative becomes an *act* rather than just an *object* and the researcher is necessarily positioned as an *activist* rather than simply a *collector*.

In the narratives I have constructed herein of the seven Latinx students and their teacher, I have attempted to remain true to these calls to narrate and to act, to consider, in the construction, the particular way in which this kind of work “care[s] about how knowledge is produced” (Wang & Geale, 20015, p. 195). But it is also equally not my intention, as discussed in Chapter 1, to assert that these narratives communicate, in any sense, that participants hold singular, unchanging views of themselves and others, the classroom, or their learning. Rather, these stories narrate particular productions of knowledge in very specific moments in the time-space continuum.

Cultural anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson describes each of us as engaged in the “act of creation” of the “composition of our lives” (1989, p.3). And rather than seeing this act of composing “as purposeful and monolithic, like the sculpting of a massive tree trunk that has first to be brought from the forest and then shaped by long labor to assert the artist’s vision,” Bateson describes it as “something crafted from odds and ends, like a patchwork quilt, and lovingly used to warm different nights and bodies” (1989, p.3). As a metaphor for self-creation, the act of composing a life is an art that can take many forms:

In the visual arts, a variety of disparate elements may be arranged to form a simultaneous whole, just as we combine our simultaneous commitments. In the temporal arts like music, a sequential diversity may be brought into harmony over time. In still other arts, such as homemaking or gardening, choreography or administration, complexity is woven in both space and time. (Bateson, 1989, p.3)

That is to say that we, as storytellers, often tell fractured, shifting, and sometimes contradictory narratives of ourselves (Bansel, 2013), and yet the power of storytelling lies in the art of gathering these disparate pieces of our lives together to create a coherent, unified story that defines who we are in a particular space and time. After giving a brief description of the participant selection process for this study, I present a complex, layered series of narratives as told by the students, their teacher, and myself about teaching and learning literacy in history as a Latinx youth to create a coherent and unified story (although this does not mean free of contradictions) about what it meant *to become* in these class spaces.

Selecting the Storytellers

Creswell (2014) suggested that the researcher carefully consider sample size, ensuring that the number of participants allows for ample opportunity to identify themes and conduct cross analysis while not overloading the researcher in what is often an intense data collection and analysis process. Most suggestions range between four and eight participants (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995). Seven students were selected for this study. General criteria for inclusion included, of course, willingness to participate in the study, as well as enrollment and consistent attendance in the selected history class, providing me with ample access and opportunity for data collection. Three specific inclusion criteria for the selection of participants also ensured fulfillment of theoretical considerations.

First, ALL students considered for the study self-identified as Latinx on the Class Survey (See Appendix E) given on my first day in the class. This self-identification eliminated the potential of misrepresentation by making selection decisions based on school records that may be inaccurate or not representative of a student's choice in identity markers. Second, there is ample research suggesting that (a) schools and individual teachers possess socially-constructed ideals regarding what it means to be a student, particularly a "good" student, (e.g., Hall, 2009, 2012; Wortham, 2004) and (b) that teachers' perceptions of students influence the instructional opportunities they provide their students (e.g., Alvidrez & Weinstein, 1999; Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968). Therefore, in order to be inclusive of the diverse experiences of Latinx students in the class, I interviewed Mr. Wallace using the Student Perception Profile (See Appendix F)

to categorize students based on his perception of students who were high-, average-, and low-performing. I used the profile results to analyze the criteria Mr. Wallace used most consistently to identify performance level (See Table 1). Particularly notable were his tendencies to base performance assessments on students' course grade or academic history (59% of the total comments) and behavior (13% of the total comments). Thus, this use of the Student Perception Profile also made explicit some of the enduring cultural and historical expectations of learners that were present in Mr. Wallace's classroom.

Table 1

Student Perception Profile Results Indicating Performance Level

Attribute	% of Total	Example
Behavior	13	sleep issue
Congeniality	4	social creature
Grade/Academic History	59	high test scores
Participation	7	strong discussor
Personality	11	ill-tempered and short
Relationship with Teacher	2	could communicate with him in the past
Other	2	is a Mexican dancer

Finally, students were also selected based on their degree of cultural affiliation with their native heritage, which was also reported on the Class Survey. As discussed in the theoretical framework of this study, research (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Lesko, 2012) has indicated that education in the United States is geared towards the White, middle class, male student and that those students who fall outside these norms are often academically disadvantaged in classrooms. This includes students from diverse cultures who, therefore, become peripherally-positioned, even in contexts like dual immersion and

bilingual programs that are designed to be more culturally-inclusive (Fitts, 2009; Hadi-Tabassum, 2006). The degree (i.e., high or low) to which a student affiliates with his/her native culture and his/her desire to fit into the “American” school culture could potentially influence how and how often a student might choose to accept, resist, or contest the spaces and literate identities constructed for them in the classroom by their peers and teachers. For this study, then, it was important that students were included who reported both a high affiliation and a low affiliation with their native culture.

Final selection of participants for inclusion was based on maximum variation (Creswell, 2014). A maximum variation sample³ considers inclusion of students who are representative of diverse selection criteria (i.e., academic performance level and degree of cultural affiliation). In this case, I created a matrix with performance level (high, average, low) on the horizontal axis and cultural affiliation (high, low) on the vertical axis. Students were placed in the matrix appropriately and I ensured that, after parent consent and student assent were collected, at least one student was selected per box (See Figure 1). Considerations were also made for maintaining a similar ratio of Latinx female to Latinx male participants (2:7) as were enrolled in the course (5:16).

The only student in the class who would have been in Box 2b did not give assent and no other students fit the criteria. Two students in Box 2a were selected to ensure a total of at least six participants. Alberto⁴, who is not included in the matrix because Mr.

³ Regardless of the sampling criteria, the study does not purport to generalize the experience of Latinx students in either U.S. schools or in Mr. Wallace’s class. I do not assume that those individuals with similar characteristics will share the same kinds of experiences.

⁴ Alberto reported a high cultural affiliation.

Wallace felt he could not make a judgement on Alberto’s academic performance, was included in the study because he came to me to ask to participate. Mr. Wallace’s inability to comment on Alberto’s academic performance was not a dynamic I had initially imagined (and so did not include on the matrix) and Alberto’s request provided an interesting opportunity to expand understanding of what it meant to be a Latinx learner in Mr. Wallace’s class.

Figure 1

Participants by Selection Criteria

		ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE		
		High	Average	Low
CULTURAL AFFILIATION	High	(1a) Sebastian	(2a) Atalaya Joaquin	(3a) Lorenzo
	Low	(1b) Kesara	(2b)	(3b) Ramón

Although two students enrolled in Mr. Wallace’s class were upperclassmen, all students selected to participate in the study were ninth grade Latinx students enrolled in Mr. Wallace’s World History course in the spring semester of 2018. They are all second-generation Americans with foreign-born parents from three general regions: México, Central America, and the Caribbean Islands. Their home languages include Spanish and English and many of their families speak both languages fluently. They all, except for

one⁵, consider themselves bilingual. While all of these details are part of their narratives, they were not necessarily explicitly named in the ones they shared with me. I provide this demographic information in Table 2 so that it may serve to further contextualize the narratives shared in the following section. The asterisk denotes the dominant language.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Information

PARTICIPANT	AGE	GENDER	BIRTH COUNTRY OF PARENT(S)	HOME LANGUAGE(S)
ALBERTO	15	M	Jalisco (México)	English Spanish*
ATALAYA	15	F	Guanajuato (México)	English Spanish
JOAQUIN	14	M	Guatemala	English Spanish*
KESARA	14	F	Dominican Republic	English* Spanish
LORENZO	15	M	Veracruz (México)	Spanish
RAMÓN	14	M	Veracruz & Oaxaca (México)	Spanish
SEBASTIAN	15	M	Veracruz (México)	Spanish

The remainder of this chapter centers on the narratives/counter-narratives of the students and teacher in BHS's World History class, with my own narratives interwoven. Again, these narratives are told, to the best of my ability, in the words of the participants, their words clearly indicated in italics. Section sub-titles indicate the speaker. Contradictions across narratives, as well as within narratives, are not only to be expected

⁵ Joaquin and his family spoke mostly Spanish at home. Joaquin reported being able to understand the language but not speak it fluently. His grandmother was teaching him Spanish.

but are welcomed as part of the complex, layered process of narrating lives that are historically-, culturally-, and politically-situated. I begin with my own narrative, drawn from across memos, to construct a visual picture of the physical spaces in Mr. Wallace's classroom and the students and materials within it. I then pass the narrative telling to Mr. Wallace, whose words contextualize expectations for engaging in and learning world history and literacy in consideration of his teaching philosophy. It matters little, at this point, whether or not these beliefs are enacted in actual curriculum and instruction; it only matters that these are the ways in which he frames his thinking about teaching and learning. Following this narrative of Mr. Wallace's, the narrative telling shifts once again to center the words of each of the Latinx students in the study and their day-to-day lived experiences in class spaces. Their words are layered with the narratives Mr. Wallace and I tell about them, about the class, and about ourselves. And across these narratives I invite you, the reader, to critically engage with both the narratives you are hearing, to sit with the words each person shares, and then to consciously and intentionally consider the narratives you are constructing about each of us.

Contextualizing Life in Room 323

Tierney. I am no stranger to the classroom—the chimes of bells dividing the day, the sound of teachers' voices in the classroom next door, the smell of lunch wafting into the room sometime around 10:30 in the morning. The jostle of bodies and the bustle of movement that is the chaos of the passing period in high school no longer intimidates me the way it did when twenty-three year old me watched my first class of ninth graders make their entrance into my classroom. Eight years as a teacher, while paltry in

comparison to the time career teachers have spent in the classroom, had given me enough experience that little surprised me about schooled life anymore. There was little that surprised me about BHS or Mr. Wallace's classroom at first glance.

It would have been obvious, had I not already known, that the school had seen plenty of history—seventy years, to be exact, for some parts of the building. Two back corners of Mr. Wallace's classroom were dominated by large radiators, although I wondered if they worked since student desks were often shoved against them. Every once in a while I would hear the telling click of a working radiator and would wonder once again but it never seemed to bother any of the students except Kesara, who asked to be moved away from it. But I think that had more to do with wanting a seat next to her friend across the classroom than any lasting discomfort caused by radiating heat.

Like many classrooms I had frequented, Mr. Wallace's room had the occasional tile torn up from the floor and walls that hadn't been patched in a while. The floor was a reddish-brown and the walls appeared almost pink (perhaps salmon) under fluorescent lighting. It was an interior room with no view outside but, although you could see nothing but the top of the wall in the hallway, a row of small windows near the ceiling at the back of the room gave a sense of a more open space.

The number of desks packed into the room was also unsurprising given the growing number of students in schools across the United States and a decreasing teacher workforce. The desks were organized in rows, one set of 5 X 4 desks facing the front of the room, where a SMART Board, a podium, and the teacher's desk were positioned. The other set of 3 X 4 desks faced the first set in an arrangement that seemed to

encourage the exchange of ideas across the room but was also, I think, largely done to enable all students to see the SMART Board, which was skewed to one side of the room.

A small table and a chair were positioned next to the SMART Board. This table was where Mr. Wallace kept his laptop and where he, I was soon to learn, spent the majority of his time during each class period. The desk was usually mostly bare except for the laptop and a Styrofoam cup of coffee but a smaller table behind it was always piled with papers to hand out or grade. The laptop was connected to the SMART Board and both were used nearly every class period, although the SMART Board typically functioned more as a traditional projector than as an interactive tool for learning. PowerPoint slides, videos, and students' written work were most often displayed.

There were also two bookshelves in the room, but textbooks were sparse and they lay haphazardly across the shelves with a pile of unused Glencoe editions of *World History in Graphic Novel*, a long-forgotten binder of teaching transparencies for World History, and the occasional ball of trash. The textbook was a 2008 *Glencoe World History* state-specific edition published by McGraw-Hill featuring a large picture of the Parthenon and a smaller strip of square images across the top of the cover that included Nelson Mandela; Nefertiti; a terra-cotta warrior from Xi'an, China; Simón Bolívar; and Indira Gandhi. There were 25 books and 29 students in this particular class. The textbooks were rarely ever all on the bookshelf at the same time and usually remained scattered across the room, peppering desktops, laying in baskets under desks, and stacked on a catch-all table to one side of the room.

Besides the presence of the textbooks, there were other obvious signs that this was a world history classroom. A map hung near the door, the label “Trade Systems/The Silk Roads” printed on white paper above it. What must have been an old student project titled Medieval Castles was displayed on a poster above the whiteboard at the front of the room. But what made this classroom stand out and, as discussed in Chapter 2, what made the school’s administration recommend Mr. Wallace for this project was a purported approach to teaching world history through disciplinary literacy approaches. Wrapping around two of the classroom walls was a line of restickable easel pad papers, the kind that teachers often use to record and display key information or ideas with students during instruction. Again, a white paper with “Historical Thinking Skills” printed on it served as a label for eight of the easel pad papers: Sourcing, Interpretation, Argumentation, Causation, Continuity and Change over Time, Periodization, Comparison, and Contextualization. Handwritten in black marker was the title of each, followed by a series of questions and directives. For example, the poster on sourcing included the following list: (1) Identify the source: Primary, Secondary (2) Who is the author? (3) Who is the audience? (4) Point of view: Why was this document written on this day? (4) Relevance of the content? These eight papers lined one side wall. Along the back wall, hanging below the windows, were five more easel papers: Economic Systems, Social Structures, Interaction between Humans and the Environment, Culture, and State Building. Mr. Wallace referred to these as the major themes, or unifying threads, through which historical world events could be viewed and analyzed.

In addition to the history-specific materials in the classroom, there were also the typical resources you would expect to see displayed in many secondary classrooms and which are often required by the school's district or administration. Next to the Silk Road map was a two-page laminated table describing expected behaviors for being respectful, responsible, and safe across the contexts of classroom, transition, lunch, restrooms, bus, and assembly. In the corner behind Mr. Wallace's desk was a phone mounted on the wall, accompanied by a list of telephone extensions for the building. Nearby were the school's tardy policy and school-wide rules, bell schedule, vision and mission statements, and a Crisis Management Flip Chart provided by the district.

Of course, many of the explicit expectations named on these posters had already been established before I walked in that first day, as well as a number of hidden norms. After the bell rang, I sat patiently waiting for Mr. Wallace to appear and begin class. I could hear him talking with other teachers in the hallway and a PowerPoint was prepped on the SMART Board, the title slide displaying what seemed to be today's key question: *How did the Islamic empire expand?* However, he didn't make any kind of immediate appearance and the students in the room remained, quite unsurprisingly for teenagers, unconcerned about it. Many sat eating their Second Chance Breakfasts or chatting with each other while others sat at their desks on their Chromebooks or with headphones on. Not much later, when the daily announcements came on over the speaker, I realized why there had been no real movement toward beginning class.

As the majority of students ignored the announcements or talked over them so that the speaker's voice was barely audible, I took this first opportunity to observe the

class. I knew the majority of the students were ninth graders, although there were two Latinx boys, one an eleventh grader and one a twelfth grader, who were not. It was unclear if they had not taken the course and still needed the credits to graduate or if they were retaking the course after having failed it. Until I had mentioned, in passing, the boys' grade levels during my initial interviews with Mr. Wallace, he had been unaware that they were not ninth graders.

In terms of other demographics, 70% of the students in the class identified as male. Fifty-five percent of the students self-identified as Latinx, 24% as White, 17% as African American, and 4% as multiracial. Only one student was designated an exceptional learner and had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). None of the students were designated by the school as ELLs.

There were, however, students in the class who were speakers of other languages. Most noticeably Spanish. Although its use in this space appeared minimal, I caught snatches of phrases in Spanish, spoken mostly by a small group of Latinx boys. And because they called out to other students, including a young Latinx woman across the classroom (who did respond to them, although in English), I assumed that there were other students with varying levels of proficiency in Spanish in the room as well.

These conversations, much more lively now that students were moving into second block⁶ and finding themselves more awake, didn't dwindle as Mr. Wallace ambled into the classroom while announcements came to a close. He stopped by a group

⁶ Many secondary schools, like BHS, operate on a 4 X 4 block schedule in which students take four 90-minute classes a day. In this particular variation of block scheduling, students finish a course in one semester rather than in a year. BHS's second block began at 10:10 AM and ended at 11:40 AM.

of students in the back corner of the classroom, who had apparently been leaving food containers and trash behind, and reminded them that he would be very disappointed if he found any after class that day. As he turned to walk back to the front of the room, he knocked a fist on the desk of a young lady who was still sitting and eating her breakfast and excitedly asked, “Is that sausage and biscuits today? My favorite! Where’d you get it? The cart here had those burritos.” She informed him that she’d gotten it downstairs. After giving the students another couple of minutes to finish breakfast while he worked briefly on his laptop, he called to students to quiet down so he could begin class. And so began my journey into understanding Mr. Wallace’s conceived spaces for teaching and learning in his class and the types of discourses he used to talk about those spaces.

Mr. Wallace. *Teaching’s always been really easy for me as far as a profession. I’ve never had the conflict that some teachers have about pay or about student behavior. I don’t remember where I heard this but somebody made a comment about when you’re thinking about a career, think about what you already do. And what I already did was read history. I loved historical fiction. I loved going to museums. I’m a nostalgic person so I love the past. It’s easy for me. Remembering things, like space and time. I can SEE all of world history. It’s almost like it’s just there for me. I can just see it.*

And so I started teaching social studies when I was older—28 or 29—following a military career. This is my 25th year teaching. I’ve taught World History, US History, Civics, Geography. For a time we had a World Geography course. I taught a law course. But my concentration has been mainly world history and, specifically, AP. One of the things that kinda HAS to happen in the classroom is students need to feel like their

teacher knows what they're talking about. KNOWS they have an energy for world history. They have enthusiasm for it. They are on top of it and they can help them.

One of the things that I think is most important about teaching is that we teach rigorously. *I think public education is way off on their idea of rigor. I love the way the army did it. The army did what's called Task, Condition, and Standards. Example. Putting a bandage on an arm. This is a common task that a soldier has to be able to do. There's a certain way to do it. So they give you the minimum requirements to put a bandage on an arm. You have one arm. You have one bandage. You have some tape. You have some antibacterial cream. And you have a canteen of water. That's your task and your equipment. The conditions are what changes rigor. Because one condition may be that you're in the classroom. You have a table. You have all the tools you need. The second one, you're on the side of a mountain. And it's raining. And it's 3 AM and you don't have light. So, you've got the same task. The difference is the RIGOR of the standard. You gotta change the conditions.*

In high school, I would much rather see us be able to identify our state on a globe or on a map. But you change the types of globes or maps. You change the language and you have it in Spanish. You change the conditions. It's the basic stuff but it makes the students better when they have to do it. Now, I think that's RIGOR. Just because you're not doing some COMPLEX problem doesn't mean that what you're asking them to do is not hard. Simple tasks can be difficult.

The head coach of the University of Alabama, Nick Saban, is one of the top coaches in America. And I went to a clinic where he was at and he said, "One of the

problems that we have in our society is we think that things that are fundamental become less important over time. And we've made that mistake in football." So, a fundamental of a play in football you might say is walking, running. Every day at Alabama, Coach Saban lines the football team up and they get into a defensive stance and he says, "Right step! Ready, step!" They just pick up their right foot and put it back down. He said the reason is because "if I don't practice that every day, they step with the wrong foot." And we need to do that in the classroom. We don't practice those fundamentals enough. So, my real emphasis, what I love to do, is skill development. To me, that's just more important than content. And the reason is because content will always be there. The skill development won't. These students will never have another chance to learn how to read a document. So I see myself as a technician. I kind of had this drive as a teacher to teach them how to be a historian instead of just filling them with facts and storytelling and so I let skill development drive my class.

I talk to my students about doing this using the word grinding. It's a word they know because of video games. There's [sic] a lot of video games out there now that you have to grind to build up your avatar. So in Warcraft [a videogame], you have to go out and kill twelve wolves. And you have to find them and kill them. And, as you kill the twelve wolves, you collect their paws. Then you bring the paws back to the quest giver and you get two gold pieces. Then you take the two gold pieces and you buy a new sword. So you have to GRIND. And then the more you do it, you get experience points. And the more experience points you get, you go up in levels. And you just build your avatar. And, over time, your avatar becomes a POWERFUL warrior.

Well, they understand that. This generation understands that you just HAVE to do it. It may not be a lot of fun but you have to do it. So I talked to them about, in history, it's the same way. In order to become a POWERFUL historian, you have to grind. You have to just do it.

Now, it's important to remember that it's not going to work the same way for every student. Maybe I shouldn't even say this but I'm gonna say it. The idea that we can all live the same way is ridiculous. If you take a group of 16 year olds and you put them down in that weight room and you put them on a bench press with 225 pounds, maybe out of a hundred kids, maybe ten of them can even think about lifting it. Most of them can't. Well, then you start reducing weight. You're still gonna have a huge amount of diversity in their abilities. It's the same way in the classroom. However, we're required to teach a certain thing. If the analogy of the weight room's used, we're still required to teach them to lift 225 pounds. Even though they can't do it.

And that's why when we want to evaluate a teacher, I can't imagine it being any more complicated than saying, "I'd like to see some graded work." Because from graded work, you should be able to see how the teacher is evaluating what the student did. See, we're front-end heavy: Let me see your lesson plan, let me see your planning, and then let me see your acting job. Let me see how well you act. It's all a big act. Mr. Wallace is acting like a teacher and they're acting like a student [sic] but neither one of us are [sic] really engaged. How do you get around that? Well, the way you can really tell, the evidence that this little game that is being played out is real, is through graded

work. Now, we can do that little acting thing but then if I give them an assignment and they do it and then I score it, there's the truth.

In terms of world history, my number one goal is to teach them an appreciation for it. They've got to deal with history for their families. They're going to go on vacation, they're going to go to museums, they're gonna go through old towns, they're going to do things with their families someday and they're gonna be exposed to historical concepts that they need to have some background about.

And then my number two goal is to teach them about their civic duty. You know, social studies at the secondary level, we're kinda the bastion of our society. If you think about it, we're the ones who kind of preserve the essence of democracy. We go beyond just teaching reading and writing. We teach the story that leads us to where we are as people. In addition, when you're a history student, one of the things that you learn to do is think independently. History tends to have that effect on us. It promotes independence. It promotes self-preservation. Not SELFISHNESS, I don't think, but, you know, it's kind of like when you see those people, those settlers, struggling for survival, it teaches you that this seems to be a human condition. That we're ALL struggling for survival, regardless of the technology.

