Lives in classrooms described as inclusive:
From the stand-point of equity-based inclusive education

By

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Abstract

This dissertation study aimed to understand the roles educators play in designing and supporting inclusive classroom communities and the degree to which students have participatory parity in classrooms described as inclusive. This study was framed within the lens of sociocultural historical activity and decolonial theories. The multifaced classroom activity arenas were examined against the three pillars of equity-based inclusive education, i.e. recognition, redistribution, and representation. The study found that educators and students were subjected to the imposed system that governed teacher work and students' learning. Thus, rather than classrooms designed to address the full range of student capacity, educators spent much of their time ensuring that they were conforming to a set of time-limited instructional routines, prescribed learning objectives, and behavior expectations that required certain types of student response and teacher performance.

Keywords: inclusivity, equity, education, policy, and qualitative research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Many nation-states adopt an idea of inclusive schooling and embrace it within their national educational policies and regulations in trying to undo long-standing social, economic, political, and educational injustices; and in an effort to secure a project of democracy in the world (Artiles et al., 2011). As of 2020, a total of 92 governments and 25 international organizations have assembled annually to reaffirm their commitment to Education for All (Salamanca Statement & Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994). In the United States (U.S.), the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) Supreme Court decision declared "separate is not equal" and endorsed inclusive schools for Black and White students. Following *Brown*—21 years later— the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142, 1975) ensured free, appropriate public education for students with dis/abilities[1] in the U.S. schools. The U.S. national law marked an important milestone in the development of a global inclusion movement that continues today to expand access to education for individuals whose dis/abled identities have been marginalized for centuries through exclusion from mainstream educational systems worldwide (Artiles et al., 2011). Governments of numerous countries view inclusive schooling as the means to closing opportunity gaps and issues of access to mainstream education for students identified with dis/abilities. Inclusive education is positioned and framed as the tool to eradicate poverty and promote sustainability across diverse

[1] I follow Annamma, Connor, & Ferri (2013) who deliberately use "/" in disability to "call attention to ways in which the latter overwhelmingly signals a specific inability to perform culturally-defined expected tasks" (p. 24).

and international communities (Salamanca Statement & Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994).

Despite having transnational and national calls for inclusive educational reforms, disparities in access to quality education and resources needed for *all* children to succeed socially and academically in schools are striking. In the U.S.—a country whose "inclusive" educational approaches are followed by many nations as modelling "best practices" (Walton, 2018)—the number of students experiencing intersecting forms of oppression identified for special education services is dramatically increasing (Skiba et al., 2016; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). For example, manipulation of dis/ability categories (Saatcioglu & Skrtic, 2019) and overrepresentation of African-American and Latinx students in special education (Skiba et al., 2016) demonstrate that a top-down approach to inclusive schooling has failed. In addition, disproportionate use of identity markers such as dis/ability, gender, race, and sexual orientation in school discipline (Annamma et al., 2019) shows that various U.S. government attempts to secure equitable educational outcomes (NCLB, 2001; IDEA, 2004; ESSA, 2015) for students with differing needs and abilities have failed too.

In response to the slow pace of inclusive transformation of schools, some researchers have emphasized shifting the unit of analysis from a whole school approach and focus on individuals embedded in multifaceted systems of activities (Artiles & Kozleski, 2016). While benefits of utilizing inclusive practices in schools have been well-documented in the education field (Kurth et al., 2015; Hunt et al., 2020; Sailor, 2017), there is little known about (a) ways in which teachers situate themselves within a complex, bureaucratically-driven schooling system with an institutionalized professional community of practice; (b) how educators appropriate their practices, knowledges, and positionalities to equitably redistribute educational opportunities and

recognize multidimensional, intersectional students' identities; (c) what factors and the degree to which they impact equitable relationships in the classroom; and (d) through which medium students have participatory parity in classrooms (Artiles, 2019; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). These questions have not been researched well enough to fully understand the sociology of inclusive schooling that prioritizes equity. The processes and relationships that accompany, mediate, and shape the work of educators who think and act in terms of erasing boundaries, extending membership to *all* students, establishing connectedness among them, and centering impartiality within daily routines and behaviors are unknown (Artiles, 2019; Kozleski et al., 2014). The purpose of this dissertation is to conduct research in classrooms described as inclusive in order to address these unknowns. By addressing these gaps, I seek to understand (1) the degree to which equitable relationships are present in classrooms described as inclusive and (2) what role educators play in designing and supporting inclusive classroom communities.

Toward Social Justice: Equity and Inclusivity in Education

The concept of social justice in education goes beyond advocacy for free, appropriate public schooling as it acknowledges multiple factors that contribute to and shape student educational outcomes. A conversation about equity in education takes place because of existing societal disparities and inequities (Skiba et al., 2011; Bal et al., 2019; Kunesh & Noltemeyer, 2019). Ideally, education from its very beginning (if implemented rightly) must encompas equity and inclusiveness (Dewey, 1923). However, as the history of many nation-states demonstrates, education has never been free from politics (Apple, 2017). On the contrary, education has been used as a device to assimilate people and preserve the culture of dominant groups as well as facilitate accumulation of global political and economic power (Apple, 2017; Tyack, & Cuban, 1995). By setting boundaries around what constitutes personhood and who deserves to

participate in democracy, exclusion in education continues to thrive (Klein, 2016). Equitable education is incompatible with structures and institutional arrangements designed to serve "imagined communities" (Anderson, 2006; Kozleski, 2019).

Defining Equity-Based Inclusive Education

Educational systems ground their definitions of equity, social justice, and inclusion within various philosophical and epistemological orientations toward personhood, learning, and schooling. There is no agreement in the field of education regarding what constitutes inclusivity in schools. Multiple interpretations of inclusive education guide educators' language and practices (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). Moreover, exclusion and segregation of students considered dis/abled has been recognized as a "wicked problem" (Rittel & Weber, 1975) since the 1960's along with ineffective instruction, psychological and social damage of labeling, and race and class bias (Dunn, 1968). A problem becomes wicked when the formulation of the problem itself involves a choice of interpretation that leads to a preferred solution (Skrtic, 1995; Rittel & Weber, 1975). When nations strive for democratic, inclusive, and equitable education systems, they typically identify groups that have historically been excluded. Attempts to redress exclusion often result in criteria that diminish and marginalize identities of Others. These criteria emerge from national socio-cultural, historic, economic, and political legacies in which the sediments of past exclusions leave traces in new legislation that filter the conditions under which students are able to exercise their right to be educated (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015).

I draw on critical inclusive scholarship (Artiles et al., 2011; Kozleski & Waitoller, 2013) in framing equity-based inclusive education (EBIE). Critical education scholars emphasize that EBIE requires centering *all* students' voices in school practices and reforms (Zion & Petty, 2014), understanding the connected multifaced nature of learning (Kozleski & Artiles, 2014),

and securing access to culturally relevant, high-quality, and student-oriented education to *all* students regardless of their ability, language, sexual orientation, socio-economic, and race/ethnic backgrounds (Kurth et al., 2015; Hunt et al., 2020; Sailor, 2017). Therefore, in this study, I adopt an equity-based model of inclusive education that emphasizes the *redistribution* of educational opportunities to all students, *recognition* of their differences, and *representation* of student voices in daily teaching practices and school decision making (Artiles et al., 2011; Kozleski & Waitoller, 2013). Moreover, as Fraser (2008) argued,

> …[W]hat is really important …is not the demand for recognition of a group's specific identity, but the demand for recognition of people's standing as full partners in social interaction, able to participate as peers with others in social life (p. 177).

Full recognition and representation of students' backgrounds in teaching as well as active, quality participation of *all* students in learning designed for them are key components of equitable education (Artiles et al., 2011; Kozleski & Waitoller, 2013).

While many nation-states strive to ensure "inclusive schooling" or whatever they mean by that, an extensive body of research shows a growing percentage of students with differing needs and abilities continue to be excluded from regular, continuing participation in school (UNESCO, 2018). For instance, the analysis of data on education and dis/ability from 49 countries conducted by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018) demonstrates that persons with dis/abilities are more likely to be out of school and tend to have fewer years of education than their peers without disabilities. Similar alarming disparities were found among indigenous, ethnic minority students and their non-indigenous, ethnic majority peers (UNESCO, 2018). Having a particular population of students (e.g., students identified with dis/abilities, LGBTQ, indigenous students) who lack access to quality education clearly articulates several important

messages about how nation-states worldwide imagine what education, schooling, and learning are in the era of globalization, especially for students with differing needs and backgrounds. The U.S. is not an exception in this regard. In the following paragraphs, I narrow my lens and focus on the context of the U.S. for EBIE.

I situate my analysis about the extent to which education is equitable and inclusive within the U.S. context for several reasons. Firstly, the U.S. system of public education has a long reputation of being regarded as one of the most "developed" and supposedly democratic educational systems in the world which many countries follow as an example (Artiles et al., 2011). Secondly, many Americans view the purpose of education more than just "crafting a character" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). For decades education has been perceived as means to achieve the American Dream (Labaree, 1997). Such perception of education significantly impacts ways in which educational opportunities and resources are distributed. Thirdly, the study described in this research project presents an empirical case of how a discourse toward equitable and inclusive education has been shaped in U.S. classrooms.

"Inclusive" Educational Policy and Its Outcomes: The U.S. Context

The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution prohibits any state from denying "to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The equal protection clause obliges that all persons born or naturalized in the U.S. must be treated equally by law. All state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) are required to comply with the *Brown* decision that "separate is not equal" emphasizing the importance of education and the stigmatizing effect of segregation (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2007). Further, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004) introduced two significant requirements: (a) a child

with disabilities receives a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) and (b) receives it in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The IDEA defines LRE as the following:

> "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." (20 U.S.C. § 1412[a][5]).

Thus, LRE mandate increases access to the general education classroom for students with dis/abilities to the maximum extent possible and supposedly diminishes segregated educational practices at schools.

However, despite the layered foundations for inclusivity and equity in U.S. society and enacted legislation (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954; IDEA, 2004; ESSA, 2015), students with dis/abilities, indigenous and ethnic minority students, LGBTQ students have especially been found to be marginalized by the mainstream U.S. public educational systems. Racial minority students continue to be disproportionally excluded from participation in learning with their general education peers by being disproportionally identified for special education services (Skiba et al., 2011) and subjected to school discipline (Bal et al., 2019; Kunesh & Noltemeyer, 2019). As research indicates, students who identify as Black or African Americans are seven times more likely and students who identify as Native Americans and Latinx are two times more likely to be subjected to exclusionary discipline (Bal et al., 2019). African American and Native American students are two to three times more likely to be labeled as emotionally disturbed (Bal

et al., 2019). African American were less likely to be assigned to math and reading gifted programs than their peers who identify as White (Grissom & Redding, 2015). Moreover, the achievement gap between students who identify as Black or African-American, Latinx, American Indian/Alaska Native, and students who identify as White persists (Bohrnstedt et al., 2015). For instance, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) of 2017 shows that students who identify as African-American scored 32 points lower than their counterparts who identify as White on Mathematics Grade 8 Assessment. Similar results were found for students who identify as Latinx and American Indian/Alaska Native who scored 24 points lower respectively than peers who identify as White (NAEP, 2017). In terms of students labeled as having dis/ability, even though the percentage of time they spend in general education classrooms (i.e., 80 percent and more of their time) has significantly increased from 47 percent in 2000 to 63 percent in 2017, this increase has not been consistent across the states (McFarland et al., 2019).

Therefore, these findings demonstrate that education as a public good has not been equally distributed to every student in the U.S., regardless of the countless number of so-called inclusive educational reforms that have been initiated aiming to make education available to all student populations and in such a way as to bridge the academic achievement gap. Poor, inequitable educational outcomes for members of historically marginalized racial groups exemplify that “color” and “ability” lines drawn among groups who identified as White or Black Americans have not been yet erased. These inequities continue to persist within the U.S. public education system and to shape educational outcomes for students who find themselves at the margins of social institutions (Apple, 2017; Skiba et. al., 2016; Zinn, 2015).

Centering Equity in Teaching Practices: A Rationale for the Study

To transform schools into inclusive and equitable learning spaces entails educators' learning and understanding of students' cultures, histories, experiences, and interests. It requires educators to use that knowledges about their students to redesign and adjust the learning conditions and outcome demands. Inclusive and equitable education based on the distribution of quality learning opportunities, pedagogical content, and the tools that reflect students' voices and backgrounds (Kozleski, 2020). However, education is a product of a larger system of relationships (i.e., historical, economic, political, and cultural) that mutually reinforce each other to control the U.S. public education system. These relationships (a) shape the meaning of education; (b) influence who runs the U.S. public schools; and (c) determine educational access, participation, and opportunities to learn (Labaree, 2012; Kozleski, 2016). In the following paragraphs, I briefly describe the macro and micro-level forces that shape students' educational outcomes and justify why it is crucial to focus on teacher communities of practice as micro-level forces in instituting and promoting equitable education to *all* students.

Macro-Level Forces

Saturated with regional historical legacies, a contested origin story, and challenged by globalization processes, the U.S. assembles its ideological and institutional mechanisms to manufacture through schooling criteria for participation in democracy. One of the outcomes of schooling in the U.S. is the production of competitive, able, and self-interested individuals who are enabled to partake in the country's socio-economic growth (Giroux, 2018). Such socioeconomic and cultural "expectations" [hegemony] emphasize certain human features as superior and defines who is "less worthy" and who is "more capable" to contribute to the country's economic expansion, development, distribution, and enjoyment of goods and services, including having access to the quality education (Adams et al., 2018; Giroux, 2018). Hegemonic

cultures produce knowledges and practices which rationalize ability-driven notions of well-being and what it means to be successful by manipulating human qualities and assigning individuals with differing needs and abilities lower societal statuses. In this way, hegemonic cultures, perpetuated through educational systems, become tools of oppression aimed to preserve a status-quo to benefit dominant, able-bodied groups and secure their power. Individuals whose appearances and practices are misaligned with the consuming, economically driven behaviors become pushed to the societal edges and labeled as those who deviate from what is imagined to be the "norm" (Davis, 2002).

Educational systems put value on human characteristics such as gender, ability, sexuality, race, and indigenity, and structure the degree to which these human qualities become acknowledged and naturalized in learning environments. It creates a struggle for groups who find themselves labeled as "less worthy" to attain quality education as their performances are measured by Eurocentric, ableist, and economically driven indicators. Further, the extent to which these groups can participate in democracy becomes predetermined based on the labels assigned to them. This is an unending, pressing social justice issue that the U.S. continues to face (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007).

The government of the U.S. envisions its schools to be the "great equalizers" which fulfill gaps that other systems failed to achieve. The analysis of school reform waves in the U.S. shows that since the mid-nineteenth century and the first educational reform effort and the common school movement (1840-1890), school systems have always been set as a compromise between capitalism and democracy (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Labaree, 2012). By treating schools as equity devices to distribute opportunities, governments perceive schools as spaces able to foster

economic mobility and cultivate civic communities. Such approach creates a conundrum for schools to be a fix to socio-economic problems that the country confronts (Labaree, 2012).

Moreover, education is viewed as an opportunity tool to achieve the American Dream. Labaree (2012) argued that social mobility and social efficiency educational goals prevailed over a democratic equality educational goal because the U.S. schools are not prepared to socially engineer citizens. Instead of viewing education as a public good, it is perceived to be a private good. For many, it is a vehicle to get into middle class. Therefore, the U.S. socio-economic, political, and educational systems manage and respond to individual differences by constructing identity markers which are used as reasons to include or exclude individuals from participation in decision-making and meaningful learning opportunities (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). The notion of equity has not been perceived as a universal value within the U.S. public educational systems because education continues to be used as a vehicle to climb a social ladder rather than as an instrument to celebrate the uniqueness and indigenity of human nature.

Micro-Level Forces

Considering the "micro" in addition to the "macro", teachers are powerful actors in policymaking and their position within school system can be the most influential. However, they do not internalize this role and do not perceive themselves as policymakers (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Shannon & Saatcioglu, 2016). Educational policies and law itself are loosely connected to public servants such as frontline workers such as teachers. Like many other public servants, teachers' work is rule-centered but is not rule-determined (Lipsky, 2010; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003). Because of the rule-centered nature of their positions, teachers can work "for a student" as well as "against a student." For instance, some educators aiming to provide "appropriate" education might advocate to place a student with differing needs and

abilities in general education classrooms; other educators might advocate to place such a student in special education classrooms. In both cases, educators aspire to the same goal. Maynard-Moody & Musheno (2003) by grounding their research in Lipsky's (1980) work argued that teachers are frontline workers and street-level bureaucrats because they structure and position their compliance with the law within professional communities of practice (PCP). School professionals situate their work and the rationale for the decisions they make within the PCP, appropriating its language, dominant ideologies, and identity frames toward students and teaching (Edelman, 1974, 2013; Skrtic, 1991).

Edelman (1974) argued that public bureaucracies use language to shape beliefs and practices, "when we name and classify a problem, we unconsciously establish the status and the roles of those involved with it, including their self-conceptions" (p. 29). For instance, since schools categorize students by race/ethnicity, language status, ability, age, and gender, teachers apply these socially constructed identity markers to categorize their students (Black student v. White student, girl v. boy, English speaking student v. English learner, students identified with and without dis/abilities) (Edelman, 1974; Oakes, 2005; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). School professionals perceive their students through different categorization forms (i.e., identity frames). Identity frames that teachers use are constantly reflected in their daily teaching practices, perceptions, and attitudes and extend to the practice of normalizing certain identity markers. Teachers' words and actions are political and social markers of specific world views and biases. These world views and biases impact those whose needs are seen as different, disruptive or non-essential. The needs of others become privileged, moved up in the hierarchy of reflexivity and support. As a result, educational opportunities and resources are distributed unequally to students. All of this occurs without formal processes. It is crucial to focus on this language and

its symbols as they justify and sustain acceptance of educational inequality and tolerate excluded forms of learning (i.e., self-contained classrooms). Language forms (i.e., categorization of students) mutually reinforce each other and shape the meaning of how education, schooling, teaching, and learning should look within school settings (Edelman, 2013; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015).

Oakes (2005) emphasized the school's role in structuring and perpetuating inequalities in society. Tracking and assigning students to different groups (categorization) is a common school practice. Students get classified in teachers' thoughts and labeled by adults based on prevailing ideologies (e.g., high achiever, low performer, average, etc.). Teachers' understanding about their roles in schools, conceptualization of teaching practices, coupled with organizational, professional culture and institutional pressure mediate teachers' interpretation of educational policies and, thus, determine the nature of inclusiveness for students with differing backgrounds and needs in school. As such, teachers represent the power of the state as they define who is the citizen, and they play a role in diminishing citizenship through labeling, tracking, and exclusion practices (Rogoff, 2003).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is twofold. First, to understand what roles educators play in designing and supporting equitable relationships in classrooms described as inclusive and the degree to which students have participatory parity in such classrooms. Second, to promote equity-based educational research by centering the study of equity and inclusivity within classroom and teaching practices described as inclusive.

Guiding Research Question

The guiding question is the degree to which equitable relationships are present in classrooms described as inclusive. This research question includes three sub questions:

(a) in what ways/ to what degree does the recognition of all student differences, the representation of all student voices, and the redistribution of educational opportunities to all students occur in classrooms described as inclusive?

(b) To what degree do students have participatory parity in the classroom described as inclusive?

(c) What roles do educators play in designing and supporting an inclusive classroom community, in other words in ensuring equitable redistribution of opportunities and participatory parity?

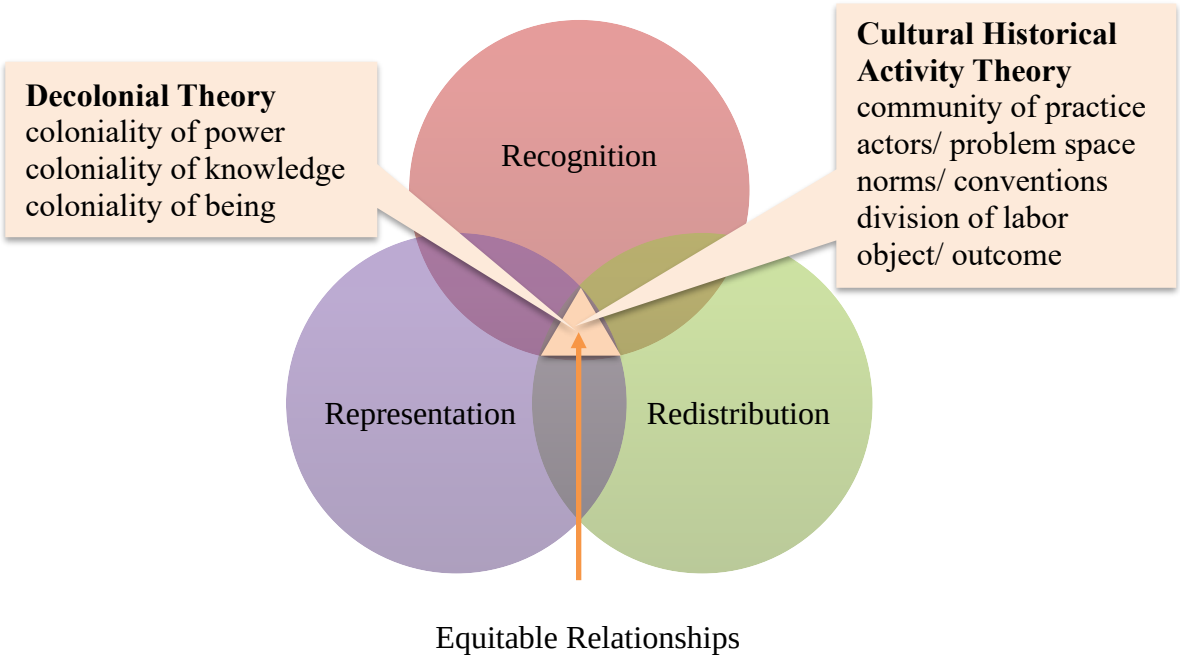
Equitable Relationships in Education: Conceptual Framework

In developing a conceptual framework for the study, I share Ravitch and Riggan's (2017) definition of conceptual framework: "an argument about why the topic one wishes to study matters, and why the means proposed to study it are appropriate and rigorous." (p. 5) I embrace these authors' position on defining a conceptual framework with its elements being reasonable and rigorous and their perspectives on framing and conducting research, as well as Maxwell's (2006) notion of a conceptual framework as an evolving process rather than something fixed and constant. Thus, I anticipate that the conceptual framework (Figure 1) presented in this chapter might change by the end of the research project due to a variety of re-examined, re-imagined practices, and emergent factors (e.g., changes in setting, participants, unexpected developments in the field, unpredictable social, economic, and/or political events in the country, state, district, and/or school where the study takes place, etc.) (Maxwell, 2006; Ravitch & Riggan, 2017).

Further, I purposefully linked my research aspiration and goals (promotion of equity, inclusivity, and social justice in education), identity and my own positionality (White, ciswoman, Ukrainian), context and settings (Western, White, Anglo-American education; American schools, teachers; and students labeled as dis/abled), theories and methodologies (decolonial approaches to analyzing power, being, and knowledge production; critical inclusive education research, and relational models grounded in political philosophy, sociocultural psychology, and pedagogy) in my conceptual framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). Some of these elements from the conceptual framework were discussed earlier in the chapter (i.e., equity-based definition of inclusive education), other elements are described in the following paragraphs (i.e., decolonial and cultural historical activity theories) and in Chapter Three (i.e., positionality statement, methodological approaches and tools).

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework: In Pursuit of Equitable Relationships in the Classrooms



Decolonial Theory

Decolonial scholars emphasize the coloniality of knowledge (Dirth & Adams, 2019; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2012; Walton, 2018). According to them, knowledge is not a value-free enterprise. It reflects the hegemony of the current dominant group (i.e., the Global North[2]) and, thus, produces ignorance in regard to the Other (i.e., the Global South[3]), prevents recognition, and erases institutional origins and histories. Theories from the Global South (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Walton, 2018) provide epistemic tools to question taken for granted assumptions in education. For instance, Walton (2018) argued that the concept of inclusion in education is problematic because it has been appropriated to Western, White, Anglo-American, neoliberal, colonial standards and ways of being. Decolonial theory suggests delinking education from its colonial nature through the exercise of constellational thinking (Aamodt, 2016; Cole & Teju, 2016; Walton, 2018). To practice constellational thinking means to examine ways in which humans establish connections between elements, especially when it comes to putting themselves in the position of Others in understanding and designing inclusive education research (Aamodt, 2016; Dirth & Adams, 2019; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Walton, 2018).

Moreover, in framing inclusive practices it is crucial to understand *who* a modern subject is (Adams et al., 2015; Dirth, 2018). Maldonado-Torres (2007) argued that "as modern subjects,

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[2] In decolonial theory, "the Global North" is associated with the Northern societies that "have created modern institutions and mentalities that have enabled them to achieve development" (Adams & Estrada-Villalta, 2017, p. 37).

[3] In decolonial theory, "the Global South" is "not simply the land below the equator. It is an ideological concept highlighting the economic, political, and epistemic dependency and unequal relations in the global world order, from a subaltern perspective" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 166).

we breath coloniality all the time and everyday" (p. 243). It emerges in a specific socio-historical context and continues to be alive in habits, behavior patterns, cultural artifacts, practices, criteria for performance, etc. Under modernity and capitalism, inclusion is coordinated and measured by economic means and standards. A social mobility and social efficacy became goals to stratify society through public education (Labaree, 1997). By situating himself in Gramsci's scholarship, Said (1978) explained that individuals cultivate features in themselves through the absorption of and consent to dominant cultural forms, ideas (hegemony) in which they live.

Thus, inclusion became a proxy for the expansion of patterns and practices of Whiteness (Waterston, 2006). Individuals construct features in themselves that modernity discourse projects. These features transformed through cultural practices and ways of doing and being (Bonilla-Silva, 2000; Loomba, 2007). Moreover, decolonial theory reminds us that language participates in reproduction of colonial mentality as it carries categorical identification. For instance, a concept of development is used as mechanism to sort and pathology individuals and groups who deviate from White, heteronormative, ableist established criteria of development (Esteva & Babones, 2013; Estrada-Villalta & Adams, 2018).

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

At the micro level, inclusive education depends on school workforces and families whose understandings of learning, individual differences, and inclusive practices are shaped by histories, experience, political systems, engagement in professional learning communities and community of practices in and outside of schools (Kozleski & Thorius, 2014; Waitoler & Kozleski, 2013; Skrtic, 1991). Socio-cultural theory conceptualizes dis/ability as a socio-cultural construct that results from poor access to social and cultural knowledge (Kozulin et al., 2003). Thus, framing inclusivity in education through the socio-cultural lens means to recognize the

importance of history and situate what is perceived as "different" within systems of social interactions, culture, and language to examine the degree to which these systems create or pathologize access and for whom (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013; Rogoff, 2003).

Moreover, CHAT reminds us that (a) learning is a collaborative practice that occurs within and across individuals, (b) culture is critical to understanding what learning is; and (c) learning and culture cannot be detached from social, political, and economic factors as those factors mediate learning, teaching, and classroom cultures (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007; Engeström, 1999; Leontiev, 1975; Vygotsky, 1978). CHAT provides the analytical tools that are particularly relevant in studying classroom. The CHAT elements – *subjects, objects, community, mediating tools, rules, division of labor, and outcomes* – allow to map out a multilayered classroom activity arena. These elements make visible normally silent and/or ignored structures, processes, and relations. Moreover, CHAT allows to see how learning and teaching processes unfold in classrooms for students with various needs, histories, and backgrounds and can be used to examine the way in which power, participation, and voice are manifested in classrooms (Cole & Engeström, 1993; Kozleski & Thorius, 2014).

Therefore, I used humanizing approaches to qualitative and ethnographic inquiry with educators and students who were labeled as "different" and documented their experiences and beliefs concerning inclusivity and equity (Paris &Winn, 2013; Seidman, 2013). Through this project, I theorize educators' lived experience regarding individual differences, inclusive education, and mechanisms that shape their beliefs, knowledge. By drawing from CHAT, decolonial theory and employing principles of humanizing research, I focused on the manifestations of political systems, histories, dominant communities of practice, and ideologies as forces which shape relationships and practices in the classrooms described as inclusive,

approaches to teaching and student learning. Moreover, I focused on the meanings regarding education and individual differences in terms of access and participation in education that have been created as a result of educators' engagements with those forces. By knowing about these underlying systemic issues, I searched for ways in which classrooms can be re-imagined and reorganized so they continue to be responsive to the social and academic needs of *all* learners.

Chapter 2: Examining Knowledge and Research Toward Classrooms Described as Inclusive

This review of the literature explores how inclusive classrooms have been studied and what researchers have found as they sought to uncover the processes and outcomes of inclusive education. After a brief description of the methods, I explore dimensions of inclusive classroom communities and examine the degree to which decolonial notions of what counts as inclusivity infuse current definitions and enactments of inclusive education.

In reviewing the literature, I aimed to understand the ways in which educational research produces knowledge(s) and practices about inclusive education, teachers, and students identified with dis/abilities in general education classrooms. In this process of learning, I sought to understand (a) what is known about inclusive schools; (b) what research questions were asked; (c) what theoretical and methodological tools were applied to research the topic; and (d) to what extent included scholarship centered (or not) notions of equity and inclusivity in studied classrooms described as inclusive (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Artiles, 2019; Kozleski, 2016; Kozleski & Thorius, 2014). I analyzed relevant empirical studies through a prism of CHAT (Cole & Engeström, 1993; Rogoff, 2003; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013) and decolonial theory (Adams et al., 2018; Dirth & Adams, 2019; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2012, Walton, 2018) because their epistemological foundations emphasize the importance of situating perception and practice within histories and contexts which is crucial in advancing equity research (Artiles, 2019).

Method

In the following paragraphs, I describe literature search strategies, inclusion and exclusion criteria I used to search literature, and themes that emerged across reviewed articles. I

conclude the chapter with an argument about prevailing gaps in the literature as well as explain the means by which the present study has potential to contribute to existing inclusive education research, theory, and practice.

Literature Search Strategies

I applied several strategies to search for relevant studies. First, I consulted with experts in the field who helped to identify key search terms: *inclusive education, inclusive classrooms, student outcomes, student experiences, students, teacher outcomes, teacher collaboration, teacher experiences*. Second, I conducted two basic searches, the KU Quick Search and Google Scholar search, to compare if these sources could reveal any additional terms. Thus, the terms *students with disabilities, inclusive practices in classroom,* and *general education classroom* were found. A list of identified terms was compared with the ERIC Thesaurus's (2019) descriptors (including synonyms) assigned to sources in the ERIC digital library to describe its subject content. In this way, the terms *mainstreaming* and *students with special needs* were added to the literature search. Finally, I reviewed the authors' key terms from the first ten articles included in the literature review which led to a few more terms to be discovered. For instance, by reviewing Kurth's et al. (2015) article, the terms *inclusion* and *severe disabilities* were added to the list.

