

A NARRATIVE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION FOR  
GLOBALIZATION HELD BY TEACHERS IN THE URBAN CORE

A DISSERTATION IN  
Education

Presented to the Faculty of the University of  
Missouri at Kansas City in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

by

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2018

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A NARRATIVE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION FOR  
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University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2018

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this social constructivist narrative study is to understand the thoughts, perceptions and experiences of urban K-8 educational professionals regarding education for globalization. The goal of this study is to collect the understandings and perceptions of education for globalization held by urban teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it relates to their personal story and professional practice of being a teacher and advocate for their students. The following central question addressed by this narrative study was: *What themes are apparent in the narratives of novice and veteran teachers in an urban charter school in the Midwest?* The sub-questions that helped achieve the central question were: 1) *What meanings do novice and veteran teachers have about education for globalization?* 2) *What do they do to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum?*

The site selected for this study is located in the urban core of a Midwestern state. This study selected participants through criterion sampling to gain in-depth and relevant insight of the experiences of novice and veteran teachers in this study. Open-ended interviews, teacher responses to journal prompts and Board document reviews, which provided a social context for the teachers' experiences were used to construct a narrative profile for each participant. Analysis of the constructed narratives began with descriptive coding to identify units of

analysis and their frequency. Construction of interpretive codes followed the process of descriptive coding which ended with the identification of themes. The themes that emerged were *education for globalization, educational reform, equitable education and educational reform advocacy*. The findings from this study can influence school reform initiatives, teacher education programs and on-site professional development offerings for schools. These narratives can inform teachers' practice to effectively prepare students for competition and living in a global society.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Education, have examined a dissertation titled “A Narrative Study of The Perceptions Of Education for Globalization Held by Teachers in the Urban Core” presented by Tammy M. Combs, candidate for the Doctor of Education degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Walk with me Lord, walk with me. Walk with me Lord, walk with me. While I’m on this tedious journey, I want Jesus to walk with me.” I sang this song more times than I can remember during this journey. So I must first thank God for His strength, love and guidance, for without it I would not have this achievement.

I thank my family for their unwavering support through this journey. My grandmother, Lawrence Miller, also an educator by profession passed away last year. She did not get a chance to see me cross this finish line, but I know she would have been proud of me. I love her and her memory lives on through me. My parents, Al and Tina Combs, their prayers, support, and consistent encouragement made me believe that I could accomplish this goal. Many years ago, they made an investment in me and I have worked hard to show them they their investment was not wasted. Their belief in me forced to me to fight against the exhaustion, the headaches, the doubts and thoughts of inadequacy. And I fought for my life! Their love got me through some rough times and it was their strength that carried me through. I will forever be thankful for them. My siblings, Chris and Rebekah, they both experienced some challenges while I was on this journey. I am sorry I was not always able to be there with you, but know you were always in my thoughts and prayers. I love you very much and wish you your best life. To my nieces, Bria, a future doctor, and Niara, you two were the inspiration for this study. I desire nothing but the best for the both of you. I hope that my life can be an example that you two can accomplish your dreams.

I would like to express my gratitude to my committee members for your assistance. Drs. Smith and Jacobs challenged me to define my educational philosophy and walk in its truth. Dr. Caruthers refused to let me quit because she saw my potential, even when I could

not see it myself. Her patience, guidance, and example helped me to grow into the educator that I am today. Finally, Dr. Roper motivated me to start this journey and walked with me providing encouragement and support along the way. Her life is truly an inspiration and I am still waiting for her book. I am grateful for the knowledge and wisdom that I have gleaned from these great educators.

My colleague, Dr. Erica Hernandez-Scott, was instrumental in my successful completion of this journey. Her transparency and assistance was immeasurable. I can emphatically state that without her friendship, I would not be at this point in my journey. Words cannot express how thankful I am for her being a part of my life.

There were many friends and acquaintances that supported me along this journey with thoughts, prayers and words of encouragement. However, I would be remiss if I did not recognize my best friend, John Mark Tolbert. You always provided an ear for me to vent to and offered sound advice. You would check me when I was going off the deep end. You provided a shoulder to cry on when I was overwhelmed. You pushed me when I wanted to give up. You understood my frustration but never allowed me to stay in a place of discontent. I lost faith in myself many times, but you never lost faith in me. And for that, I really appreciate our friendship.

## PREFACE

“Education is the key to success.” That was a statement that I continuously heard from my parents while growing up. Both of my parents graduated from high school and had some post-secondary educational experiences. My mother trained as a radiology technician after completing high school. My father went into the military after high school, and then he spent some time in seminary. On a daily basis, these examples reinforced the importance of education for me.

Although I had an older brother, I was seen as the child most responsible. My father was a pastor who built two churches from the ground up and my whole family was very involved in the church. I held a variety of positions in the church. With every position I held, came another level of responsibility. These experiences led me to grow with a strong work ethic and a desire to develop my potential to be successful in life.

When I went to school, I would hear my teachers say, “If you do well in school, you will have access to more opportunities.” A good education could and would make any of your dreams come true. I desired to be successful and have a prosperous life; therefore, I patterned my life using these ideals as road markers for the journey. Whenever I faced something difficult at school, I would encourage myself by remembering education was necessary in order to be successful; I learned how to persevere in order to achieve.

At my neighborhood school, which was in the urban core, I was considered a model student. I completed my work, turned it in on time, and received good grades. Sometimes I was classified as a “teacher’s pet.” I always looked for ways to help in the classroom. I desired positive attention from my teachers and other staff members and received such attention.

At this point, I was on the path to be successful as a result of education. I was learning and becoming a top student in my classes. I had the positive attention of adults in the school, even those who were not my teachers. I enjoyed the school experience. However, I was about to experience a big change that would challenge me in ways that I had never known.

In 1973, three years prior to my birth, the US Supreme court ordered Denver Public Schools to desegregate under the *Keyes v. Denver School District* ruling. Denver had become the first northern school district ordered to desegregate by the U. S. Supreme Court (Lee, 2006). The Keyes case argued that the schools in the Park Hill neighborhood, where I lived, were intentionally segregated to keep white students separate from students of color (Lee, 2006). Black, Latinx, and White families collectively supported this claim.

In response to this ruling, Denver Public Schools (DPS) had to be strategic. Many of the neighborhoods in the DPS attendance area were segregated by ethnicity. This, in turn, made the neighborhood schools segregated. The problems associated with segregated schools resulting from segregated neighborhoods were not unique to Denver, Colorado. Kansas City, Missouri also experienced challenges with neighborhood schools mirroring the communities in which they were located. “[The] Kansas City, MO School District (KCMSD) school board preserve[d] segregated schools by using Troost Avenue as a racially identifiable school attendance boundary from 1955 through 1975, separating White schools to the west and Black schools to the east” (Gotham, 2002, p.93). “KCMSD made frequent shifts in the attendance areas of its schools, typically removing White areas from the western portions of its racially transitional zones and attaching them to all-White zones farther west” (Gotham, 2002, p.100).

With the U.S. Supreme Court ordering the desegregation of schools, DPS had to devise a plan that would desegregate schools in segregated neighborhoods. Their solution was busing students out of their neighborhoods to schools in other neighborhoods. The initial response to such an endeavor was expected to be positive. However, after a closer look at the specific plans, the response was not so enthusiastic.

DPS's busing plan involved redefining school attendance zones. Many African American students were to be transported south to neighborhood schools that were traditionally all white starting at the fourth grade. Students living in the white suburban neighborhoods were bused to the urban core beginning in kindergarten through third grade. For the cause of desegregation, students could look forward to waking up early to get ready for school in order to take a long bus ride that could last up to a little over an hour, one way. I spent the rest of my pre-collegiate educational experience coping with the residual effects of this desegregation plan.

I entered the suburban elementary school in the fourth grade. At first, I was excited by the opportunity to meet new teachers and possibly make new friends. I lost all enthusiasm when I received my first report card. For the first time in my academic experience, I received a "C" on my report card. This was devastating; I knew I was a good student. I did all my work and turned it in on time. I had not changed any of my study habits that made me successful at my neighborhood school. What was I doing wrong?

What I failed to realize was that an "A" student at an urban school was a "C" student at a suburban school. The standards and expectations of scholarship were not the same in both educational institutions. This system is a great example of "the culture of power," a concept developed by Lisa Delpit (2006). The first three tenets of "the culture of power" are

reflected in my schooling experience. The first tenet addresses issues of power that are enacted in classrooms. These issues include the power of teachers over the students; the power of textbook developers to determine curriculum contents and perspectives to view the world; and the power of individuals or groups to determine another's intelligence or "normalcy." The second tenet explains that there are codes or rules for participating in power. These codes or rules relate to the existence of language registers, communication strategies and presentations of self. The third tenet describes the rules of "the culture of power" as a reflection of the culture of those who have power. This means that children from working-class or impoverished homes struggle to operate in cultures that have codes or rules of power (2006). These tenets offer some rationale for my schooling experience at the suburban elementary school. Teachers were permitted to use their "culture of power" to set academic expectations for me while limiting my culture to learning activities that began with slavery and ended with superficial celebrations of Black History Month and Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday.

However, this was not the tragedy. The tragedy was that the difference in academic expectations held by the suburban school was never shared or communicated to the students affected. There were no discussions about the high academic standards or the implementation of support structures to assist students with achievement. This speaks to the fourth tenet of "the culture of power." "If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of the culture makes acquiring power easier" (Delpit, 2006, p. 25). Could it be that I was not informed of the achievement expectations because I was to remain "powerless," or were my teachers illustrations of the last tenet which states, "... those with power are frequently least aware of or least willing to acknowledge its existence" (2006, p.

26)? Whatever the case, many students of color like me were left to fend for ourselves in this new educational environment.

As I reflect on my educational journey as a student of color and the academic challenges I faced trying not become a victim of the “achievement gap,” I cannot help but consider the current academic atmosphere with the emergence of education for globalization. Will this be another hurdle that students of color face? The plight of students of color within this context has become a major concern of mine and the inspiration for this research. For this generation of students, the road to success will look different. Education is still necessary, but what is included in a quality educational experience has changed.

My concern is that students of color may not be properly prepared to successfully engage the global village. This generation must understand that their future success could lie outside of our US borders. They must be prepared with the knowledge and skills that will make them able to effectively compete with their global peers. An examination of this issue will require a careful review of literature and research with regards to a) current student performance gap trends; b) educational reform efforts; c) teaching and learning models in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and d) education for globalization. Further examination will include capturing the thoughts and experiences of urban teachers as they discuss their perceptions of education for globalization and its influence on their professional practice. Are today’s teachers equipped with the knowledge and skills to ensure that their students, especially students of color, are not disenfranchised from the global community? That is the ultimate question.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

“Global literacy” is a new term that has surfaced with regards to the education for globalization and refers to a level of knowledge and skills that students need to have to be considered globally competent . Elements of global literacy include, but are not limited to: knowledge of world regions, cultures, economies; skills to communicate in a language other than English; respect for other cultures and the ability to operate respectfully in a global context (Brewer, Tan, & Metton, 2012; Hsu & Wang, 2010; King & Thorpe, 2012; Merriman & Nicoletti, 2007; Stewart, 2010). “Many American educators recognize that the purpose of education is to develop good citizens and productive workers for the future. The question for American educators today is, ‘For what kind of future should American schools prepare students?’” (Merriman & Nicoletti, 2007, p. 10). American educators cannot be satisfied with just answering that question. They must take the conversation a step further and ask are educators in the United States (US) knowledgeable enough about education for globalization to appropriately prepare students for the global society? “Just as our schools made the transition from teaching skills in an agrarian society to those needed in an industrial and scientific society, so too we need to transform our learning systems to equip students with the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in this new global era” (Stewart, 2010, p 101). Roth and Papastephanou stated the challenge like this, “When the character of the work, for example, changes from agriculture to industry production and to the knowledge-based society, then education has to be attuned to such changes” (2012, p. 188). These changes in the way we educate current and future students are in response to the phenomena of globalization.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century will be known for a number of things, but probably nothing as influential as the development of a substantial global economy (Hsu & Wang, 2010; Ruperez-Lopez, 2003; Tomlinson, 2003). This global economy has influenced the current and future job market for U.S. citizens. In 2004, the U.S. Census Bureau's studies indicated that one in five US jobs was already tied to international trade (Stewart, 2010). This number is expected to grow as US trade increases across the globe.

As the world continues to become a global society, the United States must examine its role in globalization. History has named the U.S. as a world power and a military leader on the world stage. However, with recent military actions and financial struggles, the U.S.'s place at the top is becoming more questionable and increasingly noticeable among the workforce and educational studies. For example,

... for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the United States could take pride in having the best-educated workforce in the world, that is no longer true. Over the past 30 years, one country after another has surpassed us in the proportion of their entering workforce with the equivalent of a high school diploma, and many more are on the verge of doing so. (NCEE, 2007)

The changes in our world, Levine (2010) explained, have been “transformed by profound demographic, economic, technological, and global changes” (p. 19). Further, such changes demand that schools provide students with knowledge and skills to succeed in a world that has rapidly been transformed by globalization.

### **Problem Statement**

While the global stage has changed, many US schools are not appropriately preparing students with the skills to live in the world of globalization. These skills include, but are not limited to, “... the ability to think critically and creatively to solve complex problems, the

skills and disposition to engage globally, well-honed communication skills, and advanced mathematics, science and technical skills” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, p.6).

In 2008, MetLife surveyed 1000 teacher participants, 679 elementary teachers and 321 secondary teachers, and although 89% of teacher rated their school curriculum as excellent or good and 77% reported that their schools did an excellent job of preparing students for college, 64% of teachers rated their students’ global awareness as fair or poor with 57% of teachers rating their students’ foreign language skills as fair or poor (MetLife Survey, 2008). Another important finding was that many students were not improving in basic content areas as they moved from grade to grade. The teacher ratings of student skills as excellent or good in the content areas of reading, writing and math were substantially lower for secondary schools than elementary schools (MetLife Survey). These results prove problematic for preparing students to successfully compete in our global society.

In a similar study, Hsu and Wang (2010) explored global literacy (awareness) among 2,157 New York high school students; varying in grades, gender, ethnicity, and school assignments. They recognized that, “When facing greater demands in the international job market and the innovative development and use of technologies, our youth needs a new set of skills and attitudes to succeed in an increasing well-educated global workforce” (p. 43). Students’ surveys indicated a high level of awareness of both comprehending and appreciating various cross-culture perspectives and confidence in using “new literacy” skills to compete and succeed in a global village. However, students expressed the need to be aware of not only world trends and their impact on global society but also the importance of being a global citizen. Yet, students did not display a willingness to attend school events that included discussions of global affairs.

The US's challenges in education are not isolated to the K-12 school system. Achievements in postsecondary education have also proven to be lacking. According to the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise, "... less than 10 % of four-year graduates [within the US] are leaving college globally prepared (2007, p. 8). The Council defines globally prepared as, "... [being] intellectually resilient, cross-culturally and scientifically literate, technologically adept, ethically anchored, and fully prepared for a future of continuous and cross-disciplinary learning" (2007, p. 15). In Adelman's (2004) examination of global preparedness using U.S. longitudinal studies, he found that only 5.4% of bachelor degree recipients from the high school class of 1992 had met the criteria for differential levels of global preparedness (p. 254). These criteria included various combinations of the following components: course work in international studies, participation in study abroad programs, and language competence in a secondary language.

The impact of the above findings corroborates the notion that the "achievement gap" has gone global. "Student performance measures in 29 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries ... indicated the US students rank 16<sup>th</sup> on the combined reading literacy scale, 23<sup>rd</sup> on the mathematics literacy scale and 19<sup>th</sup> on the scientific literacy scale" (Merriman & Nicoletti, 2008, p. 12). In an address given in 2005 at the National Education Summit on High Schools, Bill Gates stated that, "America's high schools [were] obsolete." This characterization was due to the widening gap between what content and skills US high school students are being taught and required to master and the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills employers desire of the workforce. "To prepare students to succeed and become leaders in the global context, educators need to empower our youngsters through the teaching of global knowledge, skills and values" (Hsu & Wang, 2010, p. 44).

Governments around the world are, "... intending to raise national competitiveness by training more highly skilled talents, which will lead to an increase of access to opportunities of higher education" (Huilan, 2007, p. 27). Merriman and Nicoletti had a similar thought. "If the United States wants to maintain its leadership among independent nations, it must reexamine the value of education to its citizens" (Merriam & Nicoletti, 2008, p. 12). These skills are not only necessary for the successful navigation of the global community but also for adopting the role of global citizen. With that being said, what is a *global citizen*?

Global citizenship is a concept that does not have a specific definition that has been accepted universally (Morais & Ogden, 2010; Myers, 2010; Tardif, 2015). However, relevant literature notes that global citizenship can be defined using the ideas of social responsibility, global competence, and global civic engagement (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Morais & Ogden, 2010; Noddings, 2005). Myers (2010) explored how adolescents defined and constructed meanings for global citizenship through engaging 77 high school students through online discussion boards, essays and interviews to capture their thoughts and ideas about global citizenship. While 79% of the students believed that global citizenship was predicated on having a moral commitment to the world, they were conflicted about their personal responsibilities to this ideal. Thus, "[a] personally-defined understanding of global citizenship suggests a compromise between the concept of universal values inherent in global citizenship with an emphasis on individualism and the 'ownership' of citizenship" (Myers, 2010, p. 493). Another conundrum that surfaced in the study was the idea of global citizenship being an innate condition that included all human beings or an acquired status that required effort or actions by individuals. Forty-nine percent of students believed that global citizenship included all human beings with the remaining 51% believing that it was an

acquired status (p. 495). Myers concluded that, "... students are not being served by the existing curriculum, which does not address the complex realities of citizenship in a global age" (2010, p. 499). He further exclaimed that, "Preparing adolescents for citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become an imperative for educators across the world" (Meyers, 2010, p. 499). Therefore, educators are once again being advised to review current curriculum for the inclusion of education for globalization.

The challenge becomes ensuring that students receive education for globalization at all levels of their education. Courses addressing global studies cannot solely be offered by postsecondary institutions (Adelman, 2004; Kerkhoff, 2017; USDOE, 2012). Students from grades K-12 must have learning experiences that provide them with a global perspective, enlarging their world outside of their neighborhood and even their city or state. While U.S. students are institutionally trained to think of and react to the world in the context of the United States (Ladson-Billings, 2005), this mindset is not acceptable in a global society. Students must understand that the U.S. makes up approximately 5 % of the world's population which means 95% of the world's population is found beyond our borders (Jacobs, 2010). Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students need exposure to the different countries, cultures, and perspectives of the world in order to be able to act responsibly in the global context (Calder, 2000; Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). This all can become difficult if K-12 school leaders and teachers do not have adequate understandings around global literacy and awareness.

Landwehr (2012) conducted a study examining the understandings of K-12 principals had regarding global awareness and the internalization of schools. The first, and probably the most noteworthy, finding of this research was the varying definitions of global competence

provided by the principals. “Some mentioned that knowledge of current events fits into that definition, while others defined it as a curiosity of the world” (p. 29). These principals also saw the implementation of global awareness in their schools differently. “Some thought that it is only necessary within curriculum, and some thought it deals with diversity of the student body, and others feel it is a combination of both” (p. 29). Since these principals did not have a common understanding of global competence and how to implement the approach in the classroom; they were likely to be unsuccessful with providing instructional leadership to their schools around this concept. “The data indicate that public schools in Wake County, North Carolina vary widely in terms of global awareness, but all have a long way to go to become truly international 21<sup>st</sup> century institutions” (p. 29). Landwehr (2012) concluded that K-12 schools would benefit from educational materials that provided teachers and school leaders with a concise definition of global awareness and practical strategies for implementation in the classroom.

Rapoport (2010) identified parallel concerns in his study of teachers’ thoughts and understandings of global citizenship and global awareness. All the teachers who participated in the study confirmed that they were aware of the term “global citizenship” but also agreed that it was a term they rarely if ever used in the classroom. Although, they agreed that it was important to infuse global dimensions into the curriculum, they questioned if they, “...had a clear vision of what global citizenship entails or if they possessed a comprehensible rationale for teaching this and related concepts” (p. 186). The teachers provided reasons like, “... this concept or related concepts are not mentioned in textbooks; they do not have time to ‘cover’ it; they are not familiar with these concepts” in an effort to explain the absence of the concept in their classrooms (p. 183). Like the principals in Landwehr’s study, the teachers in

Rapoport's study could not articulate an exact definition for the term "global citizenship" and therefore had varying degrees of understanding about this concept. Each participant tended to describe the term in the context of his/her personal international experiences, including international travel and study abroad programs. All teachers agreed that if global citizenship and global awareness were included in the state standards, they would be more apt to address these concepts. However, they expressed the need for educational resources and professional development around these concepts in order to offer effective instruction. Hence, there is a pronounced need for school leaders and teachers to not only have access to instructional materials that address global citizenship and global awareness but also professional development on effective use of said materials for instruction. With that being said, it is important to review conversations surrounding teacher development and teacher education programs.

In light of the phenomena of globalization and its connection to educational practices and policies, many have examined teacher preparation programs within the context of preparing teachers to operate in this emerging global age. Such examination has revealed various challenges. One challenge faced by teacher education programs is the curriculum used to prepare teachers for the profession. There are differing opinions as to what should be included in the curriculum for teacher education programs. Wang, Lin, Spalding, Odell, and Klecka (2011) assert that

Curriculum and instruction in teacher education should focus on helping teachers develop the capacity to generate changes in their culturally and linguistically complex classrooms using their critical personal and professional knowledge along with the knowledge that they gain from their students. (p.116)

Although the specific content covered in teacher education programs may differ depending on who is asked, there is a consensus growing around the need for teacher education

programs to include awareness and understanding about globalization and therefore global literacy. Roth and Papastephanou summarized their ideas like this, "... teacher education [needs to] focus not merely on the interests within the nation-state, but also on the challenges we face in the age of globalization" (2012, p. 189). Levine concluded, "For all these reasons – demography, the economy, technology, globalization, brain research, government, competition and status – the nation's teacher education programs, particularly those located in universities, need to adapt to a world transformed" (2010, p. 22). In order for teachers to be effective at preparing the future workforce, they must be aware and have some level of understanding of global literacy. "... changes in school functions and classroom characteristics are engendering changes in teaching and teacher education so that the United States can contend with the challenges emerging from globalization" (Wang et al., 2011, p. 115).

How can any of the above suggested changes in educational preparation and practice be impactful and sustainable if there continues to be performance gaps between students of color and their white counterparts within the U.S.? These gaps can be defined by scores of standardized tests, student graduation rates, gifted or advanced placement attainments (Milner, 2012). By not effectively addressing these academic performance gaps among students of color, are we securing their destiny to be disenfranchised from the global community? This thought will be explored further in chapter two.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this constructivist narrative study is to understand the experiences of K-8 educational professionals with regards to education for globalization, who are employed by an urban charter school in the Midwest. At this stage of the research, I will use the

following definitions of global literacy and social constructivism to inform this study. Global literacy is the,

... knowledge of other world regions, cultures, economies, and global issues; skills to communicate in languages other than English, to work in cross-cultural teams, and to assess information from different sources around the world; values of respect for other cultures and the disposition to engage responsibility as an actor in global context. (Stewart, 2010, p. 102)

Social constructivism is a worldview where,

... individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things. The goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. These subjective meanings ... are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 24)

In order to capture the perceptions and experiences of teachers, the use of narrative research is a logical choice. "Narrative research methodology embraces multiple ways of representing lived experience discursively, regardless of a participant's levels of literacy, education or formal occupation" (Fox, 2008, p. 335). Narrative research provides opportunity for the participants' voices to be heard as they tell their own stories. "... [T]he point of narrative research is to reveal the subjective experience of participants as they interpret the events and conditions of their everyday lives" (Coulter & Smith, 2009, p. 578). Narrative research also aligns well with the social constructivist framework of this study. Patton (2002) identified the relationship between social construction and qualitative inquiry:

We can conclude by emphasizing the basic contributions of social construction and constructivist perspectives to qualitative inquiry, namely the emphasis on capturing and honoring multiple perspectives, ... the relationship between the investigator and the investigated ... affects what is found. (p. 102).

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, allowing participants to share their narrative is not only appropriate, but necessary.

The participants' narratives with regards to education for globalization will illustrate how the level of their understanding of education for globalization assists them with constructing meaning of the concept and determining the personal implications it holds for them as 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers. Therefore, the units of analyses for this study are the perceptions about education for globalization held by novice and veteran educational professionals. This research study will capture the constructed "realities" educational professionals possess about education for globalization and chronicle their experiences with this concept. The following central question and sub-questions will be addressed: What themes are apparent in the narratives of novice and veteran teachers in an urban charter school in the Midwest?

- What meanings do novice and veteran teachers have about education for globalization?
- What do they do to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum?

The proposed purpose and research questions are at the heart of this study with the foundation of several topics and my experiential knowledge that form the conceptual framework and assist in providing structure for this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Maxwell defined the conceptual/ theoretical framework as, "... the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research" (2005, p.33). Rossman and Rallis explained this concept as, "... the way you are thinking about your topic: through it, you reveal your perspective, the angle at which you will approach the topic" (2003, p. 120). The theoretical framework for this study includes topics related to student performance gaps, educational reform, teaching and learning in the

21<sup>st</sup> century, and globalization. I find it crucial to examine the experiences of educational professionals through their perspectives and voices. With that being said, their stories will offer understanding of their constructed “realities” with regards to education for globalization.

As a former principal of an urban high school and now an educational consultant and university adjunct instructor, one of my responsibilities is to stay current with societal and global education trends that have the potential to impact teachers and students. In recent years, there has been much discussion concerning the outsourcing of U.S. jobs to other countries. These economic decisions were deemed unpatriotic by the populace (Apple, Kenway & Singh, 2007). In some of the same business circles, discussions about academic achievements of industrial nations around the world surfaced. Numerous academic assessments have been administered to school children around the world in an effort to not only measure the current success of educational programs across the globe but also measure the potential of influential power nations could obtain. Initially, exposure to these discussions piqued my interest in the study of education for globalization. How well is the US preparing its progeny to compete in a global marketplace?

As a public educator for over 15 years, I have not experienced any educational initiatives or reform efforts that were presented in the context of providing education for globalization to K-12 school children in the U.S.. This has led me to believe that no such strategic initiatives for educational reform exist. Once again, the U.S. is behind the curve with reference to global educational reform. If the US does not adopt education for globalization reform efforts soon, it may quickly lose its place as a global power. These assumptions have guided my search through current literature.

Through a survey of literature, I have identified four topics that directly connect to education for globalization, and therefore will be explored in this study. The increase of globalization efforts have required that school children be prepared to live and compete in the global community. This will be a challenge for most educational institutions because they are still plagued with the problems of performance gaps among students of color. The performance gaps between students of color and their white counterparts are still wide enough to be a concern and will be addressed in this study. “Achievement gap refers to the differences in scores on state or national achievement tests between various student demographic groups” (Anderson, Medrich, & Fowler, 2007, p. 547). Although there have been several education reform efforts to address this dilemma, the continual existence of these gaps imply that such reform efforts were not successful. In 2015, the National Assessment of Educational Progress results indicated that white students in the fourth grade outperformed their black counterparts on the math section of the test by 24 points and their Latinx peers by 18 points. Thirty-two points was the difference between white students and black students on the eighth grade math section of the test and 22 points between Latinx students the same year. Reading results were just as concerning. In 2015, white students outperformed their black counterparts on the reading section of the NAEP by 26 points and their Latinx counterparts by 24 points in the fourth grade. In the eighth grade, the reading performance score difference was 26 points between white and black students and 21 points between white and Latinx students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015).

The second topic explored in this study is educational reform. Throughout the history of the American public education system reform efforts have had different levels of impact. Some effectively addressed the problems to which they were designed. However, some

efforts were shortsighted in ascertaining the scope of the problem, and therefore did not measure up. Ravitch (2010) asserts that

School reformers sometimes resemble the characters in Dr. Seuss's *Solla Sollew*, who are always searching for that mythical land 'where they never have troubles, at least very few.' Or like *Dumbo*, they are convinced they could fly if only they had a magic feather. ( p. 3)

School reformers must understand that education reform must be enacted with intentionality and strategically, especially in order to address the challenges that globalization has created for public education. These challenges include an examination of teaching and learning practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom, the third topic in this study.

Sahlberg made the following assertion, "... [A]s a response to globalization, educators need to rethink the ways teaching and learning are organized in schools" (2004, p. 65). Ensuring that students are appropriately prepared for global competition requires effective teaching and learning strategies for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. "Since education standards and purposes of education are changing, curriculum frameworks, instructional methods, and assessment strategies must also change" (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012, p. 12). Globalization has developed the need for educators to evaluate their instructional practices as well as the curriculum currently being taught. In Thomas-Robertson's (2003) study of globalization of the community college business curricula, she found that 53% of the total community colleges surveyed and 60% of community colleges surveyed in California did not have globalized curricula. This is an important finding in relationship to preparing globally-minded citizens.

Teachers and administrators must realize that they are preparing students for jobs that yet do not exist, and this requires a set of skills and content knowledge that students can effectively apply in the global community. "... [C]omprehensive global education may help

students access the global job market and solve global social issues. [This] requires instruction focused on global readiness for all K-12 students” (Kerkhoff, 2017, p. 91). In Duvall’s (2016) descriptive study of two 21<sup>st</sup> century schools, she noted that teachers in both schools commented on how they adapted current curricula to include 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and global awareness content. Teachers developed units of study starting with state standards as a base but expanded the content by providing a global context and encouraging students to develop and answer their own questions about the world around them. This was important to them because they were committed to preparing students to live in a global society.

In the survey of literature regarding education for globalization, I noticed that educators’ voices were not solicited and or provided. A search of *Google Scholar*, *ProQuest*, *JSTOR*, and *EBSCOhost*, reflected less than 10 studies related to education for globalization which included the voices of U.S. educators and their perceptions. This intrigued me because it is my belief that any successful reform initiative must be supported and implemented by teachers who have taken ownership of the cause. The absence of these voices contributed to my decision to give voice to teachers through the narrative design. By capturing the thoughts and stories of educators related to educational reform and education for globalization, their perspectives have the potential to influence policy and the implementation of reform initiatives related to globalization. A discussion of the four topics of the theoretical framework follows.

### **Performance Gap**

The “achievement gap” is a common term used to describe the disparity of academic performance of students of color to their white counterparts. The academic performance of African American and Latinx students on state assessments has been found to be at the lower

end of the scale, while their white peers' performance is at the higher end of the scale using the same assessments ("Achievement Gap," 2010). This academic performance gap has been similarly found between students from low socioeconomic and high socioeconomic families. Students from low income families tend to have a poorer academic performance than those who are from high socioeconomic families (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

According to Zhao (2009) The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported that over time, African-American and Latinx students have made great strides in closing the academic performance gap. However, such strides have halted since the turn of the century. NAEP statistics show that in 2015, 44 % white students in the eighth grade scored at proficient or higher compared to 16 % of African-Americans students and 21 % of Latinx students. Results of the mathematics exam were just as troubling; 43 % of white students in the eighth grade scored proficient or higher compared to 13 % of African American students and 20 % of Latinx students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

The performance gap disparities were not confined to performance on state and national assessments. Data shows that high school course selection patterns and high school completion were also impacted. Data from the U.S. Department of Education (2004) illustrate that when enrolling in advanced high school course work, white students had the highest percentage of participation. The gap between students of color and their white counterparts continued to widen as the courses became more advanced ("Achievement Gap," 2004). High school graduation and college success statistics also offer evidence of a performance gap. Studies show that white students enrolled as ninth graders have a higher high school completion rate than that of their peers of color. This in turn has led to the

disparity found in college enrollment and completion among students of color (“Achievement Gap,” 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2010; NCES, 2009).

There has been much research conducted to find the root or cause for the performance gap. There are a plethora of ideas and theories offering information to narrow the scope and to get closer to finding the answer. Although a single factor has not been identified, great discussion and problem solving has been done around the following contributing factors. The socioeconomic status of families affects the health of the students, which can be a distraction in the educational environment (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Noguera, 2008). Students from low socioeconomic families tend to have limited access to health care and proper nutrition. Students who are sick or malnourished cannot be expected to perform well in class. When students’ most basic current needs are not fulfilled they cannot concentrate on learning necessary for future success (Noguera, 2008).

Another contributing factor to the performance gap is the lack of materials and financial support. Many schools whose majority student populations are students of color are often underfunded. Property taxes and other state funding formulas have sentenced urban schools to a life sentence of constant struggle. “Many urban districts must contend with an eroding tax base, which makes them unusually dependent on state and federal funding. The reliance on outside actors further constrains urban districts” (Jacob, 2007, p. 133). Due to the lack of access to preschool and educational materials at an early age, the students of color who rely on public education are not exposed to curriculum and instruction that provide the same learning experiences and opportunities as their wealthier counterparts and therefore negatively impact their scholastic journey.

