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An Exploration of Teacher Perceptions of the Presence of Cultural Reproduction in Two Middle Schools

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AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRESENCE OF
CULTURAL REPRODUCTION IN TWO MIDDLE SCHOOLS

by

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary challenges to education pose threats that our current educational system remains unable to meet. With the prevalence of school shootings, rapid technological development, threats to mental health, superficial curriculum content, increased testing standards, and continued inequality in classrooms, now more than ever it is imperative to define, explore, and quantify the ways in which the system of education reproduces or replicates norms, values, behaviors, and practices and the effects these possibly have on students and teachers. The purpose of this research is to redefine 'cultural reproduction' into reproduction and replication in order to explore how the education system in a single district in Florida reacts to threats through adjustments to, or replication of, existing practices. Through the perspectives of teachers, the research question posed was: *(RQ) How do teachers perceive the presence of cultural reproduction and cultural replication in their schools?* The study discovered that in addition to identifying cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) in their schools, (i) participants perceived that current needs outpace their public-school system's ability to adapt effectively and (ii) that contemporary threats to education produce unmeasurable and unmeetable challenges within current cultural practices and resources. The study contextualized the implications of these findings through social change, cultural studies, social system dynamics, and primitive belief disruption for the purpose of developing a new model of subsystem adaptation to represent the cycle of replication, reproduction, and reform in education as observed by teacher participants in this study.

DEDICATIONS

to

My Mother, Father, Little Sister, and Curtis
For never giving up on me no matter how many responsibilities I take on, how many times I fail,
and how many times I succeed.

NEA National Education Association and FEA
The opportunities you provide aspiring educators bridge the way to a successful future in
education for this state and country. Thank you.

The 2019 NEA Aspiring Educators Advisory Committee
Guys, I did it.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The terminology cultural reproduction was coined by a French sociologist and cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu in the early 1970s to describe how the system of education serves as a tool to reproduce the culture of the dominate class so that they may stay in power (Bourdieu P. , 1973). Bourdieu's main focus was the structural reproduction of inequalities; however, reproduction serves as a broad term. Rather than being defined by its previously known negative connotation cited by Bourdieu, this study seeks to redefine the terminology into two facets within education – copying and response: cultural replication and cultural reproduction – in order to explore the ways in which cultural reproduction acquires educational norms and adapts to contemporary threats to education.

Redefining Cultural Replication and Cultural Reproduction

The original terminology used reproduction as an umbrella term to describe the transmission of existing cultural values and norms from generation to generation (Anthropology, 1997). For the purpose of this study, the primary use of the term cultural reproduction is split as follows:

A) Cultural replication (CL): the *replication* of current norms, values, practices, and behaviors.

B) Cultural reproduction (CD): the *reproduction* of current norms, values, practices and behaviors with accommodations and adjustments.

In this study, cultural replication is defined as the *acquired* cultural norms, values, and behaviors replicated over time in which adjustments are not needed to preserve a system, while

reproduction is the *response* to new threats in order to maintain a cultural system. Reproduction in this study implies that current norms, values, practices, or behaviors are adjusted to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving society, such as accommodations for diverse students' needs. Replication implies norms, values, practices, or behaviors are simply replicated without additional adjustments. Culture, in its simplest form, can be used to describe the variables people use to live their lives and the way in which they do so (Handwerker, 2002).

In the present-day American school system, primitive beliefs, or beliefs held close to one's own sense of identity, face controversy, and the preexisting legal and social responsibilities of teachers are being challenged. One such example of a contemporary challenge to education is the question: *Would a teacher die for a student?* School shootings challenge the primitive beliefs of: *Life is preferable to death* and *Adults should protect children at all costs.* When primitive beliefs – the beliefs that are most central and are rarely, if ever, experienced as subject of controversy – are disrupted, due to the centrality of primitive beliefs, the results involve serious disruption of self-constancy or self-identity leading to disarray and cognitive inconsistency (Rokeach, 1972).

Historical disruption of beliefs preludes reforms in education, which is a form of cultural reproduction, as a response to contemporary challenges to education such as, but not limited to, poverty, school funding, high stakes testing, and low student achievement (Sarason, 1990). Individuals affect whether or not change will occur in a society, and belief is a foundational value for an individual that resists threats to its core principles. If teachers feel their beliefs or values are being threatened, a greater problem than just their decreased autonomy as professionals, are they able to identify ways in which cultural replication and cultural

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reproduction cause or contribute to this belief disruption? How do they view the effects, positive or negative, of reproduction techniques such as adjustments to testing, the rising charter school movement, and disability/exceptionality accommodations for students? Do teachers present a positive outlook when determining the current effectiveness of cultural reproduction in education? Are patterns discernable?

With these factors in mind, this study seeks to explore the modern challenges in Florida's education system that have historically required replication or reproduction for a short-term fix. The motivation of this study stems from the possibility of the development of modern, drastic social changes with severe, long-term consequences:

    I.   Are primitive beliefs being challenged?

    II.   Are teachers aware of these challenges?

    III.   What roles do teachers perceive themselves playing in cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction in their schools (CD)?

    IV.   What patterns and relationships can be drawn between belief disruption and the concepts of (CL) and (CD)?

    V.   If there is a lack of awareness of one, several, or all of the above, could this be, despite the possible presence of cognitive inconsistency, be the cause of the current stagnancy of response to contemporary challenges in the modern North American education system?

The central motivation of this study is to observe whether or not cultural reproduction, as redefined by this study, remains a viable solution to challenges in education. The purpose of this

study is to explore how teachers in two middle schools perceive cultural reproduction and cultural replication in a particular county in Florida. The research question is as follows:

RQ) How do teachers perceive the positive or negative effects of cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) in their schools?

When addressing the topic of educational improvement, exploring how public education continuously adapts or replicates existing norms is a requirement for investigating solutions to problems. With several factors affecting improvement, it's difficult to examine a one-size-fits-all solution. Despite the challenges, recognition of today's socio-political climate, lack of educational equity and efficacy, and the effects of replicating or reproducing cultural norms are imperative factors that need consideration and further analysis prior to true educational reform.

Statement of Problem

Cultural reproduction, as originally defined, is a widely understood concept of the cultural transmission of individual social identities into one dominating culture. The theory is often used to explain political motivations, economic disparity, historical movements, and social change. However, little research of the role, presence, and effects of cultural reproduction within a school system exists outside of the exploration of public school as a form of reproduction of cultural capital or social reproduction (Bourdieu P. &.-C., 1977). This study seeks to explore the following through the perceptions of teachers within two middle schools in a chosen county in the Florida school district: What is the role, as observed by teacher participants, of cultural reproduction in their middle school? How do they perceive the effects of (CL) and (CD) on

students, district policy, and their ability to teach? When faced with contemporary challenges to education, does cultural reproduction remain a viable solution?

Cultural reproduction is a characteristic of the social practices of the United States of America. Previously argued through Bourdieu, schools reproduce differences that exist in a society, and the presence of replicating norms, values, behaviors, or practices is the foundation of most education systems (Lundstrom & Oygard, 2015). Modern challenges such as school shootings rapidly adjust the social culture in which the school system functions through challenging the current responsibilities of teachers and the very purpose of public education. In order to effectively support students and teachers in the 21st century, the contemporary role of cultural reproduction in public schools must be identified, studied, and contextualized.

Rationale for Re-Definition

The terminology created by Pierre Bourdieu functions as an umbrella term to describe the way in which values and norms are transmitted over time to preserve a system, usually with a focus on cultural hegemony. From my perspective within the Florida school system as a student and substitute teacher, the transfer of norms and values survives only when the system itself benefits from replicating them. Thus, even if the system of education functions as a reinforcement of current hierarchies, as discovered by Bourdieu (1973), history presents the concept that small changes and accommodations are made to disrupt the potentially negative portions of the system, but not disrupt the system itself. Bourdieu developed a theory of examining the ways cultural practices are passed through schools but narrowed his depth of focus to negative practices and the reinforcement of the dominating culture. Taking a step back

from that focus to examine cultural reproduction practices more plainly reveals possibilities that extend to broadened theories of education system adaptation and the inspection of patterns relating to belief, social change, and 21st century challenges.

For example, education reform was popular in the 1980s, a little after the time Pierre Bourdieu developed his theory, as a way to change the structural importance of inputs to that of outputs, or student achievement (Spring, 2005). The base of the system preserved itself as a production of a commodity, put work into the student and society will reap the benefits of a literate and educated class, but the accommodations made to focus on student achievement did not replicate norms exactly as they previously existed. Thus, came the question, could Pierre Bourdieu's (1973) theory of cultural reproduction, or the transmission of norms and values over time, be further expanded on as a process of either replicating norms and values exactly or reproducing them with adjustments?

For the purpose of being as specific as possible, the academic language of reproduction and replication are defined below, as adopted by the *Association for Computing Machinery* (2016)*:*

> *Replicability* (a) different team (b) same experimental setup: The measurement can be obtained with stated precision by a different team using the same measurement procedure, the same measuring system, under the same operating conditions, in the same or a different location on multiple trials. For computational experiments, this means that an independent group can obtain the same result using the author's own artifacts.

> *Reproducibility* (a) different team (c) different experimental setup: The measurement can be obtained with stated precision by a different team, a different measuring system, in a

different location on multiple trials. For computational experiments, this means that an independent group can obtain the same result using artifacts which they develop completely independently.

When applying this process to the transmission of cultural norms over time, (a) represents different people passing norms and values while (b) and (c) represent the ways in which the values are passed/preserved. For example, (a) can represent teachers passing on (b) replicated values, such as the importance of education, or (c) reproduced values, like education is for everyone, even those of a lower social class. With (c), values are changed from their original understanding – education was not always available for everyone – but the core concept remains promoting the importance of education.

In the terms of this study, using the language above, cultural replication is when a system is preserved *with no changes* to the process of ensuring its long-term functionality, while cultural reproduction is when a system is preserved *with changes* to the process of ensuring its long-term functionality. Replication equals the same result with the same process to achieve it. On the other hand, reproduction equals the same result, but with a different process to achieve it.

Significance of Study

Education reform serves to adapt public education to the changing needs of a rapidly evolving society. However, short-term adjustments to meet long-term needs pave the way for a difficult transition to addressing long-term solutions. The 21st century has seen intense and rapid social, cultural, and technological development. Innovations such as instant access to information have produced online cultural norms that vary from previous norms for interaction, education,

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and the general wellness and conceptuality of life. With these changes come challenges, specifically challenges that threaten the current norms, values, practices, and behaviors that maintain the system of education in the United States of America. When faced with previous threats to the system, accommodations such as the "No Child Left Behind Act" (2001) were put into place, proving the ability of cultural reproduction to address short-term challenges using small adjustments to current practices.

Although praise is given to the process of cultural reproduction for its historic ability to cover the cracks in a system, it can be compared to placing a Band-Aid on cement. Contemporary threats to education pose long-term consequences that reproducing our current practices may not be capable of fixing. Instant access to information, continued socio-economic gaps, poor mental health wellness, and a current culture built around easy access to weapons are modern problems causing issues to the sustainability of our education system. Now, more than ever, I stress the importance as a future teacher of examining the ways in which we reproduce and replicate cultural practices in order to continue to strive to provide the best possible support for students and teachers to succeed.

This research provides the groundwork for future studies built upon primitive belief examination, cultural reproduction, education as a subsystem seeking equilibrium, and educational reform in order to connect these concepts and bridge the existing gap in this area of study within the last decade.

Rationale for Study

Building upon the concept of disruption of primitive beliefs in our society and the long-term effects of an ineffective response to contemporary threats to education, (CL) and (CD) first need to be examined in the context of a school environment. Previously, Pierre Bourdieu, and other research studies on class inequality produced from his theories, was one of the only researchers interested in connecting cultural reproduction to the education system. Outside of examining cultural capital, there exists little to no known research connecting the specific process of system preservation with replication and reproduction of norms, values, practices, and behaviors within education. Thus, to justify the exploration of the concept in a broad perspective would be to imply the importance of recognizing it exists in the first place, which is the focus of the current study for the purpose of contextualizing a phenomenon.

Teachers serve as the focal point for observing classroom and school culture. Through the perspectives of middle school teachers who have been employed by a particular county in Florida for more than five years, this study explored whether or not they perceived the presence of (CL) and (CD) as redefined by this study. In addition, if replication or reproduction were perceived, this study explored how teacher participants viewed the process: positively or negatively in terms of their ability to teach, their students' achievement and motivation, and their school environment.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is organized using three sections to provide a framework for subjects relating to cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) as redefined by this study: (A) behavior and belief theories, (B) structural systems, and (C) education reform. Due to the lack of existing research of cultural reproduction within school systems outside cultural hegemony, each section serves to reaffirm the importance of this study.