I applied two type of searches to identify relevant studies: (a) an online search and (b) an archive search. First, by using the Boolean operators (i.e., AND, OR) and combining identified key terms in multiple ways (e.g., *inclusion* AND *students with disabilities, inclusive education* AND *student experience, inclusive classroom* AND *student outcomes, general education classroom* AND *students with disabilities, inclusion* AND *disabilities* OR *mainstreaming* OR *students with special needs, inclusive education* AND *teacher collaboration,* etc.), I reviewed

four electronic databases (ERIC, ProQuest, KU Quick Search, and Google Scholar). The other search agents were not used as they yielded the same search results. The online search was conducted in September 2019 and revealed thousands of articles. I examined the title and abstract of each article. I screened the full article when relevant indicators such as activities described between and among students and their teachers in classroom described as inclusive were found. Table 2.1 demonstrates the results of this literature search procedure. It includes descriptors of search strategies, the limiters used, the searched databases, the combinations of search terms applied, a total number of articles found, and a total number of articles that met inclusion criteria. Therefore, among 469 articles found by using the online search databases, 46 articles were included. The other 423 articles were excluded from the review as they did not meet inclusion criteria.

Table 2.1

The Results of Online Literature Search Procedure

Search terms	Total number of potential articles found	Number of articles that met inclusion criteria
Database: Google Scholar		
Search strategy and limiters used: with the exact words, search terms occur anywhere in the article and/or in the article title, dated between 2000 and 2019.		
inclusive classrooms	73	14
inclusion and students with disabilities	15	6
general education classroom and students with disabilities	10	2
inclusive practices in classroom	17	4
KU Library Search		
Search strategy and limiters used: peer-reviewed, dated between 2000 and 2019, published in the English language		
inclusive education and student outcomes	47	7
inclusive education and student experience	131	1
inclusive education and teacher outcomes	16	1
inclusive classroom and student outcomes	47	2
inclusive classroom and student experience	42	1
inclusive classroom and teacher outcomes	6	0

inclusive classroom and teacher collaboration	41	1
Database: ERIC		
Search strategy and limiters used: peer-reviewed, dated between 2000 and 2019, published in the English language		
(inclusive classrooms) inclusion and disabilities or mainstreaming or special needs students	22	6
(inclusive classrooms) inclusion and disabilities and equal education	2	1
Total	**469**	**46**

Second, I conducted an archival search from books (Artiles et al., 2011; Kozleski & Thorius, 2014) as well as examined a reference list of articles (e.g., Garrote et al., 2017; Kurth et al., 2015; Stelitano et al., 2019), and journals with their emphasis on special education and inclusive education research (*International Journal of Inclusive Education, Exceptional Children, International Journal of Special Education*). This archive search resulted in six additional articles that were included in the literature review. A total of 52 articles were included for further analysis and coding (Table 2.2)

Table 2.2

Included Articles

Author(s)	*Activities*	*Type of study*	*Data sources*	*Data analysis*	*Type of school*	*Participants*
Banda et al. (2010)	peer-to-peer initiations	quantitative	observations	multiple-baseline	elementary	students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (n=2)
Bottge et al. (2015)	student problem-solving and performances	quantitative	achievement tests, classroom observations, field notes	multilevel modeling	middle	students with mild mental disability (MMD), other health impairment (OHI), specific learning disability (SLD), autism, or emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). (n=134); students w/out disabilities (n=337)
Boutot & Bryant (2005)	peer nominations	quantitative	scales, peer nominations,	Fisher's Exact Test, Pearson chi square procedure	elementary	students w/out disabilities (n=141), students with disabilities (autism, LD, ADHD, BD) (n=36)
Bray & Russell (2018)	writing, implementing, and monitoring IEPs	qualitative	ethnography, field notes, pictures, interviews, sample documents created	coding	high	students (n=5) with learning disabilities
Brock et al. (2016)	peer support, interactions	quantitative	observations, questionnaire		middle	students with intellectual disabilities and/or autism (n=4), paraprofessionals (n=4), special education teachers (n=4), peers without disabilities (n=10)

Author(s)	*Activities*	*Type of study*	*Data sources*	*Data analysis*	*Type of school*	*Participants*
Bryant et al. (2000)	reading intervention	quantitative	reading assessments	repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA)	middle	students with reading disabilities (n=14), low-achieving students (n=17), average-achieving students (n=29), teachers (n=10)
Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprathaban (2016)	instructional practices	qualitative	observations	coding	elementary, middle, high	students with special needs (n=83)
Cameron, (2014)	grouping arrangements, student interactions	mixed-methods	observations, interviews	coding	elementary, middle	general education teachers (n=17), (1) students with severe disabilities (n = 13), students with mild disabilities (n = 13), non-disabled students (n = 13)
Carter et al. (2005)	student engagement	quantitative	observations	descriptive statistics, MANOVAs, paired-sample t tests.	high	students with moderate (n=8) or severe intellectual disabilities (n=8), students with ASD (n=5), physical impairments (n=4), speech or language impairments (n=2), visual impairments (n=1), and hearing impairments (n=1).
Carter et al. (2008)	student interactions	quantitative	observations	descriptive statistics, paired samples t tests	middle, high	students with autism (n=11), students with intellectual disabilities (n=12)
Carter et al. (2007)	student interactions,	quantitative	observations	descriptive statistics	high	student with severe intellectual disability (n=1), student with

Author(s)	*Activities*	*Type of study*	*Data sources*	*Data analysis*	*Type of school*	*Participants*
	instructional format					moderate intellectual disability (n=1), student with moderate and a speech/language impairment (n=1), and student with severe intellectual and physical disabilities (n=1)
Cawley et al. (2002)	student achievement and behavior, teacher collaboration	quantitative	student grades, discipline referrals, attendance records	no specified	high	three-person teacher team (n=15), students with severe emotional disturbances and/or learning disabilities (n=114)
Chung et al. (2012)	student interactions	quantitative	observations	descriptive statistics	elementary, middle	students with ASP or intellectual disabilities who used AAC
Chung et al. (2019)	student interactions	quantitative	observations	descriptive statistics	high	students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (n=10)
Chung & Douglas (2015)	peer interaction behaviors	quantitative	observations, interviews, questionnaires	descriptive statistics	elementary	students with ASD and used SGD (n=3), paraprofessionals (n=3), peer partners (n=6)
Cosbey & Johnston (2006)	peer support and interactions	quantitative	observations, survey	descriptive statistics	preschool, elementary	students with severe multiple disabilities (n=3)
David & Kuyini (2012)	teacher behaviors	quantitative	surveys, semi-structured, interviews,	descriptive statistics, multiple	elementary	teachers (n=93), students (n=923)

Author(s)	*Activities*	*Type of study*	*Data sources*	*Data analysis*	*Type of school*	*Participants*
			classroom observations	regression analysis		
Flem et al. (2004)	teachers' behaviors and collaboration	qualitative	observations, video recordings interviews, school documents, member-checks	coding	elementary	teacher (n=1)
Foreman et al. (2004)	students' behavior states	quantitative	observations	descriptive statistics	elementary	students with profound and multiple disabilities (n=16)
Hunt et al. (2003)	teacher collaboration	mixed methods	observations, interviews, member checks	descriptive statistics, coding	elementary	student with severe physical and speech and language impairments (n=2), student with ASD (n=1), students at-risk of academic underachievement (n=3), educational team classroom, educational teams
Jordan & Stanovich (2001)	teacher-student interactions	mixed-methods	scales, interviews	descriptive statistics, coding	elementary	teachers (n=9), students (n=48)
Katz (2015)	students' engagement	mixed-methods	surveys, observations	chi square analyses	elementary, secondary	schools (n=5), classroom teachers, resource teachers, and school administrators (n=58)
Katz et al. (2002)	teaching practices, students' engagement and interactions	quantitative	observations	molar analysis	elementary	students with intellectual disabilities (n=5), students with ASD or pervasive developmental disorder (n=5)

Author(s)	*Activities*	*Type of study*	*Data sources*	*Data analysis*	*Type of school*	*Participants*
Kugelmass (2001)	school practices	qualitative	ethnography (4 years) observations, interviews	historical analysis, coding	elementary	school (n=1)
Kurth et al. (2015)	classroom ecology	qualitative	observations, field notes	coding	elementary, middle	students with severe disabilities (n=18)
Lee (2006)	classroom ecology	quantitative	observations	multilevel regression, descriptive	high	students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (n=45), general education teachers (n=29)
Lemons et al. (2012)	reading intervention	quantitative	reading assessments, social validity	descriptive statistics	elementary, middle	students with Down syndrome (n=15), special education teachers (n=1), reading specialists (n=2), paraprofessional (n=1)
Lyons & Thompson (2012)	student engagement, reading progress	mixed methods	assessments, group reflection, teacher journals, interviews, classroom observations, student discussion group	descriptive statistics, coding	elementary, middle	educational teams (n=4) and their general education classrooms (n=4)
Mackey (2014)	instructional strategies, classroom community	qualitative	interviews, observations, field notes, classwork, exams.	coding	middle	teachers (n=3)
Magiera & Zigmond (2005)	co-taught and solo-taught classes,	quantitative	observations	descriptive statistics	middle	co-teaching pairs (n=8), students with LD (n=15), students with other health impairments (n=3)

Author(s)	*Activities*	*Type of study*	*Data sources*	*Data analysis*	*Type of school*	*Participants*
	students' interaction					
Matzen et al. (2010)	students' behaviors and performances	mixed-method	observations, semi structured interviews, field notes	coding, descriptive statistics	middle	student with significant disabilities (n=3)
Mavrou et al. (2010)	students' interactions	mixed methods	observations, video recordings	coding, discourse analysis, descriptive statistics	elementary	pairs of students with and w/out disabilities (n=20)
McDonnell et al. (2006)	one-to-one embedded instruction	quantitative	student responses, social validity	descriptive statistics	middle	students with Down sydrome (n=2), students with LD (n=2), specila education teacher (n=1), paraprofessional (n=1)
McDonnell et al. (2001)	academic responding and competing behaviors of students	quantitative	test scores, observations	descriptive statistics	high	students with moderate to severe disabilities (n=3), students without disabilities (n=3), special education teacher (n=1), general education teachers (n=3)
McDonnell et al. (2000).	instructional context	quantitative	observations	ANOVAs, descriptive statistics	elementary	students with moderate to severe disabilities (n=6) and their peer w/out disabilities (n=6)
Mcleskey & Waldron (2002)	curriculum content, grouping	qualitative	semi-structured interviews	coding	elementary	teachers (n= not specified), schools (n=6)

Author(s)	*Activities*	*Type of study*	*Data sources*	*Data analysis*	*Type of school*	*Participants*
	patterns, collaboration					
Morcom & MacCallum (2012)	classroom activities	qualitative	video recordings, reflective accounts, surveys, school records of behavior, in-depth interviews	coding	elementary	teacher (n=1), classroom (n=1), students (n=25), students with disabilities (n=2)
Morningstar et al. (2015)	supports for participation	mix-methods	observations, field notes	descriptive statistics	elementary	schools (n=6)
Naraian (2011)	classroom activities	qualitative, ethnography (9 months)	participant observation, interviews, field notes	coding	elementary	general education teachers (n=1), parents of students with disabilities (n=3)
Naraian (2011)	classroom activities	qualitative, ethnography (9 months)	participant observation, interviews, field notes	coding	elementary	general education teacher (n=1), special education teacher (n=1), classroom (n=1)
Palincsar et al. (2001)	classroom activities, instructional contexts	mixed-methods	field notes, video recordings, assessments, interviews, students' products, teacher journal entries	descriptive statistics, coding	elementary	general education teachers (n=4), students with disabilities (n=19), students w/out disabilities (n=11)
Palmer et al. (2004)	self-determination skills	quantitative	scales, students' scores	ANOVAs, descriptive statistics	middle, high	students with intellectual disabilities (n=22)
Place & Hodge (2001)	students' interaction	qualitative	video recordings, observations, interviews	coding, descriptive statistics	middle	students with physical disabilities (n=3), students w/out disabilities (n=19)

Author(s)	*Activities*	*Type of study*	*Data sources*	*Data analysis*	*Type of school*	*Participants*
Possi & Milinga (2017)	teachers' behavior	qualitative	questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, focus group discussions	coding	middle	schools (n=2), teachers (n=9), students with hearing impairments and albinism (n=100)
Scruggs et al. (2012)	traditional instruction vs. tutoring intervention	quantitative	students' test scores	descriptive statistics	middle	general education students (n=133), students with learning disabilities (n=21), students with emotional disabilities (n=3)
Stelitano et al. (2019)	school routines	mixed-methods	interviews, observations, social network survey, artifacts	coding	high	schools (n=2), administrators (n=10), general education teachers (n=15), counselors/other (n=9), special education teachers (n=9), assistants (n=4)
Slobodzian (2011)	classroom activities	qualitative	observations, field notes, photographs, audio-, video recordings	coding	elementary	deaf students (n=2), non-deaf students (n=20), general education teacher (n=2), sign language interpreter (n=1), resource room teacher (n=1)
Tay & Kee (2019)	teachers' behaviors	qualitative	observations, interviews	coding	elementary, middle	high-functioning students with ASD (n=6), teachers (n=6)

Author(s)	*Activities*	*Type of study*	*Data sources*	*Data analysis*	*Type of school*	*Participants*
Wallace et al. (2002)	classroom ecological events	quantitative	observations	descriptive statistics	high	inclusive classrooms (n=118)
Wiebe Berry (2006)	classroom context, interactional patterns	qualitative, ethnography, 9 months	interviews, video recordings of classroom activities	discourse analysis	elementary	general education teacher (n=1), special education teacher (n=1), students (n=29), students with disabilities (n=12)
Woodfield & Ashby (2016)	classroom settings	qualitative	observation, semi-structured interviews, student self-presentations	coding	high	students with ASD (n=3), parents (n=4), teaching assistants (n=3), teachers (n=5), case manager (n=5), co-teachers (n=2), school psychologists (n=1), administrators (n=2)
Yildiz (2015)	teachers' and students' behaviors	quantitative	questionnaire, observation form	descriptive statistics	elementary	general education teachers (n=54), students with mild intellectual disabilities (n=54)

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To be included for further analysis, a study had to meet the following inclusion criteria: (a) published between 2000 and 2019 in a peer-reviewed journal in the English language; (b) was an empirical study; (c) described activity between and among students identified with dis/abilities, their peers, and teachers in K-12 classroom described as inclusive (public and/or private school settings in and outside the United States). The term *activity* can be defined in various ways. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2019) defines activity as, "behavior or actions of a particular kind" and/or "an organizational unit for performing a specific function." However, in this project, I followed the definition of *activity* provided by the third generation of CHAT theorists in education. They define activity as structures and practices that allow students to be engaged and involved in learning (Roth & Lee, 2007; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). For instance, studies were included that described supports for and interactions among students identified with dis/abilities and their peers (Banda et al., 2010; Foreman et al., 2004; McDonnell et al., 2001), and student academic engagement in classroom described as inclusive (Katz, 2015; Morningstar et al., 2015) (Table 2.1). Studies were excluded from review if they (a) were intervention studies lacking a description of how an intervention supported students identified with and without dis/abilities in inclusive settings; and/or (b) were attitudinal studies based on surveys examining teachers' and/or students' perspectives and/or experiences toward inclusive education and/or inclusive settings.

Maxwell (2006) emphasized relevance over thoroughness when it comes to including articles for dissertation literature reviews. He suggested that "relevant works are those that have important implications for design, conduct, or interpretation of the study, not simply those that deal with the topic, or in the defined field of substantive area, of the research." (p. 28) Therefore,

in order to have an expansive understanding about the research topic, several conceptual, seminal articles and book chapters that employ a critical perspective on inclusive educational research, policy, and practices were used to critically examine included empirical studies and identify gaps in the literature.

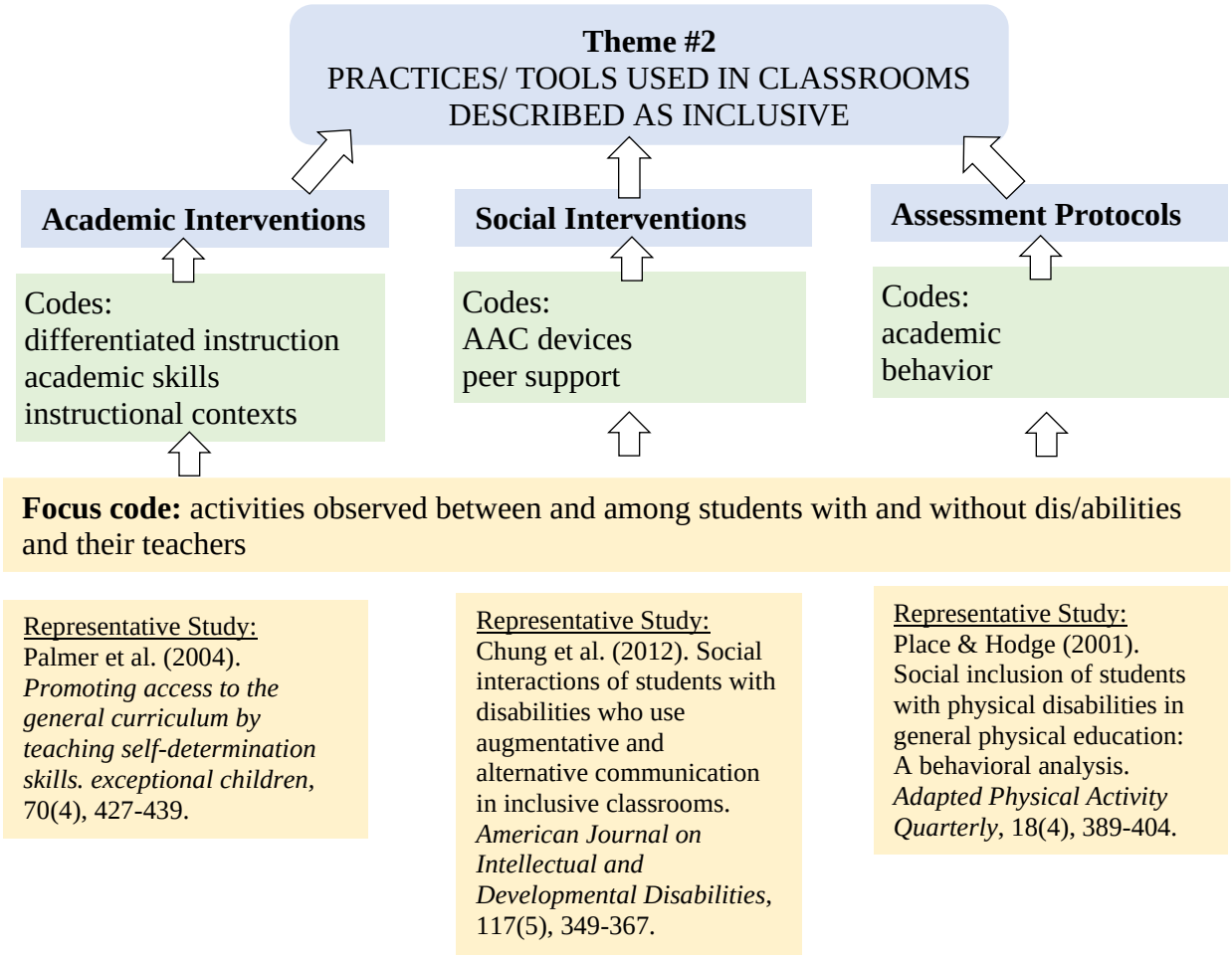
Coding Procedure

To analyze 52 empirical studies that met the inclusion criteria, I engaged in three levels of coding (Saldaña, 2015). First, I coded studies by assigning the following descriptors (i.e., first-level codes or focused codes) to each of the articles: *purpose*, presence or absence of *conceptual framework* (presence as 1 and absence as 0); *dimensions of research* (e.g., key articulated concepts, what counts as inclusive practice); *participants*; *activities* described among and between students with and without dis/abilities and their teachers; *grade level* (i.e., elementary, middle or high schools); *type of school* (i.e., private or public); *research design*; *data sources*; and *data analysis*. These focus codes served as placeholders and were used to surface and map out features of research toward classrooms described as inclusive. While I was assigning the focus codes while reading included articles, I memoed common occurrences and events that I began noticing within and across reviewed studies. For instance, one of the activities which was well-documented in classrooms described as inclusive was academic interventions for students identified with dis/abilities. It appeared often to be a major research focus in many reviewed studies. In a later analysis, that observation was supported through a second level of coding and became one of the categories.

The second level of coding employed two procedures, the recoding of previously coded data and clustering new codes into categories (Saldaña, 2015). I examined what was coded under each of the focused codes and recoded that data (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1

Example of the Three Levels of Coding Process



For instance, I examined structures (i.e., procedures, practices, and behaviors that allow students to engage in learning) which were coded under the focus code *activities* and assigned new codes to capture the type of activity/structure described (e.g., peer tutoring, modification of curriculum, examination of students' or teachers' behaviors, etc.). A similar procedure was applied to the rest of the data that was previously coded under each of the focused codes. As I searched for similarities across the codes (e.g., instruction, use of device, teacher training, teacher collaboration, etc.) and grouped them into categories (e.g., academic or social interventions, assessment protocols and procedures), the focus codes were no longer applicable.

Finally, the third level of coding included grouping categories into larger clusters or themes following the CHAT framework (Cole & Engeström, 1993). For instance, categories such as social, academic interventions for students identified with dis/abilities, as well as assessment tools for managing student and teacher behaviors and engagement, were grouped into a cluster unfolding practices and tools used in classrooms described as inclusive (Figure 2.1).

Thus, analysis of clusters or themes (i.e., actors and goals, practices and tools, and roles in classrooms described as inclusive) in correspondence with CHAT's elements (i.e., subject, object, rules, community, division of labor, means), allowed me to (a) determine the extent to which available knowledge(s) and research captured classrooms described as inclusive (i.e., the dimensions of the activity arena) and (b) answer the following three questions: *who* has been studied in classrooms described as inclusive (i.e., actors), *what* has been studied in inclusive classrooms (i.e., actions, activities), and *how* inclusive classrooms have been framed and examined (i.e., concepts and mediating tools). Further, drawing on decolonial scholarship (Adams et al., 2018; Dirth & Adams, 2019; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2012), I examined the *degree to which* researchers' frameworks and epistemologies allowed them to examine participants' voices, activities, and mediating tools in studying classrooms described as inclusive. The following paragraphs present answers to those questions.

Findings

The vast majority of articles were intervention studies. Typically, authors of these studies analyzed the effectiveness of the academic and social supports and practices that aimed to include students identified with dis/abilities in general education. Several studies explored a collaboration among school professionals toward inclusive education reform implementation as well as interactions and behaviors between and among students and their teachers in the

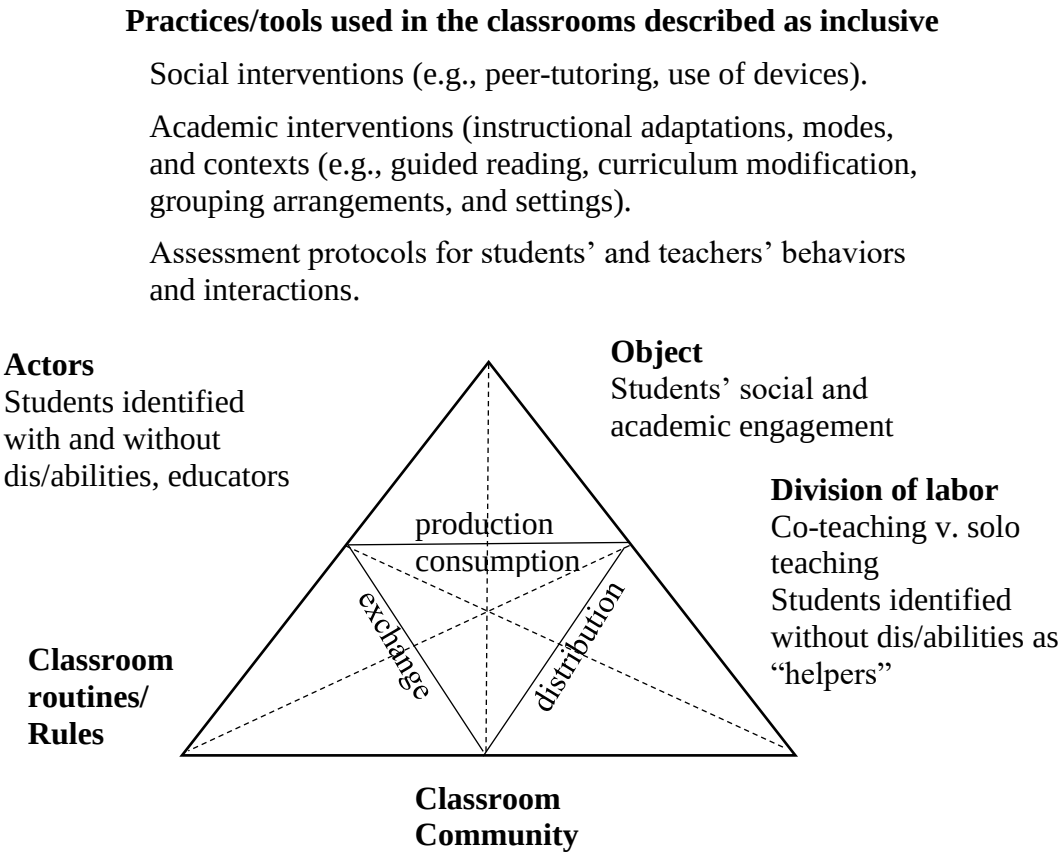
classrooms described as inclusive. These dimensions of the reviewed research are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Dimensions of the Activity Arena

The analysis of literature demonstrates that actors, activities/ practices, roles, and mediating tools were the dimensions of the activity arena in regard to knowledge(s) and research toward classrooms described as inclusive (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2

Literature Review Coding Results: The Dimensions of the Activity Arena



Actors and Goals

Actors in these studies included students identified with and without dis/abilities, general and special education teachers, paraeducators, and educational teams. Students identified with

dis/abilities were a major research focus in the majority of the studies (22/52). These studies focused on behavior and/or academic and social performance of students. Teacher collaboration and behaviors were observed in 15% of the studies (n = 8). All studies included in the review were designed and directed by researchers. The majority of the studies occurred in elementary schools (n = 21). The remainder were in middle (n = 10) or high schools (n = 9). Twelve studies involved a mixed of participants from different grade levels. In almost all studies, students were positioned as recipients of and teachers as implementers of educational services.

Typically, researchers sought to understand communication and behavior patterns among and between students with and without dis/abilities and their teachers (Banda et al., 2010; David & Kuyini, 2012; Chung & Douglas, 2015) and/or ways to increase student academic and social participation in general education (Palincsar et al., 2001; Hunt et al., 2003; Mackey, 2014; Scruggs et al., 2012). Several studies compared students' outcomes and experiences within different instructional settings (e.g., special versus general education classrooms) (Foreman et al., 2004; McDonnell et al., 2000; Matzen et al., 2010). A few studies explored changes in teachers' perceptions and beliefs toward the education of students identified with dis/abilities in general education classrooms (Jordan & Stanovich, 2001; Mcleskey & Waldron, 2002). Table 2.3 provides a detailed description of targeted research goals (motives) in classrooms described as inclusive.

Table 2.3

Research Goals in Classrooms Described as Inclusive

Goal Area	Description	References
	Elementary Schools	
Communication among students	Occurrences of initiations and responses between students with ASD and their peers, acceptance,	Banda et al., 2010; David & Kuyini, 2012; Chung & Douglas, 2015; Boutot & Bryant, 2005; Slobodzian, 2011.

Goal Area	Description	References
	visibility, and membership in a peer group, indications of self-identity.	
Academic and social participation	Student academic and social engagement, participation, and learning, use of technology; management of student behaviors.	Palincsar et al., 2001; Hunt et al., 2003; Mavrou et al., 2010; Yildiz, 2015; Flem et al., 2004.
Comparison of different settings	Communicative conditions observed in students in different instructional contexts.	Foreman et al., 2004; McDonnell et al., 2000; Katz et al., 2002.
Teacher beliefs	Teachers' perceptions regarding the changes occurred in the general education classrooms.	Jordan & Stanovich, 2001; Mcleskey & Waldron, 2002.
Production of inclusive communities	Inclusive classroom communities, community ethos, self-reflection, teachers' negotiation of immediate classroom demands.	Naraian, 2011; 2011; Wiebe Berry, 2006; Morcom & MacCallum, 2012; Kugelmass, 2001.
	Middle Schools	
Academic and social participation	Peer mediated instruction to facilitate student learning; academic and social outcomes.	Bottge et al., 2015; Brock et al., 2016; Bryant et al., 2000; Mackey, 2014; Scruggs et al., 2012; Place & Hodge, 2001.
Comparison of different settings	Students' experiences in different contexts.	Matzen et al., 2010; McDonnell et al., 2006.
	High Schools	
Academic and social participation	Social interactions between students; social and academic outcomes; student-teacher behaviors.	Bray & Russell, 2018; Carter et al., 2005; Carter et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2006; McDonnell et al., 2001; Wallace et al., 2002; Chung et al., 2019.
Comparison of different settings	Student achievement and behavior in various classrooms.	Cawley et al., 2002
Production of inclusive communities	School organization for inclusion, organizational routines.	Stelitano et al., 2019

Thus, the analysis of targeted goals demonstrates that the *efficacy discourse* (i.e., focus on social, academic, and behavior benefits of practices described as inclusive) (Artiles et al., 2006) dominated in the reviewed studies. The *rights and ethic discourses* (i.e., focus on ways in which schools reproduce inequalities) and the *implementation discourses* (i.e., focus on

questioning underlying assumptions that sustain practices) (Artiles et al., 2006) were virtually absent within included studies (Naraian, 2011). Few studies were concerned about the relationship between teacher collaboration, school reform, school organization, and conceptualization of inclusive practices (Wiebe Berry, 2006; Kugelmass, 2001; Stelitano et al., 2019).

Activities

The review of this set of studies illustrates the importance placed on academic and social interventions designed to increase inclusion of students identified with dis/abilities in general education. I draw on CHAT to understand the purpose, nature, and impact of activities observed in classrooms described as inclusive. This theoretical framework affords the opportunity to situate and analyze an activity within networks of activity systems that mutually reinforce each other (Cole & Engeström, 1993; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013).

On one hand, the relations between students identified with and without dis/abilities and their social and academic inclusion in general education were mediated by practices and pedagogical tools teachers use; on the other hand, they were also facilitated by prescribed national educational standards, classroom community, and roles that teachers employed in schools (Cole & Engeström, 1993; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). This "cultural mediation" simultaneously impacts and transforms the whole classroom arena, the students, teachers, educational goals, teaching and learning environments (Cole & Engeström, 1993). Thus, analysis of pedagogical practices, structures, and tools (material and symbolic) utilized in classrooms with students is crucial for at least two reasons. First, their applications position students and produce knowledge about them and their interactions with the environment in a way that might radically change their schooling experience and conditions for success. Second, attention to

activities in classrooms between and among students and their teachers presents an opportunity to examine the degree to which an applied practice or tool represents students' lived experiences and provides learning opportunities that are meaningful to students. It opens space for identifying existing tensions toward praxis involved in creating inclusive classrooms (Engeström, 2001; Hancock & Miller, 2018; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013).