Other research has linked the performance gap to in-school factors, such as access to quality teachers. Jacob (2007) asserted,

Indeed, many studies have found that teachers in schools serving poor and children of color in large cities are more likely to be inexperienced, less likely to be certified, and less likely to have graduated from competitive colleges than are suburban teachers. (p. 135)

In the article, *The Quest for Quality*, Hardy (2009) discussed the focus on teacher quality as a part of President Obama's educational reform. Obama stated that, "... the most important factor in their [student's] success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents. It's the person standing at the front of the classroom" (Hardy, 2009, p. 20). The challenge schools therefore face is recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers. This is especially difficult in urban schools (Dunn, 2011; Jacob, 2007). "Low-performing schools ... tend to have high turnover among staff, particularly among administrators (Noguera, 2008, p. 181). "The added instructional costs that are concentrated in segregated high-poverty schools [require] the need for ... constant training and supervision of new teachers because of rapid turnover" (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 21). Many quality teachers choose to work in schools that can provide them with not only the essential materials for instruction, but also those supplies that assist with innovative instruction. These materials for active pedagogy are scarce in urban schools, and the materials that are not necessary for basic instruction are usually not provided ("Achievement Gap," 2010).

Students in inner-city schools not only have to contend with poor quality teachers, but also teachers with low expectations of student achievement. "Low-performing schools also tend to suffer from a dysfunctional culture where low expectations for students, lack of order and discipline and poor professional norms are common" (Noguera, 2008, p.182). Some of these teachers walk in the classroom with the belief that students of color students cannot

academically perform at a high level, and this drives their instructional practice (Shields, 2004). The problem, therefore, expands for these students. These students, who entered an underfunded educational institution with academic deficits, are placed in a classroom with a poorly qualified teacher that believes the students of color cannot achieve academic greatness. How can the performance gap be closed when this is the experience of more students of color than not?

### **Education Reform**

Educational reform has been a social and political subject throughout U.S. history. Social justice organizations have fought long and hard to ensure that all students have access to equal education. Many laws and policies have been implemented to address student achievement and academic performance. Yet, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the performance gap between students of color and white students still exists. The perpetuation of educational inequalities is evidence that its roots lie deep and are entangled in the foundation of U.S. culture. So, the question becomes, “Can a change occur within our educational system instead of how do we change the system?”

Students might suggest that changes in the curriculum would assist in solving the crisis in U.S. education. Ladson-Billings (1995, 2009) provides the answer of culturally relevant pedagogy with regards to curriculum and instructional changes within the schools.

Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: a) Students must experience academic success; b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. Culturally relevant teachers utilize students’ culture as a vehicle for learning. (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160)

Therefore, students would be exposed to the accomplishments and achievements of those who do not represent the dominant culture. This exposure would not be in a limited manner,

as in only occurring around holidays or famous personalities' birthdays. Students would see themselves in the curriculum on a daily basis as a point of information and celebration. This curriculum would provide students with information that would assist them with becoming more socially and culturally aware of the diversity in the U.S..

Teachers might say that increased parental support is the answer to addressing the crisis of U.S. education. The demands placed on teachers today are tremendous. Although providing instruction is still the main function of a teachers' job, this task is not the only expectation. Teachers have been given the burden of being miracle workers. They not only have to educate students with a prescribed content, but they also have to provide social training that traditionally was provided by the home (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Teachers need all parents to be more active and supportive of their students' education. Without parental support, the growth that students make during the school day can be hampered by the environment and circumstances of the students' home life (2010).

For school administrators, obtaining support from all stakeholders is necessary to address the crisis in education. Working toward the overall district's vision, while yet addressing the challenges found daily in the operation of a school, is difficult (Deal & Peterson, 2007). Many school leaders, while developing and implementing policies to ensure that long-term goals are met, are often side-tracked by creating short-term solutions for temporary challenges within their schools. Therefore, school leaders who are caught in this quandary must open up dialogue between themselves and the stakeholders. Providing conversation opportunities with stakeholders is necessary to ensure that the overall vision of the school district is not hampered by short-lived challenges that arise (Fullan, 2007). "Principals who are active communicators before issues become problems, before situations

become crises, and before rumblings become rumors are likely to gain the support of active Enablers, Partners, and Friends and offset the vocal critical enemies” (Schneider & Hollenczer, 2006, p. 142).

Parents might say that ‘choice’ is the answer to address the crisis of U.S. education. Whether they choose a charter school that emphasizes college preparation, or a public school that specializes in the arts, parents value being able to choose the right educational institution for their students (Jackson, 2010). Parents desire for their students to be successful. They also understand that all academic environments are not conducive to learning for all children (2010). With choice, parents would be able to survey schools and choose the one they believe would be most beneficial for their students.

Social justice advocates might suggest a revision in the funding formulas for public schools would help address the crisis of U.S. education. Most funding formulas depend on property taxes as the basis for funding schools; after which, state and federal dollars supplement school budgets. This type of funding formula is inherently problematic. A close examination of property values in the urban core would reveal that they are too low to provide schools the necessary funding. With this formula, schools in the urban core continue to be under-funded leaving their students without the materials and resources for an equal and quality education (Gotham, 2002; Husted & Kenny, 2014; Sweetland, 2014).

Many agree that change must occur in the U.S. public education system to address the new demands of education for globalization. As the world becomes more interdependent, there is a need to educate students on how to live and function in this new global society. “Millions of children and youth are growing up in a world where global processes are placing new demands on educational systems that are traditionally averse to change” (Gardner, 2004,

p. 252). It is imperative that educators educate themselves about globalization and its influence on personal, professional, and political relationships across the globe. This knowledge will help to prepare this current generation and generations to come to be productive and successful global citizens.

### **Teaching and Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

I will never forget the first time my oldest niece called me on the phone. She was four years old, and using her mother's cell phone, she called me. To my surprise, when I answered the phone thinking it was my sister calling, my niece says, "Hi auntie!" What made that moment most memorable was to hear my sister in the background asking my niece what she was doing with the phone. That alerted me to the fact that my sister did not help my niece with using the phone to call me. My niece, through observation and play, learned the purpose of the phone and how to use it. For some, this may not seem like a big deal or even relevant. However, what I learned that day was that my niece's generation, and those to come, would be advanced learners, and technology would play an essential role in their development. With that understanding, I had to reflect on my practices as a teacher and how I would address the needs of my students and prepare them for the future.

Educators in the 21<sup>st</sup> century realize that students entering the classroom today are much different from those who have come before. Today's students are demanding a change in the classroom because of their ability to gather information faster than any previous generation. (Sheskey, 2010, p.197)

Students entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom have instant access to information via technology and can travel the world from their computers (Shesky, 2010; Wilmath, 2010). Therefore, teachers have to employ instructional strategies and models that are effective with engaging this type of learner. Since most teachers would be considered technology

immigrants, it is imperative to their students' academic success to engage in instructional strategies and models that allow students to assist with the development of curriculum initiatives that offer choice. Democratic education is such a model that encourages teachers to allow their students to design units of study of their interest, choice, in an effort for students to take ownership of their learning and scholastic journeys. Democratic education will be discussed comprehensively in chapter two.

Increased student diversity has also influenced the climate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom and has created a need for innovative instructional practices.

The United States has just experienced the greatest immigration surge in its history. Today, about one in ten Americans is foreign born, and the native language of well over 30 million Americans is a language other than English. Also, 2012 was the first year that minority births were greater than white births, and by 2030, half of all school children will be of color. (Sadker & Zittleman, 2013, p.51)

These statistics warrant a review of current instructional methods and an analysis of their effectiveness for diverse student populations. Some may argue that, "Today's teachers are unprepared to deal with the complexities of a classroom that represents diversity of all kinds: racial, ethnic, linguistic, and ability" (Landorf, Rocco & Nevin, 2007, p.43). I would add to this list individuals with emotional and physical disabilities. In the MetLife (2008) Survey of American Teachers, 43 % of teachers surveyed agree that their classrooms have become so diverse, they cannot teach all students effectively. With that being stated, the need to identify effective teaching models and methods for the diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century learner is even more pressing than first considered. Culturally responsive teaching has been identified as an instructional model that effectively addresses the needs of the diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom and provides teachers with practical strategies to assist their students with their academic

performance (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). Culturally responsive teaching will also be extensively addressed in chapter two.

As the classroom changes, teachers are constantly challenged to maintain professional knowledge and skills in order to successfully address the challenges that come with change. Innovative techniques and practices are called upon daily to ensure students leave classrooms more prepared for life and the future. Globalization has increased these demands on educators and has required a careful review of teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. “Educators are realizing that the new vision for educating students is more concerned with survival skills needed for our children’s future, for the perpetuation of our democratic society, and even for our planetary existence” (Costa & Kallick, 2010, p. 211).

### **Globalization**

Coatsworth (2004) describes globalization as, “... [W]hat happens when the movement of people, goods, or ideas among countries and regions accelerates” (p. 38). Steger (2009) adds that globalization is, “... [T]he set of social processes that appear to transform our present social condition of weakening nationality into one of globality. At its core, globalization is about shifting forms of human contact” (p. 9). With that being stated, in order for this and future generations of students to be successful in the global age, they must acquire knowledge and skills that will assist them with navigating within the global society. “The yardstick for success is no longer improvement by national standards, but the ability to prepare students to perform at the highest international standards” (Schleicher, 2010, p. 81). Levy and Murnane (2004) found in their studies that the easiest skills to teach and assess are also the ones that lend themselves to being digitized and/or moved offshore. They assert that

the skills that are in demand are higher-order thinking skills and complex communication skills provided by a high-quality education.

The evidence of globalization and its effects can be found in our everyday lives. From the manufacturing of our clothes to the viewing of the English subtitled movie ‘Pan’s Labyrinth,’ countries from all over the world are moving ideas, goods, and services. Cultures that were once isolated are being exposed to informational technology that has opened their borders to others with similar histories. The plights of famine and disease are no longer confined within political borders. Through the news media, attention is given to such tragedies, and humanitarian aid is made available. The advancement in communication technology and great scientific discoveries assisted in creating this new world (Baker, 2010; Wilmarth, 2010). The creation of the internet has opened access to communities across the globe. Ideas can be shared from around the world in a matter of seconds. Histories of ancient cultures are no longer confined to the pages of textbooks, which limit the amount of information printed. These histories can be experienced through virtual museum tours and the examination of artifacts with the click of a button. The internet, properly nicknamed “the information highway,” has provided contact to an unlimited amount of resources for learning and becoming an expert in any subject area desired. The internet has destroyed the barriers of distance in acquiring information and in a timely manner (Turkle, 2004).

While the internet provides access to information, television offers access to cultures and current events. Studies show that 90 % of the world’s households have a television (Zhao, 2009). Twenty-four hour programming has allowed many to be kept informed about the issues of their communities and events around the world. However, television is not just a source for news. Entertainment programs give television audiences opportunities to learn

about their cultures as well as other cultures through dramatic presentations. Movies and other entertainment media have allowed actors from various countries to perfect their craft in a medium that is enjoyed by all.

The political changes and developments around the globe have been critical in the formation of a global society. “Nations that used to be at war with each other, laid down their arms and opened their borders to their former enemies” (Zhao, 2009, p 100). Former enemies have become allies in an effort to fight terrorism and other extremist groups. The formation of global organizations has also assisted with the non-violent political exchange of ideas and philosophies. Organizations like the European Union, World Trade Organization, and the expansion of the United Nations have provided many political leaders a new context for interaction.

The advance of the new information and communications technologies has facilitated tremendously swift transmission has allowed interconnection between social and economic agents located in remote places, has stimulated the internationalization of capital and labour and has, in short, enabled globalization of the economy and to some extent of society. (Ruperez, 2003, p. 251)

These political changes have opened the door to increased trade and other financial transactions amongst the countries of the world.

The theoretical framework of this study detailed the assumptions I bring to the study that stimulated my selection of theories, concepts, and empirical literature related to the topics of student performance gaps, educational reform, teaching and learning in the 21st century, and globalization. These four areas are the focus of the literature review and will also serve to make meaning of the data collected during the field phase of the proposed study. The field phase of the study is guided by the proposed design and methodology of the study.

## **Design and Methodology**

The method of inquiry in the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to solicit the thoughts, ideas and understandings of participants as they address their relationships to the problem being studied. “Qualitative inquiry can be used to discover, capture, present, and preserve the stories of organizations, programs, communities, and families” (Patton, 2015, p. 217). The participants’ voices are intentionally documented as an integral part of the study. Therefore, the realities the participants have constructed surrounding their connection to the problem of the study allow the researcher to comprehend the problem from various perspectives. “We conduct qualitative research because we want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue” (Creswell, 2018, p. 45).

The purpose of this social constructivist narrative study will be to understand the thoughts, perceptions and experiences of K-8 educational professionals regarding education for globalization who are employed by an urban charter school in the Midwest. The units of analysis for this study are the stories about education for globalization held by novice and veteran educational professionals. The problem as identified in this study is the inadequate preparation of school children in the U.S. to acquire the international skills necessary for their successful living in the global age. This can be attributed to the understandings and knowledge, or lack thereof that educational professionals have about education for globalization.

The purpose of this study aligns well with the research approach of narrative research. “Narrative inquiry is the study of people in relation studying the experience of people in relation” (Clandinin, Murphy, Huber, Murray Orr, 2009, p. 82). Capturing the stories of

educational professionals as they make sense of their understandings of education for globalization will give opportunities for their voices to be heard in an otherwise silencing discussion. “Using such narrative models, researchers can gain insight into the way human beings understand and enact their lives through stories” (Sandelowski, 1991, p. 163).

### **Selection of Site and Participants**

Maxwell (2013) argues that the conduction a qualitative study has four components: 1) research relationship between the researcher and those being researched; 2) site and participant selection; 3) data collection; 4) data analysis. Researchers must be deliberate when addressing these areas. Researcher must be strategic when developing relationships with their participants to maximize the experience and to obtain meaningful data.(Maxwell, 2013). This process is referred to as “purposeful sampling.” The researcher cannot think to gather meaningful data from all potential sources that have a connection to the topic of study. They must narrow their lens to a realistic and manageable population of participants. Each approach to research requires different data, which is collected through different methods and will be analyzed differently (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015). The data collection and analysis are directly tied to the purpose of the study.

This qualitative study will be conducted within a charter school district in the urban core of a Midwestern city and state, where I currently serve as an educational consultant. This setting offers the most potential for candid responses to the interview questions, as well as authentic narratives. I have worked in this district for the past 12 years and have developed great professional and personal relationships with colleagues that will assist in the collection of reliable data. I plan to use purposeful sampling through maximum variation. Creswell and Poth (2018) define maximum variation as an, “... approach [that] consists of determining in

advance some criteria that differentiate the sites or participants, and then selecting sites or participants that are quite different on the criteria” ( p. 158). For this study, the variation will include participants’ number of years in education and their experiences with teaching in the urban core. The goal is to include novice teachers with 0-5 years of experience and veteran teachers with 15+ years of experience in the study. Their levels of experience with teaching in the urban core will be another factor used during the analysis part of the study for comparisons.

The goal of this study is to collect the understandings and perceptions of education for globalization held by K-8 educational professionals. Their understandings will provide information for the development of educational reform initiatives to address this matter.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

“Stories are at the center of narrative analysis ... How to interpret stories and more specifically, the texts that tell the stories, is at the heart of narrative analysis” (Patton, 2015, p. 130). For this qualitative study, data will be collected mainly through the use of interview protocols. Interviewing is a great way to capture the stories of individuals. Participants are able to articulate their understandings and experiences using their own words to express themselves (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). The information that is gathered from interviews is directly connected to the planning and preparation of the interviewer (Patton, 2015). These interviews will determine the participants’ understanding of education for globalization and their perceived responsibility as 21<sup>st</sup> century educators to address it within their classrooms. The variation of years of classroom experience among participants should offer insight into the constructed realities of the level of responsibility participants will own with regards to education for globalization.

Data will also be collected through documents. Analysis of the district's board policies relating to curriculum development and implementation and professional development will provide a social context to the teachers' stories. Teachers will also be asked to respond to three journal prompts as they develop their understanding of education for globalization.

“Narrative analyses of texts force scholars to attend first to what is placed immediately before them – stories – before transforming them into descriptions and theories of the lives they represent” (Sandelowski, 1991, p. 162). “The data collected in a narrative study need to be analyzed for the story they have to tell, a chronology of unfolding events, and turning points or epiphanies” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.198). The data collected will be analyzed as suggested by Connelly and Clandinin (2000).

Crystallization will also prove valuable for analysis in order to capture the participants' voices. “Crystallization produces knowledge about a particular phenomenon through generating a deepened, complex interpretation” (Ellison, 2014, p. 444). The “phenomena” in this research, not to be confused with a phenomenological study, are the perceptions of the participants with regards to education for globalization and their perceived responsibility as 21<sup>st</sup> century educators. Through crystallization, I can use multiple texts of various genres of writing or representation in order to weave together the stories of the participants. “... [C]rystallization provides the methodology to genuinely follow the trails to gain the richest and deepest account possible” (Stewart, Gapp & Harwood, 2017, p. 5).

### **Significance of the Study**

As the U.S. participates in the developing global society, students must be appropriately prepared for successful competition. The educational system must assist all

students with increasing their proficient academic performance through critical thinking and problem solving, an understanding of different cultures, and interpersonal and group skills in order to successfully compete globally. Many politicians, educators, and American citizens have been exposed to numerous surveys and data that continue to prove that U.S. school children are being outperformed by school children in other countries (Bloom, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Merriman & Nicoletti, 2008; Zhao, 2009). Educational reform can no longer be a “Black and White” issue, but it must be viewed as a “U.S. and World” issue.

Any educational reform with regards to education for globalization will rely heavily on school administrators and teachers for successful implementation. This study will explore teachers’ perceptions and thoughts surrounding education for globalization and will ultimately give voice to a critical population that has not been considered for speaking about this issue. Much of the literature addressing the phenomenon of globalization has yet to appropriately approach the educational professionals, who are on the front lines of the work, for their thoughts and advice on strategies and methods to address the growing need for education for globalization among youth in the U.S. As stated previously, a careful search of four major databases revealed less than 10 studies related to education for globalization that included the voices of U.S. educators and their perceptions. Participants in this study will share their stories and expertise in an effort to spark dialogue for their inclusion in discussions of educational reform efforts within the context of education for globalization.

This study will be of interest to teachers, school administrators, school board members, and proponents of educational reform, especially within the context of education for globalization. As noted previously, the academic performance of U.S. students is lacking when compared to other industrial countries. In 2006, U.S. students who took the Trends in

Mathematics and Science Study were outperformed in math and science by 18 of the 21 countries participating (Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of 21<sup>st</sup> Century [National Academies], 2006). In 2003, the U.S. 15-year olds were ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of 40 countries on the Program for International Student Assessment, PISA (Darling-Hammond, 2010). In 2006, U.S. fourth graders were ranked 18<sup>th</sup> out of 40 on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of 21<sup>st</sup> Century [National Academies], 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Fast forward to 2015, U.S. 15-year olds were outscored on the mathematics portions of the PISA by 38 countries. Twenty-three countries scored better than the U.S. on the reading literacy portion of the PISA (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). The U.S. must take a critical look at educational reform efforts in the context of preparing successful global citizens. In order to do this, teachers must be consulted to devise the best laid plans to meet this challenge.

### **Conclusion**

In closing, the proposed goal of this study is to identify the themes in the stories K-8 educational professionals tell about their experiences with education for globalization in an effort to spark dialogue for educational reform. By providing voice to this silenced population, policymakers and other educators can learn from the experiences and expertise of these teachers. In order to address the growing need for education for globalization among our country's youth, those educational professionals who are influential with the implementation of any new educational initiative must be consulted to gain buy-in. Only through their ownership of the process will real change occur.

This dissertation will consist of a total of five chapters upon completion. Chapter one provided a brief overview of the study and included discussions regarding the problem

statement, review of literature and methodology. Chapter two will expand the review of literature to provide a more in-depth look at the literature associated with the theoretical framework. Chapter three will offer a detailed description of the study's design which will highlight the nature of qualitative inquiry and theoretical traditions, setting and participants, data collection and analysis, and limitations including validity, reliability, and ethical considerations. Chapter four will present discussion of the results and answer the research questions. Finally, chapter five will discuss the implications of the findings to inform the education profession and other societal institutions.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW AND SYNTHESIS OF RELATED LITERATURE

Global literacy is the emergence of a new set of knowledge and skills that have been determined that all students will need in order to successfully compete in this global society, a result of globalization (Brewer, Tan, & Metton, 2012; Hsu & Wang, 2010; King & Thorpe, 2012; Merriman & Nicoletti, 2007; Saavedra & Opfer, 2012; Stewart, 2010). Although much is written about education for globalization, evidence of the voice of teachers and their perceptions is scarce. The purpose of this study is to capture the stories of education for globalization held by urban teachers related to their work as teachers in the urban core. This chapter will present, in four sections, a discussion of literature that is related to the study of urban teachers' perceptions and understandings of education for globalization. The books, peer reviewed articles, dissertations, and research reports reviewed were chosen from several major databases in humanities, social sciences, business and education: Google Scholar, ProQuest, JSTOR, and EBSCO host. The first section will present a brief discussion of the continued existence of the performance gap between students of color and their white counterparts while addressing the new focus on the achievement of U.S. students and their world counterparts. The second section will be a brief discussion of U.S. educational reform efforts through the lenses of K-12 curriculum approaches and school models. The third section will address teaching and learning within the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and provide specific discussion of democratic education and culturally responsive teaching. Lastly, there will be some historical discussion around the phenomena of globalization, which was the catalyst for the development of education for globalization.

## **Performance Gap**

The term “performance gap” has been traditionally used to describe the differences in academic performance among various student populations. More specifically, this term has been used as a label identifying the academic performance gaps of students of color when compared to their white counterparts. “The achievement gap refers to the differences in scores on state or national achievement tests between various student demographic groups” (Anderson, Medrich, & Fowler, 2007, p. 547). As outlined in Chapter One, generally, students of color and low-income students have received lower scores than their white or middle-class/affluent peers on various national and state assessments as stated above. In 2015, while 46 % of white students scored at or above proficient on the 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading section of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), only 18 % of Black students and 21 % of Latinx students made such achievements. The math achievement scores were not any better. Fifty-one % of white students scored at or above proficient on the 4<sup>th</sup> grade math section of the NAEP compared to 19 % of Black students and 26 % of Latinx students (Nation’s Report Card, 2016). Therefore, closing the performance gap continues to be a point of conversation and research in the educational community. “Closing the achievement gap is widely seen as important not just for our education system but ultimately for our economy, our social stability, and our moral health as a nation” (Evans, 2005, p. 582).

Many researchers have studied the performance gap between students of color and their white peers in an effort to identify causes and to determine possible solutions. This has not been an easy task. There are numerous variables that can be connected to the cause and perpetuation of the academic performance gap (Evans, 2005; Hale, 2001; Noguera, 2008; Noguera & Wing, 2006). Some research has shown a correlation between academic self-

concept of students of color and student academic performance. This finding was identified in several studies.

Awad's (2007) study examined the extent to which racial identity, academic self-concept and self-esteem predicted grade point averages, GPA, and verbal scores on the Graduate Record Examination, GRE for African American students. This study, which was conducted at a historically Black university, included 313 participants who were enrolled in various psychology classes. The instruments utilized were the Cross Racial Identity Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Academic Self-Concept Scale, GRE, and a demographics questionnaire. The study results showed that the best predictor of GPA was academic self-concept. This means, "... individuals who have positive attitudes toward school and their scholastic abilities are more likely to perform better in their classes" (Awad, 2007, p. 201). Higher scores on the GRE were associated with older students and individuals endorsing internalization multiculturalist attitudes which serve, "... as a buffer to stereotype threat in low-threat conditions" (p. 202). Additionally, GRE scores were positively related to GPAs indicating that students who obtained higher GRE scores were more likely to report higher GPAs.

Hanselman, Bruch, Gamoran, and Borman (2014) also found a correlation between academic self-concept (self-affirmation, their term) and student performance. In their study, Hanselman et al. conducted a randomized trial in 11 middle schools in Madison, Wisconsin in an effort to assess the benefits of a self-affirmation intervention which was designed to counteract social identity threats (including stereotype threat) and positively impact student performance. A total of 910 seventh graders participated and completed the study. Students were asked to complete writing prompts that was administered three to four times in the year

of the study. These prompts asked students to identify from a list the values that were most important to them and to explain their choices in corresponding sentences. Results indicated that the use of the self-affirmation writing prompts reduced the racial achievement gap in overall grade point average by 12.5 percent in high-threat school contexts and had a minimal yet noticeable impact on standardized scores. The researchers concluded that the achievement gap can be closed by the implementation of various social psychological interventions. Although their findings are sound, the academic performance gap has various causes which in turn require various solutions working in tandem.

Some researchers have concluded that socioeconomic status and access to resources are major factors in the development and continuance of the academic performance gap. Wing (2006) identified through her research that the lack of access to social and cultural capital has prevented students of color from obtaining the same academic opportunities as their white counterparts. Henry Giroux made similar conclusions which he stated in his interview with Michael Peters (Peters, 2012). In the interview, Giroux outlined that although working-class students aspired to attend college, many of them did not have the financial means for such an endeavor. With that being said, “They often compete with middle-class kids who can spend most of their time studying or attending classes” (p. 163). Other researchers have determined that issues of race and equity have contributed to the formation and maintenance of the academic performance gap. Noguera’s (2008) research concluded that racism and institutional practices have a well-documented history of influence on the performance gap.

Burchinal et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the racial achievement gap among Black and white low-income children. Researchers followed 314

children from birth to fifth grade and measured their academic achievement using the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Revised. These assessments provided researchers with a “W score” that made academic changes over time easy to identify and document. The results of the study identified achievement gaps between Black and White children in reading and mathematics. These gaps were explained by the differences in family, neighborhood and schooling experiences, with instructional quality surfacing as a strong predictor for Black children. “... [B]oth family and school characteristics were related to the development, maintenance, and perhaps widening of this racial achievement gap” (Burchinal et al., 2011, p. 1416). Additionally, the achievement gaps were detected among participants as early as at the age of three. The researchers concluded that early intervention in home and school experiences would be beneficial for this population. This study affirms Noguera’s assertions that racism and practices within schools can and do contribute to the performance gaps among students of color and their white counterparts. “... Black children face more social risk demographically, ... and attend lower quality child care and schools than White children of the same low economic status [which] provides further evidence suggesting long-term impacts of racial segregation and differential treatment” (Burchinal et al., 2011, p. 1417). This understanding provides the foundation for Ladson-Billings’ education debt discussion.

Ladson-Billings (2006) relabeled and redefined the performance gap, “We do not have an achievement gap; we have an education debt” (p. 5). Ladson-Billings argued that, “Looking at the [performance] gap from year to year is misleading” (p. 5). That process only provides a one-dimensional view of the problem and that is through test scores. The problem is more complicated and therefore requires a multifaceted approach of analysis. According to

Ladson-Billings, the education debt was created by the policies and decisions influenced by historical, economical, sociopolitical and moral thoughts and practices. Following is a brief discussion of each of the above mentioned aspects of the education debt.

Similar to Noguera's findings, Ladson-Billings attributed the historical debt to the well-documented inequities found in educational practice around race, class, and gender. Many of these inequities manifested in policies, systems and structures that still plague public education to this day (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2012; Noguera, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2010). The economic debt refers to the school funding disparities between school districts serving predominantly suburban communities and those located in the urban core. However, the impact of economic debt is not restricted to just school funding formulas. Economic debt also includes the income disparities between people of color and their white counterparts when comparing education and professional experience. "The sociopolitical debt reflects the degree to which communities of color are excluded from the civic process" (p.7). This means that people of color are regularly ignored and or excluded from the decision-making systems that directly impact their lives. The last aspect of Ladson-Billings education debt is the moral debt. Simply put, the moral debt refers to the paradox of knowing what is right and doing the opposite. Again, the U.S. has a long and scandalous history detailing its treatment of people of color, women and children. A history of discrimination, disenfranchisement, marginalization and isolation. The U.S. has not always landed on the right side of moral dilemmas and therefore policies, practices and systems were developed that have had a lasting impact (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2012; Noguera, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Together these aspects of the education debt provide a more comprehensive look at the performance gap and potentially better solutions.

Like Ladson-Billings, Milner (2012) did not believe reviewing performance gap statistics was adequate in addressing educational disparities among students of color and their white counterparts. Milner noted that these disparities should be discussed in the context of gaps in opportunity and identified five tenets to frame the discussion: color blindness, cultural conflicts, myth of meritocracy, low expectations and deficit mindsets and context-neutral mindsets and practices. Color blindness on the surface looks like a harmless and admirable behavior. However, “[E]ducators who adopt and enact color-blind practices can lack the racial knowledge necessary to achieve pedagogical success with racially diverse students, especially for those who are relegated to the margins of teaching and learning in educational practices” (p. 699). Educators must see the whole student and implement appropriate instructional strategies that are research-based to effectively teach. A student’s racial and culturally make-up joins them every day in the classroom. Ignoring the racial or cultural make-up or being blind to it means to discount an essential component of the student.

Another tenet to consider in achievement disparities is the manner in which cultural conflict manifests in the classroom practices as a result of differences in the teacher’s cultural background. Delpit (2002) discussed that the language teachers use assist in defining classroom culture which is not always in agreement with students’ cultures. Delpit (2006) furthered her observations of culture conflicts in the classroom and identified the “culture of power” as an unspoken force in the classroom. A detailed discussion of the “culture of power” can be found in the preface of this dissertation.

Milner (2012) identified the third tenet as the myth of meritocracy. “Educators appear to be more at ease, confident, and comfortable reflecting about reading and discussing how socioeconomics particularly, resources related to wealth and poverty, influence

educational disparities, inequities, outcomes, and opportunities” (p. 704). Educators have little to no understanding of socioeconomic privilege and therefore cannot appropriately address it in their professional practice. “They [educators] fail to recognize systemic barriers and institutional structures that prevent opportunity and success, even when students are hardworking” (p. 704).

The fourth tenet of opportunity gap are low expectations and deficit mindsets. When teachers have low expectations and deficit mindsets of their students, the probability of developing challenging and engaging learning experiences is low. Teachers who do not believe that their students can obtain mastery or proficiency of difficult concepts in the curriculum will instruct at a middle of the road level of the content being studied and not at a remedial level. This sets students up to be behind academically compared to their peers. The final tenet Milner identified of opportunity gap is context-neutral mindsets. “Context-neutral mindsets do not allow educators to recognize deep-rooted and ingrained realities embedded in a particular place, such as school in a particular community” (p. 707). Teachers fail to grasp the impact of the social contexts in which their students live and are educated. “Relevant, effective, and responsive teaching requires that educators know more than their subject area; they must understand the differences, complexities, and nuances inherent in what it means to teach in urban, suburban, and rural environments” (p. 709). These five tenets of opportunity gaps provide educators with a more thorough discourse with regards to the academic achievement of students of color and those of a low socioeconomic status.

### **Socioeconomic Status and Performance Gap**

“Middle class” is a notoriously elusive category based on a combination of socioeconomic factors (mostly income, occupation, and education) and normative judgments

(ranging from where people live, to what churches or clubs they belong to, ...)" (Patillo-McCoy, 2000, p. 13). In an earlier book, *Black Students. Middle Class Teachers*, Kunjufu (2002) discussed the performance gap through the lens of the perpetuation of middle-class values and the creation of what Milner (2012) and Delpit (2006) identify as cultural conflicts in the classroom. "Cultural conflicts can have negative consequences for students because there are few culturally consistent points of reference and convergence between educators and students" (Milner, 2012, p. 701). Delpit (2006) eloquently expounded upon this idea, "We all carry worlds in our heads, and those worlds are decidedly different. We educators set out to teach, but how can we reach the worlds of others when we don't even know they exist" (p. xxiv).

Before using the lens of middle-class values to view student performance gaps, it must be understood that there is a difference between African American middle-class and white middle-class and subsequently the existence of a wealth gap (Altonji & Doraszelski, 2005; Hamilton & Darity, 2010; Shapiro, 2005). As of January 2017 the average wage for white college graduates was approximately seven dollars higher than that earned by African American college graduates, \$31.83 compared to \$25.77 (Gould, 2017). "Regardless of age, household structure, education, occupation or income, black households typically have less than a quarter of the wealth of otherwise comparable white households" (Hamilton & Darity, 2010, p. 210).

