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Creating Creators Cinema Project: Transforming Lives through the Arts

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

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by

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ABSTRACT

Creating Creators Cinema Project:

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This work centered on the Creating Creators Cinema Project (CCCP), a for-profit organization that works with K-12 school districts in California to integrate student filmmaking into core subjects. The qualitative case study documented the experiences of CCCP's founders, the teaching artists who mentor filmmaking youth, and the students participating in year-long projects, providing a "thick description" of the creation, implementation, and impact of the program in a high school setting. The research addressed the dearth of arts programs in urban schools and their connection to representation in arts fields, particularly filmmaking. The study utilized three frameworks: Critical Pedagogy, Constructivism, and Situated Learning Theory to analyze data about pedagogical approaches and impact in the personal and professional lives of those involved in the project. Findings revealed participants in CCCP challenge traditional schooling practices and create a professional identity for students in the program. This study affirmed the importance of arts education in student lives and identifies how arts is a transformative vehicle for students and educators.

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To the LMU professors who expanded my thoughts on leadership for social justice and what it means to be an inquisitive educator. In particular, I want to thank, Dr. Jill Bickett, Dr. Marta Baltodano, Dr. Antonia Darder, Dr. Karen Huchting, Dr. Martha McCarthy, Dr. Mary McCullough, and Dr. David Sapp.

Lastly, to the Creating Creators Cinema Project founders, teaching artists and students, for allowing me to tell their story. Polo and Jessica, thank you for giving your time, energy, and industry knowledge. I am inspired by your commitment to the arts and your collective commitment to transforming teaching and learning in the classroom.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Marlene and Gustavo Quintero. When I first told you of my acceptance to the LMU doctoral program, your immediate response was, “How can we help?” Your unwavering support, my whole life, has brought me to this point; my success is your success.

To my twins, Sean and Karl. On my 40th birthday, you played me a duet version of “Imagine” on the piano that brought me to tears. May the world you create be driven by peace, love, humanity, and your music.

To Shuqian Guan, your doctorate is next—it’s my turn to take care of you.

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PROLOGUE—MY EARLY YEARS

My father, Gustavo Quintero, an immigrant from Colombia, in search of a better life for himself and eventually his two kids, took photography classes at East Los Angeles Community College. Gustavo would take my brother and I out to the park and take pictures of us for his class. Sometimes we had props like soda cans or tennis rackets, and other times we were dressed as clowns and goblins. At the time, I thought this was a family activity, I learned years later he was taking the class to develop his photography skills.

Figure 1. Christian Quintero dressed as a clown 1983. Photo taken by Gustavo Quintero.

One of my fondest memories of my youth and the arts came from an activity with my father. Gustavo worked for a few years in his early 20s with the *Federación Nacional de Cafeteros*, the National Federation of Coffeemakers, in Colombia. He and a group of colleagues would go to local towns and perform short skits, sing songs, and entertain the communities. During the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays in Southern California, my extended family would gather at my uncle's house (my mother Marlene Quintero's brother). One year, I was around four or five years old and my brother was six or seven years old. My dad painted our clown faces and dressed us in oversized shorts held up with red suspenders. He taught us a skit he remembered from his days with the *Federación Nacional*. *Pelota* (ball), my brother's character would introduce our show: a flea circus. *Pelotica* (little ball), my character, carried a small box where our flea circus was ready to perform. The two characters walked out into the living room:

Pelotica: "*Hola, Pelota*."

Pelota: "*Hola, Pelotica*."

Our skit consisted of a variety of tricks our flea circus would perform, from jumping from one hand to the other, to walking a tight rope (dental floss held tightly), to the punchline: the fleas escaping the box and infesting the audience.

What resulted from this first performance was an expectation for all the young cousins to entertain the adults with shows during our family celebrations. Weeks prior to the Christmas gatherings, the cousins would start calling and planning for the next show. One year, we performed the story of the three little pigs, the wolf was played by our youngest cousin who was three years old. Another year we lip synced songs of the mid-1980s. The adults applauded and

the cousins were thankful to have an audience. These initial performances created a nurturing environment for creativity in our home, an environment that pushed us later to develop our acting craft.

My parents, immigrants from Colombia in the early 1970s, enrolled my older brother, at age 12, in a drama class at East Los Angeles Community College. His drama instructor was connected to Nosotros, an organization created to support the growth of Latino Americans interested in performing arts. The summer of 1988, Nosotros produced *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and needed youth to fill the parts for the dwarfs (White, 1913). I was 10 years old and was given the part of one of the dwarfs. Performing on stage for the first time was a pivotal and thrilling moment in my life, different than performing at our family gatherings. There was a large audience, louder applause, a much bigger cast, and real accountability.

At this age, I struggled with reading and my anxiety forced me to memorize the whole play. I employed this strategy during rehearsals to the point where I went beyond my own role in the play and became the stand in whenever there was someone absent or missing a line. The context of the theater production allowed other literacy skills to flourish and removed my fear of reading out loud in public.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was a family affair. My grandmother, *Abuelita* Conchita, visiting from Colombia, made the costumes for all the dwarves. My mother was the make-up artist for the youth in the cast. I remember her having to battle with disagreeable preteen boys who did not want make-up on their youthfully masculine faces. My father took on the role of cross-town chauffer and drove the whole Quintero tribe during weekend and evening rehearsals. My brother and I came to know that learning was communal.

The collaborative community became an extended family. During downtime, we chatted, cracked jokes, and acted silly, but when we were on the stage, we knew our lines, our blocking, and our movements. Looking back, this production had a lasting impact. The fact that the entire cast was Latino opened up visions of the possibility and taught me about the importance of representation in the arts. Certainly, the audience had a great show. Beyond that, the excitement I felt being on stage, the commitment to learning my role, and the interdependence of all members shaped my personal learning trajectory. Learning is a creative process that requires collaboration with others. Whether it is in the arts or academics, learning for me requires social interaction.

I did not perform on stage again until I was in high school. I joined the school choir in ninth grade, auditioned, and got a minor part in the musical, *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, a Musical Play* (Hauptman & Miller, 1986). I sang and danced in the big chorus numbers. Once again, I connected to the excitement of performance and team work. Later, I auditioned for a minor part in *West Side Story* (Shulman, 1990) but was handed the more important role of Bernardo. I had a voice that worked in a chorus but not as a solo performer. It was a huge surprise that both the musical director and drama teacher had cast me in a major role. Our choir and drama director told me I had a strong presence on stage and thought my Latino accent when I spoke English sounded authentic to the role. This was the first time anybody had pointed out I had an accent; I thought I sounded like everyone else.

My high school was predominantly Latino; however, the two female leads in the musical were given to two White, monolingual, English-speaking girls when Latina actresses were available for the roles. Awkwardly, these girls chose to mimic bilingual accents when playing

their part. I felt bolstered by the directors' trust but became keenly aware of the politics of representation on stage.

When I reflect back on my performing arts experiences, I recognize their positive influence on my personal and academic development. Whether on or off stage, I was part of a collaborative community. We had a common purpose: to create a great show. We celebrated successes and built an environment of constructive criticism. In addition, we provided each other with social and emotional support. The creative atmosphere allowed for us to make mistakes, try out potential innovations, and receive immediate feedback on our performances.

Unfortunately, I never saw a career in the arts as an option for my future. As far as my high school was concerned, arts were a hobby. I had to choose a real career. My parents never gave me restrictions on career choice, but both my parents worked, and arts were relegated to hobby status. As I grew older, my father painted less, took fewer pictures, and seemed uninterested in continuing his own development in the arts.

My College Years

When I went to college in Indiana at Depauw University for my bachelor's degree, a career in the arts was the furthest thing from my mind. I chose a path in education, specifically studying economics. In my first semester, I signed up for a beginner's folk guitar class, against the advice of my student advisor. This class was in high demand. I was told I would not get the class because I was in my first year of studies, and this class was favored by the upper classmen. I got the class! This was my only connection to any type of creativity during the first semester. I was able to go to the sound room and practice playing for as long as I wanted. I was not good, but regardless, I learned cords, strumming techniques, and songs that I still remember to this day.

Figure 2. Christian Quintero playing guitar 1995. Photo taken by Gustavo Quintero.

During the winter session, all first years were required to enroll in some type of three-week learning activity on campus. I signed up to be a stage crew member for the play *The Persecution and Assassination of JeanPaul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade*, *Marat/Sade* (the abbreviated title), (Weiss, 2001). I worked on stage construction and stage markings and was told after week one that all crew members had a part. I was given the role of Jacques Roux, a former priest who interjects radical ideas during the play. I was thrilled to be back on stage. I enjoyed working with my fellow cast members and loved collective goal of performing a memorable show.

Although I was participating in plays and learning guitar, my time at Depauw University was not full of positive memories. I was one of 100 Latinos in a school of approximately 2,200 students.

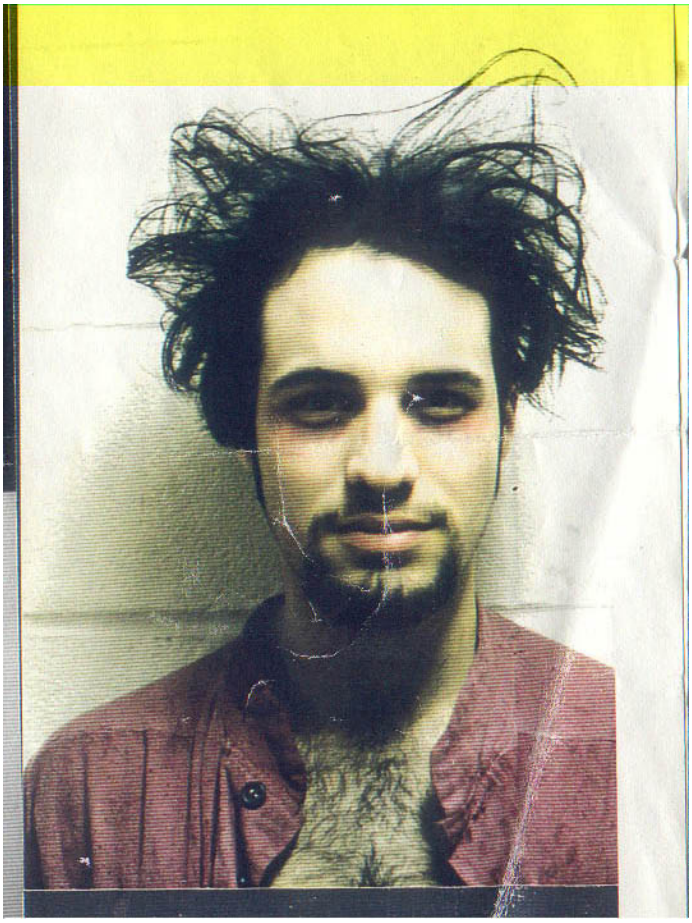

Figure 3. Christian Quintero as Jacques Roux 1996. Photo taken by an unknown person.

There were 50 Black students and three Asian students in 1995-1996; there was little racial diversity. I used the arts as a way to distract myself from the lack of minority representation at school. The trials and tribulations of my experiences at Depauw University I will leave for a future discussion, suffice it to say, my arts participation served as a means to deal with the discrimination I felt daily on campus.

I stayed at Depauw University for a second year because I received the job as resident assistant for a first-year floor in one of the halls. In the second year, I performed in a one-act play interpreted by a theater student: *Six Degrees of Separation* (Guare, 1990). I played Rick, a Utah

resident who moved to New York with his wife Elizabeth. This was the last time I was on stage for any type of performance. I transferred to another university after my second year at Depauw University, and did not engage again in theater. I do not think I could have completed those first two years at Depauw University if I did not have the arts as an outlet for my frustrations at school.

I will now fast forward to my principalship in July of 2012.

My Professional Years

I was a founding teacher at the Los Angeles School of Global Studies (LASGS) in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) when we opened in 2006. After six years of teaching social studies in ninth, 11th, and 12th grades, I was offered the opportunity to take on the role of leader at the school. I will go into more detail in Chapter 1 about my school and working with the Creating Creators Cinema Project (CCCP), but first, I wanted to share some experiences I had with film and building our school community.

In the spring of 2014, Hipolito "Polo" Muñoz offered an intriguing opportunity for our students. Polo invited Chris Weitz, the director of the film *A Better Life* (Witt, McLaughlin, Weitz, Gertz, & Weitz, 2011), to speak with our students about his journey of transforming the screenplay into a feature film. Several weeks prior to the school-wide screening, our advisory classes engaged in telling their or their parents' stories of migrating to the United States. Students discussed many of the struggles faced arriving in the United States. The story of *A Better Life* (2011) revolves around the son of an undocumented single father living in Los Angeles. This is a story that hits home for many of the students at LASGS. The father is a gardener, and the teenage son, feeling neglected by his father, is tempted to join a gang. The

discussion and questions after the screening sparked interest in the role of the director and storytelling. This was the first time our school had a public showing and the first time we used film to create a shared experience and collective conversation around immigration.

In the winter of 2015, the whole school was invited to see *He Named Me Malala* (Parkes, MacDonald, Guggenheim, & Guggenheim, 2015), sponsored by the Malala Foundation, a nonprofit organization focused on creating a world where every young woman can learn and lead without fear. As a school community, we developed curriculum and conversation in our advisory classes to prepare our students to watch the film and have conversation about what they learned and how they could apply their learnings to their own lives. The documentary tells the story of Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani student who began her educational activism at the age of 11. Malala survived an assassination attempt at 15, and at the age of 17 won the Nobel Laureate Peace Prize. The discussion around this film revolved around student activism and empowerment. We asked our students what issues in the community, nation, or world they would like to change.

In the fall of 2016, I registered for an event sponsored by the LA Promise Fund, Girls Build LA to watch a community screening of the film *Hidden Figures* (Gigliotti et al., 2016). Girls Build LA was a nonprofit organization dedicated to challenge young women from public schools in Los Angeles to use science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) principles and 21st century skills to effect social change in the community. All of the young women of LASGS attended a community screening at the University of Southern California's (USC's) Galen Center, a multipurpose sports arena along, with 10,000 other young women from Los Angeles (LA) County. Our Latinx youth returned to our campus inspired, excited, and curious as to why

it took so long to tell the story of African American engineers, hired as computers for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. The young women felt empowered to carve out an optimistic future for themselves.