Researchers acknowledged a multiplicity of factors and ways in which they shaped inclusion for students labeled as dis/abled in general education (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). Instructional strategies (e.g., peer-mediated instruction), curriculum adaptations, student seating arrangements (Carter et. al., 2008; Maskey, 2014; Flem et. al., 2004; Lyons & Thompson, 2012; Lee et. al., 2006; McDonnel et al., 2001; Scruggs et al., 2012), paraeducators' training (Brock et. al., 2016), teacher collaboration (Cawley et. al., 2002; Hunt et al., 2003), redistribution of teacher attention among differing learners, and frequency of teachers asking questions (Cameron, 2014; Possi & Milinga, 2017) are some examples of the determinants that researchers examined. For instance, Cameron (2014) analyzed teachers' interactions with students on the basis of group composition (whole class, small group, and one-on-one) and differences in regard to students with and without dis/abilities. Observational records suggest that general education teachers were almost solely responsible for whole-class instruction. They provided 98.7 percent of whole-class interactions. Special education (1.1%) and paraeducators (0.2%) were rarely engaged in the whole-group interactions. In regard to a student group, for instance, during the small-group and one-on-one instructions, special educators and paraeducators were more frequently engaged with students identified with dis/abilities. While these findings offer insights into how roles were defined among educational professionals working with classrooms described as inclusive, the criteria used for data collection were based on (a) the type of taken-for-granted interactions in

different grouping arrangements (“whole class, small group, one to one”) and (b) the taken for granted student group and type of dis/ability (“severe, mild, non-disabled”). Knowledge about teachers’ interactions with students was produced based on centering the notion of ability and portraying it as the only dimension of student identity worth attention. The intersections of race, language, sexuality, class, and culture of students and teachers and their impact on classroom community, recognition of student differences, and teacher-teacher, student-teacher interactions were ignored (Crenshaw, 2017). Historically and economically determined hierarchies among educators that shape their roles in schools and interactions with students were also omitted in data collection and analysis (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). A similar critique concerns almost all included studies.

Further, in terms of type of activities observed in classrooms described as inclusive, 22 articles focused on academic interventions (e.g., Bottge et al., 2015; Bryant et. al., 2000; Lemons et al., 2012; Lyons & Thompson, 2012; Palmer et al., 2004; Scruggs et al., 2012). Nine emphasized social (e.g., Brock et al., 2016; Carter et al., 2007; Cosbey & Johnston, 2006; Mavrou et al., 2010) interventions and supports aimed to increase students identified with dis/abilities social and academic engagements in general education settings. Several studies investigated the impact of placement on student educational outcomes (McDonnell et. al., 2000; Matzen et al., 2010; Foreman et al., 2004). Few studies examined students’ and teachers’ engagements in classrooms described as inclusive (Chung et al., 2012; 2019; Slobodzian, 2011; Wiebe Berry, 2006).

A limited number of studies utilized critical, institutional, socio-cultural, and sociohistorical discourses to investigate practices that were meant to produce inclusive communities in schools (Bray & Russell, 2018; Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprathaban, 2016;

Kugelmass, 2001; Naraian, 2011; Stelitano et al., 2019). For instance, using a mixed-methods research design Stelitano et al. (2019) examined school organization, service delivery models, special educators' role, allocation of school resources, and daily organizational routines that structured teachers' work in two high schools. Two models, co-teaching and consultation, prevailed among schools' formal design for including students with dis/abilities. As findings suggest, the implementation of the consultation model in one of the participating schools occurred through the administration of test routines. Such routines involved consultations of special educators with general education teachers about scheduled quizzes, tests given in general education classrooms in order to administer them with "extra help"[4] to students with dis/abilities in a resource room. The authors described the "extra help" as follows:

> Ms. Miller looks down at her answer key and then tells the student "you need to change this" and points to a number. The student erases the answer and starts walking through the problem again. Ms. Miller then says ''Oh no, you have to put 4 here,'' and the student erases her work and puts a 4 down. The student gets an answer and Ms. Miller looks down and says, "Great, keep going." (Stelitano et al., 2019, p. 24)

The documented performative nature of organizational routines through the consultation model offers important insights into the ways in which practices aimed to be inclusive resulted in perpetuation of an inequitable education in school. On the contrary, the co-teaching model was implemented through the study hall routine. It required educators in both general and special education to be familiar with activities that occurred in general education classrooms in order to

[4] Quotation marks are original.

efficiently plan for “learning support study halls.” These service delivery models followed the goal to provide inclusive education. They both entailed a certain level of coordination and communication among educators to include students with dis/abilities in general education classrooms. However, the means through which they were implemented were significantly different and often prevented equity-based models of inclusive education (Stelitano et al., 2019; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). Unfortunately, there is little known about teacher collaborative routines as mediating factors in providing access to rigorous learning opportunities for students with dis/abilities within general education classrooms. The analysis of organizational routines and ways in which they are practiced has a potential to illuminate activities that perpetuate exclusion in schools (Stelitano et al., 2019). The Individualized Educational Program (IEP) is another example of a practice designed to support appropriate learning of students labeled as dis/abled (IDEA, 2004; Bray & Russell, 2018). However, as the literature review reveals, IEPs were used as a performative act in responding to institutional pressure (Bray & Russell, 2018).

Roles

Researchers have acknowledged that the design and sustainability of inclusive and equitable classroom communities depends on many actors (e.g., general education teachers, special education teachers, paraeducators, students identified without dis/abilities) and their roles in classroom described as inclusive (Kozleski & Proffitt, 2020; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). Several studies viewed students without dis/abilities to be “peer-mentors” to their classmates labeled as dis/abled. For instance, Brock et al. (2016) examined the implementation of peer support arrangements in improving the social outcomes for students severely affected by dis/abilities. Participating peer-buddies followed a script to engage or reengage students identified with dis/abilities during their independent or group work. The observation record

system was utilized to measure behaviors of students and their peers. While peer-mediated instruction promoted social engagement among students, in some cases it situated peers without dis/abilities as superior members of the classroom community that misaligns with the spirit of inclusivity in education.

Mediating Tools

Academic Interventions

Out of 52 studies, eleven studies investigated the effectiveness of academic interventions for students identified with dis/abilities (see Table 2.2). In those studies, researchers argued that it can be challenging for teachers to provide instruction to students with a variety of learning and behavior needs in classrooms described as inclusive. They followed the assumption that effective instruction would benefit academic inclusion and skill development of students labeled as dis/abled. For instance, Lyons and Thompson (2012) reported on the impact of guided reading on student engagement and reading progress as well as the changes in teachers' perspectives toward the guided reading approach in inclusive classrooms. The intervention impact was determined based on student performances on benchmark reading assessments, classroom observations, and interviews with teachers. One of the teachers reported:

> "You know obviously once kids start feeling successful some of those behaviors decrease, but some of the more needier students with heavy behaviors and mental health issues, I mean [student] is an example. You know there's so many issues there with him that guided reading isn't going to address it." (Lyons & Thompson, 2012, p. 164)

Unfortunately, when the reviewed studies reported about the effect of academic interventions on student progress, they failed to discuss, for example, about what a particular book, event or interaction made "kids start [to] feel successful"; nor did they explain how teachers coped with

the situation like the one described above. Examination of the contextual variables that mediate student learning and interactions with other members of classroom community is crucial because it has a potential to better understand activities, habits, and tools that produce or undermine equitable relationships in classrooms.

Social Interventions

Peer-to-peer communication and peer acceptance are considered to be foundational in increasing access to the general education curriculum and participation in school for students labeled as dis/abled. Several studies focused on the nature of social relationships and behaviors (Banda et al., 2010; Boutot & Bryant, 2005; Carter et al., 2008; Chung et al., 2019; Place & Hodge, 2001; Wiebe Berry, 2006) as well as factors that may influence social interactions and communication between and among students identified with and without dis/abilities in general education settings (Carter et al., 2005; Chung & Douglas, 2015; Chung et al., 2012; Cosbey & Johnston, 2006).

Typically, social engagement and peer interactional patterns were measured as the degree to which students labeled as dis/abled exhibited verbal and/or non-verbal communication behaviors toward their peers and teachers in classrooms described as inclusive. The literature review indicates inconsistency among findings across studies examining the effects of social interventions for students identified with dis/abilities. In some cases, researchers reported students being infrequently engaged in social interactions despite their close proximity to a peer and use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices to communicate (Chung et al., 2012; Place & Hodge, 2001). For instance, Place and Hodge (2001) used video recordings, non-participant observations (i.e., an interval recording procedure of 5 second to observe and 5 second to record), and interviews with eighth-grade students (three students identified with

physical disabilities and 19 students identified without disabilities) to document occurrence (e.g., initiates or engages in social talk with a peer, praises peer for effort and/or achievement, uses peer's first name, gives appropriate feedback to a peer, etc.), duration, and specificity of interactions (e.g., who, when, and how initiated contacts). Findings suggest that students identified with and without dis/abilities rarely engaged in social interactions. In other cases, increased reciprocal interactions were observed as a result of implemented direct instruction, peer training (Banda et al., 2010), use of a computer to scaffold communication (Mavrou et al., 2010), and paraeducators' prompts (Chung & Douglas, 2015).

Researchers emphasized the importance of social skills development (e.g., to increase occurrences of initiations and responses) in students identified with dis/abilities (Banda et al., 2010; Boutot & Bryant, 2005; Carter et al., 2008). Researchers utilized different strategies to enhance peer interactions within general education settings. For instance, two studies discussed the use of AAC as means to increase students' social and academic engagement. Students affected by severe, multiple dis/abilities and autism were taught to use a voice output communication device to request access to preferred items and prompted by paraeducators to interact with their peers during classroom activities (Cosbey & Johnston, 2006; Chung & Douglas, 2015).

The intervention studies aiming to increase social inclusion for students labeled as dis/abled usually employed a time sampling observation procedure. Researchers often reported about students' engagement as a total percentage of students' interactions rather than describing them qualitatively. For instance, instead of documenting the degree to which and what kind of opportunities for social interaction (e.g., taking turns in responding to a question) were offered to students with differing needs and abilities during a particular classroom activity, research

findings reported the average and range of percentage of intervals during which communication occurred within different instructional formats (large, small groups, and individual work) (Chung & Douglas, 2015). The analyze the intervention effects the follow-up studies were not conducted as well as it remains uncertain how classmates and teachers recognized students' behaviors that might increase or decrease student interest to learn and engage with other members of the classroom community. Clearly, further research is required to examine contextual variables that shape students' social engagement, learning, and sense of belonging.

Assessment Protocols

Research demonstrates that positive interactions among students with and without dis/abilities and their teachers promote student academic engagement and sense of belonging (Chung et al., 2019; Yildiz, 2015). Although this philosophy of inclusive education is widely promoted, educators continue to question its feasibility, especially in classrooms that include students severely impacted by intellectual disabilities and autism. A review of the literature suggests that the examination of academic and social arrangements in general education settings aimed to include students identified with dis/abilities is important because these contexts shape student-teacher and student-student interactions and behaviors. For instance, Lee et al. (2006) argued that the provision of curriculum modifications results in more academic-related responses, fewer competing behaviors and classroom behavior management strategies employed.

To determine the effectiveness of pedagogical practices and learning models that support the inclusion of students identified with dis/abilities in general education (Katz et al., 2002; Kurth et al., 2015; Katz, 2015; Tay & Kee, 2019), student academic and social engagement (Wallace et al., 2002; Yildiz, 2015), and teacher-student interactions across a variety of instructional contexts and educational settings (Cameron, 2014; Foreman, Arthur-Kelly et al.,

2004; Place & Hodge, 2001; Matzen et al., 2010), researchers utilized numerous assessment protocols (e.g., achievement tests, questionnaires, attendance, discipline, student academic records, and peer nominations, etc.). However, in 22 out of 52 studies, researchers utilized behavior observation protocols to assess students' and teachers' targeted interactions and outcomes in the contexts of academic and social inclusion (see Table 2.2). Following multiple baseline probe designs across participants (time sampling), researchers recorded, for instance, students' with disabilities academic and social responses; their ability to stay on task; proximity to a peer body with a level of engagement in different instructional contexts (large, small groups or one-on-one); and the degree to which students used augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) to initiate interactions with peers and request access to preferred objects (Cosbey & Johnston, 2006; Carter et al., 2005; 2007; Chung et al., 2012; 2019).

Typically, these observation protocols included predefined sets of behaviors, events, and interactions among and between students and their teachers. For instance, Carter et al. (2007) examined peer support interventions as an alternative to individually assigned paraprofessionals' support in high school science and art classrooms. Predefined dependent measures of social (task-, social-related interactions or indistinguishable) and academic interactions (engaged, unengaged) as well as contextual variables (small or large group, independent seatwork, peer support proximity) were used to code verbal or nonverbal students' communicative behaviors. Using stop watches and time sampling procedures, researchers documented incidences over a 14-week period (two to four times per week during the 50-minute lesson). The analysis of data (gathered and reported as percentage intervals) suggested that high school students identified with dis/abilities were considerably more engaged in learning when they received support from their peers (Carter et al., 2007).

While behavior assessment protocols are widely used in research to improve practice, it is unclear to what degree those protocols advance notions of social justice, inclusivity, and equity in education. Researchers omitted to engage in what Kozleski (2011) called the "third space," defined as a dialectical inclusive discourse about the ways in which teachers and students collaboratively build an understanding toward what it takes to create an inclusive classroom and what practices, activities, and roles support and represent that vision.

Methodologies: Reproduction of Special Education Praxis

Centering a notion of settler colonialism within research toward classrooms described as inclusive exposes special education frames that have been widely employed in the reviewed studies. Some examples of how the notion of inclusion has been conceptualized in the reviewed studies are the "rate of academic engagement" (Yildiz, 2015), "the levels of academic responding and competing behaviors" (McDonnell et al., 2001), "problem-solving performances" of students identified with and without dis/abilities (Bottge et. al., 2015), "peer-to-peer responses" (Banda et al., 2010), "traditional instruction versus tutoring intervention" (Scruggs et al., 2012), "student engagement and reading progress" (Lyons & Thompson, 2012). Further, the rampant misrepresentation of students identified with dis/abilities as those who are always in need for some sort of intervention marginalizes them. Instead of identifying environments, tools, and practices that were "at-risk," research focused on students identified as "at-risk". Thus, such frames guided the construction of knowledge and applications of how needs of learners labeled as dis/abled should be managed within the educational systems. On the contrary, equity-based inclusive education focuses on active learning structures, accounts for practices that demonstrate teachers' high expectations toward learners with differing needs and abilities, promotes ways in which educators distribute learning opportunities, and recognizes all

student differences. It shifts the focus from an individual student to the system of supports and services that need to be in place in order to provide meaningful and equitable education to all learners (Sailor, 2017; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013).

Critical inclusive education scholars define inclusivity as the intersections between recognition of all students, representation of student voices, and the redistribution of resources to recognize the needs of all learners (Waittoller & Kozleski, 2013; Kozleski, 2020). However, as the reviewed literature indicates, *inclusive education was often used as a proxy for special education*. Many studies used a narrow, incomplete understanding of inclusive education. For instance, Scruggs et al. (2012) explored the impact of classwide peer tutoring in facilitating social studies learning of middle school students identified with dis/abilities. Peer tutoring was utilized as an example of practice aimed to be inclusive. However, this framing ran counter to a notion of inclusivity and equity in education described above. Rather, it portrayed students identified with dis/abilities as less capable in comparison to their classmates. A recognition of learners' weaknesses instead of their strengths is incompatible with the equity-based model for inclusive education (Kozleski, 2020; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013).

Further, a limited number of studies incorporated students' voices and sought their opinions toward implemented practices. Knowledge about student-student and teacher-student relationships in classrooms described as inclusive was reported as, for instance, the percentage of students' academic engagement (e.g., a percentage of time when students identified with disabilities were on-task; Yildiz, 2015) rather than accounting for individuals' experiences in an activity. It is a mistake to assume that numbers and statistical procedures convey neutral, objective, and factual knowledge as "all data is manufactured, and all analysis is driven by human decisions," (Gillborn et al., 2018, p.167) And, finally, many studies reported student

demographics, including information about student race, dis/ability category and/or service area, socio-economic status, IQ, gender, mathematics and/or reading achievement. However, discussions of findings and their applications failed to address the intersectional aspects of students' multidimensional identities as studies were focused on disability labels.

Reenvisioning Research Toward Classrooms Described as Inclusive: Closing the Gap

The analysis of literature demonstrates that a majority of included articles were intervention studies. They typically focused on the academic and social engagement of students identified with and without dis/abilities and employed special education epistemologies and conceptual frameworks to document activities and practices aimed at including students in general education. Typically, studies conceptualized classrooms described as inclusive by emphasizing the presence of students identified with dis/abilities in those classrooms. These studies described the degree to which students identified with dis/abilities were able to "catch up" socially and academically with their peers identified without dis/abilities. Students without dis/ability labels were assigned as "peer support," "peer buddies" to students who were unable to "catch up" (i.e., student identified with dis/abilities) in classrooms described as inclusive. Research was focused around the idea of student "progress" in general education. The reviewed studies omitted inquiry into the kind of education into which students identified with dis/abilities were included in as well as to what degree students had participatory parity in classrooms described as inclusive. The reviewed research perpetuated epistemic violence as it disregarded social, economic, political, and historical contexts and ignored their impacts on participating teachers and students. Practices and activities framed as inclusive were detached from local experiences and knowledges. Dis/ability was imagined as a static demographic variable, regardless of its historical connection to other identity markers such as social class, race, gender,

and language (Kozleski et al., 2020). Representational practices were absent in the reviewed research. Thus, a majority of studies produced knowledge and practices that contributed to a deficit-laden view of students identified with dis/abilities and perpetuated social stratifications and did not question the status quo and embrace a moral commitment within research activities (Artiles, 2019; Skrtic, 1995).

Artiles (2019) argues that future research examining complex inclusion and equity questions must be re-envisioned to "honor the complexities of equity in worlds of difference" (p. 325). The author emphasizes that, in order to advance education research, it must be grounded in a historical epistemology and rely on alternative representations of equity problems (Artiles, 2019). Following these principles and drawing on critical inclusive education research, CHAT, and decolonial theory, the proposed study has the potential to help to close the identified gaps in literature on classrooms described as inclusive in three ways. First, the conceptual framework of the proposed study acknowledges that injustices are simultaneously rooted in two realms, culture (i.e., recognition) and political economy (i.e., redistribution) (Anderson, 2009; Fraser, 1997). Inclusivity in classrooms is defined as the intersections between cultural recognition of all students, political representation of student voices, and the economic redistribution of resources to recognize the needs of all learners (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). Second, this study centered notions of equity, historicity, and voice by attempting to examine the degree to which classroom structures, activities, and tools supported students' with differing needs and abilities engagement in meaningful learning. Moreover, this project was focused on determining how these structures were produced and to what extent they were sustained for students in classrooms described as inclusive. And, finally, this project viewed activities and practices in classrooms to be dialectical as well as culturally and historically situated. Thus, this project attempted to bring into discourse

representational practices by raising questions about perspectives (whose viewpoint?), voice (who was being heard?), and consequences (who benefitted?) (Artiles, 2019; Kozleski, 2020).

Chapter 3: Methodology

In chapter one, I explained the importance to center the notions of equity and inclusivity in studying classrooms described as inclusive. In chapter two, I reviewed literature to determine how classrooms described as inclusive have been studied. I learned that typically researchers (a) focused on the academic and social engagement of students identified with and without dis/abilities; and (b) employed special education epistemologies and conceptual frameworks to document activities and practices aimed to include students labeled as dis/abled into general education. In this chapter, I describe a qualitative research design, methodological strands, and tools that I applied to learn (a) about the roles educators play in designing and supporting equitable relationships in classrooms; and (b) the degree to which students have participatory parity in classrooms described as inclusive.

At the beginning of this chapter, I argue for importance of combining two interdisciplinary methodological strands – ethnographic inquiry (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007) and reflective dialogues (de Groot, 2014; Moyles et al., 2002) – essential methodologies to learn about classroom learning environments, routines, and behaviors as well as interactions and roles among and between educators and students. Then, I describe the research design, sampling approach, and the analytical procedures that I employed to analyze collected data. I conclude this chapter with a positionality statement.

Overview of the Study

I conducted this study in one of the U.S public elementary schools that had a reputation being the “most inclusive” and STEM signature school in its district. Four general education classrooms, two lower and two upper elementary classrooms, were the unit of analysis. I observed those classrooms and specifically focused on the work of educators, tools, and practices

they used to engage students in learning and participation. I framed this research project within critical ethnographic inquiry (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007), a qualitative approach that landed itself in learning about classrooms described as inclusive and analyzing the spectrum of learning opportunities that educators offered to the students, given the resources and limits of their professional community of practice (Holland & Lave, 2009; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015).

Critical Methodologies and the Conceptual Framework

To understand the degree to which equitable relationships were present in classrooms described as inclusive, it was crucial to examine the nature of classroom cultures as well as the ways in which educators recognized students' differences. It was vital to understand how educators rationalized and situated their practices to equally embrace learning of all students. In this study, I draw on critical work of sociocultural and decolonial scholars who emphasize that human behavior is relational and cannot be "adjusted" unless it is historically and socially situated (Artiles, 2019; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013; Rogoff, 2003; Walton, 2018). Researchers argue that a proper way to gain insights about human behaviors, activities, and interactions is through "occupying the frame of reference of the participant in action." (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 5) Moreover, it is crucial to understand the contexts in which participants live and the ways these contexts shape human interactions and decision-making (Kozleski et al., 2020; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005).

Thus, I integrated critical ethnography and reflective praxis to answer the *research question* about the degree to which equitable relationships were present in classrooms described as inclusive. The following research sub questions guided data collection and analysis:

(a) In what ways/to what degree does the recognition of all student differences, the representation of student voices, and the redistribution of learning opportunities to all students occur in classrooms described as inclusive?

(b) To what degree do students have participatory parity in classrooms described as inclusive?

(c) What roles do educators play in producing and sustaining inclusive classroom communities?

Critical Ethnographic Inquiry

To understand the degree to which equitable relationships are present in classrooms requires documentation of everyday classroom activities, practices, and routines (Erickson, 2010). Critical ethnographic research, grounded in feminist methodologies (Collins, 1986) and an interpretivist perspective (Ferguson, 1993), offers approaches and tools to examine classroom culture within which students and teachers engage in a particular set of interactions and behaviors (Kozleski, 2017). Moreover, such inquiry provides an opportunity to capture classroom culture (i.e., networks of activity systems) from the participants' points of view (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Kozleski, 2017; Smith, 2005). Through interviews with teachers, classroom observations, analysis of video recorded lessons and cultural artifacts, I learned about teachers' and students' everyday classroom experiences. Specifically, I focused on the classroom activities and discourses that occurred in classrooms and the degree to which they promoted students' participation and learning as well as the roles educators played in those processes. I used this project as a space to collect what Smith (2005) calls the "work knowledges" – anything that is done by educators and students in classrooms that supports or weakens equity-based models of inclusive education (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). I sought to understand how educators navigate

historical, economic, political, and sociocultural contexts within their classrooms and what impact it had on student learning. Thus, I proceeded with the social-justice-oriented inquiry to study classrooms described as inclusive and problematized classroom activities, practices, and tools employed by educators (Erickson, 2010; Kindon et al., 2007; Smith, 2005). Because teaching is an intentional practice tailored to certain contexts, resources, and individuals (Apple, 2017; Artiles, 2019), I examined the degree to which collected accounts nested coloniality and reproduced certain ways of being and knowledge formations (Dirth & Adams, 2019; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2012). At the same time, I hesitate to call this research project "critical ethnography" because a well-developed ethnography requires a substantial time spent in the field (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007; Erickson, 2010). Instead, I prefer to call this study a critical ethnographic inquiry as I only spent 3.5 months in the field.

Critical Reflective Dialogues

A variety of existing interpretive frames makes it difficult to determine goals and practices when it comes to teaching learners with differing needs and abilities (Holland & Lave, 2009). To actualize and sustain equity-based inclusive educational models in schools, the involvement of educators as co-researchers in collaborative inquiry and problem-solving is crucial (Kozleski, 2020; Powell, 2005). Educators should become social justice actors of school change for inclusivity and engage in reflection of their own approaches to teaching (Skrtic, 1991) and in policy communication (Fisher, 2003). However, educators rarely receive opportunities to engage in such reflective practices (Powell, 2005; Walkington, 2005).

A transformation to inclusive schooling requires deconstruction of socially constructed, institutionalized culture of classrooms and schools (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). Fisher (2003) argues that human actors construct individual and collective reality by producing and assigning

meanings to events and actions that are appropriate at that time. Educators, as many other professionals, develop meanings about their work and the clients (i.e., students) that they aimed to serve. These meanings guide educators' practices and decision-making. The origins of social meanings are difficult to determine as they relate to certain times in history and exist within certain local contexts (Kozleski et al., 2020). Language transmits and objectifies teachers' understandings toward inclusive education (Kozleski & Choi, 2018). A socially constructed classroom reality incorporates and reflects multiple meanings created by various groups (i.e., administrators, educators, learners, families). These understandings premise upon individuals' motives, values, interests, and beliefs and elaborated and transmitted within everyday classroom practices, activities, and routines (Kozleski et al., 2013).

To institute an equity-based inclusive educational model in schools, educators' socially constructed definitions toward their practices and roles as well as assumptions regarding students' with diverse backgrounds require an investigation: the application of the critical reflective practice (CRP) related to equity and inclusivity (Rogoff, 2003; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). Empirically oriented methods are not applicable to subjectively based problems of socially constructed reality (Fisher, 2003). Fisher asserts that empiricists capture the "fixed" social meanings and examine causal understanding (i.e., technical reasoning), while postempiricists analyze social meanings and actions within social context and purposes (i.e., practical reasoning). The author sees benefits of using the social constructionist approach instead of only empirical tools, grounded in positivism, to explore assigned meanings to events and practices by different groups.

A classroom as a socially constructed symbolic entity can be determined by its relationship to the particular situation, social system, and ideological framework (Kozleski &

Thorius, 2014). The CRP is an interpretive method that if used correctly calls socially constructed meanings into question and facilitates development of new meanings (Fisher, 2003; Wailtoller & Kozleski, 2013). It can be used to reframe educators' institutionalized beliefs (i.e., stories, frames) about students with differing backgrounds and needs and teacher roles in classrooms.

As such, the CRP offers an opportunity to analyze ways in which educators rationalize their actions and practices in classrooms. Moreover, it has potential to unpack conditions (i.e., cultural frames) under which educators construct assumptions toward their classrooms and students. By deliberatively facilitating this process, through video stimulated reflective dialogues (Powell, 2005) together with educators I aimed to surface and analyze teachers' assumptions and meanings toward their own teaching, inclusive education, and ways in which educators thought educational opportunities should be distributed to the students. The CRP has potential to examine systems of power, privilege, and their interlocking oppression mechanisms that are reflected in everyday classroom life and shape teachers' and students' identities and beliefs (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007; Brydon-Miller & Maguire, 2009). As there are many controversies around political agreements and language on a course of action toward how inclusive education should look in schools, the critical reflective dialogues have a potential to encourage educators to analyze their work knowledges and ways of being (Khanlou, & Peter, 2005; Smith, 2005).

This research is an emancipatory project because it allowed teachers to see themselves as valuable and knowledgeable educational leaders (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001; Spivak, 2013). It gave teachers opportunity to revisit what they envision as good practice of supporting learners who brought their diverse experience to a classroom table. The research project also empowered me because it gave me, the researcher, "the chance to explore and test out ideas against the

complicated, and often unforgiving, context of 'the real world'" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 26).

Thus, by employing critical ethnographic inquiry and reflective dialogues, I deny the notion that knowledge is universal. I acknowledge that it is a product of multiple perspectives and there is no external or objective truth (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Krauss, 2005; Skrtic, 1995). I argue for its relativistic nature and the importance of understanding the ways in which teachers create and modify practices, activities, and tools to sustain classrooms described as inclusive (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015). Finally, by applying these methodologies educators' as well as my own beliefs towards democracy, difference, and equity were challenged, and, perhaps, changed.

Research Design and Sampling Strategy

In searching for answers to the research question about the degree to which equitable relationships are present in classrooms, this study was framed as a *critical ethnographic inquiry* (Smith, 2005) in which educators were key informants about their work in classrooms described as inclusive. While it was a full-scale ethnography, nevertheless the conceptual and political orientations that I adopted in this research project as the ones that explicitly demonstrate my concern about the degree to which needs, knowledges, and experiences of all students were recognized and represented in classrooms described as inclusive. I applied a set of participant observations, video recorded teaching activities, collected classroom cultural artifacts as well as conducted a set of video-stimulated critical reflective dialogues with educators. My position in this study was conceptualized around enabling educators to reflect on their perspectives toward equity-based models for inclusive education. To a large extent, this project was a form of critical classroom ethnography (Erickson, 2010; Smith, 2005).

This study employed a purposeful sampling technique (Patton, 2002). In this way, I sought to "select information-rich case" for the study that would allow me to "learn about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry." (Patton, 2002, p. 230) I employed what Patton calls the "extreme case" sampling strategy and, thus, I selected an "illuminative case" that exemplified contexts where inclusive practices were perceived as remarkable (Patton, 2002, p. 232). However, the major disadvantage of using this sampling strategy is its lack of generalization. Nevertheless, at the same time such sampling logic enabled me to achieve the research goals for this project, i.e., (a) to learn about the roles educators play in designing inclusive classroom communities; and (b) to generate knowledge about the practices that educators interpreted and perceived as "inclusive" and "equitable."

Thus, I asked a school district to nominate the "most inclusive" school in its district. I did not specify a grade level, nor I mentioned educators that I sought to work with. As a result, a school district nominated an elementary school. It was a new facility that was build less than five years ago to advance inclusive and STEM education in the district. School administrators selected educators and four classrooms to participate in the study. I adopt humanizing approaches to qualitative and ethnographic inquiry (Paris & Winn, 2013). Thus, I refrain to label and categorize participants. Instead, in order to give a reader an understanding about the participants, in chapter four I relied on language that educators used to describe themselves as well as the classrooms and learners that they worked with.

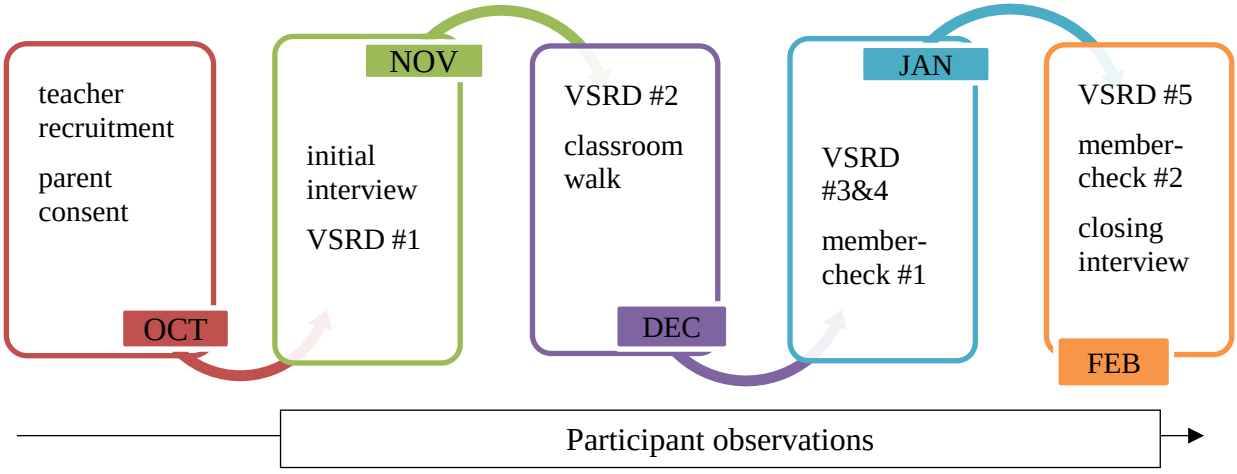
Data Collection

In this research project, I applied a qualitative approach to data collection (Patton, 2002). I collected data through classroom observations, video samples of lessons, classroom cultural artifacts (e.g., lesson plans, curriculum, materials, images used to communicate values and

standards), in-depth interviews and video recall interviews with educators, and member-checks during the period of three and a half months (November 2019 – February 2020).