Understanding this difference between the two middle-classes is important to the discussion of student academic performance. "Wealthier families are far better positioned to finance elite independent school and college education..." (Hamilton & Darity, 2010, p.210). In white households, the mother is more available to serve on school committees and attend

various school meetings (Wing, 2006). Rothstein stated, “If upper-middle-class parents have jobs in which they collaborate with fellow employees and resolve problems, they are more likely to show their young children how to figure out answers for themselves” (2004, p. 40). Further, differences in parental income appear to affect the cognitive and language development of children. Sohr-Preston, Scaramella, Martin, Neppl, Ontai, and Conger (2013) observed the children of low income parents tend to have lower academic success in school than children of middle income parents and their vocabulary is not as developed. In their longitudinal study of 139 families, findings indicated “more affluent parents are more likely to secure high quality child care and may be better able to invest in out-of-home experiences enhancing children's vocabulary and academic competencies” (p. 1058). Despite the income level of parents, the extent to which parents used “clear and responsive communication emerged as a mediator of the intergenerational transmission of educational attainment and vocabulary development” (Sohr-Preston et al. 2013, p. 1058). Consequently, “Low-income kindergartners (a group that includes large numbers of Black and Latinx children) typically start school at least a full year behind others in reading and with vocabulary of 5,000 words (as opposed to 20,000 for their middle-class peers” (Evans, 2005, p. 585). Middle-class values prescribe to such behaviors as reading to children regularly, creating home libraries, assisting with homework and engaging daily in conversations to develop “educated” language (Cibattari, 2010; Evans, 2005; Sullivan 2001). These parental actions provide middle-class children with academic benefits that are virtually nonexistent among low-income children. Noguera and Wing (2006) would classify these benefits as social and cultural capital.

Any evaluation of the academic performance gap must include a discussion about the influence of social and cultural capital. "... social capital [is] (who you know and how you know them) and cultural capital [is] (what you know and what impression you give) ..." (Wing, 2006, p. 89). The amount of access that children have to valuable educational resources impacts their academic achievement (Noguera & Wing, 2006; Peters, 2012; Sullivan, 2001). "Gaps in achievement and school behavior are significantly associated with an individual's contacts whether they possess resources or not" (Liou & Chang, 2008, p. 107). Giroux indicated in his interview with Peters, "Middle and upper class cultural capital tends to crush these kids [working-class and students of color], and ... there are no remedial programs available to compensate for the poor education they often receive ..." (Peters, 2012, p. 163). Thus, children with more access to social and cultural capital will tend to academically perform better than those children without such capital.

Wells' (2008) study examined the roles social and cultural capital played in first-to-second year persistence in higher education and how race and ethnicity are associated with the initial levels of said capital. This study used a National Educational Longitudinal Study dataset, descriptive analysis with the use of ANOVA, and logistic regression analysis. The data sample was limited to students who graduated from high school in 1992 and enrolled in a four-year college the same year. To no surprise, the study showed that students of color enter college with less capital when compared to whites. Latinx students were found to have the least amount of capital overall. This was explained by less education of Latinx parents who were also English language learners and their family resources. African Americans also were found to have less family resources and less parent education. However, they had

higher values for test-prep tools used in college preparation. Asians only differed with whites on parental involvement with whites having more parental involvement on average.

The study results showed that across all models race and gender were not significantly different (Wells, 2008). Access to finances to pay for school showed positive association with persistence as well as academic ability. Having at least one parent with a college degree was positively significant to student persistence as well as the number of test-preparation tools used. “Students who attended high schools in which more students attended college are themselves more likely to persist” (p.117). As well as students whose social circles were planning to attend college; they were also more likely to persist through their college years. This last finding offers a great transition into the discussion of Wing’s research at Berkley High School.

Noguera and Wing’s (2006) research at Berkeley High School in California with the Diversity Project was conducted over six years of organizing efforts to close the achievement gap. Wing’s (2006) work specifically analyzed the access and use of social and cultural capital among high school students. Wing identified two students to specifically discuss in the research who were from different family and economic backgrounds. Both students were determined to graduate high school and further their education in a collegiate environment, however their journeys to the goal were very different.

Pamela was a white girl from an affluent family. Her social capital granted her access to networks of peers, teachers, tutors and other educational resources that assisted her in making decisions that would benefit her chances with attending a prestigious college. “Advantaged individuals preserve resources by forming dense groups in which members of the group share information, money, authority, and access to social resources” (Liou &

Chang, 2008, p. 109). These networks of people provided her with vital information, cultural capital, as to how to navigate the world of academia for the best outcomes possible (i.e. the need to take honors classes and choose the right electives). “Middle- and upper-class parents understand the system and are more knowledgeable in terms of accessing resources. The pathway to obtain resources and the mechanisms that make the institution function seem more accessible to advantaged classes” (Liou & Chang, 2008, p. 107). Through these connections Pamela’s family was able to hire private tutors to assist her with her class work and a private college adviser to help her with college acceptance requirements. “Middle-class parents have cultural knowledge and social networks that they can leverage to improve their child’s educational experiences” (Ciabattari, 2010, p. 119). Pamela’s social and cultural capital ensured that she had access to resources and information for successful achievement of her goals.

Kevin’s journey to college was very different from Pamela’s. Kevin, a Vietnamese student, spent most of his high school experience semi-homeless. Kevin was from a single-parent home and lived below the poverty line. “Resources embedded in the social networks of working-class minorities are often limited or even unavailable, because the working-class students experience can be hampered by the inaccessibility to social resources through parents and through their own social networks” (Liou & Chang, 2008, p. 108). Although he was an academically strong student his, “... exclusive reliance on the high school’s services put Kevin at a disadvantage” (Wing, 2006, p. 95). Because Kevin had little to no social and cultural capital, he was left to make academic decisions by himself. “Kevin had no access to certain crucial college-going information, including the importance of taking at least one AP class, information about how to pursue honors mathematics, or how to apply for the best

college scholarships” (Wing, p. 111). Kevin’s academic decisions were made based on his personal knowledge, research, and occasionally the information he would receive during casual conversations with his classmates. “Kevin suffered the consequences of uneven distribution of information, a form of social capital, and he lacked access to networks of informed adults” (Wing, p. 113).

Although Wing (2006) specifically discussed the journey of these two students, her research noted that the access and use of social and cultural capital was prevalent among the affluent student populations at Berkeley High School. She further identified the access and use of social and cultural capital as privilege.

For white, middle-class students, privilege means having almost exclusive access to the most advanced classes and most qualified teachers, along with the academic support to succeed in these classes. It means being able to bend school rules regarding attendance, graduation requirements, and classroom behavior, with no negative consequences. (p. 89)

Privilege has the power to determine the course a student takes to achieving their collegiate goals. Pamela and Kevin’s experiences were distinctly different due to social and cultural capital.

Sullivan’s (2001) research also examined the benefits of social and cultural capital and their connections to education, more specifically student performance on the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCES). Grounded in Bourdieu’s work with regards to cultural capital, Sullivan’s (2001) study included 465 students in their final year of compulsory schooling. Sullivan examined to what extent pupils’ and their parents’ cultural capital influenced their GCSE score. Sullivan administered a survey that captured participants’ attendance at “public” or “formal” cultural activities such as art galleries, theatre, and concerts. The survey included the amount of and the types of reading in which

the participants were engaged as well as their television viewing and music listening preferences. The survey also tested participants on their knowledge of cultural figures and vocabulary. Analysis of the distribution of cultural capital by social class and parents' education revealed service-class parents had a mean cultural capital score of 7.2, while non-service-class parents had a mean score of 3.6. Sullivan (2001) concluded that a student's cultural capital positively influenced their educational attainment and score on the General Certificate of Secondary Education. "Compared to unskilled manual backgrounds, all non-manual backgrounds are associated with increased GCSE performance, with higher-service class backgrounds providing the strongest advantage" (p. 904).

The effect that social and cultural capital has on the academic performance gap should not be ignored. Access to educational resources, or the lack thereof, is crucial to successfully obtainment of scholastic goals. "If those that are privileged, and therefore able to amass the most social and cultural capital, ... are more likely to attain a college degree, then the social hierarchy is effectively reproduced via higher education" (Wells, 2008, p. 104).

### **Race, Equity and the Performance Gap**

As mentioned earlier, there are several factors that contribute to the existence of the performance gap. Among the most researched and discussed factors are institutionalized practices with regards to race. "One of the most vexing problems in the struggle for equality is the fact that the dismantling of institutionalized barriers to advancement has not erased gender and racial gaps in achievement" (Schmader, 2010, p. 14). This question of underperformance has sparked much debate and discourse among researchers and theorists (Allen, 2010; Anderson, Medrich & Fowler, 2007; Chapman, 2014; Darling-Hammond,

2010; Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2010b; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Noguera, 2008; Noguera & Wing, 2006). Again, no one theory can be considered as the only correct answer to this question. Each theory must be considered a piece of the complex puzzle that is the underperformance of students of color when compared to their white peers.

Noguera's (2008) research on the connection between racial identity and school-related behaviors was initiated by evaluating his own son's educational experience. Noguera (2008) saw a well-mannered, academically astute student change into an angry disgruntled young man. Through many conversations, Noguera (2008) learned that many of his son's peers were dropping out of school due to academic failure and lack of support. He also learned that his son was struggling with reconciling his racial identities of the past, present, and future in contexts of his neighborhood, school, and peer groups. "... Joaquin felt the need to project the image of a tough and angry young Black man. He believed that in order to be respected, he had to carry himself in a manner that was intimidating and even menacing" (Noguera, 2008, p. 4). He understood that his son's journey to forming his racial identity was deeply impacted by his experiences at school (2008). "Trapped by stereotypes," (p. 4). Joaquin's racial identity, like other students of color, was developed under difficult circumstances (Noguera, 2008).

Steele's (1997) earlier research established that racial identity and academic performance are connected through the application of numerous stereotypes in the U.S. educational system. Because racial identity is developed during the ages when children are attending school, the influence of the educational system for shaping identity cannot be overlooked. "... [A]wareness of race and its implications for individual identity become even more salient. As children become increasingly aware of themselves as social beings, their

perceptions of self tend to be highly dependent on acceptance and affirmation by others” (Noguera, 2008, p. 7). Students’ exposure to explicit and implicit messages about links between academic performances and race affect their individual academic achievement (Noguera, 2008; Schmader, 2010; Steele, 1997). “Just as certain institutional practices contribute to the concentration of African American and Latinx students at the bottom rungs of educational performance, other policies and practices work to ensure that high-achieving, upper-middle-class White students retain their academic advantages” (Noguera, 2008, p. 154). These messages are known as “hidden curriculum.” “... ‘[H]idden curriculum’ [is] an unspoken set of rules that ‘teaches’ certain students what they can and cannot do because of who they are” (Noguera, 2008, p. 12). Schmader (2010) indicated that “... most academic settings are replete with subtle reminders of stereotypes that presume the incompetence of certain groups” (p. 14). Steele (1997) referred to this hidden curriculum as the, “stereotype threat”. “Stereotype threat” is a phenomenon, coined by Steele, where students’ fear, of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or ... of doing something that would confirm that stereotype” (Schmader, 2010; Steele, 1997). “... [A]nyone can exhibit impaired performance when reminded of way in which they might be negatively stereotyped” (Schmader, 2010, p. 14). Once the threat of measuring academic abilities was eliminated, performance differences between groups disappeared. The internalization of this “hidden curriculum” is destructive to a student’s racial identity and scholastic achievement. “For example, in many schools, the remedial classes are disproportionately Black and Brown, and students often draw conclusions about the relationship between race and academic ability based on these patterns” (Noguera, 2008, p. 12). Students might think that these patterns of more students of color in remedial classes instead of honors classes are because of an issue

with intelligence. This belief supports what Ogbu and Fordham (2004) discovered in their research with students of color.

Ogbu and Fordham (2004) suggested that students of color viewed performing academically well was actually “acting white.” So, in an effort to maintain allegiance with peer groups, students of color tended to decide to engage in behaviors that could be considered as academic self-sabotage. “Negative peer pressure discourages almost all African American youth from participating in advanced placement, honors, and gifted and talented classes unless getting on the honor roll is easy and doesn’t require additional study time” (Kunjufu, 2002, p. 4). Students of color equated being smart as unnatural, and therefore a perpetration of a false identity. “Specifically, these youth cultures can foster the attitude that using standard English, being smart, and working hard constitute an kind of sellout – acting “too white” (Evans, 2005, p. 586). This is a twist on Steele’s “stereotype threat.” Instead of feeling pressured about confirming a negative stereotype, students embraced the stereotype and acted accordingly.

This approach to education, however, did not completely represent the views of students of color in the research. “Becoming raceless and committing to the ideology of the dominant social system diminish[ed] the adverse effects of persistent negative stereotypes ... and allow[ed] them to freely adopt and engage in mainstream cultural norms” (Harris & Marsh, 2010, p. 1247). Students of color acted in a way to become invisible in their classrooms and schools. These students became masters at code switching. *Code switching* refers to students, “...adopting multiple personas: they adopt the cultural norms that are valued in school settings while embracing the speech, style of dress, and larger identity construct associated with their racial group outside of school” (Noguera, 2008, p. 142). A

challenge with code switching, however, is that student's racial identity can become warped and unstable which can manifest itself in poor academic performance (Harris & Marsh, 2010; Noguera, 2008; Schmader, 2010).

Harris and Marsh (2010) conducted a study to examine the connection, if any, of racial identity and educational outcomes for black students in high school. The data used were collected from the Maryland Adolescence Development In Context Study, a longitudinal research project at the University of Michigan and included approximately 5,000 adolescents. Harris and Marsh created five profiles that addressed the degree to which adolescents connected to their race. The results revealed that a raceless identity did not improve academic success. The results proved the opposite, blacks in the ambivalent and similar race profiles had higher achievement than those in the neutral profile. The findings also showed a relationship between blacks' feelings about their race and schooling. Blacks who were happy to be black attributed more value to school and were less detached from school. Additionally, adolescents who regretted being black had lower school achievement, lower value for school and were detached from school. This finding offers a unique perspective on the relationship of race and academic performance and requires more attention through further research.

Due to the history of racial oppression within the United States, the institutionalized discriminatory practices plaguing the public educational system will not readily disappear. However, being aware and able to identify such practices can assist with addressing the needs of students of color and therefore narrowing the performance gap. "When educators demonstrate a willingness to accept responsibility for their role and... move beyond a search

for blame to search for concrete solutions, the possibility for genuine progress in raising students' achievement can be significantly increased" (Noguera, 2008, p. 158).

### **Urban Schools and the Performance Gap**

No discussion of the performance gap would be complete without some reference to the conditions of urban schools which serve the majority of students of color (Darling-Hammond, 2010). One of the major challenges that face urban schools is funding. "Many urban districts must contend with an eroding tax base, which makes them unusually dependent on state and federal funding. That reliance on outside actors constrains urban districts" (Jacob, 2007, p. 133). This lack of funding has hindered urban schools and urban school districts from providing students with access to essential academic resources and hiring and retaining qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Jacob, 2007; Noguera, 2008). The term "qualified" is used to address the experiential or certification status of teachers. Many urban schools are afflicted with hiring new, inexperienced teachers because of the high turnover rate (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gay, 2010a; Jacob, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2017). "In practice, therefore, a teacher shortage in urban districts makes it hard to hire qualified teachers – so that the teachers who are hired are often less qualified than teachers in suburban districts" (Jacob, 2007, p. 134). "Qualified" also references the teachers' ability to fulfill the unique role of an urban teacher. Hale (2001) indicated that, "African American children do not enter school disadvantaged, they leave school disadvantaged. There is nothing wrong with the children, but there is clearly something wrong with what happens to them in school" (p. 46). Ladson-Billings added, "... for urban students, school is the place that exacerbates students' problems. Instead of helping urban students, school often hurts them" (2017, p. 85). Many researchers have agreed that teachers in urban settings

require more than the typical teacher education courses provided by universities for certification (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Jacob, 2007; Leland & Murtadha, 2011; Milner, 2012; Noguera, 2008). They need coursework in teaching diverse student populations (Catalano, 2014). “Urban students bring specific cultural orientations and practices to the classroom including diverse patterns of language and socialization” (Swartz & Bakan, 2005, p. 829). The lack of knowledge of the cultural orientations and practices of students of color can lead to these students being subjugated to practices that impede their academic performance. “Due to the lack of knowledge about urban students, many teachers position learners at risk of academic failure, misidentification of special needs, unnecessarily harsh disciplinary action and diminution of the self” (Swartz & Bakan, 2005, p. 829). Teachers must be provided with extensive learning opportunities that address the student diversity that they will experience in their classrooms, especially if they plan to teach in urban settings. Learning opportunities require pre-service teachers to meaningfully engage with the community they plan to serve (Schaffer, 2012).

Indeed, research has documented that teaching in urban schools offers more challenges than teaching in suburban schools (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Delpit, 2006; Haberman, 2010; Hale, 2001; Kunjufu, 2002; Noguera, 2008; Noguera & Wing, 2006; Pattillo-McCoy, 1999; Schultz, 2008). The nuances of urban culture demand knowledge and skills of teachers that have not been explicitly taught in traditional teacher education programs. This is not to say that teachers lack the power of influence because of this absent coursework. “Educators ... have the power to have an impact on the functioning of the school ... educators need to focus on what we can do to improve our efforts between 8:15 and 3:15 Monday through Friday” (Hale, 2001, p. 47).

As stated above, there are numerous variables that must be addressed when discussing the academic performance gap between students of color and their white peers. The issues of privilege, institutionalized racism and classism and the plight of the urban school will not be solved overnight. These issues have deep roots in the U.S. public education system. Time, deliberate attention, and implementation of policies securing equity for all students will provide evidence of progress which ensures that all students have the knowledge and skills they need to successfully compete in the global community.

### **Education Reform**

What is the purpose of public schools? There are various answers to and perspectives on this question which are linked to the historical development of public schools and what was to be their purpose in shaping the tenor of the nation. A brief review of the foundation of public schools will provide a context for the discussion of education reform.

In the first half of the 19th century, support for public education began to pick up steam both in Great Britain and America (Goetz, 1999; Persky 2015). In Great Britain, Adam Smith was leading the charge advocating for the expansion of the education system that would be supported by public subsidies as a necessity to the nation's wealth. At this point in Great Britain education was only an opportunity for those families that could afford it. (Persky, 2015). Supporting Smith's work was Thomas Malthus who, "... offered evidence that where working classes were more educated, crime rates were lower" (Persky, 2015, p. 249). This provided a sound argument for the promotion of education. Other arguments for the expansion of educational opportunities included but are not limited to: education was a civil right; reduced the propensity for criminal behavior; represented the advancement as a

civilization; education provided a more skilled workforce which in turn increased productivity and profit; and increased personal (human) capital (Goetz, 1999; Persky, 2015).

At the same time Great Britain was debating the expansion of schools, America was engaged in discussions about common schools. “Among the first to advocate state-supported common schools were the working men and mechanics of New York and Pennsylvania who organized into early unions... who were threatened by the development of the factory system and industrial capitalism” (Goetz, 1999, p. 246). These union workers would gain a strange partner in their fight for common schools in that of the Whig Party, known as conservative elitists. Taking the lead was Horace Mann who proposed that it was natural for a republic to promote equality and required educated citizens and such schools would counter vice and crime (Persky, 2015). Like in the case of Great Britain, Mann offered various arguments for common schools that appealed to a variety of audiences. Mann used economics as a platform to describe the benefits of education to worker productivity (Vinovskis, 1970). Mann described the role of education as capital and the nation’s premier resource. Mann saw the benefits of education to population control which relied on the moral character of men to not have more children than they could support.

Mann also argued that education would alleviate the likelihood of pauperism increasing which could lead to an infestation of crime, and degradation. Mann sought to, “... create the virtuous republican citizenry needed to sustain American political institutions, the educated workforce required to expand the American economy, and the disciplined generation necessary to forestall the social disorders so common in American cities” (Warder, 2017, para. 1). Debates over public education include but are not limited to: purpose, funding, and implementation. However, defining the purpose of public schools

must be addressed before settling the debates around funding and implementation models. As noted in the above discussion of common schools, the purpose of public education was defined numerous ways depending on the audience and the speaker. This has not changed over time. There is still diversity about what should be the purpose of public schools.

Walker and Chirichello (2011) identified the purpose of schools, "... to preserve democracy by learning how to learn" (2011, p. 5). Loflin's (2008) ideas of public education were, "Public schools, ... provide the best chance to fulfill their country's moral obligation to prepare students, its future citizens, for the democratic way of life" (p. 13). Ravitch concluded, "... schools [are] a primary mechanism through which a democratic society gives its citizens the opportunity to attain literacy and social mobility" (2010, p. 4). Framing the discussion of school reform, the purpose of public schools will be defined as providing a comprehensive education to students that can prepare them for social advancement and successful living in a democratic society.

If, indeed, the purpose of schools is to provide students with opportunities to learn how to learn and become educated in various contexts, it is imperative to examine the vehicles of such education. The idea of school reform began the minute public schools were created. Various stakeholders consistently reviewed the impact of public education on society and how public education were to operate more efficiently and effectively (Glickman,1998; Ravitch, 2010). Due to this extensive history of school reform, I have narrowed the discussion of school reform to

multicultural education and culturally relevant teaching which may lead to helping disenfranchised students advance their social status for critical citizenship in a democratic society; which are connected to the purpose of this study: To explore narratives through

experiences of K-8 educational professionals with regards to education for globalization, who are employed by a Midwest urban charter school. With this being said, I take note of Anyon's (2014) insistence that "an unjust economy and the policies through which it is maintained create barriers to educational success that no teacher or principal practice, no standardized test, no 'zero tolerance' policy can surmount for long" (p. 4). She argued for a massive movement similar to earlier decades that put in place "legislative, judicial, and regulatory decisions" (p. 12) through programs and legislation acts that improved the lives of people; such as women's right to vote, child labor laws, civil rights laws, headstart, English Language programs, and others.

### **Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education emerged as an attempt in our society to provide a more equitable and inclusive education for education with an emphasis on curriculum changes in schools. Banks (1995) viewed this effort as "an educational reform movement that tries to reform school in ways that will give all students an equal opportunity to learn. It describes teaching strategies that empower all students and give them voice" ( p. 391). This reform movement proposed, "... educational equality and diversity" (Kim, 2011, p. 203). "In the spirit of creating more equitable educational experiences for all students, multicultural education was birthed from *Brown* and has remained pertinent to conversations about curricular and content reform, whole-school restructuring, and district modifications" (Chapman, 2008, p. 43). Many of the reform policies that were promised to people of color after the *Brown* decision were not properly executed, if implemented at all (Banks, 1995; Chapman, 2008; Kim, 2011; Sadker & Zittleman, 2012). This led to an outcry for equitable schooling practices.

As people of color demanded that the promise of *Brown*, equal and equitable education for all citizens, be fulfilled, the multicultural education movement gained momentum and became intrinsically linked with the promotion of issues of access and equity in educational reform. (Chapman, 2008, p. 44)

Multicultural education is not limited to the inclusion of the contributions of people of color into curriculum. “Over time, these programs expanded to confront not only racism, but also injustices based on gender, social class, disability, and sexual orientation” (Sadker & Zittleman, 2012, p. 67).

Through his work, Banks’ (2004) development of the tenets of multicultural education, five dimensions were identified: “... content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, and equity pedagogy and an empowering school culture and social structure” ( p. 392). The content integration dimension describes the ways teachers used materials and products from various cultures and groups to teach concepts in their content areas. The knowledge construction dimension requires teachers and students to evaluate the “knowledge” that is developed. This process, “... consists of the methods, activities, and questions used by teachers to help students understand, investigate, and determine how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed” (Banks, 2004 p. 20). The third dimension, prejudice reduction, involves teachers actively addressing students’ racial attitudes in an effort to encourage students to develop more tolerant values and attitudes. The equity pedagogy dimension is present when teachers intentionally and deliberately use research-based instructional strategies to address performance gaps found between various student populations. The fifth, and last dimension, of multicultural education as identified by Banks (2004) is the development of an empowering school culture and social

structure. Schools develop and maintain policies and practices that are inclusive of diverse cultures in design and implementation.

Branch (2005) conducted a modified case study to examine the instructional practices of university professors, who teach pre-service teachers, for Multicultural Education practices (MEPs). Although the full study included six professors, Branch was responsible for examining the instructional practices of the History professor. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and artifact collection which included the course syllabi, handouts and the textbooks. Under the dimensions of content integration and equity pedagogy, the professor had several identifiable MEPs. Professor J. specifically chose a textbook that was seen as culturally balanced and inclusive. Professor J.'s United States history curriculum began in the south and made its way to the north. This meant the culture of Mexican Americans would receive much attention in the curriculum. Lastly, Professor J. interjected Spanish words and phrases throughout his lectures. This guaranteed engagement from his Mexican American students who were the majority in all the sections of the professor's classes. These strategies garnered the support of his students who consistently recommended his classes to their friends and others. As a history professor, Professor J. was deliberate in teaching and developing assignments that emphasized knowledge as a social construction. He informed his students that 'facts' comes from the Latin root 'fachere' which means to make, therefore facts are made by people. Professor J. would often ask his class, "Who made the facts?" Professor J. did not do as well on the remaining dimensions, prejudice reduction and empowering school culture and structure. There were no identifiable MEPs associated with these last dimensions and were considered missed teachable moments.

Along with the five dimensions of multicultural education, Banks (2004) also identified four approaches to multicultural curriculum. The four approaches to multicultural curriculum are represented in a hierarchal framework. At the most basic level is the contributions approach. This approach includes the superficial inclusion of cultural heroes and holidays into curriculum. Discussions of aspects of culture are minimal to nonexistent. The next level is the additive approach. At this level, celebrations of people of color and/or other marginalized groups are featured in a specific unit of study. A special unit on African Americans may be taught during Black History month. Full integration of significant examples into year-round curriculum is not acknowledged. “... [M]ulticultural education often takes the form of adding the history and cultures of ethnic minorities to the dominant curriculum without addressing racism and critiquing school structures” (Kim, 2011, p. 206). Level three is the transformative approach. “Students are taught to view events and issues from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives” (Sadker & Zittleman, 2012, p. 68). Year-round curriculum is more inclusive of marginalized groups for authentic representation throughout the curriculum. The highest level in the hierarchal framework is level four, the social action approach. This level encourages and challenges students to consider social justice issues that they may see and/or encounter and take actions to solve them (Sadker & Zittleman, 2012).

According to Sleeter (2014), planning multicultural citizenship education pedagogy, which is more befitting to the development of globalization, requires struggling with three central issues:

- What is the relationship between citizenship and human rights?
- How can working with diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity as well as immigration status help students to value democracy and learn to participate

constructively?

- What pedagogical model(s) enable students to ‘learn about the ways about which people in their community, nation, and region are increasingly interdependent with people around the world and are connected to the economic, political, cultural, environmental, and technological changes taking place across the planet’ (Banks et al. 2005, p. 11), while learning not only about democracy but how to apply it (Banks et al. 2005)? (Sleeter, 2014, pp. 89-90)

Although Banks’ (2004) dimensions and approaches are well documented, “... many schools have attempted to implement multicultural education as a touristic approach [contributions & additive approaches], such as celebrating different cultures ... lacking critical perspectives” (Kim, 2011, p. 205). However, some urban school districts, “... have attempted to implement multicultural reforms by: changing texts to include the works and experiences of people of color, women, and homosexuals; supporting new pedagogical approaches; and funding in-service seminars to acknowledge learning style differences and multiple intelligences” (Chapman, 2008, p. 44).

### **Culturally Relevant Teaching**

Culturally relevant teaching is an attempt to address the above mentioned needed school reform. Through her research, Ladson-Billings (2009) studied the practices of teachers of African American students who displayed strong academic performance and achievement. According to Ladson-Billings (2009), culturally relevant pedagogy consists of three components: students must experience academic success; students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. Students who experience or

are exposed to this form of instruction are noted to demonstrate higher achievement and academic performance (Martins-Shannon & White, 2012; Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007).

Driver and Powell (2017) conducted a quasi-experimental study to investigate word-problem instruction for third grade English Language Learners (ELL). Driver and Powell employed culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy as an intervention strategy. This study included nine third grade ELL students who attended tutoring sessions three times a week for 10 weeks. These students were exposed to culturally and linguistically responsive schema instruction (CLR-SI). The results of the study showed that the nine students made significant gains between the pretest and the posttest. Because of the small sample, Driver & Powell compared the gains of their students with the rest of the third-grade population. The mainstreamed third grade showed a mean score at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile for the pretest and a mean score at the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile for the posttest. The participants showed scores ranging from the third to the 18<sup>th</sup> percentile for the pretest and at the 33<sup>rd</sup> to 59<sup>th</sup> percentile for the posttest. It is important to note that none of the participants would have been eligible for tutoring based on their posttest scores. Students who participated in the CLR-SI intervention improved their skills on word problems.

Despite the home and societal challenges students of color and students of poverty may face on a daily basis, they are still expected to and must develop strong academic skills. “Teachers have a responsibility to all their students to ensure that all have an equal opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability” (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007, p. 67). Teachers can employ various strategies to engage students in learning experiences that support critical thinking and the development of other academic skills. Teachers should, “... connect in-school learning to out-of school living; promote equity and excellence; create

community among individuals from different cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds; and develop students' agency, efficacy and empowerment" (Gay, 2013, p. 49). "Teachers with an awareness and understanding of culturally responsive [relevant] teaching practices will begin incorporating various cultures, languages, and traditions into lessons" (Martins-Shannon & White, 2012, p. 5). Therefore, when students are engaged in the content in more meaningful ways, opportunities for students to experience academic success is increased.

Ladson-Billings (2009) identifies cultural competence as the second component of culturally relevant teaching. In order for students to develop and/or maintain cultural competence, teachers must learn about and know the various aspects of different cultures. Teachers cannot teach what they do not know. "To effectively create a culturally responsive classroom, teachers must understand various ethnic groups, norms and expectations" (Martin-Shannon & White, 2012, p. 5). Additionally, teachers must be committed to, "... replacing pathological and deficient perceptions of students and communities of color with more positive ones" (Gay, 2013, p. 54). Acknowledging students' diversity and cultures within the classroom via curriculum, activities, and assessment provides validation to the students' cultural identity and again increases the likelihood of student academic success (Gay, 2010b; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Martins-Shannon & White, 2012; Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007).

Charleston, Charleston, and Jackson (2014) conducted a qualitative study to examine the use of culturally responsive practices (CRP) to positively impact STEM career choices among African American students. This study included 37 African American computing science aspirants from across the country. Data were collected through interviews and data analysis revealed three themes: peer and community modeling, positive familial cultivation

and multi-faceted mentorship. “Study participants cited a number of experiences throughout their educational trajectories in which aspects of culturally relevant interactions were instrumental in their decisions to pursue the computing sciences” (p.408). Participants did not specifically describe their support structures and schooling experiences as CRP. However, “In so much as supporters recognized cultural, social, or political barriers to education achievement and enacted culturally specific strategies to surmount them, they were implicitly adopting strategies theorized by CRP” (p. 409). Although, many of the participants demonstrated levels of aptitude and ambition, the most salient factors for their pursuit and persistence in STEM were the, “... positive social influences, community building, and sense of belonging, which developed self-efficacy and relevant self concepts” (p. 412). These are all attributes of culturally relevant teaching.

Like Bank’s (2004) highest level on his multicultural education framework, Ladson-Billings (2009) also challenges and encourages students to become critically conscious of societal norms, perceptions, etc. As the last component of culturally relevant teaching, sociopolitical consciousness, “... students should be able to use what they learn in school to help solve problems they confront in daily life” (Ladson-Billings, 2017, p. 88). Gay (2002) added, “Culturally responsive teaching ... deal[s] directly with controversy; stud[ies] a wide range of ethnic individuals and groups; contextual[izes] issues within race, class, ethnicity, and gender; and includ[es] multiple kinds of knowledge and perspectives” (p. 108). Culturally relevant teachers do not shy away from societal topics and subjects that require students to use critical thinking and other high-order thinking skills. “Teachers must prepare students to participate meaningfully and responsibly not only in the classroom but also in society” (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2007, p. 67).

Education reform efforts attempt to ensure that public education accomplishes its purpose at its most foundational level, to develop an educated populace. I contend that multicultural education to promote democratic education and culturally responsive teaching should be at the heart of educational reform. The emphasis on these democratic education and culturally responsive teaching are supported further in the section on Teaching and Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. As the world continues to become interconnected through globalization, there will be more conversations and dialogue defining the term “educated populace.” What knowledge and skills are required to be considered “educated,” and who gets to decide? Are these determinations a result of global events or to act as catalysts for global events? These questions may never receive adequate responses or solutions, however it is safe to say that they need to be addressed.

### **Teaching and Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Some may view preparing students for jobs that do not exist yet as the main focus and challenge of 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning. This reality further emphasizes the need to ensure that all students have access to and receive a quality education, an education that will equip them to successfully compete in the global village. However, I view the importance of globalization as the need to prepare students for critical citizenship as proposed by Sleeter (2014). “Our public schools have been the pathway to opportunity and a better life for generations of Americans, giving them the tools to fashion their own life and to improve the commonwealth” (Ravitch, 2010, p. 242). Since students of color are still academically outperformed by their white counterparts, community and business leaders have dubbed education reform as the civil rights issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Melinda Gates stated, “Education is the key to opportunity, and the opportunity is not equal” (Legend, 2010, p. 1).