As a companion to the *Hidden Figures* (2016) experience, while the young women watched *Hidden Figures* (2016), the young men remained on campus and watched *The Mask You Live In* (Newsom & Newsom, 2015), a documentary that follows the lives of boys and young men as they reconcile what it means to be a man in America. The male staff created curriculum around the documentary film to help the young men on campus remove their masks and share their most vulnerable moments with one another. The documentary tackled topics of masculinity, vulnerability, and society's role in maintaining stereotypical gender roles. As principal of the school, I had wanted to create a learning environment where students were challenging society, unpacking the injustices we all experienced, and finding new ways to tackle those problems. I have used film as the medium for creating discussion, challenging norms, and creating an environment where students collaborate to find creative solutions to many of our most pressing problems.

My hope is to eventually screen student-produced films that provide the same avenue for discussion as the preceding films did. Arts programs can play an important role for youth in both academic and professional arenas. Educators who work in school arts programs must be aware not only of the tremendous benefits but also the critical issues of diversity in the field. Outside of schools, society is contending with issues of school-to-prison pipelines and representation in the arts. People are clamoring to see their stories and themselves reflected on stage and screen.

The following work introduces the CCCP, a for-profit organization that works with schools and school districts to integrate student filmmaking into core subjects. The CCCP's mission is to foster technical and creative skills in students to open up opportunities for careers in the film and arts industries. Using a descriptive case study approach, this research introduces the founders, teaching artists, and youth involved in the CCCP program at one school site in Southern California. I use theoretical frameworks connected to critical pedagogy, constructivism, and situated learning to analyze the experience and enquiries I had with this community of practice.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT

I started teaching for the LASGS in 2006 and have served as principal since 2012. LASGS is a small, co-located high school in downtown Los Angeles. The entire school employs a project-based learning approach to instruction: all grade levels and teachers collaborate so that all curriculum is integrated with real-world applications of knowledge. Our Title I school serves students from ninth to 12th grade, 96% of whom are Latinx (California Department of Education [CDE], 2017). One of the great advantages of being small is that we get to know our students on a personal level; we create strong bonds both with students and families to support learning.

However, due to our size, we cannot offer a wide variety of elective programs found at large comprehensive high schools, such as art classes, choir, drama, band, and dance. At LASGS, we have limited options to meet the district requirement of providing a year of arts curriculum for students. The limitation has created a problem of practice as I must balance a limited budget with my desire to provide transformative arts experiences for our students. One of the ways that schools navigate a limited budget is through external partnerships. Fortunately, LASGS became one of the first partners to collaborate with filmmakers, Hipolito "Polo" Muñoz and Jessica Just, who were incubating an arts program for students of color in high-poverty communities. The partnership was mutually beneficial—the program needed a school and our school wanted to enhance our arts program.

Polo and Jessica were concerned about issues of representation and workforce diversity in the film industry and wanted to intervene. Issues of diversity and disparities have risen to the forefront in the film and broadcasting industry (Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American

Studies at University of California, Los Angeles [UCLA], 2018). They hoped to create a vehicle to change the film industry and improve diversity through increased participation of students of color. Polo and Jessica worked under the Latino Film Institute (LFI), focusing on LFI's youth initiative program. This initiative allowed students to participate as audience members and to create and showcase their work at LFI's film festivals. This program served as a template and inspiration for what would become the CCCP. Prior to becoming CCCP, Polo and Jessica created the Youth Cinema Project (YCP) a nonprofit organization as part of the LFI that has operated as a nonprofit since 2013. The YCP has exposed students to the filmmaking process with the intention of creating filmmakers. Students who participate in the program learn about brainstorming a story, storytelling, script writing, character development, film editing, directing, acting, production, audio engineering, and finance. YCP has hired professionals working in the film industry to guide students in the creative and technical processes of filmmaking.

Prior to formally becoming YCP, Polo and Jessica piloted program components at an elementary school in South Central LA and at LASGS. They worked with teachers and students to develop curriculum to teach filmmaking. Resources for purchasing hardware and software were scarce, so Polo and Jessica focused on screen writing and storytelling. They built a 34-week curriculum that culminated in complete student films. At LASGS, they met with students twice a week, for 1.5 hours each day. LASGS's project-based learning environment offered them an existing collaborative framework to which they added their expertise in filmmaking. The synergy was beneficial to both the students and the organization.

Polo and Jessica saw arts education as a way to support students from underserved communities and a way to close an opportunity gap. The outcomes of the initial years of the

program revealed the importance of giving students an opportunity to share their voice and tell their stories. They also found students needed to develop technical skills in filmmaking despite the ubiquity of technology in their lives. In addition, Polo and Jessica believed introducing students to storytelling and filmmaking early on could have an impact on the film industry. The film industry is looking for unique stories. By teaching students the creative and the technical processes of filmmaking, students could choose careers in filmmaking that would allow them to tell their stories to wider audiences. Even if students did not go into filmmaking, Polo and Jessica were certain that the program would have a lasting impact on their academic and personal development.

Polo has been volunteering at LASGS since 2011. In the first year, he focused on writing. The school had no video or audio equipment, so storytelling became the focus for the students. As resources became available to the school, hardware and software purchases allowed for more opportunity to engage with visual storytelling. As Polo and Jessica refined their curriculum, they explored more ways for students to develop their filmmaking acumen. In the last few years, students have had the opportunity to create and produce a three-part web series, documentaries tied to historical figures, and fictionalized stories of student lives in Los Angeles. These videos have been showcased at schoolwide assemblies.

Reflecting on the importance of having a program tied to the arts, I am reminded of the struggles many actors of color face when it comes to representation. For two consecutive years, White actors and actresses held 20 of the acting categories for the Oscars which prompted the #OscarsSoWhite social media protest (ABC, 2016). In a recent *The New Yorker* article about the 2017 Oscars, Schulman (2018) asserted, “The nominations announced on Tuesday morning, for

the ninetieth Academy Awards, reflect a changed—but not a transformed—Academy" (para. 2). After consecutive years of all White nominees for 2015 and 2016, the Academy attempted a membership overhaul "to diversify the voting body by race, gender, geography, and age" (Schulman, 2018, para. 1). Regardless of the attempts to diversify, Schulman (2018) explained, "the voters are still predominantly [W]hite and male; [28%] are female, and only [13%] are non-[W]hite" (para. 2). These two statements highlight structural issues that many students in high-poverty and minority schools face in the arts. Structural concerns that face our society are not just found in Academy nominations, they persist in writing rooms, studio executives, casting directors, directors, editors, lighting, sound engineering, animators, and producers. School structures and programs have the potential to mitigate the institutional and ideological racism students face in the arts.

Along with the structural deficiencies that exist with the Academy voting bloc, actors of color are also faced with the casting practices of a homogeneous industry. Recently, there has been a resurgence of protest against "Whitewashing" in Hollywood (Kiang, 2016). Whitewashing is a practice where non-White roles are cast with White actors. Within the last few years, a Marvel movie, *Doctor Strange* (Feige & Derrickson, 2016), cast Tilda Swinton, a White actor, to plays the Ancient One; in the comic book version, this character is a man from Kamar-Taj, a fictional kingdom in the Himalayas (Sage, 2016). The list of Whitewashing practices has a long history in the United States and is much longer than can be covered in this introduction. A filmmaking class could not only provide the technical skills to our students of color, but could also unpack the casting bias they see in movies.

The Rationale for Arts Education

The State of California has graduation requirements that mandate students take at least one year of arts education. Smaller schools with limited budgets can offer few options for students to complete their visual or performing arts credits. At LASGS, for example, students in the ninth grade have a theater class coupled with their ninth-grade English language arts class. In 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, students take a graphic design class tied to the LASGS's Linked Learning Career Pathway. A Linked Learning Career Pathway is an approach to high school instruction that integrates a rigorous academic program with a career-technical program, with the goal to prepare students for college or career.

I have continually explored ways to expand arts electives in the curriculum. CCCP offered an opportunity to build upon our project-based learning curriculum and offer a visual storytelling component for our students of color. When Polo approached our school about a partnership, we saw Polo and Jessica's program fulfilling two purposes: we helped an experimental program generate curriculum for filmmaking in an urban classroom, and CCCP brought an additional elective course to our school that leveraged our project-based learning approach and introduced our students to careers in the creative arts.

The following section discusses the current state of arts education in the United States. In particular, how the lack of arts programs in impoverished urban areas negatively impacts students of color. In addition, I present the theory of social reproduction as one of the mechanisms that perpetuates the lack of arts participation in adulthood. Children who do not have access to arts in their youth may not participate in arts in their adulthood. I introduce the film and broadcasting industry as a symptom of the larger problem of access to arts programs for

many youth of color. Lastly, I present the case for the importance of arts education in our students' academic and creative lives.

The Problem

Where do the arts fit in the education of our children? This is a question confronted by policy makers in the United States. Early in the development of public schooling, Dewey (1934) believed the arts were a foundational aspect of every child's curriculum; they developed creativity and self-expression as well as the appreciation of expression of others. Unfortunately, throughout the history of the United States, arts education has become a secondary priority. During economic struggles and particularly over the last 25 years, during a period of high-stakes testing and accountability, arts education has become less of a priority (Berliner, 2011).

Federal legislation/programs such as *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB, 2002) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, (*Race to the Top* [RTTT], 2009) have had profound impacts on arts education (Beveridge, 2010; Onosko, 2011; Tanner, 2013). The importance of arts education was not prioritized during the high-stakes reform movement. Reforms prioritized accountability and testing gains for "at risk" schools. This focus on accountability forced schools to reduce budget to programs outside the core (Chappell & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2013). In a study conducted in 2005-2006, Woodworth et al. (2007) found California severely lacked the funding schools needed to embed arts education. Their findings showed 89% of K-12 schools failed to offer sufficient arts courses aligned to California Standards. Furthermore, schools lacked arts facilities and materials due to inadequate state funding, thus forcing schools to seek donations and outside support. This created inequitable access to arts education in working-class communities. Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) reported

26% of African American youth and 28% of Hispanic youth participated in the arts in school, compared to 58% of White youth. Grey (2010) found the *NCLB* (2002) required little accountability for arts programs. Coupled with scarce implementation guidelines for arts education, schools failed to implement arts education to the same degree as English language arts or mathematics. As a result of inadequate integration, Grey (2010) saw arts education substantially reduced in schools.

Several studies demonstrate the impact that the national policy had on student achievement as it pertains to the arts (Baker, 2012). Baker (2012) evaluated the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) policies that removed arts programs from schools that were underperforming. The LDE curtailed opportunities for arts education in schools with low performance on state achievement tests. State requirements for arts education were waived in favor of more instruction time in language arts and mathematics. Disproportionately, this impacted socioeconomically disadvantaged students in Louisiana public schools who did not meet state accountability requirements. Students from these schools had been most impacted by the loss of arts education in a test-driven environment. Baker found withholding arts education for these 37,000 eighth-grade students did not raise standardized test scores. On the other hand, students who had access to music education did have improved test scores. The policy of arts education reduction for the purpose of test-driven curricula did not have the intended result.

Arts education in the context of urban schools is significant because it enables students to acquire valued forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and sustain and evolve cultural resources found in local communities (Gadsden, 2008; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti 2005; Paris & Alim, 2014; Yosso, 2005). Dewey (1907) described arts as a

democratizing endeavor. Absent opportunity, children experience injustice to their future abilities to participate fully in society.

Social Theory of Reproduction

Understanding how arts education impacts communities starts with understanding the role and function schools play in society. Are schools spaces for liberation and emancipation or are they sites that reproduce the values and culture of the dominant social class? Twentieth century French intellectual Pierre Bourdieu offered educators a framework to analyze the dynamics of power in society and the persistence of social and educational inequity, including such concepts as *reproduction, habitus, field,* and *capital* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Through these concepts, we can create an understanding of how educational policy impacts the school community and the power that schools have in mitigating the reproductive power of inequitable policies.

Bourdieu (1977) defined *habitus* as:

> systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor. (p. 72)

For Bourdieu (1977), habitus is socially constructed through the contextual, political, social and ideological factors of a given society. Habitus becomes the values and dispositions gained from

cultural interactions and generally stays constant throughout our lives (McKnight & Chandler, 2012). If undervalued and therefore scarce, arts experiences will be absent from the habitus of students as they grow: national policies perpetuate a culture of disproportionate emphasis on tested material in schools, lessening access to the arts.

Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) conducted a comprehensive study focused on arts learning. In a report commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts, Rabkin and Hedberg endeavored to identify patterns of childhood participation in both in-school and out-of-school arts education and the relationship between arts participation in childhood and in adulthood. Longitudinal data from Surveys of Public Participation of the Arts (SPPA) were used to determine whether arts education contributes to adult arts participation. Over a span of 26 years, the percentage of U.S. children who had arts educational experiences declined dramatically from 65% in 1982 to a low of 50% in 2008 (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). The study found the reduction in the arts education for Whites was relatively insignificant, while the downward trend for African Americans and Latinx was significant (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). The findings demonstrate how the uneven access to arts education for youth significantly contributes to low arts participation among adults of color.

Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) made it clear that arts inequality is systemic and selective, stating, "Childhood arts education has not been equally distributed by socioeconomic status or race. Its decline has been concentrated among low-income children and among African American and Hispanic children in particular" (p. 46). I will talk about this disparity as it relates to the film and television industry later in this chapter.

Bourdieu's (1984) concept of *field* represents the physical setting within a society where the habitus emerges. An individual's capacity to have power in the field is dependent on their knowledge of the rules in that field and the amount of capital acquired through interactions in the field. In other words, a person's power in any setting is proportional to their knowledge of the rules and the amount of cultural capital they have acquired. Given this reality, the CCCP has endeavored to open opportunities for students of color to learn the rules of the game and connect them to a network of professionals to enhance their cultural capital.