Figure 3.1

Timeline



Corpus of Data

Video Stimulated Reflective Dialogues

On the first and the third weeks of each month I observed (for 15 minutes) (see Appendix B Teaching Practices Observation Protocol) and video record (for 10 of the 15 minutes) four general educators and two special educators delivering instruction to students in their respective classrooms described as inclusive. On the second and fourth weeks of each month, each educator and I participated in a 15-minute video stimulated reflective dialogue (see Appendix C Video Recall Interview Protocol), in which we reviewed their respective 10-minute teaching videos from the week before (Powell, 2005). The video recall interviews were completed outside of educators' classroom teaching hours. There were no student data collected in this project. As a result, I conducted from four to five video recall interviews with each general educator and two video recall interviews with each special educator (Table 3.1). Thus, in total, 22 video recall interviews were conducted.

Table 3.1

Corpus of Audio Data

Participant Formal Roles	Audio Data		
	VRI	Interviews	Total
General Educator	5	3	8
General Educator	4	3	7
General Educator	5	3	8
General Educator	4	4	8
Special Educator	2	2	4
Special Educator	2	2	4
Dean of Student	n/a	1	1
School Principal	n/a		
District Consultant	n/a	1	1
Paraeducator	n/a	1	1
Paraeducator	n/a	1	1
Paraeducator	n/a	1	1
TOTAL #	**22**	**22**	**44**
Total hours			**15h 47min**

Educator Interviews

Besides video recall interviews, I conducted one in-depth interview with each of the three paraeducators and the three school administrators. I also conducted from two to three in-depth interviews (at the beginning and at the end of research project) with each of the four general educators and the two special educators about their experiences working in classrooms described as inclusive. Thus, in total 22 in-depth interview were conducted (Table 3.1).

The purpose of interviewing aligned with the research goal of this project in three ways. First, I aimed to learn about the "lived experience" of educators, their past histories, knowledge, values, and beliefs that have shaped educators' perceptions towards teaching and learning. Second, I sought to conceptualize meanings about equity and inclusivity that teachers had by telling their stories and using their language. And, finally, I was eager to demonstrate that "[teachers'] meaning is worth" within equity-based inclusive education implementation

(Seidman, 2013, p. 5). Thus, 15 hours and 47 minutes of collected audio data was transcribed and analyzed.

Classroom and Teaching Practices Observations

At least three times per week I observed for 30 minutes each of the four participating classrooms. I took field notes about classroom activities and interactions among and between students and educators in classrooms described as inclusive. Moreover, in each classroom I selected two focus students (one student identified with dis/abilities and one student without dis/abilities) whom I observed to better understand the degree to which educators interacted with them, recognized their needs, and represented their voices (see Appendix B Teaching Practices Observation Protocol). Thus, in each of the four classrooms I spent at least 11 hours observing educators and learners during reading, math, science, and transition classroom activities (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Classroom Observation Time (in minutes)

Month	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary	
	"Behavior Support"	"Resource"	"Resource"	"Intensive Support"
		2019		
November	291	375	272	286
December	117	175	288	95
		2020		
January	233	210	290	197
February	65	45	45	55
Total	**738 (12h18)**	**890 (14h50)**	**930 (15h30)**	**683 (11h23)**

Cultural Artifacts

In addition to participant observation and interviews, I collected lesson plans, teaching materials, instructions, images, and narratives used by educators to communicate values and

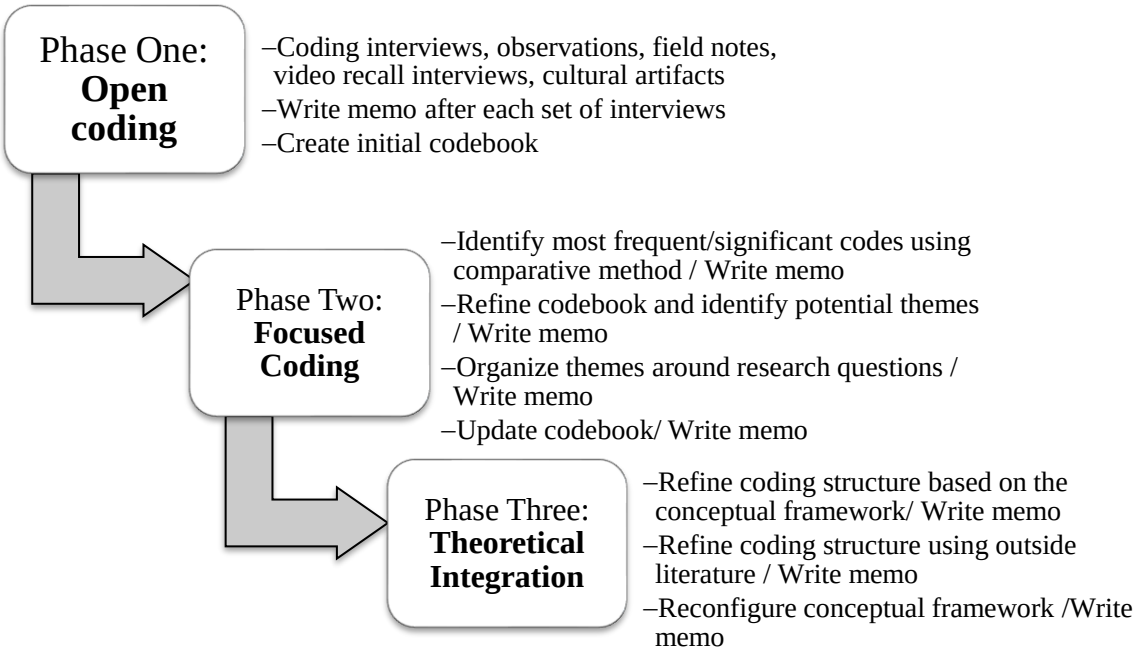
standards. Based on analysis of these cultural mediators (Wertsch, 2009), I aimed to examine the degree to which they represented all students' needs, backgrounds, and experiences. I also conducted with each of the four general educators an activity called "Classroom Walk," in which I asked an educator to describe the classroom space and physical objects and tools that they utilized in their respective classrooms.

Iterative Data Analysis: The Process of Meaning-Making

I employed a grounded theory approach to analyze collected data (Charmaz, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, I transcribed audio and video recorded materials. To establish accuracy within transcripts, I asked two colleagues to review 20 percent of transcribed materials (Charmaz, 2006). Second, I engaged in three phases of coding (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2015) and I coded interview transcripts, collected cultural artifacts as well as field notes that I took during classroom observations (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2

Iterative Data Analysis



I stayed as close as I could to the data (i.e., use participants' language, their phrases and words from transcripts when created units of coding (open and focused codes) and their descriptions) (Paris & Winn, 2013). These processes were accompanied by writing memos that described emerging themes and relationships among them (Figure 3.1). To ensure trustworthiness of emerging themes, I shared 20 percent of coding data with three colleagues whose identities differs from mine (i.e., a Black male born in the U.S; two White females born in the U.S.). Moreover, I conducted member checks (one at the middle and one at the end of the project) written as a case studies with each of the participating teachers (Figure 3.2). Thus, such an approach to data analyses allowed to triangulate collected artifacts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Saldaña, 2015).

Analytical Coding Procedures

Open Coding

Qualitative data were coded using Corbin and Strauss's (2014) open and focused coding strategies. During the open coding phase, I coded words, lines, and paragraphs from interviews and developed an initial codebook. Corbin and Strauss (2014) suggested testing each of the incidents against each other based on their differences and similarities and code incidents under the same label if they were found conceptually similar. Thus, the first cycle of coding resulted in 485 open and inVivo codes.

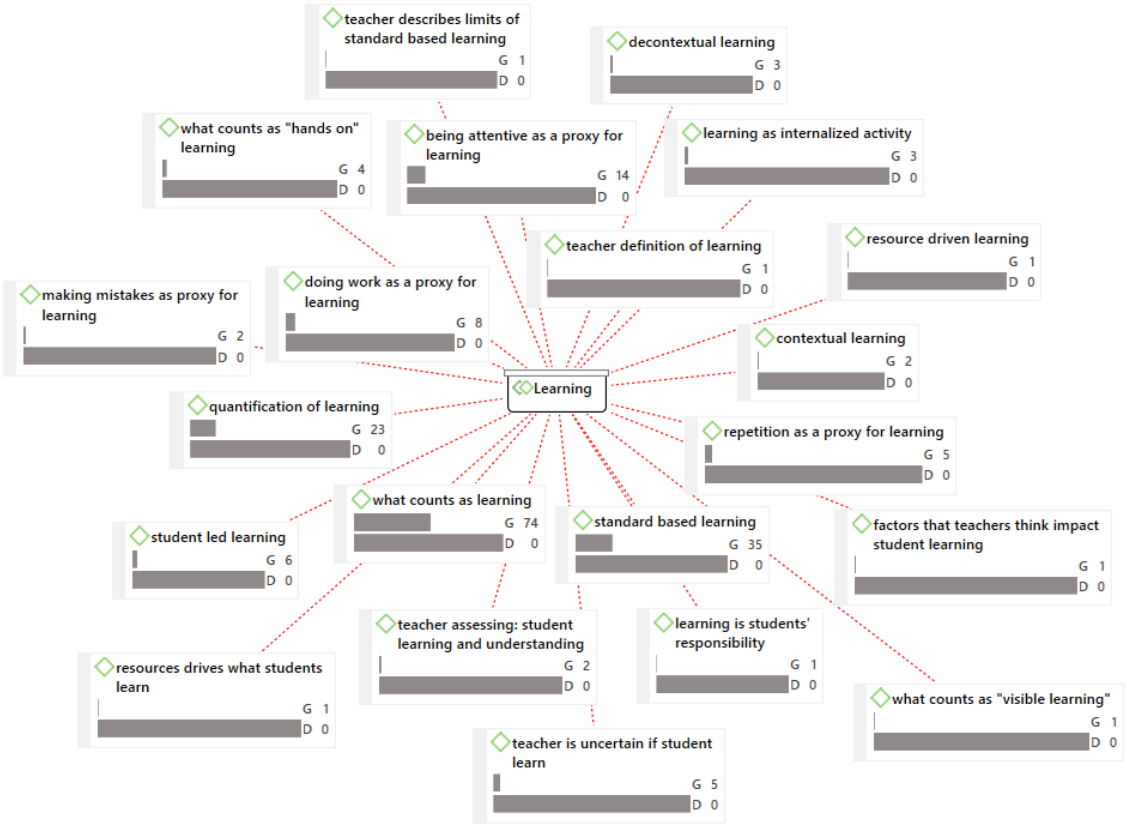
Focused Coding

The next step in data analysis included the axial coding phase. Saldaña (2015) related axial coding to second cycle coding methods that "describes a category's properties and dimensions and explores how the categories and subcategories relate to each other" (p. 235-36). Thus, the purpose of this phase was to group similarly coded data, which reduced the number of initial codes as they were sorted and relabeled into conceptual categories (themes) based on patterns that emerged across the codes (Figure 3.3). For example, open codes such as "making mistakes as a proxy for learning," "repetition as a proxy of learning," "teacher definition of learning," "student-led learning" were grouped under the "Learning" category.

Figure 3.3

Sorting of Codes and Categorization

Assessment	Technology	Learning	Choice	Accountability
Resources	Spaces & objects	Modifications	Categorization	Collaboration
Success	Curriculum	Time	Perspectives on equity, diversity & inclusivity	Top down approach
Rules & expectations	Teaching	Roles & responsibilities	Progress monitoring	Techniques
	School history	Teacher history	Student history	



This process was accompanied by writing memos which constituted narratives of how and why initial codes were linked to each other and formed conceptual categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Saldaña, 2015) to further examine education discourse in classrooms.

I coded video recorded lesson separately from the rest of the data by using the protocol that I developed with my research adviser (Figure 3.4). This process also was accompanied by writing memos. For instance, the ways in which activity enabled a level of effort that was required from a student in order to master a task were coded under the "cognitive demand" code. To establish trustworthiness of video coded data, out of 22 video recorded lessons, six were coded by three colleagues of mine (Saldaña, 2015).

Figure 3.4

Coding Protocol for Video Recorded Lessons

Concept	Definition	Sub concept	Definition	Mediator	Cultural Practice Spectrum
RECOGNITION	Indicators of the degree to which a teacher accounts for learning interests, emotions, and competencies of learners	**Cognitive Demand**	Ways in which activity enabled a level of effort that was required from a student in order to master a task	*instruction*	inductive -- deductive
		Connection	Ways in which interest was established by a student prior history, novelty, and/or excitement produced within material	*orientation*	performance oriented -- person-oriented
		Understanding and Engagement	Ways in which activity enabled student sense of belonging and persistent involvement	*engagement*	cognitive -- emotional coupled with cognitive
		Discourse and Language	Ways in which teacher's language fostered a student sense of self and communication	*feedback and rules*	toward academic -- toward behavior
REDISTRIBUTION	Ways in which a teacher distributes quality opportunities to learn and participate to all students	**Power and Participation**	Ways in which a teacher enables student participatory parity and voice	*distribution of roles*	teacher-led -- student-led
		Choice	Ways in which learning opportunity was designed by a student interest and prior history	*position*	recipient -- facilitator
		Personalization and Differentiation	Ways in which learning opportunity was modified to prioritize student strengths, interest, and cultural assets	*interactions*	peer-to-peer -- teacher-to-student
				talk	teacher talk -- student talk
		Resources	Ways in which capital (tools, time, and attention) was distributed to equally embrace and support student learning and participation	*time*	spent on academics -- spent on behavior
REPRESENTATION	Ways in which a teacher uses tools and materials to represent student backgrounds and voice	**Intersectionality**	Ways in which activity attended to a student's intersectionality and centered their experiences	*tools*	oppressive -- liberating
		Cultural Relevance	Ways in which activity enabled a student to connect with relevant/authentic situations in their lives	*content*	decontextualized -- contextualized
		Liberation and Empowerment	Ways in which a teacher acknowledges and empowers student multidimensional identity		

Positionality Statement

I was born and raised in Ukraine. I received my elementary and secondary education from public schools in Ukraine and graduated with bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology and social pedagogy from a Ukrainian university. Thus, from the time I was six years old until my graduation at age 23, my entire educational experience was within the Ukrainian education system and curricula. My master's degree allowed me to take a position as an assistant professor at one of the universities in Ukraine. After working for six years in higher education in Ukraine (2010-2016), I moved to the United States to pursue a degree in special education. I consider myself a boundary crosser between two education systems (Ukrainian and American), which continues to influence how I think about students, education, and schools. This boundary crossing behavior helps me recognize resemblances and differences in values, culture, and approaches to teaching and learning that these two educational systems employ. I hold outsider status not only in terms of origin, nationality, and education with participants of this study. My status impacted: (a) methods, participants, and school I chose; (b) strategies I applied during data collection and analysis; and (c) approaches I used to draw conclusions and outline implications for future research.

Chapter 4: Findings

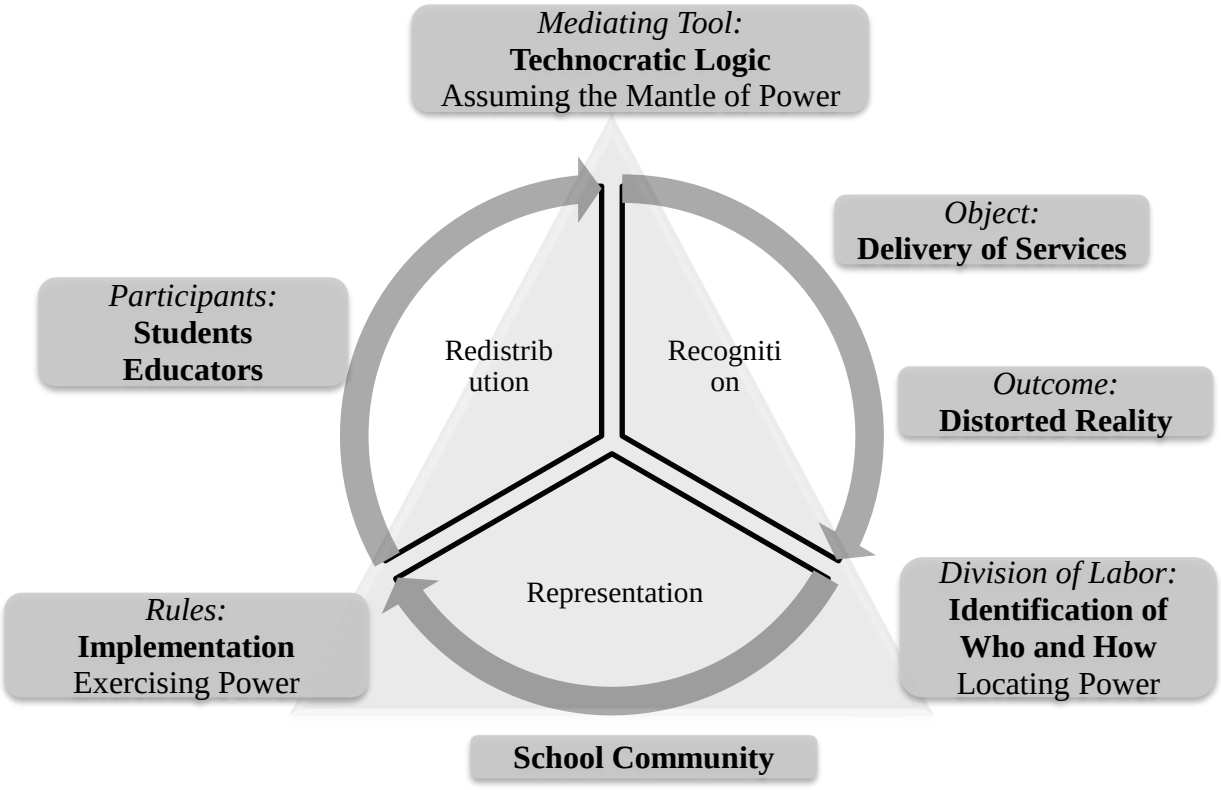
I analyzed classrooms from the stand-point of equity-based inclusive education that focuses on cultures and redistribution of learning opportunities to all students (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013; Kozleski, 2020). CHAT (Engeström, 2001; Kozleski & Thorius, 2014; Rogoff, 2003) and decolonial theory (Dirth & Adams, 2019; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2012; Walton, 2018) provided me with analytical tools. These tools offered frames into inquiries about what kind of students were included, who benefitted from classroom arrangements, how students learned and understood what it meant to be a learner, and whose needs were served by the available teaching materials and tools. I applied these heuristic tools to classroom activity arenas in four classrooms. I used three interconnected, equity-based inclusive education dimensions: (a) cultural recognition of all students' differences, (b) political representation of all students' voices, and (c) redistribution of educational opportunities to all students. Equitable relationships, inclusive of all classroom members, are located at the intersection of these social justice principles (Figure 4.1).

As a result of iterative data analysis (Creswell, 2013), three themes emerged: (a) *Locating Power: Terminology, Structures, and Roles*; (b) *Exercising Power: The Implementation of the "Inclusion/ STEM" Dream;* and (c) *Assuming the Mantle of Power: The Technocratic Logic as Oppression*. I found that the district system impacted and managed lives in the classrooms I studied. The district system was predicated on an interpretation of equality that mediated the delivery of educational services as well as teachers' work and students' learning at school. Prescribed learning objectives, time limited instructional routines, and behavioral expectations shaped classroom activity arenas and relationships between educators and learners. Drawing on CHAT, I begin this chapter by situating the school within its historical, sociocultural, political,

and economic contexts. Then, I describe the themes that illustrate various ways in which the system operated within classrooms described as inclusive.

Figure 4.1

Mapping the Classroom Activity Arena. Figure Expands on Engeström (2001).



Swept Up in the Tsunami of Being "The Best"

A tsunami is a series of long ocean waves (sometimes reaching heights of over 30.5 meters/ 100 feet) that suddenly and powerfully send flows of water onto land (National Geographic, 2020). A life cycle of a tsunami includes four stages – initiation, split, amplification, and run-up (i.e., when a tsunami hits the shore). The U.S. public education history echoes the life cycle of a tsunami. Each time a new (often, a forgotten or abandoned) educational reform looms on the horizon, it disturbs existing educational systems, drastically disrupting the lives of students and teachers (Labaree, 2012).

The school in this study offers an example of what can happen in a school community when a reform gathers momentum and becomes a reality. The effects seem much like a tsunami hitting the shore. The school has experienced a set of powerful waves that have shaped its vision, structures, and educational practices. The first wave was school consolidation. Less than five years prior to this study, the district consolidated three schools with deep, historical connections to their communities. The second wave crested when the merged faculties and students converged in a new school campus, built to advance science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The new school enrolled almost 800 students from prekindergarten through fifth grade. The old schools had been much smaller, each serving about 250 – 280 students.

Teachers, school administrators, students, and families had to adjust to rapid changes. The size of the student body alone was a big change. Along with the new scale, came new school rules, expectations, and new start and stop times for the school day. The district emphasized the need for a school climate that was responsive to the academic, behavioral, physical, and socio-emotional needs of students. District leaders emphasized the need to transform approaches to teaching and learning, intended to improve student learning and increase student performance on annual statewide measures of academic success. One of the principals from the old schools became the principle of the new school. Following the district's vision toward a new school, the new principal together with all educators were asked to revisit their teaching and learning habits and chart new ways of working together to support students who struggled to learn.

The third wave brought STEM reform that, according to district leaders, aimed to prepare the next generation of "Einsteins." The district capitalized on the flush of funding available for STEM education. Beginning in 2002 with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1964, renamed No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the national

education scene focused on revitalizing science, technology, engineering and mathematics. NCLB led to enormous expenditures in terms of human resources, time, and funding to develop and adopt K-12 STEM educational programs in the U.S. public schools. Enacted by President Bush, the act was supported the Obama administration. Ten years after NCLB was reauthorized, President Obama emphasized that the country "can't just stand still" and "needed to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world." Under the Obama administration, STEM reform gained further traction in the next ESEA reauthorization dubbed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Obama, 2011). By 2019, the U.S Department of Education had invested nearly $540 million in grants to foster STEM education, including preparation of STEM teacher corps (U.S Department of Education, 2019). As a result of the infusion of funding, many schools throughout the U.S. responded to the call for the STEM education. In the heartland of the U.S., where this study took place, STEM funding was abundant. The new school became the district's STEM signature school.

Finally, the district was buffeted with a fourth wave, installation of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) that were touted as the best means to organize schools in order to support students who struggle academically, behaviorally, and socio-emotionally (Berkeley et al., 2020; U.S Department of Education, 2020). The framework combines response to intervention (RTI) and positive behavior support (PBIS) approaches. Adapted from the three-tiered public health model used by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), MTSS involves a set of practices implemented across a school intended to be responsive to individual and systemic barriers impeding student learning (Sailor et al., 2020). MTSS seems to be at the forefront of a preventative special education reform that intends to "catch" students who struggle to learn. MTSS is focused on prevention and time-limited intervention in order to prevent compounded

learning struggles that emerge from delayed intervention. Early intervening may offer low-intensity services that increase student school success (Berkeley et al., 2020; Sailor et al., 2020). Congruent with the district's mission to make its newest school a flagship for the district, the school adopted MTSS to support students who needed preventative education services. District and educators collaborated with a neighboring university to receive additional support for MTSS installation including professional learning.

With this backdrop, I situate the study with a brief history of the city and the state. Remembering that in the U.S., the responsibility for governing and regulating education belongs to the state, rather than federal government, I link the school closely to its context. In doing so, I attempt to give readers an understanding of the school's position in the eyes of community and the potential consequences of such positioning for educators and students at school. By drawing on educators' experiences, I illustrate the impact that school consolidation, the marketing of the new building to the community, the rush to capitalize on federal incentives, and the impetus to redesign special education had on the students and faculty. I conclude by describing educators' relationships with the four waves and ways in which educators were swept up in the tsunami of being "the best" as they attempted to navigate their responses to those waves.

Situating the School within its Historical, Sociocultural, Political, and Economic Contexts

The study was conducted in a state that has long and complex history of racial school segregation. Even after the Supreme Court in *Brown* declared that "separate is not equal," it took at least 20 years for the state to desegregate its education system. In the city where this study took place, the vestiges of racial segregation remained even longer because of the resistance of the local political institutions, including the Board of Education, to educate learners with diverse racial backgrounds together, including learners labeled as dis/abled, under one roof. In the 1970s

and 1980s elementary schools continued to experience racial imbalances in student enrollment and faculty assignment. Most of the Black students attended the "minority inner schools" while their White counterparts were afforded the opportunity to go to the reputedly better schools built in White neighborhoods. To eliminate growing racial and economic segregation, Black communities filled lawsuits against the district which forced the federal courts to impose a desegregation plan on the district and address disproportionality at schools (masked state resources). However, even after the decades of the imposed desegregation plan, the ghost of racial segregation continues haunt the district. At the beginning of 2020, many schools were located in White-dominant areas of the city and had a majority of White teaching workforce. In the school where the study was conducted, 57 percent of students were Black and Latinx while 90 percent of teachers were White (NCES, 2020).

Currently, the demographic, labor, income and economic city data indicate that the economic development of the city was stalled, unlike cities with similar populations in the same state. While the total population had increased by four percent over the last decade, population growth still lagged behind other U.S. cities. In 2013, the city had the highest property crime rates in the state. Less than five percent of workers identified themselves as "self-employed" which also was significantly below the state and nation benchmarks. When the study was conducted, the average per capita income continued to be the lowest in the state by municipality. Within the school district, nearly a quarter of all families had incomes below the poverty level. Parents of most students worked in the fast food and/or delivery industries. The city's capacity to create jobs was also on decline (masked state sources).

Thus, a city that, at the turn of the 20th century, had been one of the fastest growing U.S. cities was no longer able to sustain growth and prosperity. Many of its residents commuted to

neighboring cities in search for better employment. An announcement to build a brand new, modern school heralded the city's attempt to win back its reputation of being a prosperous municipality. The opening of the new school hit the local media.[5] A content analysis of local news articles revealed that the city attempted to resurrect its reputation by building a new school. Millions of dollars were invested. The city promoted the school to the public by emphasizing that it was one of the most expensive construction efforts ever untaken in the city. The facility was portrayed as the school of the 21st century, embodying cutting edge teaching methods and technology. Moreover, the school was marketed as a model in providing specialized support services to the students who struggled academically, behaviorally, and socio-emotionally.

When the Tsunami Hits the Shore: Marketing as a Strategy to Rebirth

The data revealed that the same story, a big investment to turn around poorly performing schools, was also touted to the education community. Educators' comments echoed that of the community press. They told me that building a brand new school was "a very large endeavor" undertaken by a district. They also championed the idea that the endeavor eventually turned out to be "really good for kids." Educators impressed upon me the range of adversities that they had to overcome to become, in their words, "an inclusive school community." A general educator explained, "these schools did not necessarily want to be closed." She noted that the district administration moved the faculty "to a big building." Teachers believed that it was primarily a "financial decision of trying to lower costs."

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[5] Instead of providing the direct quotes from the local newspapers, I paraphrased them to protect the anonymity of the city, district, and school.

One teacher commented that “the first year was a nightmare, trying to get bus schedules and the carline. Oh, my goodness it was awful. And, just trying to get everybody to work together because we were all divided up.” She went on to note, “this school, this school, this school” emphasizing that three sets of teachers had to become one community. “We were trying to merge together, to be a cohesive team,” she said. “I think we have finally done that.” Another educator echoed those comments. She said that “first year was really difficult.” She noted how the students and the teachers struggled with a lot of problematic behavior. Lots of students were sent to the office and educators complained constantly about the problematic behaviors. The changes in routines, practices, negotiated rules and expectations between staff from different buildings, and the challenges of working with new populations of students mixed together were remembered as overwhelming. One teacher said “it was just a lot of new stuff.”

Educators used the same language to describe their school as the district and school leadership. They described their school to me as being “the most inclusive” as well as the STEM signature school. They also described their own teaching and that of their colleagues as “very effective.” On multiple occasions, I heard that “sped and non-sped,” students “had some of the best growth and student scores in the district in both math and reading.” This language prevailed and was repeated. School administrators noted that since the school opened, they integrated more and more students into general education each semester. One educator expanded on a sense of confidence and capacity and mentioned that school felt confident working with the student population identified for specialized education services. She said, “we have a pretty good idea when kids aren’t understanding something, why that might be, and what skills they might be missing.” The same phrases were used repeatedly by the educators whom I interviewed.

However, after being at school for three and a half months and conducting 54 hours of classroom observation (between 11 and 15 hours of observation in each of four general education classrooms described as inclusive, see Table 3.2), I experienced a very different context from the one described to me. It was challenging to reconcile the site narrative of "most inclusive" and the STEM signature school with my observations. My own understanding of the context began to shift when I realized how hard the teachers were working to meet their students' needs. One teacher said, "I feel that the kids that are coming up here, their needs and the things that they need in order to be successful are becoming more and more difficult to provide. It is frustrating." When teachers began to tell me that their teaching strategies benefitted only some of their students, I began to wonder what was going on.

Teachers seemed to equate mainstreaming students with dis/abilities into general education classrooms as a proxy for inclusivity and equity. Equity-based inclusive education challenges the traditional notion of inclusive education focused on physical integration of students identified with dis/abilities in general education classrooms (Kozleski et al., 2012; Sailor 2017). Kozleski (2020) emphasizes that often "sitting in a classroom apart from peers, excluded from a community of practice passes as inclusive education." (p. 1) Moreover, she argues that (a) a place-based framing of inclusive education that is often focused on moving bodies into ableist spaces as well as (b) emphasis on just one dimension of students' identities (i.e., ability) must be disrupted. Such framing ignores and masks the multifaceted intersections among students' races, languages, ethnicities, sexualities, genders, and religions. Equity-based inclusive education includes shifting the design of schooling from individual intervention to focusing on designing learning environments that account for a range of students' capacities, histories, and backgrounds. Inclusivity is incompatible with standardized teaching and learning

techniques and practices. It respects and encourages various ways of learning and performance (Kozleski, 2020; Waitoller, 2020).

However, when educators described the benefits for the students identified with dis/abilities of being in the general education classroom, they continued placing the emphasis on the individual rather than questioning the established classroom environment. For example, one educator stated, “I believe it is best for students to be in (the general education classroom) and still hearing grade level instruction.” Thus, “hearing grade level instruction” and being physically present in the general education classroom were perceived as evidence of inclusion. Yet, such “inclusion” practice was met with a critique by another educator who said, “I don’t think (such approach) benefits (students’ names). I would love to see something more at (students’ identified with dis/abilities) level, something that (was) differentiated for each one of these kids.” The educator acknowledged that a grade level instruction and presence were not enough and emphasized the redesign of learning activity. Thus, while progress that a district and the school have made to include students identified with dis/abilities into general education should not be underestimated, I observed that it continued to be a struggle for educators to design inclusive and equitable learning environments for those learners.