With similar sentiment, Rev. Al Sharpton said, “Fifty-five years after Brown versus the Board of Education there is still a difference in how students are treated and a difference in how schools are funded” (Lucas, 2009, para. 7). In the same article, Newt Gingrich exclaimed, “If a foreign power did to our children what we did, we would say it’s an act of war” (Lucas, para.9). Research shows that high school drop-out rates continue to be high among students of color and college admissions rates continue to be low within the same population (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Noguera, 2008; Noguera & Wing, 2006). Americans across all walks of life and occupations demand that more attention be spent on the plight of the U.S. educational system. But what is the answer? Before that question can be addressed, a look at the current needs for an educated populace would be beneficial.

### **Knowledge and Skills for an Educated Populace**

Students need the abilities to critically think and analyze information in order to make sense of the world. “A fundamental goal of education is to lead students to develop the ability to use varied and competing ways of understanding the universe” (Haberman, 2004, p. 55). Giroux asserted, “Pedagogy is not about training; it is about educating people to be self-reflective, critical and self-conscious about their relationship with the larger world” (Peters, 2012, p. 166). In order for students to display such complexity of thought and analysis, they must be taught how to do this. However, critical thinking and problem solving are only one set of survival skills that are needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century living. Scott-Webber indicated, “Corporations are calling for a new type of graduate. Corporations want graduates who have the ability to be highly creative, collaborative in their pursuit of problem solving, critical thinkers, and agents of change” (2011, p. 268). Again, 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers have the

overwhelming responsibility to educate students and prepare them to create jobs and work in careers that do not exist yet.

Saavedra and Opfer (2012) claim that the current transmission model of instruction, still used by much of the world, is outdated and not the most effective way to teach 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (2012). “Through the transmission model, students can learn information, but typically don’t have much practice applying the knowledge to new contexts, communicating it in complex ways, using it to solve problems, or using it as a platform to develop creativity” (p. 9). Ravitch offered this sentiment, “By our current methods, we may be training (not educating) a generation of children who are repelled by learning, thinking that it means only drudgery, worksheets, test preparation, and test taking” (2010, p. 231). Scott-Webber stated,

Preparing our students for the world they will inhabit should be our national educational goal. But change must happen as the current educational system and its responding design solutions are obsolete for the world in which our students must find work. (2011, p. 266 & 269)

Adding to the discussion of the need for crucial changes in current teaching and learning practices is the idea of effective use of technology in the classroom. Access to technology has grown as well as the need for students to know how to use it effectively as a tool or instrument for learning not just social activities (Jukes & McCain, 2007). “Still dominant is a view and use of the Web as augmenting information retrieval rather than supplanting traditional resources and activities ...” (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009, p. 248). So, not only do current teaching and learning practices need to be updated, these practices need to include effective use of ever-changing technology. “Technology allows students to transfer skills to different contexts, reflect on their thinking and that of their peers, practice addressing their misunderstandings, and collaborate with peers” (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012, p. 9).

Many policy makers, politicians, educators, community activist groups, and others have tried to address the preparation question for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each group, motivated by their agenda, has offered solutions that range from very simplistic to quite comprehensive. However, no approach has been identified or promoted as a silver bullet. There are two approaches that offer some answers to changing current teaching and learning practices that authentically connect to research on global literacy. Both democratic education and culturally responsive teaching are fundamentally student-centered approaches to teaching and learning (Apple & Beane, 2007, Gay, 2010b, Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009, Walker & Chirichello, 2011). These approaches endeavor to develop students so that they take ownership of their own learning. “The aim of teaching is to help students get to the point where they don’t need us, where they can independently do what they have been learning” (Riordan, 2005, p. 52). Taking a closer look at these approaches to teaching and learning will provide relevant information for the continued discussion of education for globalization.

### **Democratic Education**

After the terrorist attack on U.S. soil on 9-11, there was a societal push for more patriotism and U.S. solidarity. “Within days, companies like McDonald’s and General Motors were filling their television advertisements with patriotic symbols and appealing to a frightened citizenry with words about spending for America” (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 73). There was much rhetoric asking for political parties to put aside their differences and work together on an appropriate response to such villainy. During this same time politicians looked at schools and questioned what they were doing to educate students on U.S. democracy and patriotism. Federal money was given to school districts across the country to revise social studies curriculum and purchase supplemental materials in an effort to teach students about

citizenship. I was chosen by my school to be the teacher leaders for the Social Studies Department and attend the training sessions for the new district curriculum. This curriculum included a very comprehensive study of American History and Civics. We spent numerous hours over the course of three days learning the new curriculum and the instructional strategies that would be most effective. When I returned to my school, I felt ready to provide professional development to my colleagues on the new curriculum. I waited for my principal to schedule the professional development session, but it never occurred.

This expenditure of tax dollars for new curriculum and teacher training was a reaction to a catastrophic event that no one really had an idea about how to respond. Again, the societal emphasis on patriotism and U.S. ideals and principles was supposed to rally the nation into an U.S. pride fest. The terrorist attack on 9-11 returned public education to its fundamental purpose, "...developing students' capacities and commitments for effective and democratic citizenship" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p.1). The focus of public education was once again on, "creating knowledgeable and patriotic citizens" (Waltzer & Heilman, 2005, p. 156).

Ravitch revealed that this goal should co-exist with other disciplinary principles:

Education is the key to developing human capital. The nature of our education system – whether mediocre or excellent – will influence society far into the future. A democratic society cannot long sustain itself if its citizens are uniformed and indifferent about its history, its government, and the workings of its economy. Nor can it prosper if it neglects to educate its children in the principles of science, technology, geography, literature and the arts. (2010, p. 223)

Students needed to learn these U.S. ideals and principles through a review of the country's history so that they would understand the true meaning of being a U.S. citizen. The next question posed by many was would these efforts, after 9-11, revive the movement for

democratic education and schools? This question can be answered with a closer look at defining democracy and the purpose of schools in a democratic society.

The meaning of “democracy” can be quite ambiguous and have multiple perspectives. Political perspectives, socioeconomic status and governmental confidence can influence how individuals describe “democracy.” At its root, America has subscribed to, “... Abraham Lincoln’s broad definition of democracy as government of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Loflin, 2008, p. 15). This definition, although simple in nature, does not adequately represent a comprehensive understanding of all the nuances of democracy. Apple and Beane (2007) offered the following characterization of democracy.

... democracy is the central tenet of our social and political relations. It is the basis for how we govern ourselves, the concept by which we measure the wisdom and worth of social policies and shifts, the ethical anchor we seek when our political ship seems to drift. And it is the standard we use to measure the political progress of other countries as well as their trade status with our own. ( p. 5)

They further stated that, “... democracy is a form of political governance involving the consent of the governed and equality of opportunity” (Apple & Beane, 2007, p. 7). Walker and Chirichello explained, “Our [democratic] culture represents a set of beliefs, which form the basis of our freedoms and continues only when there exists a thinking, informed and vigilant citizenry who have the ability to reflect beyond the limitations of their own insights” (2011, p. 10). By combining these definitions it can be concluded that “democracy” is a set of beliefs and ideals upon which the country was founded and continues to be governed. These beliefs and ideals include the call for participation from its citizens. With that being said, “... democratic faith [is] the fundamental belief that democracy has a powerful meaning that it can work, and that it is necessary if we are to maintain human dignity, equity, freedom,

and justice in our social affairs” (Apple & Beane, 2007, p. 7). This statement helps to define and support the purpose of schools in a democratic society.

As many pondered this question, the purpose of public schools in a democratic society became a concern, Glickman (1998) wrote, “Most schools have little sense of why they exist and what they are trying to accomplish, either as a school; in each classroom, grade level, and department; or beyond the school walls” ( p. 5). The idea of perpetuating the ideals of democracy was found in Walker and Chirichello’s discussion of the purpose of schools, as they identified the purpose of schools to be, “... to preserve democracy by learning how to learn” (2011, p. 5). Loflin’s ideas of public education were, “Public schools, ... provide the best chance to fulfill their country’s moral obligation to prepare students, its future citizens, for the democratic way of life” (Loflin, 2008, p. 13). Ravitch summarized, “... schools [are] a primary mechanism through which a democratic society gives its citizens the opportunity to attain literacy and social mobility” (2010, p. 4). Therefore, public schools in a democratic society not only have the job of educating the populace on reading, writing, and arithmetic, they are to instruct and promote the beliefs and ideals of democracy. Is this democratic education?

From a review of these theoretical underpinnings of democracy, one might think that democratic education was just a curriculum about U.S. patriotism and, “... [an] uncritical acceptance of the United States as the “best” country in the world” (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 75). Democratic education is more complex than that. Democratic education, like many terms already discussed, does not have a single definition. Korkmaz and Erden’s (2014) study was an attempt to identify characteristics of democratic schools. Using the Delphi technique of consensus building through a series of questionnaires and controlled feedback,

Korkmaz and Erden engaged 22 experts from nine countries in three rounds of data collection and analysis. By the end of the study, 339 items were identified as characteristics of democratic schools which were organized into the following categories: values and philosophy, collaborative learning organization, founding process, decision-making model, policy forming, curriculum learner, teaching staff, nonteaching staff, relations, physical properties, and financial resource management. This study can serve as evidence to the range of understanding people have about democratic schools and to their thoughts and ideas about the characteristics of democratic schools.

For this discussion, democratic schools will be viewed through two lenses, school structures and curriculum. “One is to create democratic structures and processes by which life in the school is carried out. The other ... create a curriculum that will give young people democratic experiences” (Apple & Beane, 2007, p. 10). Democratic education references the structures within a democratic school; applies to the systems, processes, protocols and other opportunities that all stakeholders have access to in order to be fully engaged in the school and the educational organization. “Democratic schools are meant to be democratic places, so the idea of democracy also extends to the many roles that adults play in schools” (Apple & Beane, 2007, p. 8). Examples of this level of engagement include but are not limited to: shared decision-making among staff and students with regards to school activities, events and curriculum content; students using democratic decision-making processes in the classroom to create classroom expectations, classroom leaders, etc.; a learner-centered approach in which students choose their daily activities; using the community as an extension of the classroom for students to investigate problems within their neighborhoods and develop possible solutions and engage with authentic audiences; teachers embedding content in critical

thinking about real issues; students' cultural and linguistic identities being supported and viewed as legitimate aspects of citizenship (Loflin, 2008). These structures and practices are vital elements to democratic schools and encourage equal participation among all stakeholders. "The democratic schools considered here are based upon a notion of genuine participatory democracy ..." (Miller, 2007, p. 1).

The term curriculum for this discussion does not include content area knowledge and skills, but refers to democratic principles, beliefs and values that are taught within these educational institutions. "This is education aimed at helping create critically deliberating and acting citizens who work for a more just and humane national community and world" (Waltzer & Heilman, 2005, p. 161). Apple and Beane (2007) offered an extensive list of values and principles that should be found in democratic schools:

- Concern for the dignity and rights of all individuals, including historically disenfranchised groups.
- Concern for the welfare of others and "the common good".
- Faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to create possibilities for resolving problems.
- The open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity, that enables people to be as fully informed as possible
- The use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems and policies
- An understanding that democracy is not so much an "ideal" to be pursued as an "idealized" set of values that we must live and that must guide our life as a people
- The organization of social institutions to promote and extend the democratic way of life. (p. 7)

Korkmaz and Erden (2014) conducted a mixed-method study with participants around the globe with the purpose of identifying characteristics of democratic schools. A summary of their findings concluded that democratic schools have the following features:

- Democratic values
- Collaborative processes for decision-making
- Community input on policy design where students and adults equally participated in the process.
- A curriculum that provided learners with the freedom to decide how to use their time (p. 369).

Within both lists, the ideals of human equality, social justice and citizenship can be found. Many might argue that these ideals specifically do not speak to the traditional spirit of U.S. democracy. There are numerous examples throughout U.S. history that are in direct contradiction to these principles (Waltzer & Heilman, 2005). This predicament can become problematic when developing democratic schools. This area will be revisited.

Sudbury Valley School (SVS) started as an experiment in democratic education over 40 years ago. This school fully embraced the ideals of shared leadership and equal voice. “In Sudbury schools, children have been given full rights and responsibility for helping to run the school on an equal basis with the staff” (White, 2009, para. 14). Shared leadership is implemented campus wide, from curriculum development to fiscal management. Everyone also has committed to adhering to the rules and expectations that are kept in a “Law Book.” These rules and expectations govern all administrative policies and behavior and were crafted with the students’ input. Students abide by the rules and expectations and assist with enforcing them, knowing that they can change them if they deem them to not be administered

fairly. SVS is also proud of the fact that their students have experienced success in college and entrepreneurial pursuits upon leaving school. This school has sustained their democratic ideals and philosophies over time and could be considered a model democratic school.

Another structure and belief of democratic schools is that they are strong proponents of equal opportunities in education (Korkmaz & Erden, 2014). What this means is that all students have the right to be challenged and receive the best learning experiences that the school has to offer. “Every effort is made to eliminate tracking, biased testing, and other arrangements that so often deny such access on the grounds of race, gender, and socioeconomic class” (Apple & Beane, 2007, 12). Students in democratic schools are not classified in traditional categories that would inhibit their access to engaging learning experiences. Since they work hand-in-hand with teachers and other school personnel to plan instruction, they are given the opportunity to self-regulate when it comes to curriculum that may be a challenge. This, as well as other democratic structures, have been proven to be successful in diverse communities. Earlier literature states,

Schools in inner cities, rural towns, and suburbs – wealthy and poor – show substantial evidence of student achievement (as measured by academic examinations, recognitions and honors, attendance and completion rates, and post-graduation accomplishments) when a pedagogy of democracy is implemented. (Glickman, 1998, p. 176)

Democratic education has many purposes. “... [T]he empowerment of children in school administration and self-education, the use of democratic decision-making mechanisms in school, [establish] equality between children and adults, and [display] confidence in children” (Korkmaz & Erden, 2014, p. 366). Last but not least, democratic schools have the responsibility for teaching students the values and principles of democracy in an effort to

create knowledgeable citizens. “We must be sure they are prepared for the responsibilities of democratic citizenship in a complex society” (Ravitch, 2010, p. 13).

### **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is another student-centered approach to teaching and learning. “As the student population becomes increasingly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, language, socio-economic level, teachers are challenged to meet the academic, cultural and community needs of tomorrow’s citizen” (Edwards & Edick, 2013, p. 1). Not only are teachers challenged with addressing the needs of such a diverse population, many lack the training to do so (Gay, 2010b; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). CRT has been endorsed as an appropriate response in addressing the above mentioned circumstances. Like the concept “democratic education,” culturally responsive teaching has several definitions depending upon the source. Gay (2010b) defined CRT as, “...using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p. 31). Vavrus offered this definition, “Culturally responsive teaching is an educational reform that strives to increase the engagement and motivation of students of color who historically have been both unsuccessful academically and socially alienated from their public schools” (2008, p. 49). All of the definitions have in common the addressing the needs of a traditionally underserved population, students of color.

CRT’s tenets can be identified as developing opportunities for students of color and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds to be academically successful; to maintain cultural awareness; and to become critical examiners of life (Edwards & Edick, 2013; Gay, 2010b; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Vavrus, 2008). Much research has been conducted and

many have concluded that social inequities still exist and continue to play a big role with creating ineffective classrooms for students of color and students from low socioeconomic families (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Vavrus, 2008). With that being said, CRT provides teachers with a template to address the needs of this population of students.

The first tenet of CRT is to provide students with opportunities to be academically successful. In her research, Ladson-Billings (2017) found that, “Although the study took place in a district that performed poorly according to standardized tests, ... their students’ learning was expansive and deeply intellectual” (2017, p. 87). Having high expectations for students to perform academically is not enough to achieve success. The intentional employment of specific instructional strategies also influences students’ academic success. “Culturally responsive teaching is designed to help empower children and youth by using meaningful cultural connections to convey academic and social knowledge and attitudes” (Vavrus, 2008, p. 49). So, instead of students’ cultures being ignored in the classroom, students’ cultural voices are encouraged and incorporated into the curriculum and daily lesson plans.

The second tenet of CRT is cultural competence. “Cultural competence as defined in the context of culturally relevant pedagogy seeks to help students to appreciate their own history, culture, and traditions while also becoming fluent in at least one other culture” (Ladson- Billings, 2017, p. 88). “Teachers need to understand that racially diverse students frequently bring cultural capital to the classroom that is oftentimes drastically different from mainstream norms and worldviews” (Howard, 2003, p. 197). In other words, teachers must “see the student,” as described by Ayers (2010)

Teaching is an interactive practice that begins and ends with seeing the student. As layers of mystification and obfuscation are peeled away, as the student becomes more

fully present to the teacher, experiences and ways of thinking and knowing that were initially obscure become the ground on which an authentic and vital teaching practice can be constructed. p. 38)

Teachers who spend time to learn about their students and their backgrounds are able to understand better where their students' thoughts and belief systems originated and are better prepared to assist their students with reflection. "Whenever students are involved in reflecting upon their own lives and how they have come to believe and feel as they do, good teaching is going on" (Haberman, 2004, p. 57).

Seeing the student is not an easy task. Teachers must reflect and identify the origin of their own thoughts and beliefs about children from diverse backgrounds and confront various stereotypes they may hold concerning these populations. In her earlier work, Delpit(1995) made the following assertion, "Teacher education usually focuses on research that links failure and socioeconomic status, failure and cultural difference, and failure and single-parent households. ... there is a tendency to assume deficits in students rather than locate and teach strengths" ( p. 172). Before teachers can find value in learning about their students, in order to "see them," they must become aware and address their preconceived notions about diverse populations. "Culturally responsive teachers have not only a knowledge base conducive to investigate local cultures, but they also need to have explored their own personal knowledge about their cultural and racial identity formation (Vavrus, 2008, p. 54). This is a necessity for teachers who desire to be effective with these student populations and those who want to be culturally relevant teachers.

Parker, Bartell and Novak (2017) conducted a study to explore how teachers' perceptions about their students and their aims to be culturally responsive. This study included 13 teachers who were enrolled in a course entitled, Culture in the Mathematics

classroom. Data were collected through video recordings of the online synchronous classes, text from the discussion boards and teacher work from the four course projects. Two themes were used to analyze data, cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness. The findings revealed that each of the course projects had a different impact on teacher perceptions and practice. The project which had the most impact was the investigation of “Does Culture Matter” (DCM). This project had positive results under the themes, cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness. This was important to note because the remaining course projects offered little to no evidence of changed perceptions under the theme of cultural awareness. Under cultural awareness the DCM increased awareness of the existence of culture and its influence on the feelings students held about school and math. Under cultural responsiveness the DCM increased desire to know students more personally and more consideration as to how mathematics problems could be more culturally relevant. The study concluded that overall teachers’ perceptions related to cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness did change as a result of their engagement in the four projects which will support them in becoming culturally responsive teachers. However, findings did not indicate the development of teachers’ understandings around power and privilege which was an ancillary focus of the study. This study proved that once teachers were aware and addressed their assumptions about the students they were able to teach and assist students with maintaining cultural competence.

Allowing students to make cultural connections to the curriculum is an effective CRT instructional practice (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). This assists students with taking ownership of their own learning and being other sources of information for their peers within the classroom. “Student-centered learning that is cooperative, collaborative and community-

oriented allows for a socially mediated process that reminds students that learning does not occur in a vacuum but must be interpreted by the participants in the context of culture (Edwards & Edick, 2013, p. 8). “Culturally responsive teachers have the ability to implement a constructionist orientation to teaching and learning that allows students to have their voices and cultural backgrounds incorporated into curriculum and instruction” (Vavrus, 2008, p. 55).

Ladson-Billings (2009) found perfect examples of teachers using students’ culture as a means to deliver curriculum objectives. One teacher allowed her students to bring in lyrics to popular rap songs during a unit on poetry. Another teacher invited community members into the classroom as guest instructors of cultural knowledge. Lastly, a teacher allowed students to speak and write initially using their home language with the understanding that they would eventually translate that communication into Standard English. Students became proficient at “code-switching.” When students have the opportunity to culturally be themselves in the classroom and have their voices celebrated instead of being stifled or ignored, academic performance is increased and good teaching is going on. “Good teaching is a process of ‘drawing out’ rather than ‘stuffing in’” (Haberman, 2004, p.57).

Cholewa, Goodman, West-Olatunji and Amatea (2014) conducted a qualitative case study to examine culturally responsive education practices (CRE) through the lens of relational cultural theory (RCT). The data were collected as a part of a larger study which examined how one teacher developed relationships with her low-income African American students. Ms. M., the teacher in the study, was videotaped for one hour a day during the first four days of school. These videos were to later be used for professional development. Two main categories emerged during data analysis: instructional methods and classroom

management/teacher-student relations. Ms. M. demonstrated that she was well-versed in CRE practices and implemented them with excellence. These practices included: building on experiences and existing knowledge, integrating music and dance, utilizing familiar communication styles, responding to feeling states, holding high expectations, recognizing students publically and sharing herself through transparency. The findings indicate that the CRE practices align with RCT interventions which promote the psychological well-being of students of color. “By promoting psychological well-being through RCT’s five good things, these [CRE] practices may help reduce and ameliorate the psychological distress that students of color are likely to experience due to endemic discrimination and prejudice” (p. 589). The study concluded that when teachers are culturally aware of their students and their students’ lived experiences, they can provide culturally responsive interventions that promote psychological well-being.

This study is significant because of its correlation with culturally relevant teaching practices and the mental health of students of color. There is much literature linking these practices with improving student achievement. However, this is the first, if not one of very few, studies that associates and offers evidence that these CRE practices support and improve the psychological well-being of students of color. The study’s findings revealed that students in Ms. M.’s class demonstrated behaviors such as zest, empowerment, connection, clarity, and self-worth; all of which are related to RCT’s five good things.

The last tenet to CRT is the development of critical consciousness. Students should and must be examiners of the world and contemplate the ideals of social justice far and near. “CRT focuses on social change and social justice and encourages students to engage in civic and social justice initiatives. This tenet entails that students develop a commitment to service

as well as to social justice ideals” (Bassey, 2016, p.3). Students cannot just achieve at high levels in the academic arenas, they must take the knowledge gained from their various learning experiences and critically apply it to address the ills of the world. Students cannot be self-centered but rather look to be change agents in an ever-changing world. This type of critical thinking and analysis is an important skill for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners to develop and with which to become proficient.

Culturally responsive teaching invites and encourages teachers to become learners alongside their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). “Teachers must be able to construct pedagogical practices that have relevance and meaning to students’ social and cultural realities” (Howard, 2003, p. 195). The more students are engaged in meaningful learning experiences their potential to critically engage with the world is increased. “CRT is a democratic, student-centered pedagogy that incorporates and honors the cultural background of historically marginalized students and attempts to make meaningful links to academic knowledge for student success” (Vavrus, 2008, p. 56).

The demands and requirements of 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning may not appear that different from any of the other centuries. Educating the populace for a better tomorrow seems like the theme and focus of education in general. However, increased population diversity and rapid development of new technologies can be noted as distinct occurrences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom (Selander, 2007). In order to address these challenges found in 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms, different strategies for teaching and learning are required. Democratic education and culturally responsive teaching are two of many educational reform efforts recognized to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. Both approaches, at their core, require active student engagement in the development of curriculum and the development of

a critical perspective of the world (Apple & Beane, 2007; Gay, 2010b; Korkmaz & Erden, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995. 2009; Vavrus, 2008). Such preparation equips students to tackle the demands of a globalized world.

### **Globalization**

Throughout history the world has experienced various eras that have profoundly influenced change of intellectual thought, cultural practices, beliefs and values. Haugen (2009) offered the following descriptions of the centuries: Through the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Renaissance Age was birthed, which was characterized as a cultural movement with significant developments in literature and the arts. The 18<sup>th</sup> century was noted as the Age of Enlightenment, which was an intellectual movement advocating ideas of freedom, democracy and reason. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was known as the Gilded Age, especially in the U.S. This was a time of major growth in industry development, particularly factories, mining and labor organization as unions. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was the Age of Technology. Many technological advances were made during this century that fundamentally changed the daily lives of people around the world. All of these historical time periods shaped people's lives and initiated changes within the educational system. Each era required a new way of thinking about, functioning in and looking at life and the world. Each era provided new tools and perspectives to enhance the personal experience and journey of life.

And like the other centuries, the 21<sup>st</sup> century will have a title that represents the important occurrences of its time. Currently, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been named the Age of Globalization, characterized by the increasing interdependence of people and nations around the world. "The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by the availability of abundant information, advanced technology, a rapidly changing society, greater convenience in daily lives, and

keener international competition” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 1). But what is “globalization” and what impact will its existence have on education? Since the world is becoming more interdependent, there will be a need to educate students on how to live and function in this new global society. Consequently, these students must become aware of their individual roles and responsibilities in the global context, and therefore fulfill their roles as “global citizens.” However, what are the expected roles and responsibilities of “global citizens?” How do we adequately prepare students to successfully fulfill these roles?

One of the major challenges experienced when discussing globalization is the lack of a single agreed upon definition. Depending on the perspective an individual holds, the definition of globalization will change. Coatsworth defines globalization as, “what happens when the movement of people, goods, or ideas among countries and regions accelerates” (2004, p. 38). Steger offers the following definition, “... globalization applies to a set of social processes that appear to transform our present social condition of weakening nationality into one globality” (2009, p. 9). Although articulated differently, all the above definitions address the increasing connectedness of people around the world. Through commerce, trade, educational pursuits, and employment the world is a smaller place than it was a century ago. “Throughout the world [globalization] is generating more intricate demographic profiles, economic realities, political processes, technology and media, cultural facts and artifacts, and identities” (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 5). Many would attribute these occurrences to the improvements of travel and the creation of the internet. People and ideas can move across the world in record time. This has enabled the development of relationships with personal, professional, and political gains.

Although globalization seems to be a relatively new concept on the world scene, some of its practices can be traced back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Coatsworth, 2004). Coatsworth (2004) has historically analyzed the practices and impacts of globalization on the world. He has identified four globalization cycles that have profoundly changed world societies. He identified the first cycle beginning in 1492-1600 being characterized by the conquering of the Americas and the establishment of trade between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The second cycle, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was marked by the second wave of European colonization of the New World. The third cycle of globalization is noted as beginning late 19<sup>th</sup> century with increased international trade and mass migrations from both Asia and Europe to the Americas. Coatsworth (2004) classifies the current cycle of globalization beginning with the liberalization of international trade after WWII and the global trade of manufactured goods (2004). All of these cycles of globalization have helped to develop connections and relationships with people and nations around the world.

Steger (2009) stated that, “Globalization surfaced as the buzzword of the ‘Roaring Nineties’ because it best captured the increasingly interdependent nature of social life on our planet” (2009, p. 1). He further identifies, what he calls, four characteristics at the core of the globalization phenomenon. The first characteristic includes the creation and expansion of social networks and activities that are not bound by political, economic, cultural and geographic boundaries. The second quality reflects the expansion of social relations and increased interdependence. The third quality involves the intensified and accelerated social exchange of ideas and perspectives. The last characteristic explains that “... globalization processes do not occur merely on an objective material plane but also involve the subjective

plane of human consciousness” (p. 15). This thought will be revisited in the discussion of global citizenship.

Again, the shrinking of the world has created a level of global interdependence that will be an infamous trait of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For many critics of globalization, its economic focus as a means of global interdependence has been objectionable. Noddings (2005) stated,

First, there is evidence that present efforts at globalization have aggravated existing economic injustice. Second, globalization’s emphasis on economic growth has led to practices that threaten the physical environment – life of the Earth itself. Third, critics object to construing global interest entirely in economic terms. Fourth, because globalization points to a global economy, we have to ask whose economic vision will be adopted. (p. 3)

Noddings’ (2005) concerns are not unique to her. “While some political scientists see economic integration as the very essence of globalization, others have come to see growing inequality as its most profound legacy, which should reaffirm the centrality of politics over economics” (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 12). In examining both quotes, it is imperative to question in the globalization age, whose ideas, beliefs, and values will be supported and maintained and whose will be ignored. This dilemma opens the door for a brief discussion about truth and power.

Foucault (1980) made the following statement, “Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which accepts and makes as true: ...” These regimes of truth that are held by national governmental systems, which Foucault refers to as structures of power, are systematically communicated to its populace through various apparatuses. Foucault identified some of these apparatuses as educational institutions, military, literature and other forms of media. These governmental systems have traditionally employed disciplinary acts of power to ensure conformity of individuals to this set of beliefs and values or regimes of truth. Foucault (1980) noted in that national governmental systems

use various techniques to ensure adoption of the regimes of truth. One of the techniques is normalizing. This technique can be found to facilitate conformity and compliance through national educational systems. Generations are taught to not only believe in but accept national regimes of truth, especially with regards to power and plan their lives to support the perpetuation of these truths. McIntosh offered the following example, “United States educational institutions merely replicate the power relations of the rest of U.S. society ...” (2005, p. 32). Again, the use of educational systems to perpetuate national values and customs as means for creating norms within the society is a practice that many nations use as an example of their power relationship with their populace.

Historically, it has been known and understood that conflict among governments were a concern of the differences in their regimes of truth; philosophies, beliefs, and values. Ladson-Billings (2005) offers the following as an example of a national regime of truth, “... U.S. schools [are] designed to prepare students for active citizenship. However, this preparation is likely to be in the form of uncritical acceptance of the United States as the “best” country in the world” (p. 75). So, in a global village, whose knowledge and regime of truth will be legitimized and promoted as the norm? Will the subjugated knowledge of those marginalized countries be ignored as we define a global society? These questions have yet to be formally addressed; however the power of each of them has the potential to destroy the personal, professional, and political relationships that have been a product of globalization. In the meantime, it is understood that globalization is indeed a phenomenon that will not fade away, for its impact and influences are far reaching. Therefore, it is important to address the idea of global citizenship.

## **Global Citizenship**

Globalization has forced us to review the ideas of citizenship. What does it mean to be a global citizen? Does one lose their national identity in order to become a global citizen? These questions and more like them have been asked as the world becomes a smaller place. “Instead of being bound by geopolitical boundaries and national loyalties, people are developing multiple allegiances that transform them into “flexible citizens” (Ong as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2005). “... [T]he question arises of how citizenship could be redefined if one of its dimensions were felt membership in a political and social unit that is the whole globe” (McIntosh, 2005, p. 22).

Citizenship can be defined in various ways and like the term “globalization” the definition can change depending on the perspective. Ladson-Billings (2005) identified two aspects of citizenship,

The political aspect of citizenship refers to the ability to participate in collective goal attainment at the societal level, through the process of government. The societal component of citizenship refers to an ability to have access to the society’s resource and capacities that permit social mobility and comfort. (p. 69)

What about the cultural aspects of citizenship? Maira (2004) indicated that, “Citizenship has traditionally been thought of in political, economic, and civic terms, but increasingly, analyses focus on the notion of cultural citizenship as multiethnic societies are forced to confront questions of difference that undergird social inequity (p. 212). McIntosh (2005) discusses the social factors of citizenship by stating, “Within this vast world, the marks of citizenship would need to include affection, respect, care curiosity, and concern for the well-being of all living beings” (p. 23). The multidimensionality of the term citizenship has ensured that the concept of “global citizen” will also have multiple dimensions. At the core of any definition of global citizen, lies the beliefs and values of that term.

According to Noddings (2005), a global citizen has a responsibility to address and/or protest the numerous injustices around the world. We cannot be a global citizen and ignore the civil and political rights issues of this time. “The concerns of global citizens extend beyond economic justice to social/political justice. Rights that we demand for ourselves should be offered to others worldwide” (Noddings, 2005, p. 8). Therefore, global citizens are obligated to take off their lens of obliviousness and take action against human atrocities. But what if the protest is unwelcomed by the subjects of the injustice? Global citizens cannot assume that their truth, although dominant, is the only truth worthy of attention. They cannot over generalize the attitudes of subjugated or marginalized people around the world. “Rights arise out of expressed needs and different cultures put emphasis on different needs. Moreover, when basic needs are unsatisfied, some rights taken for granted by citizens of advanced democracies may seem frivolous” (Noddings, 2005, p. 9). The education of global citizens must include analysis of geographical and cultural history to provide the appropriate context for the campaign against injustices around the world.

McIntosh (2005) offers a less political view of the role and/or responsibility of a global citizen. “... [The] habits of mind, heart, body and soul that have to do with working for and preserving a network of relationships and connections across lines of difference and distinctness” (p. 23). In her discussion of the capacities that help to define the habits of the mind, heart, body, and soul, she emphasized a great sense of self-awareness. As stated above, there are many responsibilities that a global citizen can look forward to undertaking. The new challenge then becomes preparing current and future generations of students to become successful global citizens in the age of globalization. “New and broader global visions are needed to prepare children and youth to be informed, engaged, and critical citizens ...”

(Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 3). We must then ask ourselves what does educating global citizens include and require for successful adaptation in an ever-changing global context.