(A) Behavior and Belief Theories

In *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values*, a belief system is defined as "having represented within it, in some organized psychological but not necessarily logical form, each and every one of a person's countless beliefs about physical and social reality" (Rokeach, 1972). The study sought to explore the significance of belief disruption by establishing assumptions of belief as follows:

I. Not all beliefs are equally important to an individual; they vary along a central-peripheral dimension.

II. The more central a belief, the more it will resist change.

III. The more central the belief changed, the more widespread the repercussions for the rest of the belief system.

Thus, the study established the idea that a disruption of a belief held close to the center of one's ideas about themselves and their physical world would result in serious cognitive inconsistency. A belief that rests closer to the center functions as a primitive belief that should rarely, if ever, be the subject of controversy. Beliefs that rest further along the central-peripheral dimension, however, can be subject to frequent change. The importance of a given attitude

depends on the extent to which it is perceived to be instrumental to the furtherance or hinderance of important values, or primitive beliefs.

For the purpose of this study exploring cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD), the following organization of a belief system is thoroughly defined:

(A) *Primitive belief: 100% social consensus.* Most central are those beliefs that are learned by direct encounter with the object of belief – they are not derived from other beliefs – and that are, moreover, reinforced by unanimous social consensus among all the one's reference persons and groups. These tend to be beliefs about the physical and social world in relation to, or confirmed by, others.

(B) *Primitive belief: 0% social consensus.* Central belief about self-identity and the world that cannot be confirmed by others. These are beliefs that are held, but not shared. These such beliefs, since they are not shared with others, are impervious to persuasion or argument by others.

(C) *Authority belief:* Developed from a type (A) belief to help one establish their picture of the world. Positive and negative references for belief: which authorities should one trust or not trust as they go about their everyday life?

(D) *Derived belief:* Typically, a religious or political belief derived secondhand through the process of identification with authority rather than direct interaction with the belief. These typically form what is known as institutionalized ideology.

(E) *Inconsequential belief:* Matters of taste that do not tend to require a reorganization of one's entire belief system if dropped, added, or changed.

Violation of any primitive beliefs supported by unanimous consensus can lead to disruption of beliefs about self-constancy or self-identity. When a belief closer to the center is disrupted, it affects the entire system.

Belief examples based on centrality are listed below:

(A) Adults protect children.

(B) My parents know what's best for me.

(C) Adults and teachers are trustworthy; they know what's best for me.

(D) Children should not die in schools.

(E) I do not want guns in schools.

Belief Congruence, another concept explored in *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values*, asserts that we tend to "value a given belief, subsystem, or system of beliefs in proportion to its degree of congruence with our own belief system, and further, that we tend to value people in proportion to the degree to which they exhibit beliefs, subsystems, or systems of belief congruent with our own" (Rokeach, 1972). Using this idea, one may conclude that beliefs, at their core, hold the cognitive basis for social change, or how we interact with others.

The proponents of the Congruence Principal establish a Characterized Subject (*CS)* in which Subject (*S)* means *capable of being characterized in many ways* and Characterization (*C)* means *capable of being applied to many subjects.* Two stimuli are first compared for mutual relevance, then they are compared for relative importance.

For example:

Characteristic *(C)*: IRRESPONSIBLE

Subject *(S)*: FATHER

(CS) IRRESPONSIBLE FATHER

One may feel negative about *(C)* IRRESPONSIBLE but strongly negative toward *(CS)* IRRESPONSIBLE FATHER because they feel a father in particular should be responsible. This aids the current study exploring how cultural reproduction or cultural replication are influenced by individuals when someone is faced with two stimuli perceived to have a negative relationship, such as DANGEROUS SCHOOL or DEAD CHILD.

Table 1 | (C) Character and (S) Subject Examples

(C) Character	(S) Subject
Dangerous, hungry, problem, irresponsible, dead, depressed, violent, cold, sick.	School, family, child, student, teacher, classroom, principal, environment.
Respectable, admirable, safe, heroic, fair, kind, model, accepting, helpful, supportive.	

Rokeach's (1972) research serves to explore and quantify belief systems, attitudes, and values to analyze human nature and the priorities of individuals. The study defines the ways in which beliefs are ordered and the resistance given when a central belief experiences tension; however, it lacks the exploration of primitive belief disruption outside of therapy or general delusion. To connect the importance of belief in the movement of change, Seymour Sarason (1990) describes the historic rejection by physicians of new knowledge introduced that long bedrest after a heart attack could be lethal as their own fear of this change because it contradicted their belief systems and customary practices.

In the context of education, the current study "An Exploration of Teacher Perceptions of the Presence of Cultural Reproduction in Two Middle Schools" expanded upon the primitive beliefs challenged in contemporary society that have drastic social consequences to the United States of

America's current system of education. This study bridges the gap in primitive belief research, expanding to explore the groundwork for implicating primitive belief disruption is occurring within schools and causing vast consequences.

(B) Structural Systems

The Monologic Imagination, edited by Matt Tomlinson and Julian Millie (2017), examines structural systems and dialectic modules of cultural interaction. It establishes the importance of a dialogical model in which a multitude of voices interplay between any interaction. The colloquial understanding of a 'monologue' is that of a performance that occupies the floor without interruption, but this research defines monological dialogue as speaking in a single social identity in a continuous form without interplay or interruption for the purpose of deliberately ignoring discourse or argument. A monological model of cultural, as it stands, exemplifies the preservation of a system as a single, unified identity. A dialectic nature of discourse; however, is far more natural, as speakers respond to past utterances and anticipate future ones.

The study establishes the idea that we, as a society, are at any given point in time either copying or responding; whether it is unconscious or not. In the case of conscious and unconscious plagiarism, such as the instance with Mark Twain producing a similar dedication to one published by Oliver Wendell Holmes, the former involves awareness of copying while the latter has no awareness (Kiskis, 2010).

Similarly, social interactions between two people contain copying or response, as adapted below from Silverstein (2014): *[example of response as replication – not stated out loud]*

A: And you went to [undergraduate] school here or

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B: [I went to [undergraduate] school] In Chicago at, uh, Loyola.

A: Oh! I'm an old Jesuit boy myself, unfortunately.

B: Oh, are ya [an old Jesuit boy yourself]? Where'd ya go [to [undergraduate] school]?

A: [I went to [undergraduate] school at] Georgetown, down in Washington.

B: Oh yeah, yeah, [you went to [undergraduate] school at] Georgetown.

This study serves to strengthen the definitions of (CL) and (CD) as separate concepts. Through examining a monological and dialogical model of cultural interaction, replication can be seen as the preservation of a single voice for a single goal and reproduction as the preservation of several voices for a single goal. In the analysis of cultural interactions, copying and response are prevalent in all conversation. In relationship to systems, a single system can include both an interplay of back and forth responses, or a single process with no response.

G.W.F. Hegel, a 19th Century German philosopher, also explored what became known as "Hegel's Dialectics" (Maybee, 2016). Hegel highlights a similar form of back and forth conversation in which two opposing sides attempt to reason through conversation-generated conflict. Most notable is his concept of self-sublation, which means to both cancel (or negate) and to preserve at the same time. To simplify the concept, Hegel views the whole as preserving what it overcomes. In the case of (CL) and (CD), Hegel's theories build a foundation for a systemic view of cultural practices in education wherein a system can both negate and preserve itself at the same time.

In the context of social systems, education is considered a social institution and a dependent system that cannot be defined outside its social setting. Using sociology concepts, or the study of development, structure, and collective behavior of people, education can be classified as a

subsystem of a larger social system (Bhat, 2016). This is done, despite the conflicting approaches arguing education's position as a social organization in itself, because the general process of education, which is acquiring knowledge through experience, socialization, and observation, can be viewed as the predominant social organization that a specific education structure exists within. For example:

Host system: *to seek knowledge.*

Subsystem: *process to seek knowledge, such as education through schooling.*

Social institution: *place to seek knowledge, such as primary and secondary schools, or universities.*

(CL) and (CD) play a role in systems, education in particular. Mistakes in improving education in the past stem from the inability to comprehend the nature of school systems (Sarason, 1990). For the purpose of this study, education is classified as a subsystem under the general umbrella category of a knowledge-seeking social system: humanity's natural desire to seek knowledge, development, and understanding of the natural world. With respect to Hegel's concept of a whole, the interactions of complex social systems, and dialectic models of cultural interaction, this study evaluates a systematic approach to the perceived effects of (CL) and (CD) in schools in order to represent an observed phenomenon.

(C) Education Reform

The following section examines several instances where replication or reproduction proved effective or ineffective when dealing with education reform. The history of education

reform is vast, in such, this study provides only a brief overview of concepts relating to the focus of (CL) and (CD).

The United States undergoes educational reforms based on the interests, beliefs, and motivations of individuals. The effectiveness of a reform prior to its actual instatement is dependent upon those with the power to promote either replication or reproduction of the current system, and those with strength in numbers to oppose them. The reforms of the 1980s, for example, are described by Veronica Donahue as having "served the interest of business and political leaders and imposed on a school's constituency that had grown inactive and ineffective" (DiConti, 2008). She explains that instead of joining the reform movement, educational establishments promoted protectionist policies – cultural replication – that functioned as obstacles to reform.

In a study regarding shifting environments and dilemmas of school system reforms, the question was posed: Why did the 20th century reforms lack focus on coherent structural programs and instructional improvement? The analysis given states:

"…there were few pressures from the environment to improve instruction or instructional outcomes, and ideas about improvement focused on what were taken to be face-valid procedures like student promotion or teacher experience or on the funds schools received and the educational resources that money could buy" (Cohen, Spillane, & Peurach, 2018, p. 3).

In terms of reform, reproduction promotes adjustments and accommodations for surface level issues: those more readily seen and easier to correct. Reproducing culture consistently to

keep up with changing times is an illusion of reform. Essentially, a society or system or individuals appease rising panic until the next problem surfaces.

The study of *The Dilemmas in Educational Reform* (Cohen, Spillane, & Peurach, 2018) further expands to support the stagnancy associated with replication and reproduction in education:

"…changes [were] built on and in the vicinity of the preexisting school systems. LEAs did not vanish, nor did school board elections, local taxation, neighborhood schools, or the accumulation of federal, state, and local policies and programs. The education sector became more crowded, busy, and diverse, but nothing inherited from the earlier, less coherent era, disappeared. Hence, another effect was that—as has been the American habit with education policies and programs—addition vanquished subtraction" (p. 3).

This research study suggests the United States of America builds upon education without removing the previous metaphorical weight to accommodate new systems. During reforms, nothing from the previous era is removed. Instead, the system is reproduced in a way that stacks reform after reform with the same basic core system supporting every additional adjustment.

During, or for the goal of educational reform, cultural reproduction provides the illusion of responsibility. A benefit of the human experience is the ability to adapt; we are survived by our children and pass our cultural norms onto them. When individuals see rising panic and are faced with the option of reproduction or replication, those with the power to do so replicate culture with the expectation that their children will reproduce it. Diconti (2008) explains the concept in her analysis of reforms as that of "exit and voice," two popularly researched recovery mechanisms for a ravaged system. Essentially, until students in the education system decide

things are so bad they need to exit and abandon the system or until they are both those in powerful positions and those with strength in numbers, the system will remain stagnant.

With regard to previous generations continuously choosing the comfort of replication, an observation of the current challenges Generation Z faces shows that students are promoting exit and voice enough to cause discomfort. The people of The United States of America know there are holes in the education system; students and teachers are not only voicing this, they are providing resistance to the replication of culturally transmitted norms and values (Lundstrom & Oygard, 2015). In Seymour Sarason's (1990) comprehensive analysis of the failure of educational reform, he states:

> "The first step, recognition of the problem, is the most difficult, especially in regard to schools, because we all have been socialized most effectively to accept the power relationships characteristic of our schools as right, natural, and proper, outcomes to the contrary notwithstanding" (p. 7).

In this way, by presenting students with the paradox of having the power to reform education but denying their voice, the North American education system forces Generation Z to see exit, abandoning the bridge, as the only viable option.

The question then begs: if cultural reproduction through the process of reforms used to be a viable solution to meeting the cultural changes of a society, then why do reforms no longer sustain educational needs? Sarason's analysis of reforms suggests reproduction has always fallen short. He states:

> "The history of educational reform, like that of medicine, is replete with examples of interventions that either failed or had adverse effects because those involved had only the

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most superficial and distorted conception of the culture of the schools they were supposed to change" (Sarason, 1990, p. 120).

Whether or not reforms have always fallen short of properly adjusting existing cultural values, norms, behaviors, and dynamics to meet the changing needs of a society, a current lack of research is focused on the presence of cultural reproduction (CD) and the challenges to contemporary reform in the modern-day education system.