Marketing the Product: “The Brand New School”

The newly established school served approximately 800 students PK-5th grades (NCES, 2020). It brought together almost all the students and faculty from three small schools that were closed. Less than ten percent of students ended up going to other schools (masked state sources). For some students and teachers such change involved travelling long distances every day in order to get to school on time in the morning. Some students, including students identified with dis/abilities, took naps during the day because of their long rides to and from school. There were

a number of students who had to wake up at five or six o'clock in the morning in order to catch a school bus. An educator described, "the longest bus ride for one of my students is an hour and a half. I know I can't teach him anything in the morning. He needs to take a nap first."

Students who transitioned to the new school varied ethnically/racially, ability, linguistically, sexually, and socioeconomically. The school reported that 65 percent of student population were eligible to participate in the free lunch program[6] (NCES, 2020), suggesting that a majority of learners were from households that were had low socio-economic status. While the city population was predominantly White (i.e., 78 percent), 57 percent of students at school were African American and Latinx. For 20 percent of students, English language was not a spoken language at home. Thus, in comparison with the racial demographics of the city, the student population at school was diverse (masked state sources). However, when educators (90 percent of whom were White) described the student population, they emphasized students' socio-economic status rather than highlighted students' intersectional experiences (Crenshaw, 1990). For example, one of the teachers said, "Most of our kids come from poor families. We do have kids that come from middle-class families. I wouldn't say that we have a whole lot of wealthier, upper-class families." The language of the teachers that was focused on students' socio-economic status suggest that educators refused to "see" race and acknowledge it as a part of student identity. Annamma et al. (2017) argue that such color-evasiveness that is manifested through language is problematic and must be disrupted, otherwise it allows the system of inequities to propel at schools.

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[6] Under the U.S. National School Lunch Act of 1946 https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp

Reframing the Product: Sunflower Elementary School

The second tsunami wave that hit Sunflower Elementary school was the district's selection of the school as the STEM signature school. Its advertised status mediated and shaped professional communities of practice at school as well as ways in which educators conceptualized their professional roles and commitments toward equity and inclusivity. One of the general education teachers emphasized that all classrooms and teachers were equipped with technology. She went on to say, "that is one thing about this school is we have a lot of technology, iPads and robots because we are science, technology, engineering, and math signature school." She explained that teachers "have to incorporate technology into teaching daily lessons." It might seem that compliance with the requirement to integrate technology into daily teaching practices could potentially disempower educators. It might be seen as the district administration hindered teachers' authority and capacity to decide whether or not integration of technology into teaching was something that educators wanted to pursue on their own. However, as findings of the study suggest, even though the work of teachers was conditioned by the imposed requirement, educators viewed being the STEM signature school as an advantage. For instance, one educator explained how technology supported her in daily teaching:

> I love my Chromebooks. It makes stations really easy. It is really easy for me to hold students accountable because I can see what they are doing. I can see how much progress they have made on everything where they are at.

The excerpt suggests that the educator liked using student computers to drive instruction. She believed that it was important "to hold students accountable" and track students' progress. Other educators emphasized similar ways in which the technology assets enhanced their teaching and helped them monitor student learning. One educator mentioned, "When a small group is a

technology-based and students work away from me, I know where I can go to check their work if I need to. It is a lot easier than having to grade a whole bunch of papers." Another educator noted that she did not like "students to be on technology." However, at the same time she acknowledged that she "kind of prefer to swing more towards the technology side." She explained such preference in the following way, "I assign things for students to practice and then I can track how students are doing and it is a little bit easier for myself." These excerpts demonstrate that educators were in charge of the technology tools. They used them to set learning objectives for students as well as surveil students' behavior and academic performance. On multiple occasions, I observed that students were allowed to use these tools when teachers prompted them to do so. Thus, educators believed that their school was technologically advanced. Teachers emphasized access and connection to technology tools. They used these instruments to organize and manage students' work. Such perception seemed to influence educators' willingness to value being a STEM school. Very little of their dialogue about STEM and the use of technology focused on helping students build new knowledge and analytic tools to improve their students' capacity to question, experiment, innovate, and explore in partnership with other students.

In addition to marketing the STEM signature school, the newly established school carried a slogan of being the "most inclusive school" in its district. Teachers confirmed that they "feel really good about the way that (they) provide (their) services." They compared their school with other schools in the same district and were convinced that "the reason of them not having as many issues and concerns as other school buildings have" was because they "had really good systems and structures in place." This narrative was widely shared among educators at school. Both Bakhtin (1981) and Wertsch (2009) remind us that narrative exists in a social milieu in

which meaning emerges when two or more voices come into dialogue with each other. In Bakhtin's terms, "a voice always has a will or desire behind it" (Holquist & Emerson, 1981, p. 434). Thus, educators engaged in a collective meaning making in support of the way in which their school was positioned in the eyes of community (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 2009).

Teachers' responses to the story about the school to be the "most inclusive" varied and were informed by the educators' previous experiences working in schools as well as their beliefs toward human development, individual differences, and learning (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). For instance, educators who had the opportunity to work in other schools within the same district often believed in their current school's narrative and emphasized it on multiple occasions. They shared stories about the students who were transferred to the site from other schools because of the school's established image of having "the best systems in place" for managing needs of students referred to special education services, especially the needs of students labeled with emotional disturbance (ED). Teachers explained the school's "success with inclusion" as having the resources available to support these students. One educator stated, "(our) school has two counselors, two social workers, and that doesn't happen in every school." Educators believed that their school provided the services that students needed. One teacher, assessing the school, mentioned:

> I feel like everything that we are doing at this school is really good for our kids. We have our kids needs in mind a lot. There is a lot of differentiation and individualization for all the kids. So, whatever they need they are kind of getting.

Another teacher echoed, "We have a lot of the trauma-informed care and just the ways that we approach behavior and mental health is different than a lot of other schools." Teachers were proud of the services that they had for their students at the school. While a large majority of the

participating teachers embraced the ideology and believed that they worked in the school that was inclusive, one educator found it to be difficult to implement. For example, she criticized the approach for distributing human resources at the school:

> We have 800 kids in this building. So, if we have 800 kids in this building, we need to have these many teachers. That is all what district looks at. And the same thing with sped. We have these many kids with IEPs, so you only need this many people. We are not just a number. These kids have specific needs.

As the study unfolded, I found that this educator was the only educator in the study who openly expressed her frustration with the system.

Theme 1 Locating Power: Terminology, Structures, and Roles

Two of the purposes of this project were to learn about (a) the roles educators play in designing and supporting inclusive classroom communities and (b) the degree to which students have participatory parity in classrooms described as inclusive. As I looked at the classrooms, what stood out to me where the power was located in these classrooms. In this study, I draw on Foucault (1999) and Wertsch (2009) who remind us that power does not exist in any form, neither it is a top-down imposition. Power exists within human relationships and cultural tools that serve as historical, social, and institutional mediators of human action (Foucault, 1999; Wertsch, 2009). The analysis of data revealed that the power was located within the (a) terminology that was used to describe students and their needs; (b) conceptualization of educators' roles; and (c) established classroom participation structures that followed schoolwide protocols for the use of instructional time.

When first approached to participate in this study, the district was asked to nominate the school that they viewed being the "most inclusive." At the beginning of the study, school asked

me about the type of inclusion that I preferred to observe. I was not sure what they meant by the "type of inclusion" but shortly I learned that the school categorized its inclusive activities into (a) academic, (b) behavior or (c) academic and behavior inclusion. Thus, the notion of inclusivity at school was mainly concerned dis/ability and not racial and/or linguistic diversity (Kozleski, 2020). For this study, the school administrator explained that she had chosen her "best" teachers along with classrooms that she believed embodied each "type of inclusion." In the following paragraphs, I briefly describe the nominated general education classrooms and its members.

A Snapshot of Classrooms: What Counts as "Inclusive Classrooms"?

The general education inclusive classrooms that I observed had distinct structures, terminology, and members. I was not familiar with the jargon that educators used to identify educational functions and procedures. Initially, it was challenging for me to fully grasp the participants' vocabulary as well as understand the classroom instructional and behavioral management systems established in each classroom. Educators told me that I was observing general education classrooms designated as either "behavior support," "resource," or "intensive support (Table 4.1)."

Table 4.1

General Education Classrooms Described as Inclusive

Classroom label	Type of inclusion	Educators	Class size
		Lower Elementary[7]	

[7] I use the language "lower elementary general education classroom" and "upper elementary general education classroom" instead of naming a specific grade level (e.g. second grade general education classroom) to protect students' and educators' anonymity.

Classroom label	Type of inclusion	Educators	Class size
"Behavior support"	"behavior inclusion"	general educator paraeducator	24 students, including seven students identified with "severe behavior needs"[8]
"Resource"	"academic/behavior inclusion"	general educator special educator	23 students, including 12 students identified with "emotional, behavior, and speech needs"
		Upper Elementary	
"Resource"	"academic/behavior inclusion"	general educator special educator	26 students, including four students identified with "ADHD, OHI, and emotional needs"
"Intensive support"	"academic inclusion"	general educator paraeducator interpreter	24 students, including three students identified with "learning" and one student identified with "physical dis/abilities"
	Total:	10 adults	98 students

Each classroom had a general education teacher and students identified with and without dis/abilities. Classrooms ranged in size from 23 to 26 students. The students included learners identified for specialized services. The students with identified needs varied from four to 12 students in each classroom. The teachers told me that the classrooms were "separated by needs." Educators explained that students identified with "similar needs" [read: dis/ability] were placed together. At the same time educators used categorical language to emphasize the diversity of their classrooms. One of them stated, "We have inclusion kids in a classroom, we have ELL kids in a classroom, and we have just our regular gen ed kids in a classroom, and we have our behavior kids in a room just because of the support wise." By constructing and assigning labels to students, educators categorized and objectified learners. Rather than understand dis/ability as

[8] I use quotation marks to reflect educators' language.

an identity and a valuable experience, educators marginalized it. Such hegemonic, colonial practice led to the erasure of student identity and diminished educators' ability to recognize students' full range of capacities and histories and use this information as a resource to advance teaching and learning (Dirth & Adams, 2019; Kozleski, 2020). General, special, and paraeducators were assigned to those classrooms based on the degree to which they had experience addressing the identified students' needs [read: identified dis/abilities]. If the teachers had not told me about the classrooms' labels, I would never have known they existed through my own observation.

Thus, educators categorized and homogenized needs of students. They assigned learners with the "similar needs" to the same general education classroom and followed the assumption that the leaners with "high needs" required "more support in terms of what they need." Educators' perceptions toward individual differences shaped (a) the way in which teachers understand their roles and responsibilities as well as (b) students' experiences in their classrooms.

Fixed, Time-Limited Classroom Participation Structures as Ways to Sustain Power

In effort to navigate the complexity of the tsunami waves (i.e., school consolidation, the marketing of the new building to the community, the rush to capitalize on federal incentives, and the impetus to redesign special education) and simultaneously manage classrooms, educators utilized a set of fixed and time-limited classroom participation structures (CPSs). These structures such as (a) in class morning meetings, (b) whole and small groups instruction times, and (c) intervention aimed to support students' learning, sense of belonging, and participation. The school developed and implemented schoolwide protocols for the use of the instructional time within these structures. In the following paragraphs, I briefly describe various CPSs and

how educators approached the notion of instructional time to illustrate the ways in which the affordances given to educators to create community of learners were interpreted and utilized. In many instances, the schoolwide protocols for the use of instructional time and CPSs made it challenging to sustain inclusive and equitable classroom communities.

Time as Capital: Schoolwide Protocols for the Use of Instructional Time

The use of time appeared to be Sunflower's capital. Administrators and teachers conceived of time linearly and used it to plan, distribute, manage, and quantify teacher and student activity (Naraian, 2014). Educators told me that the district allocates a certain number of instructional minutes for math and reading. Sunflower used this as allocation to determine the length of classroom participation structures. Whole-group and small group instruction operated within designated times, determined by the district allocation. In-class morning meetings and intervention time were also subject to the same rule.

Throughout the study, I observed that educators payed particular attention to the distribution of time during small group instruction. I noted that small groups time outweighed whole group time. In the upper elementary classrooms, educators daily taught whole-group math for 30 minutes and whole-group reading for one hour and 45 minutes. Students received small group instruction daily in the following time dosages: 90 minutes for math and reading, 25 minutes for writing, and 35 minutes for science and social studies (see Table 4.2.). In the lower elementary classrooms, even though educators shared with me their classroom schedules (see Table 4.2), at the same time they explained that these schedules tended to change to "reflect students' academic and behavior needs." Typically, educators kept the length of activity as it was posted within a classroom schedule. But they tended to change the order and format of activity. For example, one educator preferred to have more small groups and less whole group instruction

throughout the day because, the educator explained, she was able to "manage students' behaviors better." Educators appreciated that their teaching "was not bounded by the state assessments as much as it was in (upper elementary) classrooms" which allowed educators to "be more flexible" with the use of instructional time. Therefore, often when I came to observe lower elementary classrooms, I found that small and whole group instructions were delivered during the time that differed from the posted time.

Table 4.2

Class Schedule Examples

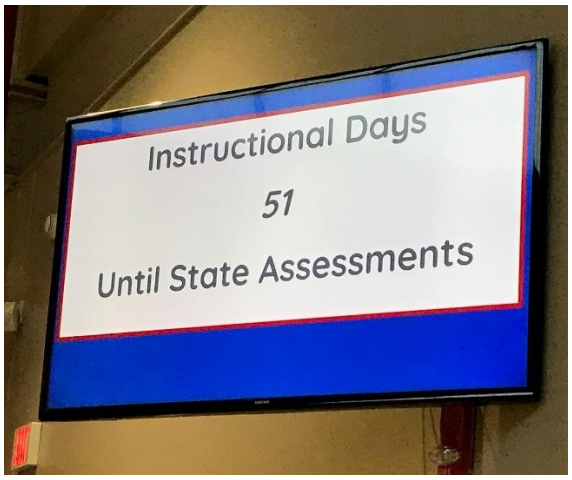
Time	Upper elementary	Time	Lower elementary
08:20 - 08:40	Breakfast	08:20 - 08:40	Breakfast
08:40 - 09:00	Morning Meeting	08:40 - 09:00	Class Meeting and Social Skills
09:00 - 09:30	Math Whole Group	09:00 - 09:10	Read Aloud
09:30 - 10:15	P.E./Music	09:10 - 10:05	Phonics and Reading
10:15 - 10:55	Math Station	10:05 - 10:20	Recess
11:00 - 11:30	Lunch	10:20 - 11:45	Reading and Writing
11:30 - 12:20	Intervention	11:45 - 12:15	Math
12:20 - 12:35	Recess	12:15 - 12:45	Lunch
12:35 - 13:50	Whole Group Reading	12:45 - 13:30	P.E. and Music
13:50 - 14:05	Recess	13:30 - 13:50	Math
14:05 - 14:30	Gramma/Writing	13:50 - 14:40	Targeted Time
14:30 - 15:00	Whole Group Reading	14:40 - 14:55	Recess
15:00 - 15:35	Science/Social Studies	14:55 - 15:35	Math
15:35 - 15:40	Pack Up/Dismissed	15:40	Dismissal

Educators developed and implemented a service delivery model aimed to equally distribute teachers' instructional time to students in a classroom. Time was indexed and served as a tool to mediate teaching and learning as well as manage students' differences. For example, one educator when explained her responsibilities at school said, "you have these many minutes for each kid. For example, an IEP would list 30 minutes in-classroom support and 30 minutes pullout support." Time conflated various services for students. Moreover, time was used as a

marker of certainty in setting expectations toward students' performance and major milestones that over time were perceived as natural occurrences and goals. For instance, a monitor displaced in the school hallway reminded educators and learners about the number of instructional days left until the state assessments (Figure 4.2). One educator noted, "I want to see growth. So, a kid, who was in the first percentile at the beginning of the year, by the end of the year I want him to be in the 10th or the 15th percentile." The educator expected a student to demonstrate a goal after a fixed amount of time. These were naturalized within classroom and school discourse and led into categorization of students who were (un)able to meet prescribed learning objectives into at least two groups, "students behind grade level" or "lower students" and "students above grade level" or "high achievers."

Figure 4.2

Time as a Marker of Certainty



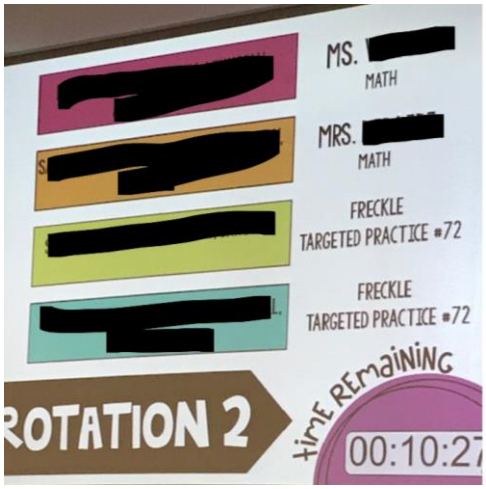
Thus, by setting precise, time-limited performance expectations and benchmarks educators perpetuated the "one size fits all" approach. Naraian (2014) argues that the conflation of time and certainty has been a constant feature of U.S schooling. Historically, it has been informed by the business model of efficiency that dominates the organizational structure of U.S public schools (Naraian, 2014).

Learners followed the traditional U.S school practice of meeting with a teacher within a small group format at least three times throughout the day (e.g., small group math instruction in the morning, small group reading instruction, and intervention time (math, reading or both)). Small groups rotated and lasted from eight to twelve minutes each depending on class size and the number of educators assigned to teach (Figure 4.3).

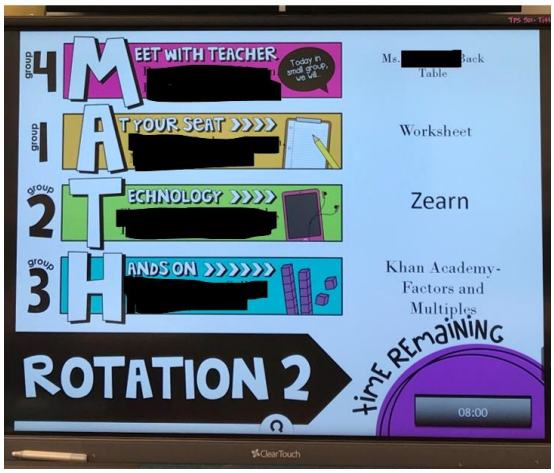
Figure 4.3

The Use of Instructional Time: Small Groups Examples

"Resource general education classroom"



"Intensive support general education classroom"



Typically, educators assigned students into four small groups. Small group included between three to seven students. Teachers used a power point image of a clock projected on the classroom screen for everyone to follow. Educators adhered to their schedule, stopping small group instruction even in the middle of the concept, when it was time for students to rotate. Following this procedure, educators rotated small groups and maintained of what they perceived to be equal distribution of instructional time. Typically, when students were not working in a small group led by a teacher, they were assigned to work independently or with other students in

small groups using various web-based reading or math grade-level programs (e.g., Freckle, Zearn, Khan Academy). Educators applied a similar model in the lower elementary general education classrooms. Their rationale for using the time-centered system was that it offered the opportunity for them "to meet every kid every day to check where (students) are in terms of their learning." However, they did acknowledge that "to meet every kid every day," small group instruction "was very fast-paced." Teachers were concerned about the time and the amount of academic content that they expected to cover during small group instruction. When a special educator joined and taught one of the small groups, the classroom teacher felt relieved. Consider the following quote:

> I was only getting to meet with groups for eight minutes. I didn't feel like I was getting a lot out of it. And having (special educator's name) really helped because then we can both meet with groups for a longer time. We meet for ten minutes instead of eight. So, those two minutes do make a difference.

Educators emphasized that schoolwide protocol for the use of instructional time caused teaching dilemma. One teacher shared, "I do a lot of looking at the clock. Do I have enough time to do another (math) problem? Do I not have enough time to do another (math) problem? (repeated twice)." In effort to meet learning objectives within the small-group format, another educator stated, "We only have ten minutes and we are supposed to do ten words today."

A portion of educators' mental processing was spent tracking the clock and monitoring time. Teachers avoided deviating from the schoolwide established protocols for instructional time rather than take an extra minute or two to sharpen a construct or skill that students may have needed. As a result, time, not mastery or teacher assessment, appeared to be in charge of teaching

practices and student learning. Educators seemed to have relinquished their power to question how time was used. Time was capital at Sunflower.

Morning Class Meetings

Historically, morning class meeting have been designed to promote communities of learning (Kriete & Davis, 2014). In STEM school classrooms, class meetings were used to instruct students, set goals, rules, and expectations. One educator described the morning meetings in the following way, "(morning meeting) just kind of to center everyone and think about what (students) need to work on." On daily basis, learners participated in 15-20 minutes class morning meeting. It was a well-established classroom routine that "sets up" students for a day at school. Students knew that after breakfast, teachers expected their students to join them on the carpet. Educators asked students to "seat crisscross applesauce" on the carpet in front of a teacher and a smart board. Students identified with dis/abilities sat on the carpet with their peers, unless they received permission or had a documented "IEP accommodation" to use an alternative seating arrangement (e.g., a rolling chair, pillow, teacher-made seating block, etc.) In one of the classrooms, a student used wheelchair that she rolled to the carpet edge to hear classroom conversations and be a part of the group. Typically, paraeducators sat in close proximity to these students for supervision purposes. Special educators did not join the morning meetings. Instead, they joined their students during the "academic time" (i.e., whole and small groups instructions) to provide support. In addition, educators dismissed morning meetings as "social" rather than "academic" time. They commented that "not much of inclusion and academics was going on."

Although the morning meetings and their format varied across classrooms, they had several common features. First, the morning meetings were important because they highlighted the teachers' authority and leadership for learning. Second, teachers made major classroom

announcements during this time. Third, educators utilized these meetings to reinforce what it meant to be successful at school. The latter occupied most of the morning meeting time. Students were taught that performance on tests was the most important performance, not learning. As an example, consider the following field note:

> When I walked in, an educator was explaining to the students about a math test and how important it was for the students "to get as closer as possible to the proficiency level." A teacher emphasized that the students "have to show" the path they took to get an answer, regardless that "some of the problems can be done in (students') head." Then she said, "it is hard to solve a math problem like 3297+1284 just in your head. You need to show." Educator emphasized at least three times within a five minutes time period the importance of practicing these skills during small groups time. She concluded reminding students that "if (they) finish their test earlier, then they can read a book." Students did not say a word. They were seating and listening quietly to what teacher was saying. (condensed Field notes, 03.12.2019).

In addition, educators utilized morning meetings to reinforce classroom behavior expectations. The following excerpt from my field notes stated:

> A teacher reminded students about the rules for the indoor recess: "choose one activity and stick to it", "chose one place and stick to it," "use level two voice for indoor recess," "two minutes to clean up should be enough, if it takes longer than two minutes, then a recess time would be reduced." She concluded by saying, "If those rules get broken, then a second recess would be silent." (Field notes, November 26, 2019)

The teacher emphasized the ways in which she expected students to behave during the indoor recess and used most of the meeting time to outline consequences for failing to meet

expectations. Classroom observation suggests that similar content educators delivered in other classrooms. Each time I observed class meetings, educators consistently focused on performance measures as well as set the daily agenda. Thus, morning meetings that historically were designed to welcome students and help them experience membership in their classroom community were used instead to foreground academic and behavioral compliance and performance.

Whole-Group Instruction

Whole-group instruction was widely-used classroom participation structure. General educators led whole-group instruction and taught "whole group math and whole group reading right from the curriculum pretty much kind of as curriculum says." They made "some minor changes" if they noticed "students needed a little bit more practice with something." Paraeducators were expected to "follow" and "support" students referred for special education services. Not only were special educators not used to lead whole-group instruction, they were not present during that time in classrooms. However, special educators felt it was a missed opportunity for their students. One educator noted, "I feel it is more beneficial for me to push in during the whole group experience or even other situations where I can support the students when they are learning the big things." Educators perceived that whole-group instruction was crucial for students' learning. They conceptualized it as a space where "every student gets the same thing." All educators emphasized the importance of having students identified with dis/abilities "present during the whole group instruction." One teacher said, "We have core instruction that (student name) would never miss. So, that would be like whole group, so like that would be like another tier. He would never miss that." Educators viewed whole-group instruction as a necessity for all students. One teacher noted, "I teach grade level curriculum and that is why it is important that (students' names) are in general education classroom for a whole group. So,

they still hear the discussions and they still hear the other things going on." A whole-group context was framed as a space for students to receive "core instruction" and to "hear" grade level discussions. While some educators continued on and on emphasizing the benefits of whole-group instruction saying that it "helps to get everything that kids need"; other educators acknowledged their inability to deliver a high-quality, whole-group instruction to all learners. One educator noted, "We were in this whole group, like there is no way that I could be able to get to each of those kids and give them a little bit more guided, personalized instruction where I could really watch what they were doing." However, even though some educators found a whole group classroom structure be difficult to implement, for learners labeled as dis/abled such structure seemed to be familiar. Consider the following field note:

> The teacher read aloud a chapter from a book that the class was listening to, chapter by chapter, on a daily basis. After listening, the students participated in a mix-pair-share activity with a partner. Then, they shared their responses verbally in front of the classroom. Given the lack of direction about what to do, the process seemed familiar to the students. Students identified with dis/abilities were able to follow the routine. They retrieved their laptops, opened to the right page and followed the words as the teacher read aloud. They were able to stay with the activity throughout the whole group reading time (condensed Field notes, 11.18.2019).

This and several other observations in these four classrooms led me to question the gaps between what the students with and without dis/abilities were learning and what the teachers assumed was being learned.

Small Group Instruction

Educators perceived a whole-group instruction as a platform to teach students major math, reading, and science concepts. Small groups were time-limited and viewed as avenues to help students master skills taught in a whole group. Educators preferred teaching students in small groups and explained that it was "a lot easier to reteach a concept to a student than when students (are) in a crowd of twenty five." In rooms labeled "resource" and "behavior support" general education classrooms, students who struggled to learn, including students identified with and without dis/abilities, were grouped together to work with a special educator at the separate table in the same room as their peers. Students from the "intensive support general education classroom" who were identified as having "high needs" worked one-on-one with a special educator outside the general education classroom, either in the self-contained classroom or at the table in the designated "study area" in the hallway while their peers remained in the general education classroom. As educators told me, in both cases these students were grouped "to work on specific skills based on their IEP needs." Sometimes, special educators "got to work with not just sped kids but gen ed kids" who joined small group instruction to work on similar skills.

Thus, classrooms' schedules were organized to situate students within various learning contexts. Educators mainstreamed students identified with dis/abilities and exposed them to the whole group, small group instructions as well as participation in daily morning meetings. However, regardless of students' identified with dis/abilities presence in classrooms, educators did not modify time-limited instructional routines, nor did they redesign classroom participation structures to reflect all learners' needs and backgrounds. These structures were managed and led by educators. Students were expected to learn and follow established classroom routines as well as engage with the fast-paced whole group and small groups instructions and same tools and

learning objectives. In the following paragraphs, I describe the ways in which the school distributed special education human resources, the roles paraeducators and special educators played in these classrooms, and the ways in which educators facilitated students' learning, behavior, and participation within these classroom structures.

Distribution of Special Education Human Resources: Assumed Deference

The special educators as well as paraeducators appeared to have distinct roles and responsibilities in the general education classrooms. While the classrooms were to be inclusive, special educators and their para-educators worked almost exclusively with the students identified for special education services. General educators appeared to be in charge of the curriculum, the classroom participation structures, and the behavioral and academic expectations. Special educators and paraeducators deferred to general educators' leadership.

Taken for Granted Paraeducators' Roles

The paraeducators' classroom roles were tied to duties with students with identified dis/abilities. The following field note describes how one paraeducator carried out her role:

> At the beginning of the activity, the para moved to sit closer to the students identified with dis/abilities. The students knew that it was expected from them to sit next to the para. They grabbed their laptops and positioned themselves accordingly. The para was sitting next to the student making sure he was following the reading of the general education teacher. At some point, the para enlarged a page, so the student could see the text better. She used a pencil to point the line that the general education teacher was reading and asked the student to keep his eyes on the page (condensed Field notes, 01.21.2020).

On multiple occasions throughout the study, I observed similar interactions between paras and students across classrooms. Paraeducators reinforced educators' expectations that students were to follow the text when teachers read aloud. Paraeducators assisted students who struggled to learn with physical access to the teaching materials used in classrooms.

The school implemented a schoolwide behavior management "point system" for the students who experienced challenges managing emotions and behavior. One educator described the system in the following way:

> Each kid starts with 290 points that they can earn throughout the day. And then there are 59 violations. If students argue, if they are off task, if they don't follow directions, if they throw an object, if they yell at a teacher, yell at a student, then the para or myself will take off the points.

In this way, through the "point system" educators perpetuated ableist ways for students to behave. Such colonial approach led to policing of students' behavior and objectification, marginalization of students' bodies (Annamma, 2017; Dirth & Adams, 2019). Students were expected to act within prescribed behavioral frames and were penalized if they behaved otherwise. Paraeducators were expected to use a "point sheet" to track students' undesired behavior within the school areas (i.e., classrooms, cafeteria, bathrooms, hallways, etc.). Educators told me that students knew that some of them were "on the point sheet." Adults utilized the point sheet as a communication device about students' behavior. Sometimes students carried a point sheet that had their names on it and gave it to the next paraeducator or teacher who were going to work with a student. Some students struggled to meet educators' behavior expectations and got upset when adults took off the points. Others "worked hard" to earn as

many points as possible to receive a reward (e.g., a candy, extra play time on iPad) at the end of the school day.

Apart from monitoring and managing students' behavior, paraeducators told me that they had to make many "judgment calls", "pick and choose" what and how students should learn. One of them stated:

> Trying to figure out what most important thing is for a student to get out of whatever we are doing because he is not gonna get all of it. So, we have to pick and choose what we think is the best thing to do and we kind of make that judgment call.

The paraeducators set the tone of student learning and the degree to which students had the opportunity to engage with their peers without dis/ability labels. I rarely observed classroom activities where paraeducators actively promoted students' learning alongside with their peers identified without dis/abilities. The field note reads as follows:

> During the mix-pair-share activity, the para and the interpreter remained in their seats as well as the student who used the hearing aids. He was not asked to get up and find a partner to work with. Instead, one of the students identified with dis/abilities joined him for a mix-pair-share activity. Even though, the interpreter seemed to facilitate the discussion between the two boys, the students did not engage in the conversation with their general education peers. A general education teacher circulated around the classroom monitoring the rest of the students' behavior (condensed Field note, 01.24.2020).