### **Education for Globalization**

What skills and knowledge will the global citizen need to have? Who should determine the need for the skills? These are questions that need to be answered in order to change existing school curricula and instructional practices. Bloom (2004) identified three main channels where globalization has increased the importance of not only a good education but the right education: operation in an increasingly competitive global economy, cross-national communication and the increasing speed of change. As the job market goes global, there will be a specific set of skills and knowledge that will make one more marketable and successful in the global community. These skills are classified as global literacy competencies. Stewart (2010) defines global literacy competencies as,

... knowledge of other world regions, cultures, economies, and global issues; skills to communicate in languages other than English, to work in cross-cultural teams, and to assess information from different sources around the world; values of respect for other cultures and the disposition to engage responsibility as an actor in global context. (p. 102)

These are the skills that global citizens need in order to be productive citizens in the global society.

Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hillaird (2004) stated, “Education’s challenge will be to shape the cognitive skills, interpersonal sensibilities and cultural sophistication of children and youth whose lives will be both engaged in local contexts and responsive to larger transnational processes” (p. 3). Knowledge about other countries and cultures is a necessity for all students in order to compete in the evolving global society. “Human survival may not

depend on the preservation of racial/cultural heritages, but human life is certainly enriched by the existence of different cultural practices, and cultural practices are influenced by race”

(Noddings, 2005, p. 13). Students must understand cultural protocols and respect diversity as they prepare to compete in a global job market. Zhao asserted that,

As citizens of the globe, they need to be aware of the global nature of societal issues, to care about people in distant places, to understand the nature of global economic integration, to appreciate the interconnectedness and interdependence of peoples, to respect and protect cultural diversity, to fight for social justice for all, and to protect planet Earth – home of all human beings. (2009, p. 113)

Successfully competing in the global marketplace is a concern for countries around the world. As the world becomes a smaller place, industrial countries are revisiting how they educate their populace and in what content and context (Zhao, 2009). The United States must do the same, and they must do it sooner than later. “It is true that in a time of rapid global integration, the capacity to move between the global and various local levels of economic, intellectual and social activity is becoming increasingly important” (Ziguras, 2007, p. 107). We cannot afford to lose a generation of students. The world is changing at an accelerated rate and we must make immediate changes in our education system in order to keep up.

DiBenedetto and Myers (2016) conducted an exhaustive literature review to identify 21<sup>st</sup> century employability skills relevant to career readiness for high school students. A total of nine seminal pieces of literature were identified that provided lists of employability skills. Nine constructs surfaced from the literature review and included five to ten specific skills that represented the general categories of knowledge, skills and dispositions. The nine constructs were: learning skills, life skills, career skills, social skills, knowledge competencies, incidental learning skills, dispositions, experiences and interdisciplinary topics. From this research, the Conceptual Model for the Study of Student Readiness in the

21<sup>st</sup> Century was developed. This model provides an accurate systems-approach to prepare students to be college and career ready. In the absence of a common definition of college and career ready skills, this model in conjunction with the nine constructs can provide educators with a framework to develop curriculum and instructional practices. “As students develop within this model they become independent minded, life ready individuals that are prepared to be responsible citizens in the world in which they live” (p. 32).

The phenomenon of globalization has far reaching implications and it is not a concept of only economic development. Starke-Meyerring (2005) refers to globalization as, “... the increasing interdependence and integration of social, cultural, political and economic processes across local, national, regional, and global levels” (p. 470). The more interdependent and interconnected the world becomes issues of citizenship and power will surface. What does it mean to be a global citizen, and who gets to define that role? Along with that, questions of the role of education in the age of globalization has emerged. What knowledge and skills do global citizens need, and, again, who gets to decide? “Millions of children and youth are growing up in a world where global processes are placing new demands on educational systems that are traditionally averse to change” (Gardner, 2004, p. 252). Educators need to educate themselves about globalization and its influence on personal, professional, and political relationships across the globe. This knowledge will help to prepare this current generation and generations to come to be productive and successful global citizens.

Cozzolino DiCicco (2016) conducted an ethnographic study to examine the reform effort to integrate global education at Olympus High School (OHS). During this four and half year study data were collected through interviews, observations and documents. Olympus is a

high-performing public school district in an affluent suburban area. This district is unique because it has a school culture where excellence and equity are both highly valued and the community is concerned about social justice and equity in education. In 2010 the district adopted a reform process, the Global Studies Initiative (GSI), which was envisioned to be a new global lens for the district. Implementation of GSI was strategic in starting small with high school curriculum and learning experiences. The school redesigned courses to have a global perspective and added new courses that expanded global studies. The school updated summer reading lists to include authors and stories of other cultures and lands. The Global Studies Credential (GSC) was developed for students who wanted more in-depth learning experiences in global studies. This program encouraged study abroad opportunities, dual enrollment coursework, videoconferences and study groups.

The findings of the study revealed tensions between GSI intentions and implementation. During the first two years of the implementation, the district sought out prospective partners from universities and non-profit organization to validate GSI and GSC. The district held in high esteem their reputation of academic excellence and desired a distinguishable stamp of approval for both programs. Students enrolled in GSC were also looking for opportunities that would assist them in “standing out” on college applications. However, this was problematic because the district could not secure accreditation for these initiatives. Tension arose between the GSI and state standards and assessments. Teachers struggled with integrating global studies content with state standards inspired curriculum. This in turn impacted student scores which were a highlight of the district. Another tension surfaced between the community and the district. “The competing priorities related to standards and accountability were an issue for the district and [could] be found in articles that

appeared in the local newspaper, minutes for school board meetings and topics selected for community forums” (p.16). The community believed the district had too many initiatives and could not operate with the level of excellence for which they were known. Addressing these concerns contributed to the last tension, implementation fidelity. What started as an ambitious district reform effort, in four years the program had been reduced to a few global studies classes in the social studies department and dwindling participation in the GSC. The GSI was intended to prepare students to be knowledgeable global citizens and prepare them to be competitive and achieve career success in the global marketplace. The Olympus School District was challenged with negotiating these two intentions and succumbed to offering students a superficial integration of global studies education.

This case study may provide support for abandoning the idea of global studies integration in an effort to prepare students to be global citizens. However, that would be a detrimental interpretation of the study’s findings. This study acknowledges that much can be learned and therefore improved upon with efforts to integrate global studies. And although difficult, the exposure to global perspectives and corresponding knowledge will ensure that students have the tools and resources that they need to live in this global society.

### **Conclusion**

Review of the literature addressing student performance gaps, education reform, teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and globalization points to the complexities of education within the current school climate, characterized by accountability and testing schemes with less focus on education for globalization. No one solution exists to appropriately address all the variables and nuances that surface when examining educational standards, structures, programs, policies, etc. in relationship with addressing global issues,

challenges and demands. However, we cannot turn away from the challenge and accept defeat. We must forge ahead and continue to discuss issues of race, equity, social justice and citizenship. Educators must continue and increase the usage democratic and culturally relevant instructional practices and programs to educate and prepare this generation and those to come to live productively and successfully as global citizens.

The following chapter provides an overview of this study's methodology. First, I discuss the catalyst for my interest in this research topic. Then I address the rationale for qualitative research, in particular, the theoretical traditions of narratology and social constructivism. The specific details of the design of the study including data analysis will follow. The chapter will conclude with the study's limitations and ethical considerations.

. CHAPTER 3  
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this social constructivist narrative study was to understand the thoughts, perceptions and experiences of K-8 educational professionals regarding education for globalization who are employed by an urban charter school in the Midwest. The central question and sub-questions that guided this narrative inquiry was: What themes are apparent in the narratives of novice and veteran teachers in an urban charter school in the Midwest?

- What meanings do novice and veteran teachers have about education for globalization?
- What do they do to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum?

Teacher voices are absent in current literature that addresses education for globalization. Much literature about globalization and education for globalization has been written from the political, social and economic lenses (Apple, Kenway & Singh, 2007; Bloom, 2004; Coatsworth, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Spring, 2009; Steger, 2009). When the field of education is represented in the literature, it is from the perspectives of educational theorists and policy makers (Apple, Kenway & Singh, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Noddings, 2005; Spring, 2009; Steger, 2009). However, the voices of the educators who are responsible for providing education for globalization are buried if they exist at all.

This study can be of interest to teachers, school administrators, proponents of educational reform, and teacher education programs, especially in the context of education for globalization. I provided an opportunity for novice and veteran teachers to share their understandings of education for globalization and how it has or will influence their work, if at all. Their narratives should assist educational reformers with developing comprehensive

plans for the implementation of global studies across curricula. These narratives should also offer information to teacher education programs as to how to improve their programs in order to meet the demands of education for globalization, as expressed in the following:

The quickening pace of globalization over the past 20 years – driven by profound technological changes, the rise of China and India, and the accelerating pace of scientific discovery – has produced a whole new world. As never before, education in the United States must prepare students for a world where the opportunities for success require the ability to compete and cooperate on a global scale. (Stewart, 2010, p. 97).

The above quote was what first sparked my interest in the study of education for globalization. As a social studies educator, I made it a point to try to stay current with local and world news. I understood that world countries were connected through a complex system of political, economic, and social ties. On numerous occasions, I required my middle school students to complete current events projects and presentations with the hope of igniting their interest in global events and world affairs and increasing their awareness of this complex system. Right before our eyes the world was becoming a smaller place. Not in size, but in the interconnectedness of countries and people across the globe (Hsu & Wang, 2010; Ruperez, 2003; Stewart, 2010; Tomlinson, 2003; Zhao, 2009). Many attribute this phenomenon of micrifying the world to the invention of the internet and other technological advances (Battro, 2004, Hsu & Wang, 2010, Turkle, 2004, Zhao, 2009). “Globalization usher[ed] in a new era in which human interaction across many borders (educational, political, scientific, artistic, economic, religious, etc.) shape[d] a new human environment” (Battro, 2004, p. 92). People around the world could now learn and conduct business without the limitations of time and space. Students gained access to libraries and other educational resources from around the globe via the internet. Businesses could facilitate staff and other meetings via

teleconferencing and video chats. The increase of the development and use of innovative technology has transformed the world as we once knew it.

One of the outcomes of this technological advancement and micrifying of the world is the development of a specific set of knowledge and skills needed for navigation of the new global society.

Since we are living on a shrinking planet and are made contiguous with others by technology, commerce, conflicts, international networks, and the environment, the question arises of how citizenship could be redefined if one of its dimensions were felt membership in a political and social unit that is the whole globe. (McIntosh, 2005, p. 22)

This outcome has commanded the attention of educators and educational policy makers with regards to evaluating current curricula and educational practices and their alignment to the needs of students' successful navigation of the global village. "One of the goals of modern education must be to help individuals see where they fit into the world. Communities and nations are still important, but awareness of global society is also needed" (Bloom, 2004, p. 73). "Both formal education and social and professional demands increasingly stress the need to develop digital skills" (Battro, 2004, p. 92). This set of knowledge and skills has been labeled by many as global literacy (Brewer, Tan, Metton, 2012; Hsu & Wang, 2010; King & Thorpe, 2012; Merriman & Nicoletti, 2007; Stewart, 2010).

Addressing education for globalization within the context of curricula and educational practices has looked different across the globe. However, ensuring that education for globalization is addressed has been a common concern for many countries (Bloom, 2004; Zhao, 2009). While there has been some agreement as to what knowledge and skills should be included under the term "global literacy," the question that remains is, "At what level are teachers and other educational professionals aware of education for globalization?" The

dilemma is that the level of knowledge and awareness held by teachers and other educational professionals for globalization directly impact their ability to adequately prepare students for competition in a global society. Appropriately preparing teachers to address the instructional needs of students in this global society is essential to any educational reform initiative for education for globalization.

With this intent in mind, I selected qualitative design elements that captured the realities of my participants and extended their experiences with globalization.

The theoretical traditions that framed this study were social constructivism and narrative inquiry. These theoretical traditions were used to capture the stories of the participants' "constructed realities," understandings of and experiences with education for globalization. Through narrative research I hoped to, "... portray experience, to question common understandings, to offer a degree of interpretive space" (Coulter & Smith, 2009, p. 577). When, "The voices of a marginalized community are heard, read, and analysed through narrative research, [they] have significant implications for policy makers" (Fox, 2008, p. 337). "Personal narratives, ... reveal cultural and social patterns through the lens of individual experiences" (Patton, 2015, p. 128).

Social constructivism lends itself to the creation of richer personal narratives. "...constructivist research seeks to generate the most sophisticated description or explanation of a particular setting as a result of an interactive process between the researcher and participants, many of whom are likely to hold differing perspectives about individual situations" (Brown, Wilson & Clissett, 2010, p. 678). Participants' knowledge about a subject is not set in stone, but is influenced by their interactions with others' knowledge and therefore constructed into an experienced "reality" (Patton, 2015). "In terms of practice, the

questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 24). Social constructivism and narrative inquiry allow for teachers’ voices to be heard as they articulate their “realities” with education for globalization. Although this chapter includes detailed discussion of the design of the study, it would be reckless to not first address the rationale for using a qualitative approach to this study.

### **Rationale for Qualitative Research**

Stimulated by a keen interest in this topic and teachers’ experiences with education for globalization, I elected to use qualitative research as the major methodological underpinnings of the proposed study. “Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell & Poth, 2018 p. 42). Qualitative research encompasses some standard components: The research is conducted in the natural setting where the problem occurs and where the participants of the study interact with the problem. “Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of variety of empirical materials, ... that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The researcher as an instrument of the study (Patton, 2015), collects and analyzes the data and reports the findings. Data are usually collected through observations, interviews and/or the analysis of documents and has expanded to include other data sources, i.e. videos, photos, music and other audiovisual materials. Throughout the research, the researcher is careful to focus on the meanings the participants hold for the problem being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This is an opportunity to give voice to the participants of the study. However, this type of research

allows for the researcher to interpret what they encounter as they collect the data in the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Qualitative research is a design that allows for change and can transform as the researcher engages in the process. This is referred to as “emergent design” by Creswell & Poth (2018). Maxwell (2013) describes this component as a reflexive process. Whereby, “... any component of the design may need to be reconsidered or modified during the study in response to new developments or changes in some other component” (p. 2). Maxwell further states that the design in qualitative research is an ongoing process of moving back-and-forth between all the components of the research. Most qualitative research employs the use of a theoretical lens when looking at a problem. This lens provides a focus in which to address what can be an overwhelming subject or topic. Ultimately, qualitative researchers, “... try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 39.) Researchers might present varying opinions about the problem or various perspectives in an attempt to create a “holistic” view of the problem.

Qualitative research not only has common components of implementation, it also involves specific methods for data collection and analysis. Patton (2002) opens one of the sections in chapter one with the flowing quote from Albert Einstein, “Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted” (p. 12). This quote is a simple yet great description of qualitative data collection methods. Qualitative researchers use various means and methods to collect data for their studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Patton, 2015; Stoner, 2010). “Qualitative methods permit inquiry into selected issues in great depth with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance; that

data collection need not be constrained by predetermined analytical categories contributes to the potential breadth of qualitative inquiry” (Patton, 2015, p. 257).

As stated earlier, qualitative research is used to research a social or human problem. This inquiry method lends itself to a variety of research traditions. For my study I used the tradition of narrative inquiry with the lens of social constructivism. I began this discussion with narrative inquiry which was the major approach for the study, followed by how social constructivism acts as a critical lens for seeing and understanding how might the participants experience globalization.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

I first encountered the term “narrative” when I was in elementary school when I had to write a story about what I did over summer vacation. As I matured in school, the narrative topics became more sophisticated. I would write stories about the first time I was scared and the time I was most embarrassed. As a junior in high school, I read infamous published narratives like *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass* and *The Souls of Black Folk*, which I believed to be a narrative of W.E.B. Dubois. I enjoyed reading the stories of the events in their lives and their growth and development because of them. Their personal perspectives of life events and the decisions they made were interesting to me. I always believed that people are who they are because of the challenges they experience and the choices they made. I found myself becoming a study of people, analyzing their decisions and trying to understand their perspectives. This desire for “the story” led me to choose narrative research for my qualitative inquiry.

As I acquired knowledge about the use of stories as a method in qualitative research, I was amazed about how the approach simply ties to our everyday lives as social beings.

Essentially, life is a story and we live storied lives. Shuman (2005) described storytelling as “an aspect of the ordinary . . . . touted as a healing art . . . a means for transforming oppressive conditions by creating opportunity for suppressed voices to be heard or for creating opportunities to listen to those voices” (p. 5). Narratives, as a mode of writing, originated in the field of literature and later was found in disciplines such as history, anthropology, sociology, and education. “Narrative research has many forms, uses a variety of analytic practices, and is rooted in different social humanities disciplines” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 67).

The term narrative has been deemed as synonymous with “personal story”. The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially lead storied lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Craig, 2004). Czarniawska defines narrative as, “. . . a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (2004, p. 17). “The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000, p. 20). Dewey (1934) understood that life experiences were both social and personal. In other words, people’s experiences, although personal, always occur within a social context. This means that storied lives must be viewed through social lens in order to fully understand and interpret the experience. Understanding this dichotomy of experiences is especially important when desiring to capture the stories of teachers concerning their practice. A practice which occurs within a “knowledge community” located on a “professional knowledge landscape” (Craig, 2004). In these spaces teachers, “. . . often live and tell cover stories, stories in which they portray themselves as experts, . . .” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 25). For this study, I provided teachers with

safe places free from judgment and critique so that they felt comfortable enough to reveal their “secret lived stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Craig, 2004). Stories that explain that teachers are life-long learners who desire to become experts at their craft, a goal that has yet to be accomplished. Narrative inquiry allowed me to obtain these stories.

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) identified a three dimension conceptual framework for narrative inquiry. First dimension of narrative inquiry is temporality. Narrative inquirers must understand that events and people have a past, present and future which means that they transition, change. The second dimension of narrative inquiry is sociality. Narrative inquirers must understand that events and people exist in social contexts and relationships. The third dimension of narrative inquiry is place. Narrative inquirers need to consider the impact or influence “the place” has on events and people in the study. Understanding these dimensions and operating with them in mind will assist with ensuring that the narratives represent “the whole”.

In their research Steven and Tighe Doerr (1997) identified three types of narratives; the epiphany which was a revelation, the confirmation of something suspected, and the calamity which details a traumatic event. In this study, the epiphany narrative is an expected result. As described by Steven and Tighe Doerr, the epiphany narrative allows for, “... the essential meaning of their [life] to become visible ... [and] insights to fuel radical changes” (p. 529). Through interviews and journal prompts I expected teachers to have epiphanies as they obtained a greater understanding of education for globalization and in turn changed their practice. These epiphanies were evidence of the teachers’ social construction of education for globalization.

## **Social Constructivism**

The tradition of social constructivism is a worldview where, "... individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 24). Patton (2015) identifies constructivism as the, "... multiple realities constructed by people and the implications of those constructions for their lives and interactions with others" (p. 121). Understanding that social constructivism is the understanding of reality that is constructed, not the construction or reality is important (Patton, 2015). "The constructivist perspective is that learning is a process of interpreting and organizing information and experiences into meaningful units, transforming old conceptions and constructing new ones" (Golding, 2009, p. 468). Teachers were the focus of this study. They created meaning around their individual and collective experiences and understandings of education for globalization. Hence, this is why this was a *social* constructivist study.

The term social constructivism can be traced back to W.I. Thomas's theorem which was crafted in the late 1920's. His thought was that whatever people defined as real was real in its consequences (Patton, 2015). Guba and Lincoln (2001) identified relativism, transactional subjectivism and hermeneutic-dialecticism as the assumptions of constructivism. In other words, truth is a matter of consensus; facts have meaning only in context; causes and effects occur only by imputation; phenomena is understood only in context; and data (findings) from constructivist inquiry cannot be generalized, it is only representative of the participants of that study (Patton, 2015). Thomas Kuhn first applied the understanding of social construction of knowledge to the field of science. His work assisted in establishing social constructivism as a legitimate methodological paradigm (Patton, 2015).

This study required the participants to discuss their perceptions “constructed realities” regarding education for globalization. Because education for globalization is a relatively new concept in the field of education, the participants’ constructed realities of their role with this educational reform initiative offered insight into understandings about the term. Social constructivism is the lens in which the narratives were crafted and viewed. However, two terms in the literature suggest that constructivism and constructionism are synonymous. The distinction between the two lies within one’s view of knowledge. Whereas, social constructivism constitutes knowledge the individual brings to the learning process through their social and psychological worlds (Duffy & Jonassen, 2013; Boghossian, 2006), social constructionism portends that knowledge is always shaped by history and culture (Burr, 2015; Young & Collin, 2004) determined by an individual’s positionality in the world which dictates the act of knowing. Such positionality may involve a more critical view of knowledge through the lens of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, geography, and other shapers of culture. Within this vein, participants’ understanding about global literacy may have been shaped by their positionalities, based on various constructions of culture. My own positionality as an African American female, growing up under court-order desegregation in Denver, CO, with over 20 years of working in public and charter schools played a role in my research.

### **Role of Researcher**

Creswell and Poth (2018) identify the researcher as a “key instrument”. The researcher collects and analyzes the data of the research. Although there are various protocols to use for data collection and analysis, the responsibility still falls on the researcher to choose and employ appropriate methods and strategies. The researcher of narrative inquiry

understands that a relationship is built between her and the participants and through the process of collaboration there is mutual storytelling and restorying as the research proceeds (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Each role will provide the researcher with access to different experiences and therefore will impact the study's findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Stoner, 2010).

As a full participant, the researcher is engaging in document analysis, interviewing, observing and reflection at the same time. On the other hand the onlooker has the opportunity to separate each process (Patton, 2015). Anthropologists Boas and Sapir defined the roles as insider and outsider, emic and etic approaches. The emic insider, approach required the researcher to share as intimately as possible the life of those in the setting being studied. The insider not only sees what is going on but has the opportunity to feel what is going on (Patton, 2015). However, for the etic approach Pike stated that this approach required, "standing far enough away from or outside of a particular culture to see its separate events, primarily in relation to their similarities and differences, as compared to events in other cultures" (Pike, 1954 p. 10).

As the researcher, I identified the background experiences I brought to the research study. Maxwell (2013) emphasizes the need for the researcher to examine his/her goals, experiences, assumptions, feelings and values and their connections to the problem being studied as well as their influence on the design and implementation of the study. "Narrative inquirers need to attend to three kinds of justification: the personal, the practical, and the social" (Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007, p. 24). Noted earlier, I must be aware of my own positionality and acknowledge my knowledge and experiences that likely will shape my interpretation of the problem and the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This is known as

bracketing. “Bracketing is a method used by some researchers to mitigate the potential deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research and thereby to increase the rigor of the project” (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 81). This evaluation of personal “baggage” that the researcher brings to the research process is addressed specifically in the limitations and ethical considerations part of the study design.

As the researcher of this study, my role was simple. I am a novice at qualitative inquiry, and therefore applied research strategies and methods deliberately. Using the narrative tradition, I collected the stories of educational professionals as they related to the perceptions of education for globalization. The narratives were crafted from the interviews and answers to journal prompts. I had the responsibility for creating their story while staying as true to their voices as possible. This is important because their stories must authentically express their understandings of education for globalization. As an educator, I had the unique opportunity to occupy the role of insider and outsider. However, I did not make assumptions about my experiential knowledge as being applicable to the understanding of the stories of the study’s participants.

### **Design of the Study**

When designing a qualitative study the researcher must first decide the purpose of the study. “Purpose is the controlling force in research. Decisions about design, measurement, analysis, and reporting all flow from purpose” (Patton, 2015, p. 248). There are five types of research that have very distinct purposes: Basic research purpose is to discover truth and to provide knowledge about a phenomenon; Applied research purpose is to understand a human or societal issue or problem; Summative evaluation purpose is to determine the effectiveness of a program or intervention; Formative evaluation purpose is to improve a program or

intervention; and Action research is to solve an identified problem. Each type of research defines the design of the research. They each have specific desired outcomes as well as key assumptions. The problem as identified in this study is the inadequate preparation of school children in the U.S. to acquire the international skills necessary for their successful living in the global age. As a result, the purpose of this study is to collect and explore the perceptions that educational professionals have about to education for globalization.

Although this study had attributes of basic research, this study was an applied research study. Exploration of the perceptions held by educational professionals in the context of education for globalization brought about an understanding of its current and potential impact. This purpose aligned with the research tradition of narrative research and social constructivism. Narrative research focus is the exploration of the life or lives of individuals (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000), social constructivism involves the constructed realities of those lived experiences (Patton, 2015).

### **Selection of Site and Participants**

Maxwell (2013) suggests that the design of a qualitative study has four components: Research relationship between the researcher and those being researched; site and participant selection; data collection; and data analysis. Researchers must be deliberate when addressing these areas. “In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument of the research, and the research relationships are the means by which the research gets done” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 91). The researcher must be strategic when developing a relationship with those he/she is researching to maximize the experience and to obtain meaningful data (Stoner, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). “Decisions about where to conduct your research and whom to include are an essential part of your research methods” (Maxwell,

2013, p. 96). This process is referred to as “purposeful sampling.” The researcher cannot think to gather meaningful data from all potential sources that have a connection to the topic of study. They must narrow their lens to a realistic and manageable population of participants. Each approach to research requires different data which is collected through different methods and will be analyzed differently. The data collection and analysis is directly tied to the purpose of the study.

This qualitative study was conducted within a charter school district in the urban core of a Midwestern city and state. This district is 98 % African American with a 93 % free and reduced lunch status. This setting offered the most potential for candid responses to the interview questions as well as authentic narratives. I have worked in and with this district for the past 12 years and have developed great professional and personal relationships with colleagues. However to my surprise, those that volunteered to participate in the study were teachers with whom I had little to no former relationships. Criterion sampling was employed in this study. Criterion sampling described by Creswell is when, “... all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon.” (2007, p. 128). This study conducted criterion sampling through maximum variation. Creswell and Poth (2018) define maximum variation as an, “... approach [that] consists of determining in advance some criteria that differentiate the sites or participants, and then selecting sites or participants that are quite different on the criteria” (p. 158). “Variation of the sample and research methods avoids one-sidedness of representation of the topic; variation of questions avoids just one answer” (Patton, 2002, p. 109). Therefore, for this study the criteria for participants were teachers in the urban core. The maximum variation that was employed included the number of years in education of each participant as well as their experiences with teaching in the

urban core. My goal was to include novice teachers, 0-5 years teaching experience, and veteran teachers, 15+ years of teaching experience. Their level of experience with teaching in the urban core will be another factor considered during the analysis part of the study for comparisons.

The goal of this study was to collect the understandings and perceptions of education for globalization held by urban teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it relates to their personal story of being a teacher and advocate for their students. Their understandings will provide information for the development of educational reform initiatives to address this growing phenomenon.

### **Data Collection**

Qualitative research takes on many forms and has many purposes. However no matter the form or purpose, there are two distinct strategies that every qualitative researcher must be aware of and address. Reflexivity, "... relates to the degree of influence that the researcher exerts either intentionally or unintentionally, on the findings" (Jootun, McGhee & Marland, 2009, p. 42). Primeau (2003) stated, "Reflexivity enhances the quality of research through its ability to extend our understanding of how our positions and interests as researchers affect all stages of the research process" (p. 9). The choice of data collected in this study was evidence of reflexivity. From the start of the study potential data sources are either chosen or rejected. This decision ultimately impacts the findings of the study by creating the lens used to study the problem. Reactivity is the other strategy found in qualitative research. Reactivity is the influence the researcher has on the participants of the study and sometimes even the site (Patton, 2015). The relationship between the researcher and the participants must be comfortable and exemplify mutual trust (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maxwell, 2013; Patton,

2015; Shenton, 2004). Mutual trust is imperative in narrative inquiry. Participant must trust and have confidence that the researcher will restory their experiences accurately and in the appropriate contexts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Craig, 2004; Shenton, 2004). This trustful relationship can address any validation concerns that may arise.

Data collected for this study consisted of open-ended interviews, writings on journal prompts and document reviews.

**Interviews.** For this qualitative study, data were collected mainly through the use of interview protocols. “Interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). There are various approaches to interviewing. Each approach has specific outcomes in mind. “Qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the actor’s perspective through detailed interviewing and observation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 12). Interviewing is a great way to capture the stories of individuals (Stoner, 2010). Participants are able to articulate their understandings and experiences using their own words to express themselves. The information that is gathered from interviews is directly connected to the planning and preparation of the interviewer. Patton (2015) discusses three basic approaches to interviewing: informal conversation, general interview guide, and standardized open-ended.

The informal conversation, “... relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction ...” (Patton 2015, p. 437). The informal conversations approach is also known as “unstructured interviewing” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The information gathered by informal conversations represents candid responses to casual questions. This approach will garner a wealth of information. However, the information gathered will differ from person-to-person. Depending upon the occasion, the

same person might share different information. Each conversation can and will reveal varying information from each participant.

The general interview guide outlines a checklist of topics and issues to be discussed that is determined ahead of time (Patton, 2002; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The interview guide provides more structured method for data collection. The interview guide consists of some basic questions the researcher would like answered by the participants. The guide ensures that all participants provide information on the same questions. The interview guide can be as structured as necessary yet leaving the researcher with enough flexibility to follow up on various answers that the participants may give.

The open-ended approach, also known as individual in-depth interviews, involves carefully worded questions with minimizing variation with the interview between participants (Patton, 2015; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). “Individual in-depth interviews are widely used ... to co-create meaning with interviewees by reconstructing perceptions of events and experiences” (DiCicco-Bloom et al , 2006, p. 315). These in-depth interviews include standardized questions which do not require the interviewer to possess any mastery of communication or interviewing skills. This method assists the researcher with prioritizing the questions for interviews that will only be able to occur once due to the availability of the participant.

My plan was to use the open-ended interview protocol. This assisted me with gathering the “rich data” needed to craft the narratives of the participants. The flexibility provided by this structure allowed me to ask more follow up questions to draw out the details of “the story.” In order to provide authentic narratives, I limited the standardized interviewing to seven participants, two veteran teachers and five novice teachers. Coding the

interviews according to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2013) helped me gain insight into the participants' stories. Some participants were subjected to subsequent interviews as a follow-up to previous answers provided. These interviews assisted with providing answers for the central research question and sub-question #1.

I provided the following explanation of global literacy as an attribute of education for globalization: Global literacy is a new term that has surfaced in the field of education and is an attribute of education for globalization. Global literacy refers to a level of knowledge and skills that students need to have in order to be considered globally competent or competitive. This explanation was followed by a series of questions.

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Table 1: Interview Questions

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1. Describe your decision to become a teacher in the urban core.

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2. Describe your understanding of education for globalization.

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3. Describe your experience with teacher education coursework/programs that have prepared you to address education for globalization in your classroom?

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4. What educational reform efforts do you believe will be beneficial to addressing your needs to successfully prepare students to compete in the global society?

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5. What educational reform efforts do you believe are necessary to successfully prepare students to compete in the global society?

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6. Describe the role you see yourself taking in advocating for educational reform efforts that address education for globalization?

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7. What role or responsibility does education have in preparing students for successful living and competition in the global society?

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**Documents.** The analysis of documents, "... prove valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing" (Patton, 2015, p. 377). Documents are a part of what has been traditionally referred to as "material culture" in the anthropology, along with records artifacts and archives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Patton, 2015). Bogdan and Biklen have assigned documents to three distinct categories: personal documents, official documents and popular culture documents (2007). These documents could include personal diaries, any official communiqué, photographs, etc. Documents are valuable for not only the information they provide directly but also for the lines of investigation that become topics of intrigue. The decision about what documents to analyze is made at the beginning of the fieldwork experience. This determination helps to plan getting access to the documents desired as well limiting the potential of becoming overwhelmed with document options.

I analyzed the district's board policies with regards to curriculum development and implementation and professional development. The district's policies provided a social context for the teachers' experiences. The policies influence the operations of the school and inform decision-making practices. The policies also govern the professional knowledge landscapes in which the teachers work and develop their practice. The analysis of the board policies was supposed to address sub-question #2, but proved to be insufficient and inadequate.

The second set of documents that were collected as data sources were teacher journals that addressed specific prompts. These prompts addressed instructional practice and professional development. Teachers were asked to complete these prompts approximately two weeks after their initial open-ended interview and were collected at the individual

debrief sessions. The expectation was that after the interviews teachers would seek out more information concerning education for globalization in an effort to improve their practice. The journal prompts were: 1) Describe any instructional strategy or activity students were engaged in this week within your classroom that addressed education for globalization. How did students respond?; 2) Describe any professional development session you attended within the last year that equipped you to address education for globalization within your classroom; 3) Describe any efforts you have made to become more aware of education for globalization in order to inform your practice. As with the interviews, these documents were coded according to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2013). However with analysis of the documents, I was specifically looking for connections to the interviews or patterns within both the interviews and documents. Analysis of teachers' writings to the journal prompts in addition to documents and interviews helped to re-story the data and provided answers for sub-question #2.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data provides rich descriptions and explanations of lived experiences in social and political contexts. Narratives allow the voice of those living the experiences to author the description of the experience from their perspective. Therefore, data collected from narrative inquiry should be handled with respect and care. To ensure this outcome, narrative inquirers should employ well established data collection and analysis techniques that are recognized as a part of the narrative inquiry tradition (Shenton, 2004). Narrative analysis steps include: reading and memoing, reading text and coding; describing, chronicling the stories; classifying epiphanies; and interpreting to grasp the bigger picture of each story. The first cycle of the analysis protocol was to code the interviews and documents

determining the descriptive codes initiated the “chunking” of data. The second cycle of analysis was to determine interpretive codes that offered a deeper examination of the data. The third cycle of analysis was to determine the pattern codes that connected the data sources and presented the emergence of common themes (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2013). These themes became the foundation for the restorying of teachers’ experiences.