In history, literacy is the skills used to develop an argument or to interpret. If there's an art to being a historian, that's it—being able to recognize truth or at least accuracy in documents. And teaching students to do it because I'm not sure that they've learned very much if they can't write down what they learned. That writing is evidence of learning. Ultimately, we write and we read to inform the subject. How do we know

how to think if we don't know how to communicate it? And the best medium is writing because it doesn't go away. Once you write it down, it's there, it's permanent. So, when I think of literacy, I do think of much more than just reading and writing. Through reading and writing, we're able to do our craft.

In terms of curriculum for history and literacy, I draw upon four resources. First, *the course is built around the historical thinking skills and the five themes of history from AP World History curriculum. Big history. Big ideas. And bringing those historical thinking skills into assessment. I like focus, I like structure in curriculum.* There is also *the timeline. Knowing, being able to see all of history. Knowing these turning points and just having it memorized. There are seven key events. So what I want to teach them is how to take these chunks of time periods and, inside of each chunk, contextualize big events. Connect them to the big picture. And then close reading. It's overanalyzing. It's going so far that you may be wasting your time but you're not sure. But you CAN'T get to the essence of some words and phrases if you don't overanalyze. And finally, the American Civics and the World History classes from the state Virtual School has some really good lessons in there. So I'm trying to figure out how to upload them and get them for our reviews because some of the questions are perfect. They're in three tiers: really simple, easy ones; then there's some more intermediate; and then there's some very difficult ones.*

Tierney. While Mr. Wallace's beliefs about teaching and learning history and literacy surfaced across the interviews we did that semester, I also had the opportunity to observe what teaching and learning history and literacy looked like in practice for his

class. As in any learning space, while there was variability in the tasks and activities in which Mr. Wallace engaged his students, a typical pattern of instruction emerged. There were the occasional events that disrupted instructional time—class starting late because the majority of the students participated in a nationally-organized school walkout protesting gun violence a month after the deaths of 17 staff and students in a shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School or a cancelled day of classes because so many faculty and staff were participating in a rally at the state capitol to protest the conditions under which teaching and learning were occurring. However, while all of these events impacted instructional time, the borders and boundaries between these events and instructional content and discourse remained distinct. That is, what was considered typical instruction remained in place. This pattern of learning tasks and activities were typified by five major structures: lecture (n=50), exams (n=22), reading guides (n=19), analysis and writing packets (n=17), and public scoring of student work (n=13).

Lecture in Mr. Wallace's class was, of course, characterized by teacher talk. The majority of this talk was focused on transmitting key concepts, like the events that led to the Sepoy Mutiny or the impact of the American Industrial Revolution. Twenty-six percent of these lectures were pre-planned and involved reading the background information from lessons developed by the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) or talking about PowerPoint slides created by SHEG, the state's virtual school, and other educational organizations. Nearly half of lectures were informal and in-the-moment as Mr. Wallace reviewed assignments, which could occur before, during, or after assignment completion as he explained concepts that appeared on those assignments.

However, all lectures, whether formally- or casually-planned, were accompanied by Initiate-Response-Evaluate (IRE) patterns of discourse, in which any questions used to prompt students were generally closed-ended and positioned as fact-based. The final 24% of the lectures in the class, while still transmission-oriented, were focused on what Mr. Wallace considered skill instruction, including describing test-taking skills (e.g., deciding what questions to answer first), explaining how to construct rubrics to guide essay writing, and modeling thinking about key historical events by contextualizing them using a timeline of major turning points in world history.

Exams, including quizzes, were all completed by students via Canvas⁷. Types of exams were fairly evenly distributed across reading, content, and end-of-course⁸ practice tests. Mr. Wallace's reading exams aimed to evaluate students' abilities to critically read primary and secondary sources. Although he began the semester by reviewing the documents with students prior to the exam, by the end of the semester students were expected to analyze the documents independently and then answer test questions. Content exams, generally retrieved from the state's virtual school or other similar resources, were fact-based questions about key concepts from world history. Students usually had little to no warning that they would be completing a content exam but they were typically allowed to use their textbook, reading guides, and primary and secondary source documents during the exam. Finally, end-of-course practice tests, concentrated at

⁷ A digital learning management platform utilized by the district. Students can access assignment materials, complete and turn in classwork, and see their assignment grades/feedback.

⁸ Used to measure student mastery of key course content. Technically, the state's end-of-course exams for World History were non-consequential in terms of school or district accountability. However, the results were consequential in terms of teacher reputation and student placement.

the end of the semester, were pre-packaged tests designed to help students prepare for the state exam in May. Although these exams may have included questions based on units of study in Mr. Wallace's class, they were not directly related to any current or particular unit Mr. Wallace taught and did count as part of students' grades. Across all exams, there were a variety of question types, including multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay.

The third typical instructional task in Mr. Wallace's class was the guided reading activity. These were cloze notes provided by the publishing company for each chapter section of the textbook. Mr. Wallace typically gave these guided reading activities to students in stapled packets, with the notes for every section in the chapter together. These packets also often included an additional reading, usually an enrichment activity designed to be interdisciplinary (e.g., applying geography to history), that was somewhere between one to two pages in length and followed by critical thinking questions and activities (e.g., group discussion).

Document analysis and writing packets—what most students referred to as just “packets”—were materials from the Reading like a Historian curriculum created by SHEG. These packets typically consisted of three to five (although they occasionally included up to seven) primary and secondary sources focused on a central question and were informed by the PowerPoint slides and other background materials provided by SHEG that Mr. Wallace used for his lectures. Although some of the larger packets included primary and secondary sources (i.e., documents) that were photographs, maps, or other types of texts, the majority of the documents were written texts. Each document

included a brief description of the source of information at the top, an excerpt of the original document, and a box with key vocabulary and definitions at the bottom of the page. Following the documents was a matrix designed to support analysis. This matrix always included columns for each of the documents in the packet and rows with key questions requiring the application of historical thinking—*Who wrote it? When? Did the author witness the events? Is this source trustworthy?* The final page of the packet was always a large blank text box with the central question at the top and directions asking students to use evidence from the documents to write a paragraph addressing the question. Mr. Wallace never particularly utilized this page. Instead, students were required to complete an essay on the central question in Canvas. At the beginning of the semester, Mr. Wallace provided a rubric for each essay that he used to support student thinking about how to construct their composition and to evaluate the essay. By the end of the semester, he was asking students to develop their own rubrics.

The final learning activity that characterized Mr. Wallace's class was public scoring of student work. Using a random student generator, Mr. Wallace selected students to display their work on the overhead projector. For guided reading activities, this meant that the student's worksheet was displayed and Mr. Wallace would read the answers, affirming which ones were correct and providing detailed explanations about each question. When students were selected to display their essay, Mr. Wallace would model (with some student input) application of the rubric to evaluate and score the essay, emphasizing points of strength and making recommendations (or, occasionally, eliciting student recommendations) for improving it.

These five tasks and activities characterized the patterns of teaching and learning in Mr. Wallace's class. But, although they describe, as an outsider looking in, a bit about what happened in class from day to day, they don't, as narrative inquiry aims to do, capture much about what life must have been like in Room 323. Neither for the students or for Mr. Wallace. For that, I needed Alberto, Atalaya, Joaquin, Kesara, Lorenzo, Ramón, and Sebastian to share their stories with me and for Mr. Wallace to then tell me his understanding of their stories.

Untold Stories: A Prologue

Alberto. I am a joyful person. I like helping people that I see are struggling. Like, this homeless dude. I bought him food for weeks. I learned it from my mom. Why not do something that can help everybody? What if that day they're not feeling love? You can help that person and care for them. But, sometimes, I can be quite a little bit off. Like, you can get me mad really easy but I try not to. I mean, sometimes when I'm in a bad mood, I feel like my teachers are like, "What's wrong with this kid?" Or, "Why's he acting like this?" I don't know if they're like, "I need to watch out for Alberto." Because I did REALLY bad in school by sixth and seventh grade year. Like, I wanted to get in fights like every day or something. Then I started noticing that I needed to do good. I started, in eighth grade, moving on and cutting off all these friends that I didn't need to have. It was a teacher who helped me change. She talked to me and she was like, "You're like a son to me and I don't want to see you in the office anymore." Ever since she told me that, in eighth grade, I was never in the office. But, sometimes I have my bad days and sometimes I have my good days. Sometimes I can go to class and just

pay attention to everything. I don't talk to anybody, I don't look behind me, I don't do anything like that. I can just get in class, just listen, get out of class. It's, like, the day that that happens goes much easier, faster. But when I know that I'm not going to be a good kid is when I'm like, "Oh my god, this is gonna be a long day."

Joaquin. *I want to go the [School] of Art—it's like in the mountains here—to study because my grandpa, when he lived in Guatemala, he used to be an agriculture person. Like, me and my grandpa like to plant. And he likes to have his own little tomatoes and cilantro in his garden so he can be able to pick it out. Sometimes it's flowers, like when it gets around this time—spring—he likes to put flowers in front of his house. They might be roses but I'm not sure. And I have this tree. It's like a really small tree. For years. And I'm taking care of it. My dad also went to college for a little to learn agriculture. So this is my future and I guess I've matured more to think, you know, I already know what I want to do when I get older. My mom and I talk about what I want to do when I get older. If I want to do this agriculture thing, then I have to take such-and-such classes. She wants me to graduate. I'll be the second person in my family to graduate, after my dad.*

Sebastian. *I live with my mom, my brother, and my two twin sisters. Before school starts, my mom always tells me to try hard and keep my grades up. After I submit something, she always checks up on me, see [sic] how I'm doing, and see [sic] if I need extra help or anything with it. She has high expectations. With me, she's always wanted me to keep straight A's ever since third grade. And, like, with my sisters, she's a little more lenient because they have a struggle learning. And with my brother, she hasn't*

given up on him but she's like, "He doesn't like trying anymore." I think it was after his freshman year that he stopped trying.

Mr. Wallace. This is a *diverse* class. It's *standard*⁹ level. They are ninth graders who *actually come from our only two middle schools* in Beechville—*North and South Beechville Middle Schools*. *North Beechville is traditionally a school that is . . . lower. It has a lot of our Hispanic population and our Black population. South Beechville Middle School, which is across the street, is more blue collar. The kids that live in the center of Beechville or the south side tend to be a little more affluent. They just come from some of the better neighborhoods. So when the two middle schools merge here you get a little bit of a blend, but a lot of these kids in this class went to North together. And a lot of the kids in the honors class maybe went to South together. Now, there's South kids sprinkled in here. So obviously it's very diverse. Not just in race or ethnicity but in learning skills.*

Alberto, if he has a specialized skill, kids LOVE him. They migrate to him. I think he's aware of what's going on in the community and at school. Underneath, the Black Market, whatever you want to call it. And I've talked to him about that. I've told him, "You know, you're a leader. Whether you want to be or not. Because people do follow you. They migrate to you. And I want to challenge you to be a good leader. I want to challenge you to be the kind of leader that you'll look back and be proud of." He liked the idea of that. I think Alberto wants to be good.

⁹ For BHS, a standard level course was defined as one that was not specially designed for remedial, honors, or AP instruction. Because no remedial World History course was offered, this class served all students who didn't meet academic requirements to be placed in an honors or AP class.

However, when it comes to history, Joaquin's special. He seems to plug into it and he's interested by it. You hear him, he has a lot to say. I think Joaquin is in that upper tier. Maybe his skills in reading and writing aren't quite STRONG enough to get him where he wants to be but he is resilient. He does demonstrate that he wants it, he wants to be a really good student. You know, that work ethic and that resilience sometimes is more important than talent.

I want to be a kind of facilitator for Joaquin and help him. He wants to go to Honors. I told him that I'm NOT going to recommend him for Honors because he doesn't demonstrate some of the characteristics that I can justify for the teachers. But that I would support him if he waived my recommendation. I would definitely support that and that if he waived it, then I'd love it. "Now it's on you. Now the ball's in your court." And I think that's the way he'll THRIVE.

I also know that Sebastian has a lot of talent. He is a Mexican dancer. He's doing something with his family to where they go and dance in these competitions or shows. And he is a FORMAL, I don't know, whatever it is. He tried to show me a video one day and something happened, I got distracted and I didn't get to see it. So I think he's a CULTURED person. I think he's got a strong family. I think that expectations are high. I think people expect a lot from him. I think he has high self-esteem. He demonstrates a lot of characteristics of a high performing student. He's also got a lot of peer pressure for him NOT to be that way. So he kind of fights that.

Tierney. Even before I began anything more than observing the class for this project, there were students who immediately drew my attention. Some because they

were loud and confident and active. Everything school usually says they shouldn't be. In part, they drew my attention because they were pushing boundaries and my intention in observation was to notice those moments. But they also drew my attention because that boundary-pushing often resulted in surfacing actions that were, in essence, a kind of movement away from what had become normed ways of teaching and learning in this space. This "movement away", though often present in class underlife, often went unacknowledged. This included student actions, like playing games on their Chromebooks or putting their heads down, as well as *teacher* actions, such as watching football plays or looking up health information on the computer.

However, Alberto, Joaquin, and Sebastian caught my attention because they appeared to do exactly the opposite of this kind of boundary pushing. They "fit" within the formal spaces of the class, but not in ways that were necessarily passive or accepting. During one of my observations in the classroom, Mr. Wallace had assigned students to read five documents from an analysis packet on the Sepoy Mutiny. The class was silent as students read independently. Except for Alberto and Sebastian. Alberto turned to Sebastian, who was seated behind him, and with very little discussion, they began taking turns reading paragraphs out loud to each other. They were quiet and unobtrusive but seemed to work against the established norm that the reading task would be completed independently. No other students followed their example, but neither did Mr. Wallace step in to re-direct their behavior.

From the beginning, Alberto was difficult to miss. He had questions—all types of questions—and he was eager to ask them. *So if it was in the old days, if you were*

Mexican, you would be treated as White AND Black at the same time? You know the wealthy and the poor, right? If one wealthy person tried to help a poor person, what would happen? I have a question for teachers. Do you copy your answers from the computer or do you do them? Nor did his curiosity abate after content instruction ended. He wanted to know who I was, what it was I was doing, and if he could be involved. It also became habit after the first week when Alberto saw me climbing the rather long steps up to the front doors of the school during their passing period, my arms laden with recording devices and folders, that he would be there to open the door for me, say good morning, and then disappear with friends until class started. When it came to interviewing, he was certainly ready to share his stories. He seemed to need the interest of the adults around him as much as he needed his peers.

Joaquin, on the other hand, could easily have been overlooked. His desk, not an actual part of any row, was jammed next to a file cabinet in the back corner of the room. And he was quiet. So quiet that it was impossible for me to hear him when he spoke in class even though I was on the same side of the room as him. Mr. Wallace often moved directly in front of his desk to hear his answers and, even then, often had to have him repeat his response. Yet, every time he had an answer, Joaquin's hand would be up.

The one and only time I saw Joaquin get into trouble he had been throwing paper balls with four other students near him. Mr. Wallace asked him to move desks; Joaquin remained in his seat, silent. After several requests by Mr. Wallace for him to move, he was pulled into the hallway. By the time he returned and moved seats, he had yet to react or say a word.

And, Sebastian, of all the students in the class, appeared to me to be one of the most consistent and steadfast. He was a diligent note-taker, his assignments were always completed, and while he wasn't the most outspoken student in class, there was little doubt that he was actively listening and engaged with the content. He seemed to understand what many teachers wanted—a *person who stays on-task, who respects the teachers' rules, tr[ies] to answer all the questions, gets their work done on time, and isn't loud and obnoxious during work time*—and knew how to adapt to different learning spaces. With some teachers, *like not in this class but my fourth period class, I like to be, I wouldn't say loud, but kind of talkative and like play around with the teacher sometimes. But I feel like Mr. Wallace's a kind of strict teacher so I kind of hold it back instead.* And Sebastian used this knowledge to help other students in class.

Sebastian (to Alberto): *Dude, you need to start paying attention in class!*

Alberto: *Yeah, I know.*

Sebastian: *Why do you think I have nineties and all A's?*

Alberto: *I don't know.*

Sebastian: *Because I actually pay attention and I leave everybody out of my sight.*

For Alberto, Joaquin, and Sebastian, these stories of home and school had very little to do with the actual act of doing history but had everything to do with what it meant to learn in these class spaces. These stories served as reminders that they already had narratives-in-construction, ones that were at play in the framing and experiencing of these new spaces. But despite the shaping force of these stories, I also came to realize

that there were probably few in this schooled space, besides me and the storytellers, who knew and understood these parts of their narratives, and thus, the power of these narratives-in-construction to transform the lived experiences of these students in Mr. Wallace's class over the coming semester.

Narratives-in-Construction: An Exposition

Atalaya. *My parents want me to focus on school. I always do my work but this class feels the longest out of all four classes because it's always boring. Sometimes I don't listen to Mr. Wallace. He talks a lot and I stop paying attention. I won't get all the information because I'll be zoning out. Everybody is asleep so, like, it's quiet. Plus, the worksheets and the textbooks, that's all we do every day. It's the fact that it was kind of a routine. It got boring. Like JUST NOW we are starting to use the computers and stuff. I wish we would do something else other than these worksheets, like Kahoot!¹⁰, because they're [sic] fun to do. I do like to play games, like Kahoots! [sic], because they are competitive. I'd like to do some projects and stuff. Like my first period, we do projects on like copyright and stuff like that. Make Google slides. Watch more videos. Not just the teacher talking all the time.*

Alberto. *I like Mr. Wallace. He doesn't give us that many tests. He just gives us essays. That's good. I learn a lot from him. Out of all my other history teachers, I never learned a lot. And that's why I'm confused sometimes and that's why I ask a lot of good questions. The thing that I like about Mr. Wallace is that he likes questions. When we all*

¹⁰ Kahoot! is an online quiz game. Using their cell phones, students can play live in class, competing individually or in teams. The teacher can also assign student-paced games for practice outside of class.

talk, just ask questions, you learn new stuff. I know, yeah, when you start growing up, you're gonna have to start doing stuff on your own. But when you're in school, that's why there's a teacher around here to at least show you. I can't learn unless Mr. Wallace is talking because I can ask a question when I need to ask. He makes it a lot easier. Like, when he talks, I get interested in history by the stuff that people do and why they hate doing that stuff. Or, like, anything that happens. Like it just caught my attention how they started using grease for their guns during the Sepoy Mutiny¹¹ so it can slick faster and how other people [the Sepoys] hated it because the cows meant something else for them. It made me learn more. You know, it interested me so I got into it. It just has to catch my attention for me to pay attention. When I lose interest is when he stops talking and he's just arguing with somebody else. I'm just, like, I don't care. I don't care anymore. I don't wanna pay attention.

Ramón. *World History can be cool. But it's like so much stuff, like learning about a lot of people, like their history, and you gotta remember it and it can get pretty hard and stuff. Some teachers would say that I work hard but some teachers think that I'm lazy. When I'm working lazy, it's because I don't understand what I'm doing or I need help or something. When I put it down, it's when I don't know what to do. Or whenever I can't find the answer. When my head is up, I'm actually doing my work.*

¹¹ The Indian Revolt of 1857. The mutiny against British rule was alleged to have begun when the British East India Company shifted to manufacturing bullets using greased paper cartridges that had to be bitten in order to remove the paper. The grease was made with a mixture of beef tallow and pork lard, which offended the Sepoys (soldiers), who were largely Hindu and Muslim.

Class is *pretty fun sometimes*, too, though. *But some people can get kind of, like, where they ruined it. It happens pretty often. Whenever the teacher's talking, like, people are talking or they respond back to him. Like, let's just be quiet, just don't say anything. Whenever Mr. Wallace gets mad, he has to scream. It sucks. I used to not be able to work when the teacher screamed and stuff.*

Mr. Wallace. *I can't remember where I got it. I don't remember what source it was but I learned it in college and I learned it through teaching it. But there's a huge difference between English culture and Spanish culture. And the Americans first had to deal with the Spanish American culture that was being born, in particular between México and the United States. México and the United States is [sic] kind of the battleground between those two cultures and you see it really start happening in the early 1800s with, of course, the war with México. English, the Americans—and most of the Americans I'm talking about were of English ancestry—saw Spanish males as being feminine. When I say Spanish males, also the Native Americans who were influenced by the Spanish, by the Catholic Church or whatever influence there was. Maybe through marriage. And I always thought that was kind of interesting because the laziness, the idea of a siesta, all of that stuff, the Americans kind of had a really poor image of who these people are. And how much of that is still around? How much of that is still there? Because you can see it in all of the diaries, all of the writings—President Polk, all the war generals, all the people talk about these people as though they were just SECOND class citizens. And I wonder how much of that is still there?*

In terms of individual students in this class, though, *Atalaya is VERY quiet. I can't get a read on her. I've had some talks with her and she just smiles at me—grins and smiles and that's it. Atalaya is . . . man! Unknown, I have to admit. I would say she's got to be somewhere in the middle. She's got some skills. But she's not a high flyer. She only does what I ask her to do. She doesn't do anything MORE than that. During class discussion, sometimes she converses with confidence, sometimes she doesn't. Sometimes she's just, "Oh my god, don't call on me!" There will be days where she does really well and then there will be days where, "How can she do this poorly?" Now, I would never say that but I'm asking myself, "How is that possible?" I mean, there were times where she demonstrated, especially in her writing, she had some really good thoughts and it looked like she was putting it all together but then there's [sic] times, a SETBACK, where she was totally lost. I'm not sure that I'm getting her best shot. And if I am, then there's something else going on there that I need to probably talk to her about because, like I've said, she's been a mystery to me. Sometimes her answers are really good and sometimes they're not. And she's always got the SAME expression! Whether she did good or did poorly. You know, she's the same.*

Alberto is a strong student as far as discussions and things like that. I don't think his skill set is very strong. I don't think he's a strong reader or comprehender. He struggles with words so I think that's really hurting him on his tests, his reading tests. That's why his scores are in the 20s, 30s, and 40s. He just can't READ something with confidence. I just think it could be language. It could be the way he fits. You know, people talk about—and I believe this to a certain degree—that Europe is easy for me to

learn about because I'm European. Africa is difficult for me to learn about because I'm not African. Well, I think it's difficult for Alberto to learn about U.S. history because so much of it is European. And that may be the case for a lot of them. Nobody really knows what to do. You can try and make things . . . more doable and believable for students like that but in the end . . . how do I say this? The events like the Scientific Revolution, the Renaissance. Hispanic culture has their own, kind of. And so that background is more what I think those students are aware of. I don't know how that would be but . . . I don't know when I learned about knights in shining armor and when I learned about medieval history and stuff but I've ALWAYS known it. I don't remember anybody ever teaching me. I just KNEW.

But Alberto also reminds me of my older brother. He struggled in the classroom. He eventually quit high school when he was 16. Alberto's got talent and he's got his likes and dislikes but they're not in school. Just not in school. My brother was a horse guy. He loved horses and hunting. And he hated school. He hated it. Alberto is almost like that. There's something that he would rather be doing, I think.