A modern problem that requires more focus is that (CL) and (CD) may not effectively provide solutions for the challenges students, teachers, and schools face in the 21st century. Modern challenges to public education include, but are not limited to, the concepts of autonomy, personal freedom, and censorship. In a dissertation from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Jennifer Montgomery (2015) comments on the 'culture wars' of the 1980s and the modern controversy of patriotism and student expression. Accommodations to the education system redefined the purpose of public school to include the responsibility of ensuring students grew into politically active and socially responsible members of the United States of America, ready to enter the labor force after graduation (Spring, The American School A Global Context; From the Puritans to the Obama Administration, 2014). The result of producing politically active and socially responsible members of a society, however, is autonomy and freedom of expression. Currently, controversy exists in what public schools can enforce their students to do, how parents can censor or affect their child's education, and the level of freedom students have in access to multiple education perspectives (Montgomery, 2015). Can districts set policies that force students to stand for the pledge of allegiance in schools? Do students have more rights of control over their education in public school than their parents? How much freedom can schools give in

the face of political advocacy? What separates hate speech from freedom of expression within school walls? The 21st century is a movement of rapid social, technological, and scientific change. With such swift changes to cultural values, norms, behaviors, and dynamics, cultural reproduction is slow to meet and adjust to the changing needs of contemporary society.

School shootings are a relatively new social issue the United States of America faces, and of the little research collected since the increase in the phenomenon, test scores and enrollment significantly decrease at schools and districts that face mass shootings, quantifying the problem into evidence that can be used to incite change (Beland & Kim, 2016). Replication of culture is an avoidance, not a solution, and reproduction is a short-term confrontation of an issue, not an answer to a problem. Reproduction may have worked in the past as a way to adjust to meet the changing needs of a society, but when faced with contemporary challenges such as school shootings, cultural reproduction may provide harmful or ineffective adaptations to existing cultural practices.

The motivational focus for this study in relation to reform is the question: if we keep changing, why does nothing get better? This study analyzed how teachers perceived their role in the replication and reproduction of cultural values, norms, behaviors, and practices within their schools to model an illusion of change observed by participants.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter reflects on the long-term purpose of studying cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) in education, and the short-term purpose of exploring the presence of (CD) from the perspectives of teacher participants. The approach of this study is broken down and rationalized to understand the methods used. This chapter includes an introduction, design of study, settings, and methods.

Introduction

In the present-day American school system, primitive beliefs are being disrupted and the preexisting legal and social responsibilities of teachers are being challenged.

One such example of a contemporary challenge to education is the question: *Would a teacher die for a student?* School shootings challenge the primitive beliefs of: *Life is preferable to death* and *Adults should protect children at all costs*. When primitive beliefs are disrupted, due to the centrality of primitive beliefs, the results involve serious disruption of self-constancy or self-identity leading to disarray and cognitive inconsistency.

Historical disruption of belief preludes reforms in education as a response to contemporary educational challenges such as, but not limited to, poverty, school funding, high stakes testing, and low student achievement. In this study, cultural replication is defined as the *acquired* cultural norms, values, and behaviors replicated over time, while cultural reproduction is the *response* to threats to a cultural system in a society. Reproduction in this study implies that current norms, values, or behaviors are adjusted to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving society.

With the current redefinition of cultural reproduction, and with consideration for the concepts of primitive beliefs, structural systems, and educational reform, this study followed the following process:

a) Recognized and recorded the contemporary challenges to education as observed by teacher participants.

b) Analyzed emerging themes.

c) Contextualized the presence and effects of (CL) and (CD) in schools as observed by study participants.

d) Developed a new theory and model to present the data.

The central motivation of this study was to propose and support the continued exploration of the question: *Is cultural reproduction a viable solution to contemporary challenges to education?* The purpose of this study, in support of the above proposed question, was to explore how teachers perceive cultural reproduction in two middle schools in a particular county in Florida.

Design of Study – Grounded Theory

A Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) approach serves to contextualize a phenomenon. This study explored, using a qualitative approach, the phenomenon of cultural reproduction (CD) in response to contemporary challenges to education, through the perspective of teachers in two middle schools in a Florida district. Grounded Theory is the method used in this study due to the flexibility of its theoretical applications and connections, allowing conceptualization of social patterns and compositions in selected settings.

Grounded theory bases research on patterns and context, building a relationship between theory and empirical data and relying on the chronological process of representing the researcher's developing theories based on data coding. Rather than the typical representation of deduction that moves from idea to observation, induction through Grounded Theory moves from observation to idea. The researcher may begin with a hypothesis or theory developed through their experiences, thoughts, or observations, but Grounded Theory seeks to take a question and observe and collect data related to that question in order to saturate findings and connect emerging themes to reach a consolidated theory. It is important to note that the resulting theories are substantive but, like any approach to collecting data, fallible and can be considered dependent on context and never completely final. The goal of Grounded Theory is to move towards saturation of concepts. In this sense, the researcher should not be introduced to new ideas as a study continues; saturation means concepts and themes become consistent.

A qualitative research study involving a self-efficacy survey (see Appendix C) based on Bandura's scales (Bandura, 1995) and a focus group were conducted to examine the context in which a phenomenon is perceived in two middle schools in a single county in Florida. Through Grounded Theory, survey data is used to present introductory concepts followed by reoccurring themes through focus group one (School A) to reach a satisfactory level of saturation through focus group two (School B). Focus group data was open coded, then axial coded using the open code, then selective coded using the axial code. The results were represented through three organized tables consisting of open codes, properties, and participants' word (see Appendix D) then the data was consolidated into categories through axial coding in order to represent the findings through selective code(s). It is important to note that Grounded Theory is typically not

used in a study requiring a literature review due to the researcher developing preconceived notions; however, the literature review on the specific research question is lacking, and comparison literature on concepts and frameworks of education, belief, and systems were analyzed in relation to the topic.

Settings

This study took place in two middle schools in a chosen county in Florida. Purposive sampling was employed with specific requirements to select the county, two middle schools, and participants used in the study.

Florida is a saturated location for educational challenges with minimal teacher pay, low funding for resources, and continued changes to testing strategies, in addition to the contemporary threat of school shootings, negative mental health stigma, and food insecurity. Middle school is the chosen criteria due to the critical testing period of sixth through eighth grade students. Middle school teachers are faced with constant adjustments to testing policy and new terms of accountability for students' failing scores.

The selected county was an 'A' rated county in Florida. This was a chosen criterion due to the preconceived assumption of the researcher estimating that an 'A' rated district might be implementing cultural reproduction strategies at a higher rate, or even more successfully, than a lower rated district.

Two middle schools were chosen that represented vastly different educational circumstances, even within a single county. The data shown in Table 2 is rounded and generalized to protect the identities of the schools.

Table 2 | School A and School B Comparison

Variable	School A	School B	State Average
Student population	1,300 grown recently	1,000 declined recently	735
Minority enrollment	30% low diversity score	50% high diversity score	61%
Student:teacher ratio	18:1	18:1	16:1
Teacher population	>70 grown recently	<60 declined recently	N/A
School ranking out of Florida schools	Top 10%	Top 50%	3,000+ Florida schools used as total
Students eligible for free lunch	<20%	>40%	53%
Math/Reading test scores	Significantly above state average	Slightly above state average	57% Math 54% Reading

Statistics (2016-2019) are significantly rounded/generalized to conceal the identity of each school.

Inclusion criteria for participants was as follows:

1) Must be a middle school teacher

2) Must be currently employed by the chosen county of study

3) Must have five or more years of teaching experience in the chosen county of study

4) Must be a teacher at either Middle School A or Middle School B

Such criteria were chosen in order to study the perceived effects of cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) through teachers employed in the chosen county for five or more years in order to accurately identify the changes or reproduction techniques their county or school had undergone recently.

<u>Methods</u>

A survey and two focus groups, one held at each middle school, were used to collect and represent data through Grounded Theory methods. Data collection must go through the approval of UCF IRB (see Appendix A) and the county (see Appendix B) before the process can begin.

Upon receiving approval, a Bandura Self-efficacy survey (see Appendix C) was sent to the principals to distribute to their employees. Teachers who have been employed by the county, not necessarily their current school of employment, for five or more years chose to respond or ignore the survey. Participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous. In the survey, information regarding the focus group and the Explanation of Research form was provided. Principals were also provided with the focus group information to distribute to teachers. If teachers only wished to participate in the survey, they only needed to ignore the additional information. If teachers did not fit the criteria listed at the beginning of the survey, the form would thank them for their time and close.

The purpose of the anonymous survey was to explore teachers' self-perceptions of control over their school environment, classrooms, students, and policy changes in their district and state. Bandura's Self-efficacy Scales were used as the basis for the survey due to his simple way of categorizing influences on self-confidence and belief. To keep information as unidentifiable as possible, the number of teachers who responded to the survey is identified in this study within the range of ten to twenty.

The second portion of data collection involved a focus group held on each campus for no more than thirty minutes of the participants' time. An optimal date for teacher availability was chosen per the timing request of the principal. There were no additional observers outside the

researcher and participants during the focus group. The participants were reminded of their right to leave at any time, and the researcher covered the privacy protections in place before the discussion began (see Appendix E).

An audio recording device record the focus group for the sole purpose of transcription. Identities of the participants are not essential to the research and are protected. The data was saved on an external hard drive and locked in a location known only to the researcher until transcription. To protect privacy, no identifiable information was published or available to anyone outside the researcher, such as: names, email addresses, voice recordings, research locations, and school district. Personal information regarding participants' names, gender, ages, years of experience, current school of employment, grade level or subject taught are not recorded nor important to the chosen focus of the study.

The researcher began by defining (CL) and (CD) as redefined by this study prior to the start of the focus group. The questions that were prepared by the researcher to prompt discussion are as follows:

a) *If Cultural Reproduction is defined as adjustments, changes, or accommodations made to curriculum, school environment, the responsibilities of teachers and students, and the education process as a whole, how do you perceive, if at all, Cultural Reproduction within your school?*

b) *Do you observe positive aspects of Cultural Reproduction within your school?*

c) *Do you observe negative aspects of Cultural Reproduction within your school?*

d) If Cultural Replication is defined as repetition of the same approaches, attitudes, curriculum, school environment, and the education process as a whole, how do you perceive, if at all, Cultural Replication in your school?

Four questions were prepared in order to ensure the researcher had little to no participation in the focus group discussion but was able to guide topics if discussion strayed. It is important to note that the researcher only needed to define (CL) and (CD) to the participants in the beginning. Additional clarifications or guidance was not needed. To keep information as unidentifiable as possible, the number of teachers who participated in the focus groups is identified in this study within the range of five to fifteen.

To ensure validity, data analysis involved in-depth comparison using the samples from the survey and focus group. Willingness to disclose perceptions in a survey verses amongst colleagues was also taken into consideration. The self-efficacy survey questions were first categorized by type of influence in Table 3, then averaged by the percent frequency of the level of influence in each category in Table 4. For visualization purposes, Table 4 data was then graphed in Figure 1. Figure 2 represents the percentage scale of 1-5 levels of influence overall with a percentage error of 1.8. The focus group processed data through open, axial, and selective coding to categorize information. Then, data was analyzed to identify emerging themes and ensure saturation. Focus group data interpreted participants' perceptions to construct two selective codes, and then three themes using data from the survey. Finally, using the concepts from the survey and selective codes, a theory and model were developed to present the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

<u>Introduction</u>

This chapter presents the results of the study through the following sections: data analysis, interpretive statements, researcher memos, and a brief summary of findings. The self-efficacy survey questions were first categorized by type of influence, then graphed by category and level of influence overall on a scale of 1-5. The focus group processed data through open, axial, and selective coding to categorize information. Then, data was analyzed to identify emerging themes and ensure saturation. Focus group data interpreted participants' perceptions to construct two selective codes, and then three themes using data from the survey.

The open code for Middle Schools A and B using the focus group transcriptions can be found in Appendix D. Shown in this chapter, Table 5 consolidated the open code data into categories through axial coding in order to represent the findings through two selective codes.

Study participants for both the focus group and survey adhered to the following criteria:

5) Must be a middle school teacher

6) Must be currently employed by the chosen county of study

7) Must have five or more years of teaching experience in the chosen county of study

8) Must be a teacher at either Middle School A or Middle School B

Such criteria were chosen in order to study the perceived effects of (CL) and (CD) in a particular county in Florida. Participants must have been employed in the chosen county for five or more years in order to accurately depict the changes or reproduction techniques their county or school had undergone recently.

<u>Grounded Theory</u>

Grounded theory relies on the chronological process of representing the researcher's developing theories based on data coding. Rather than the typical representation of deduction that moves from idea to observation, induction through Grounded Theory moves from observation to idea. It is important to note that the resulting theories are substantive but, like any approach to collecting data, fallible and can be considered dependent on context and never completely final. The goal of Grounded Theory is to move towards saturation of concepts. In this sense, the researcher should not be introduced to new ideas as the study continues; saturation means concepts and themes become consistent. Throughout the research process, memos are conducted to explore the researchers developing thoughts and connections as data is collected.

<u>Data Analysis</u>

Survey participants were asked to rank a series of questions from one to five based on their self-efficacy or confidence in their own ability to affect change.

Table 3 lists questions asked in the survey that can be grouped into six categories based on instruction, students, classroom, policy, school, and community. The data is represented in this way to examine which categories teachers felt they have the most and least influence over. Table 4 presents the results of the survey by average level of influence, ranked 1-5, per category. Figure 1 graphs the findings in Table 4 and Figure 2 takes the frequency of each scale, ranked 1-5 by level of influence, and presents the overall average of each.