Capital refers to the rules that are defined by those in power (Bourdieu, 1977). In the school setting, social capital is the set of knowledge and skills required for a student to be valued. Language is an example of social capital. Knowing the cultural norms, or capital, of a setting and being able to influence the field can change the habitus for the better. The CCCP's industry-specific curriculum and pedagogy has the potential of a closing of many opportunity gaps in students' lives.

Bourdieu's (1977) work on social reproduction was not without critics. For instance, Giroux (1983) criticized Bourdieu's theory of reproduction, arguing Bourdieu's explanation of reproduction in schooling to be exceedingly deterministic:

> Reproduction theorists have oversimplified the idea of domination in their analysis and have failed to provide any major insights into how teachers, students, and other human agents come together within specific historical and social contexts in order to both make and reproduce the conditions of their existence. (p. 259)

Harker (1984) countered Giroux, and other critics, holding that school community, or habitus, can be flexible and react to changes from external factors. The habitus of the individual and the

field are in constant interactions and have the potential to change given those interactions (Harker 1984). In the case of the CCCP, an outside organization can enter a school and transform a school culture.

The Film and Broadcasting Industry

According to social reproduction theory, placing a lesser value on arts education in schools of historically marginalized groups inhibits adult participation in the arts. In their research, Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) asserted childhood arts education impacts adult participation. Their work supports studies that trace the ethnic and racial disparities in film and broadcasting (cf. Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA, 2017). In a similar way, Florida (2002) suggested Latinos and Blacks have a distinct disadvantage in the creative economies of the future due to reduction of arts programs for minority youth.

The *Hollywood Diversity Report* by the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA (2017) examined the diversity in film and broadcasting both in front of and behind the camera of approximately 200 top theatrical releases of 2015 and 1,146 broadcast, cable, and digital platform television shows from the 2014-2015 season. The *Hollywood Diversity Report* showed that while the share of minority representation in the United States is increasing, the diversity in representation in film and broadcasting is not. Although minorities represent roughly 38% of the U.S. population, they represent 10.1% for directors in major theatrical releases, a decline from the previous year (see Figure 4). In the lead actor category, there was a slight increase from 12.9% to 13.6% (see Figure 5). In addition, minorities represented 5.3% for writers (see Figure 6). The graphs show that even with slight gains, minorities remain underrepresented on every measure of the report.

Confronted with this reality, the CCCP wants to work with schools to provide opportunities for students of color to think about filmmaking as their potential career path and provide opportunities for students to tell their stories. Furthermore, CCCP wants to create a space

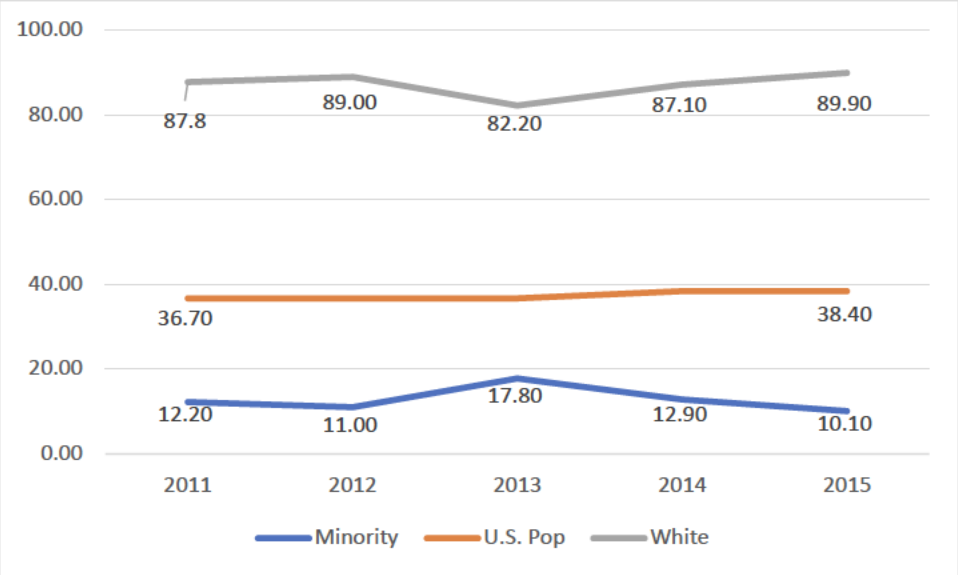

Figure 4. Director race, theatrical films, 2011-2015. Percentages of White and minority directors represented in major films over a period of five years. Adapted from *The 2017 Hollywood Diversity Report: Setting the Record Straight* by the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA, p. 13. Copyright 2017 by Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA.

where creativity, problem-solving, and production are at the center of their curriculum. Along with guiding students towards becoming creators, the CCCP uses their growing network of support to connect students they serve to the film industry. Students have sat with directors and producers during filming independent films to learn directly about choices they make on and off screen. Students have participated as volunteers at many local and international film festivals held in Los Angeles to meet filmmakers, see storytelling from different perspectives and network on their own as they establish their career paths. The CCCP's hope is that their intervention can

change the habitus seen in the film and broadcasting industry and create more opportunities for students of color to participate as writers, directors, producers, and actors in film.

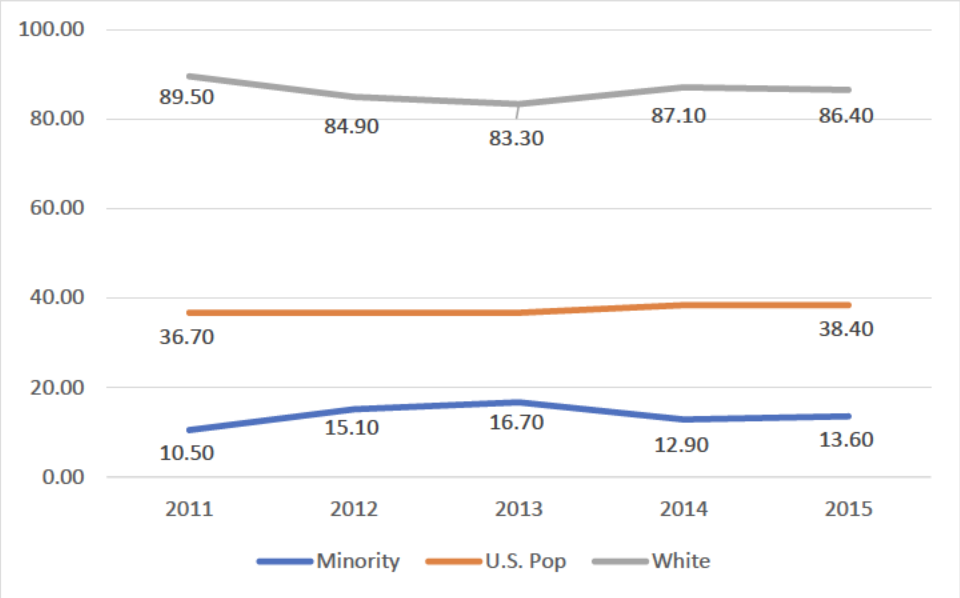

Figure 5. Lead Actor Race, Theatrical Films, 2011-2015. Percentages of White and minority lead actors represented in major films over a period of five years. Adapted from *The 2017 Hollywood Diversity Report: Setting the Record Straight* by the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA, p. 11. Copyright 2017 by Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA.

Importance of Arts Education

The importance of arts education is found in many national studies. Fiske's (1999), *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, a compilation of seven major studies, found positive effects of student involvement in the arts on their behavior, attitude, and academic performance. Fiske found that arts programs can create an equitable experience for disadvantaged youth, "One of the critical findings is that the learning in and through the arts can help 'level the playing field' for youngsters from disadvantaged circumstances" (p. viii). In a

national sample of 25,000 students, the study found students with high levels of arts participation earned higher grades and performed better on standardized

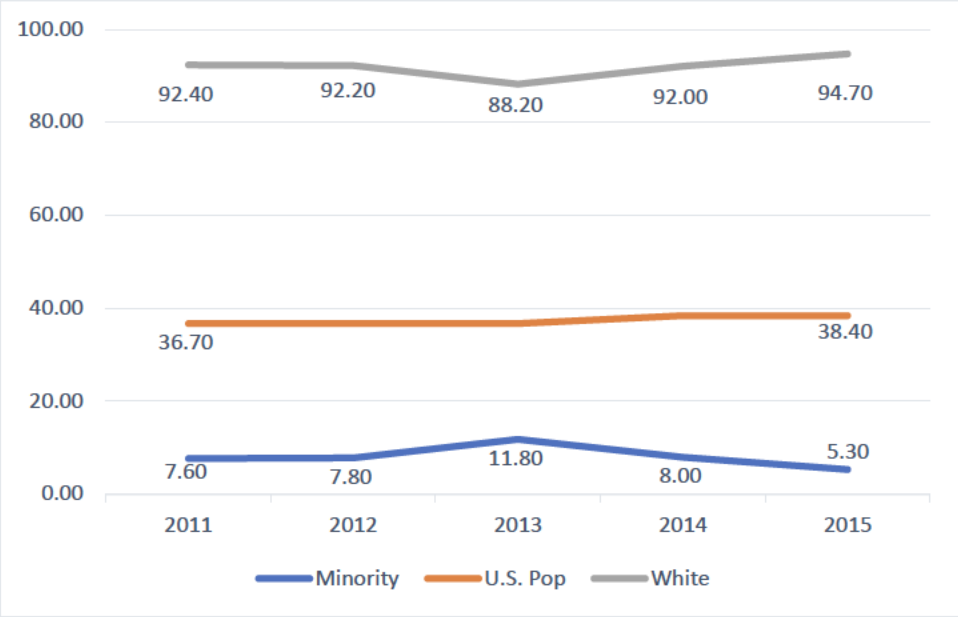

Figure 6. Writer Race, Theatrical Films, 2011-2015. Percentages of White and minority writers represented in major films over a period of five years. Adapted from *The 2017 Hollywood Diversity Report: Setting the Record Straight* by the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA, p. 14. Copyright 2017 by the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA.

test compared to students with little to no involvement in the arts—irrespective of their socioeconomic status.

In separate studies brought together by this compilation, researchers from Harvard University, Stanford University, UCLA, and several other universities (Fiske, 1999) found consensus in the following:

- The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached.
- The arts reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached.
- The arts connect students to themselves and others.

- The arts transform the environment for learning.
- The arts provide learning opportunities for the adults in the lives of young people.
- The arts provide new challenges for those students already considered successful.
- The arts connect learning experiences to the world of real work.

Deasy's (2002) *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* was a compendium of 62 studies outlining the relationship between the cognitive capacities students developed by engaging in the arts (i.e., dance, drama, music, and visual arts) and their academic and social skills. Taken together, these 62 studies revealed the arts positively impacted active engagement, discipline and sustained attention, persistence, risk taking, attendance, spatial reasoning, condition reasoning, problem solving, creative thinking, self-confidence, self-control, self-identity, conflict resolution, collaboration, empathy, and social tolerance in students.

Davis (2008) challenged arts advocates to refrain from advocating for and understanding arts education as a supplement to other disciplines and instead, to discuss the value of the arts as a core subject in effective schooling. With funding cuts and accountability tests, arts advocates often point out how arts raise reading comprehension scores, SAT and ACT scores, and student problem-solving skills that transfer to other disciplines, such as math, science, and English language development (Baker, 2012; Bauerlin, 2010; Catterall, Dumas, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999). Davis warned not to obfuscate the value arts offer—in and of themselves—by focusing on their contribution to other school subjects. Davis (2008) identified five unique features of learning in and with the arts that create a benefit for students:

- A tangible product created through imagination and agency.

- A focus on emotions through expression and empathy.
- A focus on ambiguity through interpretation and respect for a variety of perspectives.
- An orientation towards process through inquiry and reflection.
- A connection to humanity developed through social engagement and responsibility.

The advantages of integrating strong arts programs in the formal curricula of schools should be unquestioned.

In the course of LASGS's ongoing partnership with CCCP, I have had numerous conversations with Polo and his students about the classes and the impact they have had on their schooling experience. Students highlight the collaboration skills they strengthened through the filmmaking process, the excitement they feel showcasing their work during school-wide assemblies, and the confidence they build over time, especially in storytelling. They have identified outcomes in line with Davis' (2008) work. Furthermore, I have observed educators in the program using a collaborative, experiential pedagogy. The potential value of the program lies both in student outcomes and in the pedagogical approaches developed by the educators.

Unfortunately, due to constrained budgets, LASGS is only able to provide minimal investment in CCCP in terms of physical assets and programmatic funding. The program can afford limited amounts of high definition cameras, audio equipment, and peripheral supplies for students to complete their films. In other districts, the CCCP has access to a more extensive array of equipment and resources to support the program. Given the noticeable impact that the CCCP has had on my campus despite constraints, I set out to research the amount of impact possible at a school site with comprehensive resources. This line of inquiry led me to the selection of my site for this study: Santa Ana Unified School District.

Polo and Jessica were partnered with the Southern California High School. Santa Ana Unified has 10 high schools; the name of the high school I researched will remain anonymous to protect the anonymity of the students whose stories are told in Chapter 5. I am particularly interested in learning about the conditions CCCP created to fulfill its mission, which included students exploring their voices, linking their lived experiences with the wider community, and providing a space for creativity.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the story of three groups of participants of CCCP, the founders, the teaching artists, and the students. Through their words, I use the following research questions as a guide to support my analysis of their lived experiences through CCCP.

- To what extent do the participants involved in CCCP establish the conditions for critical pedagogy?
- In what ways do participants characterize the impact of the CCCP on their lives?

The Setting

Polo and Jessica's program grew to 11 school districts in California through their initial work with the YCP. Santa Ana Unified School District contracted YCP, in 2015, to bring filmmaking programs into their schools. The district has filmmaking programs in elementary, middle, and high schools. Santa Ana Unified has a population of 54,505 students, 93% of whom are Hispanic. Asian, White, Pacific Islander, Filipino, African American, American Indian, and multi-race students comprise the remaining 7% of the student population (CDE, 2017). YCP intentionally partnered with Santa Ana Unified to serve traditionally underrepresented youth with their filmmaking program.