Ramón is probably the lowest. I have failed completely reaching him. He has very low skills. He demonstrated someone who runs away from anything difficult. And whenever it's normal, he looks for help. He LOOKS at me, like whenever we are talking or whenever he is working, but whenever it is time for him to do independent work, he doesn't do it. He doesn't even try. He almost strikes me as someone who can't read. I'm wondering about that. I'm trying to catch him. And I gotta say, I don't really know what to do. I don't really know how to help him other than sitting beside him and just walking

him through it. For most of the course he was non-responsive to almost everything. I think, when it comes to learning, I think he has not gotten a lot of positive feedback on success. Like the things he may be good at, I don't know if anybody's ever recognized it. He strikes me as someone who's been kind of passed over. When it comes to academics, there does not seem to be a high expectation of himself. It's very possible that when he brings home good grades, he might get picked on by his parents. Or, you never know, brothers or sisters! So it's actually life is easier if he comes home and he's normal with bad grades.

Tierney. Although my original data collection plan included retaining copies of Mr. Wallace's lesson plans for analysis, it quickly became apparent that he didn't write lesson plans, even in a weekly overview format. It became common practice for me to interview Mr. Wallace at the end of every week to get a general feel for what he felt he had accomplished that week, particularly in terms of the seven student participants, and to ask questions about his objectives for the subsequent week.

Mr. Wallace's general planning schema seemed to be driven by content coverage—as far as pacing goes, *I wanted to get through the rise of Adolf Hitler and the rise of dictatorships and the single party states and get to World War II, so that's what we'll do tomorrow.* Selection of content important for coverage seemed to hinge on his timeline of turning points in history and the materials available through the Reading like a Historian curriculum or the state's virtual school because *I have never been a person that what I do has to be mine. I'm just not an owner. I just don't feel the need to create everything I do.* Many mornings, Mr. Wallace would come in, minutes before the bell

rang because he had been working with athletes in the weight room, to construct a quick agenda—sometimes on the board (especially when I was still new in the space), but often just verbally—before class started.

For Atalaya, this predictability in routine and task was monotonous and although she was interested in learning about other cultures—I want to learn about *Chinese* because *the bits we talked about, like, it caught my attention, it's like a cool culture*—she was not motivated to learn about the day-to-day history that was presented in Mr. Wallace's class. She was much more interested in telling me about her English essay arguing that pet stores should not be allowed to sell commercially-bred animals than she was about the French Revolution. But, she made an effort to keep her head up during (most) classes and she completed all of her assignments while worrying about whether or not she got the answers right and what her grade would be. She was often disappointed when she *got a bad score* but didn't know what else she could have done, besides not *overthink it, go with my gut feeling more*. She was quite nervous any time public scoring or sharing of answers occurred because *I may have some answers wrong* and, on the rare occasion Mr. Wallace did call on her, Atalaya sat frozen and silent in her seat until Mr. Wallace's patience for wait time was exhausted and he moved to the next person.

Unlike Atalaya, Ramón often seemed to lose the battle against putting his head down. And if some kind of battle, usually about student off-task behavior, ensued between Mr. Wallace and members of the class, it was nearly certain that I would find Ramón's head down on his desk before the end of the argument. Except for once, when Mr. Wallace had Ramón and another classmate who had his head down stand at the back

of the room for the remainder of a lecture, Ramón's disengagement typically avoided any action by Mr. Wallace. But that day Mr. Wallace lectured, "I've been in classes like this where I'm bored and disinterested but you need to know this so you need to get up and walk to the back of the room. I don't want you to miss out on it, now." Although he was otherwise never in trouble, Ramón was often concerned about his classmates' behavior *because sometimes if the class is being good, then Mr. Wallace will probably be happy about it but if everyone's making a big ruckus, Mr. Wallace will probably be in a bad mood.* Dressed in his ROTC uniform, a program he valued because it *teaches you how to be a better citizen, how to be a better role model for people, how . . . we work together to be better people,* this concern with class behavior seemed consistent with the kind of character development Ramón considered to be central to the experience of schooling. And, although he was quiet in class, Ramón, who originally wanted me to use Nacho Cheese as his pseudonym, knew *how to make people smile, to make them feel better if somebody's [sic] having a bad day.*

For Mr. Wallace, as well as Atalaya, Alberto, and Ramón, their narratives-in-construction already included beliefs, among others, about what it sounds like to learn history, what it looks like to be a successful student in school, and what it means to be Latinx. And these beliefs were at play the moment students walked into the class, influencing how each person positioned themselves and others and, thus, impacting their interactions with and observations of one another. Some of these beliefs were held in common. Some were not but functioned side-by-side. And yet others converged in

moments, described by Mr. Wallace and the students, in ways that demanded action from participants and held significance for the trajectory of their narratives-in-construction.

Turning Points: A Conflict

Sebastian. *History—like social studies—and literacy, those are two subjects that I don't really like. I'm more of a science and math type person. Making history and literacy together is making it harder but also kind of easier. Like, it's helping me a lot. I've always been not really able to read good [sic]. Like when other people read, they read a lot faster than me. But, me, I have to read and then process some of the words. I'm trying to work on my reading skills because last year I kind of did bad [sic] on my test. And this year and this class is kind of helping me more because it's more reading-based and going back into the text and finding evidence on how to answer questions. And also writing paragraphs and papers as well. This year, my teachers, they put me in honors classes so I don't really fall behind but I feel like I gotta work harder than some of the kids in there to, like, stay up with the class. To keep up.*

Ramón. *I don't like the packets. It takes kind of a long time and you gotta be looking through the books and you gotta find the answer. And what's hardest is how he wants to teach us when he uses the papers if he doesn't teach us anything first. It makes me feel stressed since I don't know the answers or know anything about the subject. When we were first working on the packets . . . I got to use the computer but then Mr. Wallace was like, "You can't do that. Put the computer away." I was looking up answers or like looking up articles, what they say, if they say anything about it. Because, like, in the textbook I would have to be looking through pages for it and having to read a*

bunch of stuff but when I look it up on the computer, I can just look it up and it mostly tells me like right at the beginning of the page. When he took the computer away, I was like, "Oh, well. At least I got some work done." I didn't have to go right to the textbook.

Joaquin. *I get frustrated when it's like packets after packets. When Mr. Wallace is not talking. We never get to hear what Mr. Wallace is saying, since the documents don't come from him. It comes from some of the other teachers. I feel like it comes better from Mr. Wallace than something written probably like ten years ago or something. And since Mr. Wallace is a history teacher, he knows more than what we're reading in the documents and packets. Also, some tests have questions that we didn't learn, that we've never heard of before. It was kind of like thrown at us. It's like, "Here's this!" You know, "Take it now!" I get a little confused because, after Christmas, I missed a lot of days. I do my best and kind of like common sense with answers. And process of elimination. Like I said before, I like history enough so it was easier and faster for me. I like to read the news and read the articles on an event in history. I just look up a topic and then click on the first few sites. I don't really do research, I just look at new topics I've never heard of by tapping links on the bottom of the page. It helps with reading packets and tests because sometimes there's stuff that you wouldn't think would be on the packet or test but it is. That you read online.*

Mr. Wallace. *A standout moment that I had personally was how I seem to be reaching about half the class. And the other half of the class is . . . is disinterested or, you know, whenever I had to stop and wake people up. Why are some awake and some aren't? What is it that creates in my classroom environment that half the students, maybe*

ten, are alert and attentive but the other ten are dead to the world? What is that? Is that the teacher, is that the lesson, is that the student? If I'm observing this class, that's a question I've got. I like to kind of think like that. I like to get outside of myself and look at my classroom from the outside, like I was observing it. Why in the world is that the case? It's probably the lesson. My method. Teaching. This is a class that probably needs more hands-on, more project. I just feel like when I turn them loose, as soon as I turn them loose, I lose them. I did that with first semester and I just got so frustrated because I'm not very good at that, that's not my wheelhouse as a teacher. I don't build the projects well enough, I guess. So whenever I give them those projects or give them those assignments, I tend to lose them. And so, you know, I'm more teacher-centered . . . and I don't like that about myself but . . . I seem to be that way. Most effective, definitely, is a strong student-centered classroom where you've got really structured lessons. I'm NEVER probably going to have that. To be honest. I'm just not. As soon as my work day is over, I've got football going on. You know, my daughter is a third grade teacher and she is a student-centered teacher. She's awesome at it but she's up 'til 10, 11 o'clock working on the assignments, working on the little cards. She gets onto me about it, trying to get me to do it and I'm like, "[Name], I'm just not going to do that. I'm not going to cut all those little cards out and stuff. I just don't want to." I know it sounds selfish and maybe I should. Maybe I should be made to do it but . . . it's not something that's me.

But even with my method, students like Sebastian *get the big picture. Like, whenever you're describing something, Sebastian's usually one of the first ones to get it.*

And from the big picture down. Earlier in the semester, when we were doing the timeline activity, he was the first one to go. And he had it down. By knowing these particular events and when they occurred, it makes it easier to fit other stuff inside of it. I think he's special; he can see like a decorator. So, I think he might be out of place. I asked him if he wanted to go to honors. His grades just weren't quite high enough for me to say he's DEFINITELY an honors student. But I did say that I would support him if he got a waiver and just waived my recommendation and him and his parents [sic] kind of go out on their own and go ahead and sign up for honors classes and see how you like it. He didn't seem interested so I didn't push. I don't think he challenges himself. I'm not going to say he takes the easy way, but to be honest, I would think that he probably needs to be at least in honors. But he wasn't interested. I kind of feel like he needs some counseling. I mean, he needs to understand why you challenge yourself. He's probably one of the brighter Hispanic students that I've taught. It's kind of a shame if he doesn't push to expand.

With Ramón, here in the last four weeks, I've seen him kind of turn around. Quite a bit. After making contact with him, I saw evidence that he's making a real attempt. His test scores improved to where now his testing is probably in the top third. Now, is it honest, is it true and all that? That remains to be seen. There's still little things in his testing that I do online that I'm not sure how kids are looking up answers. But they're not that easy to find because so many of the students aren't. If they were that easy to find, everybody would do it. Ramón may be looking up answers. But, then, when

I watch him, he WORKS. He's working on it. He's actually doing it. So I'm gonna give him the benefit of the doubt.

For Joaquin, I think a weakness that he has is his writing skills. I think he can improve. I don't think it's a language barrier for him. I think it's just he hasn't done it enough, he hasn't practiced enough. He hasn't gotten enough feedback. Nobody's ever asked him to write anything beyond a paragraph, like a more comprehensive response, a more complex response. An answer with multiple parts. I think he can do it orally but he struggles to do it with words, with writing. On multiple choice tests, his testing is pretty strong. But when it comes to communicating it with writing, he kind of weakens a little bit. So I kind of led him to Honors. It may be questioned by other teachers, whenever they look at his writing. They may not really understand why I would do that. But I don't care. Because I think Joaquin is more than he seems when it comes to history. I don't know how he's going to do on standardized tests. He may never be that strong testing. But I do think when it comes to contributing to an honors class, I think he'll get better. I think it'll help him. And THEN I think we'll see if it was a mistake or not. If you don't do that with a student like him, you'll never know. So he was one that I'm kind of willing to be wrong on.

Tierney. One of my most memorable observations occurred near the end of April. End-of-course exams were looming as was the end of the semester, both of which increased the pressure on teachers to ensure that they had adequately covered content and standards. The students were about halfway through the ninety-minute class. Mr. Wallace had begun class by assigning another guided reading activity, this one on the

beginning of the French Revolution, and had given students 13 minutes (because this is the amount of time it had taken him to do the work) to complete the task. When the timer went off, he displayed his worksheet and asked students to let him know if he had missed something in his answers or if they had written something else. One by one, he explained the answers from each question. As he was finishing up a lecture on the second question, the ninth grade counselor entered the room, leaned against the wall, and waited for Mr. Wallace to finish his explanation. Before stepping into the hallway to talk with Mr. Wallace, she addressed the class: “And don’t you just *wish* that you had the passion for history that Mr. Wallace has. To see some of you with your heads down in here. I bet it just tears him up!” Mr. Wallace responded, “Yeah, we’ve got our conflicts but we’re working on it.”

Over the course of my observations in Mr. Wallace’s class, an average of 20% of the students had their heads down on their desks for at least 10 minutes in any given class period. I do recognize here the variability of what it looks like to be an engaged learner. There were students with their heads down who were still answering questions (this was actually a fairly common practice of Joaquin’s) or picked their heads up after being given a task that wasn’t just listening. And I’m certain there were students with their heads up who were disengaged. But, in a class of (roughly) 29 students, depending on absences, that meant that about six students had their heads down each day. On the best days, all students had their heads up. But on the worst, 69% of students had their heads down. As expected, the average number of students with their heads down increased slightly from 15% the first half of the semester to 25% the second half of the semester. The day the

counselor walked in, 15 of the 28 students present had heads down on their desks, including Kesara, Ramón, and Sebastian (for whom this behavior was extremely rare).

Off-limit use of technology also seemed to be a way of disengaging with the class (again, recognizing the variability in what it looks like to be engaged). Although Chromebooks were often allowed, even required, to complete assignments, off-limit use included playing video games, using social media, or internet browsing, among other activities. The use of cellphones and headphones were also included as off-limits. Across the semester, an average of 10% of students used technology in off-limit ways. This means that an average of three students a day were engaged with off-limit use of technology as defined by Mr. Wallace, as well as technology use rules established by BHS. Although there were many days that no technology was used in off-limit ways, there were also days where 62% of students broke those rules.

Mr. Wallace often seemed to deal with this rule breaking—sleeping in class or using technology in off-limit ways—inconsistently across the course of the semester. There were days, like the day the counselor came in, that he never spoke to any students who had their heads down. During one activity, he went student by student to have them share answers on a worksheet, skipping those with their heads down without a word. Atalaya quickly realized what he was doing and put her head down before he got to her, therefore avoiding having to publically share an answer, which she hated doing.

There were days where he addressed it, but didn't make an issue of it. On one of those days he called on three students, two White and one African American, to sit up. He shook the shoulder of one White student, called the name of the other White student,

and cracked a joke about a fly going into the African American student's mouth since his head was tipped back with his mouth open while he snored. All three students put their heads back down with no additional repercussions. And then there were days, like with Ramón and his friend, that sleeping resulted in having to stand at the back of the room for the rest of class. Similarly, sometimes technology use was ignored (or went unnoticed) and other days students were required to put the technology (e.g., phones, headphones, computers) into Mr. Wallace's desk drawer until the end of the day.

Many of these conflicts, these tensions, were visible, or at least were tensions that manifested in consequences that were visible. In many ways, it seems like such visible tensions are something less. Something that holds less power. Something that is less destructive. But in the stories told by Mr. Wallace, Sebastian, Ramón, and Joaquin, many of these tensions were invisible. And these seem like something more—the monster waiting in the dark. Because the consequences of *these* tensions had far-reaching consequences on the lived experiences, positionalities, and personhoods of Mr. Wallace and his students in the learning spaces they (re)constructed.

(Re)constructing Spaces in the Dark: A Resolution

Kesara. *I really hate those packets. This class is always packets. You don't learn anything. It barely gives you information. I can't function with them because it's too much reading and you don't get all the details. I don't want to do them but Mr. Wallace told us to, it's required, so I HAVE to get them done. It's a priority that I have to do. So I ask Mr. Wallace to help me find answers in the book. He gives me hints but I guess he shows me, like, the paragraph and he tells me about it. He gives me a big*

explanation on it. I am confident about my answers because Mr. Wallace explains it, each question, and explains what each document is saying. Sometimes it's tricky how he puts questions. Like, tricky because the answer's right there but he didn't give us enough detail in his question. For one quiz I waited until he was actually explaining it to the class. I had a different answer but it was wrong. I changed it to what he was telling us.

And sometimes if I don't know the answer and I don't want Mr. Wallace to talk a lot, I'll just say to Victoria¹², "Heyyyyy, let's work together on this question" or something like that. Like, we'll probably be on the same page and I'll be like, "Hey, I found it right here" or she's like, "Oh, I found it over there." Like one time Mr. Wallace gave us an article¹³ and he RARELY gives us articles. I was having the most struggle with that because I DIDN'T want to read that. And I kept reading it. I was like, "Okay, I HAVE to do it." So I re-read it like three times and I still didn't get it so I just asked Victoria and she just helped me out with it. I feel confident in my answers when we work together because she's on my side. I don't like working by myself because half the time I probably get the answers wrong.

Atalaya. *I understand some of the content but then sometimes I don't. Like, the way the questions are worded. They're worded differently than the question in the book and it's hard to find the answer. Sometimes the answers to questions are right here in the textbook and then some, they're not, like, directly there so I have to think about it. On the worksheets, the answers are right here but in the document analysis, you gotta*

¹² Another Latinx student and a close friend. Kesara often chose to work with her when given the chance. Victoria was considered a high performer by Mr. Wallace.

¹³ An additional article attached to the guided reading activity.

think about it, what the question is asking. Some are challenging. So I re-read it to look for details. Where it talks about it. The person and, like, looking for the dates.

Sometimes I go to the packets but I feel like nothing helps. Like on this one [reading directly from the quiz]: What was the role of the United States in ending World War I, especially considering the Treaty of Versailles? The “treaty” was so general that I didn’t understand it. I have a hard time understanding what they’re asking because of the big words they use.

When I don’t understand it, it’s confusing the next day, when we go over the work. I like when we do discussion because everybody explains everything differently, like, where I understand it better. Like sometimes he calls random people up to put their papers on the projector. I get nervous that he might call on me because I may have some answers wrong but I’m glad when he does it. Because then everybody does their work and people share their answers. And that might help me to understand it more. Like, they might think the same as me and Mr. Wallace might think differently. The words he uses are confusing.

Lorenzo. *I liked how we discussed the documents or went over them. When Mr. Wallace discusses it he gives us more details about the documents and what happened and stuff like that. It helps me understand more of the documents because I don’t get it. It helps me answer the questions. I wish Mr. Wallace would go over the documents before we start the test, like we used to do. But he don’t do it that way anymore. Now I go back and try to look for the answers. I go to the computer or the textbook. But some, I think they make you think more about it than the other ones. You gotta infer what you*

gotta put down. When they ask you about your opinions. Some I just have to guess. Like, if I read something in the book and then I choose something close to the book. I try to find good evidence about it so it takes me a pretty long while to find it. I don't read all of the documents. I only read, like, the first two because sometimes when I read, I forget stuff. I would rather listen to Mr. Wallace but sometimes I can re-read and re-read until I understand it. I'm good at not giving up.

Mr. Wallace. *I had, in my first semester, seven students not pass the end-of-course exam. The other teachers had twenty or thirty. Now, overall, the students that passed did poorly. They didn't score up in the 80s and the 90s, they scored in the 60s and 70s. They barely passed. I mean, goodness sake, there's 42 questions. To pass, you only have to get 10 right! So, I mean, they could have guessed and passed. When I was an AP World teacher, I could predict, down to plus or minus one, who would pass. Out of a hundred, I would have anywhere from three to seven that I was wrong on. I do the same thing in here. I can kind of tell you in this class who's gonna fail the exam. And, as a veteran teacher, what we're doing is the only thing I know to do to help them pass it because of the 42 questions, 36 or 37 are gonna have a document they have to read. There are no maps, there are no images, there are no charts. It's just a document. And they have to read it and answer it. Now for our students on your list, that's tough. Because of the language barriers and the cultural barriers. Reading between the lines, I was talking about that today. Marco [another Latinx student] is NEVER going to be able to do that. Not in English. He might could do it in Spanish. But in English, he's going to struggle with that. I would have a hard time reading between the lines in Spanish. And*

whenever you're doing historical analysis, you have to be able to do that. It's very difficult to get the true meaning of something. I'm not sure the students will get that, the ones that are language challenged or English language challenged. I don't know what else you do because I not a reading specialist. I don't feel comfortable on technique. I'm not trained as well to do that.

For Kesara, my lack of technique didn't matter. She has shown a lot of interest in history. I think she enjoys it. She's always attentive and she has a lot of questions. She's inquisitive. And rarely do you have to tell her to do something twice. She's usually on top of it. She's actually a pretty good little leader. She has some strong leadership skills. Her skills in history are not as strong as her personality. She's got a B. Her grades I think are good because she does study, she does her work. Now, she scored a 60 on the last test, but to tell you, she came RIGHT up IMMEDIATELY. That's her. "Mr. Wallace, I can't. I've got to get that up." I like that. I like somebody who just can't live with a low score. So, yeah, she's a GOOD student. I'd be proud of her if she was my daughter.

She has confidence but I think her confidence wanes during testing and when she's alone. But in group activities or any time that she's working with someone else, she seems to do really well. But when she's alone and it's time for her to take an exam, she's not necessarily afraid of going for it but I did notice in some of her writing assignments that she was kind of way off at times when she was alone. But in groups, when she was with someone to hold her in check and give her ideas, she would play off those very well. I think it's developmental. I think she's just kind of developmentally a little weaker. But I think she'll get strong.

Atalaya, I don't know how independent she is. Some of the activities we did were group and she was allowed to work with somebody so I don't know if she just borrowed or, you know, got the idea from somebody else but when she was on her own, she kind of failed. It's hard to tell. Like when I went back there she had ALL of the assignment done, completed her Section II, except for one and it was right in front of her! The answer was right there! And whenever I showed her, I said, "Now, read this sentence and what do you think?" She stared at it and she read it . . . "I don't understand." And then I said, "Well, look, you know, it was the one with Reason. It wasn't Mohammad, they were going to worship Reason." Then she got it after I kind of pointed it out. So I don't know where she got the other answers from. But then she'll do okay or average on the writing and then on the test, she'll either bomb it or she'll do well on it so I don't really know. When I put the ball in her court, like now you have to build your own rubric, how you want to score the essay, she's LOST. Now, if I gave her a rubric and told her to do this, she might do better. So that's Atalaya, up and down. She does acceptable enough work to where she'll be promoted.

Lorenzo, on the other hand, has POOR skills. He made a 10 percent on his last exam. Looking at his scores from past courses and things like that, he's always been really in like the fifth or tenth percentile. He is very, very low. I also think he may come from an environment where it's not cool to be good in school, but then again he may have some serious . . . let's see, where's my list at? Yeah, he is. Lorenzo is one of my EC¹⁴

¹⁴ Exceptional Children. This program serves students with disabilities and students who are considered gifted.

students. I asked him earlier in the year, he's supposed to leave the room for a separate testing setting¹⁵, he didn't wanna go. He just said, "Nah, I don't want to go." He wants to stay here. I don't know why. He rarely finishes on time. And he NEVER talks about it. Like I've sat down with him and asked him, "Do you understand the questions?" "Well, some of them." And he just gives vague responses. And I said, "Well look now, it's hard for me to help you if you don't give me specifics."