Bandura Self-Efficacy Survey

Table 3 | Teacher Self-Efficacy by Influence Type

Questions	Category
How much are you able to do in order to promote a growth mindset over passing a test? *How much freedom do you feel you have with lesson plans?* *How much can you do to prepare students to meet testing standards?* *How much can you do to prepare students for their futures?*	(A) Instruction strategies and lessons
How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students? *How much can you do to promote learning when there is a lack of support from the home?* *How much can you do to overcome adverse community conditions on students' learning?* *How much can you do to make sure students enjoy coming to school?* *How much can you do to make the school a safe place?* *How much can you do to get students to trust teachers?* *How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school?* *How much can you do to get students to care about lesson content?*	(B) Student needs and engagement
How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? *How much can you do to get students to do their homework?* *How much can you do to keep students on task on difficult assignments?* *How much can you do to get students to work together?* *How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?* *How much can you do to prevent problem behavior on the school grounds?*	(C) Discipline and classroom management
How much can you do to influence decisions at the county level? *How much control do you feel you have over education policy in your state?*	(D) County and state level decisions

How much can you influence the decisions made at your school?	(E) School and administration
How much can you express your views freely on important school matters?	
How much can you do to get the instructional materials and equipment you need?	
How much can you do to influence the class sizes at your school?	
How much can you help other teachers with their teaching skills?	
How much can you do to enhance collaboration between teachers and administration to make the school run effectively?	
How much can you do to reduce school dropout?	
How much can you do to reduce school absenteeism?	
How much can you do to get parents involved in school activities?	(F) Community and parents
How much can you assist parents in helping their children do well in school?	
How much can you do to make parents feel comfortable coming to school?	
How much can you do to get community groups involved in working with the schools?	
How much can you do to get local colleges and universities involved in working with the schools?	
How much can you do to get businesses involved in working with the schools?	
How much can you do to get future educators involved in working with the schools?	

Table 4 | Average Percent by Category

Category of Influence	1	2	3	4	5
(A) Instruction	0.0%	3.6%	42.9%	46.4%	7.1%
(B) Students	3.6%	1.8%	43.6%	50.9%	0.0%
(C) Classroom	2.4%	9.5%	31.0%	38.1%	16.7%
(D) Policy	78.6%	14.3%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
(E) School	12.5%	37.5%	28.6%	17.9%	3.6%
(F) Community	18.4%	20.4%	34%	18.4%	0.0%

% rounded to nearest tenth   1 = Nothing; 2 = Very little; 3 = Some influence; 4 = Quite a bit; 5 = A great deal
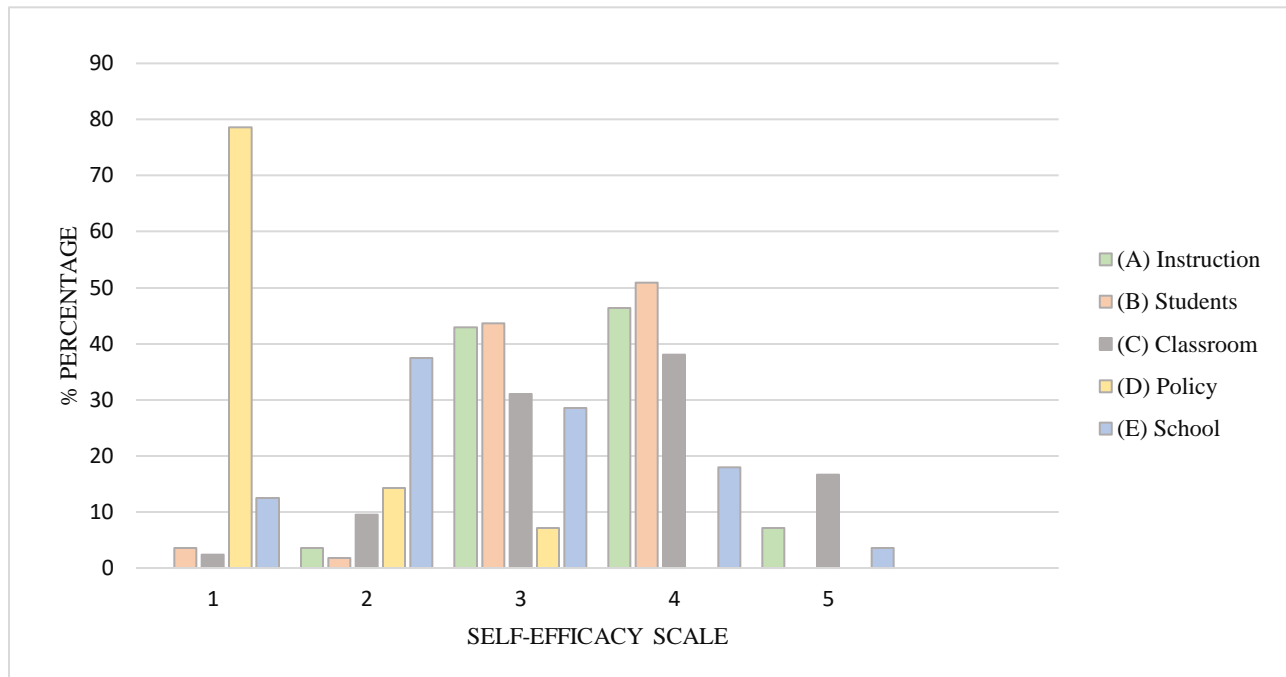
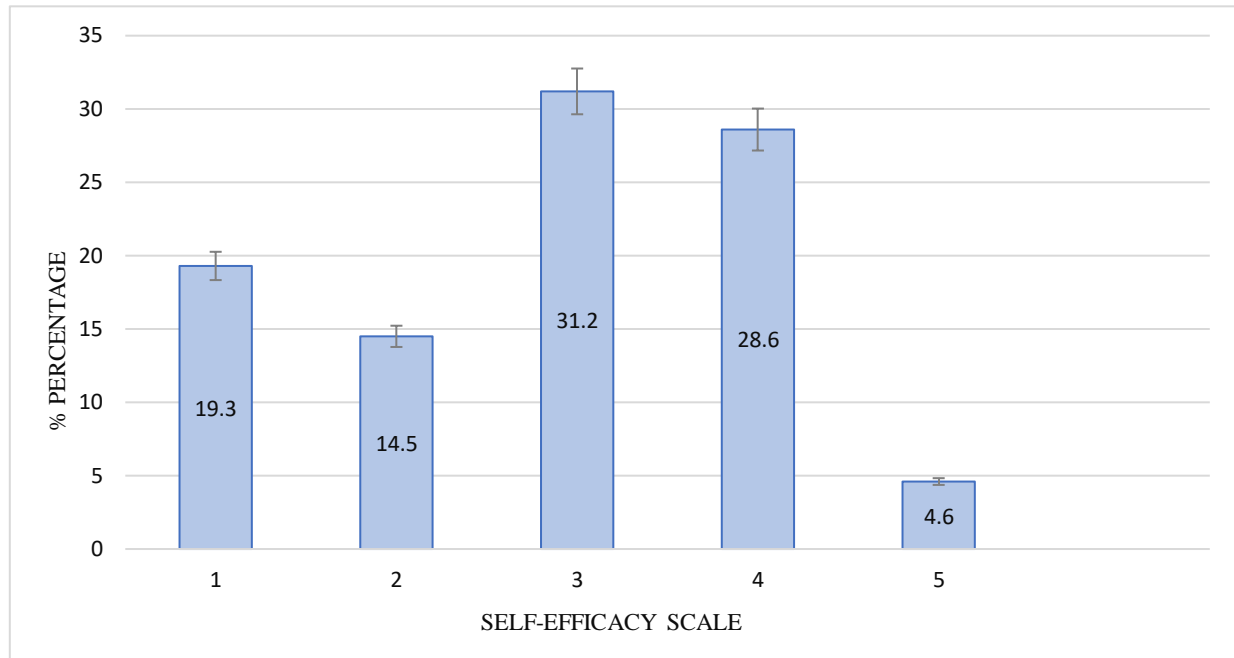*Figure 1 | Teacher Self-Efficacy Average by Category*

Figure 2 | Teacher Self-Efficacy Total Average

Percentage error = 1.8%

Of the six categories, three averaged 0% for a confidence level of five; meaning, out of the participants surveyed, none felt they have "A great deal" of influence in the categories of: *student needs and engagement (B), county and state level decisions (D), community and parents (F).* In addition, the category of *county and state level decisions (D)* reared the lowest results with each participant ranking a confidence level of three or below. The single category where no participant ranked their confidence level lower than two was *instruction strategies and lessons (A).* Represented in Figure 2, the average of each level of confidence is as follows; ordered from least to greatest percentage: (5) A great deal 4.6%; (2) Very little 14.5%; (1) Nothing: 19.3%; (4) Quite a bit 28.6%; (3) Some influence 31.2%. The most commonly chosen category was (3) Some influence. This depicts a higher level of confidence in participants' perceived ability to affect change within their own classrooms, a lower level of confidence in their ability to affect change in their environment and support student emotional or educational needs, and an average level of confidence overall.

Several quotes from the open code are listed below to contextualize the selective codes in Table 5. To examine the full open code book, see Appendix D.

"How am I supposed to treat symptom 1 when symptom 2 pops up five minutes later? What about the sickness?"

"Some things you can't fix, but we sure are spending a lot of time trying to fix them."

"We do just enough, just enough to get us running. Like an old car."

"I am not trained… I am not qualified… trauma and triggers and grief."

"Does it take somebody to die in our schools to do something?"

"That the thing, kids have died in schools. Are we doing anything about it?"

Table 5 | Axial and Selective Codes

Consolidated data from School A and B

Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
▪ Education is not a priority ▪ Increased student awareness ▪ Students have no desire to explore ▪ Students need instant gratification ▪ No connection ▪ Students are in the wrong class levels ▪ Taking out steppingstones ▪ Pushing standards and content down from the top ▪ Internet and immediate gratification ▪ Increased student awareness ▪ No application or purpose for content	Student needs and responsibilities are rapidly changing	(i) Teachers perceive that current needs outpace the public-school system's ability to adapt effectively
▪ Teachers cannot meet student needs ▪ Teachers feel they are wasting their time ▪ Too many new challenges ▪ Students and teachers are not allowed to fail ▪ Everything is the teacher's fault ▪ Wanting parental involvement ▪ Lack of sufficient number of teachers per student ▪ Constant rush – like a competition or a race ▪ Positive addition of PLCs	Teacher responsibilities are rapidly changing	

▪ New changes built on outdated knowledge	Accommodations are built upon outdated foundations and change is not incorporated in a lasting way	(ii) Teachers perceive that contemporary threats to education produce unmeasurable and unmeetable challenges with current cultural practices and resources
▪ Difficult to backtrack		
▪ The changes don't always work		
▪ Focus on appearance and numbers		
▪ Short-sited		
▪ Teachers and students do not get to see the results		
▪ Change is not incorporated in a lasting way		
▪ No time		
▪ Politics in education		
▪ Out of date rules and regulations		
▪ No feedback		
▪ Adding new support that actually works		
▪ Piling		
▪ Focus on appearance		
▪ Constantly reinventing the wheel		
▪ Support and resources rely on money	Modern threats to education are alarming and/or unstable	
▪ Divide between class status is visible in schools		
▪ School safety is a modern threat and serious issue		
▪ Not addressing actual problems		
▪ Picking a focus to improve on ends up turning a strength in another area into a weakness		
▪ Emphasis and focus on tests and results		

<u>Researcher Memos</u>

The following section includes the chronological note-keeping of the researcher during the study process. The notes are subjective memos to keep track of the researcher's thoughts and developing theories as the study was conducted per Grounded Theory methodology.

Table 6 | Memos

As survey data was collected	Teachers feel they have a decent amount of control over their own classroom. Regard their ability higher than expected. External factors rank lower – more blame on things perceived outside their influence/control Low involvement in county, state, or school decisions – fault of teacher or external factors? How involved are teachers in policy in education? How welcomed are they in participating in education policy? Discontent – community and state involvement. Parents. Student needs can be met some of the time – is this again due to their trust in their own personal ability? Ignoring their own ability to support students, do they feel students are properly supported in classrooms that are not their own? Survey question adjustments could be used in future – too general. Answer accuracy lowers when teachers are forced to just pick one for a question when the question is too broad and could have more factors.
During focus group *School A*	Survey vs. Focus group – higher sense of self-efficacy with the survey. More dissatisfaction during focus group – feed off each other's negative energy? I clarified they can perceive the effects of reproduction positively or negatively – doesn't necessarily have to be negative. They could find maybe one thing positive. "Nowadays there's nothing positive." Specific use of the word now. How far back did this participant perceive change towards more negative aspects of reproduction? Focus on negative: due to growing contemporary challenges or just general focus of human nature? Teachers are WAY more angry at reproduction than replication – too much reproduction is school currently. "We're replicating reproduction and it's not working." Interesting! Yes. More research on this. Repeating over and over new changes/adjustments. Replicating the culture of reproduction? Incredulous and angry tone.