This episode was a part of the video recorded lesson that I played back to the educator during the reflective practice. I asked a teacher to comment about the footage and reflect upon the expectations she had toward a paraeducator's role in her classroom. After the teacher watched

the clip, her first comment was that she wished that "paras would just think about what is best for all of the students that they are working with and help those that need it without having to be prompted." This teacher conceptualized a paraeducator's role in relation to the students labeled as dis/abled and acknowledged paraeducators' lack of preparation to work with these students. Other educators perceived the paraeducators' role in a similar way. Moreover, they explained that "it is a fine line between what para's job title is." They acknowledged its low-paid status and emphasized that "it can be really difficult to find a good help because paras are not certified teachers." However, as data above suggest, paraeducators were expected to act as if they were "certified teachers" (e.g., individuals with the institutional responsibility to facilitate discussion among students and re-direct behavior deemed off-task). In this way, school accepted and perpetuated the notion that the least qualified staff members taught the students with the most complex learning needs (Giangreco et al., 2005). Thus, students were missing the support that the paraeducators' roles seemed to imply.

Even though some of the educators critiqued paraeducators' role saying that "most paras overhelp, overcompensate, and do too much work for the students," many found paraeducators' presence beneficial. Consider the following quotes by the general educators from two different classrooms:

> (Para) was really good at watching and she knew which ones to kind of watch out for and use some of the signs when students were losing interest in a lesson or not being able to understand what was going on. She could sit next to them and just give gentle reminders.

> (Para) might restate the questions. That's the thing that happens for (student name). They tried to bring it down to his level of understanding. But still being able to help them participate in the book or in the discussion, or in the math problem.

Some paraeducators spent a majority of their time in classrooms in direct support of students identified with dis/abilities. Giangreco et al. (2005) argue that excessive paraeducators' proximity leads to inadvertent, detrimental effects for students' learning and participation as it creates separation from classmates, unnecessary dependence, feeling stigmatized, and students' loss of personal control to exercise choices that are usual for other students. Thus, paraeducators' roles seemed to be crucial in the degree to which students had opportunities to participate and be included into community of learners. Educators viewed paraeducators as key players in closing the special education service delivery gaps, even though paraeducators did have specialized knowledge and skills to do so. They expected them to be "really good at watching students," "sitting next to them" as well as "restating the questions" and "bringing the material down to the student's level of understanding." Paraeducators held power that determined students' learning and success at school.

Teachers' Classroom Authority

Educators wielded considerable authority through the use of classroom space and surveillance of students. They assigned meanings to various areas and physical objects in classrooms and used them to control and manage students' behavior and academics. Moreover, educators also relied on direct instruction, the flow of information and opportunities to learn as additional ways to maintain classroom authority.

Maintenance of Authority through the Use of Space and Surveillance

The use of classroom space and its physical objects can be detrimental to students' learning, identity development, and the degree to which students feel they belong at school (Lim et al., 2012; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015). Historically, the impact of classroom space, materials, and semiotics on student learning has been underemphasized (Morgan, 2000; Jones et al., 2016). However, recent developments in the fields of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1991; Jones et al., 2016; Lim et al., 2012; McLaren, 2005), human geography (Soja, 2013), and anthropology (Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003) challenge the notion that classrooms are static, physical spaces with little connection to student learning and success. Recently, scholars have begun to emphasize the importance of understanding the *classroom space as a social construction* interwoven with axes of power such as gender, sexuality, ability, language, and Whiteness (Morgan, 2000; Giroux, 1991).

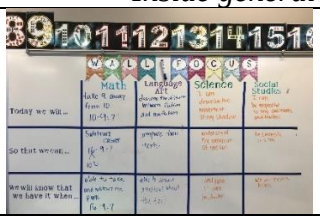
Modern materials (e.g. classroom layout, physical objects) and discursive practices (e.g., normalized meanings toward the use of material structures) combined in a classroom produce a certain space and sense of place that direct students' bodies toward specific ways of being (Adams et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2016). As findings from this study suggest, such dialectical relationships between bodies and place yielded particular experiences that students had in classrooms described as inclusive. From artifacts collected during this study emerge an interactive pattern that reveals (a) the ways in which educators' discourse and classroom materiality produced a particular classroom space; and (b) the potential consequences of classroom space for students' learning, agency, and autonomy.

Observed Spacialities. At the beginning of the study, educators told me that each classroom differed from each other in terms of how educators "set up their room." However, I

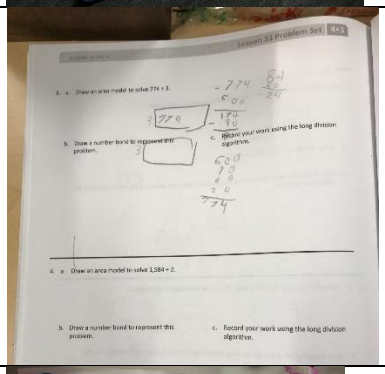
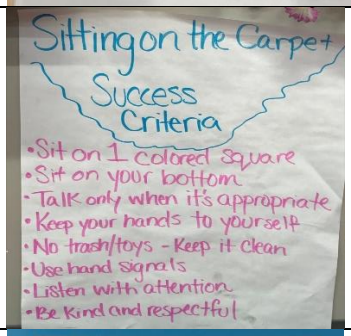
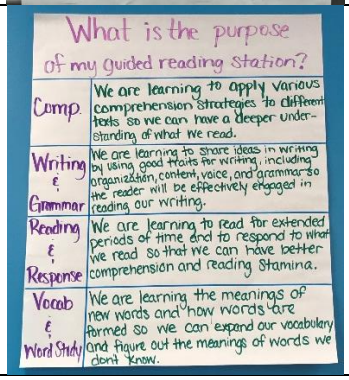
observed that many classrooms were more alike than different. Each classroom had a similar classroom layout and set of physical objects available to educators and students. An inventory of classrooms included tables, flexible seatings, carpet, a smartboard, digital tablets, whiteboards, a daily posted schedule, grade level workbooks, worksheets, and bulletin boards (see Table 4.2). According to teachers, the materials were available to support the implementation of inclusive and STEM education. Educators also used spaces and physical objects outside general education classrooms (e.g., tables, couches, and walls in the hallways). In addition, based on iterative data analysis, I determined the ownership (i.e., whether the material belonged to a student, educator or both), purpose (i.e., academic, behavior, and socio-emotional), and meanings educators assigned to the spaces and physical objects they used. While educators managed access to all 20 objects in the classroom, 12 items were used to manage academic performance while 14 items were intended to control student behavior.

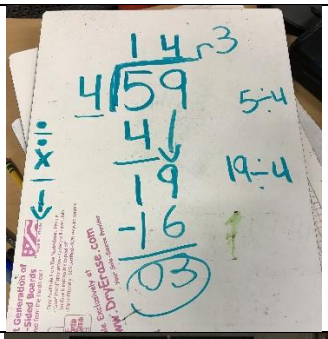
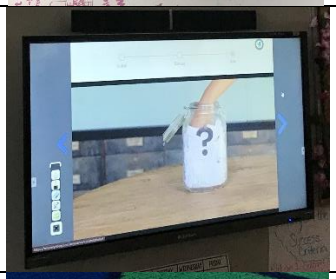
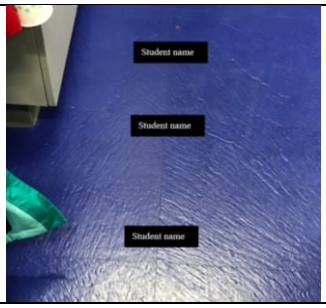
Table 4.2

Use of Space and Objects In- and Outside General Education Classroom

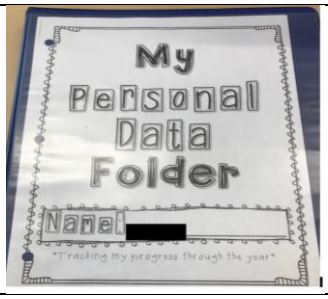
Space and objects[9]	Example	Purpose	Meanings
	Inside general education classroom		
"focus wall"		academic behavior	visualization of learning goals and objectives
carpet		behavior	study, play, waiting area

[9] The table includes information about the classroom space and objects that were observed across classrooms. The objects available in one classroom but not in the other classroom (e.g., teacher's family pictures displaced on the wall next to a teacher desk) are not included in the table.

Space and objects[9]	Example	Purpose	Meanings
letters on the carpet		academic behavior	management of students' seating
grade level workbook and worksheets		academic	skills practice, testing
classroom walls		behavior	instructions and protocols to complete assignments, behavior rules and expectations, academic goals
anchor charts		academic	

Space and objects[9]	Example	Purpose	Meanings
whiteboards		academic	exchange of information
smartboard		academic behavior socio-emotional	information display
Chromebook/ iPads		academic	skills practice, play time
"peace corner"	n/a[10]	behavior socio-emotional	"catch up on sleep time," "calming time," and exclusion areas
chairs	n/a	behavior	flexible seating, "student's IEP accommodation"
students' tables	n/a	academic	individual, group work
teacher table	n/a	academic	small group instruction
markings on the floor		behavior	managing lining up

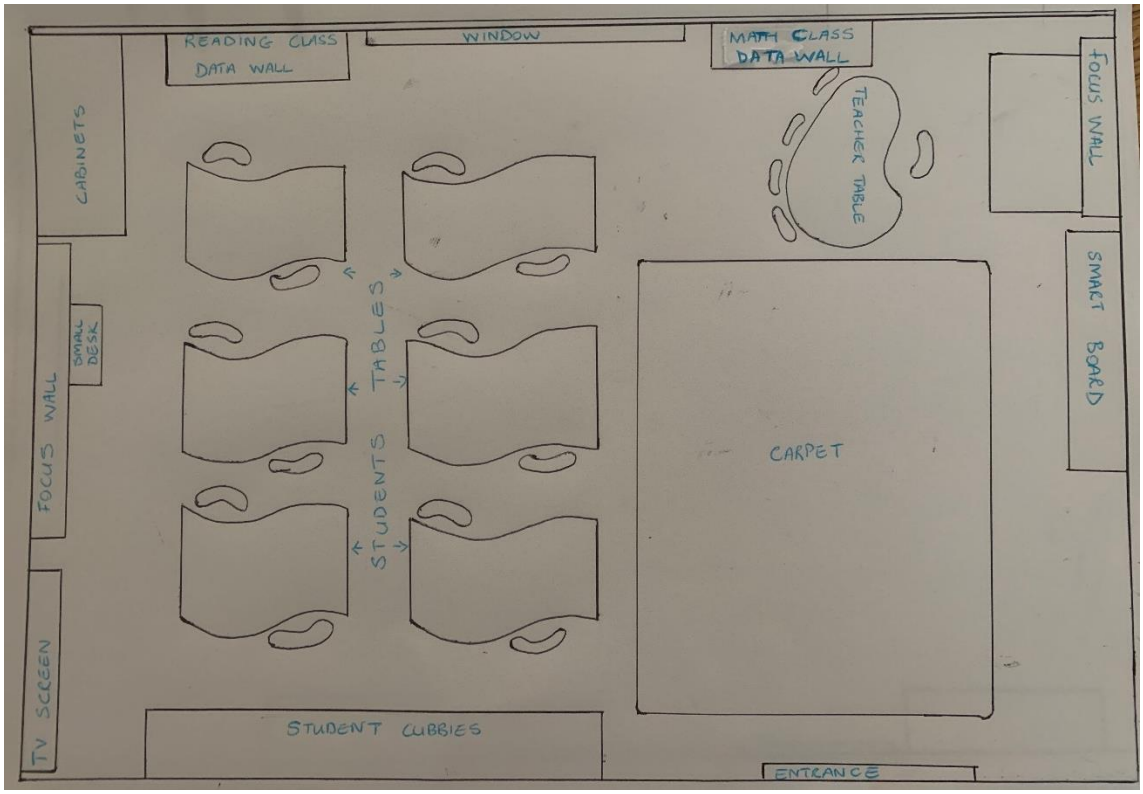
[10] To protect the anonymity of educators, students, and school some photos are not included in the table.

Space and objects[9]	Example	Purpose	Meanings
"Student Data Book"		behavior	progress monitoring of student performance
"cubbies"	n/a	behavior	to store students' work, books, etc.
Outside general education classroom			
self-contained classroom	n/a	academic behavior socio-emotional	study, exclusion areas
hallway's walls	n/a	academic behavior	behavior rules and expectations, display of student work and school announcements
hallway	n/a	behavior	transition, exclusion areas
tables in the hallway	n/a	academic behavior	study area, small group work

As data suggests, teachers had ownership of the majority of objects and used them more for behavior rather than for academic and/or socio-emotional purposes in relation to students.

Educators' Making of Space. Based on classroom observations and video analysis of recorded lessons, educators used classrooms to establish two areas of academic engagement (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4
Typical Classroom Layout



One of the areas was a big table. It belonged to the general education teacher who used it for small group lessons. Students who sat at the teacher's table worked together on tasks that the teacher directed and for which she offered feedback. Another area comprised of clustered, small student tables formed two to four big worktables. Students sat at these worktables to complete independent assignments. Sometimes, educators assigned students to small groups that were able to work on the carpeted floor. While classrooms were described as inclusive, co-teachers who led instruction for students with specific learning needs did not have assigned spaces. When they joined a classroom for a limited period (part of the daily schedule), special educators located a place to work with students. While they were able to do this, I wondered about the message this lack of designation sent to students and teachers alike about belonging, the value placed on their learning, and the recognition that their needs were important and widely recognized. Typically, special educators sat on the carpet with a small group of students (lower elementary classroom),

or used a chair and sat in front of the group of students who gathered on the carpet (upper elementary classroom), or used one of the student' tables (lower elementary classroom). The distinction between roving special educators and classroom teachers was indexed in how space was divided and utilized. The resident classroom teacher had authority and ownership in their classrooms, which was not shared with their collaborators or their students.

The use of space, furniture, and tools signaled the roles, tasks, and expectations for student performance and behavior. The following classroom observation illustrates educators' power through the use of material structures to control and managed student behavior during teaching:

> The educator taught sight words to five students seated around a kidney-shaped table. The teacher sat in the middle of the table across from the five students. Each student had an erasable ink marker that students used to write sight words that the teacher called out. Students kept their markers closed unless they were writing. Some students struggled to comply with the teacher's expectation. They kept their markers opened, played with them, and/or used them to write sight words even when they had not been asked to do so. The teacher's strategy to encourage student focus and redirect unwanted was to repeat the phrase, "close your markers, two hands in front of me, eyes on me." The teacher used that phrase to direct the students' attention and body toward a new sight word (condensed Field note: 02.04.2020).

In this example, the teacher controlled the degree of student ownership over materials and tools. Moreover, through the educator's surveillance and repetitive commands, students became "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1977). The following observation in another classroom demonstrates a similar repetitive practice used to control transitions between activities:

> The teacher asked her students to store their iPads and then, meet a teacher at the carpet. One student was delayed putting her iPad away. The teacher started to count down from 10 to 0 hurry that student. However, the student was struggling to put away her device. She was trying to connect her iPad to a charger so that it would be ready for the next activity. This took more time than the teacher had allocated. The teacher continued to count while she turned to the white board, took a marker and started saying to the students that she was going to get points and win (Note: a class had a game "Scholars versus teacher." Students earned points for following directions, behaving as expected, receiving praises by school staff, etc. Teacher earned points if the whole class or any student in a class misbehaved, refused to follow directions, or completed a task slower than it was expected). So, this time a teacher "earned" four points because a student was slow in putting her iPad back. While a teacher was counting, the rest of the class was watching how that student was struggling to connect her iPad to a charger. Students shouted, "Hurry up, hurry up." Then a teacher explained to the students why she earned points saying, "when I gave a direction to put iPads right away, everyone has to follow immediately and not wait to be called." (condensed Field note: 12.03.2019)

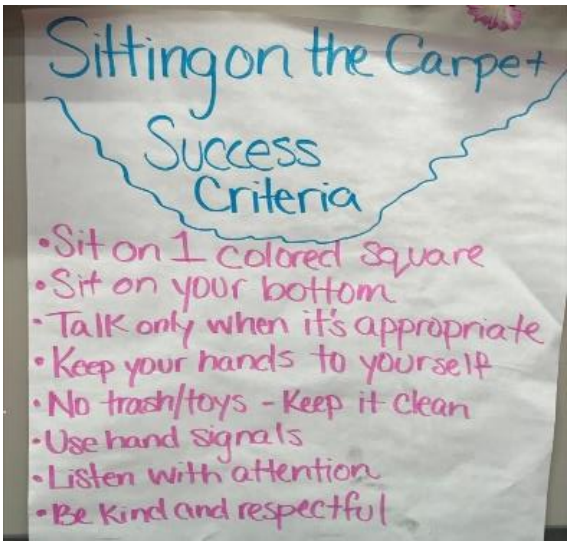
The educator used surveillance for controlling behavior that also engaged other students in performing surveillances as well. The Scholars versus Teacher activity elevated the need to obey and conform. Assigning points accentuated the importance of being on time by appropriating the rest of the class as teacher proxies. This created an emotional valence for conformity and performance that connected students to the teacher's authority.

Several educators remarked that the charts and graphs on the walls in their classrooms "have a very specific purpose, whether it's for tracking classroom data or for vocabulary, or for

learning intentions." Various charts displayed on the walls included (a) academic and non-academic information, (b) steps on how to complete assignments, and (c) behavior rules and expectations. Educators used these visual reminders to position students' bodies in a particular way. For example, in one of the lower elementary classrooms, a teacher had rules, "sitting on the carpet success criteria", posted on the wall for students to follow (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5

"Sitting on the Carpet Success Criteria"



The educator assumed that these universal classroom rules for engagement were applicable to all students in a classroom. However, for the learners who were still learning how to read, these visual reminders were likely challenging. Besides having behavior rules, educators had anchor charts communicating educators' expectations toward students' academic behavior and performance. As one of such examples, consider the following conversation that I had with an educator:

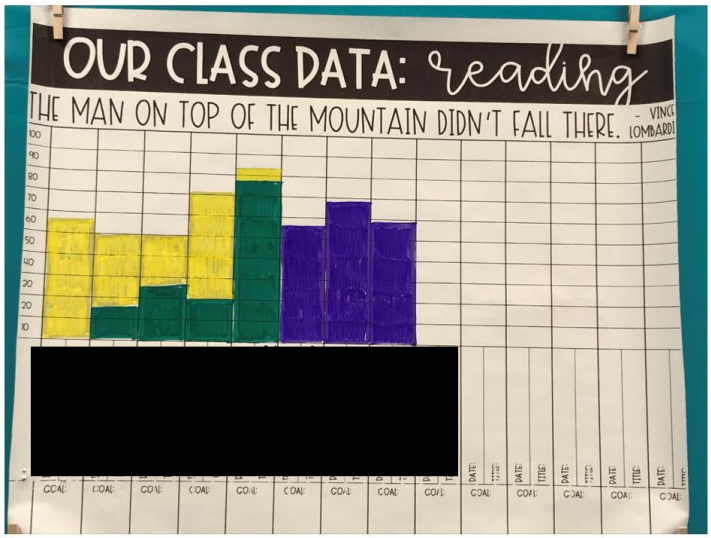
> I: As we are walking around your classroom, can you, please, talk a little bit about what you have on the walls?

> Educator: So, I have a math and reading walls. It's really important to track data and it's important for students to feel accountable for their data. It's important for students to know that what they are learning or not learning is important to them and to me. So, that is why I have class data posted.

The educator acknowledged that it was important for the students to know what they were learning and justified having "class data posted on the wall." (Figure 4.6) Moreover, the phrase that the educator printed above the graph (i.e., "The man on top of the mountain did not fail there") reinforced educator's belief toward what she perceived as students' success at school. According to the educator, the way for students to demonstrate learning and success was through students' ability to score well on a reading test. The graph below illustrates a grade point average on reading.

Figure 4.6

"Class Data Wall"



However, this practice was problematic because it was grounded in the assumption that all students learn and demonstrate acquired skills in the same way. Educators assimilated students

into ableist education by regularly surveilling students' performance and comparing it to some perceived norm. Such beliefs and their associated practices are likely the result of the experienced institutional accountability pressure toward students' ability to excel in standardized testing (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015).

Thus, combined with the semiotic structures such as language and teaching materials, educators' sense-making of the classroom space was a political act that categorized and shaped students' ways of being at school (Jones et al., 2016; Bakhtin, 1981; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015). Educators' surveillance had its sorting mechanism as teachers penalized students who did not conform to uniform and legitimized norms and standards for behavior and performance.

Maintenance of Authority through Direct Instruction

Typically, educators delivered instruction through two traditional types of participation structures, the whole and small groups (described in more detail in the second theme) that shaped ways in which students experienced learning at school. I collected multiple vignettes of classroom interactions and teaching praxis throughout the study to learn about the roles educators played in designing inclusive classroom communities. I examined each vignette using CHAT. It allowed me to capture and analyzed the relationships between the components of activity (i.e., participants, community, rules, division of labor, tools, outcome, object) to determine the degree to which students had participatory parity in classroom (cite). In this way, using CHAT's lens I was able to surface mechanisms, processes, and patterns that typically remained silent (cite). As I analyzed the interrelated components of teaching praxis, I discovered that educators dogmatically followed delivery of programmed, direct instruction that permitted them to sustain classroom authority. It was evident through the ways in which educators structured lessons, set the rules for engagement, and responded to the students' unwanted

behaviors. Two vignettes, “Don’t say it. Spell it” and “Voice off. Keep your eyes on the text” represent the teacher-owned classroom authority. The first vignette “Don’t say it. Spell it” demonstrates how a general educator and students engaged in teacher-directed small group reading/writing activity in the lower elementary classroom. The second vignette “Voice off. Keep your eyes on the text” shows how a general educator, a paraeducator, and students engaged in teacher-directed whole group reading activity in the upper elementary classroom.

Vignette: “Don’t say it. Spell it.”

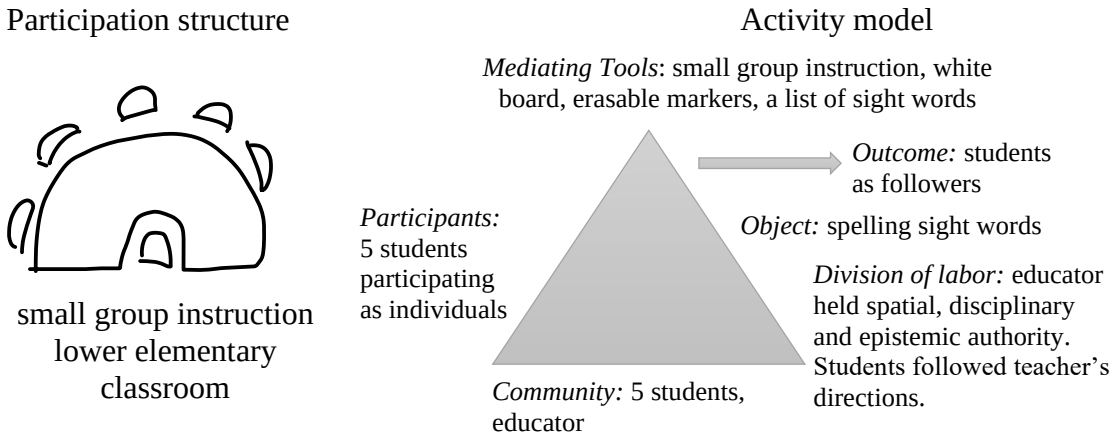
A teacher conducted a small group lesson with five students in the general education classroom described as inclusive. For eight minutes of small group instruction, the six students sat with their backs to the rest of the class, facing the teacher across a large, kidney-shaped table. The teacher gave each student an erasable marker and asked them to keep the markers closed when they were not in use. She started the activity by saying, “We gotta hurry. We are supposed to have ten words today.” Then she wrote down the word “see” on the board and asked students to “keep (their) eyes on the board.” She asked students if they knew what the word she wrote was. Students shouted out their answers. The educator said that students’ responses were “too loud” and asked them to “keep their voices down.” Then the teacher slowly spelled out the same word and asked students to repeat after her. Students followed and echoed the word “see.” After that the teacher asked the students if they knew how to spell that word. Without waiting to hear students’ response, she continued to model for the students saying, “guys, write the word “see” on your table.” Some of the students started to write down large size letters using erasable markers in the area in front of them. But the educator quickly redirected students saying that they had to leave some space on the table for other words to be written down. The teacher praised the students who followed and copied a word by saying, “okay, good job.” Then she asked students

to spell a sight word out loud by pointing to the letters, “Point to your letters with your finger. I told you to point to your letters with your finger. Here we go.” The teacher applied the same the step-by-step instruction to teach students other sight words such as to, the, see, me, like. She expected the students to follow and repeat those steps each time they learn a new sight word. When the educator witnessed student’s struggle with spelling, she called out a student and asked them to spell a sight word out loud individually in front of the group while the rest of the students patiently waited for the next step. Out of five students, two students engaged in deem off task behavior while waiting for their turn. They played with the markers, talked and laughed to each other. The educator reminded students that she expected them to seat quietly and listen while their peers were learning. Each time students shouted out loud sight words when they were not supposed to, the educator stopped them saying, “I did not say write it. I say spell it,” “Don’t say it yet.”

Drawing on the vignette above, the analysis of the small group lesson resulted in the activity model presented in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7

Activity Model of Small Group Participant Structure



In this model, the *community* consisted of one general education teacher and five students, including two students identified with dis/abilities (i.e., the *participants* of the activity) participating as individuals in the activity. Even though students sat around the table as a group of five and the teacher called the activity as a "small group," she expected each student to participate in it individually (i.e., each student was asked to write a sight word independently). The only time when students potentially could feel part of the group was when the teacher asked them r to spell aloud a sight word in unison.

The *object* of the activity was to teach students sight words. To meet this objective, the teacher broke a task into incremental steps (i.e., writing, pointing to the letters, and verbally spelling a sight word). The teacher modeled each step and expected students to follow. She wrote down a sight word and then prompted students to do the same. Students copied written by the teacher sight words. The teacher waited for the students to finish writing down a sight word and then asked students to point and spell the letters aloud. The teacher expected the students to memorize how to spell and write sight words. The teacher used a whole-group call and response technique to check students' spelling of sight words.

In terms of *division of labor,* the educator was in charge of making logistic decisions as activity unfolded. Educator hold epistemic, discipline, and spatial authority (Ford, 2008; Lim et al., 2012; Raviv et al., 2003) by giving students directions about how and when to participate in an activity (e.g., writing down a sight word using uppercase letters only). For example, the teacher exercised spatial authority by positioning the small group of students in a particular way. She was able to continue to surveil the rest of the class while keeping the small group of students focused on her face and instruction. It may have also limited visual and auditory distractions for the small group. In terms of epistemic and discipline authority, the teacher followed the scripted

lesson. Each time the teacher wrote a new sight word on the white board, she asked the students to read it aloud as a group. The students followed the instruction and gave a whole group response. She held a white board in front of the students and asked them to write down a sight word on the table in the area in front of them using an erasable marker. She waited for a student to finish writing before she asked them to point to the letters and pronounce a word. Even though some of the students seemed to be familiar with the sight words because they wrote the words clearly and shouted out letters, the teacher did not seed input from the students. On the contrary, the teacher corrected such unwanted student behaviors by saying, “I did not say write it. I said spell it,” “Don’t say it yet.” She also expected the students to copy the sight words exactly (i.e., using lowercase letters) and corrected the students who wrote their sight words differently (e.g., used uppercase letters, reversed the letters and/or wrote them backwards).

The *mediating tools* that the teacher used to achieve the learning objective included ten sight words, a white board, erasable markers, teacher-directed instruction, and a whole-group call and response technique. The educator shared these tools with the students; however, she directed the ways in which they were to be used. Moreover, the teacher controlled students’ responses by asking them to repeat words aloud and corrected students when they made mistakes either in spelling and/or writing. The educator’s expectations about students’ behavior and performance remained unchanged throughout the activity.

The activity model depicted in Figure 4.7 details how the educator sustained authority through the use of direct instruction. The *rules* for students’ engagement in the activity largely derived from the teacher’s positioning of herself within a small group. She expected students to be attentive, seat quietly, listen to the teacher’s talk, and respond to her prompts. The way in

which educator perceived her role in the classroom impacted the other elements of the small group activity and reinforced students' position as followers in the classrooms.

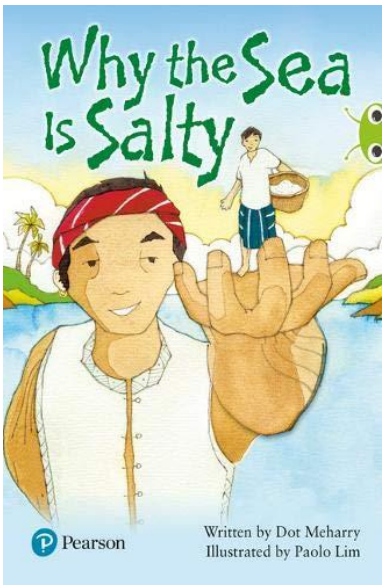
Vignette: "Voices off. Keep your eyes on the text."

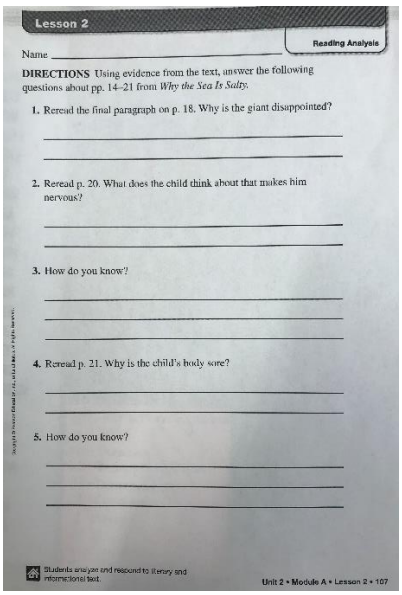
A teacher conducted a small group lesson with three students in the upper elementary general education classroom described as inclusive. For ten minutes of small group instruction, the three students sat with their backs to the rest of the class, facing the teacher across a large, kidney-shaped table. The teacher gave each student a book titled "Why the sea is salty?" written by Dot Meharry, a worksheet, and a pencil. The rest of the students worked independently on the reading assignments at their desks.

At the beginning of the reading activity, the teacher reminded the students that they had read the book before. She said, "We read it. So, don't tell me that we don't read it." Then the teacher asked students to pay attention to the worksheet which had a set of written questions for students to answer. She read out loud the first question which asked students to reread one the paragraphs on the certain page and provide the written answer about the main character (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8

Teaching Materials




Lesson 2

Reading Analysis

Name _____

DIRECTIONS Using evidence from the text, answer the following questions about pp. 14–21 from *Why the Sea Is Salty*.

1. Reread the final paragraph on p. 18. Why is the giant disappointed?

2. Reread p. 20. What does the child think about that makes him nervous?

3. How do you know?

4. Reread p. 21. Why is the child's body sore?

5. How do you know?

Students analyze and respond to literary and informational text.