I don't think, to be quite honest, Lorenzo's being totally honest with his answers. When he leaves here, is he getting somebody to help him at lunch? I don't know. But what's the alternative? I spoke to Ms. [EC Teacher] about stuff like that and she said that there's no right answer there. They've tried everything. They do everything. These are students that don't want to be engaged and if you can show engagement, regardless of any of the characteristics, like cheating, then it's a win for the student. It may not be a win for the state, it may not be a win for ethics, but it's a win for the student if they go home and they feel they accomplished something. But Lorenzo's disinterested. And when somebody's disinterested, it's hard. They're not giving you their best shot.

Tierney. I observed Mr. Wallace's class for 34 total days spread across four months (February–May). He accumulated ten days of absences in those 34 days. During those absences the nature of activity in the class didn't necessarily change, particularly as the end of the semester and end-of-course exams neared, but the intensity did. Rather than receiving guided reading activity sheets on two sections, they received four. And

¹⁵ Per his IEP.

these tasks were followed up by document analysis and an essay, which then culminated in a quiz.

Even when Mr. Wallace was present, Lorenzo struggled to keep up with the workload. With the additional work that was introduced when a substitute was in the room, it was nearly impossible to find moments to interview Lorenzo because his assignments were never completed. (It became habit for us to meet up for a quick chat during the passing period.) But Lorenzo never quit. He never had his head down. Even though some of his friends beside him would occasionally play games on their Chromebooks, Lorenzo would continue working. He responded to their questions, but never engaged in more dialogue than that. When I spoke with him, Lorenzo gave the impression of being someone who was steady and reliable. If Atalaya's ever-present smile delighted me (and it certainly did), Lorenzo's rare, shy smile was a treat. When his grades in Canvas begin appearing—10%, 25%, 35%—I kept expecting a moment when Lorenzo would be finished, when he'd just shut down in some way and quit. He never did. Instead, he took his Chromebook home and, eventually, more grades, mostly just as dismal, would appear in the gradebook. And still he sat, in the middle of the farthest row from me. He kept his head down (figuratively speaking) and did his work.

There were certainly rough moments in the class—a (White) student who claimed that he and his classmates had run out every social studies teacher who came into their classroom last year. But this comment arose around a conversation about the meaning of *mutiny* and, although Mr. Wallace framed and responded to it as a kind of veiled indication that they would do the same in this space, I did not read it in the same way. In

fact, although some of the seven student participants expressed their boredom with the class and their dislike of history or class assignments, they all remained neutral (and respectful) of Mr. Wallace and even, like Alberto, shared that they liked him.

And yet, classroom management and student compliance remained a central concern of Mr. Wallace's. In particular, he was emphatic about someone needing to stand up for *the students who do their work*. In one particular informal conversation with me, Mr. Wallace suggested that *one way to really change the system was if someone could sue the school system because a student was not able to learn due to bad classroom management*. That is, bad classroom management in terms of students making poor choices about behavior and not teachers who lacked skills for managing that behavior. *If someone could really do this, could really present evidence of this* than that would change the system because *that's how America works. Suits have changed the system throughout history, including who could go to school and where*.

When I asked Mr. Wallace about support at the building level about his concerns, he expressed his disappointment *in the rigor at BHS. They just don't seem to care. I don't know how anyone else is teaching world history in this department. No one knows how I'm teaching world history. If they cared, they would be in here, asking what I'm doing, asking me what historical thinking skills are. I don't get any of those questions. The department head, she hasn't been in here, not even once. No one supervises. I could be teaching voodoo for all they know*.

Indeed, the four months I was at BHS I never saw the department head or one of the four administrators in Mr. Wallace's room, even though it was his first year at BHS.

Although they seemed to be a stated expectation, there were no department meetings and no professional learning communities and there didn't seem to be any follow-up to make sure either was happening. And although I knew there were several faculty serving as liaisons between the school and the Latinx community, there was no evident communication between them and Mr. Wallace.

And yet, despite all of these challenges, the words and visions for the future that Alberto, Atalaya, Joaquin, Kesara, Lorenzo, Ramón, and Sebastian brought with them into these spaces were not empty. Their voices brought strength, they brought knowledge, and they brought stories of potential already met and potential just waiting to be met. *I want to be an automotive engineer. I would like to learn about the Chinese. It's like a cool culture. I'm going to join the Navy and after that, when I finish, I want to study agriculture. I'm part of the Health Sciences Academy. I'll probably be a nurse or a doctor. I like the pediatrics because working with kids is fun. I wanna be a technician, be able to fix computers and systems. I got in digital media and it's all about working with pictures and stuff like that and I started taking pictures and editing them. I want to be a photographer. I want to go to México. I'll know the language they speak there and I can come back and still know the language. I can keep our culture alive.*

CHAPTER IV

NARRATIVES-IN-INTERACTION: CONSTRUCTING THROUGH STORY

In third grade, I attended a typical parent-teacher conference with both of my parents. I don't remember all of the details but I'm sure my dad, who had made a habit of it, half-joked, half-demanded that the teacher give us more homework while my mom attempted to shush him. There was probably talk about my academic performance (which was solid) and my social skills (which were not). However, even all these years later, I still vividly recall my teacher turning to me as she spoke to my parents and saying, "I think she likes to write. Don't you, Tierney?"

I didn't, actually. Not that I hated it, I just didn't think about it. I loved reading. But writing wasn't a part of what I thought about myself as doing and who I thought of myself as being. I don't know if it was that something about the statement rang true to me, that the *idea* of liking writing sounded intriguing, or that I was a people-pleaser (which was probably most likely), but from that point on I told stories about myself as someone who liked to write until, in some undefined moment, that act became truth. I have wondered to what degree that comment from my third-grade teacher became the tiniest of seeds for the life in writing I'm choosing now.

In terms of the defining moments of my life, though, this story seems trivial at best and is actually rather insubstantial. In the unlikely event that anyone were ever to

write my autobiography, it certainly wouldn't include any mention of that parent-teacher conference or the stories I crafted later that year, which, I learned from a report card I found buried in boxes of paperwork from my childhood, the same teacher criticized as being too unimaginative anyway. But the point of this story is not that it has to be about some transformative life experience (the teacher was not magically clairvoyant and I'm not now a bestselling author) in order for it to be part of my narrative but that it is, nevertheless, a part of my becoming—a moment, an interaction if you will, that is now an inextricable piece of my self-in-construction.

The narrative as “big story” (e.g., autobiography, story of a landmark event) has found space as a major methodology over the last half century, particularly as it pertains to the social sciences. These big stories are undergirded with the assumption that they can be leveraged to make sense of the self through a unitary frame of time, space, and personhood (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). In these stories, how the teller is represented in the narration is considered unmediated and transparent, providing empirical insight into how the teller makes sense of the self and his/her identity.

However, Bamberg & Georgakopoulou (2008) argue that these assumptions cannot necessarily be held true for less formal, more conversational narratives. Instead, the “social actions/functions” of these narratives in the “everyday, mundane situations” of people's lives is to “create (and perpetuate) a sense of who they are” (pp. 378–379). These stories, what Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) term “small stories” are still very much on the fringes of what might be considered credible qualitative research but their power lies in the positioning of narrative, not as a tool for reflecting back on the

extraordinary nature of one's personal experiences that exist somewhere in the past, but on the constructive nature of creating characters—oneself and others—and using these creations in the act of positioning. Big stories are told with the purpose of representing; small stories are created for the purpose of constructing (Bamberg, 2013).

In framing the words of Mr. Wallace and the seven Latinx students in the study, I draw on Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's (2008) definition of small stories as:

an umbrella term that captures a gamut of underrepresented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, and shared (known) events, but it also captures allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell . . . They can be about small incidents that may (or may not) have actually happened, mentioned to back up or elaborate on an argumentative point occurring in an ongoing conversation. Small stories can even be about—colloquially speaking— 'nothing'; as such they indirectly reflect something about the interactional engagement between the interactants, while for outsiders, the interaction is literally 'about nothing'. (pp. 381–382)

Situated as a kind of narrative-in-interaction, these small stories are surfaced in informal and everyday conversations. In contrast to big stories, where representations are composed through frameworks that consider identity as hardened and relatively stable, narratives-in-interaction situate “who one is” as being in a constant state of becoming that entails a practicing and testing at both the “level of the talked-about and at the level of tellership in the here-and-now of a storytelling situation” (Bamberg, 2013, para. 22). In addition, three attributes of narratives-in-interaction are useful in considering how we, as listeners and tellers, construct meaning from small stories.

First, while narratives-in-interaction can seem fragmented, nonsensical, or even, as discussed earlier, quite inconsequential, continuous, everyday engagement with “who

one is” through narrative storytelling can create a sense of continuity, stability, and cohesion, in the form of *habitus*, despite the inevitability of change. Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of habitus, here, captures the notion that behavior and thinking are guided by socialized norms and tendencies and that these behaviors and ways of thinking are both enduring *and* changeable across contexts and time. Thus, whatever play occurs in in-the-moment storytelling and whatever contradictions and inconsistencies arise from that play, there is an *assemblage* that begins to define a certain state of becoming, a much larger storyline telling of “who one is” in construction.

This attribute of narratives-in-interaction is held true in both Mr. Wallace’s narratives and the narratives his students tell. Despite inconsistencies across the small stories they tell, there is an assemblage that begins to define this becoming, subjectively-speaking. But, perhaps more importantly, is the way in which Mr. Wallace’s narratives, the student narratives, and my own, taken together, begin to form an assemblage that helps us, as the listeners of these small stories, begin to define the process of becoming that is shaping teaching, learning, and interaction across the spaces of this particular class. Using this framework, the contradictions within and across stories, including the differences between the narratives of Mr. Wallace and the narratives of his students, not only begin to make sense because they represent different points-of-view, but because we can consider the “who we are” habitus of the class as composed of a diverse assemblage of smaller stories, told in play by each of the characters (i.e., members) of the class.

These narratives-in-interaction, however, are not told, as Chapter 2 establishes, in isolation from the larger discourses at play in economic, social, and political contexts.

Whether or not the teller is consciously aware of the ways in which their small stories accept, resist, or reject these discourses, there is, albeit in more implicit and indirect forms than in big stories, referencing and positioning toward larger, more cultural and global discourses by which the self is already positioned beyond the here-and-now of the storytelling moment. This embedded referencing of a more global positioning is useful, first, because it makes known the centripetal forces acting upon the spaces in which the narratives-in-action are told and, second, because the act of constructing those references provides insight into the way that the storyteller wants to be understood (Bamberg, 2013). That is, narratives-in-interaction ground our understanding of the teller's sense of self.

In this sense, the intersectional identities of Mr. Wallace and his students are particularly relevant for understanding the economic, social, and political discourses that are, consciously or not, referenced in the small stories they told. For the students, being male or female, being Latinx, being an adolescent are all points of situatedness around which referential worlds (and the act of becoming within them) were constructed in class. For Alberto, this included his family's well-established history in automotive mechanics and his own perspective of schooled learning as impractical and lacking any meaningful functionality. For Ramón, this meant a cultural clash in family expectations that his day-to-day living parallel his parents' experiences. And for Kesara, it meant having to look, act, and feel like a good student across home and school spaces. Mr. Wallace's intersectional identities, on the other hand, included being White and male, being middle-class, being Christian. For him, this meant having lived in spaces in which his ways of being had mostly (if not always) been privileged. But for all participants it is important

to understand that, while their beliefs and their actions and decisions are their own, they are all also shaped by these larger, often implicit discourses at play, particularly in schooled spaces but also across home, community, and national contexts. That is, neither Mr. Wallace nor his students are free from being positioned by others, either within interactions in lived spaces or in their own narratives-in-construction.

However, by emphasizing small stories in the telling and hearing of “who one is,” the agentic actions people take to position themselves become more visible. This final attribute of narratives-in-interaction assume an “action orientation of the participants in small story events that forms the basic point of departure for this functionalist-informed approach to narration and, to a lesser degree, what is represented or reflected upon in the stories told” (Bamberg, 2013, para. 23). Although more global discourses and positionings are certainly evident in these small stories, it is the moment-to-moment, everyday actions, those executed in practice and in play around who one is in a particular space that illustrate the agentiveness of the teller. Big stories tend to emphasize the positioned or, in the other extreme, landmark moments in which a choice, or series of choices, change the historical trajectory. However, small stories highlight the ordinary (re)positioning we do in and across spaces—a kind of jostling we do to shift, fragment, and blend assemblages. These small stories situate the teller as more than simply a receiver of uncontrollable events or situations but as an active force pressing out against the centripetal forces placed on them.

It would be easy to think of Atalaya, Alberto, Joaquin, Lorenzo, Kesara, Ramón, and Sebastian as only subjects of action. However, their agentiveness is evident in the

small stories they tell—in Joaquin’s silence when Mr. Wallace demanded he move seats, in Ramón’s decision to put his head down when he didn’t understand his work, and in Kesara’s calculated wait to complete a quiz until Mr. Wallace explained the hard questions so that she got a good grade. These small stories, and not their big life stories, are essential to understanding how they construct a sense of who they are, both as individuals and as a collective. More subtly, these small stories, and the agentiveness therein, tell of the ways in which each actor in the class shapes patterns of teaching, learning, and interaction, albeit in ways that demonstrate the varying levels of legitimized power (and privilege) possessed by the tellers. Nevertheless, it is the notion of *being in construction* rather than *being represented* that lends small stories their significance in qualitative research—that there is nothing final about the answer to “who one is” and that there is, therefore, always the promise of change.

It is thus important in the analysis of small stories that these constructions of “who one is” are conceived of as being dialogical and relational, that analysis not be centrally concerned with what might be considered inconsistencies, ambiguities, or contradictions (Bamberg, 2013) but that the rising tensions emerging from these points be leveraged in meaning-making of the narratives-in-interaction told by each participant and the class as a collective. With these considerations in place, Bamberg (2003, 2004a, 2004b), in collaboration with Georgakopoulou (2008), developed *positioning analysis* as an approach to analyzing narratives-in-interaction. Drawing on Davies and Harré’s (1990) conceptualization of *positioning* as “the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly

produced story-lines” (p. 48), positioning analysis “operates at three levels, which move progressively from the localized context of the talk to broader socio-cultural levels of discourse, to analyze the identity claims made by participants in conversation” (Watson, 2012, p. 468). For the purpose of this project, I employed an adapted positioning analysis, which makes no claims about participants’ identity but instead explores their changing and enduring conceptualizations of personhood. In addition, this analysis framework functions from the perspective that the interactional and dialogical nature of positioning occurs through utterances, as defined by Bakhtin (1981). That is, any utterance, spoken or unspoken, positions speakers in various ways and these ways are particular to the dialogic context in which the utterance is employed and must, therefore, depend upon the utterances (and positioning) of other speakers.

In positioning analysis, Level 1 addresses the question “What is the story about?” To answer this question, I utilized an inductive, recursive cycle of coding—first, within individual narratives and then across narratives. These codes were then collapsed into themes and identified across narratives. Coding and thematic analysis were conducted using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. Four major themes were identified: types of critical incidents, sources of information, strategies, and measures of success. *Types of critical incidents* classify the kinds of critical incidents that students recorded and shared during interviews based on their central focus, which included the types of tasks they were being asked to do in class; their feelings about situations and interactions in class; and the difficulty of the task assigned to them.

Sources of information are defined as specific resources participants considered credible, useful, and efficient. As major sources of information, Mr. Wallace and the texts provided for assignments (i.e., documents, the textbook, and guided reading activities) were mentioned nearly twice as often as the other highest-occurring codes in this theme. *Strategies* are characterized by the specific actions, or patterns of behavior, students talked about adopting to accomplish (or avoid) learning tasks in the class. To be considered a strategy for a particular participant, that participant had to mention use of the strategy across at least three different critical incident interviews. The most frequently coded strategies included relying on telling, disengaging, using what is known, focusing attention on learning tasks, and re-reading texts.

And finally, *measures of success* define the orientations participants took toward learning, including what they considered to count as learning and what they thought were valid ways of demonstrating and evaluating learning. Measures of success most mentioned by participants included increased understanding or knowledge of content and grades. These four themes captured the topics of the collective narratives of the class, answering the question “What is the story about?”

Using the positioning analysis framework, Level 2 analysis answers the question “Why here and why now?” During this phase, three analysis activities were conducted concurrently: (a) the relationship among the four themes were defined using visual mapping; (b) cases were built at nodes classified by theme; and (c) cases were built at nodes classified by participant. NVivo was then utilized to conduct coding and matrix queries to gather information about what participants said around each theme and to

compare participants' narratives-in-interaction according to theme based on such characteristics as cultural affiliation, gender, and academic performance. Framework matrices were produced to summarize these intersections of case and theme. Four themes emerged answering the question "Why here and why now?" to include student perceptions of instruction; student selection of tools for mediating learning (i.e., sources of information, strategies, and measures of success); teacher legitimization of those tools; and agentic moves to accept, resist, or reject positioning by others. These themes hold implications for how both students and teacher positioned themselves and one another and for the ways in which learning and the role of the teacher were being constructed.

Finally, Level 3 of positioning analysis answers the question "Who am I vis-à-vis what society says I should be?" This level of analysis, in particular, moves to transcend local context and identify the ways in which master narratives are at play in acts of positioning oneself and others (Bamberg, 2004b). I addressed Level 3 analysis by repeating Level 1 and 2 processes with Mr. Wallace's narratives-in-interaction and then conducting a comparison of framework matrices for students and teacher. This analysis included a second round of inductive, recursive coding for enduring and changing conceptualizations of personhood-under-construction in terms of both master narratives and participants' agentic sense of self. Aspects of personhood that emerged from the data can be captured by the statement *Latinx Youth's Literacy Learning (In) World History*, wherein each word can be defined by certain patterns of discourse as told by teacher and students while linking their narratives-in-interaction with wider sociocultural, political, and economic discourses.

While conducting data analysis, and in terms of data representation, parallel stories were constructed to illustrate the themes that emerged in answer to the three guiding questions of positioning analysis. These stories are framed first by a description of class instruction from the student perspective. The remaining sections of this chapter present these parallel stories and then concludes with an explication of the relationships among themes that surface across stories. As in previous chapters, the practice of centralizing participants' voices by representing their exact words in italics continues.

Convergences and Divergences in Lived Experiences through Parallel Storytelling

The narrative telling in Chapter 3 begins with Mr. Wallace's understanding of teaching and learning and how he thinks about implementing this philosophy in practice. Inclusion of this particular part of the narrative is essential for understanding the rising tensions and conflicts in the stories that students share about their lived experiences in his class. However, it is also important here, in constructing an understanding of the convergences and divergences of these lived experiences through parallel stories, that we examine the ways in which the seven *students* perceived instruction, whether in ways different from or similar to Mr. Wallace. These students' perceptions of instruction are key to realizing the class spaces each experienced as accessible (or equally inaccessible) to them for learning. There were six major attributes of Mr. Wallace's instruction that were indicated across critical incident interviews.

In terms of overarching instructional objectives, students overwhelmingly understood the class to be about learning world history content. For them, it was about *the stuff, like, let's just say, the World War I or something like that. He wants us to go*

away knowing what happened in World War I and who was involved and all that stuff. Students talked about this objective as learning that was built over time. That is, they perceived that their learning about world history in this class built upon and extended what they'd learned from previous classes in history because Mr. Wallace taught *different things, new things that we haven't learned or heard of so far.* Some of this understanding around content learning was centered on the ability to demonstrate one's knowledge by *knowing how to find your answer. I think he's trying to just prepare us for the test sometimes 'cuz he gives us 10 questions and he's like "If you can get 10 questions right on the test, then you're good for the end-of-course exam."*

There were, however, several students who perceived additional overarching objectives. Ramón and Atalaya understood some of those objectives to include teaching character. Ramón, whose critical incidents largely reflected upon class behavior, perceived *the way Mr. Wallace talks to people when they don't follow the rules* as central to his goals for teaching. Similarly, Atalaya explicitly stated that she thought Mr. Wallace's learning objectives included teaching them *to be responsible (because he always wants things on time) and to be respectful (because he wants your respect for him to respect us).*

On the other hand, Sebastian and Kesara understood there to be something more to Mr. Wallace's objectives, although they were still grappling with exactly what that was. Sebastian's smaller-scale perception of overarching objectives included *picking out evidence and the things on the walls*, which were, in this case, the historical thinking skills that Mr. Wallace wanted students to employ when working like a historian.

Although Sebastian understood those posters on the wall to be important in Mr. Wallace's framing of learning in the class, he wasn't able to explicitly name the connection between the tasks assigned in class and the way Mr. Wallace talked about learning history. Kesara was able to identify the objective on a broader scale, although mostly because she recognized that Mr. Wallace assigned importance to it, but also struggled with explicitly naming it. Instead, it was often phrased as *Mr. Wallace is just trying to test our-, I forgot the word that he said, but I'm bad at that topic*. I frequently supplied her with the word *skills* to move our conversation forward.

As far as perceptions about daily lesson objectives, students said little. When they did reference these smaller scale objectives, it was usually when they didn't understand the purpose of doing a particular assignment. *What we had to do was pretty weird so I just kind of glanced at it and I thought, "What is this?" Or I didn't like taking notes because I'm not used to taking notes in this class because we haven't taken them all semester*. In these instances, students seemed to perceive little connection between the tasks they were being asked to do and the purpose of the lesson or unit.

A second attribute of Mr. Wallace's instruction that was surfaced across student narratives was his organization of instruction. In large part, students perceived a lack of logic and consistency in Mr. Wallace's instructional planning *because we had documents and work that we could refer back to help us on the essay but other times he wouldn't give us work to refer back to. And that made the essay a little harder to do because he would like us to do the evidence and all that and, like, without the work, it was kind of hard to find evidence*. Additionally, students often perceived class as a list of tasks to

complete, rather than organized learning activities specifically chosen to develop standards or skills, *because we didn't learn anything about it. It was kind of, like, thrown at us. It's like, "Here's this!" You know, "Take it now!"* Specifically, this particular perception often applied to essays, tests, and quizzes, which were *not really things that we went over but things we still had to, like, think about . . . I don't really know how to explain it.*

Specific teaching techniques were also attributes of Mr. Wallace's instruction that students perceived as supporting (or not supporting) their learning in class. These techniques included giving *examples, telling stories, just talking about how it happened and stuff, asking questions,* and providing *rubrics* for writing essays. Opinions about how well they liked these techniques and how effective they were in supporting learning varied, however, even within students' narratives-in-interaction. Kesara, for example, appreciated when Mr. Wallace would *tell us more about his stories in the army, since he was in the army or something* but also shared that *Mr. Wallace loses me a lot when he just won't stop talking and it's really boring.* In many cases, it was the task rather than any kind of teaching strategy that students noticed and responded to in discussions around critical incidents.