During focus group *School B*	Saturation between school A and B was observed. Concepts in School B reflected themes already said from School A. Lots of overlap. School safety emphasis. Somber and reflective tone. Almost all negative aspects of reproduction. Teachers feel replication is not seen often in schools anymore – modern challenges make too many issues for repetition to work. Some are real problems, some are imagined – no real focus. More uncertainty than anything. What are their jobs? Their requirements? Their responsibilities? Teachers have no voice in education.
After research collection; before coding	Students are numbers (testing, results, emphasis on appearance). Teachers cannot meet the current needs of students – (restrictions (laws), unqualified, changing responsibilities, 1s and 2s in the wrong class levels – expected to focus 1:1 in large class sizes, teachers must entertain, undefined expectations for teachers, I feel like I'm aging out) Building on a broken foundation that cannot hold in current societal standards (piling, not set up this way). Real needs and real problems – there's no research on this (how do we know if what we're doing is working? Out of date rules – fire drills, consequences of doing it wrong are higher than ever, a science experiment of trying new things, new material built on old foundations, no point of perspective). School safety (fight or flight skills, disorganization, no one knows what to do). School funding determines support given (resources, money, support, class size, number of teachers). Students cannot adapt (nihilism, not allowed to fail, want growth mindset but no time to see it, want students to be good at everything). School vs. the world (Student awareness, teachers are not relevant compared to internet, student do not feel safe in schools, content is not applicable to their lives, if all teachers need from this is a score: they pass the test and don't do the homework, subjects are so separated – students cannot make connections, kids see the inequality of money). Replicating reproduction – (teachers do not get to see feedback, constantly adding something new, rushing, don't get to see results, don't get to learn and improve, growth mindset stakes time, curriculum load is stifling, teachers are not part of the education process, no feedback, focus on appearance, like playing wackamole, focusing on one subject increase hurts another, we're a science experiment. Short-sided solutions, treating symptoms – not the sickness). Replication with the appearance of reproduction – (change the labels to show 'improvement,' we think we're reproducing but we're just replicating at this point, we hide the problem and don't get rid of it – or more importantly what caused it). Increased student awareness – class divide, superficial lessons, focus on numbers and results What are we doing when we're not replicating or reproducing? Is there a third line? Thinking like a branch maybe.

<u>Interpretation of Findings</u>

Bandura's (1995) Self-efficacy survey provided contextual background for teacher perceptions while the two focus groups allowed for expansion on what teachers perceive; specifically, cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) in their schools.

The developing ideas from the focus group data are as follows:

(i) Teacher participants perceive that current needs outpace the public-school system's ability to adapt effectively.

(ii) Teacher participants perceive that contemporary threats to education produce unmeasurable and unmeetable challenges with current cultural practices and resources.

The results present significant implications for the current system of education in a single county in Florida. With relation to the research question, *RQ) How do teachers perceive the positive or negative effects of cultural reproduction and cultural replication in their schools?*, the findings first establish that teacher participants are aware of (CL) and (CD) as redefined by this study, and secondly, (ii) indicates teachers perceive cultural replication as not viable and (i) indicates they perceive cultural reproduction as, quite simply, not working. In this sense, teacher participants currently see very little cultural replication in their schools outside the foundations the United States' education system was built upon, while they observe an increased presence of cultural reproduction due to modern challenges. Despite the redefinition of (CD) that excludes the distinctly negative original approach, the data shows participants find immense fault with (CD), perhaps even more so than (CL).

The following and final chapter will explore conclusions that may be drawn from this research study as well as limitations and ideas for future research. Grounded Theory seeks to

move from observation to idea, but studies using this approach to qualitative research typically do not begin with a research question and literature review. A research question is instead formulated during the research process. To navigate the requirements of Grounded Theory research and the format requirements of the institution in which this research was published, the memos, coding, and implications are used to expand upon the direction of the original question to establish a theoretical model of observed cultural adaptation of education as a social subsystem.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter explored the conclusions that were drawn from this research study through analysis of education as a subsystem that uses cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) to adapt to variables (V) from the host social system that threaten the systematic continuity of education. This chapter outlines a brief summary of the research findings, analyzes the implications using a preexisting model of social change and a proposed theory of cultural adaptation of education as a subsystem, discusses the study's educational implications and limitations, and recommends future research.

Summary of Research

The purpose of this research was to redefine 'cultural reproduction' into reproduction and replication in order to explore how the education system in a single district in Florida reacts to threats through adjustments to, or replication of, existing cultural practices. Through the perspectives of teachers, the research question posed was: *(RQ) How do teachers perceive the presence of cultural reproduction and cultural replication in their schools?* The study discovered that in addition to identifying cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) in their schools, (i) teachers perceive that current needs outpace the public-school system's ability to adapt effectively and (ii) that contemporary threats to education produce unmeasurable and unmeetable challenges with current cultural practices and resources. Using a combination of Bandura's (1995) Self-efficacy survey (see Appendix C) and two focus groups in different middle schools within the same county in Florida, the findings uncovered three predominant themes:

(A) Teacher participants perceive significantly negative effects of cultural reproduction (CR) in their schools, county, and state.

(B) Teacher participants perceive uncertain and irregular responses to threats to education that force redefinition of their responsibilities as educators and their students' responsibilities in the classroom.

(C) Teacher participants perceive cultural reproduction (CR) as an ineffective and exhausted way of dealing with contemporary challenges to education.

As such, the observed theory that can be concluded from this research is: Cultural reproduction (CD) is not meeting the needs of students and teachers, and the stability of education as a social subsystem is in question.

Implications of Findings

For the purposes of this study, education was classified as a subsystem under the general umbrella category of a knowledge-seeking social system: humanity's natural desire to seek knowledge, development, and understanding of our world. Additionally, schools, colleges, and other public institutions of learning are recognized as social institutions.

One way of examining social and cultural systems is through the attainment of equilibrium. If a system seeks preservation, it requires flexibility to adapt to threats. A typology model of social change (SC) is shown in Figure 3 that depicts a theory on how society adapts to social change (SC) when cultural identity is threatened.
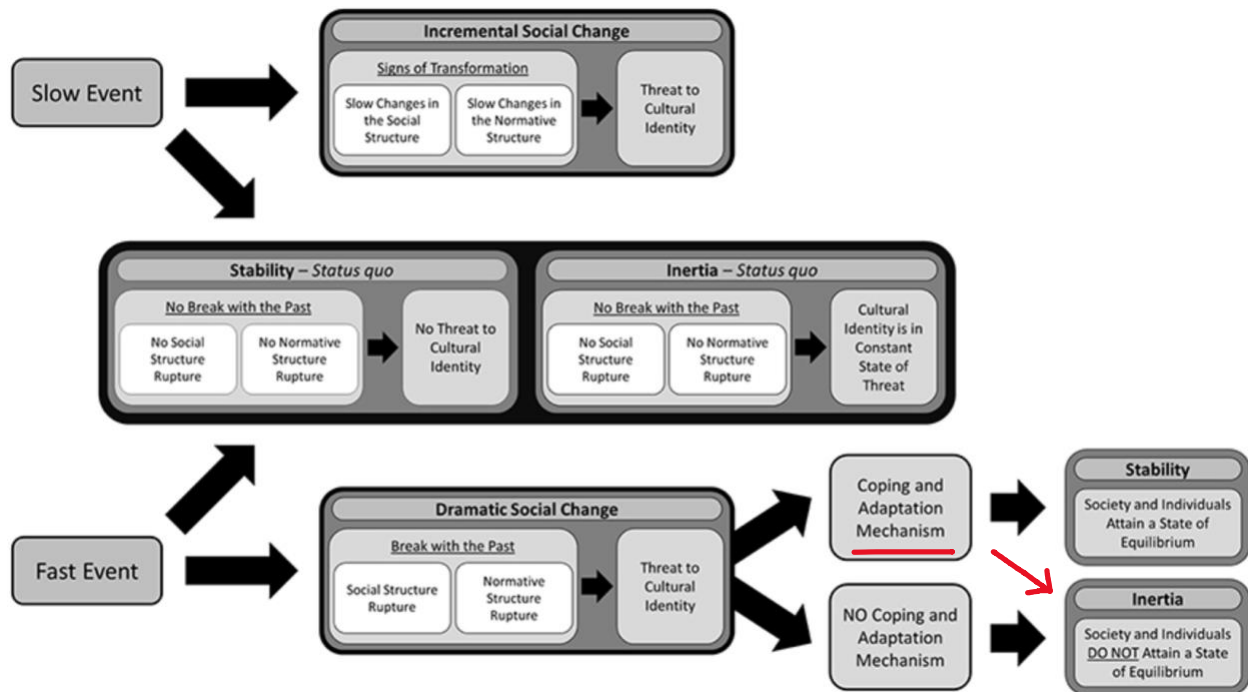
Figure 3 | Theoretical Model for Social Change

Source: Sablonniere (2017) *Frontiers in Psychology*. "Toward a Psychology of Social Change: A Typology of Social Change." https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00397/full

Suggested adjustments made to the model are in red. The findings of this research study comply with the underlined box, "Coping and Adaptation Mechanism," wherein education is a subsystem of a larger social system that must adapt to an event in order to reach stability. The original study that proposed the model depicted a straight line from adaptation to stability or no adaptation to inertia (Sablonnière, 2017); however, this study proposed that coping and adaptation mechanisms likely include reoccurring social change until a change in ideology and cultural practices is passed down in a subsystem or social system when threatened by immense primitive belief disruption.

Belief and Social Change

Belief holds the cognitive basis for social change. Primitive beliefs are those that rarely, if at all, experience controversy. If beliefs vary along a central-peripheral dimension, the more central the belief changed, the more widespread the repercussions for the rest of the belief system. Within schools, teachers observe with certainty tension in one category of primitive belief: the preference for life over death is now challenged by a belief with unanimous social consensus that adults should protect children. Instead of 'adults' and 'children,' within schools, the belief becomes: teachers should protect students. This ideology is not new and would typically be classified under an (C) or (D) belief, but the contemporary context of this statement implies it is a euphemism. With the prevalence of school shootings, the statement becomes: teachers should die for their students.

Belief governs the functionality of any social system; we, as humans, interact with each other based on attitudes, values, and beliefs. The teachers of this study observed legal, social, and personal issues with their changing responsibilities in light of new threats to school safety. Teachers in the focus groups felt unqualified, unprepared, and untrained to make these kinds of adjustments in order to meet a new demand for student needs. The requirements for mental health support, safety regulations for a shooting, and de-escalation of any threat to safety were carried out within their schools and caused drastic social change, or the ways in which students and teachers interact. As one teacher explained it, "I cannot meet the needs of all my students…I am not trained; I am not qualified." Another added, "I don't know what's going on with these kids. You never know. You can't know. You're almost not allowed to know….I would have a better handle if I was informed of the issues they face, but it's like a discovery mission."

This study began by examining cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) in schools but was confronted with the concept of social change as another variable of adaptation. Through this discovery, a model began to emerge depicting the systematic ways in which education reacts and adapts to threats in order to reach stability or equilibrium.

Education as a Social Subsystem Seeking Equilibrium

Equilibrium has a basis in macroeconomics in which supply and demand curves are fixed and equilibrium is the point in which production of a good at a certain price is equal to consumption of that good at the same price. Price and demand have an inverse relationship.

One way of observing equilibrium in social system dynamics is when needs and demands of individuals in a system – or the requirements for preservation of the system itself – are met at a rate equal to the system's overall productive output provided by equilibrium. In theory, meeting the demands of individuals, organizations, or the requirements for systemic continuity produces productive and positive attainable outcomes. In terms of subsystems, and specifically education as a social subsystem, equilibrium can potentially provide a society with a trained workforce capable of adaptability and critical thinking for the purpose of preservation of the society. The challenge lies with meeting the demands and rapidly changing needs of students, teachers, national and international challenges, and the social institution of public schooling itself.

Many factors comprise the unattainability of true equilibrium – availability of resources and support, hegemonic structures in social institutions, economic disparity, individual belief disruption, and ideologies established in cultural practices. However, according to teachers

observed in this study, the contemporary challenge to equilibrium is the constant seeking of short-term stability through cultural reproduction (CD). By attempting to reach stability to preserve the functionality of education, teachers perceive the subsystem falling short of true, long-lasting equilibrium. According to the study participants, our society builds upon an outdated foundation, "We were not set up this way, but we're trying to move this way," that piles changes instead of incorporating change in a lasting way. Rather than viewing both a positive and negative presence of (CR), teachers had very little to say about its success in their schools.