The Santa Ana School District funded the YCP program. The district's interest in both arts integration and securing/maintaining student enrollment have been driving forces for this initiative. Under the leadership of Polo and Jessica, YCP began a sequence of classes that would eventually provide the framework of a filmmaking pathway beginning in elementary school and growing to the last year of high school. The first year of established courses began in one fourth-grade classroom, an after-school program for the middle school students, and in the ninth grade in one of their high schools. In their second year of implementation, Polo and Jessica added a fifth-grade program to the elementary school and a 10th-grade class to continue the development and growth of students who completed the ninth-grade course. YCP and Santa Ana Unified designed a program that would eventually span from fourth to 12th grades. Their stated desire was to provide students with a pipeline to pursue filmmaking professions at postsecondary institutions. In the fall of 2017, the LFI, which supported Polo and Jessica's development of the YCP, asked Polo and Jessica to leave the organization.

Shortly after leaving LFI-YCP, Polo and Jessica established the CCCP to continue their work of bringing filmmaking into the classroom. The intent of my study was to document the cinema program that Polo and Jessica established through their years of collaboration. Polo and Jessica were integral in creating the curriculum, the professional development, the hiring of teaching artists, and envisioning a program that spans multiple years in the K-12 setting. I interviewed the founders, teaching artist, and students about their experience working with Polo and Jessica not YCP. Polo and Jessica's departure from the YCP program changed how the YCP program was run. I wanted to capture the filmmaking program as it was created under Polo and Jessica's supervision.

Organization of Dissertation

I have worked with the founders of the CCCP since 2011 and have been privy to the growth of the organization. I highlight an organization dedicated to increasing diversity in an industry and making a strategic effort to tackle industry disparities through educating youth of color. The organization is still in its infancy, but as their organization and reach grow, I hope to see more students of color telling their stories, highlighting their successes, and bringing arts to their communities.

As I have mentioned, the CCCP is in several districts with programs at elementary and secondary levels. For the purposes of this study, I focused on one school district and one high school in that district. I acknowledge this leads to a partial story of the CCCP. The school board deliberations, along with the decision of the Santa Ana superintendent to fund a pathway, were not included in this study. The Santa Ana teachers who worked collaboratively with the CCCP teaching artists were also excluded from this study. Lastly, as mentioned previously, classroom observation did not take place during the course of my field work. The program at Santa Ana Unified changed once Polo and Jessica were no longer connected to the program. This makes the study reliant on past memories and the connection students and teaching artists had with Polo and Jessica.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical frameworks I used to analyze the data collected during my study, critical pedagogy as the overarching framework, and constructivism and situated learning theory as supplemental frameworks that aided in telling the story of the emerging data. Chapter 2 also presents the literature for the case study approach and the various methodologies I

used to memorialize the stories of the CCCP founders, teaching artists, and students. I end the section with the method I used to analyze the emergent data for the study.

Chapter 3 of this work provides the life histories of the creators of the CCCP. I explore how their life stories brought them to filmmaking and brought them to creating a filmmaking program for the K-12 setting. This chapter describes how their philosophy of education connects to a critical pedagogy for learning. Chapter 4 provides the perspectives of the teaching artists working at a high school in Santa Ana Unified with classes in ninth and tenth grade. This chapter outlines their orientation to the CCCP curriculum and relays data regarding their teaching philosophy, particularly their implementation of an approach to CCCP-influenced pedagogy in the classroom. Chapter 5 highlights the perspective of the students participating in CCCP classes. Chapter 6 provides a discussion on the implications of this study to arts education in general and specifically working with organizations like CCCP to bring hands-on learning to students in urban public schools.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CCCP classes operationalize an alternative pedagogical relationship between students and CCCP instructors. For instance, Polo would step into class and immediately acknowledge students as filmmakers. Polo challenged conventional roles of students and instructors. Although an expert in his own right, Polo would not negate the knowledge and creativity students would bring to the classroom. His approach to instruction would invite students to tell their unique stories. Moreover, Polo would build on their skills of storytelling by guiding students through industry-specific processes from pre-production to post-production.

This study examines the built environment of the CCCP. Using the theoretical lens of critical pedagogy, constructivism, and situated learning, the study tells the story of CCCP through the eyes of the founders, instructors, and students. I discuss each of these theoretical frames in the sections below.

Critical Pedagogy

Educators often struggle with conveying the relevance of curriculum to students. "Why are we learning this?" is a common student refrain. As CCCP developed at LASGS, students developed a clear answer to that question—"to tell our stories."

I used critical pedagogy as one analytical frame to interpret the multiple interactions of all participants in CCCP, including the founder of the program, the teaching artists, and the students. I was introduced to Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* when I entered graduate school for my master's degree in education. In reading his work, I was exposed to the dehumanizing nature of the banking model of education in the very system I had been a part of

my whole life. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (2000) stated traditional education is framed as "an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (p. 72). Freire (2000) stated the responsibility of teachers, in a traditional education context, is to provide the "narration—content which is detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance" (p. 71). While the teacher is depositing information, the role of the student is passive and their role is reduced to "receive, memorize, and repeat" (Freire, 2000, p. 72). In this traditional education context, teachers are active in the process while students are passive members in the relational dynamic. In a hegemonic context, teachers disseminate the knowledge of the oppressors into oppressed student subjects. As a counter, a critical educators' role is to unmask this oppressive relationship by using pedagogical processes that promote, equity, justice, and love (Freire, 2000).

Critical pedagogy is a theory and practice that asks all learners to question common sense assumptions about what and how we learn. It legitimizes knowledge from multiple perspectives and challenges the dominant narratives that serve to oppress marginalized groups (McLaren, 2015). Many scholars, educators, and activists have developed pedagogical approaches and philosophies with core principles and practices that are in line with critical pedagogy. Despite some differences, popular education (Adams & Horton, 1975; Horton & Freire, 1990), decolonizing pedagogy (Tejeda, Espinoza, & Gutierrez, 2003), feminist pedagogy (hooks, 1989), critical literacy (Freire & Macedo, 1987), empowerment education (Shor, 1992), and critical multiculturalism (Nieto, 1999; Sleeter, 1996) have shared core principles. McLaren (2015), however, cautioned, "Critical Pedagogy does not . . . constitute a homogeneous set of ideas. It is more accurate to say that critical theorists are united in their objectives; to empower the

powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustices" (p. 122). In other words, there is a dynamic array of components and aims that are a part of critical pedagogy in particular and critical scholarship on education in general, though there are some congruencies.

Freirean and neo-Freirean scholars have written about numerous aspects of critical pedagogy, including oppression, praxis, literacy, dialects, critical love, critical hope, and conscience raising. I organize some of the core principals of critical pedagogy under the following headings: (a) all education is political, (b) learning is social, and (c) education is emancipatory. These aspects are uniquely relevant to this work and I discuss each below.

All Education Is Political

Critical pedagogy affirms the belief that all education is political. Educators, who claim to be neutral and assert the information they provide is unbiased, support the status quo and legitimize the perspective of the dominant society (Freire, 2000). Educating students in a biased system without exposing students to the bias is a clear endorsement of the system. Knowledge is socially constructed and tied to relations of power. Using the dominant narrative to educate youth without challenging or questioning the narrative, upholds the existing structures within the system (Bowles & Gintis, 1977; Freire, 2000).

Critical pedagogy stresses the political nature of school as an institution. Schools have elected officials that oversee the running of the school and are allocated public monies. State policies determine teacher certification, course requirements for college entrance and graduation, adoption of textbooks, what is taught, how it is taught, and what is left out. These are all political decisions within the institution (Kincheloe, 2004; Scherff & Spector, 2011). Schools reproduce

existing social inequalities and legitimize inequitable social structures (Oakes, 1984). Giroux (2001) asserted:

> school as both an institution and a set of social practices must be seen in its integral connections with the realities of other socio-economic and political institutions that control the production, distribution, and legitimation of economic and cultural capital in the dominant society. (p. 62)

Understanding the political nature within and around schools provides the avenue to explore unequal power relations as well as how to identify inequalities in the educational context. What is taught and the methods used have a profound political effect on how students view the world and themselves.

Learning Is Social

Critical pedagogy rejects the traditional banking model of education where the teacher is the expert and the students receive the expert knowledge from the teacher (Freire, 2000). This method of instruction reproduces and reinforces an oppressive structure of learning inside a classroom while presenting the expert knowledge as absolute. Critical pedagogy uses a dialogue-based teaching approach that asks students to problematize, challenge, and deconstruct societal assumptions and beliefs (Apple, 2004; Freire, 2000). By using a problem-posing approach, students and teachers gain a critical awareness of oppression in their own lives and learn to identify dominant discourses that sustain oppressive power relations (Freire, 2000; Shor, 1992). Problem posing emphasizes the constructed nature of knowledge and engages both students and teachers in critical dialogue that facilitates learning (Shor, 1992). Knowledge construction does not occur in isolation; thus, a problem-posing curriculum allows for knowledge to be co-

constructed. Challenging the traditional roles of learning by creating a problem-posing environment with an emphasis on co-constructing knowledge provides an avenue for both student and teacher to resist oppressive practices in school (Giroux, 2001).

Education Is Emancipatory

McLaren (2009) described forms of knowledge in his discussion of major concepts in critical pedagogy, including technical knowledge, which is the quantifiable knowledge that becomes central in a context of high stakes testing policies/practices and accountability reforms. This knowledge is used to sort, regulate, and track students based on such things as reading levels, SAT scores, and intelligence quotients. The second type of knowledge McLaren highlighted is practical knowledge. Practical knowledge is used to support individuals' daily interaction in the world. Practical knowledge is not as easily quantifiable as technical knowledge. McLaren asserted the critical educator is most concerned with emancipatory knowledge (after Habermas, who coined the term). Emancipatory knowledge, according to McLaren, helps us understand the social relationships within a given context and how they are distorted and manipulated by power and privilege. Emancipatory knowledge is rooted in the idea that education plays a prominent role in creating a just and democratic society (Giroux, 1983). Oppression can be overcome by deliberate and collective action, by creating the conditions for students to resist the current context and co-create new ones.

Principles of Critical Pedagogy

The underlining principles of critical pedagogy seek to unpack social and political injustices present in our society, for students and teachers to tie their learning to a democratizing and emancipatory practices in school to create the conditions for liberation (Darder, 2015;

Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009; Giroux, 2001). An emancipatory pedagogy, critical pedagogy aims for teachers and students to co-create knowledge, and in so doing, create a space to overcome oppression. To support my analysis for this study, I incorporated nine important philosophical principals that support the democratizing and emancipatory struggles teachers and students face in schools (Darder et al., 2009). Darder, Baltodano, and Torres (2009) presented a set of "heterogeneous ideas that were later to be known as critical pedagogy" (p. 9):

- *Cultural politics* is "fundamentally committed to the development and enactment of a culture of schooling that supports the empowerment of culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 9).
- *Political economy* "is this uncontested relationship between schools and society that critical pedagogy seeks to challenge, unmasking traditional claims that education provides equal opportunity and access for all" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 10).
- *Historicity of knowledge* refers to how "students come to understand themselves as subjects of history and to recognize that conditions of injustice, although historically produced by human begins, can also be transformed by human beings" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 11).
- *Dialectical theory* refers to how "students are encouraged to engage the world within its complexity and fullness, in order to reveal possibilities of new ways of constructing thought and action beyond how it currently exists" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 11).
- *Ideology and critique* "can be used to interrogate and unmask the contradictions that exist between mainstream culture of the school and the lived experiences and knowledge that students use to mediate the reality of school life" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 11).

- *Hegemony* is "the process of social control that is carried out through the moral and intellectual leadership of a dominant sociocultural class over a subordinate group" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 12). The concept is used "to demystify the asymmetrical power relations and social arrangements that sustain the interests of the ruling class" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 12).
- *Resistance and counter-hegemony* "begins with the assumption that all people have the capacity and ability to produce knowledge and to resist domination" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 12).
- *Praxis: The alliance of theory and practice* is "an on-going interaction of reflection, dialogue, and action" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 13).
- *Dialogue and conscientization* is "an approach in which the relationship of students to teacher is without question, dialogical, each having something to contribute and receive" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 13).

Critical pedagogy is an important framework to view my study in that the CCCP meant to disrupt the traditional schooling experience found in many K-12 settings. The nine principles provided an avenue for me to analyze my data and evaluate the extent that the CCCP program establishes the conditions for an emancipatory learning experience for all participants.

Constructivism

Constructivism is the second theoretical framework that supports this study. Dewey (1934) and Piaget and Wells (1972) were educational visionaries who laid the foundation for constructivist theory. Dewey believed in immersing students in life experiences to both stimulate learning and connect students to the world outside of the classroom. Piaget and Wells advocated

for hands-on discovery learning. Their work has influenced teaching methodology and arts education.

In a constructivist approach to learning, the core principal is that students construct their own knowledge. According to Driscoll (1994), there are five conditions for constructivist learning. The first is to provide a complex learning environment that incorporates an authentic activity. Second, social negotiation must be embedded into the learning with opportunities for students to share, ideas, opinions, and perspectives so that new knowledge is collectively constructed. When students are asked to work in teams and must produce a shared product, teachers create the conditions for social negotiations to occur. Third, the teacher creates an environment where multiple perspectives and use of multiple ways to represent knowledge is allowed. Given opportunities to collaborate, students can share their perspectives on a topic and use collective understanding as a foundation for their exhibited project. Fourth, the instructor nurtures reflection as part of the learning process. Reflection supports student understanding of how they arrived to certain conclusions as a way to develop new knowledge. Fifth, the teacher emphasizes student-centered learning. Allowing students to discover facts using their prior knowledge to situate themselves in the conversation means they become an active participant in their construction of new knowledge.