Evaluation feedback was the attribute of instruction least mentioned by students. However, in terms of the instructional cycle, as well as Mr. Wallace's emphasis on grading and providing feedback as being one of, if not *the*, most important part of teaching, I felt it important to explore it here from the student perspective. Unanimously, across critical incident interviews, students expressed no understanding of why they

received certain grades. In fact, they didn't perceive that they received feedback from Mr. Wallace other than a rubric or test score. For some students, this limited feedback made them feel *like I never learn anything 'cuz, like, I don't know where my mistake was.* In several cases, they didn't even understand the purpose of the score *because I made a 60% on that quiz and he said don't worry about it because . . . I don't know why he did that. To be honest, I don't know.*

As a fifth attribute of instruction perceived by students in Mr. Wallace's class, management was described as taking both a laissez-faire approach, as well as one that was a little more strict and hands-on, metaphorically speaking. There were moments in which students expressed that *as long as we're doing what we're supposing to be doing, he doesn't care* what else we do. This was often said in reference to students working in unauthorized groups, using phones, or playing games on the Chromebooks. There were, however, other moments in which these activities were not perceived as being authorized in the classroom and Mr. Wallace was seen as managing their behavior and learning capacity by taking away phones and computers, among various other personal and public use items. Some of the students also perceived moments of conflict over unauthorized activities to frequently be intensified by teacher or student response, like *whenever the teacher's talking, people are talking or if they respond back to him . . . like, let's just be quiet, just don't say anything back.* Similarly, *when the teacher gets mad, he has to scream. It sucks. I can't work when the teacher screams and stuff.*

The sixth and final theme describing instruction that surfaced across critical incident interviews, though not necessarily focused on a single attribute, were the ways in

which students envisioned potential for instruction around the practices that already existed in the class. There were three major ways students imagined changing class instruction, the first focused on development of academic language. While many students talked about the vocabulary they didn't understand, several students envisioned potentially helpful changes in instruction to include *giving me the proper words that I need to use that are related to the story or that has to do with the storyline*, particularly when it came to completing written work, like essays. These types of changes also included *re-wording everything* because some students found the language used by Mr. Wallace and academic materials difficult to access. The second way students indicated they would change aspects of instruction was by changing the nature of day-to-day tasks, particularly to include those that were more visual or hands-on, so that *packets and quizzes were not all we did every day. It gets boring*. Instead, students mentioned including *projects and stuff, watching more videos*, and creating *slides* that students could use to *go up in front and show about the topic we're learning about*. And, finally, the last way students envisioned change in the class centered on increasing the interactional aspects of class instructional activities. Many of their suggestions included activities to increase peer-to-peer engagement, like incorporating *more group work* and using interactive, competitive games such as *Quizlet* or *Kahoot!* However, many of their suggestions also targeted teacher-to-student engagement, such as by incorporating more discussions in which the teacher and students could *ask questions*.

These six categories describing students' perceptions of Mr. Wallace's instruction serve as an essential frame for understanding students' decision-making in learning

spaces, allowing us to explore the ways in which storylines converge and diverge to answer analysis questions at Levels 1 and 2. The following three sets of parallel stories, intentionally selected to highlight these convergences and divergences, develop our understanding of the ways in which students selected tools for mediating learning, how the teacher did or did not legitimize those tools, and the agentive moves students employed to accept, resist, or reject positioning by others. Each set of parallel stories concludes with an examination of the ways in which our developing understanding of these themes holds implications for the ways in which conceptualizations of learning and the role of the teacher were being constructed across learning spaces.

A Matter of Talk: Atalaya and Kesara

On first impression, Atalaya and Kesara appeared very different. Kesara was outgoing and outspoken. From my first day in the classroom, I got nearly daily updates on how her *sulfége*¹⁶ practice was going, whether or not she had heard about her audition results for *Les Misérables*, and a countdown of the remaining number of community service hours she had left because she had waited until the last minute to do her volunteer work. If she wasn't talking to me, she was talking to anyone who happened to be around her. She was friendly with everyone. And not particularly afraid to say what she thought, even if it meant telling Mr. Wallace, in the middle of a lecture, that she was bored. Atalaya, on the other hand, while still friendly and open to conversation, rarely instigated any interaction with me, Mr. Wallace, or her peers. She was soft-spoken but

¹⁶ A system of a set of syllables corresponding to a pattern of tones/semitones in vocal music. Particularly used for ear training.

always smiling. While all I had to do was let Kesara talk, my work with Atalaya sharpened my own conversational acuity.

However, in terms of how both students functioned in class on a day-to-day basis, there was one particular essential similarity—Kesara and Atalaya relied on forms of telling as a strategy for completing learning tasks. That is, given the attributes of instruction in Mr. Wallace’s class and the students’ perception of those attributes, both youth valued having the right answer and ensured they had the information they needed by relying on talk from Mr. Wallace and their peers. True to personality, Kesara’s reliance on telling was much more actively sought than Atalaya’s: *I’ll ask him questions and he’ll answer them for me. Well, he gives me hints, but, like, I guess he shows me the paragraph and tells me about it. Like, he gives me a big explanation on it. It makes me feel more comfortable because he’s giving me the answer and it’s making me understand more about it.* Kesara prioritized telling coming from Wallace over her peers until *I don’t want him to talk a lot* and then *I’ll just say* to Victoria, *“Hey, let’s work together on this question!”* But in both instances, Kesara felt more confident when answers were given to her by others *because half the time, I probably get it wrong or something.*

Atalaya, too, relied on Mr. Wallace to tell answers but, unlike Kesara, Atalaya struggled making sense of what Mr. Wallace said because of *the words he uses*. Instead, she relied on her peers *because everybody explains everything differently, like, where I understand it better.* Atalaya’s quietness, as well as her perception that Mr. Wallace required independent work, meant that she didn’t actively seek these explanations from anyone in class. She depended on Mr. Wallace incorporating instructional activities, like

IRE or public scoring of student work, when *people might share their answers and that might help me to understand it more*. Because these instructional activities were less frequently used in Mr. Wallace's class than lecture or independent work, Atalaya's ability to use the strategy was limited and, because she had no opportunity to ask clarifying questions in these spaces, her employment of the strategy was typically less effective.

However, although both Kesara and Atalaya relied on telling as a fundamental strategy for completing instructional tasks, Mr. Wallace situated Kesara's employment of the strategy differently than Atalaya's. Overall, Mr. Wallace positioned Kesara as *a GOOD student. She's always very attentive and she has a lot of questions. She's inquisitive. And rarely do you have to tell her to do something twice. She's usually on top of it. She's got a B. Her grades, I think, are good because she does study, she does her work*. For Mr. Wallace, whose Student Perception Profile indicated that he most valued student behavior and academic history in forming perceptions of students, Kesara met many of his expectations about what students should look like, sound like, and be like in the classroom.

And so Mr. Wallace situated Kesara's reliance on telling in two distinct ways, as stemming from her current developmental stage and a lack of confidence in herself. In terms of her seeking his help, Mr. Wallace talked about how he *noticed how she still thinks on a concrete level. Like, she seems to have a very difficult time with the abstract. I think it's developmental; I think she's just kind of developmentally a little weaker. But I think she'll get strong*. And when Kesara sought out peers for support in completing assignments, Mr. Wallace shared that *she has confidence, but I think her confidence*

wanes during testing and when she's alone. But in group activities or any time that she's working with someone else, she seems to do really well. But when she's alone and it's time for her to take an exam, I did notice in some of her writing assignments that she was kind of way off at times. But in groups, when she was with someone to hold her in check and give her ideas, she would play off those very well.

Mr. Wallace, on the other hand, positioned Atalaya as an overall average student, but one whose performance was inconsistent and unpredictable. Because her behavior was unproblematic, in schooled terms, and she rarely ever spoke up (or even responded if called upon in class), Atalaya was largely invisible to Mr. Wallace in learning spaces. *Atalaya is man! That's a good question. Unknown, I have to admit.* One-on-one interactions between Atalaya and Mr. Wallace were filled with tension because Mr. Wallace perceived Atalaya's quietness and confusion to be a kind of nonresponse that meant to Mr. Wallace that she either couldn't do the work or wouldn't talk to him. For example, *when I went back there, she had ALL of the assignment done except for that one and it was right in front of her! The answer was right there! And whenever I showed her, I said, "Now, read this sentence and what do you think?" She stared at it and she read it . . . "I don't understand." Then she got it after I kind of pointed it out. So, I don't know where she got the other answers from.* And in many interactions, Mr. Wallace was frustrated because Atalaya wouldn't say anything except respond to my questions.

Therefore, Mr. Wallace's framing of Atalaya's reliance on talk, particularly peer talk, was one of dependence. *I don't know how independent she is. Some of the activities we did were group and she was allowed to work with somebody, so I don't know if she*

just borrowed or, you know, got the idea from somebody else but when she was on her own, she kind of failed. In contrast to the way Mr. Wallace positioned Kesara as needing peer interaction to support her success, he positioned Atalaya as needing peer interaction to keep her from failing. Additionally, Kesara's reliance was situated as temporary, until *she gets strong*, while Atalaya's dependence was situated as more fixed. *She can't read for context. It would be like me trying to find answers about ballet technique. You know, because I don't know.*

Mr. Wallace's positioning of Atalaya and Kesara as learners in class spaces demonstrate the ways in which he was also positioning himself in relation to them. As the only two female students in the study, Mr. Wallace's positioning was indicative of gendered, patriarchal expectations for Atalaya and Kesara. That is, his perceptions of them included evaluations unrelated to learning but that were still reflected in his assessment of them as learners. His expectations of them depended, in part, on a male, fatherly perspective regarding appropriate personality traits. This was explicitly evident in his narrative of Kesara, whom *I'd be proud of if she was my daughter*. However, it was equally, if not more subtly, evident in Atalaya's narrative in that his perceptions of her unresponsiveness were influenced by the fact that *she's always got the SAME expression! Whether she did good or did poorly . . . you know, she's the same.*

Mr. Wallace's legitimization of Kesara's strategy of relying on telling to complete learning tasks contrasted with his de-legitimization of Atalaya's same strategy vis-à-vis his positioning of himself, Atalaya, and Kesara in class learning spaces. This act of legitimization both closed and opened particular spaces for learning for both students.

However, positioning analysis enables us to see the agentive actions both students took to (re)position themselves in specific ways in class spaces. Although Kesara accepted many of the ways in which Mr. Wallace positioned her, particularly in terms of her being a good student, she re-directed the focus of her actions by measuring success through her grades. She did not, however, frame this valuing of grades as being a way of meeting Mr. Wallace's expectations but, rather, as a way for her to meet her own expectations *because I need a good GPA to get into a good college*. By positioning herself as achievement-oriented, Kesara was able to recognize and leverage skills, like knowing *how to study*, that she had learned in out-of-class spaces as a way of learning in in-class spaces. *I make flashcards and write down notes and, like, re-read them all over again to sum up everything and then I look up information online on Google, and it gives me more information on that subject*. Although Kesara relied on Mr. Wallace to access information to complete learning tasks, her own positioning and agentive actions created, for her, a sense of distance between her and him. For example, in terms of her out-of-class skills, Kesara was adamant that she had *NOT gotten it from Mr. Wallace*.

Atalaya, on the other hand, rejected Mr. Wallace's positioning of her but sometimes did so in ways that were counter to any learning objectives. Students disengaged in Mr. Wallace's class in a variety of ways and for Atalaya that included *zoning out* and not referencing resources (like packets and the textbook) when taking quizzes because *I felt frustrated and I wanted to be done with it*. Despite the occasional act of disengagement, though, Atalaya's measure of success included the degree to which she understood course content. By the end of the semester, she shared *I understand Mr.*

Wallace, like, the whole time now. And in direct opposition to Mr. Wallace's positioning of her abilities as fixed, Atalaya (re)positioned herself in class spaces as being growth-oriented. That is, she evaluated her own success in the class based on the progress she had made toward understanding content and Mr. Wallace's lectures and then leveraged her growing knowledge to complete assigned tasks, like writing essays.

For Atalaya and Kesara, Mr. Wallace's positioning of students to determine whose strategies were legitimate in class learning spaces were central to the agentic actions the students took in order to attain their own goals for learning. Kesara (re)framed learning in this particular space as something she *HAD to do. I HAVE to get this done; it's a priority that I have to do*, which positioned Mr. Wallace as the expert through whom she was able to accomplish this goal. Atalaya (re)framed learning in Mr. Wallace's class as being *responsible* and *respectful*, which positioned Mr. Wallace as an authority figure in class spaces and not necessarily as someone capable, or even willing, to support her academically. For Atalaya and Kesara, the legitimization of strategy employment in formal learning spaces was the central point of tension around which positionality, agentic action, and conceptualizations of teaching and learning were constructed, shaping class learning spaces.

A Matter of Intention: Joaquin and Ramón

In a class where, at any given moment, an average of five or six students had their heads down on their desks and Mr. Wallace did the majority of the talking, I was quickly able to identify those students who were willing to participate through talk in the classroom. There was a core group of students who, when given the opportunity,

responded to Mr. Wallace's questions, asked the occasional question of their own, and even volunteered to have their work publicly scored. Seated in the back corner with a voice so quiet I struggled to hear him in interview, Joaquin could have easily been one of the silent students. However, he consistently participated through talk. Ramón, seated front-and-center, directly in Mr. Wallace's sight, was, in contrast, usually one of the silent (and disengaged) ones.

However, when it came to completing assigned tasks in class, both boys became equally engaged with their computers. Given the ways in which learning was structured in Mr. Wallace's class and their perception of instruction, Joaquin and Ramón had access to several major sources of information to support their work, including the textbook, guided reading activities, documents, and videos (which were used less frequently but were Ramón's favorite source of information). Joaquin and Ramón were, however, unique in the group of study participants in that they also drew upon sources of information that could be considered unauthorized because Mr. Wallace had never given explicit instruction or permission to use those resources for class assignments, including on guided reading activities, quizzes, and tests. Despite lacking this authorization, Joaquin and Ramón both accessed the Internet through their Chromebooks to conduct searches that helped them complete assigned tasks.

Ramón's use of Internet searches as a source of information was more targeted than Joaquin's and was motivated by the difficulties he experienced in navigating the textbook to complete assignments. He was *looking up answers or looking up articles, what they say, if they say something about it. Because in the textbook I would have to be*

looking through pages for it and having to read a bunch of stuff but when I look it up on the computer, I can just look it up and it mostly tells me, like, right at the beginning of the page. Without strategies to help him locate information in the textbook, Ramón leveraged his knowledge about online sources to access the same information but did so through a source that was unauthorized by Mr. Wallace.

Joaquin, on the other hand, also conducted online searches because *sometimes there's stuff that you wouldn't think would be on the assignment, but it is. That you read online.* Additionally, while Joaquin's Internet use was less intentional than Ramón's, it was also motivated by interest in history rather than simply assignment completion. *I guess since I like to read the news, I read the articles on an event. Like, from back then, around the early 1900s. I just look up a topic and then click on the first few sites. I don't really do research; like, sometimes I just look at new topics I've never heard of.*

Joaquin and Ramón's use of online resources via their Chromebooks continued until the end of April, when Ramón shared with me that *they were working on the packet and at first I got to use the computer but then Mr. Wallace was like, "You can't do that; put the computer away."* From that point forward, Ramón no longer used the Chromebook unless he was completing an assignment on Canvas, although Joaquin's Chromebook remained accessible to him. This legitimization of Joaquin's use of online sources of information and the de-legitimization of Ramón's use was indicative of the ways in which Mr. Wallace positioned both students across class spaces.

Joaquin was positioned by Mr. Wallace as *special. He seems to plug into history, and he's interested by it. You hear him, he has a lot to say.* Joaquin's active

participation in class through talk contributed to Mr. Wallace's perception of Joaquin as being special. At least in part, this specialness, this inherent interest in history, seemed to void the responsibility Mr. Wallace felt he had toward providing support in terms of some of the weaknesses that he perceived in Joaquin, like that *his skills in reading and writing aren't quite STRONG enough*. For Mr. Wallace, Joaquin's leveraging of talk meant that *when it comes to contributing to an Honors class, I think he'll get better even if when it comes to communicating it with writing, he kind of weakens a little bit or if he may never be that strong in testing*. Additionally, like with the use of the internet as a source of learning, Joaquin's actions were often situated positively because Mr. Wallace perceived him as engaged in class. For example, *a lot of kids migrate toward him. They want to cheat off him. I noticed that a lot back there in that corner. For other students, it's bad, but for him it's a compliment. It kind of shows that people see him as the guy with the answers*. So, although Mr. Wallace noticed Joaquin participating in what, for him, were not *true* and *honest* activities, Mr. Wallace's positioning of Joaquin meant that he generally assumed good intent behind Joaquin's actions.

Ramón, on the other hand, did not participate in talk and this was reflected in Mr. Wallace's perceptions of him. *He won't talk to me. Ramón won't say a word. Like Atalaya, very similar. I'll say, "Do you understand everything you read?" It's either "yes" or "no." It's never, "Yeah, but . . ."* Because Mr. Wallace perceived him as *non-responsive to almost everything*, he positioned Ramón as *in rebellion*. *He wasn't doing anything. He didn't want to do it. He'd just, "I'm not doing it." He wouldn't say it verbally, but he would say it with his body language*. This positioning also situated many

of Ramón's actions, like using online resources, as suspect. *His test scores improved to where now his testing is probably in the top third. Now, is it honest, is it true and all that? There's [sic] still little things in his testing that I do online that I'm not sure how he's looking up the answers.* So, in Ramón's case, what Mr. Wallace perceived as disengagement because of his refusal to take up talk meant that Ramón, unlike Joaquin, didn't have *the answers*.

Mr. Wallace's positioning of Joaquin and Ramón influenced his decision-making about what instructional spaces would be accessible to each student and in what *ways* those spaces would be accessible. In turn, this decision-making about access vis-à-vis legitimization actively constructed his own positioning in relation to Joaquin and Ramón. For both students, his decision-making was employed from his own positioning of himself as a benevolent supporter. This savior-like approach to his role of teacher was particularly evident in his narrative about Joaquin. About mid-semester Mr. Wallace expressed his desire to *be a kind of facilitator for Joaquin and help him. He wants to go to Honors. I told him I'm NOT going to recommend him because he doesn't demonstrate some of the characteristics that I can justify for the teachers but that I would support him if he waived my recommendation.* But, by the end of the semester, during my final interview with him, Mr. Wallace had reframed the story slightly. *As a matter of fact, I kind of led him to Honors. I don't know if you know that or not. It may be questioned by other teachers whenever they look at his writing. They may not understand why I would do that, but I don't care. Because I think Joaquin is more than he seems when it comes to history.* However, this reframing of the narrative did not reflect actual action in that

Joaquin was still required to waive Mr. Wallace's recommendation to enroll in Honors the following school year.

With Joaquin, Mr. Wallace's role of benevolent supporter was constructed in opposition to the lack of support given by the school system and other teachers. With Ramón, the role of benevolent supporter was constructed in opposition to the deleterious effects potentially caused by family and community. Mr. Wallace attributed Ramón's perceived refusal to engage in class to home culture. *It's very possible that when he brings home good grades, he might get picked on by his parents. Or, you never know, brothers and sisters! So life is easier if he comes home and he's normal with bad grades.* But at one point near the end of the semester, Mr. Wallace spoke with Ramón about his concerns and then shared with me that *I see evidence that he's making a real attempt. He strikes me as someone who's been kind of passed over. I'd love to have him for a year instead of a semester because I'm just now starting to have, you know, a little more success with him.*

On his part, Ramón adopted some agentive actions that rejected Mr. Wallace's positioning across class spaces, although, like Atalaya, these actions were not always consistent with his vision for learning, which included *being a better citizen, a better role model for people* and becoming *a photographer*. As was everything that Ramón did, his rejection of this positioning was quiet and subtle. When I asked him about how he felt when his Chromebook was taken away, Ramón just shrugged. *Oh, well. At least I got some work done.* However, without the Chromebook as a source of information and

unable or unwilling to go to Mr. Wallace for help, Ramón did disengage, feeding into Mr. Wallace's perception of him as disengaged.

However, Ramón (re)positioned his disengagement (typically manifesting as putting his head down on his desk) as one of confusion and struggle rather than, as Mr. Wallace attributed to him, one of disinterest and rebellion. *Some teachers would say that I work hard but some teachers think that I'm lazy. When I'm working lazy, it's because I either don't understand what I'm doing or I need help or something. When I put it down, it's when I don't know what to do. Or whenever I can't find the answer. I feel stressed.* By (re)positioning himself, in response to Mr. Wallace's positioning of him, Ramón emphasized the ways in which he measured his success through engagement. For Ramón, this engagement-orientation created space for him to indicate that he was struggling with material and needed help without having to take up talk as a mode of discourse because *sometimes I get nervous and I don't know what to say or I say something that's not the right answer.* Ramón understood that when his *head was up*, it meant the work *was easier* and that, even when he put his head down, *it feels like I should know what we have to do.*

Joaquin, on the other hand, largely accepted Mr. Wallace's positioning but, like Kesara, (re)positioned himself to slightly shift the narrative-in-construction. In response to Mr. Wallace's announcement that he wouldn't recommend Joaquin for Honors because he didn't have all the necessary skills to make what he considered a valid recommendation, Joaquin leveraged his measure of success as his perceived difficulty level of class material. One of the types of critical incidents that occurred most

frequently for Joaquin centered on his assessment of the difficulty of content or task and he attributed the ease of assignments to his *liking history enough so it was easier for me, faster*. When asked about why he thought the work was easier for him, Joaquin responded with *since Mr. Wallace wants me in Honors, I have to prove I can do the work he wants us to*. While Mr. Wallace positioned Joaquin as unprepared for Honors, Joaquin (re)positioned it as proving to Mr. Wallace that he was ready, including by leveraging online research to expand his knowledge of history. This orientation towards content emphasized Joaquin's (re)positioning through what he perceived as scholarly efforts.

Like with Atalaya and Kesara, Mr. Wallace's positioning of Joaquin and Ramón determined what counted as legitimate for particular students across learning spaces. However, in this parallel story, the point of tension centered on legitimized sources of information rather than on strategy employment. Yet, students' uptake of agentic actions still pushed against the borders and boundaries established by Mr. Wallace and opened spaces for Joaquin and Ramón to shape their own learning. In contradiction to the ways that Mr. Wallace heavily defined learning in terms of grades and academic history, Joaquin (re)framed learning, particularly in history, as an activity that was interesting. *I liked it. It was easy because I like to learn about World War I and II*. This definition then positioned Mr. Wallace as one source of information, among others, whose value then was that he was *doing good teaching us*. Ramón (re)framed learning as *preparing us for the test* which positioned Mr. Wallace as an authority, a kind of gatekeeper, whose directives for both assignments and behavior determined who could achieve that goal. For Joaquin and Ramón, the legitimization of information sources in

formal learning spaces had implications for student and teacher positionality, agentic action, and conceptualizations of teaching and learning that expanded and constrained the potential for both students to learn across spaces in Mr. Wallace's class.