Educational Implications

What does this mean for education as a subsystem and an integral part of social systems in our society? If we approach cultural change (CC) as involving a change in ideology, values, norms, beliefs, and practices that are passed down through social systems, such as the shift from education as an institution of religion to a secular institution of knowledge, then cultural change is rarely implemented in education. Shifts in focus happen more frequently than true ideological change. One shift observed by the study participants in a single county in Florida is a focus on testing standards and results. According to these teachers, this did not result in an ideological shift in education. Justification for this can be found by examining the ways cultural replication (CL), cultural reproduction (CD), social change (SC), and cultural change (CC) interact:

(CL): No change.

(CD): Adjustments to system itself. *System changes to preserve.*

(SC): Adjustments to social relationships within system – changing responsibilities of teachers. *People change to preserve.*

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(CC): Changes in ideology lead to modification of society; old cultural practices are replaced by new ones; environmental changes, new discovery, invention, or diffusion force reexamination of current cultural practices. *Modification of belief, ideology, and practices of a society.*

New testing standards are a response to low national rankings, one participant theorized. In this sense, our existing culture responded by making an adjustment to the system of education in order to improve output, or student test results. Our culture of education, the goal and process of producing an adaptable and critical thinking workforce, did not experience a change.

The teachers of this study reported observations of replication being tossed in favor of reproduction in order to meet changing needs. Now, however, reproduction was viewed just as much, if not more, negatively as replication by the participating teachers. Changing the responsibilities of teachers to adjust to school shootings constitutes social change – but these adjustments challenge primitive beliefs on an unprecedented level.

Shown below, Figure 4 is the model for the proposed Cultural Response Theory developed from the data where cultural reproduction does not meet the current needs of students and teachers as perceived by teacher participants. This is a metacognitive tool to represent what is occurring within schools and policy-making areas to propose a culture of response that resists change as long as possible before level of urgency or primitive belief disruption renders resistance unproductive.
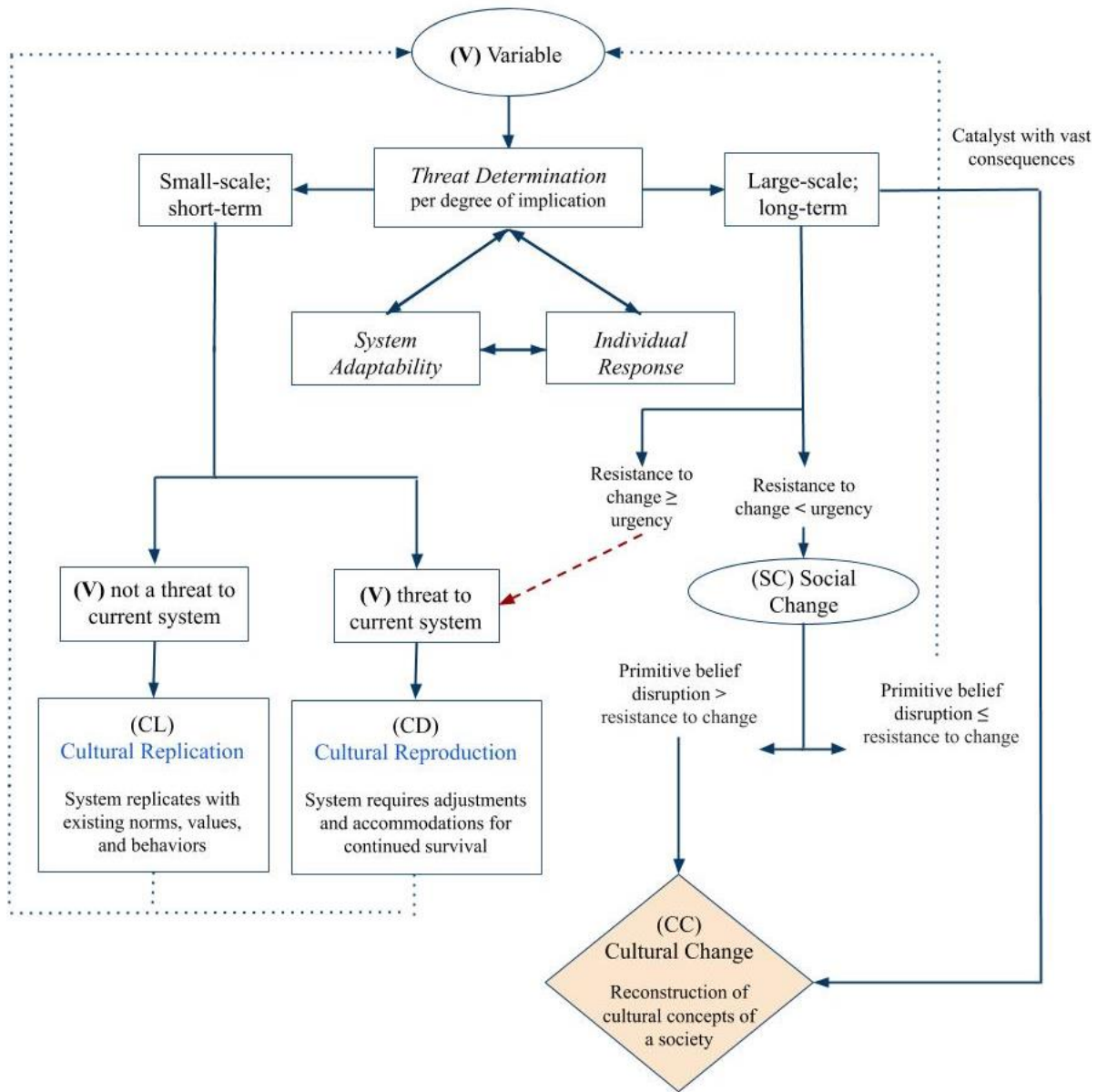
Figure 4 | Proposed Cultural Response Theory

Education as a social subsystem in which (V) variables from the host social system interact with the subsystem. The subsystem responds to ensure preservation through physical or sociocultural means.

The model in Figure 4 represents the researcher's findings in which variables from the host social system are examined by threat and consequence should the subsystem of education choose to either react, replicate, or induce immense cultural and/or social change. Change in a subsystem as interconnected and dependent as education would result in widespread consequences in other subsystems, the host system, and a given society. Cultural Response Theory depicts the left of the model, where (CL) and (CD) are found, as change resistant. If a variable does not require the response of long-term change to preserve the education system, short-term change in the form of (CD) will always be favored. In this sense, an illusion of change is modeled.

Figure 4 represents the underlined box in Figure 3: Coping and Adaptation Mechanism. The red arrow adjustment to Figure 3 integrates Figure 4's theory of cultural response in a way that reflects the perceptions of teacher participants: adaptation can occur, but stability doesn't necessarily follow. Instead, constant reproduction, or the replication of reproduction, can transpire. The proposed model (Figure 4) explores ways in which a variable (V) from a social system (Figure 3) is classified by level of threat and consequence to determine whether replication, reproduction, or a drastic social/cultural change is needed in order to preserve the system of education.

This study proposes that coping and adaptation mechanisms include reoccurring social change, replication, or reproduction until a change in ideology and cultural practices is passed down in a subsystem or social system when threatened by immense primitive belief disruption. To state simply, education as a system will continue to avoid drastic change and replicate or

reproduce for short-term stability until it is absolutely necessary in order to establish systemic continuity.

Additional Notes

(a) It is important to note that the participants in this study did not see themselves as an integral, if at all involved, part of the replication or reproduction process. Rather, they see themselves as unwilling participants to the changes around them and are just trying to keep their "head above water."

(b) The original intention of this study was to explore a dialectic model of education cultural systems; however, research and data revealed that education as a social structure has the capability to function in a non-linear sequence that goes against both functionalist ideas and dialectic models.

(c) Teacher participants were very aware of (CL) and (CD), even if they didn't previously have a name for them.

(d) Teacher participants implied they would prefer returning to simple replication over constant change under the guise of improvement. There was a strong presence of reform fatigue.

(e) The core foundation of the teachers' perceptions was that they live in a constant state of uncertainty.

Limitations of the Study

As established by Grounded Theory methods, this study makes broad generalizations and theories in order to represent an observed phenomenon. Despite the support through existing social and cultural theoretic models, this study's findings are limited to the participating

population and do not speak for other counties, the entire state of Florida, or the United States as a whole. In addition, the study approached observing cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) through the perspectives of teachers, limiting the study's scope. Demographics and other individual characteristics of teachers were also excluded from this study. Experience can affect belief, in so affecting perspective. In addition, more survey responses were anticipated than received; however, the process of distribution of the survey and study information was completely controlled by the county.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study redefined cultural reproduction and examined the presence of cultural replication (CL) and cultural reproduction (CD) in two middle schools in a single county in Florida for the purpose of establishing a model of education adaptation to lead further research into considering the viability of cultural reproduction practices.

Recommendations for future research include: 1) more background connections to social change, cultural change, and cultural adaptation; 2) a larger scope of study with a larger population; 3) expanding outside the scope of teachers' perspectives; 4) differing the inclusion criteria to observe older practices of (CL) and (CD); 5) adjusting, improving, or expanding upon the model of cultural response theory to a more inclusive systematic representation outside of education as a social subsystem; 6) further evidence that (CD) is not viable due to contemporary challenges to education

As a result of this study, I would consider the implications and move towards examining a different population, such as parents of students in public schools or students themselves.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351
IRB00001138
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

September 6, 2019

Dear Elsie Olan:

On 9/6/2019, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study, Category 2
Title:	An Exploration of Teacher Perceptions of the Presence of Cultural Reproduction in Two Middle Schools
Investigator:	Elsie Olan
IRB ID:	STUDY00000713
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Racine Jacques, Ph.D.
Designated Reviewer

APPENDIX B: COUNTY APPROVAL

October 18, 2019

Ms. Kaitlyn Montcrieff

██████████████████
██████

Dear Ms. Montcrieff,

I am in receipt of the proposal and supplemental information that you submitted for
permission to conduct research in the ███████████████████████ You are granted
permission to conduct the study described herein, *An Exploration of Teacher
Perceptions of the Presence of Cultural Reproduction in Two Middle Schools*, with the
following parameters:

1. The principal of each school listed below has the final authority to allow you to
   conduct research on his/her campus. Your first order of business is to contact
   the principal and ask permission to provide the information related to your
   survey. It is not permissible for principals to influence teachers or other
   employees to participate in a research project. It is up to the researcher to
   determine the method for contacting potential participants without use of ███
   email.
2. Each teacher will decide whether to participate.
3. Survey participants are required to respond after, not before, contracted time.

Respectfully,

████████████████

████████████

Deputy Superintendent, ████████████████████

cc.
████████████████████████
███████████ Principal, ███████████ Middle School
███████████ Principal, ███████████ Middle School

APPENDIX C: BANDURA SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY

Q1 **EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH**

Title of Project: An Exploration of Teacher Perceptions of the Presence of Cultural Reproduction in Two Middle Schools.
Principal Investigator: Elsie Olan
Co-Investigator: Kaitlyn Montcrieff
You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you. You must meet the requirements for a participant:
1. Must be a middle school teacher
2. Must be currently employed by ▮▮▮▮▮▮ County
3. Must have five or more years of teaching experience in ▮▮▮▮▮ County
4. Must be a teacher at either ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

The purpose of this research is to answer the question: *"How do teachers perceive the presence and effects of cultural reproduction in their school?"* With changes to policy and new or continued threats to education, it is important to evaluate the effects of cultural reproduction in schools to better our education system and support students and teachers in the rapidly evolving socio-political climate.

In order to gauge the presence and effects of cultural reproduction in the Florida education system to determine whether or not it is a viable solution to contemporary challenges to education, one must first explore the ways teachers perceive its effects and whether or not they are aware of its presence in their schools.

The study is two parts: a survey and a focus group. You are not required to participate in one or both. The survey and focus group are completely voluntary.

If you wish to participate in the survey portion of this study, it will take approximately 7-10 minutes of your time to complete. The questions are based on your perceptions of teacher self-efficacy and the amount of control you feel you have over the education process at your school. The survey will be completely anonymous. Your answers will not be identifiable.

If you wish to take part in the focus group portion of the study, the focus group will meet once on campus at 4:00pm. It will take 10-20 minutes. You will be audio recorded during this portion of the study. To ensure your privacy, recordings will be deleted after transcription and will in no way be used to identify participants. Neither your name or any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or the transcript. Audio recordings will be stored on an external hard drive and kept in a locked, safe location until they are transcribed. If you do not wish to be audio recorded, you will not be able to participate in the focus group portion of the study.

To protect your privacy, no identifiable information will be published or available to anyone outside the researcher, such as: names, email address, voice recordings, research locations, and school district. Personal information regarding participants' names, gender, ages, years of

experience, current school of employment, grade level or subject taught are not recorded nor important to the study.

The survey is completely anonymous. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints please contact *Kaitlyn Montcrieff, Undergraduate Student, Secondary Education English Language Arts Program, College of Community Innovation and Education, (407)-782-8383 or Dr. Elise Olan, Faculty Supervisor, Department of English Language Arts Education at* (407) 823-5179 *or by email at Elsie.Olan@ucf.edu*   **I**

RB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email irb@ucf.edu.