Constructivist approaches to learning are complimentary to critical pedagogy despite not explicitly identifying asymmetrical power relations in which students are entangled. Therefore, to understand certain aspects of the context, a constructivist lens is applied to the CCCP in this study.

Situated Learning Theory

Situated learning theory is the third lens employed in this research. Lave and Wenger (1991) have studied learning as a situated activity and concluded that one of its main characteristics is *legitimate peripheral participation*, stating "learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill require newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of the community" (p. 29). The underlying foundation of situated learning as a conceptual frame is that learning occurs in and is part of a sociocultural environment.

Newcomers or novices in a sociocultural environment interact with experts in activities that are part of a "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). The goal in this educational arrangement is for novices to become part of the community increasingly over time. Full participants in communities of practice need to consider the political and social organization, its historical development, and their respective roles in providing opportunities for participation and learning. Novices often find it difficult to fully participate when experts take on the role of "pedagogical authoritarians" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 76). In establishing the community of practice, Lave and Wenger (1991) posited novices have access to the activities that are occurring with the "tools of the trade" (p. 102) and the experience is enhanced by the conversation flow between full participants and peripheral participants. It is in this context where novices can make sense of what they observe, touch, and hear, to eventually become full participants themselves. For full participation to occur, novices and experts must dedicate time and effort. In addition, the newcomer must continually assume more responsibility by taking on more risky tasks.

The CCCP classroom promotes egalitarian social roles and flatter hierarchies. The goal is for students to fully own a filmmaker identity as they move through the course. By creating student teams, the CCCP creates a learning environment that moves the novice into expert status. As such, situated learning is an appropriate theory to examine the CCCP in the current study.

The Case Study

The founders of the CCCP began working with the Santa Ana School District in 2014-2015, starting at the elementary-school level. Prior to working with Santa Ana, the CCCP founders entered four schools in two districts in Southern California. Through the organization's early years, it developed a curriculum and a lesson sequence in service of student filmmaking capacity. Members of Santa Ana School District visited their work in the four schools and decided they would enter into partnership with Polo and Jessica to implement a filmmaking pathway in their district.

In the first year Polo and Jessica worked with Santa Ana Unified, the program was installed in a K-8 school, teaching filmmaking to fourth, seventh, and eighth graders. In their second year, they continued in the fourth grade, added a sixth-grade level and created a last-period elective for fifth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students interested in continuing their development as filmmakers. In addition to the K-8 school, in the second year, Polo and Jessica were given a ninth-grade class. In the third year, 2016-2017, the K-8 sequence remained the same and the high school expanded to include a 10th-grade course.

I have limited the scope and scale of this study to one school site. I conducted an in-depth case study of one site that could reasonably represent the educational dynamics found at the various sites where the founders of CCCP operate in California.

According to Yin (2014), "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). Through this study, the phenomenon of the CCCP and its development was context specific; a case study design allowed me to uncover the development of the CCCP program in the high school context at Santa Ana Unified. In studying the CCCP, I captured the development of the program from the creators of the program, Polo and Jessica, and the perspectives of teaching artists and students who worked directly with Polo and Jessica. Thomas (2016) noted a case study allows a researcher to look "from several directions, a more rounded, richer, more balanced picture of our subject is developed—we get a three-dimensional view" (p. 5). By taking this approach, I created what ethnographer Geertz (1973) called a *thick description* of CCCP to understand its organizational formation, teaching pedagogy, and impact on participants of the program.

A limitation of using a case study approach is the breadth of the approach. To avoid this issue, Yin (2014) and Stake (1995) suggested placing boundaries on a case to prevent excessive breadth of data. Suggestions on how to bind the case include time and place (Creswell, 2013), time and activity (Stake, 1995), and definition and context (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Delimiting the case allows the researcher to focus their inquiry and ensure the study is reasonable in scope. In the case of this work, participant boundaries included the creators of the program to provide background and organizational context. I also limited the scope of the study to high school students, particularly because of my background as a high school principal. I came with an expert knowledge of high school curriculum and a comfort with high school students I can leverage as I deepen my understanding of the CCCP and its impact on students. Lastly,

although CCCP exists in several districts and in many high schools, Santa Ana was one of the early adopters of the program and has also fully funded the program with the intention of creating a pathway from fourth to 12th-grade.

Methodologies

This study used a qualitative research methodology. I included three groups of participants: the creators of the CCCP, CCCP teaching artists, and students enrolled in the CCCP class. I elected to vary the methodologies of data collection for each group. For the co-creators of the CCCP, I used a key informant interview approach to ascertain how life experiences motivated them to start the CCCP and the philosophy they use to design the filmmaking pedagogy in the CCCP classes. For the teaching artists, I conducted interviews to unpack ways they interact with students in class and also inquired about their motivation to participate as teaching artists. Lastly, I conducted focus groups with high school students who worked directly with Polo and Jessica to gather perspective on the CCCP program and evaluate the impact filmmaking has had on their educational engagement and personal identity. By using a variety of methodologies and perspectives for the case study, I constructed a multifaceted story of the CCCP program in Santa Ana Unified (Thomas, 2016).

Unfortunately, before my field work began, Polo and Jessica were asked to separate from the YCP that was tied to the LIF. As such, observations in the classroom to view the teaching artists at work and the student-to-teacher interactions could not be fulfilled. The LFI YCP program was no longer the same program that it was under Polo and Jessica. Instead, during the interviews and focus groups I asked participants to recall their experiences working with and under Polo and Jessica during the prior year.

Life History

The philosophy of education and the motivation behind creating the CCCP can be found in the life histories of the co-creators of the CCCP, Polo and Jessica. For this case study, I was most interested in learning about how their life histories brought them to filmmaking and in particular their interest in creating more opportunities for students of color in the film industry through education. Through their life histories, I uncovered ways they created the conditions for critical pedagogy in their classroom practices. How did their political perspectives in diversifying the industry make their way into the classroom? How did they create a shared learning environment between teaching artists and students? In what ways have they seen students find their voice through film and student's impact on the continued expansion of the CCCP?

Semi-Structured Interviews

The teaching artists in the classroom went through an orientation training with the creators of the CCCP. They also attended monthly meeting to receive continued training with instruction, supports and curriculum under the supervision of Polo and Jessica. Through the interviews, I explored how the teaching artists translated their expertise in filmmaking to student filmmakers in the classroom. I also investigated their motivations for joining the CCCP and the impact that the CCCP had on their personal and professional lives.

Focus Groups

I have been on the advisory committee of the CCCP. I have had varying amounts of contact with the founders and teaching artists at various CCCP sites. However, the high school students at Southern California High School did not know who I was. Researchers often find that

focus group interviews successfully reduce stress among teens and allow them to build upon one another's responses in a way that individual interviews may not (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013). I explored student learning experiences and analyzed emergent themes from the group conversations. Furthermore, CCCP educators asked students to work in teams and negotiate, argue, compromise, and resolve conflict as they completed their projects. I capitalized on this classroom management approach and used the focus group to leverage the teamwork ethos followed in classroom instruction. Morgan (1997) asserted, "A research interest in group behavior might not be well served by data from individual interviews" (pp. 12-13). I capitalized on the groups formed in the filmmaking class through focus group data collection.

Document Analysis

The CCCP has become more organized over the years and has developed curriculum, training materials, and a mission and vision for their organization. I used their documents to provide another data source for the analysis of interviews and focus groups. Wolff (2004) suggested documents are difficult to use for validating interview statements; instead, they should be used to contextualize information. Documents for CCCP were used to provide the context for interview and focus group statements.

Inductive Analysis

I incorporated Hatch's (2002) steps for inductive analysis as my approach to view the data from the life histories, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews (see Figure 7).

Prior to analyzing the data, I used the three theoretical frameworks described above as a starting point for the analysis. Within each frame I identified domains that would help with my

Steps in Inductive Analysis

1. Read the data and identify frames of analysis.
2. Create domains based on semantic relationship discovered within frames of analysis.
3. Identify salient domains, assign them a code, and put others aside.
4. Reread data, refining salient domains and keeping a record of where relationships are found in the data.
5. Decide if your domains are supported by the data and search data for examples that do not fit with or run counter to the relationship in your domains.
6. Complete an analysis within domains.
7. Search for themes across domains.
8. Create a master outline expressing relationship with and among domains.
9. Select data excerpts to support the elements of your outline. (p. 162)

Figure 7. Nine-step inductive analysis process. Reproduced by permission from *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings* by J. A. Hatch, 2002, p. 162. Copyright 2002 by the State University of New York. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

analysis of the data (see Table 1). I used the domains as potential themes that emerged from my analysis, understanding that themes that emerged might not have had all domains associated within the frames.

The domains for critical pedagogy came from the philosophical principles of critical pedagogy (Darder et al., 2009). The domains for constructivist learning theory came from Driscoll's (1994) five conditions for constructivist learning. The domains for situated learning theory came from Lave and Wenger's (1991) legitimate peripheral participation.

Protection of Human Subjects

An Institutional Review board (IRB) application was submitted to both Loyola Marymount University IRB committee as well as the IRB committee of Santa Ana Unified in order to ensure the protection of the participants of this study. The founders and teaching artists that participated in the study received an informed consent form as well as a subject's bill of rights form that they signed to participate in the study. The young filmmakers received an informed consent form for parents of minor/child, an informed assent form for minor/child,

along with a subject's bill of rights that were signed to participate in the study. Permission to conduct the study was granted by both committees prior to the start of the fieldwork.

Table 1
Theoretical Framework and Domains for Inductive Analysis

Critical Pedagogy	Constructivist Learning Theory	Situated Learning Theory
• Cultural Politics • Political Economy • Historicity of Knowledge • Dialectical Theory • Ideology and Critique • Hegemony • Resistance and Counter Hegemony • Praxis • Dialogue and Conscientization	• Complex Learning Environment • Social Negotiation • Multiple Perspectives • Reflection • Student-Centered Learning	• Community of Practice • Shift from peripheral participation to full participation • Assume more responsibility

Participants' identities remained anonymous except for the co-creators of the CCCP. All field notes and recordings were kept in my possession in a locked filing cabinet in my home. All audio recordings were transcribed by the transcription service, verbalink.com, which maintains strict confidentiality agreements. In addition, all correspondence with the transcription serve was conducted through password protected server from verbalink.com and password protected electronic mail services. All materials and data were maintained in the protected conditions for the duration of the study and will be destroyed three-years after the conclusion of the study.

Chapter 3 examines the CCCP from the perspective of the founders of the program.

CHAPTER 3

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT: THE FOUNDERS

In this chapter, I introduce the founders of the CCCP. I provide the methodology used to gather the qualitative data for this study and describe the background of the founders of the program, the institutional history that culminated in the creation of the CCCP, the philosophical approach to the program and to the teaching artist (mentor) training, and the ideal classroom setting for the program. I end the chapter with a discussion of findings and the impact the CCCP program has had on the founders' personal and professional lives.

Methodology

I have collaborated with Hipolito "Polo" Muñoz and Jessica Just since 2011: as a school leader offering one of their filmmaking classes, on the advisory board for their organization, and through many professional development sessions they hosted for their teaching artists throughout the years. This collaboration notwithstanding, my knowledge of the institutional history of CCCP prior to my recent research was limited and peripheral. To acquire a richer understanding of the development of the program and the motivation behind Polo and Jessica's creation of CCCP and to provide a thick description within my study, I conducted three 1.5-hour interviews with the CCCP founders. Geertz's (1973) concept of *thick description* supports not only a description of human behavior but the context behind the activity; Polo and Jessica's oral histories are fundamental for understanding the institutional development of CCCP.

The first interview I conducted focused on Polo and Jessica's life histories and their connections to the arts and filmmaking. The interview uncovered motivations in the creation of a K-12 cinema program. Faraday and Plummer (1979) explained that through a life history

methodology, “the technique documents the inner experiences of individuals, how they interpret, understand and define the world around them” (p. 776). How did their life experience create their world views? How did their world views influence their choices in careers? What experiences in their lives brought them to tackling the struggle of diversity in the film industry? I delved into moments in their lived experiences that help shape their motivations and purposes in creating a filmmaking program.

The second interview focused on CCCP’s development as an organization and in the classroom setting. Although Polo concentrated his work at a secondary school site in LA Unified School District and Jessica at the elementary school site, they collaborated with curriculum design and CCCP development. Originally as volunteers and guest instructors, they began their work at three public school sites and aimed to integrate pedagogical practices developed through their experiences as filmmakers. Polo brought in practice and professional knowledge from the industry to his classroom instructional practices while Jessica brought in practices from her undergraduate studies and her professional experiences. As their program developed, they integrated their work with a local film festival to share student work. Once their filmmaking program showed promise in the classroom and connected itself with an external film festival to offer a public venue for student work, Polo and Jessica established a for-profit organization and marketed their program to several school districts. Responses from this second interview provide details of the organizational history of CCCP.

Polo and Jessica were responsible for the development of CCCP curriculum during the first years of implementation. Once the program was administered in five school districts, they hired teaching artists to serve as support for that growth and sustain instructional quality. I

explored the construction of the classroom environment and how the program founders communicated that environment to teaching artists and students in the final interview. Furthermore, I revisited themes from the previous two interviews. Finally, I highlighted emergent themes and analyzed whether they connect to critical, constructivist, and situated learning practices. In sum, I detailed the creation of CCCP and how they implemented CCCP through their teaching artists training, the founders' description of the ideal classroom environment, and the impact they feel being connected to CCCP (see Appendix A).

The Creating Creators Cinema Project Founders: Polo

Hipolito "Polo" Muñoz immigrated to the United States at age 11. Polo arrived from a small town in Mexico. Polo described the transition to the United States as a difficult experience. As a second language learner, with little to no English from the start, Polo felt he could not easily understand what was happening around him. Polo stated that in school, for example, one of his favorite subjects, mathematics, became one of his worst subjects. He recalled, "I loved math and because I wasn't understanding quite clearly how to do it, it became my worst subject." Polo described how reading literature became a solace for him, he would read books with a dictionary in hand to understand the literature he was reading. He said, "Reading, I could do it on my own, but math, no one could explain that to me." Polo described how mentorship was of great importance to him because he always wanted to understand clearly how to do things,

> I don't trust what I've been told, or I don't trust that I've read it correctly so I always look for mentors, mostly so that I can check with them if I'm right or to correct it if I am not 100% correct.