A Matter of Vision: Alberto, Lorenzo, and Sebastian

Students like Kesara and Joaquin drew attention with their physical and vocal presence in the classroom. However, in class Canvas spaces, it was Alberto, Lorenzo, and Sebastian who were most noticeable—Sebastian because his name always topped the grade list, Lorenzo because his name was nearly always at the bottom of that same list, and Alberto because his name was frequently completely absent. Observing them in physical class spaces did little to reveal the reasons for these differences. Sebastian and Alberto generally leveraged talk more frequently as a demonstration of engagement but all three students, with the occasional off-day for Alberto, could be seen diligently working throughout each class period. On a day-to-day basis, the three boys seemed to meet all basic requirements that would mark them as a “good” student by schooled standards—there were no behavioral issues, their heads were typically up, and they were on-task while completing assigned tasks. Unlike Atalaya and Kesara, who approached work with similar strategies, and Joaquin and Ramón, who drew upon similar sources of information, Alberto, Lorenzo, and Sebastian all measured success in terms of content knowledge and understanding, particularly in terms of their abilities to access that knowledge and make sense of it through the act of reading.

Despite the high scores he was receiving in the gradebook, Sebastian was much less confident about his ability to access historical knowledge because of his perceived

reading abilities, which were compounded by his dislike of history in general. *History, like social studies, and literacy, those are two subjects that I don't really like. I've always been not really able to read good. Like when other people read, they read a lot faster than me. But, me, I have to read and then process some of the words. I'm trying to work on my reading skills because last year I kind of did bad on my reading test.*

Sebastian also often became frustrated with assigned tasks *because after reading and doing the packet I had to read more for the quiz and I don't like to read.*

Mr. Wallace, however, positioned Sebastian as a strong history student and one who was particularly interested in history. Like with Kesara and Joaquin, Sebastian's level of participation in class through talk was perceived by Mr. Wallace to demonstrate *confidence and high self-esteem. Like whenever you're describing something, he's usually one of the first ones to get it. And earlier in the semester, when we were doing the timeline activity, he was the first one to go and he had it down.* In addition, Mr. Wallace noted that Sebastian *demonstrates a lot of characteristics of a high performing student.* This positioning of Sebastian included his assessment of Sebastian's reading skills based on the fact that *he consistently scores high on reading and writing as determined by quizzes, tests, and essays given after a document analysis task.* This assessment of Sebastian was consistent with Mr. Wallace's Student Perception Profile results indicating that he particularly valued grades as a measure for evaluating student abilities and Sebastian always scored high. So, when interactions happened that didn't fit Mr. Wallace's positioning of Sebastian, those moments were brushed aside as being unusual or atypical. *You won't believe what Sebastian wrote yesterday. "Islam spread,"*

and this is not gossip, “because of conquest and snakes . . . that’s what he said. And I’m like, that’s not Sebastian! He’s not like that at all. And now he’s started taking some shortcuts. But that’s not his skill. That’s just a teenager getting tired of it.

Because of his grades, Mr. Wallace did not notice or acknowledge the ways in which Sebastian’s struggle with literacy may have played a role in these “atypical” interactions. He thought that *Sebastian might be out of place* in a standard class. However, he was still unwilling to recommend Sebastian for Honors. Although in Joaquin’s case, this reticence to recommend was based on literacy skills, in Sebastian’s case it was based on grades. *His grades just weren’t quite high enough for me to say he’s DEFINITELY an honors student. But I did say that I would support him if he got a waiver and just waived my recommendation and him and his parents [sic] kind of go out on their own and go ahead and sign up for Honors classes and see how you like it.*

Like Sebastian, Lorenzo shared that he also had difficulty understanding content because of his perceived reading abilities. However, his understanding of the ways in which he was struggling was a little more nuanced than Sebastian’s in terms of defining ability by more than a test score. *Some stuff I didn’t understand. Like some words made it so some sentences didn’t make sense.* This challenge with academic language also applied to writing, where Lorenzo wished that Mr. Wallace would provide them with the *proper words that I need to use, words that are related to the story.* Lorenzo also felt that he struggled with comprehension because *sometimes when I read, I forget stuff.* In fact, many of Lorenzo’s critical incidents centered on the difficulty of assigned tasks in class

and this difficulty was connected to the reading demand. For example, *reading the documents was hard or the quiz was hard because the answers were hard to find.*

Unlike with the two Latinx students in his class who were not ninth graders, Mr. Wallace *did* know that Lorenzo had an IEP. Although none of the instructional modifications were for support in literacy, Mr. Wallace perceived Lorenzo as having *POOR skills. He made a 10 on his last exam.* This narrative was also built on Mr. Wallace's knowledge of Lorenzo's academic history. *Looking at his scores from past courses and things like that, he's always been really in like the fifth or tenth percentile.* Mr. Wallace attributed much of this performance to Lorenzo's *reading skills which are probably not where he needs to be to be able to thrive.*

And much like Atalaya and Ramón, Lorenzo's refusal to leverage talk to demonstrate engagement meant that Mr. Wallace positioned Lorenzo, not only as having low abilities, but as being disengaged. *He NEVER talks about it. Like, I've sat down with him and asked him, "Do you understand the questions?" "Well, some of them." And he just gives vague responses. And I said, "Well, look now, it's hard for me to help you if you don't give me specifics."* But, because Mr. Wallace positioned Lorenzo as being disengaged, interactions like these were not perceived by Mr. Wallace to be anything more than impartiality on Lorenzo's part. *He's disinterested. When somebody's disinterested, it's hard. They're not giving you their best shot.* This positioning of Lorenzo persisted despite recognition from Mr. Wallace that, even though Lorenzo was failing every assignment he did, *he's not shutting down. He's not giving up. He's responding to the questions.* In fact, when Lorenzo did improve his scores, Mr.

Wallace informed me that he didn't *think, to be quite honest*, that Lorenzo was *being totally honest with his answers. When he leaves here, is he getting somebody to help him at lunch? I don't know.*

Although Sebastian and Lorenzo talked about their struggles reading in spaces associated with Mr. Wallace's class, Alberto talked about struggling to access content information because *I don't read*. In terms of completing tasks in class, *if I'm gonna read, that's not gonna help me focus because I don't like reading at all*. The tone of his critical incidents were frequently directly related to the reading demand placed on him that class period. One particular day, when the reading demand was high and the interaction with Mr. Wallace and his peers was low, Alberto wrote *I felt helpless because I never know what I'm doing*. Unlike Sebastian and Lorenzo, however, Alberto never associated his reading ability with grades or assignment difficulty; instead, it was nearly always related to his willingness to engage in class and focus on content learning.

Over the course of the semester, Mr. Wallace positioned Alberto in two ways, often simultaneously. First, because of Alberto's willingness to participate in talk, Mr. Wallace positioned him as *a strong student as far as discussions go. He WILL do the work. His interest level is high. Like, you know, he sat there and worked the whole time*. For Mr. Wallace, equally important was his perception that Alberto was willing to leverage that talk to *communicate with me*.

At the same time, he perceived Alberto to have *some deficiencies in reading and writing, comprehension, things like that*. That is, Alberto was not a *strong reader or comprehender* [sic] because he *struggles with words so I think that's hurting him on his*

tests, his reading tests. That's why his scores are in the 20s, 30s, and 40s. He just can't READ something with confidence. As the semester progressed, this positioning of Alberto was weighted more heavily by Mr. Wallace in terms of who he perceived Alberto to be in learning spaces. *He made a 40 on his exam. I don't even think he had his documents. In the past, he would communicate with me. He would say thing like, "Mr. Wallace, I don't have my documents. What am I supposed to do?" Now he just seems to be so frustrated and just kind of quit [sic] when things don't go his way immediately.* The importance of grades to Mr. Wallace's positioning of students, in conjunction with what Mr. Wallace perceived as Alberto's decreasing willingness to communicate with him, marked a distinctive turn in his positioning of Alberto from that of participator to that of someone who was disengaged.

Mr. Wallace's use of grades to legitimize the work that Sebastian was doing and not the work that Lorenzo and Alberto were doing was, for this group, the point of tension around which positionality and conceptualizations of teaching and learning were being constructed. However, given that Sebastian, Lorenzo, and Alberto all placed value on content knowledge and understanding as their measure of success, the agentic actions each adopted in response to their positioning by Mr. Wallace worked to access information in ways that they perceived as learning, even if these actions weren't necessarily legitimized as measures of success in formal learning spaces.

For all three students, this resistance of legitimized measures of success became reflected in the narratives-in-construction that Mr. Wallace told. When Sebastian decided not to pursue waiving Mr. Wallace's recommendation to get into Honors, Mr. Wallace

was adamant that Sebastian was *one of the brightest Hispanic students I've taught. I would think that he probably needs to be at least in Honors. But he wasn't interested. I kind of feel like he needs some counseling. It's kind of a shame that he doesn't push to expand.* Lorenzo, whom Mr. Wallace knew was in special education, was positioned as being a cheater. But Mr. Wallace was *being pretty lenient with him. I talked to our EC teacher about stuff like that [cheating] and they've tried everything. These are students who don't want to be engaged and if you can show engagement, regardless of any of the characteristics [being a cheater], then it's a win for the student. It may not be a win for [state], it may not be a win for ethics, but it's a win for the student.* And for Alberto, who was becoming more disengaged in class, and with school in general, Mr. Wallace drew upon a parallel between Alberto and his own brother. *My older brother was a lot like Alberto. He struggled in the classroom. He eventually quit high school when he was 16. Alberto's got talent and he's got his likes and dislikes but they're not in school. My brother was a horse guy. He loved horses and hunting. And he hated school. Alberto is almost like that. There's something he would rather be doing, I think.* As with Ramón, Mr. Wallace attributed the tensions around learning that he experienced with Sebastian, Lorenzo, and Alberto to forces outside of his control. In Ramón's case, it was family and community values. For Sebastian, Lorenzo, and Alberto, it was something Mr. Wallace positioned as being internal to their characters.

However, because all three boys were challenged by the reading demand of the class texts and there was minimal collaborative work, Sebastian, Lorenzo, and Alberto concentrated much of their energy on gaining knowledge from listening to Mr. Wallace's

lectures and assignment explanations. For Sebastian, situating Mr. Wallace as a source of information was, at least in part, a rejection of the way that he had been positioned by Mr. Wallace. Listening to lectures and gaining more knowledge through that participation enabled Sebastian to seek knowledge beyond just that needed to earn a high score. He valued this understanding, in contrast to a score on a quiz or test, because it helped him *feel good about the topic, like I can probably explain it to someone else*. But at the same time, Sebastian challenged Mr. Wallace's lectures. *Instead of just, like, covering the surface, we should be going like a little more in depth with it*. This inquiry into teaching practices situated Mr. Wallace as being in equal control of the kinds (and quality) of learning occurring across class spaces. For Sebastian, this action was particularly significant in that it also challenged Mr. Wallace's refusal to recommend Sebastian for Honors when *this year, my other teachers, they put me in honors classes*.

Like Sebastian, Alberto's agentic actions also inquired into Mr. Wallace's teaching practices. Questions like *Do you copy your answers from the computer or do you do them?* were quite frequently asked by Alberto. However, unlike Alberto's inquiries, Alberto's questions weren't necessarily a challenge. Instead, they, like other questions he asked, stemmed from his orientation towards knowledge and understanding as his measure of success. He did very much want to know *what, in the medieval times of feudalism, would happen if one wealthy person tried to help a poor person*.

But during the course of the semester, as class structure shifted from mostly teacher lecture to nearly all independent work and Mr. Wallace became more and more unavailable as a source of information, Alberto struggled with meeting his goals for

learning in class. As tensions between the two increased (and were acknowledged by both Alberto and Mr. Wallace), the more Alberto's agentive actions became *I don't care anymore, I don't wanna pay attention*. The amount of time he spent in class with his head down increased as the number of assignments he turned in decreased. And then he began missing school. Over just the 34 days I was in the classroom, Alberto was absent a total of 14 days. This is not to say that what was happening with Alberto and school was entirely, or even partially, caused by what was occurring in Mr. Wallace's class. In fact, Mr. Wallace told me, during our last interview, that he had had a conversation with Alberto in which Alberto had shared that *he's just gonna fail and he's already thinking he's failed all of his other classes*. And I also knew that Alberto was dealing with complicated issues at home. However, it was also obvious that the tensions occurring between Mr. Wallace and Alberto played some role, however undefined, in Alberto's schooled experiences.

Lorenzo, because his personality was quiet and reserved in class spaces, did not inquire into Mr. Wallace's teaching practices in the ways that Sebastian and Alberto did. But, because he perceived himself as struggling with reading skills in a way that inhibited his ability to complete assignments, Lorenzo did situate Mr. Wallace as a major source of information. *He helped me understand more of the documents because, like, I didn't get it. But he explained it to us, what it was about*. Lorenzo leveraged this listening as an agentive action in rejection of Mr. Wallace's positioning of him. In particular, he (re)positioned himself as growth-oriented in relation to his use of knowledge and understanding as a measure of success that pushed back against Mr. Wallace's

positioning of him. For Lorenzo, this included finding spaces outside of school in which his in-school learning could be used. *The histories of the wars and stuff like that* are important to learn. *Like, sometimes people will be talking about when they dropped the bomb and stuff like that.* What we learned in class *helps me understand better.*

The narratives told by Alberto, Lorenzo, and Sebastian reveal the ways in which tension was evident in the construction of spaces that legitimized only certain measures of success while dismissing others. However, the students' agentic actions (re)situated their own reasons for learning within class spaces and challenged, if silently, the legitimized measures of grades and academic history leveraged by Mr. Wallace. These agentic actions also had implications for how Alberto, Lorenzo, and Sebastian positioned Mr. Wallace and what that meant for how they defined teaching and learning.

For Sebastian, who (re)framed learning as *going in depth*, and Lorenzo, who sought functionality in what he was learning for leverage outside class spaces, Mr. Wallace was positioned as an expert whose knowledge of content made an essential contribution to achieving learning goals. Alberto, on the other hand, who often *just found everything interesting* (re)framed learning as being engaging, particularly as demonstrated by question asking, thus positioning Mr. Wallace as a good teacher in that *I learn a lot from him.* In fact, for Alberto, it was the interaction between Mr. Wallace and himself that engaged him in the act of learning. When the number of those interactions were reduced, whether because Mr. Wallace was absent or because the focus was on independent work, Alberto was more likely to disengage from learning. *Mr. Wallace is not here so I can't learn because when he teaches it gets me focused but when he's not I*

lose interest on what I am doing. Mr. Wallace's legitimization (or lack thereof) of the aspirations Alberto, Lorenzo, and Sebastian had for learning in history therefore had implications for positionality, agentic actions, and conceptualizations of teaching and learning that influenced the willingness all three students had to engage in learning across spaces in Mr. Wallace's class.

An Explication of Themes

The parallel stories shared above illustrate the ways in which the learning spaces associated with Mr. Wallace's class, both formal and informal, are co-constitutive. That is, the actions, reactions, and discourse—the being—of both teacher and students across spaces shaped and (re)shaped those spaces with implications for teaching and learning. Mr. Wallace's vision for teaching world history and his implementation of instructional practices and activities do not objectively exist. Each of the seven Latinx students in this study perceived and *lived* that instruction in ways that were both similar and dissimilar. And this instruction, both as lived and as conceived, expanded and constricted what students perceived to be accessible to them as tools for mediating learning (i.e., sources of information, strategies, and measures of success). However, Mr. Wallace's power¹⁷ in class spaces enabled him to leverage his positioning of students in learning spaces to legitimize or de-legitimize these tools.

Although groups of students displayed similar tendencies in their selection of tools for mediating learning, some of those tools were legitimized for some students and

¹⁷The individual power wielded by Mr. Wallace in the classroom does not, however, ignore the systemic structures in place that have historically granted him this power and constructed normed spaces of action, interaction, and discourse.

not others based on Mr. Wallace's positioning of them. In response to this positioning, each of the students adopted particular agentic moves that accepted, resisted, or rejected that positioning and Mr. Wallace's legitimization or de-legitimization of their tools for mediating learning. These agentic moves functioned as a reclamation, at least in the class underlife, of student power and voice across learning spaces. And all of these interactions, moves, and discourses held implications for the kinds of conceptualizations students and teacher constructed about teaching and learning, as well as the ways in which they perceived themselves and others fulfilling particular roles for learning. In addition, this positioning of self and others, as well as constructions of teaching and learning, held much wider implications for developing conceptualizations of personhood.

Their first day in the classroom, Mr. Wallace and his students walked in already knowing and speaking discourses describing themselves and one another. Whether consciously or not (and often not), the wider sociocultural, economic, and political discourses discussed in Chapter 2 were already at play in their perceptions and interactions with one another. These ways of knowing how to be with one another—their conceptualizations of personhood—pressed in on the learning spaces of Mr. Wallace's class. They informed the instructional frames Mr. Wallace chose for world history, his positioning of himself and his students, and his moment-to-moment instructional decision-making. They framed the students' positioning of themselves and Mr. Wallace, their perceptions of class instruction, and the actions they leveraged in response to Mr. Wallace's positioning of them. And yet, in all spaces there is also potential for the smaller discourses of class interaction to press back out upon wider societal discourses, to

resist the ways in which systems have built and sustained the disenfranchisement of entire groups of people through language, through education. Or, as the case may be, to accept those discourses and continue participating in the reproduction of learning spaces that create inequitable and unjust opportunities for all students.

Across the learning spaces of Mr. Wallace's class, there were two distinct discourses evident—those which were used by Mr. Wallace and those which were used by the students. Placing these discourses in parallel emphasize the centripetal and centrifugal forces acting upon, shaping, and resisting developing conceptualizations of personhood under construction. These aspects of personhood can be captured by the statement *Latinx Youth's Literacy Learning (In) World History*.

Across modes of discourse, Mr. Wallace constructed being Latinx as being inferior. Although he seemed aware of some of the ways in which these discourses were at play historically (*the laziness, the idea of a siesta, the Americans kind of had a really poor image of who these people are*), his discourses about the Latinx students in his class reproduced many of the same conceptualizations of personhood. *There's a lot of kids, especially in this ethnicity [Latinx], just getting by [in school]*. These discourses had implications for Mr. Wallace's instructional decision-making, from refusing to recommend Joaquin and Sebastian for Honors despite the fact that they had top grades to excusing his responsibility for students like Ramón, Lorenzo, and Sebastian because of forces Mr. Wallace positioned as being outside of his control (i.e., family values and internal character). Perhaps most telling was his positioning of Sebastian as *being one of*

the brightest Hispanic students that I've taught despite decisions he made in terms of instruction and placement for Sebastian.

The students' discourses, in contrast, often centered their strengths and their (and their family's) aspirations and leveraged them for learning. Alberto talked about his skill with hands-on problem-solving. Joaquin was proud of his family's agricultural heritage, which was motivating him to be one of the first people from his family to go to college. Kesara, Sebastian, and Ramón talked about school and their career aspirations with parents who held high expectations for their children, both in terms of grades and in terms of what they should be learning. And Atalaya and Lorenzo simply never gave up, Lorenzo even explicitly naming his perseverance as his personal strength. Personal and familial capital were leveraged by the seven student participants to resist and push back on the borders and boundaries created for learning by Mr. Wallace's discourses about being Latinx.

Mr. Wallace's discourses also constructed conceptualizations of personhood focused on being a youth, positioning them as troublesome. This was a dominant discourse from a number of adults in the school setting as demonstrated by the counselor who lectured the class about having their heads down when Mr. Wallace was such a passionate teacher of history. These discourses influenced Mr. Wallace's validation of student work. Sebastian's *shortcuts* were *just* being a *teenager*. Ramón's and Lorenzo's correct answers were a product of *kids finding the answer somehow someway. I've called them on it. I just told them I don't accept it because they can't tell me how they got the answer. So I don't put it in the gradebook. I've asked them to come redo it and they*

haven't done that yet. So I'm not going to say they cheated, I've just made it clear to them I'm not gonna put those grades in the gradebook because they haven't demonstrated to me completely that they understand the material.

The students, on the other hand, used discourses that highlighted character, hard work, and resiliency in the telling of their narratives-in-construction. Alberto and Sebastian both shared stories about helping and caring for others. *So, I was like, why not do something that can help everybody because, like, what if that day they're not feeling love? I like to help other people or, like, if I see someone that is struggling, I would put them before me.* Joaquin was *always trying to get work in.* Lorenzo talked about being *smart and, like, intelligent.* At the same time, they, at least sometimes, told stories in which they recognized the work they still needed to do, times when they were distracted from learning by phones, friends, or computer games. Lorenzo, Alberto, and Joaquin all talked about how it was their responsibility, and not Mr. Wallace's, to make sure that they were engaged in class. In these ways, youth were positioned by the seven participants in the study as being equally capable of making good and bad choices as any other human being.

In terms of literacy learning, Mr. Wallace established conceptualizations of personhood that positioned Latinx students as less capable. *Whenever you're doing historical analysis you have to read between the lines. Now for our students on your list, that's tough. Because of the language barriers and the cultural barriers it's very tough to get the true meaning of something. What is this gardener saying when he calls the people of India ignorant? What does he really mean?* And Mr. Wallace's instructional

decision-making around this perceived struggle indicated that, in many cases, providing targeted literacy instruction was pointless. *[Name of Latinx student] is NEVER going to be able to do that. Not in English. He might could do it in Spanish. But in English, he's going to struggle with that.* This statement ignored that, for several Latinx students, English was their only home language and for many of the other Latinx students, English was their dominant language.

On the other hand, the students talked about the ways in which they were engaged in literacy. Ramón liked *scary books that have like a mystery problem and you have to get all the way to the end of the book where they cut you off and you have to go to the next book and you're like, "Here, I'll get you."* Kesara liked writing at home. Alberto and Joaquin, in particular, were already engaged in reading historical texts through online articles. At the same time, they recognized the ways in which their academic literacy needs were not being met in Mr. Wallace's class. Lorenzo and Atalaya wanted Mr. Wallace to *re-word* things and for him to help them figure out the *proper words that we need to use*. And students like Sebastian and Kesara wanted strategies for going back to the text and locating answers, gathering evidence to support their essay writing, and identifying key information in lectures. They acknowledged the role that literacy played in, specifically, the tasks assigned in Mr. Wallace's class and, more generally, the act of doing historical work.