There are two approaches to the analysis of narratives, the sociolinguistic and sociocultural. The sociolinguistic analysis, “Focuses on plots or the structure of narratives and how they convey meaning” (Grbich, 2013 p. 216). This approach was promoted by the research of Labov and Waletzky (1967) in their work with speech narratives of African Americans. They concluded that narratives displayed a six-part structure of order or sequence: abstract, orientation clauses, complicating action clauses, evaluation, result or resolution, coda. For a deeper analysis the clauses within the narrative can be classified by their range and impact (Labov, 1997). These classifications are: range of a narrative clause is the sum of the number of preceding clauses and the number of clauses that follow or are linked to; a bound clause is an independent clause; a free clause is non-sequential and remains unchanging throughout the narrative; a restricted clause is sequential (Grbich, 2013). Criticisms of socio-linguistic analysis include but are not limited to: minimizing the relationship between the actor and audience, ignoring the influence that power, culture and socialization have on language and omitting the context of narratives silencing the issues of race, gender, and class (Grbich, 2013).

The other approach for narrative analysis is socio-cultural. The sociocultural analysis, “Looks at the broader interpretive frameworks that people use to make sense of particular incidents in individuals’ lives” (Grbich, 2013, p.216). This approach intentionally does not

include fragmenting narratives. The stories are kept whole in order to maintain the intended and complete context. Acknowledgement is given that stories are influenced by culture, ideology, and socialization which offer insights into the political and historical atmospheres of the storytellers' lives. The process for analysis consists of identifying the time boundaries of the narrative, exploration of the content and context, linking the stories to relevant cultural and political landscapes, and interpreting stories being mindful of your influence in shaping the final text (Grbich, 2013). "The sociocultural approach allows the contextual constructions and interpretations of the actor and the researcher to emerge" (Grbich, 2013, p.227).

The narrative analysis approach that I used was the socio-cultural approach. This approach offered the greatest potential to gather the "rich" data that I wanted in this research. The seven participants' responses to the open-ended interview questions and journal prompts provided the data for the crafting of their narratives. "... [A]s narrative inquirers, we understand experience as storied phenomenon. Lives are composed, recomposed, told, retold and lived out in storied ways on storied landscapes" (Clandinin, Murphy, Huber & Murray Orr, 2009, p. 82).

**Data Management.** All data collected was digitized and stored electronically on a password protected computer which was only accessible to the researcher. I employed the use of dictation software which assisted with capturing the interviews. This was helpful with transcription and gave me the opportunity to be more engaged in the conversations. At the conclusion of the study, analyzed data will be given to the principal investigator and stored for seven years on a password protected computer with hard copies kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the principal investigator.

## **Limitations, Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations**

### **Limitations**

As a former urban teacher and urban high school principal who is now working at two urban-serving universities/colleges, I am aware of the biases that I brought to the study. I understand that as an African American woman who grew up in the urban core and received all of my post-graduate education in urban educational intuitions, my experiences influence my perspectives on education. Bias is understood to be the personal experiences and beliefs that the researcher brings to the study (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Craig, 2004; Patton, 2015). Since, researchers are the designers of the study and influence each component including data, methodology and participants; bias is apt to be present throughout the study (Chenail, 2011). Although it is impossible to eliminate this threat, researchers must display integrity by identifying these biases in their research proposal. I know that I have biases with regards to public education. I am a strong proponent of educational reform; however, I believe the structure of the institution of public education in this country requires reform. Although programs and curriculums have changed over time, the basic structure of school has not changed. The way legislators and policy makers fund schools has also not changed and continues to be problematic when it comes to educating students in urban settings (Allen, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hamilton & Darity, 2010).

Another bias that I brought to this study was the belief that because students of color are still performing below their white counterparts on many standardized assessments and graduation rates, they are destined to be disenfranchised in this global age. Lastly, I believe that if U.S. educational institutions and policy makers do not quickly make education for

globalization a priority and follow up with comprehensive curricula updates, our students will not be able to successfully live and compete in the global society.

By identifying these biases prior to the study, I was able to employ strategies that addressed and limited the influence of these threats. Collection of “rich” data is one method that addressed the threats made by my biases. “Both long-term involvement and intensive interviews enable you to collect “rich” data that are detailed and varied enough that they provide a full revealing picture of what is going on” (Maxwell, 2005, p.110). My biases, were carefully monitored, did not become validity threats to the study.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Before beginning the actual study, it is imperative that I, the researcher, had an understanding of “validity” which is a prerequisite to identifying threats. Validity refers to, “... the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 122). Although validity implies credibility it does not equate to the existence of “objective truth” (Maxwell, 2013). There is no expectation for the study to produce an absolute truth. This is a very important understanding in a social constructivist study. Participants, “... [D]evelop subjective meanings of their experiences [and] these meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell, 2007, p. 20).

Reliability refers to dependability of the study. In other words, if the study was conducted with the same methodology and with the same participants the results should be the same. (Shenton, 2004). This can be a difficult concept for qualitative researchers, because the research is always influenced by the time and place (Stenbacka, 2001). Therefore

expecting the exact same results would be contrary to the heart of qualitative research. Patton (2015) noted that reliability is a natural consequence of validity. Meaning, if you have a valid study then the study can be considered reliable.

Another check for threats to validity would be respondent validation. This method required me to systematically solicit feedback from the participants in the study (Maxwell, 2013). Respondent validation marries well with the narrative approach used in this study. I allowed participants to review the transcribed interviews to clear up any misunderstandings that might have been reflected in the data. Participants also reviewed their crafted narratives for accuracy and voice.

Another threat that is commonly found in qualitative research is reactivity. Reactivity is defined as, “The influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied” (Maxwell, 2013, p.124). Like researcher bias, it is impossible to eliminate researcher influence. However, this influence can be used productively if understood. Reactivity is commonly connected to the role of observer in the research study. The process of influence with regards to the role of interviewer is noted as reflexivity. The level of influence is higher in this process than the former. “... [W]hat the informant says is always influenced by the interviewer and the interview situation” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 125). Understanding this influence and the effect it has on the validity of the study is a more logical action than trying to remove it. Although I chose a setting for this study where I have cultivated professional relationships, those that volunteered to participate in the study were individuals with whom I had little to no previous relationship.

While quantitative research lends itself well to advance design of threat control measures, qualitative research does not offer the same opportunity. Maxwell (2013) states

that, “Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, rarely have the benefit of previously planned comparisons, sampling strategies, or statistical manipulations that “control for” plausible threats, and must try to rule out most validity threats after the research has begun...” (p. 123). Patton (2015) explains that, “The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork – as well as things going on in a person’s life that might prove a distraction” (p. 22). With that understanding, I was open to constant reflection during the research process, in order to address validity threats as they surfaced.

The use of crystallization was beneficial in crafting the stories of the participants. “Crystallization centers on understanding the research and researcher position to intimately view the process with an openness that allows discoveries to unfold that would otherwise be lost” (Stewart, Gapp & Harwood, 2017, p. 1). Ellingson (2014) identified five tenets of crystallization. First, crystallization produces knowledge through deep and complex interpretation. Second, crystallization uses multiple forms of analysis across the qualitative continuum. Third, more than one genre of writing or representation is included. Fourth, the researcher’s reflexive influence is recognized and welcomed. Fifth, crystallization reveals that knowledge is not one discoverable truth, but fractured, situated and many truths.

Crystallization, as a means of data analysis, allows the researcher to maintain the integrity of answering the research questions while exploring and venturing to a deeper level to discover the answers (Stewart, Gapp & Harwood, 2017).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The Belmont Report (1979) has been instrumental in creating policy for conducting research with human subjects. This report was created to ensure that all research involving

human subjects had ethical objectives and practices. During the research, human subjects were not to be, "... deceived, harmed, or otherwise exploited by investigators" (Freiesen, Kearns, Redman & Caplan, 2017, p. 16). The Belmont Report's purpose was to identify the boundaries between research and practice, address the role of risk-benefit analyses in human subjects, outline the guidelines for subject selection, and provide criteria for informed consent (Freiesen et al., 2017). The Belmont Report also describes three ethical principles that are very much relevant to research involving human subjects: respect for person, beneficence, and justice. Since the report's publication, there have been some concerns with the reports relevancy. Five themes have surfaced in the discussion: distinction between research and practice, harms to communities, the importance of transparency, implications of protectionism, and the relationship between Belmont's ethical principles and their application (Freiesen et al., 2017). Although there is some debate about updating the Belmont Report to meet the changes within the field of human subjects' research, it currently is referred to and operates as the guidelines for research involving human subjects.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) requires that this study address the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and CITI exam. There was one ethical concern for this study that needed to be considered. Teachers live their practice in knowledge communities where in most cases they are viewed as experts (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Craig, 2004). Since education for globalization is a relatively new concept for educators in general, the teachers in this study were likely to not have much if any understanding of this concept. Much care was provided with developing relationships and creating safe places for teachers to be vulnerable and know they would not be judged for their lack of knowledge or experience. Teachers felt empowered by participating in this study and not humiliated.

Transparency about the purpose of the study was important to developing a trusting relationship with the teachers.

Ensuring the confidentiality of teachers' names and participation in the study assisted with creating a safe space for candid communication. Teachers in the study chose their respective pseudonyms as a part of de-identification process which was used during the data collection process. They were provided with informed consent forms for participating in the research which stipulated that they could drop out of the study at anytime. As the researcher, I committed to fulfilling all requirements mandated by the IRB which included successful completion of the Citi exam, providing informed consent forms to participants, and all other protocols.

### **Conclusion**

Narrative inquiry was a perfect research methodology to capture teachers' voices as they describe their perceptions of education for globalization. The participants' stories allowed me, the researcher, to understand how participants made meaning of this concept. Analysis of data sources enhanced this understanding by making connections between the interviews, journals and documents. Limitations, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations of this study were also discussed.

The following chapter describes the findings of this study. It includes presentation of the participants' narratives, discussion of the themes that emerged, and responses to the central research question and corresponding sub-questions.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

Students in the U.S. are not being adequately prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary for successful living and competition in the global society. An essential element that impacts the effectiveness of classroom instruction addressing education for globalization is the level of knowledge and understanding that teachers have concerning this concept. The purpose of this social constructivist narrative study was to understand the thoughts, perceptions and experiences of urban teachers regarding education for globalization. In order to capture the voice of the teachers, narrative inquiry was an appropriate choice for research. Narrative research provides the opportunity for the participants to tell their own stories (Coulter & Smith, 2009). Marrying narrative inquiry with social constructivism was a reasonable decision since participants were being asked to construct their meaning about education for globalization. These narratives provided opportunity for teachers' voices to be inserted into the discussions of education for globalization and educational reform. The findings of this study attempted to answer the central question: *What themes are apparent in the narratives of novice and veteran teachers in a urban charter school in the Midwest?* The sub-questions that layered the central question were: 1) *What meanings do novice and veteran teachers have about education for globalization?* 2) *What do they do to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum?*

Narratives were constructed from the initial interest questionnaire, interviews, and journal prompts. Each of the seven participants took part in an interview where they were asked seven questions (see Appendix C). The majority of these interviews took place off school grounds. Three of the participants requested to be interviewed on site. After the

interviews, participants were asked to complete three follow up journal prompts. Narratives were constructed using these data sources. The work with the participants lasted over the course of approximately four weeks where I spent an average of two hours with each participant; yet, I felt this was adequate time to develop rich thick description of their experiences. The crystallization of the multiple data sources contributed to this goal. This limited time commitment was a key element to recruiting participants. Participants knew that the requirements of this study would have minimal impact on their calendar and daily schedules.

The setting that was chosen for this study was one of familiarity. I have worked in and with this school for approximately 13 years. Many professional relationships were made during this time and I felt that I would have unlimited access to staff and other resources if needed. The participants of this study were volunteers that completed an initial questionnaire indicating their interest to be a part of the study. They were then contacted to schedule their interviews. Although my original plan called for six teachers to participate, I included a seventh teacher that showed interest in the study. This was an interesting development. I expected that my professional relationships would have yielded even more interested participants.

The initial purpose of this study was to capture the thoughts, understandings, and experiences urban teachers had concerning education for globalization. I also wanted to determine if novice teachers had different thoughts, understandings, and experiences about education for globalization than that of veteran teachers. This difference would be a product of possible changes within teacher education programs from the time veteran teachers matriculated and the time novice teachers matriculated. Through the interview process I

learned that the thoughts, understandings, and experiences that teachers had regarding education for globalization were not predicated on the length of time away from teacher education programs or in teaching. Both novice and veteran teachers expressed limited knowledge and understanding of education for globalization. This was even more worthy of noting due to the fact that several of the participants had recently completed graduate coursework within the past ten years.

My relationship with three of the participants began prior to this study. I had worked with them in the position as a consultant assisting them with curriculum development and instructional practice. They respect the work that I do and therefore wanted to assist me by participating in this study. As for the other four participants, this was the first time that we had formally worked together. Their participation in the study was initiated by interest in the topic and a desire to contribute to educational research. I believe my reputation of being personable and professional assisted with creating an environment of trust, where all participants were comfortable with being vulnerable and transparent.

Since the main outcome of this study was the captured thoughts, understandings, and experiences held by the participants regarding education for globalization, it was imperative to the study that the constructed narratives were accurate and respected the teachers' voices. Therefore, once narratives were crafted participants were asked to review them for accuracy and use of voice. This addressed possible validity and reliability threats. Participants were very pleased with their narratives and felt a sense of professional pride. While they did not have much understanding about education for globalization, they did have well-articulated suggestions for educational reforms and the role of education in a global society. Socio-cultural narrative analysis was used to gather rich data in efforts to craft the participants'

narratives. This approach recognizes that narratives exist in spaces of time and culture and these elements have profound effects on narratives.

The process of influence with regards to the role of interviewer is noted as reflexivity (Maxwell, 2013). Being aware of this influence, I was very deliberate with closely adhering to the interview guide of seven questions but careful to allow their unique experiences to be addressed through follow-up questions and probes. I was mindful of gathering the “rich data” needed to craft the narratives of the participants. The flexibility provided by this structure allowed me to ask more follow up questions to draw out the details of “the story.” I also saved discussion of the genesis of my interest in the study topic until after the interview was completed. Again, this was done to limit my influence on the participants’ answers provided during the interview. The participants were given the journal prompts in writing and were encouraged to respond in any length that was appropriate to express their thoughts. I did not want to enforce a limit nor an expectation on their ideas.

The remainder of this chapter presents the analysis of Board policies, the participants’ narratives, identified themes and responses to the research questions. I conclude with a recap of the study’s findings which will be the focus of chapter five, the implication of the findings and future research.

### **Organizational Documents: Board Policies**

The law permitting the development of charter schools under the supervision of an approved sponsor passed in 1999 for this Midwest state. Charter schools are public schools which operate under the governance of their own school boards. These school boards are required to have policies that address the operations of the schools. These policies include: organization, philosophy and goals; general administration; students; financial operation;

personnel services; support services; instructional services; and facilities development. The charter schools in this Midwest City created an association which allowed them to take advantage of various opportunities from businesses and consultants. An example of this was the collective hiring of a consulting firm which was tasked with drafting board policies and regulations that were in alignment with all federal and state laws and that allowed the charter schools to modify, update and adopt for their individual organizations. It is from these policies that I selected the organizational documents for this study.

The purpose of this study was to understand the thoughts, perceptions and experiences of teachers regarding education for globalization. The school's policies provided a social context for the teachers' thoughts, perceptions, and experiences. These policies influence the operations of the school and inform decision-making practices. The policies also govern the professional knowledge landscapes in which the teachers work and develop their practice. The policies chosen for analyses were found in instructional services and addressed curriculum services. The following section describes the themes identified in the policies related to curriculum services and provides a deeper understanding of their meanings.

**Oversight for Quality.** Analysis of the policy documents generated two major themes. The first theme discovered was *oversight for quality* formed through concepts related to *systematic curriculum review & evaluation, and instructional improvement*. Several policies addressed processes and protocols to oversee the development, implementation, and review of quality curriculum. "The Board recognizes the need and value of a systematic and on-going program of curriculum review" (Policy 6110). "All curriculum developed by School staff shall be formally presented to the Board for official

approval before classroom implementation” (Policy 6114). The need for the systematic curriculum review and evaluation is to ensure that students receive the appropriate learning experiences that will in turn make them prepare them for successful living in a global society. “Our economy has transitioned from one in which most people earned their living with skilled hands to one in which all employees need to be intellectually skilled if they hope to make more than the minimum wage” (Wagner et al., 2006). The expected outcomes of a systematic review and evaluation of curriculum is to make certain that curriculum stays current with the societal expectations, needs and trends especially with regards to education for globalization. “Curriculum analysis should include not only a careful study of topics and themes but also the skills and attitudes likely to enhance a global perspective” (Noddings, 2005, p. 124).

Oversight for quality also speaks to instructional improvement. “The Board encourages and supports the professional staff in their efforts to ... improve existing programs and evaluate all instructional programs” (Policy 6110). Wagner et al. (2006) offered this sentiment, “We firmly believe that creating a system focused on the ongoing improvement of instruction must be the central aim of any education improvement effort” (p. 23). The level of instruction that students are exposed to influences their comprehension and academic performance (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hardy, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Noguera, 2009; Zhao, 2009). Therefore, it is imperative that students regularly experience quality instruction. “A substantial body of research over the last 40 years has found that the combination of teacher quality and curriculum quality explains most of the school’s contribution to achievement ...” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p.54).

**Curriculum Development.** The other theme that surfaced through the analysis of these organizational documents related to curriculum services was *curriculum development* which consisted of the sub-themes of *current research-based and standards-based*. Multiple policies addressed the fact that curriculum development is an on-going process to stay current with educational research. This expectation was expressed through such policy statements as , “All curriculum developed by the School shall satisfy moving students toward achieving [the state’s] definition of what students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school” (Policy 6111). “Every effort should be made to insure that School curriculum is current and based on sound educational research findings” (Policy 6112). Examples of curriculum and instructional practices that have been influenced by current educational research include Culturally Responsive Teaching, Democratic Schools, and Multicultural Education which were discussed in chapter two (Apple & Beane, 2007; Banks, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Walker and Chirichello, 2011). These research-based instructional practices impact the lenses used to develop, modify, and implement curriculum. However, all curriculum frameworks must be grounded in the state standards.

The state standards determine what students should know and be able to do, the level of mastery or proficiency, and the expected grade level for instruction and assessment. These standards inform curriculum development in order to maintain alignment. The Board policies addressed the above expectations with this policy, “The design of School curriculum shall follow curriculum frameworks ... which are intended to provide assistance in aligning local curriculum with the Show-Me-Standards” (Policy 6113).

These policies are evidence that the school is committed to developing curriculum that is up-to-date, grounded in educational research, and influences students’ academic

performance. These policies opened the door for the implementation of innovative curriculum that addresses education for globalization. Furthermore, they established the instructional environment where teachers perform their practice. Teachers in this school have the opportunity to explore current educational practices and update their classroom instruction. This is important for educators who desire to prepare their students for a successful life outside of the classroom.

### **Teacher Narratives about Globalization in a K-8 Charter School**

Narratives offer opportunities for people to reflect and make meaning of lived experiences. “[A] narrative ... provides a robust way of integrating past experience into meaningful learning, locating oneself and others in the account, and foreshadowing the future” (McAlpine, 2016, p. 33). The following narratives were constructed from the initial interest questionnaire, interviews, and journal prompts. The initial interest questionnaire provided the demographical data, i.e. number of years teaching, highest educational level, etc. This information provided a frame for the re-storied experiences of the participants. The interviews were where the participants shared their thoughts, perceptions, understandings, and stories. The descriptions of their lived experiences were the substance of their individual narratives. Lastly, the answers to the journal prompts accentuated the participants’ narratives with information related to their current teaching practice. This added a layer to the re-storied narratives of seven teachers, five African American and two White Americans. The narrative analysis approach that I used was the socio-cultural approach. This approach offered the greatest potential to gather the “rich” data that I wanted in this research. “... [A]s narrative inquirers, we understand experience as storied phenomenon. Lives are composed, recomposed, told, retold and lived out in storied ways on storied landscapes” (Clandinin, Murphy, Huber & Murray Orr, 2009, p. 82).

Using the socio-cultural process, I identified themes in the data using a process of enumerative and thematic coding as described in the methodology. These themes are the foundation for the restorying of teachers' experiences with global education. The subthemes or interpretive codes that form the themes are depicted in Table 1 on page 163. As the stories are told using the themes, the frequencies of the subthemes or interpretive codes are depicted (strong presence 15>, moderate presence 7-14, nominal presences <6). There is no discussion of the interpretive codes with nominal presence within the respective narratives due to limited and/or nonexistent information. Time boundaries, exploration of content and context, and linking stories to relevant cultural and political landscapes are key elements of the restorying process. To protect identities, I have use pseudonyms chosen by the participants and the race of the six female teachers and one male teacher is not identified. The narratives of Haley, Latrice, Shawn, Coco, Xavier, Lola, and Jessica with global education follow.

### **Haley**

Haley is an elementary teacher who has been teaching for two years, all of which in an urban charter school. Haley did not plan to study education in college and become a teacher. Her major, at first, was communications and she planned to be a journalist. While in college, Haley volunteered for the Jumpstart program which was housed at an urban preschool. It was this experience that opened Haley's eyes to the challenges and needs of urban schools. Haley shared the following in her interview.

I decided to start volunteering for Jumpstart and I was in an urban preschool. It was really the first time I ever been exposed to what an urban school setting looked like and I realize how different it looked from my own eyes. I had just always assumed all schools were the same. I had no idea of some of the deficits that urban schools faced and I just immediately of course fell in love with all the kids.

Right away it was clear that Haley valued *equitable education* as identified as a significant theme identified in her interview. Defined as the educational opportunities provided by access, this theme was constructed through phenomena in the data related to *access to quality instruction* and *access to learning resources*. Haley's work with Jumpstart was the first time Haley saw the lack of access as an institutional problem in urban schools. "Many urban districts must contend with an eroding tax base, which makes them unusually dependent on state and federal funding. That reliance on outside actors constrains urban districts" (Jacob, 2007, p. 133). *Access to quality instruction* had a strong presence in Haley's interview, while *access to learning resources* had a moderate presence. The lack of adequate funding hinders urban schools from providing their students with access to essential academic resources, technology, and qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Jacob, 2007; Noguera, 2008). Haley changed her major to pursue education as a profession out of a sense of obligation to give back to the community and serve as an educator who desired to provide an equitable educational experience to all her students. Haley commented in her interview,

Teaching was something that I never really imagined that I would do but as soon as the new school year started I immediately changed my major to education. I knew at that moment that I would never want to teach anywhere besides an urban school because those are the schools that need good teachers.

In preparation to become this educator, Haley's teacher education coursework increased her awareness of educational realities, instructional practice, curriculum implementation and cultural identity/diversity. Haley accredited her effectiveness as an urban teacher to the cultural identity/diversity coursework. "Urban students bring specific cultural orientations and practices to the classroom including diverse patterns of language and socialization" (Swartz & Bakan, 2005, p. 829). She learned about and reflected on her

cultural identity and the biases she brings to the classroom. During the interview Haley expressed,

I feel like we learned a lot about our own cultural identity and our own biases that we had grown up with and that we didn't even know that we had. That was a very emotional semester, coming to terms with that and dealing with that. But I honestly don't think that I would be the teacher that I am today if I had not gone through that. Especially teaching in a demographic that is so much different than where I come from.

With this awareness, Haley has been able to be intentional and deliberate with minimizing the impact and influence her cultural identity and biases have within her classroom.

The next theme that was discovered in Haley's interview was *education for globalization* identified as the attributes of education for globalization. The emergence of this theme in her interview data was supported by interpretive codes of *life skills and global literacy*. Haley's understanding of education for globalization centered on the idea of teaching students the knowledge and skills for successful living in a global society. Haley stated in her interview, "Globalization to me means you are teaching life skills not just teaching them to content. [You are] teaching them how to apply the skills that they need to know in order to succeed after they finish school." Haley commented that these life skills will afford students opportunities to access high-paying jobs, support their families and contribute to their respective communities.

I think that it's important that they can see different ways that they can contribute to the community and that they can get some of those higher-paying jobs. They need more education for thinking beyond the jobs that are only available in their community.

Scott-Webber indicated, "Corporations are calling for a new type of graduate. Corporations want graduates who have the ability to be highly creative, collaborative in their pursuit of problem solving, critical thinkers, and agents of change" (2011, p. 268). These are the skills

that students need to live a successful life in a global society. The phenomenon of *life skills* had a strong presence in Haley's interview.

Haley also believes that in education for globalization students' learning cannot be limited to just content area instruction, but must also include instruction on how to apply the content to real-life situations. Engaged students need to make connections between their learning experiences in the classroom and their lives outside the classroom (Ravitch, 2010; Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). In addition, Haley emphasized the need for students to develop technology literacy and be exposed to the world outside of their immediate community in order to increase their employability. This aligned with the phenomenon of *global literacy*. Haley shared in the interview,

They're going to need to know how to use technology and how to use their knowledge to help them get a job and make money to support their families. Globalization looks like opening doors to some different opportunities, exposing them to different cultures and avenues that maybe they hadn't thought about before.

Sometimes students' ideas of what they can become or do are restricted by their limited exposure to other possibilities which is an unfortunate reality for many students living in the urban core. Haley uses instructional technology regularly in an effort to provide opportunities to expose her students to global venues while modeling the technology literacy.

Haley's strong support for *education for globalization* connected to a third theme of *educational reform advocacy* identified in her interview and subsequently her journal. *Educational reform advocacy* is defined as the role teachers see themselves taking to advocate for education for globalization which means they must become involved with *change agency* and *responsibility of others*. Haley feels a responsibility to provide her students with meaningful learning experiences where they apply their learning to real-life problems and/or situations; learning experiences where students are also exposed to global

cultures, religions, customs, and beliefs. In order to accomplish this, she regularly searches for new and innovative ways to engage her students in learning. She considers herself an agent of change. The interpretive code of *change agency* had strong presence in Haley's interview and journal. Haley described in her journal about her class's participation in "Read Across America" on Flipgrid. "They recorded a video about their favorite book and shared it on a global grid on Flipgrid. As a class, we also watched other students' videos from all over the world." This activity exposed Haley's class to other cultures and languages. This was an example of being a change agent because students were provided the opportunity to connect and authentically learn from other students across the globe. This is not a typical English Language Arts activity.

Haley is also committed to being a teacher who assists her colleagues. She shares her instructional findings with her fellow teachers at school and other teachers via social media and other digital mediums with hopes to improve their professional practice. Haley articulated in her interview, "I continue to try to find ways for students to do that real-life application and then [I] advertise and share them, trying to encourage other teachers to do the same thing." Haley also noted in her journal, "I have also had one meeting with my technology coach to help me take some of my lessons to that globalization level."

Together the themes of *education for globalization* and *educational reform advocacy* lead to *education reform*, the final theme captured in Haley's interview and journal. This theme is characterized by the identification of beneficial education reform initiatives. *Education reform* involved subthemes of *curriculum & instruction* and *funding & resources*. As a teacher of urban students, Haley sees herself advocating for educational reform efforts

that deemphasizes high-stakes testing and provides the aforementioned global exposure to students. Haley explained in the interview,

I would say the education reform I hope they could change the huge importance that is put on standardized testing. I feel like that definitely keeps us from being able to teach some globalization skills. I feel more focus should be on portfolio type work or projects that involve real-life experiences and how they are applying the skills they have learned. I wish that there was more focus on that education than on standardized testing.

Ravitch offered this sentiment, “By our current methods, we may be training (not educating) a generation of children who are repelled by learning, thinking that it means only drudgery, worksheets, test preparation, and test taking” (2010, p. 231). The interpretive code of *curriculum & instruction* had a moderate presence in Haley’s interview. According to Haley, education has the responsibility to provide students with the tools they will need for successful living in a global society. Scott-Webber stated, “Preparing our students for the world they will inhabit should be our national educational goal” (2011, p.266). Haley expressed that education also has the responsibility to teach critical thinking, technology literacy, life skills and the real-life application of such skills. Education must provide students with opportunities to learn about the world outside of their respective communities while empowering them to problem-solve and make positive changes within their communities. Haley concluded in her interview, “Teaching them to think critically and stay up-to-date with current events and [the] things that are affecting their communities and how they can be the change if they don't like what they see.” In the end, students need to know and realize that education is the key to their success.

### **Latrice**

Latrice is a veteran teacher who has been teaching in the urban core since she became a teacher 16 years ago.

In Latrice's interview the theme equitable *education* was apparent. Latrice referenced *access to quality instruction*, which was a subtheme, in her interview and journal. Latrice explained in her interview that she is committed to providing students in the urban core with quality instruction and a rigorous curriculum. "I have always been in the urban core. I just really wanted to be with kids that really needed the experience and the background of having an experienced teacher." "In practice, therefore, a teacher shortage in urban districts makes it hard to hire qualified teachers – so that the teachers who are hired are often less qualified than teachers in suburban districts" (Jacob, 2007, p. 134). Latrice described in her journal an instructional strategy she uses in her classroom which increases the rigor of the English Language Arts curriculum.

When reading stories, I ask questions that relate to the story. The questions are providing a higher-level of questioning for my students. I want students to be able to comprehend and remember concepts from the story. I also give students an opportunity to share their ideas with their classmates, "turn and talk," to discuss different aspects from the story.

Latrice's commitment to developing her students' technology literacy addressed the next theme of *education for globalization* which was noted in her interview and journal. Technology literacy is a component of *global literacy* which was an interpretive code for this theme. Although Latrice did not receive any formal coursework related to education for globalization during her teacher education program and graduate studies, she is determined to create meaningful learning experiences that help her students to develop technology literacy and improve academic achievement in the areas of math and science. Latrice expressed in the interview, "To compete in a global society, I would say instruction in technology, math and science would help our kids." Latrice's models this thought by exposing her class to and using instructional technology on a daily basis. Latrice expressed in her journal that she uses

programs like “Square Panda”, “Razz-Kids”, and “Kodables” to improve students’ technology literacy while supporting their academic development. Access to technology and its use as an effective tool for learning is critical to education for globalization (Jukes & McCain, 2007). “Technology allows students to transfer skills to different contexts, reflect on their thinking and that of their peers, practice addressing their misunderstandings, and collaborate with peers” (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012, p. 9). Access to and effective use of technology is a component of global literacy (Brewer, Tan, & Metton, 2012; Hsu & Wang, 2010; King & Thorpe, 2012; Merriman & Nicoletti, 2007; Stewart, 2010).

Latrice recognizes that an important *education reform* effort concerning education for globalization would be providing teachers with more professional development and training and therefore the theme *education reform* emerged. Latrice expounded in her interview,

I believe that teachers can receive more training in the field of technology and science and math as far as what we can do to bridged achievement gaps for students in America. Teachers can go to various workshops as well or even receive additional training and helping their students achieve even more goals in life.

Latrice noted in her journal that she had received specific professional development which provided teachers instructional strategies and videos for interactive lessons. However, Latrice also acknowledged that these professional development opportunities need to be accompanied with more school funding and additional instructional resources and materials, hence the identification of *funding & resources* as a subtheme. Latrice expounded in the interview, “I believe as a nation we need more funding from our local and state government or the federal government.” Teachers cannot be effective educators if they do not have access to the necessary training, resources and materials to deliver quality instruction. Latrice also commented in her interview that she wants parents to be more involved in the schools.

“We also need more parent involvement as far as the parents and teachers working together to help children succeed.”

*Change agency*, was an interpretive code, which spoke to Latrice’s approach to the last theme *educational reform advocacy*. Latrice accepts the role as an advocate for educational reform through her classroom teaching. Latrice explained in her interview,

I would work as far as being advocate in the classroom to make sure my students are on track in their learning. If they need additional resources, if students are high or even if they are low help them along the way. I can help parents be more involved with their children at home. So basically just helping the kids as much as I can to help them succeed and go on to the next grade level.

Latrice mentioned in her journal that she incorporates cooperative learning regularly into her lesson plans. These learning experiences teach students how to problem solve and work effectively with their peers. “I use cooperative learning or centers in the classroom. Students are paired up and they work together in a group. They can help each other solve problems and communicate about different concepts being taught in the classroom.” Again, she has partnered with parents in order to assist bridging the learning gap between the classroom and the home. Teachers need all parents to be more active and supportive of their students’ education. (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). The instructional strategies Latrice employs in the classroom and her continuous efforts to work with parents for the betterment of her students are examples of Latrice’s dedication to being a change agent. Matriculation is a goal she holds for all her students. She wishes all of her students to be academically successful by graduating high school and completing college or a technical training program. Latrice articulated that she knows her students’ successful living in a global society is dependent on the quality of instruction she has supplied and their own motivation and effort to achieve their goals.