○ Yes, I meet the qualifications and I consent to the survey (1)

○ No, I do not meet the qualifications and I do not consent to the survey (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH   Title of Project: An Exploration of Teacher Perceptions of the Presence... = No, I do not meet the qualifications and I do not consent to the survey

Q2 Please indicate your choice by selecting the appropriate circle for each question below.

	Nothing (1)	Very little (2)	Some influence (3)	Quite a bit (4)	A great deal (5)
How much can you influence the decisions made at your school? (1)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you express your views freely on important school matters? (2)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to get the instructional materials and equipment you need? (3)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to influence the class sizes at your school? (4)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to influence decisions at the county level? (5)	○	○	○	○	○
How much control do you feel you have over education policy in your state? (6)	○	○	○	○	○

	Nothing (1)	Very little (2)	Some influence (3)	Quite a bit (4)	A great deal (5)
How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students? (1)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to promote learning when there is a lack of support from the home? (2)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to keep students on task on difficult assignments? (3)	○	○	○	○	○
How much are you able to do in order to promote a growth mindset over passing a test? (4)	○	○	○	○	○
How much freedom do you feel you have with lesson plans? (5)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork? (6)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to get students to work together? (7)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to overcome adverse community conditions on students' learning? (8)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to get students to do	○	○	○	○	○

their homework? (9)

How much can you do to prepare students to meet testing standards? (10)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

	Nothing (1)	Very little (2)	Some influence (3)	Quite a bit (4)	A great deal (5)
How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? (1)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? (2)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to prevent problem behavior on the school grounds? (3)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to get parents involved in school activities? (4)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you assist parents in helping their children do well in school? (5)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to make parents feel comfortable coming to school? (6)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to get community groups involved in working with the schools? (7)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to get local colleges and universities involved in working with the schools? (8)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to get businesses involved in	○	○	○	○	○

| working with the schools? (9) | | | | | |
| How much can you do to get future educators involved in working with the schools? (10) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

- -

	Nothing (1)	Very little (2)	Some influence (3)	Quite a bit (4)	A great deal (5)
How much can you do to make the school a safe place? (1)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to make sure students enjoy coming to school? (2)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to get students to trust teachers? (3)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you help other teachers with their teaching skills? (4)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to enhance collaboration between teachers and administration to make the school run effectively? (5)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to reduce school dropout? (6)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to reduce school absenteeism? (7)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school? (8)	○	○	○	○	○
How much can you do to prepare students	○	○	○	○	○

for their futures? (9)					
How much can you do to get students to care about lesson content? (10)	○	○	○	○	○

APPENDIX D: CODE BOOK – GROUNDED THEORY

Table 7 | Open Code: School A

Cultural Replication (CL) and Reproduction (CD) as perceived by teachers

Open Code	Properties	Participants' Words
Constantly reinventing the wheel	New concepts added all the time No time to keep up or adjust Replicating constant reproduction Completely new curriculum without time to adjust	▪ *New, new, new, new, new – I'm not saying the old was better, but we keep saying 'change is inevitable,' which it is, but then we expect our kids to rise to the challenge and they can't.* ▪ *They changed my subjects entire curriculum this year. Last minute too.* ▪ *The curriculum load is stifling. That's it; it's too much.* ▪ *I didn't even have time to implement the old thing.*
No application or purpose for content	No real-life application Teachers are not allowed to talk about anything controversial Students want candid discussion	▪ *Look, I hate to admit this, but I was that kid who passed the tests and didn't do any work.* ▪ *Where is the growth? The curiosity? My kids don't care about anything I teach.* ▪ *I have to make history a mystery; like something to discover. They're bored if I don't.*
Emphasis and focus on tests and results	Focus on results and numbers – what looks good when presented as the final product?	▪ *We start testing them at birth.* ▪ *I looked into this. I had to do the research. Just look at the international rankings. We have a habit as a country of measuring ourselves against every other country in the world…. They [other countries] test maybe the top kids going to college or vocational. We test everybody. We're comparing apples to briefcases.* ▪ *If data is so important, why don't I get to see it?*

Constant rush – like a competition or a race	Adopting new support, then changing it the following year Students accept the inevitable that nothing is concrete when it comes to their education Cannot keep up with constant change Those in charge want teachers to try new things, but there is not time to implement something new Flexible seating to meet different student needs	▪ *We don't know what's actually working.* ▪ *At this point, they [students] come to school every day expecting us to tell them testings changed again and 'Guess what? You now have to pass four pretests and the FSA to graduate. Aren't we so lucky our congressmen made this change because they care about you?* ▪ *We always have that. Think – shifts in focus. Just last year! I mean, look at history. But we didn't jump on it immediately, you know? We adapt but not rush headfirst. It makes, it gives us the feeling something is wrong, and we need to hurry or it's going to fall apart.* ▪ *We're just hammering stuff in place* ▪ *Flexible seating. I know. I tried it and it seems great but there is no time to teach these kids how to take advantage of it.*
Increased student awareness	Students cannot focus on lessons when they face real issues outside and inside of school Students see the problems teachers struggle with School environment is not positive	▪ *Fire drill goes off and we can't leave until the principal dismisses us. Guess what? We don't have speakers in the portables, so we're told to just walk through the school as soon as we hear the alarm. You know what my kids told me? "We're the firing squad."* ▪ *Feeling safe is not the same as being safe.* ▪ *We're teaching fight or flight skills* ▪ *They're not dumb. My kids hate school. They have eyes and ears and they know what these people want: their numbers, their test. They don't want them.* ▪ *There's no research on this. No one knows what they're doing. The problem is the consequences of doing it wrong, I mean, the stakes have never been higher.* ▪ *These kids know things I never d– I never would have known at that age. Sixth graders.*

Focus on appearance	Advanced, gifted, standard Level 1, 2, 3, 4 Intense focus on grades Entering 50s instead of 0s Fixing the labels instead of the way the labels are viewed Every school wants to claim they made changes or improved	▪ *Pretty words and pretty results, right?* ▪ *Parents don't like the terms anymore, so we change the terms. That's it. We can't say 'standard.'* ▪ *She [a student] was pulled out of my gifted/advanced class because her mom wanted her to have straight A's. She had an 89%.* ▪ *The 0s – remember that fight? God, they made us enter 50s for missing work instead of 0s because 0s made things look bad. You think I actually did that? Hell no.* ▪ *We fix the labels instead of the problem. Or the culture. Think dance competitions – I grew up watching those. It used to be bronze, silver, gold but now it's gold, silver, platinum. Did we really change anything? No. But appearance wise it looks like we did.* ▪ *We think we're reproducing but we're just replicating at this point.* ▪ *'Killroy was here' syndrome.* ▪ *We're hiding the problem, not getting rid of what's causing it.*
Internet and immediate gratification	Teachers must compete for students' attention. Teachers are not relevant anymore. Schools do not stick through it	▪ *They [students] don't need teachers. They have everything they could ever know at their fingertips.* ▪ *We don't know everything. We teach what we're allowed to. If kids find that boring? Well–* ▪ *Growth mindset works, but no one gets that it takes time. Our kids want instant gratification because you know what? They [people in charge] push US for it. They need to see instant results so our kids mirror that, and they get, they get frustrated when they can't meet it and they give up. They give up.*
Piling	Adding to the old concepts, but not taking them away	▪ *We build over and over again. Like a tower. Has anyone even bothered to look at what our foundation is made of?* ▪ *We were not set up this way, but we're trying to move this way.* ▪ *The Pledge – it's a big thing. It's in our school – no, I know – but think about how that hasn't changed. There's a lot we still keep and don't even realize it.* ▪ *Something has to change. Big time.*

Lack of sufficient number of teachers per student	Ratio of number of students to teachers is uneven Some subjects do not receive paraprofessional support	▪ *Advanced to standard is 6:8. Do you really think that many of our kids are advanced?*
Picking a focus to improve on ends up turning a strength in another area into a weakness	When student scores in math are low, support is brought in to improve math scores so intensely that the students lose their strengths in other areas	▪ *We focus on seeing math scores improve but then we focus too much and suddenly a kid doing well in English has lower scores in the thing that was their strength.* ▪ *FCAT had a little bit of everything. Now we're trying to do a lot of everything…. they're [students] are told they have to master every subject. That's impossible. Some people have strengths in one place and not another…. we seem to want them to be good at everything!*
Pushing standards and content down from the top	Levels are mixing Student in lower grades are given standards from higher grades	▪ *My [primary] grader was learning stuff from 7th grade standards.* ▪ *Algebra 2 is now Algebra 1.*
Not addressing actual problems	Real issues are still being ignored Fixing small problems instead of addressing the big one's teachers need fixed	▪ *Great. You're trying to help, but you're not helping what I need. They don't listen to teachers.* ▪ *They're imagined problems. I'm sorry, there might be little things here and there, but they are little. We have real issues we avoid. Why?* ▪ *For all we know, we're making our violence problem worse* ▪ *It's like playing wackamole* ▪ *We do just enough– just enough to get us running. Like an old car.*
Taking out steppingstones	Removing things that cost money or are perceived as not meeting a standard, even if they are useful to teachers and students Students are expected to adapt and fill in the holes	▪ *They take away 'stuff we don't need' sometimes. Not my words. But these things are steppingstones. Bridges to concepts. You want to know what they took away this year? The textbooks.* ▪ *Let's just throw them [the students] in the fire.* ▪ *…you were supposed to learn this last year. Surprise! They [students] didn't and now you're covering what they were supposed to learn last year in order to teach them this year's content.*

Adding new support that actually works	New administration works with teachers to get rid of the old issues Things that work are tossed out if the results or test scores are not high enough Verbal feedback	▪ *Our new principal took out those reflections. They were just annoying, and he could see that, so he tossed it out and didn't try to add something new immediately.* ▪ *Reading Edge was effective. Then they tossed it because the results weren't good enough.* ▪ *We got verbal feedback back because it works perfectly well, but it doesn't show what they want: results and qualitative numbers. You can see they're [administration] is frustrated with it.*
No feedback	Teachers do not get to see the results of their teaching strategies Test scores are used for rankings and results, not improvement	▪ *Do I get to see if it worked? No. I don't know if what I changed helped my kids cause their scores are practically locked away in a safe. How does that help anybody when the teacher doesn't get that kind of feedback?*
Out of date rules and regulations	Fire drills	▪ *No one has died in a fire in a school in over 150 years. Just think about how often we have fire drills.*
Wanting parental involvement	Teachers want parental involvement Schools and regulations can make it difficult to get parents involved Parents cannot invest 100% in their child's education	▪ *We're expected to invest 100% in each one of our student's education when parents can't even do that.* ▪ *They can't meet in person, okay so we call them, but they work all day.*
Students are in the wrong class levels	Levels: 1, 2, 3, 4 1s & low level 2 students are grouped together while high level 2s are thrown in with 3s and 4s	▪ *They don't get the support they need when they're put into the wrong class. It's the parents too. They override it.* ▪ *It's seen as bad to be in a 1 or 2 class.* ▪ *Advanced kids have different needs than standard – it shouldn't be a bad thing, but it's seen that way. We can teach them the same thing but at a different pace and in different ways. It's not bad. It's not bad.*
Politics in education	Adjustments are for the purpose of furthering someone else's agenda	▪ *It's all mind games. It's not for the students or teachers… someone gets something out of every change they make.* ▪ *We don't get a say.*
No connection	Subjects are separated Students cannot make connections	▪ *There's no 'ah-ha!' moment. Everything is so separated that kids can't make the connections we need them too.*

Table 8 | Open Code: School B

Cultural Replication (CL) and Reproduction (CD) as perceived by teachers

Open Code	*Properties*	*Participants' Words*
Everything is the teacher's fault	Any disruption in the classroom is the teacher's fault for not doing enough Teachers do not know how much their responsibility covers Undefined expectations for teachers	▪ *We're blamed for everything a student does: we're not doing enough, or if we did more, then this wouldn't have happened.* ▪ *It's the circus. We're the entertainment – can you imagine the requirement of having to be entertaining enough?*
Students and teachers are not allowed to fail	Students failing a test could mean the teacher losing their job Teachers cannot try new things when they risk failure	▪ *Students are afraid to fail… [education is] set up that way and I hate it.* ▪ *1s and 2s don't want to venture out because they think they're one step away from failing.* ▪ *…they [students] do what's required of them.*
Teachers cannot meet student needs	New mental health training requirements Adding more responsibilities to teachers Teachers do not know what students need A student who requires extra support cannot be attended to because of the sheer number of students the teacher must support	▪ *…I am not trained; I am not qualified.* ▪ *Trauma and triggers and grief.* ▪ *We watched that video for school shootings, but that was it. We can't talk about how they should process this new threat and, and I don't know how to either! …no time to discuss relevance…. decompress.* ▪ *I don't know what's going on with these kids. You never know. You can't know. You're almost not allowed to know.* ▪ *I would have a better handle if I was informed of the issues they face, but it's like a discovery mission.* ▪ *I feel like through the internet, they cannot learn the skills and we can't teach them information at that same speed they can find it on their phones because it takes time to master.* ▪ *I can't help everybody… I cannot meet the needs of all my students.* ▪ *I cannot focus on one kid.* ▪ *These kids are contained in one environment for too long.*