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One of the students shouted something that sounded like the answer to the first question that the teacher asked. But the teacher disregarded student's comment by asking him "to hold on." She said, "Wait, what they tell us to do? They tell us that we needed to read the final paragraph on page 18. So, let's look at that." The teacher wanted students to reread a paragraph first before they start answering the questions. The same student shouted, "What is the paragraph?" The teacher replied by asking students, "So, how do we find a (paragraph)? What do we know about paragraphs?" She did not wait for students' response and continued, "Every time the line is pushed in, that is a new paragraph." She turned the book to the students pointing to the intended line on the page. Students were able to locate a paragraph on the page of their books quickly when the teacher modeled locating the paragraph on her book. Then the teacher said, "Okay, let's look at that. Go to page 18." While the students in the small group were searching for the page, the teacher monitored students' behavior in the classroom. She called out the names of students who were browsing the classroom saying, "Go back to your seats and start working." She kept repeating, "make sure you are working," "guys, voices off, voices off." Once its became quiet in the classroom, the teacher started to read out loud a paragraph to the students in

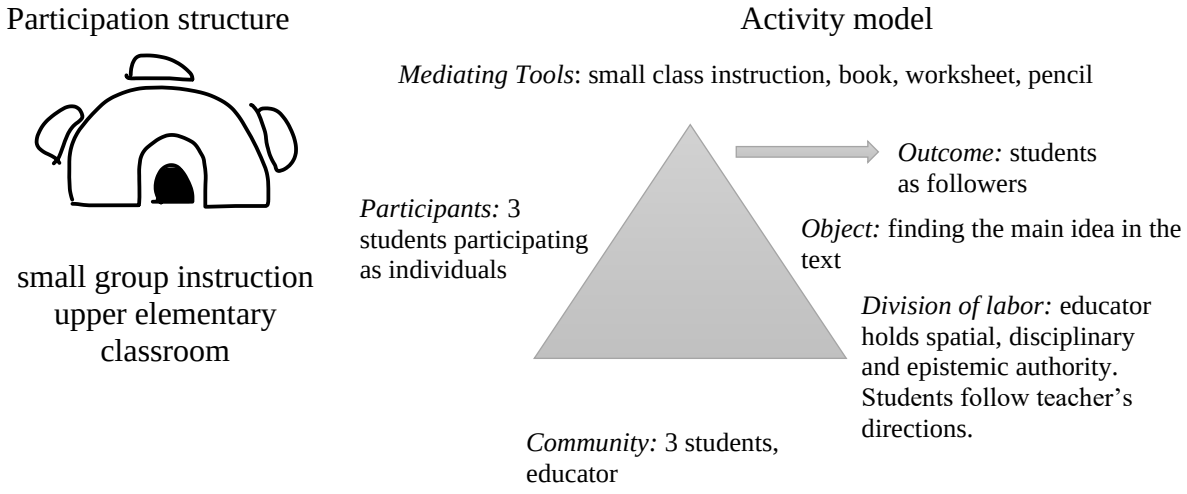
the small group. One student did not appear to be attending to the story. The teacher redirected the student saying, “Keep your eyes on the text.” When the classroom noise increased again, the teacher said “guys, keep your voices off. I can’t hear what I am reading here.”

When the teacher finished reading a paragraph, she said, “let’s see what they want us to do.” She programmed her teaching by following the order of the written questions on the worksheet. She repeated the first question, “Why is the giant disappointed?” One of the students raised his hand to answer. The teacher repeated the student’s answer saying, “because they did not bring him any food. Exactly!” Then she gave directions to the students in small group on how to complete a task. She said, “so, when we are looking at these questions, we are going to start by restating the question in a statement.” She continued saying, “So, I am going to start writing “The giant is” and we are going to put the word “disappointed,” and then we will say “because” and then she posed and asked the student who shouted his answer earlier to repeat his answer. The student repeated his answer and the teacher wrote it down (i.e., “they did not bring them any food.”) The teacher model how to write an answer to the question. Students followed. When a student looked confused, the teacher modeled finding the answer and then writing it down on her worksheet. Rather than wait or offer partial prompts, students copied the teacher’s answer. The teacher remained students that if they done with the first question, they “should be looking at question number two. It starts with the direction.” Then she continued, “what they tell us to do. To reread a paragraph on p. 20. Go and reread a paragraph. It is giving you a direction. So, that is the first thing you should do.” Students followed.

Drawing on the vignette above, the analysis of the small group lesson resulted in the activity model presented in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9

Activity Model of Small Group Participant Structure



When comparing the activity model of the small group structure in the lower elementary classroom (shown in Figure 4.9) with the activity model of the small group structure in the upper elementary classroom, it became evident how educators from both classrooms maintained authority through the use of direct instruction. As shown in Figure 4.9, the teacher was in charge in making spatial, disciplinary, and epistemic decisions toward students' participation in the activity. The teacher was trying to teach the strategies to a small group of students on how to answer a question by finding and using evidences from a text. In terms of *mediating tools*, to practice the skill the teacher offered to all of three students to read the same book (i.e., Why the Sea is Salty by Dot Meharry) and to answer the same set of written questions. To manifest the group task, she used the original, printed book as well as made a copy of the worksheet for herself and each student at a table. It was a one-page worksheet from the 4th grade reading curriculum. The teacher expected students to use their materials and follow her along. By offering the same set of teaching materials to each student, the teacher might hope to secure the student access to education. However, at the same time, it seems like she assumed that the same book and the worksheet can be duplicated and used with all the students. Those resources

travelled from one small group of students to another during rotation time. In that way, the teacher reinforced the "one size fits all" approach. She believed that her job was to provide the same set of materials to all the students she worked with. By default, the same set of teaching materials is unable to capture the learning needs, interests, and histories of all learners. Moreover, the application of the same teaching tools presents an obstacle to create personalized learning experience for each learner, not to mention the adequacy in responding to the student learning needs. The teacher had the same materials and used them to demonstrate how to respond to a set of written questions.

In terms of *rules*, the teacher treated the worksheet as some kind of the external force and utilized it to structure teaching and manage student learning and behavior. She kept saying, "let's see what they want us to do," "look, they give us directions." It was unclear to whom the teacher was referring when she was saying "they." But she kept repeating that as a way to reinforce the importance of following directions and staying on task. In that way, the teacher demonstrated to the students what the following directions and the order meant. The teacher offered the same route to learning to all the students who were working in a small group and expected to have similar academic outcomes among all the students.

In terms of *division of labor*, the educator did not distance herself from the activity, neither she sought to share classroom authority with the students. It was the "one-way" activity directed by the teacher. If the students refused to follow directions and/or demonstrated disengagement, they were reminded about the way that they supposed to engage (i.e. to perform what the teacher asked to do). Moreover, it was not clear if students needed such a complete prompt to complete the activity. Because of their proximity, the teacher was able to offer prompts to keep students moving through her lesson with them. It felt as if the use of classroom

seating arrangements facilitated management and control of students. It did not feel like students were being coached to assume their own control. Rather, the role of the teachers was to provide external control. She sought it and students seemed to expect it.

Thus, these two vignettes and developed based on them CHAT activity models provide understanding to what degree students had participatory parity in classrooms described as inclusive. The CHAT activity models illuminated how power was unfolded and manifested within classroom participation structure such as small group. These models revealed the interconnectedness among the elements of teaching activity (i.e., mediating tools, rules, division of labor) and how they sustained and perpetuated teacher-owned classroom authority (cite). Through the use of direct instruction educators controlled the sequence and the type of tasks as well as when and how the students could demonstrate their learning. The small group size facilitated highly scripted behavior with no room for students to explore and determine new ways of finding an answer. Monitoring was consistently used. Proximity allowed teachers to observe student body language, reinforce specific kinds of behavior, and support students when needed. Thus, teacher-directed, scripted activity benefitted the teacher rather than the students because it (a) could be replicated with little effort on the teacher side with another group of students; and (b) allowed to have consistencies and routines within teaching and classroom management.

Special and General Educators' Role Differentiation

The school conceptualized the roles of special educators in a similar manner as the paraeducators' roles. The school assigned special educators to work with the students identified with dis/abilities. Working within the adopted MTSS framework (Sailor et al., 2020), special educators regarded themselves as "tiered interventionists." Their roles included providing academic and behavior support, either in a small group or one-on-one in- or -outside the general

education classroom, to students identified for special education services. Special educators "travelled" from class to class with a cart full of teaching materials, supplies, and students' work.

The amout of time that special educators spent in classrooms varied and depended on the classroom's label (see Table 4.1). For instance, in the classrooms that included "resource kids" (i.e., "resource general education classroom"), a special educator taught for about 30 minutes in the morning and 45 minutes in the afternoon reading and math to the students in small groups. General educators found such arrangements beneficial as they allowed them "to spend more time with gen ed kids." They explained that "sped kids were getting that entire time with an adult and with items at their level."

In the classroom labeled "intensive support general education classroom", special educators did not join the students during the small group time. Instead, they worked with students in the "intensive support room." It was a self-contained classroom, initially designed to serve students identified with significant dis/abilities. However, the school used this room also as a Tier 2 and Tier 3 location to provide "intensive support to the students with high needs" who initially were placed in the "intensive support general education classroom."

Special educators did not share the power within the general education classrooms. Instead, they followed the expectations and responsibilities that were imposed on them. Regardless of the limited time that special educators spent in the classrooms described as inclusive, general educators recognized that their colleagues "formed good relationships with the students." Special educators often referred to themselves as friends to many of the students with dis/abilities with whom they worked with. This is likely the result of working almost exclusively with students with dis/abilities as that was their assumed responsibilities. They could speak

extensively about the students' parents, siblings, achievements, and the things learners enjoyed the most.

Special educators were confident in their abilities to support students' academic needs. They told me that they "know where their students fit" and "how students can be successful." Moreover, special educators differentiated their roles from the roles of general educators based on the degree to which they thought a teaching practice required an educator to have a "special training" in order for it to be implemented successfully. They divided teaching practices into two categories, a special education practice (or what they called a "sped thing") and non-special education practice (or what they called "best practice"). Consider the following excerpt from a conversation I had with a special educator who explained how she perceived the differences among these two practices:

> Me: when you talked about your work, you mentioned, "it is not a sped thing". What did you mean by that?
>
> Educator: I guess it just doesn't take special training to know that making a bold line is something visual for the kid to see. Kids are not dependent upon me to be successful, for me to sit there and do step by step, by step. If you have to take it step by step, then it is a sped thing. But if it is a little, minor adjustment to something, like, for example, taking a test and instead of four choices giving them three; instead of having everything paper pencil give them manipulatives. Everybody could use those things. That is just best practice. …All kids could have those things. It is just taking that one step further to make sure that they can be successful.

Another special educator conceptualized her role in a similar way. In describing the way she taught math, she said, "when I teach division, I teach five steps where some of the gen ed

teachers only teach four. I know that the kids in my group need a dip a little bit further in a different way." The special educators acknowledged the differences that students had and adjusted their teaching by breaking down learning tasks into smaller units.

However, at the same time special educators tend to model the general educators' teaching practices. They did this to ensure that their practices were aligned with the practices of the general educators who were tasked with making certain that all students received uniform instruction for purposes of testing accountability. Consider the following quote, "Ms. (general educator name) does the same thing with her students because when I listen to us, we sound very similar. She is saying the same thing across the room. There are times I'm going, oh, we sound identical (laughing)." Then she added, "Oh, at least, students are getting the same thing in both groups because at that point of the day my group should sound the same because it's just a math." Educators mimicked each other and applied similar algorithms and tools. The following memo written based on the analysis of videorecorded lesson reflect the ways in which educators reproduced sameness within teaching:

> A special education teacher and a general education teacher worked with a different group of students in the general education classroom. Even though, teachers worked independently from each other and occupied different areas of the classroom, there were noticeable resemblances within their teaching. For instance, both of them taught the same topic (i.e., adding fractions), used the same set of tools (i.e., markers, white boards, and a plastic covered sheet to write on), and applied the same teaching techniques (i.e., a type diagram with fractions). Both teachers expected the students to follow along, draw type diagrams, and responded orally to the questions (Memo, 01.16.2020).

The special educators noted that they "learned general educators' teaching styles and what (general educators) would tolerate, and what (general educators) wouldn't tolerate." Special educators did not see themselves as equal partners and "wished they had more freedom in the classroom" because they "did not always have access to going in and making changes." One of them noted that not having freedom "is a struggle for special education in general because (special educators) don't want to step on toes. (Special educators) don't want to think that (they) know more than the gen ed teacher does." Thus, special educators had multiple and sometimes competing responsibilities (e.g., to be responsive to the needs of students and model the practices of general educators at the same time) within the general education classrooms described as inclusive. The clear duties that have been imposed on the paraeducators and special educators created hierarchies where general educators were in charge of the classrooms and special educators and paraeducators were expected to defer.

Therefore, the locus of power was located within educators' deficit-based discourse toward students' differences, routinized and time-limited classroom participation structures that were organized by a classroom teacher, and teachers' narrowed understanding about their roles and responsibilities at schools. Students were expected to follow and participate in the learning contexts controlled by educators.

Theme 2 Exercising Power: The Implementation of the "Inclusion/ STEM" Dream

I discovered several patterns about interaction, intent, and outcomes of the classroom eco-system. For the most part interactions among students, between students and teachers, and among teachers focused on curriculum concepts, the organization of lessons, the use of time, and the engagement of students. Through these interactions, a clear theme arose around the exercise of power through ownership of the curriculum and the nature of learning opportunities students

encountered. In the following sections, I describe how both the control of the curriculum and the kinds of learning opportunities defined relationships and learning boundaries.

The Nature of Learning Opportunities

The nature of learning opportunities was deeply interwoven with the educators' perceptions of what constitutes learning and lodged with district-mandate procedures and schoolwide protocols to produce objective evidence of students' achievements. The findings suggest that teachers viewed students' learning as a static, one-dimensional cultural practice. Educators standardized educational processes and privileged task repetition, memorization, and call-and-response practices as the ways for students to demonstrate learning and understanding of academic content. Educators encouraged sameness in classroom learning cultures and perceived sameness as "equalizer" of educational benefits.

Cognitive Demand

Students' opportunities to learn were embedded within the activities that educators asked students to perform. In this study, I draw on Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (1956) to analyze the cognitive demand of academic activities in which students identified with and without dis/abilities were invited to participate within classrooms described as inclusive. I define the cognitive demand of learning opportunity as the ways in which activity enabled a level of effort that was required from a student in order to master a task (Tekkumru Kisa & Stein, 2015; Stein et al., 2000). Typically, educators enacted low level tasks such as scripted (i.e., task repetition) and memorized practices (i.e., remembering and recalling facts) that provided minimum efforts for students to engage in thinking and reasoning (Tekkumru Kisa & Stein, 2015).

Task Repetition. Task repetition was a widely used practice across classrooms. Educators prioritized it as a core teaching practice aimed to enhance students' academic and behavior outcomes. Moreover, educators viewed the repeated prompt as the actual constituents of instruction and learning. The two vignettes described above offered examples of the ways in which educators implemented task repetition practice within small group structure. In the first vignette "Don't say it. Spell it", educator believed that students could learn sight words if they follow and repeat the same learning path (i.e., writing, pointing to the letters, and spelling out loud a sight word) each time they learned new sight word. In the second vignette "Voices off. Keep your eyes on the text," educator taught students how to answer questions about the text using text evidence by breaking down a task into smaller steps (i.e., locating a paragraph, searching for key words, and restating a question to provide an answer). While finding the evidence was a tool for learning, the teacher did not teach the students how to use that tool to build connections across various topics and concepts and expected students to arrive to similar outcomes. Task repetition was normalized teaching practice and used with all student groups, regardless of students' cultures, interests, and backgrounds. Consider the way in which an educator aimed to build students' confidence with reading:

> The teacher followed the script and asked the students to perform the same sequence of tasks (i.e., point to a picture on a page, find a word in a sentence, pronounce a word, etc.). She expected the students to take turns in performing those tasks by calling student's name. She engaged the students in the cycle of the same questions and tasks each time they flipped a page. For instance, to explain the concepts of plural and singular to the students, she asked them to count a number of animals on a page and determine whether a word should be plural or singular. She repeatedly asked the students, "Does a word

> need a letter "s" at the end? Yes or no?" Students flipped the pages, counted a number of animals on a page, and gave a short answer "yes" or "no." At the end of the activity the teacher praised students for "working hard" and rewarded each student with a ticket (condensed Field note: 11.18.2019).

In that way, a task repetition was used as an instrument to direct the students' responses toward the expected form of performance. During the video recall interview, the teacher explained that "that activity (was) one of (her) favorite activities to do, especially for (her) low readers" because "(activity) gets them looking at the pictures." And then she added:

> I had (students) to look at the words or look at the pictures, and then the words that were going to be difficult or typically the picture. So, like "crabs" we, probably, wouldn't see another book with the word "crabs" in it or "horses." It was one of those (activities) where I was trying to make them confident in reading as well because these two scholars (pointing on students in the video), if they would be more confident, their reading ability would blossom faster too.

The educator believed that task repetition (i.e., "flipping pages of the book," "looking at the words or the pictures") helped students to become "more confident" and proficient with reading. She justified the approach saying, "if (students) don't know the words in the books, they can use the pictures as a guide. That is how (students) can guide their reading is through the pictures along." Since the discourse about the animals themselves and their connection to the students' daily lives not occurred, it suggests that the educator assumed that students were familiar with the pictures and had the capacities developed that helped students "to guide their reading." Thus, the educator viewed pictures as a tool for learning how to read, even though it was not clear to what degree students knew how to use that tool. This episode shows how by asking students to

repeat a task and expecting them to demonstrate the repeated performance could potentially result in (a) missed teachable moments and (b) perpetuated notion of normalcy (cite). However, educators did not see a repetition practice in that way. In educator's eyes, students' ability to repeat a task was perceived as indicator of students' learning. Educators believed that if students were not following and replicating a task, then they were not learning. One teacher noted, "I do feel if (students) are writing, kind of mimicking and repeating what I am doing, then they are learning, and we are more engaged and connected to each other." Moreover, educators viewed the benefits of repetition practice in increased students' test scores. One educator explained, "I tell them, like okay, (students) have to have at least a 60 percent or I am reassigning a (task). I tell them, okay, (students) have to have a 70 percent or I am reassigning a (task)." Then she added, "But (students) will be, like, can you reassign my read works? So, (students) know." Thus, students internalized that a task repetition and learning was essentially the same thing. Educator's linear thinking toward the expected students' performance and what constitutes learning hindered the possibility for the students to be involved in a discourse of learning. By dogmatically following the delivery of the material and focusing on the objective students' performance (e.g., the number of words students learned, the number of minutes students spent reading a book on the iPad, etc.), educators emphasized and perpetuated the lowest level of knowledge building. They expected students to demonstrate the repeated performance which led to having less to no opportunities for students to experience what it meant to be an independent learner and engage in high order thinking such as analysis and reasoning. Thus, by encouraging the task repetition educators encouraged the repeated performance.

Memorization and routinized lesson structure. Many observed classroom academic activities involved memorization and recall of facts as well as students' following the routinized

sequence of lesson segments. For instance, a whole-group read aloud activity involved the following structure: (a) students' recall about a previously read chapter (led by a teacher who asked students to "tell what happened in the last chapter that was read"); (b) a new chapter read aloud (led by a teacher); and (c) a chapter discussion (led by a teacher who asked students questions about the chapter content and/or vocabulary). A teacher accomplished the latter by engaging students in the call-and-response activity, asking students to type answers using digital tablets, or participating in the mix-pair-share activity with their peers. Consider the following example based on the classroom observation:

> The lesson was a part of a series on the short story "The Longest Night" by Jacqueline Guest. At the beginning of the whole group reading lesson, the teacher reminded the students that they were continue reading the same book. She asked the students to recall what had happened in the chapter that they read, "Who can tell me what did happen in the last chapter we read?" Some students raised their hands to answer the question. One of them quoted the facts from a book. The teacher was pleased that the student used the quotes from a chapter by saying, "I like that [student name] used quotes from the book." Then the teacher read a chapter out loud to the students. After she finished reading a chapter, the teacher asked students to participate in the mix-pair-share activity. The teacher asked each student to find a partner and share their thoughts by answering to the following question, "What details indicate that the first night was difficult?" (condensed Field note, 01.24.2020)

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher asked students to recall facts from the previous chapter. She praised students for correct answers which was a technique that promoted recall (Stein et al., 2000). In that way, the teacher reinforced the expectation that the students had to

remember details from the story. Moreover, a lesson positioned reading as a static body of knowledge. Later the educator explained that she used "this same structure for reading every single day where (she and students) read, (she and students) have a question, then (she and students) do vocab." She concluded admitting that students internalized the structure and then added that "this structure is effective, it works pretty well as (students) have been doing it for the whole school year." While students' ability to memorize what goes next in a lesson might helped an educator to manage classroom and had less changes made within a lesson plan, it was not clear to what degree such structure benefitted students' learning. Each time I observed whole-group reading, educators asked students to perform the same reading routine. Such algorithmic, low-level procedures required limited cognitive demand and were focused on producing correct answers instead of understanding.

Thus, students engaged in a set of procedures such as memorization, recalling facts, recitation, and call-and response that were positioned as learning opportunities. Educators broke a task into smaller steps, asking students to memorize procedures of solving these tasks, and being able to recall and applied procedures within similar tasks. Thus, often educators and students were engaged in what Bloome and Argumedo's (1983) called "procedural displays." The researchers defined the "procedural displays" as "the enactment of a set of academic and/or social procedures that (a) may not be related to acquisition of academic content or learning strategies; (b) provides a means to get from the beginning of a lesson to its end; and/or (c) is taken to be accomplishment of the lesson" (Bloome & Argumedo, 1983, p. 1). Educators and students internalized roles, acted in lessons, and said what was expected from them to say without necessarily engaging in high order thinking and new knowledge building (Bloom, 1956). In other words, educators and students "(were) displaying to each other that they (were) getting

the lesson done" (Bloome et al., 1989, p. 272) and instruction was accomplished by techniques (i.e., task repetition, recalling facts) rather than provoking students to engage in high-level cognitive processes.

Equality of Opportunity: Educators' Understanding

The analysis of teaching activities revealed that educators perpetuated the approach that they called "doing what is best for kids." Educators used this language particularly when they talked about meeting the needs of students in the general education classroom. The discourse of "doing what is best for the kids" widely circulated at school. Thus, I decided to explore what educators meant when they said, "we do what is best for the kids." As I spent more time observing classrooms, I realized that the phrase "doing what is best for kids" was a code phrase for the principle of equality of educational opportunity.

Educators created learning environments that emphasized and perpetuated the notion of equality rather than equity (Kozleski & Thorius, 2014). They engaged students, including students identified with dis/abilities in the same reading, science, and math activities delivered in general education classroom. They used the same teaching materials with all students and expected learners to demonstrate similar outcomes (see the earlier described vignettes as examples). While one special educator critiqued such approach saying that "it (was) not beneficial for students to do the same things across the board," the majority of general and special educators encouraged and perpetuated *sameness* in education. For example, when one educator described a reading lesson, she noted a program, "a website that the district pays for," that allowed "every kid to have the content and everything they need on their Chromebook screen." While a top-down approach to selection and distribution of teaching materials might be seen as a constrain in teachers' work, educators perceived such method beneficial. The educator

explained that since the school did not have enough copies of the same book available to all students, through that program "students had access to the content as far as everything that students needed to be able to learn." Another educator echoed similar position. She conceptualized her responsibility to secure students' access to the same resources and learning opportunities. When the educator described the benefits of the program, she encouraged its use:

> … because the way (activity, resources, tasks) are set up, I think the learning is accessible for all the kids, regardless of whether they are high academically or low or if they have more attention problems because (reading program) puts everything right there in front of (students). And so, (reading program) is not going to be hurtful or harmful to any of (students).

Educators framed a web-based reading program to be a universal tool, applicable in teaching all students. Moreover, another educator used the same program not only to teach reading but also to "hold every single kid accountable for answering a question." She went on explaining that "(program) doesn't say (students') names up on the (smart) board. Sometimes (students) type their own name, but then (she) can still see who does type and who doesn't type." The teacher concluded saying that she used this information (i.e., "who does type and who doesn't type") to "have (an accountability) conversations with students." By expecting students to "type" answers in order to demonstrate learning and participation in an activity, the educator restricted learners to a limited range of behaviors and possibilities. General educators provided the same curriculum, educational opportunities, instruction, and experiences to all students they taught. They applied the same worksheets and exit tickets to access students' reading, math, and writing knowledge. Educators expected students to engage in the same set of activities regardless of students' racial, socioeconomic, linguistic, sexuality, and ability backgrounds. When I asked the

educator, who taught students how to use text evidences to answer questions (see vignette "Voices off. Keep your eyes on the text"), if she would change something if she teaches that lesson again, she said:

> if I teach it again, I'd probably keep most of it. If any change, probably be more of just the grouping for this activity. Right now, these two girls got held back a little bit because I spent so much more time with him. If girls were in a little bit more of an adjusted group or they were with a couple kids that were more at their level for this specific skill, then that would probably be the best thing because I could get through a lot more with them. I don't have to teach them as directly as I have to do with him. I mean, all the things as far as I did, the activity, the worksheet, the answering the questions, but it's just the timing and the pacing of it that, ideally, I would change.

The educator recognized that two students whom she taught "got held back a little bit" because she spent more time supporting other student. However, rather than questioning her own teaching approach to education of learners with differing needs within one learning space, the educator perceived students' regrouping as a solution to the problem.

The conducted reflective dialogues with participants revealed that typically "major" learning opportunities (educators called them "big projects and assignments") for students were created by a grade-level team of general educators. When educators designed an activity, they attempted "to hit" as many educational standards as possible. For instance, when I asked educators to describe the goals they had for their students within a particular activity, teachers cited educational standards. One educator said, "usually (activity) goes into some kind of standard, whether it's like showing evidence in the text or character traits, or figurative language." By matching an activity with the educational standards and expecting all students to

participate, educators believed they allowed all learners to have equal opportunities to the development of the same skills. Educators saw such approach beneficial because “all students across the grade level could experience the same.” They called their practices being “equalizers” and believed that it was students’ responsibility to “be in the right mindset” in order to benefit from the offered activities. When I asked one educator who she thought benefitted from the participation in the activity, she said, “I think all (students) definitely.” And then she added, “I do think [student name] gets a little bit out of it when he wants to focus.” She concluded saying that that student “sometimes shows attitude because he got some emotional issues,” and “if (student) is in the right mindset, he benefits.”

Thus, the notion of equality of learning opportunity was predicated on teachers’ limited understanding what constituted learning and diversity in human nature. In spite of educators’ rhetoric about “every student learns in a different way,” daily teaching practices equated all the learners to the same learning objectives and expectations. Educators defined equality of learning opportunity as a provision of the same educational experiences, knowledge, tools, and curriculum to all students in general education classrooms. Educators conceptualized access to the same materials as a proxy for students’ learning and expected students to demonstrate similar results. In this way, educators perceived and treated students as a homogenous group rather than viewed them as individuals with various needs, histories, and interests. Such approach to framing of learning opportunity led to uniformity rather than plurality in classrooms and promoted sorting and assimilation practices.

Distribution of Learning Opportunities

In the general education classrooms described as inclusive, typically, general educators were in charge of distribution of learning opportunities to students. In doing so, they grouped

students into homogenous groups based on ability profiling of students. Teachers called these groups the “skill-based” groups. They emphasized that such approach to grouping students for instruction allowed them “to work with students on specific skills.” While educators emphasized the importance of every student to participate in the “skill-based” student groups, educators allowed students, including students identified with dis/abilities, to miss some of the learning time when learners demonstrated deem off-task behaviors and/or experienced challenges to transition from one activity to another. Educators perceived such behavior management strategy as accommodations for students identified with dis/abilities.

Grouping Learners for Instruction

Educators divided students into groups for small group instruction and intervention purposes. However, the ways in which educators grouped students depended on (a) the classroom’s label and (b) whether a student had a dis/ability. For instance, in the classroom labeled as “resource general education classroom,” students identified with dis/abilities were assigned to work with a special educator, while students identified without dis/abilities received instruction from a general education teacher. Students with the membership in the “intensive support general education classroom” did not participate in the small groups with their peers. Instead, they received one-on-one instruction from a special educator outside general education classrooms in the special education room. And, finally, in the classroom labeled as “behavior support general education classroom” students identified with dis/abilities joined their peers and a general educator during the small groups and intervention times. As general educators explained, students identified with dis/abilities received “instruction at their level” when they worked with the special education teachers outside the general education classroom. The

students, who remained and worked with a special educator in the general education classroom, were expected "to work toward their individual education goals."

Beside tracking and grouping students for instruction based on whether or not they had a dis/ability label, general educators also tracked students identified without dis/ability. They assigned them into groups based on students' identified ability level (i.e., "low achievers," "middle road kids", "high achievers," "low group," "high group," "beginning group," "developing group.") Typically, educators provided small group instruction to a homogenous student groups. However, there were a few educators that preferred to have heterogenous student groups. As one educator explained, she knew that "she was not able to meet the needs of all lower kids if they placed into one small group" and preferred to have a mixed-levels student group. On the contrary, another general educator emphasized the homogenous grouping. She noted, "students placed in different groups along that level, on that specific skill. So, groups rotate and change throughout the school year." The educator rationalized such practice saying that it allowed students "to get kind of the same baseline." A special educator echoed her general education colleague:

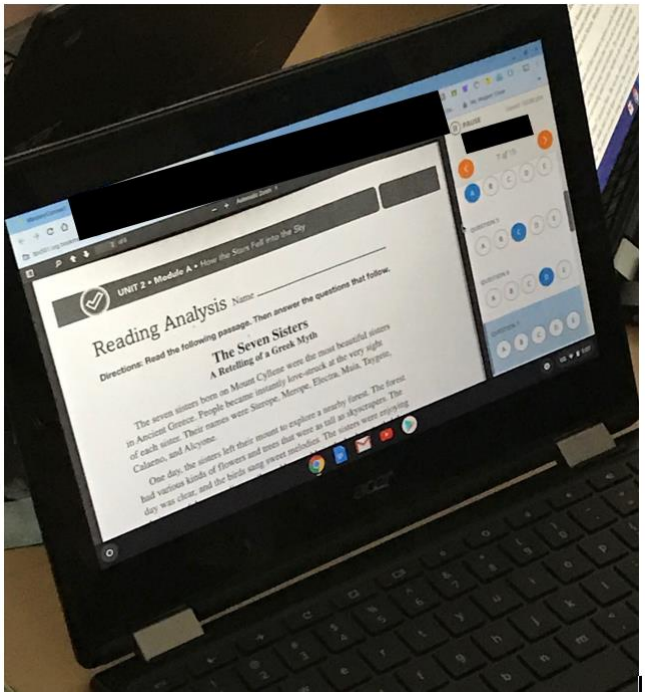
> A general educator has changed groups for intervention which has helped a lot because now these groups are more skill-based. Students are on the same level, whereas this has not always been. I think if we go more, like students are on the same level, it will help a great deal.

Educators preferred to have "skill-based" student groups and relied on students' test scores to determine groups. For example, educators administrated a reading test using a district-purchased, web-based, grade level program that was installed on students' digital tablets. A reading test had a set of multiple-choice questions for students to answer. To demonstrate

reading fluency and comprehension, students were expected to learn how to navigate technology, be able to read questions, pictures on the screen, listen to a story read to them, type an answer and/or select it from a list (see Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10

Reading Test Example (Upper Elementary Classroom)



Educators applied similar approach to monitor class progress toward math and used students' test scores to group learners for instruction. One educator explained her decision-making toward student grouping for instruction in the following way, "when I make up small groups, I can look at data and say, okay, I still have six kids that can't do this skill. We need to work on that. So, that is how I work with it." Moreover, general educators preferred "high achievers" to work together in the same group. One educator justified such homogenous grouping in the following way:

> I have two students in my top group that are really way out there. And so, they are not sitting over here. These students have little chapter books, and they are just reading on

> their own or together and talking about the book. And then I will meet with them once or twice a week and we will talk about the book that they are reading. Because they don't need me sitting here listening to them read every word. They have moved way past that.