Finally, Mr. Wallace constructed conceptualizations of personhood around learning in world history, which positioned Latinx students as being different. The discourses informing these conceptualizations drew upon his definition of world history

as being about *European history*. This was most evident in his construction of Alberto's narrative, in which he positioned him as not *tapping into world history in the same way that some of the students are*. *I think he might be blinded by his culture and language. And that may be the case for a lot of them! Nobody really knows what to do*. In particular, Mr. Wallace situated this inability to *tap into world history* as a function of some innate cultural knowledge. *Events like the Scientific Revolution, the Renaissance—the Hispanic culture has their own. And so that background is more what I think those students are aware of. I don't know when I learned about knights in shining armor and when I learned about medieval history and stuff but I've always known it. I've ALWAYS known it. I don't remember anybody every teaching me. I just KNEW*.

For their part, students' discourses around learning world history constructed conceptualizations of personhood differently from Mr. Wallace's discourses in two major ways. First, they talked about being interested in world history instruction that included diverse perspectives. Joaquin wanted to learn about *prehistoric stuff*. Atalaya *found some stuff on China and it sounded cool*. And, second, they both recognized the ways in which world history was not European and claimed American history as their own. Joaquin, talking about what else he wished they could learn in this class, lamented *from now on, it's gonna be, you know, just gonna be us, our government, our history for the next three years* of high school.

These five themes, captured by the statement *Latinx Youth's Literacy Learning (In) World History*, surface the convergences and divergences in the discourses the students and Mr. Wallace used to share their stories. However, as discussed earlier, these

parallel stories are also indicative of the centripetal and centrifugal forces at play in the conceptualizations of personhood under construction in the class. The two opposing forces are particularly emphasized in a spatial framework, enabling the act of making visible the invisible borders and boundaries defining teaching and learning for Latinx students in Mr. Wallace World History class.

CHAPTER V

SEEING CAPACIOUSLY IN THE DARK: MOVING INTO SPACES OF TENSION

In *The View from Afar*, Lévi-Strauss (1985) describes us as passengers on a train and these trains are our cultures. And each train moves on its own track, at its own speed, and in its own direction. Those trains traveling on tracks near us, in similar directions and at similar speeds, carry passengers who are more visible to us as we move along our own tracks. But for those trains that are traveling on paths that diverge from our own, that are at great distances, or that are going faster or slower than we are, we may only catch glimpses of the passengers inside. And so, Lévi-Strauss wrote:

[We] perceive only a vague, fleeting, barely identifiable image, usually just a momentary blur in our visual field, supplying no information about itself and merely irritating us because it interrupts our placid contemplation of the landscape which serves as the backdrop to our daydreaming. (p. 10)

Mr. Wallace caught only glimpses of Atalaya, Alberto, Joaquin, Lorenzo, Kesara, Ramón, and Sebastian.

The narratives told herein by the seven student participants are powerful stories about what happens in learning spaces when those with the role of teacher leverage authority in decision-making—in planning and implementing instruction, in assessing

student performance, and in participating in schooled activities designed to establish an academic trajectory for students—and yet catch, at most, only glimpses of students out the window of their own train. Stories about classroom life abound in day-to-day living, from the more politically-oriented narratives about the value of teacher assessment and accountability models to the socially-oriented narratives by teachers themselves about what it means to be an educator in today’s classroom. All of these narratives tell stories about students in schools but rarely are the students themselves the tellers, particularly when those students are students of color. And yet Hayden White (1987) reminds us of the power of the narrative as data, from which:

[it] might well be considered a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely, the problem of how to translate knowing into telling, the problem of fashioning human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are generally human rather than culture-specific. We may not be able fully to comprehend specific thought patterns of another culture, but we have relatively less difficulty understanding a story coming from another culture, however exotic that culture may appear to us. (p. 1)

What might have happened had Mr. Wallace heard the narratives of his students?

In what ways might that have influenced his understandings of their shared reality?

Perhaps (most likely) it wouldn’t have impacted his decision-making much at all. And what hope does that leave us for transforming schools in ways that have the potential to change and give space for a multiplicity of trajectories for students like the ones whose stories you heard here? To address this question, we must return to Lefebvre’s (1991) trialectic of Sociality, Historicity, and Spatiality and the potential of Spatiality for opening opportunities for change through social and political action. This consideration

must most especially be made through the conceptualization of moving spaces in relation to their expansion and constriction.

Westernized ideologies of individualism framed the First Spaces evident in Mr. Wallace's class, placing value upon the work of the individual, rather than the collective, and holding each individual accountable only for his/her own learning. Assignments were required to be completed individually and even if, on rare occasion, students were allowed to work collaboratively, each student had their own material. The physical representation of these Westernized ideologies of individualism in Mr. Wallace's classroom, as in many high schools across the country, were characterized by rows of desks and quiet, orderly spaces.

Because individualism was privileged in these spaces, expertise was conceived as belonging to individuals rather than the collective. In terms of content, then, there were knowers and non-knowers, with the teacher positioned as the expert and students positioned as amateurs. As the expert, it was Mr. Wallace's responsibility to transfer knowledge to the students, from whom little meaning-making was required. This didactic exchange of information typically asked only that students listen or read to bank (Freire, 1970) knowledge and then write to demonstrate their understanding of that knowledge. And because students were positioned as having little legitimate knowledge to bring to learning spaces, their role in the classroom remained passive, rather than active, and demanded only that students remember and repeat information.

Defining the learning process in this way—as remembering and repeating—was particularly constructed through the instructional materials Mr. Wallace chose to use with

the class. Textbook comprehension questions at the end of chapters, guided reading activities, and even graphic organizers (i.e., charts) for document analysis all required students to locate and copy answers from text to assignment. The central question around which the essay and document analysis were focused could have, and was designed to, position students as historians who have to analyze primary and secondary sources and draw conclusions about historical events. Like any historical narrative, the argument students constructed should have been open to their own interpretation, as long as they were able to support their conclusions by weighing evidence across documents. However, Mr. Wallace often had specific evidence he expected to see in the essay and this evidence was frequently provided to students when he gave assignment explanations before they began writing. So, again, the learning process became defined by remembering and repeating.

Like assignment materials, the physical organization of the classroom also contributed to defining the kinds of learning that could happen in the room. Power status was reflected in the positioning of desks; Mr. Wallace's desk was located up front and separate from the lines of unremarkably similar student desks. This space at the front of the room—the Smart Board, his desk, a table—were, for the most part, inaccessible to students. In particular, the bottom drawer of his desk was not only inaccessible to students but, as a holding place for unauthorized technology—headphones, cellphones, Chromebooks—also a place that did a kind of pointed naming of who and what didn't fit in class spaces.

This physical organization of the classroom also directed the flow of movement, directly influencing the kinds of learning structures (i.e., one-on-one, small group, peer-to-peer) students could easily leverage. The easiest one, of course, being independent work. With the last desk in every row pressed back against the wall, flow was unidirectional and gave access only to Mr. Wallace or the doors to the hallway while limiting student access to others. Movement, by Mr. Wallace or the students, during any given class period was typically minimal, the most movement occurring between student desks and hallway doors for bathroom use. Mr. Wallace would occasionally walk up and down some of the aisles between desks during lectures or to talk with students during independent work, but was much more likely to be seated at the front of the room.

It would be remiss to not also consider the ways in which the physical spaces of the classroom were shaped by larger, spatialized structures of schooling (O'Brien et al., 1995) as well, including classes limited by place, space, and time. That is, the spaces of Mr. Wallace's world history class were bounded by a particular time period, in a specific room, and by one discipline. This spatialization was largely unchangeable and, given the historicized cultural practices of schools in bounding learning by place, space, and time, crossing boundaries to position learning as interdisciplinary across spaces and times would have been challenging, particularly in a secondary school.

All of these characteristics of physical spaces were highly prioritized in Mr. Wallace's classroom, often working to constrict opportunities for teaching and learning. Particularly as the semester progressed, his teaching largely remained situated in the First Space. Instructional materials, classroom layout, and movement were all designed to

minimize interaction. Towards the end of the semester, when lecture and assignment explanations decreased in frequency, Mr. Wallace's role during class became, at least more heavily, a manager of people, materials, and tasks. Behavior was monitored, materials organized, and tasks assigned. And this was repeated on a daily basis. There were entire class periods when little was spoken beyond the initial instructions. Students did (or didn't do, as the case may be) their quizzes and tests, their document analysis, and their guided reading activities. Mr. Wallace watched football plays on his computer. Or prepped his Virtual School course. Teaching, in any form, just stopped occurring.

I questioned whether this First Space holding was intentional or whether he really couldn't envision the possibilities for engaging students—with him, with each other, and with the content. It is true that when I asked him how, if there were no limitations whatsoever, he might imagine teaching this class, he responded that he would teach it the same way. But I also recalled a conversation we had had earlier, featured in Mr. Wallace's narrative in Chapter 3, about teacher- and student-centered classrooms. He had initiated the conversation during our weekly reflection, following a particularly difficult class that had ended with more than half of the students putting their heads down for the class period. During the class, he had in no way responded to any of the students who had disengaged.

I suspect that my presence during the class was one of the only reasons Mr. Wallace voluntarily brought up the issue with me. Regardless, during the interview, he named the teacher-centered structure of his class as part of the problem causing student disengagement. But he qualified it with *I'm NEVER probably going to have a student-*

centered classroom. *To be honest. I'm just not. I just don't want to. I know it sounds selfish and maybe I should. Maybe I should be made to do it but . . . it's not something* that's me. This qualification suggested that Mr. Wallace was well aware of both the impact of his instructional decision-making (although perhaps not on specific students), as well as of at least some other possibilities for engaging students in class learning spaces. And yet he was unwilling to change.

These same suggestions were evident in informal conversations he had with me about acknowledging that struggling readers sit in his class but then doing nothing to provide instructional support because he *wasn't a reading specialist*. Or that he recognized that his class was composed of fairly diverse learners but he didn't know how to accommodate them in instruction. He knew but wasn't interested in seeking solutions.

These statements firmly establish the ways in which Mr. Wallace situated ownership of the spaces in his class. That is, he claimed full ownership, doing little to (re)shape or (re)think those spaces with his students or, even, simply with his students *in mind*. Students had little ownership and few opportunities to (re)construct teaching and learning in legitimate spaces. It's no wonder, then, that so many students became disengaged on a day-to-day basis in Mr. Wallace's class.

However, it's important to remember that spaces are capable of moving and shifting. They can stretch and expand as well as constrict. Many of the First Spaces Mr. Wallace constructed were constricting and limited opportunities for learning. Students were, for example, unable to claim ownership in legitimate spaces but, nevertheless, appropriated ownership of their own learning in other spaces. This was particularly

evident in the narratives of Joaquin, Kesara, and Lorenzo. Joaquin drew upon sources of information that were not provided by Mr. Wallace. Kesara leveraged her own study strategies at home to learn information she needed to be successful in class. And Lorenzo sought help from people outside of class.

For all three students, some of the central tensions in their narratives arose from the work they did at the periphery of the borders and boundaries Mr. Wallace had drawn for First Spaces. Although they did not have the power nor the knowledge to transform those First Spaces, their work did create movement in space, however slight, by stretching them beyond the borders and boundaries Mr. Wallace had drawn. Through this stretching, the students expanded learning spaces to include those beyond the physical classroom Mr. Wallace had designated as the place of learning, to include people Mr. Wallace did not consider as participants in this specific learning community, and to include sources of information that Mr. Wallace had not identified for use. By moving these spaces, Joaquin, Kesara, and Lorenzo significantly influenced their own opportunities for learning and appropriated ownership from Mr. Wallace's First Spaces in order to find ways to survive spaces that were constructed without them in mind.

Many of the Second Spaces evident in Mr. Wallace's class also seemed to be constructed without all students in mind, including the seven Latinx participants in this study. At the heart of these Second Spaces were historical and socio-cultural norms determining *who* could learn across class spaces, *why* it was that they should learn, and *what* it was that they should learn. In terms of who could learn, Mr. Wallace had clearly established ideals for who a student should be. Despite First Space constructions that

communicated otherwise, Mr. Wallace valued students who were participators in class. This participation was expected to be verbal. Mr. Wallace conceived of students who wanted to learn as those who raised their hands often, who contributed to IRE exchanges, and who asked questions. He also expected these students to speak with confidence and to, at least generally, know the right answer.

Additionally, being a participator meant being actively engaged with Mr. Wallace and not necessarily their peers. Certainly, it meant being a good communicator, which included being responsive to Mr. Wallace on a personal level and being generally congenial. He valued students who could advocate for themselves and who were willing and able to tell him the specific areas in which they were struggling. Often, students Mr. Wallace perceived of as being participators were outgoing and social. They were easy to talk to, often initiated conversations with Mr. Wallace, and were still able to shift their focus of talk to academics (in contrast to students who leveraged talk in the classroom to participate only in the social spaces of class, particularly with peers).

The second major characteristic that Mr. Wallace used to define a good student was grades, which, as his narratives revealed, were leveraged quite often when giving assessments about the abilities of students. Patterns in performance, including those found in their academic history, were significant to Mr. Wallace in constructing narratives about what it was that students could or could not do in class. Mr. Wallace used grades to identify those students with high, average, and low abilities. Generally, this process of assessing students was consistent, although there were occasions when personality interfered. Kesara's outgoing, friendly personality contributed to Mr.

Wallace's perception of her as a good student while Ramón's quiet, reserved nature contributed to Mr. Wallace's perception of him as being in rebellion.

In contrast, abilities and skill level were often confounded in Mr. Wallace's assessment of students. Those students who were perceived as having high abilities also typically had high skills. And these skills were generally positioned as being more fixed and innate rather than something that Mr. Wallace could teach in class. In fact, students Mr. Wallace labeled as being high performers came to class with what he considered as strong skills or were naturally able to increase their skills through repetition.

Frankly, though, despite the ways in which students like Sebastian, Kesara, and Joaquin fit Mr. Wallace's ideals for who a good student should be, that student could not look Latinx. Mr. Wallace associated any number of obstacles with being Latinx and considered solutions to those obstacles as something *nobody really knows*. This might best be captured by Mr. Wallace's narrative of Sebastian who was *one of the brighter HISPANIC [emphasis added] students that I've taught* and still not worthy of being recommended for Honors. But these obstacles also included what Mr. Wallace perceived to be language and cultural barriers that disrupted, and often superseded, literacy and history learning. For example, he felt world history was particularly difficult for Latinx students to learn because it was largely European and historical knowledge was almost ancestral—you come to know it without knowing that you ever learned it.

Mr. Wallace also possessed beliefs about why students should learn world history, which shaped the construction of Second Spaces. Although his expressed beliefs included two major goals for learning history—appreciation and civic duty—evidence of

those beliefs was largely absent in practice. Instead, his objective presented as demonstrating understanding of world history content through grades. Specifically, this discourse sounded like *getting 10 questions right* on the end-of-course exam to pass and looked like making predictions (at which Mr. Wallace considered himself quite skilled) regarding who would pass the exam or not.

There was also a legacy of accountability tied to grades as the major objective for learning in Second Spaces. In particular, Mr. Wallace believed that the demonstration of knowledge and understanding should be made public, either through the act of writing down one's understanding (i.e., essay composition) or by having one's work graded in front of the class. Mr. Wallace believed that these practices were essential for assessing students' understanding of content and instilled a sense of independence and work ethic in terms of encouraging students to complete their work so that they don't have to display incorrect or unfinished work in front of the class.

Finally, Second Spaces in Mr. Wallace's class were also shaped by what it was he considered students should learn in world history. There were three topics he centralized in lesson implementation: what it meant to learn, what it mean to learn literacy, and what it meant to learn world history. In terms of learning, Mr. Wallace focused on the concept of grinding, which was consistent with First Space production of memorization and repetition through class materials. Grinding, which originates in the world of gaming, was also one of the most effective connections Mr. Wallace made between class life and students' lives in other spaces. Although there were other attempts to draw upon students' knowledge and experiences to understand content, these were mostly broad,

abstract connections and he would then revert back to the more specific references he could make to his own life experiences with football or the military to explicate class content.

Literacy learning as a central topic was presented in terms of reading and writing traditional texts (because the end-of-course exam rarely included any texts except word documents). Mr. Wallace typically talked about literacy as a skill and, in application, it looked like close reading, which required overanalyzing a text and defining vocabulary in context. Mr. Wallace often talked about students in his class who struggled to read. *Imagine for a moment, when you left here and you walked to our car, imagine if you knew that somewhere between here and your car, you were going to collapse and fall down to the ground and not be able to get up. Would you walk to your car? So if you're a reader and you know that when you start reading a paragraph, you'll come to a word that you don't know how to say it or you don't know what it means, you're probably not going to read the paragraph.* Despite his perceived understanding about the struggle with reading that students had in his class, there were no other strategies to support the act of reading beyond close reading. Students read for the purpose of accessing information, particularly in primary and secondary source documents and the course handbook. Students wrote to show evidence of learning, typically in terms of constructing an argument around a central historical question using evidence from primary and secondary source documents.

And finally, in terms of learning world history, Mr. Wallace shaped Second Spaces through the use of the turning point timeline, historical thinking skills, and SHEG

lessons. I know that Mr. Wallace wanted students to memorize the timeline and use the turning points to contextualize the events they were learning about in class. I did observe them drawing the timeline several times but I never saw any practice with using the timeline to contextualize events. Sebastian was the only student who shared with me that he used the timeline and he used it on exams to eliminate answer choices that didn't fit between the right turning points. In application, the same seemed to be true for historical thinking skills and SHEG. The historical thinking skills, listed on posters around the room, were mentioned much more often than the timeline but there was a sense of having to use the skills on SHEG document analysis without any really clear idea about how that should look. Several students, Kesara in particular, talked about having to use the historical thinking skill of contextualizing to write their opening paragraph but struggled with how to do that and I never saw Mr. Wallace model or provide instructional support for doing so.

Although the Second Spaces of Mr. Wallace's class were fairly clearly defined, particularly in terms of who could learn and why they should learn, these spaces were much more implicitly constructed and subtly policed. The problematic aspects of who could learn made it much more difficult for Mr. Wallace to name them in ways that he explicitly named First Spaces. He could talk about who he considered an expert on world history and point out to students the backgrounds of the textbook's authors to share why he thought the authors were more credible and had more expertise than he did. But he couldn't explain (to them at least because he certainly did to me) why Mallory's Whiteness meant that she innately understood more about world history than Atalaya

could. He couldn't name Ezra's Whiteness as the reason why he could read for inferences and Alberto's non-Whiteness as the reason he couldn't.

And while he was unwilling to imagine ways in the First Space that students could be engaged with him, each other, and the content, he was equally unwilling to imagine ways in the Second Space that instruction could be designed to support students' diverse understandings of content. I was reminded of the conversation in which he compared teaching a concept or skill to making every student bench press 225 pounds. *Maybe out of a hundred kids, maybe ten of them can even think about lifting it. Most of them can't. Well then you start reducing weight. You're still gonna have a huge amount of diversity in their abilities. It's the same way in the classroom. If the analogy of the weight room's used, we're still required to teach them to lift 225 pounds. Even though they can't do it.* And so, as the semester progressed and he became concerned about meeting the writing objectives, his response was *the students that I'm not as successful at reaching are falling behind. They're falling through.* And this time there was no qualification; that's simply the way it was.

While constructions of teaching and learning in the First Space made claims about ownership, constructions in the Second Space made claims about belonging—what one must look like, think like, and do to belong in class learning spaces. What experiences counted. What knowledge counted. Mr. Wallace possessed ownership of the class and with the power granted by that ownership, could decide who did and did not fit within its spaces. These Second Spaces constricted the ways in which students could shape themselves in order to belong.

But as with First Spaces, students acting on the periphery of the borders and boundaries of Second Spaces were able to shift and stretch those spaces to find a way to belong within what was accessible. This was particularly evident in the narratives of Alberto and Sebastian. Sebastian sought deep learning through Mr. Wallace's lectures as a source of information. Alberto asked questions that extended his understanding and interest in content.

For both students, some of the central tensions in their narratives arose around Second Space borders and boundaries naming belonging as a function of good grades. Like in the First Space, the students did not possess the kind of power or knowledge needed to subvert normed class practices but their work again created movement in space by stretching the borders and boundaries beyond those which had been drawn by Mr. Wallace. Through this stretching, Alberto and Sebastian expanded learning spaces to include those that valued both the practicality, as well as the pleasure, of learning. By moving these spaces, Alberto and Sebastian significantly influenced their own opportunities for learning by constructing moments-in-space in which they could belong in a Second Space that had actually been constructed in dismissal of them.

It is this work at the boundaries and borders of First Space and Second Space that create the potential for Thirdspace, where the official scripts of the normative First and Second Spaces collide with the unofficial scripts of lived experiences (Gutiérrez et al., 1995). Thirdspaces were not evident in Mr. Wallace's class. But the potential for them was. Their resistance of Mr. Wallace's positioning of them, the agentive moves adopted to (re)position and create space for themselves in the class were all ways in which the

seven Latinx students in this study did work at the point of collision between official and unofficial scripts. The tensions existed.

But to fully realize the potential for these Thirdspaces, the tensions needed to be noticed, acknowledged, and taken up in discourse and action as teacher and students negotiated that space together. This would require a kind of play, a trying out of ways in which the vertical knowledge of the formal spaces of school could be weaved with and blended into the horizontal knowledge students already carried with them from the spaces in which they lived their day-to-day lives. Space needed to be made for the in-between.

In order for that to happen, Mr. Wallace had to be as integral a participant as Alberto, Atalaya, Joaquin, Kesara, Lorenzo, Ramón, and Sebastian. He had to be willing to engage in the hard work, a kind of work that to someone with Mr. Wallace's power and privilege in the class, and in the world more generally, probably seemed foreign. He had to be willing to share space—to imagine the possibilities of engagement and diversity, to give freely ownership of class spaces, and to consider the expansiveness of belonging. And this is hard to do, this finding of a balance between the authority and control that sociocultural norms tell us teachers need to have in the classroom and the kind of openness that subverts traditional hierarchies in the class to create space for what it is that we don't know is there.

As I ponder that particular tension, I can still recall sitting in Mr. Wallace's class the day of the national student walkout. The majority of the students in Mr. Wallace's class had participated, for one reason or another. Mr. Wallace assumed it was because they wanted the extra fifteen minutes out of class or because they were emulating wider

discourses they heard at home but didn't understand themselves. When they returned, class continued as usual with no uptake of issues surrounding the walkout, no leveraging of this event in which students had participated in order to build conceptual understanding of historical events and concepts. However, I overheard a conversation between Sebastian, who had attended the walkout, and another student who had not.

Student 1: *Did you just sit there* [at the walkout]?