This last point becomes part of the foundation of his educational philosophy, revisited later in the chapter.

Polo described how, in his youth, he felt that many of his ideas, concerns, and struggles were dismissed by adults: "I realized how dismissive adults are about that need to understand, especially kids of color, and I would assume kids that come from lower socioeconomic status, people are not giving these kids the opportunity to ask and to think." It was one of Polo's English teachers in junior high school, a private Catholic school in South LA, who provided conditions for Polo to feel empowered and participate more in his classroom settings. Polo recalled:

> My English teacher is the one that was really supportive. She understood my situation, even though I didn't know that at the time. Whenever I would read something, I'm pretty sure that she didn't understand any of it, but instead of saying something dismissive, she would always say, "That was really, really nice, can you read it again?"

Polo described how he would volunteer in class often, and if his English teacher asked him to contribute to class in any way, he would gladly volunteer. The classroom environment created by Polo's junior high school English teacher had a lasting impact and modeled a classroom environment Polo would later strive for in his filmmaking classes.

Polo's transition to high school led him to a Catholic high school in South LA, a school he described as a place that provided him opportunities to learn, was inclusive of his Mexican heritage, and did not make him feel uncomfortable for having an accent. He recalled one teacher in particular, an Air Force colonel, who, according to Polo, always said, "I need to understand what you're saying, you deserve that. You deserve to be heard and these people deserve to be able to hear you." The colonel's comment impacted Polo deeply; he often says the phrase to

himself to build clarity, but he also uses it with peers and students to emphasize the importance of being heard in society.

Polo described briefly his military experience and college experience as being formative for his later development of the CCCP. Polo talked about meeting people from outside of his South LA neighborhood and the comfort that brought him because it broke down stereotypes. He stated:

> So, you know, that is how the military had a big impact on me, meeting a lot of different people that I would have never met and experiencing the cohesion you have to have in order to be successful at the tasks you have.

After the military, Polo felt comfortable entering California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). At the time he enrolled, in the late 1980s, Polo said that the school demographic looked similar to the military: "mostly White."

At CSULB, Polo found mentorship with a Chicano professor who chaired the Mexican-American Studies department. Polo explained how his professor was "a homeboy from the barrio who got his PhD and made his way to become the Chair of the Mexican-American Studies department at Long Beach." Polo discussed how difficult it was for him to find a place to belong on campus. Polo attempted to join the *La Raza* and *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx de Aztlan* (MECHA) student organizations but did not feel he could find his place there. Instead, he joined a fraternity and later became president of his fraternity. He stated, "I knew that all those Anglo kids that were part of the fraternity, they were being influenced by me, so it wasn't like the Latino that's out there. I was Polo and, yeah, he's Mexican." Being a representative of minority

group in both the military and college provided occasions for Polo to think about experiences he duplicated in the CCCP. This is a recurring theme in this work.

Polo spoke briefly about life after college. Polo worked as a pharmaceutical representative and at an educational company, Scholastic Book Fair. As a pharmaceutical representative Polo gained substantial knowledge of biology and physiology. Polo discussed the mentorship he received from a variety of medical and nonmedical professionals in the field. The mentorship opportunities fostered the confidence he needed to speak directly to physicians about infectious diseases and the results of his company's drugs. He shared:

> Here I am talking to a physician or maybe two physicians, presenting to them a product but that product is the end point of all of this information, so in order for me to help these people feel safe to use my products I had to be a wealth of knowledge and the knowledge had to be very specific.

Through experiences at both pharmaceutical companies and Scholastic, Polo realized the importance of creating a product that can sell. The vision and curriculum for the CCCP included the need to create products that sell.

Polo discussed how he accidentally fell into filmmaking and into the role of producer. A girlfriend of Polo, a flamenco dancer, was producing a show, and the producer with whom she was working had left the show. She asked for help. Polo approached the venture from a business perspective:

> So, I ended up producing her show, both producing and executive producing it, which means that I put the money in, and at the same time I helped get all the elements that they

needed. I've been around flamenco and I love the music and I love the art. So, I just used all of my other skills in business to get this together.

Polo described this rough introduction into the filmmaking industry as a costly venture but believed the importance of completing the project outweighed the cost of the product. Polo used the film to open opportunities to showcase the film and to shift his work to focus on the arts. Polo highlighted other films and television shows he produced, *Adjusting Honor* (Beltran et al., 2010) and *LA Business Today* (Jimenez, Jimenez, Muñoz, Seidel, & Lin, 2008-2011), as he fine-tuned his skills in production and learned more deeply about the inner workings of the film industry. He reflected, "It was just an accident but because of all my business background it kind of made sense to me very fast, if I would've known that this was something I could've done earlier I would have."

Polo spoke directly about not thinking of the arts as a career path in his youth: "Nobody put it in front of me. Arts to me. For me it was not a natural thing, so I have to work on it still, but no one presented this to me." Polo came into the arts later in his career. Reflecting on his experience, Polo felt that the importance of introducing filmmaking to youth will provide more options for their future.

The Creating Creators Cinema Project Founders: Jessica

Jessica Just's career in the arts, in particular modeling and acting, began when she was about three years old. Jessica told the story of a person noticing her at her mother's work and commenting on how her mother should send pictures to a certain modeling agency. Jessica's mother's interaction with this stranger turned into a commercial modeling gig with Ford, a well-known modeling agency. Jessica contracted with a manager in New York City, and at the age of

five years old, she became a member of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA). Jessica credited this early venture into entertainment as her introduction to the professional workspace. She shared, "So, to me, this world, this industry has been just how I translate everything. I mean even down to the way in which I would memorize scripts or study for a test, they were one and the same." Jessica equated her professional life to her academic life. This point in particular will be revisited later in the chapter.

Jessica recounted her childhood experience with her cousins as a deep influence in developing her creativity and her ability to collaborate with others. Jessica and her extended family would reunite at Lake Pleasant in Speculator, New York, at her uncle's cabin. "We had this wonderful house, but there wasn't really much to do past running around the woods, shooting bows and arrows, or swimming and tubing. We would go back to the little cabin and make up skits and plays." Jessica, her brother, and her six younger cousins entertained themselves by creating stories. This tradition began when Jessica was seven years old: "We would read *Aesop's Fables* and J.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, and C.S. Lewis' things." Jessica describes how, for two months, she and her family were at the cabin, and she had many ideas for scripts and stories from her professional life as well as literature, that it was natural for the family to act out those stories together with her as the director.

The transition from acting out plays to creating film occurred as a response to her Grandfather's health. She stated:

> At the time, my grandfather was still alive. We called him Opi. He was sick. He had hemophilia and other things that, through his life, he struggled. He had a camera. So, he

would—when we did the play, you can hear him coughing but he's the one holding the camera and he's filming the whole play.

Jessica took on narration while brother and cousins designed costumes. They did this for two years; however, Jessica's grandfather could not hold the camera after that second year. Jessica remembers feeling a sense of responsibility; her Opi was there to see the process and share in the story with the children. Jessica wanted to continue to share the stories they created in Lake Pleasant with her Opi and other family members: "I started thinking, we need to get that camera and we need to plan it out. We've got to make a movie." The transition was complete, since Jessica's grandfather could no longer document the work, she would put their stories on film so that he could still enjoy the stories the family created.

Jessica's initial attempts were made on analog devices. Jessica's grandfather explained how the VHS system worked and when she had to edit a piece, she had to play it on the VHS camcorder into another VHS device to edit the selections. Jessica shared:

> So, this was the most painstaking editing you could think of. What was worse, it was one of those fancy home VHS players that rolled back three seconds. So, I was very accurate, but it would roll back three seconds. So, the first edit that we ever did was one—there was once a princess because we were so into *[The] Princess Bride*. It was ridiculous.

On the creative side of the production, Jessica, her brother, and the cousins did not want to simply replicate the movie. Jessica ensured the family team would create original interpretations.

Jessica commented on the skill of collaboration through this process of creation with her family. Since all family members contributed to the ideas, Jessica saw more possibility in the story development: "I started to develop a sense of wow, even though their ideas seemed far out.

I'm not going to say, 'no' to it because it inspired me to expand my perception of where the story could go." In telling the story of her initial experience with filmmaking, Jessica commented on the struggles she felt in the process:

> I have a personal struggle with writing. I'm a very visual person and even in my college days, it was the last course I took. I don't know what it is with me. It's just, I think, it's been a life of hearing the words in my head and then second guessing them and not writing them down.

However, Jessica found her brother and cousins had talents they could contribute to the project. Jessica delegated different roles to the family members, given their particular talents, and the film project became a yearly tradition for the family to enjoy. As her grandfather became more ill, Jessica and her cousins would have four to five films to showcase. These films could be played at any time, in any place, for her grandfather to enjoy.

As a byproduct of their tradition, Jessica found she and her family members developed skills in the creative process. They felt accountable to one another, and, in the end, had a product to share with the whole family: "Then we had this big movie premier night and we started experiencing the joy of sharing. It was a struggle, but at the end, it was so worthwhile." Jessica attributed the collaboration with her younger family members as her preparation to work with youth at school sites.

Jessica auditioned for television shows and commercials as a child: "I quickly learned, being a kid on set, that you're dismissed, not in a mean way, but just because these are professionals." Although she had spent most of her youth on set both in front and behind the camera, she could not understand why she was not in dialogue with the professionals who made

the decisions. Jessica came to the realization that the professionals behind the camera go to college to understand their craft: "A lot of them, particularly like the producers, directors, people who are more in the office portions of the production companies, managers, agents, go to college to learn about it." This inspired Jessica to attend a post-secondary institution that focused on the creative arts. Jessica was accepted to New York University's (NYU's) Tisch School of the Arts. After graduating NYU, Jessica worked for Miramax in the post-production office.

Jessica spoke fondly of learning many of the aspects of post-production working for Miramax but felt that she did not want to stay in the office indefinitely: "New York is well known for business, well known for finance, but is this really where I want to be? I want to explore." Through a series of opportunities, Jessica left Miramax and traveled through Europe, Florida, and then made her way to Los Angeles where she eventually met Polo Muñoz.

Creating Creators—The Beginning: Hot Chocolate and Red Vines

Jessica told a story I want to share before I describe the formation of the CCCP that illustrated—powerfully—the impact film and filmmaking has on the students, the school, and the community. Jessica described a dilemma an elementary school principal was having with his initial launch of a dual-language program at his school site. Parents resisted the program, making comments that their children should only learn English. Polo and Jessica were running a summer institute at the school, and the principal asked if they could create a film that showed the importance of the dual-language program. Polo and Jessica's initial reaction was, "The students are going to write it. We're not going to write it because [the students] will be invested in it." Polo and Jessica pitched the idea to the students and they began to write. The students based it on their lived experience on the basketball courts. The basketball courts were a space of tension at

the school site: many fights occurred on the courts. As students dialogued, they found many of the fights happened because of misunderstandings. Some students could not speak English, and many students could not communicate in Spanish. When students perceived they were being ignored, they resorted to violence to solve the misunderstanding. In the film they created over the summer, students showed two scenarios. In the first scene, students speaking in English asked another student if they want to play. Not understanding the request, the student became frustrated and a fight ensued. However, once the dual-language program was established, the same scene occurred again but after the silence from the second student, the first student asked again in Spanish. The two boys smiled and played on the basketball court together. Tensions were eased because the students could communicate. The story was written by the students, filmed by the students, and acted by the students under the guidance of Polo and Jessica. The video opened the school and community's eyes to the need to offer a dual-language program. Polo and Jessica's program emerged after years of collaboration, their first encounter happened in Hollywood in 2009.

Polo and Jessica met at a boutique film school in 2009. Polo was learning how to edit and Jessica had taken residency at the school. During this time, Polo had been invited to an elementary school site to teach filmmaking to students in Los Angeles. Polo was invited by two teachers who wanted to create an arts program for their school. The school was approximately 10 blocks from where Polo grew up. Polo felt a strong connection with the youth. After a series of lessons students recorded their own videos, Polo brought the videos to the boutique school to edit. The elementary school Polo partnered with did not have the technology available to edit the videos. In the spring of 2009, Jessica noticed Polo in the computer lab at the boutique school.

Jessica approached Polo and asked what he was working on. She described what she saw: “He was working on a film, not a very well-shot film.” Jessica proceeded to ask Polo a series of questions: “Who shot the film? What’s going on with the audio? What’s going on with the lighting? What’s happening?” Polo responded that kids shot the video at the elementary school where he volunteered. Jessica, reminded of her experience with her cousins and the joy it brought working with young creators, had to get involved: “I really want to be a part of this. I can edit it for you because you’re struggling so much.” Jessica remembered Polo noticed he rarely saw her eat and offered to buy her food for the help. Polo bought hot chocolate and Red Vines and Jessica would get through the edits on calories from the sweets. The film, *The Bully*, took over 11 hours to complete. Polo explained to Jessica how he was invited to the school site, how he had access to a camera, and that he had been working with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) KLCS at the time. Jessica recalled Polo describing how he planned out the classroom environment and worked with the young students guiding their storytelling processes. Jessica, in her retelling of their first meeting remembered offering support:

> Well, next time, can I maybe help you? I don’t know if either you have to go through all of this editing again or anyone else like myself go through this editing again, but it would be great either to teach them how to edit or maybe like just not have to do that much editing again. There are ways to shoot this so that it would flow better and the angles would be better and the sound could be better.

As part of their agreement, Polo offered to drive Jessica to auditions and asked her in return to help with red carpet interviews. This interaction established a long-term partnership that evolved into the CCCP.