## **Shawn**

Shawn is a veteran teacher who has taught 19 years in urban settings and holds a Masters degree in curriculum and instruction. Shawn never wanted to be a teacher. She envisioned herself using her business degree to work as a hotel manager. Shawn explained in her interview,

I never wanted to be a teacher it wasn't something that I wanted to do. I initially got a job as a paraprofessional so that I could work and make some money and then have the summer to find a real job but I was assigned to this teacher and what I saw was the most phenomenal teacher I ever saw in my life.

Shawn had an encounter that would forever change her life. Ms. M seemed to know everything and was respected by her colleagues and students. This caused Shawn to begin to consider the idea of becoming a teacher. Shawn described this encounter in her interview.

I remember the thing that made me think that I could really want to do this, let's see, we had a field trip and she came in the next morning and she had bread and peanut butter and chips and all the stuff for her students who forgot their lunch. Then a student from another classroom came down to her room and then more from another classroom. These kids from all the different classrooms already knew that Ms. M. was going to have something for them to fix her lunch. They didn't have to have to make an announcement or anything. This right here is dedication!

From Shawn's discussion of Ms. M. in her interview the theme *equitable education* was revealed. *Access to quality instruction*, as a subtheme supported Shawn's account of what happened during the summer with Ms. M. While Shawn was working with Ms. M. she became ill during the last quarter of the school year and Shawn was her replacement. However, over the following summer Ms. M. offered tutoring to students that she felt did not get her full attention during the school year and during her absence. Ms. M wanted to make sure that her students received quality instruction so that they could be successful going forth. Shawn, inspired by this wonderful act, spent the summer working with Ms. M in preparation for the next school year. "I helped her get things ready for the next year. I spent

the whole summer stacking up papers and getting materials together to help her with her class for the next year.” Shawn had an epiphany; she was going to be a teacher. “I was like well that's it I can do this and it wasn't like it was something I had to learn how to do. It was natural. I just knew what I was supposed to do.”

Shawn’s journey to becoming a teacher assisted her with making meaning of the theme *education for globalization* by connecting the subtheme of *life skills* to it description. Shawn understands education for globalization as preparing students to be successful in global competition. Shawn stated in her interview, “It's preparing students to compete with not just students in their classroom or in their school or even your neighborhood but across the entire globe.” Students around the world, “... [C]ompeting for the scholarships or jobs.” Therefore, students must be exposed to global knowledge, i.e. cultures, religions, politics, etc. in order to be successful in competition (Noddings, 2005; Stewart, 2010; Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hillaird, 2004). Shawn described in her journal an instructional strategy that she used in her classroom. She concluded, “It may not have be directly addressing globalization but having students make sense of their learning and be able to explain it to a group of peers is a step in the right direction.”

As Shawn reflected over her teacher education and graduate degree coursework, she noted in her interview that education for globalization was not addressed. During her graduate studies, approximately 10 years ago, the term globalization was beginning to surface in those educational settings. “Globalization was really just kind of coming up and people were just starting to kind of talk about it a little bit then.” Steger (2009) stated that, “Globalization surfaced as the buzzword of the ‘Roaring Nineties’ because it best captured the increasingly interdependent nature of social life on our planet” (2009, p. 1). However, no

coursework had yet been designed to explicitly address globalization in the context of education especially in teacher education.

With that being said, Shawn suggested that the first *education reform* effort with regards to education for globalization needed to be informing practicing teachers and administrators about its existence, attributes and how to address it in the classroom. Shawn conveyed in her interview,

I think the first reform that needs to be made is we need to get understanding out there to teachers because you have teachers that are in the classroom for a lot of years and they've been teaching the same things the same way and that is not necessarily a bad thing but I think that even as educators are not really aware of what's going on outside of our schools and our communities.

Shawn also proposed that recertification coursework or professional development opportunities would be beneficial resources to addressing this gap in teachers' knowledge and therefore their professional practice regarding education for globalization.

Another education reform effort Shawn suggested connected to the subtheme *curriculum & instruction*. Shawn expressed a need to expose students to the world that is bigger than their neighborhoods through curriculum and learning experiences. This idea is encouraged in the literature of Duvall (2016) and Kerkhoff (2017). The descriptive code tools for successful living which supports the interpretive code *curriculum & instruction* surfaced numerous times in Shawn's interview.

I think the big thing is exposure. We have to let our kids know that the world is bigger than their neighborhood and I think that a lot of students especially in an urban core are not really aware of everything that goes on outside of their neighborhood because they're not venturing out outside of those confines.

Shawn admitted that as a product of an urban school district when she desired to go away for college she had to use a map. Shawn explained,

Growing up in the education system here in I did not know anything about geography, never learned it. When I decided to go to school in Ohio had to look it up on the map because I didn't know where it was or anything. That was never taught to me.

Shawn's interview uncovered a final theme, *education reform advocacy*. It was because of Shawn's experience with the map and others like it that influenced her to become a change agent and use her classroom as a place of advocacy for educational reform. She will, to the best of her knowledge and skills, fill in the holes of current curriculum with the tools that her students need for successful living in a global society. "Educators ... have the power to have an impact on the functioning of the school ... educators need to focus on what we can do to improve our efforts between 8:15 and 3:15 Monday through Friday" (Hale, 2001, p. 47). This decision to be a change agent in the classroom also steams from Shawn's experience with school administration which exposed the subtheme of *responsibility of others*. Shawn expressed in her interview,

I think that, I could be wrong but I feel like as a classroom teacher the only thing that I can really do is like suggest to the higher ups that this is something that we need to look into because like I don't determine what the curriculum is going to be but I can make suggestions. Unfortunately I think a lot of times the teachers do make suggestions, you know and it is either hit or miss whether or not anybody is actually listening. So other than that, just within my own classroom I am going to try to just expose them to whatever I can when I can.

Shawn declared that education in its entirety has the responsibility to prepare students for successful living and competition in the global society. Shawn concluded in her interview,

I remember is a beginning teacher while taking my education classes and you know how you have to write your philosophy of teaching. I got into this because I want to teach children not just to read and write to become productive citizens to go out and make the world a better place.

Ravitch (2010) had a similar idea, “Our public schools have been the pathway to opportunity and a better life for generations of Americans, giving them the tools to fashion their own life and to improve the commonwealth” (p. 242). However in our current educational climate with high-stakes testing, we have strayed away from those ideals. Shawn exclaimed that education must drown out the noise of “reality TV” which provides students a warped and false view of adult life and provide students with practical instruction that prepares them to be college and career ready.

### **Coco**

Coco is a nontraditionally trained teacher who is completing her second year of teaching at an urban school.

The impressions left by her childhood teachers are what inspired Coco to become a teacher which unveiled *access to quality instruction* as a subtheme to the theme *equitable education*. Coco explained in her interview,

What influenced me to be a teacher in urban core is the impact of the teachers had on my life being from the urban core. I attended [the school] right up the street and always the teachers there took time to make sure that my talents were appreciated and that's why I'm doing what I'm doing.

As a product of an urban school district, Coco wanted to create meaningful learning experiences for her students that not only highlighted their natural talents, but allows their confidence to grow. Coco works hard to provide her students with learning opportunities that challenges them to be their best.

As a music teacher, Coco understands *education for globalization* to include exposing students to various cultures around the world. Coco noted that learning a foreign language or participating in cultural celebrations are specific ways students are exposed to different cultures. Culture exposure is an element of *global literacy* a subtheme which had moderate

presence in Coco's interview. In her classroom, Coco requires students to learn music from other cultures and in other languages as a means of opening their minds to global diversity. "A lot of the things that we do as far as music is from different places in the world so exposing kids to different cultures might be playing a part in helping them to become global citizens." Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard (2004) noted that, "New and broader global visions are needed to prepare children and youth to be informed, engaged, and critical citizens ..."

(p. 3).

*Funding & resources* were mentioned in Coco's interview as she discussed the theme *education reform*. Coco remarked that in order to give students an equitable education through meaningful learning experiences which expose them to diverse cultures across the world, schools need more consistent resources. With that being said, educational reform efforts need to include a review and revision of current school funding formulas to supply schools with the necessary materials and resources to develop global citizens. Anyon's (2014) insisted that "... [A]n unjust economy and the policies through which it is maintained create barriers to educational success that no teacher or principal practice, no standardized test, no 'zero tolerance' policy can surmount for long" (p. 4). Coco noted that schools are critical contributors to the success of its students and the educational experiences it offers can be the determining factor if students can successfully live and compete in a global society.

At school you learn a lot of different things preparing for globalization, but a lot of that starts at home. It is not you just being competent in math and English knowledge that helps you for globalization and but being an accepting person with an open mind.

### **Xavier**

Xavier is completing his second year of teaching, both in the urban core. Xavier did not set out to be a teacher. He went to college and studied human development and family

sciences. While working as a Jumpstart tutor, his mentor teacher expressed that he should consider teaching as a profession. “My biggest influence to become a teacher really was my mentor. She really pushed me to really step outside my comfort zone. She told me that it was natural for me.” Stepping out of his comfort zone, Xavier applied for alternative teacher certification and became a teacher. Xavier loves teaching and is glad he made the decision to join this profession. “I just took a stab at it and I love it. I’m glad that I’m doing it now.”

Although a nontraditionally trained teacher, Xavier received coursework that prepared him to work with students in urban settings and with multicultural families. The prominence of cultural exposure in his interview linked to the subtheme of *global literacy* which in turn supported the development of the theme education for globalization. One of his fondest projects was working on “Culture Night.”

One of the biggest programs that I did in my undergrad was a culture night. The families from all around the world but in our school district, they came to the schools and they set up different tents representing their country or where they're from and with enough food for a snack so that we could taste. So we were able to experience the world within our school and one night.

This event provided students with the opportunity to be exposed to and learn about other cultures outside their immediate neighborhoods, an essential attribute of education for globalization and an example of multicultural education (Banks, 2004).

Xavier defined education for globalization as, “A rubric for life.” This means that there should be global standards for education that are ascribed to world-wide. “What is being taught in Europe is going to be the same for Australia; same can be taught in America and South America so that we all have a have a rubric for life.” This “rubric for life” would outline the knowledge and skills that all students should have in order to successfully live and compete in a global society. Xavier emphasized that it was understood that countries

around the world have different political, cultural, and societal experiences; different languages; different histories of oppression and colonization; and different access to resources. Nevertheless, these global standards should include knowledge and skills that all students can achieve, regardless of country of residence. “A fundamental goal of education is to lead students to develop the ability to use varied and competing ways of understanding the universe” (Haberman, 2004, p. 55).

Access to an equitable education experience is the main *education reform* effort Xavier identified in his interview while emphasizing the need to review *funding & resources* allocation in urban schools. These were the next theme and subtheme discovered in Xavier interview respectively. “Education is the key to opportunity, and the opportunity is not equal” (Legend, 2010, p. 1).

The reform that I think that will be needed to make my students competitive in the world market or global market in this educational sense, would be a policy or some type of reform that would force the government to give access to equitable education. *Equitable education* was a logical succeeding theme in Xavier’s interview. Xavier stressed the need for *access to quality instruction* and *access to learning resources* in urban schools. Students in the urban core deserve to have access to qualified teachers, innovative technology, enriching learning experiences and current curricular resources. If urban students are going to successfully live and compete in a global society, they must have access to the above.

What I really do struggle with being in the urban core is we live in a semi-affluent area and in the heart of the city with very limited resources. But two blocks over there, private schools have access to going on the elaborate spring break trips and they have all this technology at their hands they have really low teacher-student ratio, technology and education galore.

Xavier believes that a mandate ensuring access to all students would assist these students with receiving the equitable education that prepares them to be competitive in the global

society (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gotham, 2002; Husted & Kenny, 2014; Jacob, 2007; Jordan, Chapman & Worbel, 2014; Shesky, 2010; Sweetland, 2014; Wilmath, 2010).

Xavier addressed this final theme of *education reform advocacy* in his interview and journal. While Xavier spoke to *change agency* which was a subtheme, *responsibility of others* also was present in Xavier's data sources. As an advocate, Xavier suggested hosting parent education forums to inform them of the educational inequalities their children face within the school system and encouraging them to use their platforms to demand change. Xavier noted in his interview,

When I was an undergrad I took an advocacy class and to be an advocate doesn't mean you have to go to Capitol Hill with the big red flag burning. It could be as simple as just educating parents on inequalities so that they can use their platforms along with my platform to get our message out.

Xavier as a change agent uses his classroom as a platform to provide students with meaningful learning experiences that set them up for success and prepare them for opportunities to advocate for themselves by employing components of democratic schooling. Xavier mentioned in his journal that he employs instructional strategies that are more student-centered and offer choice than teacher-centered. "This is education aimed at helping create critically deliberating and acting citizens who work for a more just and humane national community and world" (Waltzer & Heilman, 2005, p. 161). Xavier concluded in his interview that, "Our kids should have a seat at the table. They should not have to fight to be heard, but be invited to the table." Education plays a major role in the future success of students and therefore, access to an equitable educational experience is indispensable.

### **Lola**

Lola recently graduated with her Masters degree in curriculum and instruction while completing her fifth year of teaching.

Lola's desire to provide students in an urban setting with a qualified teacher of quality verified the emergence of *equitable education* as a theme and *access to quality instruction* as a subtheme. Lola's personal educational experiences are what inspired her to teach in the urban core.

What inspired me to teach in the urban core was because I wanted to give our little brown children great teachers. I was a product of [the urban school district] up until about third grade. I went to another school district where I wasn't treated as nicely because they saw my background. Even though I was in the gifted program [at my former school], I was immediately labeled as having a reading problem once I got to the new district. So that's what inspired me to be in the urban core with our kids just because they really need those quality teachers.

Lola's experience at her new school district was not uncommon for students of color who transfer to schools outside of the urban core. "Due to the lack of knowledge about urban students, many teachers position learners at risk of academic failure, misidentification of special needs, unnecessarily harsh disciplinary action and diminution of the self" (Swartz & Bakan, 2005, p. 829). Lola learned from this experience the power of having qualified teachers in urban classrooms. "African American children do not enter school disadvantaged, they leave school disadvantaged. There is nothing wrong with the children, but there is clearly something wrong with what happens to them in school" (Hale, 2001, p. 46). Ladson-Billings added, "... for urban students, school is the place that exacerbates students' problems. Instead of helping urban students, school often hurts them" (2017, p. 85).

In her interview Lola defined *education for globalization* as, "Education that evens the playing field for everyone across the world, recognizes cultural difference and develops critical thinking." These are all skills identified as facets of the subtheme *global literacy*. Basically, education for globalization is the knowledge and skills that assist students with successful living and competing in a global society.

Lola commented in her interview that she did not have any coursework in her teacher education program or graduate studies which addressed education for globalization. In fact, Lola expressed as an *education reform* effort, there was a great need for teacher education programs to be revised and updated to include more learning experiences that focused on teacher preparation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom (Wang et al, 2011). This sentiment aligned with the subtheme *funding & resources*, particularly referencing teacher education programs.

I'm probably gonna get a lot of heat behind this but I think a lot of undergrad courses focus on the philosophy of education which I feel is important, but if we want to update our educational system we can't keep teachers the same old song. There is too much emphasis on old information, which is good information, but then the new stuff gets thrown at us when we actually get in the field.

Lola also expressed the need to offer all students an equitable education as an effort for educational reform. "If we want our students to be competitive we need to give them an even playing field." How can students in the urban core successfully compete in the global society if they do not have access to quality teachers, curriculum resources, innovative technology and meaningful learning experiences? The amount of access that children have to valuable educational resources impacts their academic achievement (Noguera & Wing, 2006; Peters, 2012; Sullivan, 2001). The playing field must be fair and accessible to all students regardless of their ethnicity, culture and socioeconomic status.

Lola concluded her interview by identifying her role as an *education reform advocate* for education for globalization first as a learner. "My first role is to be well acquainted with the whole idea. Granted I get it, but I would like to do more research and have more training." She desires to become more acquainted with the attributes of education for globalization in order to be a *change agent*, in her classroom implementing instructional practices and using curriculum resources which prepare her students to successfully live and

compete in a global society. Her effective instruction is contingent on her depth of knowledge and skills ascribed to education for globalization. She must become a learner before she can be the teacher.

### **Jessica**

Jessica is currently completing her Masters degree in teaching with an emphasis in elementary education while finishing her third year as a teacher. Jessica originally went to college to study journalism in the hopes of becoming a sports journalist.

While assisting her mother's transition to her new school, Jessica witnessed firsthand the educational disparities found in urban schools. This experience exposed the initial theme *equitable education* and the corresponding subthemes, *access to quality instruction* and *access to learning resources*.

A week before I went back to college she said, "Rachel come help me school." I went with her and like I never wanted to be a teacher but there was something special going on there. I helped her out for a week love it, then fast forward to November still studying journalism about to graduate gonna do sports journalism and then something kind of switch in my heart. Just like a realization of the disparities that are still ingrained, huge socioeconomic gaps, racial gaps happening in our country and happening in some urban communities and so I applied for TFA with like a few months left of college. By purely luck and began to work at Washington (pseudonym). What encouraged me to go to urban core was seeing the relationship that my mom was building within just a few days with her students. I had felt the importance of having a safe and stable structured place in her first graders.

Jessica felt a sense of urgency to get involved and create change and the best way to accomplish that was to become a teacher.

Jessica admitted that she has not had any intentional professional conversations or received instruction in her graduate studies about *education for globalization* which was the next theme to surface in Jessica's interview. However, Jessica was able to describe education for globalization as,

Educating students to be competitive on a global level and understanding how the world works beyond your immediate community or even beyond the societal norms of the United States. Students need to understand how countries communicate and trade with one another and be able to navigate that space.

Instruction would also include discussion of other countries, their languages, political and economic practices. These subject areas are examples of *global literacy* competencies (Stewart, 2010).

Jessica's lack of formal knowledge of education for globalization led her to identify an *education reform* effort to meet this need. Jessica believes one major educational reform effort should be increasing teacher awareness of education for globalization. She explained in her interview,

I still think that what's lacking is a conversation of globalization. What does it mean, what does it look like? I think a lot of times we get stuck on the things are students are lacking or failing at. Making statements like, "You know they are not even reading on grade level. How can we be talking about students becoming globalized?" I think giving teachers the space to learn and have conversations is a big thing.

Another reform effort is assisting schools with creating innovative learning spaces where students have access to technology and that reinforce 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration and creativity. This speaks to the subtheme *curriculum & instruction*. Jessica expressed in her interview,

I think access is really important with technology there's no reason why our students aren't seeing the world right now in kindergarten and first grade. Every single day [students] should be seeing what's happening in the world and learning to use 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and ask questions.

Students need to have meaningful learning experiences that involve interdisciplinary units of study, exposure to other cultures, and financial literacy. These innovative learning spaces should be places for students to ask questions, be inquisitive and feed their curious minds. Jessica stated, "Being able to be inquisitive is really important is likely to occur naturally

when curious about the world and when given the space to ask questions.” Student should also be empowered with skills to research and navigate global spaces in order to understand and make sense of the world. “... [T]he empowerment of children in school administration and self-education, the use of democratic decision-making mechanisms in school, [establish] equality between children and adults, and [display] confidence in children” (Korkmaz & Erden, 2014, p. 366).

Jessica, therefore, has become a *change agent* and has designed her classroom to be a safe space for students to explore and taking risks. Jessica further defined her *advocacy role for education reform* as a classroom teacher providing students with innovative instruction that addresses the attributes of education for globalization. She shared in her interview,

My personal role in advocating for reforms that are pushing for a globalized education system has a lot to do with the unique program that I'm teaching. I think I have the opportunity to a teach skills that push us toward a more innovative and global society. I do think that teachers in general, including myself, expose students to what's beyond their small vision of the world and empower them to ask questions and to continue tolerance. I think the teacher's role is that exposure and empowerment and access to the classroom that's connected to entrepreneurship innovation and more technology.

It is this type of learning experiences that Jessica trusts will prepare students for successful living and competition in a global society. Jessica noted in her journal that as a change agent, “I research in order to write curriculum that address these skills and emphasize leadership.”

However, a student’s innate will to succeed and be an influential global citizen can be the deciding factor. Jessica offered the following explanation in her interview.

I think ultimately if a student is going to be globally competitive it still comes down to something inside of them that schools can't really give them. However, I think that skills and opportunities should be developed by the school and spaces to practice and fail safely and then have to stand up and keep working. Because I think when you're globally competitive you do have to learn how to fall down six times get up seven.

Students must learn from failure and continue to strive for success after every defeat.

## Findings to Research Questions

This section will attempt to answer the central research question and the sub-questions by summarizing the data collected in this study.

**Central research question:** *What themes are apparent in the narratives of novice and veteran teachers in an urban charter school in the Midwest?*

The themes that emerged in this study are: *education for globalization, education reform, equitable education, and educational reform advocacy*. The degree to which each theme was present in the participants' data sources is found in Table 1. Below, is a brief discussion of each theme.

**Education for Globalization** Since this study's purpose was to capture teachers' perceptions of education for globalization, it was logical that it would appear as a theme. Like in the literature concerning education for globalization, participants identified various subjects that they believed would be classified under education for globalization. These subjects were represented in the two interpretive codes: *life skills and global literacy*. Every participant remarked that none of their previous education coursework addressed or even mentioned education for globalization. This lack of formal exposure led to the different meanings the participants had about this concept.

All participants used different avenues to lead them to a place of understanding education for globalization. By using terms with which they were already familiar, participants were able to craft practical definitions and meanings of this concept. This strategy allowed participants to make connections between their current practice as teachers and the unfamiliar concept of education for globalization. Consequently, participants were able to identify several of the components of education for globalization referenced in the

literature of Brewer et al (2012), Hsu & Wang (2010), King & Thorpe (2012) Merriman & Nicoletti (2007), and Stewart (2010).

**Education Reform** As participants made meaning of education for globalization, they agreed that their current educational practice was not appropriately addressing this concept. Transferring that perspective to a larger scale, participants viewed the current state of education as a whole not being adequate. Therefore, the theme of education reform surfaced. The interpretive codes that formed this theme were *curriculum & instruction* and *funding & resources*. Each participant, concerned with the state of education, identified educational reform efforts that would be beneficial to themselves as teachers and to the students they served.

A careful review of the educational reform efforts proposed by the participants would reveal no new initiatives. The identified education reform efforts have been discussed in the literature. Noddings (2005) and Darling-Hammond (2010) spoke to the need of increasing teacher awareness about education for globalization. Noguera (2008) and Noguera & Wing (2006) tackled the dilemma of inequities in educational funding. Marshall & Olivia (2010) encouraged teachers and schools to build effective partnerships with parents. Since these ideas have been talked about before, why are they still the go-to answers teachers provide when asked about beneficial education reform efforts? Perhaps that is a research study for another time.

**Equitable Education** The theme of equitable education was an unexpected find. All participants made references to the importance of providing all students with an equitable education experience. The interpretive codes that shaped this theme were *access to quality*

*instruction and access to learning resources*. It was the idea of providing students in the urban core with an equitable education that prompted the participants to become teachers.

Providing students in the urban core with access to equitable education experiences was at the heart of all participants when describing why they chose to teach in the urban core. The idea of equitable education is discussed extensively in the literature of Darling-Hammond (2010), Delpit (2006), Dunn (2011), Husted & Kenny (2014), Kunjufu (2002), Noguera (2008), and Sweetland (2014). The belief that no matter what background students come from or where students live, they all deserve an education that will prepare them for a successful life in the global society. It is this belief that sparked the development of the last theme.

**Education Reform Advocacy** It is one thing to identify problems and desire change. It is another thing to become agents of that change. This theme was created using the following interpretive codes: *change agency* and *responsibility of others*. The participants expounded on their thinking concerning education reform by identifying the ways and means they could become advocates for specific education reform initiatives.

Each participant defined their role as an education reform advocate in a way that spoke to their comfort level and where they could be most effective. For many teachers their classrooms and schools were the spaces where they believe they have the most control and influence. Wherever and however these teachers advocate for educational reform, they become agents of change as soon as they use their voice to improve the educational experiences for their students (Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014; MacPhail & Tannehill, 2012; M. Priestley, Edwards, A. Priestley & Miller, 2012; van der Heijden, Beijaard, Geldens & Popeijus, 2018). For the other teachers in the study, they mentioned parents and school

administrators as people who should advocate and/or provide change in the schools in order to support education for globalization.

**Sub-question 1: *What meanings do novice and veteran teachers have about education for globalization?***

Each participant had varying levels of knowledge and understanding of education for globalization prior to this study. Therefore, they made meaning of this concept through the lens of other educational terms. Although participants were not able to define education for globalization in a concise definition, they offered the following as meanings as they understood the concept: education for students that prepares them to be competitive on a global scale; education exposing students and using innovative technology; education that teaches life skills to students and provides them with opportunities to apply those skills to real-life problems or challenges; education that exposes students to other cultures and the world; education that prepares students to work and live in a global society; 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, i.e. critical thinking and problem solving and technology literacy. These meanings are referenced in the literature of Brewer et al (2012), Costa & Kallick (2010), Hsu & Wang (2010), King & Thorpe (2012), Merriman & Nicoletti (2007), Saavedra & Opfer (2012), Shesky (2010), Stewart (2010) & Wilmath (2010).

**Sub-question 2: *What do they do to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum?***

The limited exposure to and understanding of the concept of education for globalization influenced the amount of instructional practices that the participants could identify. All participants received specific professional development from their school that encouraged the use of technology and cooperative learning strategies. Participants mentioned

using technology in the form of iPads and SMARTboards to engage students daily in learning. The use of technology was the main method referenced as an attempt to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum. Effective use of technology to address education for globalization is found in the literature of Costa & Kallick (2010), Greenhow et al (2009), Jukes & McCain (2007), Saavedra & Opfer (2012), Shesky (2010) and Wilmath (2010).

<b>Questionnaire/ Interviews/Journals</b>	Haley	Latrice	Shawn	Coco	Xavier	Lola	Jessica
<i>Table 2 Themes and Interpretive Codes</i>							
S = Strong presence							
M = Moderate presence							
N = Nominal presence							
<i>Theme: Education for globalization</i>							
Interpretive Codes							
Life Skills	S	N	M	N	N	N	M
Global Literacy	M	S	N	M	S	M	S
<i>Theme: Education Reform</i>							
Interpretive Codes							
Curriculum & Instruction	M	N	S	N	N	N	S
Funding & Resources	N	M	M	M	S	S	N
<i>Theme: Equitable Education</i>							
Interpretive Codes							
Access to Quality Instruction	S	M	S	M	S	S	M
Access to Learning Resources	M	N	N	N	S	M	M
<i>Theme: Educational Reform Advocacy</i>							
Interpretive Codes							
Change Agency	S	M	M	N	M	M	S
Responsibility of Others	N	M	S	N	M	N	N

## Conclusion

The central question of this social constructivist narrative study was: *What themes are apparent in the narratives of novice and veteran teachers in a urban charter school in the Midwest?* The sub-questions that layered the central question were: 1) *What meanings do novice and veteran teachers have about education for globalization?* 2) *What do they do to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum?* Data were collected from seven teachers in the form of an initial questionnaire, interviews, and answers to journal prompts. The data sources were coded in an effort to discover themes and respond to the research questions. The findings revealed in the data were the focus for chapter four.

Chapter four opened with a brief review of the research questions and the design and methodology of this study. Descriptions of the setting and participants of the study then followed. The analysis of organizational documents was then presented followed by the constructed narratives of the participants. After the presentation of the narratives, the findings were used to address the research questions.

The participants, unfamiliar with the concept of *education for globalization*, tried to make meaning of the term by associating it with educational terms that already existed in their professional vocabulary. Participants identified content that they believed would be classified under education for globalization. This content can be summarized as the knowledge and skills that students need to successfully live and compete in a global society.

*Education reform* was a likely theme that emerged. Participants understood that in order to effectively prepare students for the global society, change was required in education. However, before change could occur in the classroom, teachers needed to have spaces and

opportunities to learn and converse about education for globalization. The success of any educational reform effort was dependent upon their expertise of the concept.

Since the participants were teachers in the urban core, the emergence of *equitable education* as a theme was understandable. Each participant detailed how their life experiences placed them on a path that would culminate with them teaching in the urban core. Their desire to provide all students with a teacher of quality and an equitable educational experience defines their drive to be educators.

The final theme that emerged was *educational reform advocacy*. Participants felt empowered to be education reform advocates, first in their individual classrooms. This was a space that they had immediate control over and unlimited influence. They would ensure that every student that crossed their doorway would experience meaningful learning which would prepare them for success.

In the next and final chapter, I will discuss the implications of this study on current and future educational practice and conclude with recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This social constructivist narrative study explored the stories of seven K-8 teachers who teach in the urban core. These participants disclosed their understandings and perceptions of education for globalization. In chapter four, I reported the findings of the central question, *What themes are apparent in the narratives of novice and veteran teachers in an urban charter school in the Midwest?* There were two sub-questions that layered the central question: 1) *What meanings do novice and veteran teachers have about education for globalization?* 2) *What do they do to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum?* Analysis of the data informed the construction of the participants' narratives and provided insight into their understanding of education for globalization.

In this chapter, I will discuss the implications of this study on current and future educational practice and conclude with recommendations for further research. The discussion of implications of this study will include the following topics: defining education for globalization, teacher educational awareness & professional learning, and access to innovative curriculum and resources. These topics surfaced during the study and merit additional discussion and attention.

#### **Discussion**

As stated in chapter four, there were four themes that emerged from the data analysis: education for globalization, educational reform, equitable education, and educational reform advocacy. Embedded in these themes were topics that proved to be significant and worthy of continued reflection. Those topics are discussed below.

## **Defining Education for Globalization**

It has been documented that a major challenge of education for globalization is its inconsistent definition (Morais & Ogden, 2010; Myers, 2010; Rapoport, 2010; Landwehr, 2012; Tardif, 2015). The definition depends on the perspective of the person defining it, i.e. political, economical, social or educational. In the absence of a comprehensive definition, many have commented on what should be addressed in education for globalization. Hsu & Wang (2010) noted that education for globalization should include global knowledge and skills. Morais & Ogden (2010) concluded that social responsibility, global competence and global civic engagement are to be referenced with education for globalization. Meyers (2010) expressed that education for globalization must consist of preparing students for global citizenship. Even within these definitions are arbitrary terms that could mean different things to different people. What are “global skills?” What is “global competence?” What does “global citizenship” look like? Again, the nonexistence of a universally agreed upon definition makes it hard for educational institutions to make meaning of, and therefore, adequately address education for globalization. This conundrum became more apparent within the study.

All seven participants in the study had varying degrees of understanding about education for globalization. This difference in their understanding influenced how they made meaning of the concept for their professional practice and identified beneficial reform efforts. Terms like life skills, culture exposure, problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, technology literacy and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills were used to describe the participants’ understanding of education for globalization. In an effort to understand this concept, each participant associated education for globalization with educational concepts that already

existed in their professional practice. Each participant defined and made meaning of education for globalization using their professional perspective shaped by their experiences as a framework for comprehension. With that being said, how can teachers develop their understanding around education for globalization? The next section will attempt to answer this question.

### **Teachers' Educational Awareness & Professional Learning**

“Our world is changing around us in such a frantic pace that if we do not continue to grow and develop; we will soon be left behind” (Laal & Salamati, 2012, p. 399). This quote accurately describes the need for teachers to stay current with societal changes that impact the educational profession (Vangrieken, Meredith, Packer & Kyndt, 2017). The concept of teachers' educational awareness emerged in the study as a byproduct of exploring participants' understanding of education for globalization. For context, teachers' educational awareness is defined as the level of knowledge teachers had concerning educational initiatives, policies, trends and practices. Evers, van der Heijden, Kreijns & Vermeulen (2016) determined in their study that teachers need to keep up to date with new insights and advancements in the education profession in order to be effective. This idea implies that teachers hold a level of responsibility for their own professional learning. Teachers cannot solely rely on school sponsored professional learning opportunities to provide them with the necessary information to improve their practice (Dhaliwal, 2015; Vangrieken et al, 2017). Teachers have to become lifelong learners in the true sense of the word. “Lifelong learning is described as all the activities that individuals take part in their whole lives to improve their knowledge with a social, cultural and economical approach” (Hursen, 2014, p. 5036). As stated earlier, the rapid changes in today's society with advancements in technology, access

to information and global interdependence, it is essential that teachers maintain an awareness of the matters that influence education and therefore their practice (Laal & Salamati, 2012; Hursen, 2014; Evers et al, 2016).

Teachers need to be shown how to learn so that they can not only stay abreast of technological advances in a rapidly changing world, but become self-starters so that they can learn on their own rather than having to wait for the next time they are released to attend a staged professional learning course or program about a specific skill, tool or ways to embed tools into curriculum. (Dhaliwal, 2015, p. 261)  
This was a point of discussion with the participants of the study.