		▪ *Where is the time to actually work with students?*
		▪ *So many changes in just seven years. It's no different than a science experiment.*
		▪ *...new things but no time to understand them.*
		▪ *Marzano could have worked, but where was the time for us to learn it, then teach it, then let the kids get used to it?*
Students need instant gratification	Students need immediate results or proof that there is actual purpose to what they're doing Students give up	▪ *Their attention span is extremely short, and I don't recall having that issue.* ▪ *It's the internet – quick availability.* ▪ *We were at the video games. So, with the appearance of cell phones and technology, everything is available to our students with a push of a button and searching on the web. So, they can have instant gratification through entertainment, and they can also have 'I don't have to memorize lots of things anymore.'* ▪ *Order of operations – I have no time for them to apply a new formula that they're trying to learn. It takes a process of time and I feel like kids get frustrated with that because things are not right there. I know if my daughter – she has that problem even in kindergarten when things are easy for her it's great! But when she has to spend time on something, she hates it.*
Students have no desire to explore	Focus on testing and results Students find lessons superficial Teachers compete with the internet for relevance, yet curriculum content has little relevance	▪ *We can't venture outside of what we're allowed to teach so students don't want to explore what they can learn outside of what they're supposed to learn.* ▪ *...it's not relevant to what they live every day. I can't entertain them with superficial lessons.* ▪ *I don't want my kids to hate science.*

Change is not incorporated in a lasting way	Nothing is taken away, but more adjustments are added A cycle of adjustments No lasting changes or effects	▪ *There's no actual change happening. We just keep adding stuff and most of the time the stuff doesn't work, so what are we really doing?* ▪ *We just pile.* ▪ *…it's added in addition.* ▪ *The formula is backwards.* ▪ *We're losing precision… we're losing focus.* ▪ *They took away the science fair – what's that going to do?* ▪ *It's just a cycle.*
Teachers and students do not get to see the results	No impact or improvement Data is used at the national level	▪ *We are never able to see what we're doing and if it's working. Logical progression – there's no logical progression.* ▪ *They're data crazy but where is the data? Do we ever get to see it?*
School safety is a modern threat and serious issue	School shootings	▪ *It's big. It's bigger than us.* ▪ *Threats of guns in schools, knives, throwing a person down a flight of stairs – oh, you didn't hear about that? Yeah, just this year.* ▪ *Does it take somebody to die in our schools to do something about it?* ▪ *That's the thing, kids have died in schools. Are we doing anything about it?* ▪ *I don't know what I would do. I can't imagine. You can't prepare for this kind of thing.* ▪ *…legally what are you supposed to do?*
Short-sited	New processes that do not last Not thinking in long term who this might affect students Focus on short-term improvement rather than long-term positive effects	▪ *So, there's an issue and we try to fix it… spaghetti on a wall or Band-Aid on a dam.* ▪ *…no thought about how any of this might affect students.* ▪ *They're missing basic skills.*
Too many new challenges	Adjustments are not effective when there are too many new challenges	▪ *I'm not equipped to handle any of this.* ▪ *Too many new things to keep up with.* ▪ *How am I supposed to treat symptom 1 when symptom 2 pops up five minutes later? What about the sickness?* ▪ *…so many steps.*

Education is not a priority	Students face challenges that occupy their time Content is lacking Students feel there is little to no purpose to education	▪ *Schools can't make education a priority anymore.* ▪ *Our culture is changing, and we have to struggle to meet the change.* ▪ *There have always been new problems to face, but our students are giving up today. Now we have to think why.* ▪ *I just struggled through it… can these kids do that?*
Focus on appearance and numbers	Keep referrals low so the school can claim they have behavior under control Special Ed., ESE, Gifted, etc. Keep the test scores high by adding more tests Bills/bucks and treats	▪ *The district sets a precedent and the schools have to meet it.* ▪ *We need the numbers to look good.* ▪ *How many second chances can we give… something will go wrong – something has already gone wrong.* ▪ *It was special ed., now it's – what is it? ESE.* ▪ *Little JoJo who never cares about doing things to be nice gets all these little ____ bills/bucks as a treat for 'good behavior." He does it only to get them, not because it's good behavior.*
The changes don't always work	Adding new requirements to meet all student needs that don't meet all students' needs Flexible seating Movement Stations Trying to fix things that might not need fixing	▪ *My kids work differently. They [people in charge] want blood circulation movement in the classroom but sometimes my kids are in the zone and don't want to be interrupted.* ▪ *Some things you can't fix, but we sure are spending a lot of time trying to fix them.* ▪ *We're trying to put a square peg in a round hole.*
Difficult to backtrack	Cannot teach missed skills Grade level requirements are being pushed down	▪ *…it's really hard to backtrack and teach them those skills now.* ▪ *My teacher didn't have to teach me how to use a ruler… at home skill…Yes, I know we can't fault them for it, but what do we do?* ▪ *We're just setting them up for complete failure when they hit high school.* ▪ *My 6th graders should not be seeing 8th grade material.*

Divide between class status is visible in schools	Students who lack resources and students who have them No computer at home Money determines what a child can do	▪ *There's a visible divide between students who have everything and students who have nothing. The kids know it. They see it.* ▪ *What can we do? Legally?*
New changes built on outdated knowledge	The core foundation of the standards and education system remain unchanged Adding new things by using old information Adjustments without exploring context – would this work today?	▪ *…new material is using material in the NEXT standard… there's no background on what these are or where our students are at currently.* ▪ *We have no proof 'this' is what will work.* ▪ *There's no point of perspective.* ▪ *Think of it like the highway. We always have construction but by the time it's done we need new construction!* ▪ *They expect us to do in two days what we did in five days!*
Support and resources rely on money	The more money a school has, the more professional support they can bring in Money means more teachers Money means better tests	▪ *We complain about the people who make our assessments, but have you noticed that it's all money? Our exams make kids pick between a cassette and CD when they don't know what a cassette is, but counties with money have six times the number of people in charge of common assessment. They have the time and resources to sit there and check if the standards match the questions.* ▪ *[My subject] doesn't get support facilitation.*
Increased student awareness	Students feel they are nothing but the product they are able to produce: high test scores	▪ *They aren't dumb.* ▪ *A kid asked me about the curve right after the test: "What's the curve this time?" They tell us not to let the kids know something is curved – it shows the test was faulty in the first place if not a single honors kid can get it all right. It's insane. They know.* ▪ *I want my students to be able to say: "That was my 100. The county didn't give it to me. I earned it."*

Teachers feel they are wasting their time	Teachers are not a part of the policy creation aspect of the education process Teachers feel ineffective Teachers feel burned out	▪ *I'm just wasting my time.* ▪ *There's not a lot of learning going on.* ▪ *They [people in power] never listen to us.* ▪ *I feel like I'm aging out.* ▪ *I just keep my head above water.* ▪ *They scale the mini FSA tests to prepare kids for the FSA, but then our class tests aren't scaled that way because we don't get to see what they're being tested on!* ▪ *I need time to process.* ▪ *What can we even do?*
Positive addition of PLCs	Teachers collaborate in groups to create lesson plans and expectations throughout the year	▪ *Collaboration is good… a little time consuming.* ▪ *We have to meet on our own time…* ▪ *It works.*

APPENDIX E: EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

Title of Project: An Exploration of Teacher Perceptions of the Presence of Cultural Reproduction in Two Middle Schools.

Principal Investigator: Elsie Olan

Co-Investigator: Kaitlyn Montcrieff

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you. You meet the requirements for a participant:

1. Must be a middle school teacher
2. Must be currently employed by ██████ County
3. Must have five or more years of teaching experience in ██████ County
4. Must be a teacher at either ████████████████ or ████████████████

The purpose of this research is to answer the question: *"How do teachers perceive the presence and effects of cultural reproduction in their school?"* With changes to policy and new or continued threats to education, it is important to evaluate the effects of cultural reproduction in schools to better our education system and support students and teachers in the rapidly evolving socio-political climate.

In order to gauge the presence and effects of cultural reproduction in the Florida education system to determine whether or not it is a viable solution to contemporary challenges to education, one must first explore the ways teachers perceive its effects and whether or not they are aware of its presence in their schools.

The study is two parts: a survey and a focus group. You are not required to participate in one or both. The survey and focus group are completely voluntary.

If you wish to participate in the survey portion of this study, it will take approximately 7-10 minutes of your time to complete. The questions are based on your perceptions of teacher self-efficacy and the amount of control you feel you have over the education process at your school. The survey will be completely anonymous. Your answers will not be identifiable.

If you wish to take part in the focus group portion of the study, the focus group will meet once on campus after school hours. The focus group will take no more than 30 minutes to complete and will be held at a location approved by the principal.

You will be audio recorded during this portion of the study. To ensure your privacy, recordings will be deleted after transcription and will in no way be used to identify participants. Neither your name or any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or the transcript. Audio recordings will be stored on an external hard drive and kept in a locked, safe location until they are transcribed. If you do not wish to be audio recorded, you will not be able to participate in the focus group portion of the study.

To protect your privacy, no identifiable information will be published or available to anyone outside the researcher, such as: names, email address, voice recordings, research locations, and school district. Personal information regarding participants' names, gender, ages, years of experience, current school of employment, grade level or subject taught are not recorded nor important to the study.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints please contact *Kaitlyn Montcrieff, Undergraduate Student, Secondary Education English Language Arts Program, College of Community Innovation and Education, (407)-782-8383 or Dr. Elise Olan, Faculty Supervisor, Department of English Language Arts Education at* (407) 823-5179 *or by email at Elsie.Olan@ucf.edu*

IRB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email irb@ucf.edu.

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Focus Group Questions

Principal Investigator: Dr. Elsie Olan
Co-Investigator: Kaitlyn Montcrieff

1. If Cultural Reproduction is defined as adjustments, changes, or accommodations made to curriculum, school environment, the responsibilities of teachers and students, and the education process as a whole, how do you perceive – if at all – Cultural Reproduction within your school?

2. Do you observe positive aspects of Cultural Reproduction within your school?

3. Do you observe negative aspects of Cultural Reproduction within your school?

4. If Cultural Replication is defined as repetition of the same approaches, attitudes, curriculum, school environment, and the education process as a whole, how do you perceive – if at all – Cultural Replication in your school?

APPENDIX G: LETTER TO TEACHERS

Dear Teacher,

My name is Kaitlyn Montcrieff and I am conducting an undergraduate thesis through the University of Central Florida. I am a substitute teacher in Seminole County and a future teacher. I am the co-investigator of this research study under the direction of my faculty advisor, Dr. Elsie Olan.
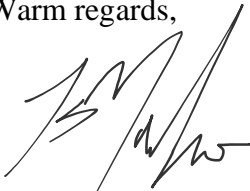
My research is titled "An Exploration of Teacher Perceptions of Cultural Reproduction in Two Middle Schools" and I am asking for teachers with five or more years of experience in ███████ County, employed at either █████████████████████ or █████████████ ████, to participate in a focus group on their school campus.

This is the second email being sent to you. The previous, distributed by your principal, discussed a self-efficacy survey while this provides information about the focus group.

Attached is an "Informed Consent" document that further explains my research, why it's necessary to face contemporary challenges to education, and information regarding your participation. The focus group is voluntary, will take no more than thirty minutes, and information recorded will be confidential.

Thank you for your time. I truly appreciate your commitment to education and your students. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Warm regards,

Kaitlyn Montcrieff
University of Central Florida
407-782-8383
kmontcri@knights.ucf.edu

APPENDIX H: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS
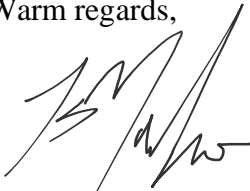
Dear Principal _____,

My name is Kaitlyn Montcrieff and I am conducting an undergraduate thesis through the University of Central Florida. I am a substitute teacher in ███████ County and a future teacher. I am the co-investigator of this research study under the direction of my faculty advisor, Dr. Elsie Olan.

My research is titled "An Exploration of Teacher Perceptions of Cultural Reproduction in Two Middle Schools" and I am asking for teachers with five or more years of experience in ███████ County to participate in a focus group at their schools during a time which is most convenient to them, such as their lunch period in the teachers' lounge.

I would love to discuss with you what my research is about, how it would be conducted, and the impact on your school. It is an extremely relaxed study held at the convivence of the principals and teachers involved and no longer than thirty minutes. The names of the participating district, schools, and teachers will not be published.

Thank you for your time. I truly appreciate your commitment to education, and to your students and staff. Please contact me if you have any questions and if you would like to meet.

Warm regards,

Kaitlyn Montcrieff
University of Central Florida
407-782-8383
kmontcri@knights.ucf.edu

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