The educator viewed her role in working with the "high achievers" by allowing them to "read chapter books" and spend the majority of small group time on their own.

Thus, in distributing learning opportunities to students, educators prioritized ability grouping. In this way, teachers assumed they could meet the varying needs of learners. They defended a tracking practice arguing that it provided the "lower kids" with the instruction at the level that students needed and the "higher kids" were able to achieve a fast-paced, more challenging instruction which allowed them to move faster with the curriculum. However, by perpetuating ability profiling of students, educators exaggerated the differences among learners and label them as "low," "middle," and "high achievers." Moreover, an educators' reliance on performance indicators in grouping students (i.e., students' test scores) diminished students' opportunities to learn from their peers who learned in different "skill-based" groups.

Allowing Learners to Join Activity Halfway

Classroom observations revealed that educators allowed students identified with dis/abilities to miss some of the learning time and/or joined an activity halfway. Typically, these "allowances" occurred when students demonstrated deem off-task behaviors and/or had difficulties transitioning from one activity to another. Educators conceptualized such behavior management strategy as "providing accommodation to the students." The following field note captured an educator's response that prevailed across classrooms during students' transition time:

> An educator started the whole group reading activity while one of the students identified with dis/abilities was still finishing up her math assignment and another student was busy with finishing up eating a mandarin and cleaning his table. Both of the students knew that they were supposed to be doing next as they transitioned and joined the whole group activity without being reminded. However, by the time it happened, they had already lost a few minutes of the whole group instruction. The teacher kept going with her lesson when students joined (condensed Field note, 01.22.2020).

She expected students to "jump in" once they finished with their previous activity. Later, the educator explained that she was used to the idea that some students joined lessons halfway because as she said "that was just the nature of the bees. They need more time to transition." Thus, she expected learners to "fit in" and adjust to the ongoing activity in a classroom. Moreover, sometimes educators dismissed what students were doing and asked them to join the activity halfway. Consider the following classroom observation:

> The small group activity included two students and one teacher. However, halfway into the activity, the teacher asked another student to join the small group. Initially, the student was playing by himself on his iPad. It seems he encountered some challenges on his iPod and decided to walk to a teacher table and asked for help. Instead of responding to the student request, the teacher said that the student should be in the group. She did not acknowledge her mistake and asked him to grab a chair and join the group. The teacher's response seemed to confuse the student, but he did not ask any questions. As soon as the student complied, the teacher handled him a book and asked him to answer a question (condensed Field note, 01.09.2020).

Thus, by allowing learners to join activities halfway, educators reinforced the notion of students identified with dis/abilities being "guests" in general education classroom rather than perceiving them to be full-time members of general education classroom.

Theme 3 Assuming the Mantle of Power: The Technocratic Logic as Oppression

The findings of the study suggest that lives in the classrooms described as inclusive were arranged along the lines of "technocratic logic" (Mehta, 2013) or what Skrtic (1995) calls the "prescriptive discourse" toward classroom organization in managing human differences. The core feature of technocratic logic is the politics of expertise which results in a set of prescriptions for standardizing teaching and learning in classrooms (Skrtic, 1995). Such logic appeared to dominate decision-making processes toward the cultural set up of the classrooms and ways in which educators allocated resources, conceptualized their roles, and delivered services to the students. The technocratic logic was not questioned, taken for granted, and widely practiced by educators at school.

The Politics of Expertise

At school adults regarded to themselves and each other based on the roles and spaces that they occupied. As I reviewed the school website, I found various tittles used for adults who worked at school: "principal," "assistant principal," "dean of students," "instructional coach," "librarian," "reading specialist," "interventionist," "general education teachers," "special education teachers," "interpreters," "paraprofessionals," "occupational therapist," "special education consultant teacher" (affiliated with a school district), and "English language

teacher."[11] (masked school official website). Those titles were normalized and used to manage leaners with various needs.

Such employed classification system indicates a certain collective way of thinking toward human differences. For instance, classroom observations revealed that the concept of "English language teacher" assumed identification, labeling, and homogenous grouping for language service. On multiple occasions those services were delivered outside the general education classrooms by the "English language teacher" to a group of students labeled as "English language learners (ELLs)." Typically, a teacher worked with a small group of students (ranged from four to six students) around a table in the designated area in the hallway while the rest of their peers remained in the general education classroom. The delivery of language services was not integrated within a general education classroom, neither was it considered as a shared practice by general, special, and English language teachers. On the contrary, English language services were implemented as a separate, isolated activity. In that way, rather than embracing students' differences school collective technocratic logic disqualified them and positioned as being deficient. Such approach legitimized particular expertise and the "correct" ways of communication, expression, and learning. For example, one educator described her experience working with those students in the following way, "English language learners, ELL, which are just different in their own case because it is not that they don't know, it is that they can't, you

[11] The quotation marks indicate the language that was used to describe the professionals' roles at the school.

can't translate what you are trying to say." Educators recognized language differences of students and used it as a rational to exclude and pathology the conditions that learners had.

As it was mentioned earlier, educators employed similar practices with the students identified with dis/abilities. General educators viewed their special education colleagues as "experts" in special education. For example, one general educator believed that her special education colleague "fits the needs for the students at where they are at more." Special educator echoed such belief and viewed their role to support students identified with dis/abilities. One special educator described her role in general education classroom in the following way, "I know when I am in this classroom, I follow my group, primarily, the group of five. That is my group. I just kind of follow them." Another special educator also emphasized her expertise in teaching students identified with dis/abilities. She said, "as a special education teacher, I kind of know where my students fit and what I might be able to do, either in the classroom to help support them or outside of the classroom to help support them."

The described educators' roles, classroom participation structures as well as the ways in which educators distributed learning opportunities to students suggest that educators perceived themselves as experts who did not see the need to share their expertise with other educators. For instance, general education teacher explained that the reason of her not having a special educator in her classroom was because she had the special education background herself. She said, "sped teachers kind of leave me alone and they support other teachers that may not have that special ed background. Because once you have that special education background, then it's just in your teaching. So, the modifications and accommodations that sped teachers would suggest, I do for an almost every single child in my classroom." The educator believed that the received credentials in special education allowed her to work on her own with the students. Thus, for her

teaching was a one-actor play. Those excerpts illustrate the degree to which the politics of expertise dominated classroom discourse, perpetuated certain roles and expectations toward the work of educators, and established boundaries among professionals.

Further, the politics of expertise distorted and displaced what historically have been conceptualized as a teacher's responsibility (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). For example, when I asked one of the general education teachers to describe what constituted having a "good day" for her at school she said:

> … with a good day, students and I are able to get everything that I have planned done. And I don't have any students that are having really any major blow ups, where I have to call the office to get assistance because it has passed my round where I can take care off.

The responsibility to manage student behavior was passed to the "experts" who occupied spaces outside the general education classroom (i.e., school administration office). A general education teacher viewed those professionals as "more qualified" in managing student behavior. Thus, educators approached diversity in human nature within a technical rationality that positioned teachers as experts in the special programming aimed to benefit the diagnosed students (Skrtic, 1995).

Educators' Political Double Consciousness

The phenomenon of political double consciousness (Du Bois, 1961; Matusov, 2018) was observed within the activities, cultural artifacts, and language of educators. The dialogical analysis of the relationship between the advertised slogans and the systems that educators developed and employed within the classrooms described as inclusive in response to those slogans (and to the tsunami waves mentioned earlier) exposed at least two mutually connected spheres of political consciousness – performative and private (Matusov, 2018). In the following

paragraphs, I illuminate each type of political consciousness and the ways in which it authorized the power and meanings that sustained and perpetuated what was imagined to be inclusive schooling.

Performative (Thick) Consciousness

Matusov (2018) defines the performative political consciousness as a "deliberate political strategy that the person chose for his/her survival via performance of his/her political loyalty" (p. 20). In the public spaces like schools, educators by acting upon their official roles engage in the performance of the official ideology, even though they might not necessarily believe in it (Matusov, 2018). To retain the status of the "most inclusive" and STEM signature school in a district, educators developed and participated in the performative system that was premised upon deficit-based ideological assumptions toward difference, deficit, and disability (Kozleski et al., 2012). In efforts to deliver educational services and respond to the needs of students identified with dis/abilities, the school utilized what they called the *"minute model."* It served as a blueprint for distribution of human resources and management of students' needs at school. Two underlying deficit-based assumptions anchored the delivery of services at school. First, the developed system premised on the notion that individual education plan (IEP) and differential diagnosis were objective and valuable (Skrtic, 1995). Educators recognized students' differences and considered "the IEPs important" because they "allowed" teachers "to know what exactly every student needs and how to hold students accountable." Hence, the IEPs and differential diagnoses were sources of teacher knowledge about students as well as authority driving organization of teacher work and student learning.

The second assumption that guided delivery of services at school was the assumption that students' development and teachers' work can be measured and quantified. One educator

describing her role in general education classroom explained that "the minutes were based on students' IEPs" and "normally, it was about 45 for reading and 30 minutes for math and it was critical for (her) to be in general education classroom during that time. Otherwise (educators) (were) not following the IEPs and it (was) illegal." Thus, a presence of an additional adult in a room was count as evidence of inclusion and the demonstration that "students received what they needed in order to be successful at school."

The minute model was a performative activity, "a contestation of the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve." (Barad, 2003, p. 802) Educators did not simply assemble the model to satisfy a top-down effort toward inclusive education reform. But were themselves the integral parts of its becoming (Barad, 2003; Holland & Lave, 2009), even though some of them demonstrated dissatisfaction and frustration with the approach:

> … if they are just going to stick to the minute model, we are going to lose a lot of good people who are very stressful. It is stressful. It's just a frustration about all of that. I guess administration has to justify something certain way and it is all about the minutes. But there is that individual child that is being lost. And it makes me sad.

Such performative practice was produced as a result of educators' engagement with others, understanding of their own work and students who struggled to learn. Educators interpreted and addressed the "inclusion goal" under conditions of political, economic, and cultural-historical forces (Holland & Lave, 2009; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015). It was deeply interwoven and orchestrated by the "New Capitalism" agenda, a neoliberal force toward efficiency and standardization (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015). To meet the desired outcomes under the neoliberal conditions, educators objectified and homogenized the needs of students to justify the practices

they employed. They noted that “all the minutes overlap.” One educator explained, “if student has minutes, it all gets accommodated by that one pull-out time.” She went on saying:

> So, it has to kind of coincide with the other ones. Like you don’t get three paras for each kid. You have one para that is meeting all of those kids’ minutes. And that is why (educators) kind of keep students in the same classroom based of minutes.

School manipulated with the needs of students to justify its decision making toward the economic distribution of resources. Thus, the minute model became a material entity, an ontological unit that created certain experiences for students as well as educators and positioned their bodies in a particular way. Even though educators mentioned that “students took pride” when they have been asked “to work with a special educator and/or paraeducator” at the separate table for X number of minutes, such approach pathologized identities of educators as well as students identified with dis/abilities. It produced a colonial practice that portrayed them as lacking capacities and agency to work with their peers and colleagues and learn from each other.

Therefore, the performative political consciousness and the minute model as its artifact were the modern forms of coloniality that promoted material structures focused along standardization, efficiency, and progress (Dirth & Adams, 2019; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015). It was thick enough to colonize the minds of educators in a way that many of them believed that the established system was THE way to provide education to the students identified with dis/abilities.

Private (Thin) Critical Consciousness

The second sphere of political consciousness, the private criticism, seemed to be weak and thin (Matusov, 2018). Only few educators openly critiqued the established performative system of delivery of services to the students identified with dis/abilities. They critiqued the

minute model by calling it the “number game” that failed to account for the needs of students. One educator emphasized that “teachers spend a lot of time in IEP meetings talking about for how many minutes does a student need to do that there.” She knew that the approach was used to justify “how everything gets paid for, how things and data are collected” and “that is how school, district can send their reports.” But she was concerned and upset because the model “(was) just not looking at the kid!” and called it “the number game.”

Thus, the efficiency discourse coupled with the top-down accountability systems and teachers’ understanding about their roles at schools displaced the initial purpose of an IEP meeting and for whom it was historically designed for (IDEA, 2004). Freire’s scholarship (1973) reminds us that behind any practice there is an implicit ideological commitment. Thus, an IEP meeting was no longer a discourse about the needs of an individual child but rather a collective effort aiming to secure and protect the needs of educators.

Similar criticism was observed when teachers talked about the ways in which the STEM marketing dream was implemented in classrooms. One teacher noted that “there (were) teachers throughout the building that used technology even more. And that has been even problematic in the building that technology becomes a babysitter.” She believed that “educators relied too heavily on the digital tablets” and that was a reason of why “students did not get as much teacher time.” Having a capacity to (a) reflect on political, cultural, and social environments, (b) express commitments toward just and quality education, and (c) define positions toward the established schooling system is a crucial step in designing and sustaining inclusive learning communities (Kozleski & Waitoller, 2010). As findings of the study demonstrate, some educators had the agency to define the problematic cultural space that they were immersed in. However, they lacked the epistemological tools and resources to resist and disrupt it. One educator said, “I wish

there was something else I could do different. But I have only got (a student) for like ten minutes and so it's kind of that frustration factor for me." Moreover, educators did not perceive themselves as being part of the solution either, neither they tried to resolve the tensions that occurred among the spheres. They continued to participate in the system that oppressed them and the students they served. As one educator admitted, "(educators) created behavior problems with students because if students (did not) get an opportunity to be on iPads, they get mad."

Thus, educators exercised the technocratic logic in pursuing what they envisioned to be the "Inclusion/STEM" school. The technocratic logic assumed the identification of experts and the use of scientific management in pursuing complex agendas. Teachers draw on the deficit-based, ideological assumptions that they had toward human development and dis/ability to claim that they knew what students needed. As a result, the general education classrooms were "separated by needs" and the students were categorized as the "resource kids," "kids on IEPs," "intensive support kids," etc.

Concluding Remarks: Learned Expectations and Behaviors

The homogenization of procedures and practices encouraged through tracking, grouping, surveillance, ableist behavior protocols and expectations, knowledge control and subjugation led students to learn what it meant to be a "good student" at school. Students internalized that as long as they followed what educators were doing, they were not in trouble. Consider the following classroom observation:

> A student identified with dis/abilities seemed to be not interested in what a teacher was reading. Student kept rolling in his chair and cleaning his table from a fruit he just ate. He knew that he had to keep his table clean and his laptop opened. When an educator turned

to the next page, she also flipped the page on the smart board. The student followed the teacher and flipped the page on his laptop as well (condensed Field note, 01.28.2020)

It was a ceremonial act to demonstrate that he was following what educators expected from him. Student learned the behavior of the "good" student. Moreover, students learned that following directions, seating up straight, keeping eyes on a book, responding to a question were indicators of being a "good reader" and "working hard" as often at the end of the activity educators rewarded students with tickets that students could use to purchase various things in a classroom store.

Thus, educators used inclusion and STEM language in the way that masked ignorance and lack of understanding what inclusivity and STEM education were. Educators lived the marketing dream and claimed to be working in a "good school" where students "feel safe" and "have a right to learn." Teachers followed the language that was foreign to them but continued to use it. Thus, the ideal was paint but not really understood (Kozleski et al., 2012). So, who did benefit?

Chapter 5: Toward an Intersectional Approach in Designing Inclusive Classroom Communities

The themes that threaded through this study frame an education system at Sunflower that was saturated with contradictions. In pursuit of equity, inclusion, and STEM education, the district imposed a system that constrained teacher leadership and regulated teacher-teacher, teacher-students, and student-student relationships in classrooms. Rather than classrooms designed to address the full range of student capacity, teachers spent much of their time ensuring that they were conforming to a set of time-limited instructional routines, prescribed learning objectives and behavior expectations that required certain types of student response and teacher performance. Educators were expected to track student progress and apply "repairing" activities if students did not meet the expected level of academic and/or behavior performance. Students whose performance fell outside of institutionalized routines and expected grade-level performance were relegated to paraeducators or special educators who assisted the classroom teacher. Special and/or paraeducators taught the same routines to smaller groups of students. Students in these groups received fewer learning tasks and extended timeframe to complete assignments. Students were referred to outside classroom support to receive instruction from other special educators. Rather than accommodate student needs in the classroom through new designs for learning that embraced all students, these students were marginalized within their classroom and, if peripheral supports did not work, they were sent elsewhere.

The system perpetuated hierarchies among educators in which special educators and paraeducators were expected to defer to the classroom teacher. The classroom (i.e., a general educator) teacher was expected to orchestrate activities with the classroom by setting up classroom agendas, learning objectives, group students for instruction, track students' progress

and delegate some of the teaching responsibilities and students to the special educators and paraeducators. Grade-level classroom teachers met weekly to refine and align classroom and teaching. In these meetings they aligned their teaching plans to district expectations and systems. Following these meetings, classroom teachers informed special educators and paraeducators about the decisions they made about the curriculum, students, and the steps needed to meet district and state expectations for student performance on state assessments.

Students were followed the prescribed learning agendas and performance indicators. Educators assigned all students a set of predefined tasks which they progress monitored regularly. The direct, programmed, and repeated instruction was used to "reach every student in a class" within small and whole groups structure. Educators focused on equal educational opportunities. This was manifested through the use of the same teaching materials, learning goals, and tools for all students in classroom. Students participated in offered activities, followed teacher directions, and learned procedures for completing curriculum tasks. Repeated performance was used as a proxy for student learning. Recognition of varied learner histories, needs, and interests played second fiddle to the received curriculum. Classroom practice emphasized equal portions of available human and material resources.

By adopting *equality of resources and opportunities* (Dworkin, 1981) the district and educators recognized the growing nature of socioeconomic injustices in education. The system, with its emphasis on equal treatment, attempted to eradicate economic struggles and establish equal outcomes for students and educators. This enactment of distributive justice controlled, coordinated, and legitimized activities in classrooms.

What CHAT theorists call an object or outcome of an activity might be characterized by organizational theorists as an institutional myth. The outcome or myth was rationalized and

imbedded into the educators' thoughts as forms of classifications or interpretations that were not questioned and taken for granted (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). The outcomes regulated networks of social behaviors within and across classrooms by decreasing opportunities for educators to exercise internal coordination, control, and innovation in order to produce new practices and culture. This object/myth was enforced by public opinion, legitimated knowledge, and educational laws. Thus, a principle of equality, positioned as an inclusion standard, became converted into a technical purpose that was pursued by the appropriate bureaucratic means (i.e., the imposed system) (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Skrtic, 1995).

However, in pursuing inclusion and equality agendas, critical inclusive education scholars argue that the equality of resources and opportunities is problematic due to its narrow distributive focus that ignores the *status inequality* or misrecognition (Artiles, 2011; Kozleski et al., 2020). Fraser (2008) emphasizes that "it is unjust that some individuals and groups are denied the status of full partners in social interaction simply as a consequence of institutionalized patterns of cultural value in whose construction they have not equally participated and which disparage their distinctive characteristics or the distinctive characteristics assigned to them (p. 3)." The equal distribution of educational services and resources does not fulfill the purpose of inclusive education if the spaces in which students who have been historically marginalized participate continue to reflect the characteristics, culture, and experiences of dominant group (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). CHAT and decolonial theorists remind us that in social constructions like classrooms a focus on (a) cultures in the classroom (i.e., cultural practices and values that educators and students bring), (b) school culture (i.e., ingrained practices of educational system and school building), and (c) classroom cultures (i.e., work and activities that educators and students do together) are critical to understanding what kinds of learning

opportunities and resources were afforded to these learners (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007; Rogoff, 2003). These affordances cannot be detached from social, political, and economic factors as they mediate teacher work, students' learning, and the extent to which students have participatory parity within the classroom space.

I analyzed classrooms from the stand-point of equity-based inclusive education that focuses on cultures and redistribution of learning opportunities. CHAT and decolonial theory provided me with analytical heuristic tools (i.e., inquiries into what kind of education students were included? Who benefitted from classroom arrangements? How did students learn and understood what it meant to be a learner? Whose needs did teaching materials and tools served?). I examined classroom activity arenas in four classrooms against three interconnected, equity-based inclusive education dimensions: (a) cultural recognition of all students' differences, (b) political representation of all students' voices, and (c) economic redistribution of educational opportunities to all students (cite). Equitable relationships, inclusive of all classroom members, are located at the intersection of these justice principles. By framing the study and analyzing its findings within such intersectional lens, this dissertation has taken a step forward toward generating new, social justice-oriented ways to study classroom communities. Moreover, such approach allowed to challenge the notions of power, participation, and voice that often omitted in conventional inclusive education research. In this chapter, I draw on my findings and discuss the degree to which recognition, redistribution, and representation occurred in classrooms that operated within the imposed by a district system. I conclude the chapter by discussing the limitations of the study and providing directions for future inclusive education research.

Intersectional Pillars of Inclusive Education

An equity-based inclusive education agenda (a) challenges the systemic injustices produced by deficit beliefs about human capacities and (b) calls for redistributive justice to guarantee access to quality instruction and learning to cultural groups that historically have been excluded from participation in general education. In Sunflower Elementary, the notion of inclusion was distorted. The imposed system in which students and educators lived their daily lives at school was not fluid. It operated within a colonial/ modern understanding of inclusion that implied mainstreaming and assimilation of students into White, heteronormative, ableist spaces and knowledge.

Recognition

Fraser (2008) reminds us that the justice principle of recognition "is not the demand for recognition of a group's specific identity but the demand for recognition of people's standing as full partners in social interactions, able to participate as peers with others in social life (p. 177)." When the three small schools with the largest populations of students with racialized backgrounds were consolidated into one large school, it was met with little resistance. Students were moved into a new building where they were taught predominantly by White educators. Students and teachers found themselves in a district system whose deficit, modern/ colonial orientation was magnified by the imposing new building and its STEM mission. This system connected teachers and students within and across classrooms around assumptions, tools, and objectives that pathologized teaching, learning, and development and perpetuated modern/colonial ways of being and habits of mind (Dirth & Adams, 2019; Kozleski & Thorius, 2014).

For example, when Sunflower's educators talked about students' differences and needs, they typically talked about dis/ability, English language, and "meeting the needs" of students

identified with dis/abilities and/or identified as English language learners (ELL). Moreover, when educators talked about inclusion, they talked about mainstreaming of students identified with dis/abilities into general education settings. Such narrative followed the conventional understanding of inclusion grounded in the medical, deficit-based model of dis/ability (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007; Baglieri et al., 2011). This model conceptualizes dis/ability as deficit that locates inside the individual and requires remediation (Oliver, 1995).

The general education classroom cultures were based on categorization of teachers and students and the degree to which they could assimilate into the heteronormative, White, ableist culture that was ingrained within the top-down system. Students who demonstrated resistance received disciplinary actions (e.g., referral to the school office, a phone call to parents). The system expected learners identified with dis/abilities to "fit" in general education. It was evident through the ways in which time, space, teaching materials, and assessment tools were used. Educators could, with no hesitation, say what learners could and could not do in terms of "grade level work" and what accommodations were needed in order to succeed in general education classroom. The discourses about accommodations and modifications as well as the "types of inclusion" (i.e., academic, behavior or both) reinforced the ableist expectation of "fit" into the fabric of general education classroom. Moreover, the notions such as "high achievers," "lower group", "middle road kids" etc. were used to label and demonstrate the degree to which learners deviated from the norm. Sunflower Elementary relied on the Common Core Standards to determine individual differences. Educators were encouraged to use standardized, group measures of performance and auditing practices to track students' academic and behavior outcomes. Such measurement practices fail to capture a full range of students' capacities and personalize students' success. Instead, these tracking mechanisms focused on the degree to

which students were able to demonstrate skills by responding to the same concrete academic tasks in the same way. By expecting students to demonstrate repeated performance in a particular way, the system pushed students out to the margins of classroom. Students who were unable to demonstrate standard performance were assigned to prepackaged remedies. Moreover, by labeling students according to the constructed ableist performance indicators and behavior protocols, the system essentialized one-dimensional student identity. Such misrecognition erased student cultural repertoires and the political, social, cultural, and economic conditions in which students' learning unfolded (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015). Thus, such one-way, so-called "inclusion" essentialized students' differences by subjecting students to standard performance indicators and protocols that regulated their participation and learning. Rather than inclusion, the system produced exclusion. The journey toward inclusive education has to challenge taken for granted understanding of what counts as student learning and disrupt the "one size fits all" approach.

Redistribution

The redistribution dimension of equity-based inclusive education concerns students' access to quality opportunities to learn and participate in education (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). While redistribution appeared to be central to Sunflower's organization, it was far from equitable. Instead, inclusive education was mired in a place-based conception of inclusion. Students who were historically marginalized were included. They spent the majority of their school day in general education classrooms. However, rather than becoming part of the fabric of a rich, responsive educational process, they existed at the margins of the classroom (Kozleski & Artiles, 2014; Kozleski, Artiles, & Skrtic, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2006). Special educators and paraeducators supported these learners while classroom teachers led other students' learning.

Inclusive education requires partnership among educators and students where all educators and students feel equally valued. However, at Sunflower Elementary, leadership for learning resided in individuals rather than in a contextually embedded process (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). A distinct division of roles and responsibilities among general and special educators based on disciplinary and pedagogical traditions of these professional communities led to (a) insufficient use of special educators, (b) perpetuation of hierarchies among educators, and (c) unaltered social and learning arrangements in classrooms.

Representation

The opportunities for students and educators to represent themselves in decision-making processes that would advance their positions as equal partners were absent. The imposed system positioned students as followers of teachers' directions and recipients of knowledge while educators as experts and performers of teaching that included roles of surveillance, fixing, and cataloging of students' behavior and outcomes. By following colonial "one size fits all" approach within teaching and learning students' and educators' intersectional identities and experiences were ignored, silenced, and erased (Crenshaw, 2017).

Thus, the context in which educators and students found themselves limited their opportunities to experience a full range of human experiences. The system was not responsive to students' and educators' needs and was built to sustain efficiency and performance instead of allowing its member to develop a sense of belonging and community. The discourses of power, pathology, and competence manifested classroom activity arenas. School was positioned as a work rather than a learning place where educators and students had a set of predefined roles and tasks which where measured against the standard, ableist, White, heteronormative, indicators for development and success. Learning was conceptualized as "passing," receiving knowledge, and

reproduction of skills. It was an individual rather than collaborative practice. The distribution of learning opportunities was embodied within deficit-based notions of dis/ability, difference, race, and capacity.

Rewinding the Tsunami Story and Conclusion

The consequences of the tsunami can be devastating to the land and its communities. When in 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake hits the northeast coast of Japan, it took lives of nearly 16,000 people and destroyed thousands of homes. The entire nation remains in recovery. While progress on reconstruction remains slow, government officials reported that the natural disaster gave them an opportunity to reimagine the future and ways of engagement with the land. Communities and government work toward developing new approaches to city planning and infrastructure building resilient against natural disasters (*The Japan Times*, 2018).

When the tsunami and its four waves (i.e., school consolidation, the marketing of the new building to the community, the rush to capitalize on federal incentives, and the impetus to redesign special education) hit Sunflower Elementary, the district had a chance to chart new ways of schooling and design inclusive classroom communities. However, as findings of the study demonstrate, Sunflower's educators were swept up in the tsunami of being "the best." In efforts to preserve the advertised reputation of Sunflower Elementary being the "most inclusive" as well as the STEM signature school in the district, the imposed system missed the opportunity to engage what matters the most – transformative education and learning for it students and educators.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the research was limited in giving voice to students from participating classrooms described as inclusive. Research findings reflect the

perspectives of educators and positioned them as major knowledge contributors. Future research would benefit from the engagement of students' and parents' voices. More teachers and school administrators should be invited to share about their experiences with the inclusive education reform. Another limitation was the duration of the study. I spent 3.5 months at school. Based on data collected over this period of time, it is difficult to know to what degree it captured nuances of lives in classrooms described as inclusive. I had limited time to develop trusting relationships with educators and students. Expanding the length of the study could provide opportunities for educators and students to learn more about me. In this way, it may allow to shift from an outsider to the insider status in the school and engage educators in conversation about issues which remained silent during the study (e.g., Whiteness as privilege) (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Sullivan, 2006). Moreover, I used video recall interviews with educators as the primary method to collect data. Providing educators with other means of expression and knowledge sharing (e.g., identity mapping (Sirin & Fine, 2007) may allow them to engage with more in-depth reflection toward equity and inclusivity. And, finally, while my researcher positionality allowed me to capture practices that may be taken for granted by researchers who have been raised and taught within the U.S. education system, it also shaped my relationships with the school, educators, and the kind of the data that I collected. At school, I was position as a visitor from the third world country who came to learn about "the best U.S. inclusive practices." The fact that I was from Ukraine and did not have a car to drive to the site was pronounced more often than my first name or my doctoral candidate status in the U.S. Instead of being vulnerable, educators sought to impress and teach me about what they perceived being "the best inclusive practice."

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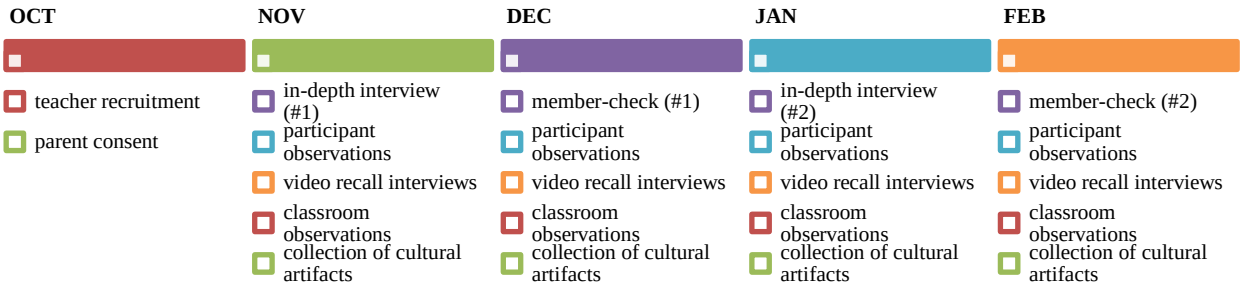
Appendix A: Timeline for Data Collection



Appendix B: Teaching Practices Observation Protocol

Date:	*Educator:*			
Classroom:	*Observation Time:*			
Activities	Educator(s)' Goals	Structures	Outcomes	Impact
	What is the educator(s) trying to do?	*How educator(s) structured their lesson?*	*What are the outcomes that I observe?*	*What seems to be the impact?*
Recognition (educators' feedback, language, rules, efforts, rewards)				
Redistribution (time, resources, learning opportunities, roles, responsibilities, grouping)				
Representation (tools, materials, instruction, assessment, images, narratives used to communicate values and standards)				
What did I learn?				
What connections am I making?				
What do I want to learn more about?				

Appendix C: Video Recall Interview Protocol

- What are your thoughts/feelings about this video?
- What do you like the most in this video? What seems to work?
- How does this activity relate to the goals and opportunities you have for your students? What are they?
- In what ways does this practice support the inclusion and participation of all students? Who benefited from this activity? Why?
- What would you do differently, if you were to teach this again? Why?
- What have you learned about your own teaching practice by reflecting on this video?