All participants admitted that they had not received any formal introduction, training or professional development concerning education for globalization. One participant went as far as to say that she had never engaged in any professional conversations where education for globalization was discussed. This meant that the participants' level of knowledge and understanding of this concept was very limited to nonexistent. One could argue that the media presence of the term "21<sup>st</sup> century skills" has overshadowed any mention of education for globalization. Participants were well aware of the term "21st century skills." They had attended various professional development sessions where the term was defined and discussed for implementation within daily lesson plans along with its introduction and consistent presence in the school culture. Is it safe to assume that if the participants were not formally exposed to the term 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, their level of knowledge would mirror that which they had for education for globalization?

After the initial interviews were conducted in this study, participants were encouraged to learn more about education for globalization on their own and possibly try one instructional strategy or activity in their classrooms that supported learning in this area. Three of the seven participants were able to describe the efforts they made to become more aware of education for globalization in order to inform their practice and attempted to implement an

instructional strategy or activity. This was an interesting result and could mean that these participants may need a formal learning session in order to expand their knowledge and understanding of education for globalization because they are not motivated to study it on their own. “The teachers who are able to continuously acquire new and better forms of knowledge that they can apply to their teaching and their lives are the true teachers” (Dhaliwal, 2015, p. 259). By committing to being lifelong learners, teachers can become experts of their craft. However, knowledge alone will not improve teachers’ practice and make them more effective. Teachers need access to innovative curriculum and resources to provide students with meaningful learning experiences that align with education for globalization.

### **Innovative Curriculum and Resources**

Education once was regulated to teaching students the “3R’s”, reading, writing and arithmetic (Alismail & McGuire, 2015). However in today’s classrooms, students are exposed to much more complex ideas and content. Although there are various contributing factors to this advancement in education, global competition remains an influential catalyst even to this day.

Globalization has shown itself to be one of the most irresistible forces in the contemporary world. In the field of education, it has a profound influence on the national initiatives of many widely differing countries to renew their education systems, especially non-Western and developing ones. (Yin, Lee & Wang, 2014, p. 293).

Many countries around the world have maintained a focus on international competition while designing and implementing educational reform efforts (Zajda, 2011; Z. Ciroma, Abubakar, Kaigma & J. Ciroma, 2014; Sparapani, Perez, Gould, Hillman & Clark, 2014; Yin et al, 2014). “Governments, in their quest for excellence, quality and accountability in education,

increasingly turn to international and comparative education data analysis” (Zajda, 2011, p. 144). This concentration on global completion has incited discussions around the development of a global curriculum (Z. Ciroma et al, 2014; Sparapani et al, 2014). “... [T]o achieve global education there is a need for all stakeholders to take into consideration using the same curriculum” (Z. Ciroma et al, 2014, p. 144). Although this may become a reality in the distant future, framers of this curriculum will experience the same challenges faced by those trying to define education for globalization. Deciding what should and should not be included in the global curriculum will be a difficult task. Education is enveloped by culture and is expressed and shared through cultural systems (Yin et al, 2014). With that being said, can a global curriculum exist that is sterile of the cultural nuances that define the identity of a country? The advocacy for the implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills makes discussions for a global curriculum seem premature and unnecessary.

Twenty-first century skills have been described as extensions of the “3R’s.” The “4C’s” (critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity) were added to the emphasis of core academic content mastery (Alismail & McGuire, 2015). An in-depth discussion of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can be found in chapter 2. Although 21<sup>st</sup> century skills offer teachers a guide for preparing students to succeed in the future, they cannot be effective for students whose schools have limited access to the necessary innovative curriculum and resources. This was an articulated dilemma for several of the participants.

Access to innovative curriculum resources and technology was mentioned specifically by four of the seven participants. These participants identified access as an attribute to equitable education and determined that it was a major hurdle that teachers and consequently their students had to overcome in order to live successfully in a global society.

Xavier expressed his frustration that the urban school where he teaches is located in a semi-affluent area in the heart of the city, but struggles with being provided limited educational resources. However, a private school that is only two blocks away has the finances to send their students on elaborate spring break trips and exercises a one-to-one technology philosophy. Sparapani et al stated the problem (in regard to) access like this,

As long as new educational initiatives are regulated to competitive funding, where only the privileged schools are positioned to apply ... schools in urban and rural areas, which educate a majority of students in poverty, and face fiscal and financial challenges regarding resources and support, will continue to struggle to prepared highly qualified teachers and have classrooms that are rich in curriculum, materials, and resources. (2014, p. 11).

If teachers and students in the urban core continue to lack access to innovative curriculum and resources, how can these students be prepared to successfully live and compete in a global society? Will these students be destined to be disenfranchised from the global community? It is this last question that sparked the initial interest in this study and sadly remains insufficiently answered.

The ideas discussed above, defining education for globalization, teacher's educational awareness & professional learning, and innovative curriculum & resources, all have a role in preparing students for successful living in a global society. However, teachers' educational awareness & professional learning will serve as the foundation for the recommendation in the following section which will be addressed through the lens of the instructional leader.

### **Recommendations**

In many professions, being a life-long learner is not only a good thing, it is a requirement. Although doctors spend several years in school and several more in residency, their learning does not stop there. Doctors subscribe to numerous medical journals and attend various conferences and seminars to stay current with the innovations of the medical

profession and for recertification. Likewise, lawyers apply similar means in order to keep up with new and changing laws. Teachers are not exempt from these examples of continued professional learning. To become experts at their craft, teachers must also commit to being lifelong learners by subscribing to professional journals and attending conferences and seminars. Teachers also need to become reflective practitioners consistently seeking for ways to improve their knowledge and skills. As stated before, teachers ought to take ownership of their professional learning and growth. However, for many teachers, opportunities for professional development and growth do not occur in isolation. Teachers are exposed to best practices and innovative strategies through on-site professional development sessions. Yet the level of actual influence on instructional practice by these sessions can be dubious. Students' academic performance is directly related to teachers' access to and the implementation of innovative curriculum and instructional practices (Dhaliwal, 2015; Evers et al, 2016; Vangrieken et al, 2016). In order to provide students with the tools for successful living and completion in a global society, teachers must implement (an) the innovative curriculum and instructional practices with fidelity and be monitored for effect. In the paragraphs to follow, there will be discussion on how instructional leaders can make professional development and learning a staple in their schools' culture and effective with changing instructional practice.

Professional development is simply that; learning opportunities that enhance the knowledge and skills of a professional (Hursen, 2014; Dhaliwal, 2015; Evers et al, 2016; Vangrieken et al, 2016). With that being said, these opportunities must be meaningful in order to support authentic learning.

If professional development is to become something more than the dissemination of information about current mandates, it should be: focused on advancing the quality of

teaching and learning; representative of a long-term strategic plan; collaborative developed by teachers and administrators working in concert; ... (McCann, Jones & Aronoff, 2012, p. 83).

Fullan (2007) made the following assertion,

First, professional development related to the knowledge, skills and dispositions of teachers as individual staff members is a necessary, but insufficient element. Obviously this is important and can make a difference in individual classrooms, but unless connected to collective learning, it fails to influence the culture of the school (p. 164).

Therefore, professional development cannot just be about improving the knowledge and skill of a single individual. It must be part of a bigger plan for the improvement of an organization and the achievement of its goals and objectives.

The idea for collective professional development can be referred to as professional learning communities, PLCs. “In contrast to the traditional paradigm of professional development in which teachers attend off-site workshops and conferences that may or may not inspire them to change their thinking or instruction, the PLC involves teachers in site-based, ongoing, collaborative professional development” (Linder, Post & Calabrese, 2012, p. 13). Rick Dufour (2004) stated that there are three big ideas that define the purpose of PLCs. The first is ensuring that students learn. In this day of high stakes testing and accountability, it is imperative that at the core of all PLCs lies the commitment to assist students with learning (Pirtle & Tobia, 2014; Prenger, Poortman & Handelzalts, 2017). “The professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply that students are taught, but they learn” (DuFour, 2004, p. 8).

The second big idea is the development of a culture of collaboration. Educators must work together if they desire to positively impact student achievement (Pirtle & Tobia, 2014; Prenger et al, 2017). They must come together to share ideas and experiences in order to

enhance collegial learning. “Educators who are building a professional learning community recognize that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all. Therefore, they create structures to promote a collaborative culture” (DuFour, 2004, p. 9). A challenge that PLCs must address is creating an environment where people are open to being transparent with their weaknesses and failures in order to receive constructive feedback. In this case, trust is a must.

Professional learning communities share three important features: the adults in them act and are treated as professionals, there is a focus on learning, and there is a strong sense of community. For these three features to characterize a school’s culture, trust is required. Teachers are more likely to be innovative and effective in an atmosphere of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 107).

The growth and development of teachers is distinctly tied to the level of trust and respect for colleagues that is felt and displayed within the school culture.

... [E]stablishing a culture for learning where all teachers expect that their teaching will be questioned and explored by colleagues and supervisors, not because there’s anything wrong with their teaching, but because teaching is so complex that it requires continuous growth and change (McKay, 2013, p. 85).

If teachers do not feel comfortable sharing or are in fear that they will be judged on their shortcomings, they will not meaningfully connect to the PLC. “Without trust, teachers are unwilling to take the risks needed to engage in honest reflection and dialogue about their practice” (McKay, 2013, p. 90). However, if teachers and administrators have created an environment and culture of trust and respect, professional dialogue can occur with the intent of impacting current professional practice (Freire & Fernandes, 2015; Gray, Kruse, & Tarter, 2015).

The third big idea that defines the purpose of PLCs is a focus on results. This idea may seem obvious, but it is easy for educators to become completely engaged in the work and develop tunnel vision, thus, they fail to assess their progress. “Professional learning

communities judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Working together to improve student achievement becomes the routine work of everyone in the school” (DuFour, 2004, p. 10). Prior to implementation, PLCs should define the expected outcomes and the measurements of success, and set a timeline for operation (Pirtle & Tobia, 2014; Prenger et al, 2017). From there, they need to identify appropriate benchmarks to ensure that they are on target and/or determine if there is a need for intervention (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004).

Following these ideas can assist with establishing productive and effective PLCs. However, there must be a school culture constructed in order to welcome such collaborative work. The school principal is very instrumental in crafting this culture. “The actions of the principal play an important role in setting the general tone of school trust.” (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 107). His or her attitudes, actions, and behaviors can be the determining factors of the success or failure of a PLC initiative. Yes, principals do have that much power and influence. “A leader who demonstrates the core beliefs of the school each day in their deeds and actions with teachers, students, ... has taken the first step in creating a context for meaningful conversations to occur among teachers” (McKay, 2013, p. 91). This is again an example of why Deal and Peterson (2007) labeled school leaders as symbols. Faculty and staff observe school principals for cues on how they themselves should and could respond to school activities and practices. With this understanding, it is imperative that school principals are deliberate and intentional with their actions in order to craft a school culture that embraces reflective practices like PLCs to improve student achievement (Pirtle & Tobia, 2014; Freire & Fernandes, 2015; Gray et al, 2015; Prenger et al, 2017).

School principals should look for opportunities to celebrate and acknowledge the accomplishments of faculty and staff as well as students and parents (Tschannen-Moran,

2004; Cosner; 2009; Brown, 2015). These celebrations inform the staff that the school leader appreciates the efforts of those who try to make a difference within the school community. Awards like teacher/staff member of the month and student of the month that are sponsored by the school principal are examples of presentations that can boost school morale and give the school climate some positive energy. By allowing the faculty to vote for award nominees and winners has several positive effects (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Cosner; 2009; Brown, 2015; Freire & Fernandes, 2015; Gray et al, 2015). First, teachers are empowered to have their voices heard. Second, it fosters a climate and culture of collegial appreciation. Third, staff members can take ownership of the criteria and therefore improve their practice. Lastly, the school principal can avoid damaging the school culture by choosing those whom he or she may have friendships with outside of school.

School principals should also establish ways to commemorate special events and national and cultural holidays. This, "... may make the school an important cultural center for events in the local community and reaffirm the school's ties to the wider culture" (Deal & Peterson, 2007, p. 207). Schools must attend to the needs of the whole student, not just the academic side. This is a great way to invite all stakeholders to recognize and honor the diversity found within the school and build a culture of acceptance (Brown 2015).

In an effort to build a culture of trust and respect for professional conversations, school principals need to display genuine interest in the major events of the lives of their staff members (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Brown 2105). Social practices should be initiated by principals to celebrate weddings, birthdays, graduations, and the birth of a new child. There should also be protocols to address the death of staff members' love ones. There is a famous anonymous quote that states, "No one cares how much you know, until they know how much

you care.” Principals must keep this in mind as they try to establish a collective culture of improvement.

In addition to all the positive celebrations and emotional support, principals have the job of addressing violations of norms, poor teacher performance, and other challenging events in the daily life of the school (Cosner, 2009; Brown; 2015; Freire & Fernandes, 2015; Gray et al, 2015). How school principals tackle these challenges will affect the school’s climate and culture. Principals cannot practice avoidance because their silence could be more destructive to the culture than them having an explosive rant (Cosner 2009). They must meet each challenging situation head on with grace and accountability, and in the appropriate forum.

In implementing the above procedures and practices, principals will have helped to establish a school culture ready for PLCs. However, the work for principals is not over. As PLCs are designed, principals and staff members need to revisit the school’s shared vision. This will assist with forming a collective understanding of the purpose for the PLCs. “Professional development programs only work when they make collective sense to administrators and teachers” (McCann, Jones & Aronoff, 2012, p. 90). This collective understanding is necessary to guide the PLCs in generating the expected outcomes and measurements for success.

If good instruction – in every classroom and for all students – is the central focus of systemic change in education, then districts and schools need to define “goodness” and come to a shared understanding of what is meant by great, or even competent, teaching (Wagner & Kegan, 2006, p. 37).

If there is any confusion about the purpose and/or goals of the PLCs, the principal should facilitate the discussion and offer any clarifying information when possible. “School leaders are better able to facilitate teacher growth when everyone is grounded in a common set of

understandings and beliefs about teaching and learning” (McKay, 2013, p. 68). The principal and staff members should work together so that all will have a sense of ownership of the process and results. Principals can facilitate these discussions during staff meetings at the beginning of the year.

Once the expected outcomes, measurements for success, and benchmarks are determined, staff members should offer suggestions to the principal of ways and means to achieve the outcomes (Pirtle & Tobia, 2014; Prenger et al, 2017; Vangrieken et al, 2017). Principals need to be strategic when outlining the next steps for PLCs. It is at this point where principals can group staff members into PLCs that have like needs. The grouping strategy used is at the principals’ discretion. However, grouping according to similar weaknesses or issues of performance can allow the principal to intentionally influence the PLCs strategies to meet the outcomes. This would also allow the principal to focus his or her professional conversations with individual PLCs. This differentiation also allows for staff members to engage in the PLCs process more effectively. They will know that their PLC is going to address specific areas of improvement that they have identified (McCann et al, 2012; McKay, 2013; Pirtle & Tobia, 2014; Prenger et al, 2017; Vangrieken et al, 2017). The PLCs process will, therefore, be more meaningful.

After PLCs and subsequent strategies have been decided, principals must, “... create time and structures that facilitate collaboration and that allow for professional discourse and shared decision-making among teachers” (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p.108). Staff members will know the level of importance and commitment the principal has for the PLCs by how he or she attends to the logistics. Too little time or meetings that are not frequent enough will tell staff members that the principal is not committed to the PLC structure. Principals must

give the appropriate amount of time, space and resources to the PLCs in order for them to be successful, and ultimately increase student achievement (McCann et al, 2012; McKay, 2013; Pirtle & Tobia, 2014; Prenger et al, 2017).

Professional Learning Communities can be the answer to outdated professional development practices. PLCs can be structured so that they meet the specific professional learning needs of staff members. This could make staff participation more meaningful. PLCs can assist with resource allocations. Since all teachers do not need the same support, resources can be applied to efforts that meet individual needs. PLCs have much to offer if school leaders and staff can work collectively to establish outcomes and strategies that directly align to the school's vision. "Collective teams tend to plan strategically, keeping specific target outcomes in mind, and planning together a course of instruction that offers the strongest potential for students to attain goals" (McCann, Jones & Aronoff, 2012, p. 76). The role of the principal is crucial to the success of this structure. The principal must fashion a school culture that welcomes and protects vulnerability while earning the trust of the staff members he or she leads. "Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 70).

During this study, organizational documents such as Board policies were used to provide a context of the professional spaces wherein teachers worked and developed their craft. These policies expressed the Board's commitment to providing a quality education to all students. These policies specifically addressed means and methods for systematic curriculum review to ensure that curriculum met state learning standards and were based on current educational research. The term "current educational research" is arbitrary and does not offer school leadership explicit direction with identifying educational research initiatives

that should be considered and/or included in school curriculum. Therefore, Board policies should be updated to explicitly state that curriculum should align with state learning standards and education for globalization expectations.

Naming the educational research initiative to be considered and/or included in the curriculum provides clear direction and informs the systematic curriculum review process. This explicit determination of the educational research initiative also ensures that the school stays true to the Board policies that require curriculum to be based on current research. Education for globalization is a new educational demand supported by research that emphasizes the instruction and learning of knowledge and skills for successful living and competition in the global society. By identifying education for globalization in Board policies, the school is addressing a current educational need and setting their students up for success.

### **Future Research**

The state of the world is changing rapidly. Advancements in technology have erased borders of countries and made accessing and sharing information effortless. Although these technological conveniences and social advancements have been met with great appreciation, a haunting truth continues to lurk in the shadows of human progress. That is the depressing fate of students of color attending urban schools in the United States and their place in the global society. Students of color are still experiencing educational inequities that control their access to qualified teachers, innovative instructional technologies and curriculum, and meaningful learning experiences. This continued lack of access hinders efforts to close student performance gaps and prepare students for successful living in the global society. Although student performance gaps have been well documented, their impact in connection

with globalization requires more study. How can students of color, who are already being academically out performed by their white peers, compete in a global society? What educational initiatives, policies or practices can be implemented to ensure that students of color are not disenfranchised from this global society? These two questions can guide future research for true equitable education.

Another area that would benefit from more research is the insertion of teachers' voices in educational policy change. Many studies have been conducted about teacher practice and where teachers, themselves, were the subjects being studied. However, in comparison, there are fewer studies where the actual intention was to capture teachers' voices especially regarding educational policy development and change. This became more apparent with the recent discussions of arming teachers with guns as a means of protecting students from and preventing potential active shootings. In the media coverage of the issue, it was the politicians, students, parents, community leaders and teacher union leaders that were invited to the table and given air time to address the issue from their respective perspectives. Teachers' voices were absent from the conversation until they inserted themselves into the conversation by creating a social media campaign "#ArmMeWith". It was then that teachers' voices were solicited to offer ideas from their perspective and expertise. How can educational policy be developed or changed without the intentional inclusion of teachers' voices? They are the ones on the front lines where most policies are implemented. More research can be conducted where teachers' voices are deliberately incorporated in discussions of educational policy, development, and change.

## Conclusion

“Globalization has a profound impact on educational reforms across the world. It implies the exchange of educational theory, policy and practice among different cultures, which brings more complexity for the local institutions where reform initiatives unfold” (Yin et al, 2013, p. 294). Whatever reform initiatives implemented by national and local educational agencies, teachers will need to make sense of them for effective execution. The purpose of this social constructivist narrative study was to capture teachers’ voices while they made meaning of education for globalization in an effort to understand its influence on their professional practice. The central question addressed by this study was: *What themes are apparent in the narratives of novice and veteran teachers in an urban charter school in the Midwest?* The sub-questions that layered the central question were: 1) *What meanings do novice and veteran teachers have about education for globalization?* 2) *What do they do to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum?*

Written documents and interviews informed the construction of the participants’ narratives and provided insight into their understanding of education for globalization. Analysis of data sources included determining descriptive codes for checking the data. Then interpretive codes were created to offer deeper examination of the data. Pattern codes were determined and common themes emerged. The themes that emerged were: *education for globalization, educational reform, equitable education and educational reform advocacy*. These themes were the foundation for the restorying of the teachers’ experiences. The results and findings support the need for teachers to take an active role in their professional learning in order to advocate for reform efforts that are practical for their practice.

In closing, I want to express appreciation to the teachers in this study who trusted me to capture their voices and vulnerabilities in a respectful manner for the purpose of professional learning. It is not easy for teachers to admit that they are uninformed about issues which impact their practice. These teachers were courageous to expose their unawareness of education for globalization. However, their commitment and dedication to their students and to their craft ensures that this will only be momentary.

**Appendix A: Consent for Participation in Research Study**  
**A Narrative Study Of The Perceptions Of Education for Globalization Held By**  
**Teachers In The Urban Core**

**Co-Investigators:**

Tammy M. Combs, M.A., Ed.D Candidate  
[combst@umkc.edu](mailto:combst@umkc.edu)  
(816) 560-8156

Loyce Caruthers, Ph. D.  
[caruthersl@umkc.edu](mailto:caruthersl@umkc.edu)  
(816) 235-1044

**Request to Participate**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is being conducted at the University of Missouri – Kansas City (UMKC).

The researcher in charge of this study is Dr. Loyce Caruthers. While the study will be run by her, other qualified persons who work with her may act for her.

The study team is asking you to take part in this research study because you are a teacher in the urban core. Research studies only include people who choose to take part. This document is called a consent form. Please read this consent form carefully and take your time making your decision. The researcher or study staff will go over this consent form with you. Ask her to explain anything that you do not understand. Think about it and talk it over with your family and friends before you decide if you want to take part in this research study. This consent form explains what to expect: the risks, discomforts, and benefits, if any, if you consent to be in the study.

**Background**

You are being asked to participate in this study because you meet the following requirements:

- Teach in the urban core (inner city)
- Are a teacher of grades K-8
- Are a teacher with less than five years teaching experience (novice) or more than 15 years teaching experience (veteran)

This study will capture the perceptions novice and veteran teachers have concerning education for the global society.

You will be one of six subjects in the study at Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this narrative study is to understand the thoughts, perceptions and experiences of urban K-8 educational professionals with regards to educating students for successful competition and living in a global society.

The following central question and sub-questions will be addressed: What themes are apparent in the narratives of novice and veteran teachers in an urban charter school in the Midwest?

- What meanings do novice and veteran teachers have about education for globalization?
- What do they do to integrate education for globalization in the curriculum?

This study is being conducted to include teacher voices in education reform efforts, teacher education programs and professional development offerings that will help teachers to be appropriately prepared to provide meaningful learning experiences to students in order for them to successfully compete and live in a global society.

### **Procedures**

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in one 45 minute one-on-one interview, submit three journal entries and participate in one 30 minute debrief session. The research will take place off site of the school.

#### **Individual Interview**

- 45 minute interview

#### **Journal Entries**

- Respond to three prompts about your knowledge and understanding of education for a global society
- Journal prompts will be provided at the end of the interview. Completed responses will be collected at the debrief session to take place approximately three weeks from the interview.

#### **Debrief**

- Discussion about the narrative developed from your interview and journal responses.

The interviews and debrief sessions will be recorded and transcribed later for analysis. Audio recording is necessary to ensure the accurate documentation of the information provided by participants. Once interviews and debrief sessions are transcribed, all audio recordings will be destroyed.

This research will begin February of 2018 and conclude by April 2018. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in this study for approximately three months.

**Participation in this study is voluntary and subjects may refuse to participate in certain activities or answer certain questions.** If you wish to withdraw from the study, you may do so at any time by contacting the study investigator.

### **Risks and Inconveniences**

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means the risks of taking part in this research study are not expected to be more than the risks in your daily life. There is a minimal risk of breach of confidentiality. To minimize this risk that following steps will be used: all data sources will be de-identified with the use of pseudonyms, all interviews and debrief sessions will occur off site and all data will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office during and after the study. There are no other known risks to you if you choose to take part in this study.

### **Benefits**

There are no direct benefits to participating in this study. However, results for this study may influence educational reform efforts, teacher education preparation programs and professional development offerings.

### **Fees and Expenses**

You will not incur any fees and expenses for participating in this study.

### **Compensation**

There is no payment for participating in this study.

### **Alternatives to Study Participation**

The alternative is to not take part in the study.

### **Confidentiality**

While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

Information gathered through the interviews and journals will be stored with the use of pseudonyms. The key identifying participants and their respective pseudonyms will be destroyed after the transcription of interviews, if not sooner. Only the study investigators will

have access to the data sources. This information will be stored in a locked office at the School of Education at UMKC and on the UMKC and personal computers of the study investigators. Any information written in the dissertation, papers, presentations or publications will use pseudonyms to de-indentify participants in the study. If a subject withdraws before the study ends, the data collected will be kept and possibly used to inform study findings.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City appreciates people who help it gain knowledge by being in research studies. It is not the University's policy to pay for or provide medical treatment for persons who are in studies. If you think you have been harmed because you were in this study, please call one of the researchers, Ms. Tammy M. Combs at (816) 560-8156 or Dr. Caruthers at (816) 235 – 1044.

### **Contacts for Questions about the Study**

You should contact the Office of UMKC's Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927 if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research subject. You may call the researchers, Ms. Tammy M. Combs at (816) 560-8156 or Dr. Caruthers at (816) 235 – 1044, if you have any questions about this study. You may also call either researcher if any problems come up.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to be in the study or decide to stop participating, your decision will not affect any care or benefits you are entitled to. The researchers, doctors or sponsors may stop the study or take you out of the study at any time if they decide that it is in your best interest to do so. They may do this for medical or administrative reasons or if you no longer meet the study criteria. You will be told of any important findings developed during the course of this research.

You have read this Consent Form or it has been read to you. You have been told why this research is being done and what will happen if you take part in the study, including the risks and benefits. You have had the chance to ask questions, and you may ask questions at any time in the future by calling Ms. Tammy M. Combs at (816) 560-8156 or Dr. Caruthers at (816) 235 – 1044. You volunteer and consent to take part in this research study. At any time, you can discontinue your participation in the study.

**Appendix B: Initial Questionnaire**

This questionnaire will be used for participant selection.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this short questionnaire.

- 1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Gender : \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Length of time as a teacher: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Grades taught: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Number of years teaching in the urban core: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Highest degree: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Interview Guide

*Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I know that there are many demands on teachers especially this time of year with the preparation for state assessments. Today we are going to discuss your experience in the field of education and your knowledge and understandings of education for globalization. This interview is being recorded and will be transcribed at a later date. I want you to feel free to talk at a normal pace without interruption. Please remember that all response will be anonymous.*

(Turn on recorder)

Please state your name for the recording.

### *Interview Questions*

Global literacy is a new term that has surfaced in the field of education and is an attribute of education for globalization. It refers to a level of knowledge and skills that students need to have in order to be considered globally competent or competitive.

1. Describe what influenced you to become a teacher in the urban core.
2. Describe your understanding of education for globalization.

*Provide description of global literacy competencies as an example*

3. Describe your experience with teacher education coursework/programs that have prepared you to address education for globalization in your classroom?
4. What educational reform efforts do you believe will be beneficial to addressing your needs to successfully prepare students to compete in the global society?
5. What educational reform efforts do you believe are necessary to successfully prepare students to compete in the global society?
6. Describe the role you see yourself taking in advocating for educational reform efforts that address education for globalization?
7. What role or responsibility does education have in preparing students for successful completion in the global society?

*This is the end of the interview. Thank you again for time and cooperation. This information will be used to construct a narrative describing your ideas, perceptions and experiences. I will share the constructed narrative after with you to ensure that I have accurately captured your voice. Do you have any questions for me before we dismiss?*

## **Appendix D: Journal Prompts**

*Throughout the duration of this study, you will be asked to submit three journal entries. These entries along with your interview will assist with capturing your ideas, perceptions and experiences with education for globalization. The journal entries will begin after the initial individual interview. During the interview the definition of education for globalization is provided with discussion.*

Journal Prompt One:

Describe any instructional strategy or activity students were engaged in this week within your classroom that addressed education for globalization. How did students perform?

Journal Prompt Two:

Describe any professional development session you attended within the last year that equipped you to address education for globalization within your classroom.

Journal Three:

Describe any efforts you have made to become more aware of education for globalization in order to inform your practice.

*Thank you for your candid responses to the above journal prompts. I will continue to share the findings of this study with you as data sources are analyzed. Just as a reminder all data will be reported anonymously.*

## Appendix E: IRB Approval



UMKC  
6319 Rookhill Road  
Kansas City, MO 64110  
TEL: (816) 235-6827  
FAX: (816) 235-6802

### NOTICE OF NEW APPROVAL

Principal Investigator: Dr. Loyce Caruthers  
615 E. 52nd St.  
Kansas City, MO 64110

Protocol Number: 18-003

Protocol Title: A Narrative Study of the Perceptions of Education for Globalization Held by Teachers in the Urban Core

Type of Review: Designated Review

Expedited Category #: 6, 7

Date of Approval: 02/06/2018

Date of Expiration: 02/04/2019

Dear Dr. Caruthers,

The above referenced study, and your participation as a principal investigator, was reviewed and approved, under the applicable IRB regulations at 21 CFR 50 and 56 (FDA) or 45 CFR 46 (OHRP), by the UMKC IRB. You are granted permission to conduct your study as described in your application.

Your protocol was approved under Expedited Review Regulatory Criteria at 45 CFR 46.110 or 21 CFT 56.110 under Categories #6 and #7 as follows:

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your protocol was approved for a waiver of documentation of consent under regulatory criteria at 45 CFR 46.117(c) having met either of the following criteria:

1. That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern; or
2. That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

In cases in which the documentation requirement is waived, you may be required to provide subjects with a written statement regarding the research.

This approval includes the following documents:

#### Attachments

- Tammy Combs Diss Approval form
- Oral Recruitment Script

Appendix D Journal Prompts  
CHAPTER THREE Methodology  
Appendix B Initial Questionnaire  
Email Recruitment Script  
Key to Pseudonyms  
Tolbert Permission Letter  
Appendix A Consent to Participate - Stamped 2.5.2018  
Appendix C Interview Guide

If a consent is being used in this research study you may find the stamped version in section 16 of your application.

The ability to conduct this study will expire on or before 02/04/2019 unless a request for continuing review is received and approved. If you intend to continue conduct of this study, it is your responsibility to provide a Continuing Review form prior to the expiration of approval or a final report if you plan to close the study.

This approval is issued under the University of Missouri - Kansas City's Federal Wide Assurance FWA00005427 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under the Board's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

There are 5 stipulations of approval:

- 1) No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date. (PIs and sponsors are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings).
- 2) All unanticipated or serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB.
- 3) All protocol modifications must be IRB approved prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk. This includes any change of investigator.
- 4) All protocol deviations must be reported to the IRB.
- 5) All recruitment materials and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to being used.

Please contact the Research Compliance Office (email: [umkcirb@umkc.edu](mailto:umkcirb@umkc.edu); phone: (816)235-5927) if you have questions or require further information.

Thank you,



Cynthia Thompson

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## VITA

Tammy Monique Combs was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. Tammy is a product of Denver Public Schools (DPS). She graduated from George Washington High School in 1994 and attended the University of Colorado, Denver campus that fall. Tammy graduated with a Bachelors of Arts degree in History with a minor in Ethnic Studies.

Ms. Combs worked as the after-school Program Director for the Smiley Neighborhood Center housed at Smiley Middle School in DPS prior to entering the classroom as a teacher. As a middle school teacher, Tammy taught sixth grade English and Social Studies. After two years of teaching, she was encouraged to pursue a Master's degree by her principal. Tammy was accepted by the University of Phoenix (UOP) and completed her Master's degree in Educational Administration and Supervision in 2004.

After completing her Master's degree, Tammy moved to Kansas City, MO and taught middle school Social Studies part-time while also working as an Instructional Coach part-time at Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy. The following year Tammy became a full-time Instructional Coach and therefore left the classroom. In 2006, Tammy was promoted to the position of Curriculum and Assessment Director. Her work with teachers drew the attention of the Board and she was asked to be the founding principal of the new high school, Tolbert Preparatory Academy, which would be the extension of the K-8 school. Tolbert Preparatory Academy opened in 2008. Tammy began her doctorate studies in 2010 in the Educational Leadership, Policy, and Foundations department at UMKC two years after the opening of the school.

Due to circumstances beyond her control, the school only had one class of graduates before closing in 2011. It was at this time Ms. Combs founded her own educational consulting business and secured a contract to work with one school. She also became an

instructor at UOP, the Kansas City campus. While teaching at UOP, Tammy served as an Advisory Board member for the School of Education at UOP. In 2012, Tammy was given the opportunity to join the adjunct faculty of the University of Missouri at Kansas City (UMKC). She has taught various courses in the Teacher Education program and supervised pre-service teachers during their teacher candidacy.

In 2015, Ms. Combs became a Lead Evaluator for AdvancED, an international school and school systems' accreditation organization and was initiated into Omicron Delta Kappa, the national leadership honor society. The following year, Tammy accepted another adjunct instructor position, this time at Metropolitan Community College (MCC) teaching in its Associates of Teaching degree program. Upon completion of her degree, Tammy will continue to work as an educational consultant and adjunct instructor until securing a full time faculty position at a college or university.