Sebastian: *Yeah, but that's what it was about. We have to do it together. If we want change.*

There was something about what Sebastian said that spoke of the larger discourses surrounding national issues—school shootings, climate change, the #MeToo movement. Issues about equity and privilege and power. But also about change and who should be responsible for that change. What Sebastian said spoke to me of the ways in which we, as the adults, have historically positioned youth as the future. *They* are the ones who will bring change. It spoke to me about the ways in which people of color, people living in poverty, people with disabilities are told that they have to earn their way. *They* have to be the change. And there was also something about what Sebastian said that spoke to my own personal journey to this moment. I thought about the Latinx teacher from the Heritage Language Academy who talked about being so exhausted but who continued the work because there was no one else who could do it. *She* was the change. And I thought about the Latinx families who attended the Academy, negotiated

an advisory committee to the superintendent, and advocated for the continuation of the program. *They* worked for change.

And I couldn't help but draw a parallel between those discourses and experiences and the narratives that were shared with me in Mr. Wallace's class. Within the borders and boundaries drawn by Mr. Wallace; by solidified and legitimized school practices; and by the wider social, political, and economic discourses, the seven Latinx students had to also be the change. They were the ones responsible for moving spaces, for stretching and shifting and twisting the borders and boundaries to make space for them. And this work, this very hard work, was unsustainable. Particularly when as Latinx, as youth, as students, they lacked the power and privilege in class spaces that Mr. Wallace possessed.

It can, then, no longer be a question of *if* we—as teachers and teacher-educators, as researchers, as administrators—are brave enough to take up spaces of tension, but *how* we might do so. The Latinx students in this study had no choice; they existed in the in-between spaces, enmeshed in conflict, as part of their everyday lived experiences. We, then, cannot excuse our refusal to take up tensions because it makes us uncomfortable or unsafe or unsure. Or because it might fail. This establishes a binary between success and failure where inaction can be considered a kind of success. It is not. Inaction is our greatest failure.

I've thought about what might have happened had I had the opportunity to work with Mr. Wallace professionally. Might it be possible for him to, in any small way, become a part of the change? The conceptualizations of personhood Mr. Wallace continued to construct around Latinx youth and their abilities to learn were deeply

ingrained and enduring, although not unconscious. In many cases, discourse markers like *I shouldn't say this but I'm gonna* or explicit statements like *I'm not real good at working with students who are diverse, I'll just be honest* were strong indications that he was, at least in part, aware of how he positioned Latinx students in his class. And Mr. Wallace is not alone; DiAngelo (2018) makes clear that *all* of us participate in systems that reproduce racism and, in a teacher workforce that is majority White and middle class, the power and privilege that is wielded often goes unacknowledged. However, it is essential to remember here that, while Mr. Wallace's discourse and associated actions in the class were often deficit-based and even deleterious to students, he is also a product of endemically racialized, politicized, and gendered systems. And while it is sometimes easier to place blame on individuals, it is imperative to remember that these individuals, including Mr. Wallace (and his students, for that matter), are reflective of broader societal and institutional environments that create, tolerate, and perpetuate these ideologies (Sierk, 2019).

And so it would be difficult to imagine that Mr. Wallace's ideologies, reflected across institutions and systems in which he held power, would be changeable without a sustained, intentional effort. But I considered the ways in which I might, given the opportunity, push back against some of Mr. Wallace's instructional practices (if not his decision-making in terms of legitimizing and de-legitimizing student learning). What spaces did he open for me to build a multiplicity of trajectories, for both him and his students? He placed significant value on expertise. Would positioning myself as expert to expand upon constructions of literacy leveraged across class spaces be effective?

Would building learning communities around equity education encourage more criticality? And, if not, than what other possibilities existed for de-centralizing the responsibility for change away from the Latinx students in his class?

The difficulty lies in deciding how we can move *into* tensions. It doesn't come naturally to most of us, to not only walk into conflict but to unequivocally seek it. And teaching is often challenging enough without seeking tensions. But those tensions already exist and, whether we are conscious of it or not, many of these tensions are already at play in the things that challenge us most about teaching. The narratives of Mr. Wallace and the seven Latinx students in his class at BHS teach us several lessons about how we might think about moving into tensions:

We must pursue discomfort. Developing the skill of noticing and acknowledging tensions must begin with pursuing what it is about our interactions with specific others in specific places and at specific times that make us uncomfortable. This also includes pursuing, and most importantly, validating, what it is that makes others uncomfortable. We must then examine the roots of that discomfort, drawing upon both our own personal experiences, as well as the larger sociocultural discourses at play across the norms and expectations of the spaces which we inhabit.

If Mr. Wallace had been able to recognize the discomfort he felt when he tried to ask Atalaya about what it was she didn't understand about an assignment or when he spoke to me about why so many heads were down in class or when he refused to recommend Joaquin and Sebastian for Honors, how might that recognition have changed his long-term trajectory (and that of his students)? He did feel tension. It was evident in

the words he used, his tone of voice, his sharing with me of the experience after class. But he wasn't necessarily conscious of that and certainly didn't do much exploration into the roots of that discomfort. The most honest discussion we had, which centered on his choice of a teacher-centered classroom and its impact on learning, ended in an abrupt *I just remembered something. I've got-, I'm supposed to-, I've got to go upstairs.*

But it is in those small recognitions that I believe the power of change lies. The use of critical incidents, as employed in this study, holds potential not just for research with teachers and students in classrooms but for teacher education. How might we use a critical incident identification process to bridge coursework and fieldwork? How might we use those small moments of recognition to unpack the role our beliefs and the larger sociocultural, political, and economic discourses play in our moment-to-moment decision-making? How can we leverage critical incidents to think about how we might move into tensions rather than away?

We must play at the edges of borders and boundaries. Exploring the roots of our discomfort requires that we move from the safe, middle zones of the spaces in which we reside to their borders and boundaries, where our own spaces collide with the spaces of other people, places, and systems. Entering this contact zone means walking into spaces that belong to others, spaces where we *don't* belong. For some of us, it can be easy to walk into a space that is not ours because we must only take a step or two in any direction to be back into a space in which we belong. So we must then be intentional about our time, our movements, our objectives in order to see and feel what we would ordinarily not be able to see or feel.

Mr. Wallace's time outside of the classroom was devoted to football. But none of the Latinx students in his class were on the football team. Did he ever take opportunities to find them in their spaces—to watch Alberto or Lorenzo play community soccer, Atalaya play the clarinet with the school band, Joaquin compete at a DECA event, Kesara sing in *Les Misérables*, or Sebastian perform at a dance show? Was he even aware that they participated in these activities? Had he ever spoken with any of their parents or attended an event in their community? Did he know anything about their shared career and family aspirations?

We must also, given the time constraints in the lives of busy teachers, consider what it is that the school can do to build partnerships among schools, families, and communities to close the figurative (and sometimes literal) distance between and among them. The narratives shared by students here grant us powerful insights into the lived experiences of students in in-between spaces in schools. How might narratives like these be collected and shared in and out of school spaces? How might we leverage them with students, teachers, and pre-service teachers to provide them with glimpses into lived experiences that they might otherwise have never known? How can we engage them in telling the narratives of others in ways that help us think collectively about how we are together in classrooms (and outside classrooms) and what it is that we can do differently?

We must be consistently in dialogue with. If we are to explore the roots of our discomfort, of the discomfort of others, and if we are to be in spaces with these others, we must be consistently in dialogue with those around us, both those like us and those unlike us. We cannot see what we cannot see. The making of meaning must (and Bakhtin tells

us that it certainly does) happen in the spaces between us. But this dialogue also requires a certain honesty and vulnerability from us and we cannot expect that others return it. We must be able to reflect upon our strengths and our faults, our vision and our blindness, and be able to leverage those in examining the discomfort we feel (or don't feel). This being with others is what helps us see what we might be missing when we aren't feel discomfort.

What if Mr. Wallace had built in opportunities for dialogue in his classroom, not just of the social variety but also that focused on academic content? What if he had taken seriously Alberto's question: *In the old days, if you were Mexican, you would be treated as White AND Black at the same time?* What if he had leveraged these unplanned moments for dialogue about both world history content and personhood? What if he had brought into class spaces what was happening around those class spaces--the teacher rally, the student walkout? What if he had brought what the students knew and understood into dialogue with what he knew and understood?

Examining the ways in which disciplinary literacy can be implemented in classrooms, particularly at the secondary level, holds potential for supporting teachers and pre-service teachers in structuring dialogue that connects the social nature of many adolescents and their passion for learning about the world around them with the academic discourses used to produce, present, and evaluate disciplinary knowledge. How might we leverage these discourses to encourage inquiry, the habits of mind of a discipline, and the exploration of lived experiences of students and teacher in learning spaces? But as happened with Mr. Wallace, it is also important to examine the ways in which the teacher

takes up disciplinary literacy practices in class spaces, why they take it up in those ways, and in what ways their taking up of practices has implications for the conceptualizations of personhood under construction, both for literacy learning and for disciplinary learning.

We must be open. We cannot, actually, do any of the above without being open. We cannot pursue discomfort if we cannot accept the ways in which others feel discomfort. We cannot play at our borders and boundaries if we are not willing to see the ways in which others' lived experiences can be different from our own. We cannot be consistently in dialogue *with* if we cannot validate what it is that others say. We cannot actually do any of this alone because we are not capable of seeing, hearing, feeling, or experiencing what we do not know in the first place. I suggest here that the act of being open is not just about being willing to accept what we see as being different from us but that it is also about being in a state, a kind of permeability, that allows in what we don't know is there—those things we cannot yet name because our worlds were constructed in ways that gave us different words.

In what ways were the students aware of the ways in which their narratives about themselves were different from the narratives Mr. Wallace told about them? Was Mr. Wallace aware at all, or even interested in being aware, of the ways in which the stories he told were different from the stories the students told? To what might both he and the students have attributed these differences?

If we have learned anything from the students in this study, it is that, although we must also recognize the importance of hearing the narratives of individuals, it is not just the individual students—their words, their voices, their stories—that matter. Their stories

told in layers and in parallel provide powerful insight into the significance of the connection between the ways we move into tensions and the impact of our instructional decision-making. If we are to truly understand who it is that we are together in class spaces, then we must also look at what stories we tell collaboratively—as students, as teachers, as administrators, as parents and community members. The layers of our stories, their convergences and divergences, and the diverse ways in which we make sense of all of this have significant implications for not only how we go about teaching and learning, but how we become agents for change in what already exists about teaching and learning. By engaging in this layering and paralleling of stories, Geertz (2000) tells us that we create spaces where:

Now, when it is not so alone and the strangeness it has to deal with are growing more oblique and more shaded, less easily set off as wild anomalies . . . its task, locating those strangenesses and describing their shapes, may be in some ways more difficult; but it is hardly less necessary. Imagining difference (which of course does not mean making it up but making it evident) remains a science of which we all have need. (pp. 84-85)

If I may, for one moment, return to the initial chapter, to this idea of darkness as hiding some silent, deadly monster. We do indeed have something to fear from the dark. But it is not from something outside of us that we need fear. The darkness hides our strangeness and it hides from us what we do because of that strangeness. It hid from Mr. Wallace the strangeness of his students and it hid from him the damage he perpetrated in his own classroom. In some ways, if not others, it hid from students the damages that they incurred. *We* are what we should fear about the dark.

But it need not remain that way. If we do not need to fear the dark, and if we are only causing harm by trying to avoid the dark, then we also need not fear going into the dark. We have things to learn there. As educators, as humans, we have the responsibility of pursuing discomfort, of playing at the borders and boundaries of our spaces, and of being in consistent dialogue *with* so that we may build our capacity to be open. So that we may be able capaciously to see:

If we wish to be able capaciously to judge, as of course we must, we need to make ourselves able capaciously to see. And for that, what we have already seen—the insides of our railway compartments; the shining historical examples of our nations, our churches, and our movements—is, as engrossing as the one may be and as dazzling as the other, simply not enough. (Geertz, 2000, pp. 87-88)

If we are to find what might be enough, then we cannot take this journey on our own.

This change must build from a collective purpose. And, as educators, we must be charged with leading this journey into the dark so that we may learn capaciously to see.

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APPENDIX A

CONTEXTUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

<p>Opening Script: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of my study is to look at the kinds of things that happen in a secondary history class in your district that may influence Hispanic students' perceptions of their identity as history learners, readers, and writers. You were selected for interview because of your knowledge of and influence on what kind of learning happens in this district and who your students are. With your permission, I'd like to record our conversation, but your participation and responses will be completely confidential. The recoding will help me be able to focus on you during the interview and allow me to review your responses after our meeting. Do I have your permission to record our interview? This interview will last no longer than 20 minutes. Some questions will be about your background in education and others will be about your experiences with the school/district. You may choose not to answer any questions or to stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. Thank you again for taking the time to participate in these interviews. Do you have any questions for me before we begin? <i>(Make sure consent and assent forms have been collected prior to interview.)</i></p>	
Research Questions	Interview Questions
Demographic Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me a little bit about your previous and current work in education. 2. How do you define your role at _____ ?
Contextual Interview	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What do you envision is the goal for serving Hispanic students in your school/district? How is this specific to history and literacy education? 4. Tell me a little bit about the history of the school/district, particularly in relation to history and literacy education. How and why did these things happen? What kinds of transformations have occurred over the years? Why? 5. How well do you feel your school/district serves the needs of Hispanic learners? Why? What still needs to be done? 6. What do you value about the students and teachers who make up your schools? 7. In what ways do you feel that the community has influenced the school/district? In what ways do you feel your school/district has influenced the community? 8. What do you feel makes your school/district special?
<p>Wrap-Up and Closing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Are there any questions I should have asked but didn't? Is there anything else I need to know? 10. Do you have any questions for me? <p>Thank you again for participating in the interview. If you need to contact me for any reason or if you decide that you do not want your information to be used in the study, here are my email address and phone number. Please feel free to contact me at any time.</p>	

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH PHASES

PHASE	Time Period	Research Goal(s)	Data Collection
Phase I: Initial	November – Mid-March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish contact with school site and hold initial meetings with administrators and teachers regarding the study • Gather archival records and other documents • Select classroom/teacher • Establish presence in school and classroom • Conduct initial class observations • Select student participants • Collect participant consent and assent forms • Establish interview schedule for contextual data • Train participants in CI • Map First Spaces • Establish artifact collection routine • Establish interview schedule for teacher and student participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Summary Form • Document Summary Form • Participant Consent and Assent Forms • Teacher Profile • Observation field notes • Class Survey • Student Perception Profile • First Space maps • Critical Incident Identification Guide
Phase II: Core	Mid-March – May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1: Conduct Participant Background, School History, & Home History Student Interviews • Week 2-End: Conduct daily think-aloud protocol interviews with students • Conduct initial teacher interviews • Conduct weekly reflection interviews with teacher • Map Second Spaces • Conduct class observations and record sessions • Establish schedule for teacher follow-up interviews • Establish schedule for off-site reflection interviews • Establish schedule for home/parent interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Background Interview Protocol • Student School History Interview Protocol • Student Home History Interview Protocol • Teacher Initial Interview Protocol • Student Think-Aloud Interview Protocol • Artifact Summary Form • Teacher Reflection Interview Protocol • Observation field notes • Second Space maps • Class video recording
Phase III: Final	Late May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct member checks on student CI profiles • Conduct follow-up teacher interviews • Conduct off-site reflection interviews with students • Potentially conduct home/parent interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Follow-Up Interview Protocol • Student Off-Site Reflection Interview Protocol • Home/Parent Interview Protocol
Phase IV: Follow-Up	Early June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up on questions or member checks by phone or email during data analysis and report writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Summary Form

APPENDIX C

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

A critical incident is something that occurred during class that you feel affected you, positively or negatively, as a reader or writer. After today's class, I will be asking you to identify a part of the class that stood out to you for some reason. You'll need to be thinking about this and be ready to share what part of class you chose with me. Below are some reasons you might use to make your choice, but it is also fine if you also have reasons of your own.

This part of class made me feel _____ as a writer:

- ❖ frustrated
- ❖ excited
- ❖ more interested
- ❖ less interested
- ❖ angry
- ❖ surprised
- ❖ ashamed
- ❖ happy
- ❖ helpless
- ❖ smart
- ❖ motivated
- ❖ confused
- ❖ sad

Class	Critical Incident	Reason
1		
2		
3		
4		

APPENDIX D

STUDENT PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

<p>Opening Script: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of my study is to explore what kinds of things help you, as a Hispanic learner, be successful in your history class. With your permission, I'd like to record our conversation, but your participation and responses will be completely confidential. The recording will help me be able to focus on you during the interview and allow me to review your responses after our meeting. Do I have your permission to record our interview? We will do three separate interviews a week and each will last no longer than 10 minutes. Some questions will be about your background and other questions will be about your experiences in history class. There are no right or wrong answers to questions; I'm interested in learning about how you experience your class and what you think about what works best for you as a learner. Your teacher will not know how you answer the questions I ask you. You may choose not to answer any questions or to stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. Thank you again for taking the time to participate in these interviews. Do you have any questions for me before we begin? <i>(Make sure consent and assent forms have been collected prior to interview.)</i></p>	
Research Questions	Interview Questions
Interview #1: Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me a little about yourself. (Probes: age, interests or hobbies, friends, school home) 2. How would you describe yourself and your personality? 3. How do you think other people see you? Teachers? Peers? Parents? Friends? 4. What do you think is most interesting about you? 5. What do you feel is your greatest strength? What about your greatest weakness? 6. What kinds of things do you have special knowledge about?
Interview #2: School History	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. What has school been like for you? 8. How do you feel about history? 9. How do you feel about literacy (reading and writing)? 10. What kinds of reading and writing do you do in history? How about in school in general? 11. What kind of student do you think you are? Why? What kind of student do you think your teachers and peers think you are? 12. What does it mean to be a good student? Is there a difference in how you, your teachers, or your family might answer that questions? 13. What do you want to do when you graduate?
Interview #3: Home History	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Who do you consider part of your family? What does family mean to you? 15. Do you and your family ever talk about school? What kinds of things are said? 16. Where are you from? Where is your family from? 17. What language do you speak at home? (How do you feel about being able to speak more than one language?) 18. What kinds of reading and writing do you do outside of school? For what reasons? 19. Do you think your family has a distinct culture? How would you describe it? 20. Do you feel like you belong with your family?
Retrospective Think-Aloud Interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. What is your critical incident and why did you choose it? 22. Tell me about what's happening here. 23. How did you feel about . . . ? 24. Did . . . help you or confuse you? Why? 25. Why do you think your teacher/peer . . . ? 26. How did . . . make you feel as a learner (historian/reader/writer)? Why?

	<p>27. What did . . . make you think about history/reading/writing? Why?</p> <p>28. What did you know about . . . that you didn't share? Why didn't you share it?</p> <p>29. You brought up an interesting idea about . . . How did you know that? Why did you share it?</p> <p>30. How did you use reading/writing/history to . . .?</p> <p>31. What did you learn about being a learner (historian/reader/writer) when . . .?</p> <p>32. Why did/didn't you . . .?</p>
<p>Wrap-Up and Closing:</p> <p>33. Are there any questions I should have asked but didn't? Is there anything else I need to know?</p> <p>34. Do you have any questions for me?</p> <p>Thank you again for participating in the interview. If you need to contact me for any reason or if you decide that you do not want your information to be used in the study, here are my email address and phone number. Please feel free to contact me at any time.</p>	

APPENDIX E
CLASS SURVEY

Name: _____ Age: _____ Grade Level: _____

Please put a check in the box that best describes you.

1. Ethnicity/Race:
 - White
 - Hispanic
 - Black or African American
 - Native American or American Indian
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - Biracial/Multiracial
 - Other: _____ (Please specify.)
2. What kind of association/affiliation do you have with your ethnic heritage?
 - High
 - Low
3. If you checked Hispanic in Question #1, how do you like to be identified? (Leave blank if not Hispanic.)
 - Hispanic
 - Latino/a
 - Chicano/a
 - By nationality _____ (Please specify.)
 - Other: _____ (Please specify.)
4. Gender:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other: _____ (Please specify)
5. What kind of student would you describe yourself as:
 - Above average
 - Average
 - Below average
6. How would you describe your ability to learn history?
 - I am **confident** in my ability to learn history.
 - I am **mostly confident** in my ability to learn history.
 - I am **unsure** of my ability to learn history.
 - I am **not confident** in my ability to learn history.
7. How would you describe your ability to read and write?
 - I am **confident** in my ability to read and write.
 - I am **mostly confident** in my ability to read and write.
 - I am **unsure** of my ability to read and write.
 - I am **not confident** in my ability to read and write.

APPENDIX F

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

<p>Opening Script: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of my study is to look at the kinds of things that happen in your class that may influence Hispanic students' perceptions of their identity as learners of history and as readers and writers in history. With your permission, I'd like to record our conversation, but your participation and responses will be completely confidential. The recoding will help me be able to focus on you during the interview and allow me to review your responses after our meeting. Do I have your permission to record our interview? This interview will last no longer than 15 minutes. Some questions will be about your background in education and others will be about your experiences in class or your students. You may choose not to answer any questions or to stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. Thank you again for taking the time to participate in these interviews. Do you have any questions for me before we begin? <i>(Make sure consent and assent forms have been collected prior to interview.)</i></p>	
Research Questions	Interview Questions
Initial Interview	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me a little bit about yourself as an educator. What do you/have you taught? 2. Why did you choose to teach history in particular? 3. What do you think is the overall goal of teaching history to secondary students? How do you go about accomplishing that goal? 4. What are the greatest benefits and challenges of teaching history to secondary students? 5. What role do you think literacy plays in teaching and doing history? 6. Tell me about your class this year. 7. What kind of culture do you feel your class has? How do you create it?
Reflection Interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Summarize the week's goals in class. 9. Did you make any curricular or instructional changes? Why? 10. In general, how did the eight students do this week? Are there any moments with any of the individual students that stand out to you? 11. What do you feel most helped any of the students this week? Is there anything you would change or will address next week to help an individual student?
Student Perception Profile & Follow-Up Interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Tell me about _____ as a learner this semester? 13. How did you see _____ grow as a learner/reader/writer this semester? How did you see him/her struggle? Why do you think this happened? 14. What are _____ greatest strengths? What are his/her greatest challenges? 15. How do you feel _____ perceives of himself/herself as a learner/reader/writer? Why? 16. How do you feel _____ fits in with the culture and environment of your class? How about with the culture and environment of the school in general?

	17. What kind of specialized knowledge do you think _____ has that helps him/her be a stronger learner? What do you think he/she still needs to know?
Wrap-Up and Closing: 18. Are there any questions I should have asked but didn't? Is there anything else I need to know? 19. Do you have any questions for me? Thank you again for participating in the interview. If you need to contact me for any reason or if you decide that you do not want your information to be used in the study, here are my email address and phone number. Please feel free to contact me at any time.	