Creating Creators: The Forming of the Organization

Polo and Jessica began their collaboration in 2009, working together volunteering at one school site in the LAUSD. Along with working at the school site, Polo and Jessica collaborated with film festivals and the PBS station KLCS. Jessica recounted one film festival where a viable program began to emerge:

> When we started getting involved in the film festivals, there was this one time at the Latino International Film Festival that I was working also on their video production and I was cutting their promos. So, I brought *The Magic Elevator*, which was one of the films that we had done with the kids at the elementary school. The film segment they were supposed to show in the front of the feature film for the kids to come see, the reel had not got past customs. So, we had this 5-minute block of nothingness. I went to the projectionist and offered to cut something real fast to play on the projector. I know projectionists. I know editors. I used to do it at Miramax.

The elementary students' film, *The Magic Elevator,* played to start off that portion of the festival. Jessica recalled:

> That moment, when that came up on the big screen—because I had that experience with the little screen in my home—but when the film that the kids made came up on the big screen, the kids were just, like, in wonder and shock.

Jessica invited the student who wrote the short to answer some questions in the question and answer (Q&A) format of the festival. The student answered like one of the professional filmmakers on the panel.

What started as a casual volunteer project became a program that was viable and sustainable. Both Polo and Jessica were still looking to improve their craft; they could not commit professionally to visit the schools daily. What they could commit to was visiting the school site twice a week during the school day, and still, their schedules remained open for additional work in the industry. Jessica commented on the initial work with the school:

> As much of a drain it was on both Polo and I—I mean at one point I remember driving all the way down thinking, I came thousands of miles from New York to Los Angeles to be in the studio doing work, how is this supposed to help me in Hollywood?

With hindsight, Jessica regretted that thought: "That very statement has haunted me now, because it's exactly helping me in Hollywood." Jessica talked about the start of the program:

> At first, the program was just kind of a thing that Polo and I were doing and it enriched a lot of what I was doing in my professional job. But slowly, that started reversing. What I was doing in my professional job with [a] TV show was starting to enrich what we were doing with the kids.

Polo and Jessica brought to the school site the learning they were acquiring in their professional setting. This established the basis for how they created the program; students were filmmakers and Polo and Jessica would set-up their program as a production unit.

In three years, from 2008 to 2011, Polo and Jessica established student filmmaking in three schools, an elementary and a secondary school in LAUSD, and a secondary school in Bellflower Unified. Both Polo and Jessica completed the required training for career technical education (CTE) credentials and worked in partnership with teachers, principals, and district personnel to continue their program. At this point, Polo and Jessica discussed the program's

sustainability, Jessica asked: “Is this going to be a hobby, or is this going to be something that we’re really going to brand, put out there, and do?” Both were working now for the LIF Festival, and for three years, bringing many students to the festival. Polo and Jessica saw an opportunity to make the program financially viable. Sponsors of the festival saw students grabbing their products and uploading pictures to social media sites. The executives of the film festival saw mutual partnerships between schools and the festival could bring in more sponsorship to the festival. Polo and Jessica had a green light to build the foundations of a cinema program.

In considering the partnerships between the film festival and the schools in 2011, Jessica remembered the lessons of first years:

> Working with students taught us to be sharper creatively. Also, there is a need to craft how and what we were teaching so that it could remain in the classroom. We began tying this [filmmaking] to academics and prepared lessons that built on themselves so that students could absorb the information. We tested how long each part of the production would take with the students throughout the year, and we were able to design a precise timeline that gave our students the maximum time to be creative and produce stronger films and outcomes after experiencing our project.

Polo and Jessica formulated their philosophy of education through filmmaking and saw interconnections with traditional academic outcomes.

By 2010, as Polo and Jessica delivered a nascent filmmaking curriculum, they received feedback from both principals and students. Jessica described, “Not only were these students and teachers more excited about work, but they were approaching problems with a ‘can-do attitude.’ They were growing emotionally.” Polo and Jessica found their lessons were not only about

filmmaking but allowed everyone involved to find their love of learning. Jessica said that the approach to classroom instruction was "to empower self-direction and rekindle the approach to learning in both the students and teachers." In the next section, I discuss more of the dual role filmmaking played on students' self-direction.

Jessica described the development of structure for the filmmaking class taking a stronger shape from 2011 to 2013. Polo and Jessica actively integrated Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as part of their development of the CCCP program. The filmmaking class attended to curricular standards and provided a project-based model for instruction that appealed to many principals interested in a pedagogy of creativity and engagement. Jessica recalled:

> We knew from our time in the classroom that students approach projects with more dedication when the class was part of their work day, so we made a decision: it had to stay within the school time because that is when we saw the best results.

Polo described some of the difficulties of having the program after school or on the weekends: "Many of the students had responsibilities at home. To ask them to stay after school or to come in on the weekends was not sustainable. We would get inconsistent attendance and many projects were not completed." While piloting their curriculum, Polo and Jessica continued their learning of the school system by completing their CTE credential, Jessica shared:

> So, Polo and myself began working with teachers and researching the new Common Core Standards. We also applied, studied, tested for, and received our CTE certification, which was awarded from a combination of our hours in our field of work, and our completion of study and comprehension of state-taught teaching methodology.

Polo and Jessica argued their CTE training solidified their belief that the filmmaking course should be taught during an art class or an English language arts class.

In designing their program, Polo and Jessica thought they could not just arbitrarily create a budget without knowing the inner workings of school districts. They asked principals and leads of the schools they were working with to establish an advisory board to help them create a program that fit the needs of the districts and of the students. Polo and Jessica were filmmakers; that was their profession. They knew their expertise was useful in the classroom, but they also wanted the expertise of professionals that have worked in the school system to guide their development of the program.

Through their work with the advisory board, and after many long drives in Polo's car without a working radio, the cinema program started taking shape. Polo and Jessica approached the program through a storytelling format. They assumed most schools had a limited budget for technology and arts courses. Polo described his initial thoughts in creating the program:

> Most folks that are in schools teaching them even how to do video production stuff. They are focused on the technical thing. And a creator is really more about someone who can develop—take an idea, turn it into a concept and then actually turn it into something practical.

Polo emphasized the importance of story, "It's more about designing a story so that others can consume it so that others have feelings according to how you put that out there together." He concluded his thoughts with, "At the end of the day, everything starts with an idea." Storytelling and generating ideas for story becomes the backdrop of the program. Without a story, you cannot make a film.

After five years of working through their curriculum in the classroom, as well as continuing their professional work in the film industry, Polo and Jessica developed a structure that reflected their curricular and pedagogical approach and considered the sustainability of a filmmaking program at school sites. The framework included (see Appendix B):

- 1.5-hour classes,
- Two filmmakers in the classroom,
- A certified classroom teacher collaborating with filmmakers,
- Class during the school day,
- Class held twice a week,
- A 34-week school year,
- Three to five filmmaking groups per class,
- Three- to 15-minute maximum length of films for the year, and
- Establishing an advisory board to inform classroom instruction.

Polo and Jessica divided the yearlong curriculum into manageable segments, under these parameters. They would be in the classrooms twice a week for approximately 90 minutes each day. Jessica and Polo found that the 90 minutes per session allowed the creative process to have a beginning, middle, and end point. Jessica explained the importance of the 90 minutes:

> We found that most classes tended to be around 40 minutes in middle school and high school. But in elementary, we really found the sweet spot to be 90 minutes, because by about 30 minutes you've got the kids kind of already able to kind of slow down, question, and think. Then in the hour, they open up, now they're absorbing a lot at a higher

> capacity so that by the last 10 minutes or so they're breaking down, they're reflecting on everything.

Jessica felt if they had to rush through that opening up part of the program, students were not given enough opportunity to learn, put learning into practice, and reflect. Polo and Jessica now had their structure for the classroom. In their early attempts at engaging elementary school youth, they realized that for the course to be sustainable they would need to organize the course using a production timeline that fit within the structure of the school day. The program's timeline consisted of 34 weeks, twice a week, 90 minutes per session. They used their initial classes to gauge the length of each phase of production in order for each team of students to complete a five to 10-minute film.

Polo and Jessica believe that filmmaking is an academic endeavor. The class could not be treated as an elective course; it should be tied to a core class. Jessica recalled:

> So, we're going to propose this very radical concept that we want to come into your classrooms during the school day. But in order to do that, I understand because of the red tape, or just protocols and comfort and also for our comfort and safety, we want a certified teacher in there, preferably an English teacher because we believe in the importance of where story starts, with writing.

Jessica, working with the advisory board and academic teachers at their school sites, started reading and understanding the CCSS and how they aligned with the filmmaking course Jessica and Polo created. Jessica created a matrix aligning the CCSS of English with the lessons they prepared for the year: "So, I created a matrix. Every lesson I painfully went through." Jessica met with teachers of various grade levels to check her alignment and to see if it fit with the

expectations of the school site: “Then I took it to the fourth-grade teacher and asked if they aligned. She made some adjustments.” Jessica continued this process to establish the curriculum for the primary years, grade four, grade six, and grade nine. Jessica added:

> But then, once you go one grade up, you’re building on that, expanding it, challenging it. So, when I started building on my pillars, by fifth grade and sixth grade, not only do you have to develop story with a beginning, middle, and end, but you also have to challenge yourself with developing a character that has XYZ personality.

After defining the structure of the program into weeks and hours, Polo and Jessica wanted to be able to translate their course into language educators could understand. The idea was to enhance the learning that was already taking place at the school site. By connecting their curriculum to the CCSS, they were able to justify having the class during the school day tied to the core English language arts class (see Appendix C.).

Polo and Jessica articulated the breakdown of the year. The first semester was broken down to writing, developing, and creating story. The second semester was production. Taking their time in the first semester through development allowed for students to prepare themselves for the work that came during production. For example, in the first semester, students were given the opportunity to brainstorm story ideas. Students were introduced to filmmaking roles: screenwriter, producer, director, cinematographer, sound engineer, and editor. By Week 10, students were pitching their ideas and creating storyboards for their production. They ended the first semester with casting parts for their film. The second semester involved filming. Student production teams filmed, edited, and completed their projects by Week 30. In the last weeks of

the second semester, students showcased their work. Jessica and Polo offered a bit of a caveat for the second semester:

> At the end of the year, it isn't the most beautiful Shakespearean finished script. It's not Scorsese produced-like movie, but the students feel accomplished. We all learn something new together. We were in a different place than the first day we walked in.

The process of learning is the focus, not the final piece.

Polo and Jessica discovered their lessons helped galvanize student self-direction. Students, excited about their CCCP work, engaged in their classes with a positive attitude. Along with teaching the technical process of filmmaking, Polo and Jessica created lessons that unpacked the intra- and interpersonal skills required in creative and collaborative spaces. Polo and Jessica believed that the intra- and interpersonal skills were a vehicle to help students learn the collaborative journey, and human interaction throughout the process was as valuable as the final product. This is a foundational aspect of creating their classroom environment, the basis for their philosophy of learning, I discuss that later in this chapter.

From 2013 to 2017, the filmmaking program expanded from two school districts to nine school districts. During these years, Polo and Jessica continued fine tuning the curriculum for their filmmaking classes. Initially called The Cinema Project, the filmmaking classes needed an outside venue to display their work. Both Polo and Jessica commented on the authenticity of the experience. Polo added, "When youth see their work on the big screen, it is very satisfying for them and their instructors." In 2011, Polo became the Youth Program Manager for the LA LIF Festival (LALIFF). Jessica, in that same year, became the Youth Program Coordinator for LALIFF. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, Jessica played one of the elementary

school student's films at the 2012 LALIFF, and the partnership between The Cinema Project and LALIFF seemed plausible. In 2012 and 2013, Polo and Jessica connected students to film festivals where they had strong connections: LALIFF and the South East European Film Festival (SEEFF). Since both Polo and Jessica worked directly for LALIFF in the youth programs department, they believed the partnership could yield the best results.

From 2013 to 2015, The Cinema Project, created by Polo and Jessica, and the LIF Institute (LIFI) worked together to establish an advisory board to support their business development and continued improvements on their Grades 4-12 curriculum. For naming purposes, LALIFF and LIFI are interchangeable; they were the same organization. Through their partnership, The Cinema Project expanded to two additional school districts, increasing their class offerings from three classes to eight classes. By working with their advisory board, Polo and Jessica created a cost formula that could support in replicating The Cinema Project for more schools. Polo and Jessica looked at the hourly rate of the teachers in the different school districts; they worked with and added an additional hour to each day of class for planning. Along with the hourly rate for the teaching artists, Polo and Jessica supplied schools with potential equipment needs for full implementation of The Cinema Project. The Cinema Project, along with LIFI, interviewed and hired teaching artists to support an expansion in 2015-2016. The integration of the new teaching artists will be covered in a later section. While the programs continued to expand with the support of LIFI, Polo and Jessica continued volunteering at their LAUSD sites. According to Polo:

> We wanted to keep the partnerships with our first schools. We understood that budgets were tight, but the successes we saw with the students kept bringing us back to the

schools. As we grew, we were hoping to find ways to fund our program for those beginning schools.

During the spring of 2016, The Cinema Project separated from LIFI. The separation is outside the scope of the study. The LIFI transformed into the LFI and a nonprofit was created, the Latino Film Institute Youth Cinema Project (LFIYCP). By 2016-2017, LFIYCP expanded to a total of nine school districts with a total of nine class offerings. Twelve classes were at the elementary school level, three classes at the middle-school level, and four classes at the high school level.

For 2016-2017, Polo and Jessica were leading the curriculum development, running the professional development for the new teaching artists, and meeting with interested schools and districts to continue their program expansion. Polo and Jessica were working with school sites independent of LFIYCP, an elementary school and a secondary school in the LAUSD. Due to internal strife between LFI leadership and The Cinema Project founders, Polo and Jessica were asked to leave the YCP program.

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of my study was to document the work created under the leadership and supervision of Polo and Jessica, so from this point forward I will be referring to the CCCP as the program that was established based on the foundational work that Polo and Jessica created since 2008-2009 to present. See Table 2 for a brief summary of the organizational history of the CCCP.

Philosophy Behind Creating Creators Cinema Project

Polo and Jessica worked together on a variety of projects in Los Angeles along with their partnership with schools. Polo and Jessica saw a disparity in the film industry's workforce

related to ethnic representation. They believed part of the disparity they witnessed in their professional life could be mitigated if they worked with public schools to expose students of

Table 2
Timeline of Organizational History of Creating Creators Cinema Project

Year	Brief Description of Developmental Process
2008-2009	• Polo and Jessica volunteer at an elementary school in the LAUSD.
2009-2010	• Polo and Jessica volunteering at an elementary school LAUSD. • Curriculum development is emerging.
2010-2011	• Polo and Jessica expand their program to a secondary school in LAUSD. • Continued work at elementary school in LAUSD. • Curriculum includes asking writers, producers, journalists, directors as guests to offer career workshops to students. • Polo becomes the Youth Program Manager for the LIF Festival. • Jessica becomes the Youth Program Coordinator for the LIF Festival.
2011-2012	• Polo and Jessica expand their program to another secondary school in LAUSD and at a secondary school in Bellflower Unified. Continued work at elementary and secondary school in LAUSD. Four classes in total. • Continued development of filmmaking curriculum incorporating CCSS elements. Formation of the year-long structure begins to form. • Polo and Jessica apply and receive CTE credentials to work at Bellflower Unified. • Polo joins advisory board for secondary school in LAUSD. • Jessica plays a student film at the LALIFF.
2012-2013	• Polo and Jessica program continue at three secondary schools and one elementary, three schools in LAUSD and one school in Bellflower Unified, four classes in total. • Polo and Jessica connect their filmmaking program with the Latino International Film Festival and with the South East European Film Festival. • Filmmaking curriculum emerges with important structures: 1.5 hours a class, meet twice a week, two filmmakers in the classroom, a certificated classroom teacher in the classroom, during the school day, 34-week design, three to five production groups per class. • A skeleton of a contract emerges to present to districts and schools that cover costs of the program.
2013-2014	• The filmmaking program, The Cinema Project, continues at three high schools and one elementary school in LAUSD and Bellflower Unified. • Continued development of filmmaking curriculum. The Cinema Project created by Polo and Jessica worked with LIFI in the hopes of having a partnership that connects the film festivals with the schools. • The Cinema Project and LIFI established an advisory board for the Cinema Project that includes teachers, principals, CTE liaison, and filmmakers to support in the business development and curriculum development of The Cinema Project. • LIFI connects The Cinema Project to two additional school districts.

Table 2, *continued*

2014-2015	• Cinema Project partnered with LIFI expands to two school districts, an elementary school and a secondary school Pasadena Unified and Bassett Unified. A total of five classes, one class in Pasadena and three in Basset Unified. • The Cinema Project continues their work with LAUSD separate of LIFI, one elementary school and two secondary schools. A total of three classes. • The Cinema Project develops the idea of creating a pathway for filmmaking, starting in elementary school and growing through secondary school. Bassett Unified has one class in elementary, middle, and high school. • The Cinema Project, partnered with LIFI, begins hiring additional filmmakers, screenwriters, producers, directors, etc. to prepare for 2015-2016 expansion.
2015-2016	• The Cinema Project, partnered with LIFI, expands to two additional school districts, Lynwood Unified, Santa Ana Unified, continues working with the other two districts for a total of nine classes. • The Cinema Project continues their work with LAUSD separate of LIFI, one elementary school and two secondary schools. A total of three classes. • Training begins to prepare new filmmaking teaching artists to work in a variety of school settings the summer of 2015. Topics include: collaborating with classroom teacher, working with students with different backgrounds, building a space for creativity, supporting autonomous learning environments, the difference between elementary, middle and high school students. • In the spring of 2016, The Cinema Project Separates from LIFI. A nonprofit entity is developed called the Latino Film Institute Youth Cinema Project (LFIYCP). The Youth Cinema Project, as a nonprofit, expands their classes for the 2016-2017 school year.
2016-2017	• The Youth Cinema Project expands to a total of nine school districts with a total of 19 classes, 12 elementary school classes, three middle school classes, four high school classes. • Continued training and professional development for new and existing teaching artists.
2017-2018	• Polo and Jessica separate from LFIYCP to establish CCCP.

color to filmmaking. They also believed that by giving students of color access to an arts education with an emphasis in the film industry they could create an impact on the film industry as a whole. Polo stated:

> If a kid is a writer, they can eventually make money as a writer, you know? In a pathway from fourth to 12th grade, if they do it every year, now they're becoming an expert and if they decide to go to film school, or creative writing or English or whatever, they're heck a lot more advanced and that's where you start getting kids from these neighborhoods on par with kids from more affluent neighborhoods.

The impetus is to create an environment of success that exposed students to an industry that they might have few, if any, opportunities to access.

Polo and Jessica stressed the importance of having a student-centered classroom. Making the learning space conducive for creativity meant that students would be placed in a vulnerable environment. Polo, recalling his experience at the Catholic school and on the importance of creating a safe space for students, remembered:

> elements that people have given me—little things here and there—have stayed with me, and so that also effected the curriculum, which is we have to keep giving kids the chance to either blossom or to fall because it's okay.

Creating a space for students to fall, according to Polo, supported students' creative development. Jessica asserted, "The best way of learning is failing. I mean that's how most people learn. They don't learn from getting pats on the back." Jessica, in talking about the progress of creating the program stated, "it was more about what the kids were getting out of it. We worked really hard to kind of protect that, because that to us, is the more important learning experience." Students generated their own stories. Polo and Jessica would use the students' stories to discuss elements of character development and plot development: "It is a program that allows for these kids to explore their own ideas, and their own world through the filmmaking process." In all elements of the learning, the students were at the center.

An element that proved initially challenging was creating collaborative groups, or production teams. Polo and Jessica stressed the importance of working collaboratively. If the director and producer were not working together, it would be difficult for the actors and camera person to understand the vision for the scene. Polo discussed collaboration:

> What I was asking them to do and what we're trying to do with this project and film really falls right into kids learning to create something that they feel very close to, that they feel they want to see happen. The challenge is that you're in a group. How are you gonna get everyone to be in the same vision?

Polo reminded students how he collaborates in all aspects of the filmmaking process, the importance of having a unified vision for the project and the work that was needed to complete the project together. Jessica remembered working with her cousins, how everyone contributed to the final movie, and the importance of taking in everyone's idea and finding a way to support everyone's voice. In the technical aspect, Polo and Jessica discussed how certain students become experts in certain elements, for example, editing. Jessica would help a student work through an editing idea. Then as more students asked about editing, she would direct them to the expert students in the classroom to learn from one another. This was so that the collaboration was not just within the production team but also outside the production team.

Creating an autonomous space is a central goal for educators to allow students to work and build on each other's ideas: Jessica shared, "Little-by-little during the filmmaking process, during the whole class, we start turning over, everything over to them and that starts actually the first day." Jessica knew that, with the guidance of a skillful filmmaker, students can and do become autonomous learners, a knowledge born from the experience of being a child on a professional set, working with cousins creating their movies, and years of classroom teaching. Students took more control of their learning in the filmmaking space. Polo reflected on the program to highlight the autonomous space as well, explaining:

> They create their own world within that hour and a half that we're with them because we're there collaborating with them. We're working with them and they have a say and that's really important and that's what I have learned working with Jessica.

Polo and Jessica understood that creating autonomy in the classroom impacted the way students would meet challenges in all aspects of their lives.

Jessica expressed working with the students helped her with her professional life. She also mentioned that her professional life impacted her filmmaking pedagogy. Polo and Jessica both talked about the importance of connecting their professional experience to the learning in the classroom. Polo wanted the students to understand the process of film from idea to distribution:

> And so, we're trying to take the kids also through the same thing because that experience is not that far off from the experience of creating a video on YouTube, Facebook, all of these spaces where they can market whatever product that they have.

The collaborative role that both Polo and Jessica took in the classroom setting was intentional. Polo described it as being part of the film crew:

> The experience in which we had in the classroom and combining it with the experience we had on the film set and not treating it like we're these expert adults coming in but we're actually your crew members and we're working with you. We're all learning together.

Jessica recalled acting exercises where she felt vulnerable and silly but which held value for teaching the students about acting, being present in the moment, and not overthinking the lines. Polo and Jessica felt it was a part of their duty to bring in those professional experiences in to the

classroom; it made the material relevant for the students and offered insight into an unfamiliar industry for the students.

Lastly, in their philosophy for CCCP, Polo and Jessica both talked about building a professional network. In the initial years, Polo and Jessica would invite friends into their classrooms to discuss a variety of topics pertaining to filmmaking. As their involvement in the industry grew, so did their network of professionals. When class offerings grew, Polo and Jessica could not be available for all of the class offerings, so they began to hire teaching artists: professional filmmakers from their network to support the learning in the classrooms. In working with secondary schools, Polo and Jessica also saw a perfect opportunity for students to access their professional networks. One teaching artist worked on a film at a school site in Southern California. The agreement the teaching artist made with the school site allowed the CCCP students access to the set, to see the director at work, to witness the minute-by-minute decisions made on set, and to support—if they could—the filming process. The organizer's hope was for filmmakers to provide ongoing opportunities for students to gain access to film sets (see Appendix D).

Creating Creators: Teaching Artists, Mentors

As the cinema program grew to 18 schools in five districts, Polo and Jessica established a plan to replicate the classroom setting they created initially with their first three schools. An important part of the plan was hiring experienced filmmakers to support student learning. For this section, I refer to the experienced filmmakers as *teaching artists* or *mentors.* A teaching artist may also be referred to as *artist-in-residence*, *residency artist, artist-educator, visiting artist, arts consultant, arts expert, arts provider,* or *artist* (Booth, 2003, p. 2). Teaching artists

serve a different function than traditional teachers; they emphasize the artistic process more than the final artistic product (Booth, 2003). Polo and Jessica described their development of teaching artists as it pertained to the CCCP classroom.

Jessica described the growth:

> We wanted it to be replicated so it wasn't just me and Polo now going to these 18 schools. How do you get consistency in your mentors, as we were soon to call them, that come in and basically do the same thing? So, in the last year and a half, Polo and I have had the opportunity to work with almost 18 pairs of filmmakers, so about 36 other filmmakers in sort of teaching them this Creating Creators mentality.

The training, much like their philosophy of learning, was to develop the skill-sets teaching artists need to mentor young creators. Jessica described many of the teaching artists as amazing filmmakers who sometimes needed personal or professional development. She said:

> What we found was that a lot of the filmmakers were struggling themselves. They come from a lot of great schools just like I had come from, but they didn't learn how to apply that. They didn't learn how to transition from artist to business person. They didn't learn how to work within a rigorous environment, a stressful environment.

In preparing to become mentors in the CCCP classroom, teaching artists would use support from Polo and Jessica to create classroom conditions that fostered creativity.

The 34-week schedule was now in place, having two sessions of 90 minutes each week. Polo and Jessica discovered having two mentors in the classroom offered the ideal environment for the CCCP classroom. Polo explained the rationale for two mentors in the classroom:

> The other part of it is that you cannot house all of the skillsets in one filmmaker. You can have a filmmaker that's very clear about the story, very clear about writing. And then you can have a filmmaker who's really great at the technology, physical production, post-production.

In the classroom together, Polo reasoned, the mentors could collaborate and show students that being knowledgeable in all aspects of filmmaking was important, but it is difficult to be expert in all aspects. Polo further explained, "If you have the talents that complement each other, now you have a strong team. It's a constant learning atmosphere." The learning is happening between the mentors and students, the students and their peers, and between the mentors.

The atmosphere Polo and Jessica wanted to create in the classroom, with the support of the teaching artist, was a professional environment. Polo described the work with choosing the mentors as a disruption to the traditional schooling model:

> We wanted to be more professional, to be more of a professional viewpoint to the schooling. Because they're already getting plenty of academic viewpoint and learning. We need to come in and say, if you want to be doing filmmaking or if you want to be in a business, this is what you need to know.

Jessica described that from her own experience, she had not experienced a mentorship where she could acquire a professional assessment of her work in the classroom setting. Similar to the teaching artists she hired for the program, Jessica wanted all participants involved to gain the skills necessary to live the life of a creative artist. It was imperative to both Polo and Jessica the training they provided would benefit students and teaching artists alike.

Polo and Jessica were adamant about being working artists themselves. They had created schedules with schools flexible enough to continue improving their craft, Polo as a producer and writer and Jessica as an actress, editor, and director. The teaching artists for the CCCP classroom also needed to be working artists. Polo and Jessica found filmmakers who were on set brought authentic learning to the school site. Instead of theorizing about abstract concepts, the mentors could talk about the learning that occurred in real time. Polo explained:

> You need to have working artists so that when they come into the classroom, their mindset is no longer just, "What am I going to do with these kids?" It's mostly getting them to be connected to your experiences outside of the classroom.

Polo told a story of one of his first filmmakers, a screenwriter, coming to speak to the class. A few months after volunteering in the class, this screenwriter began writing for a popular show on mainstream television. Polo recalled video conferencing with the writer while he was in the writing room. Polo showed the kids the filmmaker who had worked with the students just a few months prior to the video chat. Students asked many questions about the show, the writing regime, and experience the filmmaker had gained through his few weeks of work. It was this authentic experience that both provided access to a profession the students had never seen and motivated many students to think of the arts as a viable career option. Polo added, "We generally look for people who have experience in the film industry. They've done films. They hopefully went to film school or they're gained ample experience with film." This criterion adds to the authenticity and experience students will have access to in this type of classrooms.

Polo and Jessica knew that to find a working filmmaker and ask them to work a few days of the week may be difficult. They needed to create a business model that supported their ideal situation. Jessica described the development of the schedule:

> I needed some sort of paradigm in how we structured our hours so that I could go to class on a Monday and then be available for an audition on Tuesday. Every other job I knew of, to make money at the time, was like a 9:00 [a.m.] to 5:00 [p.m.]. I want to make a company where that isn't the case because we're going to be working with active artists.

Polo described how their approach of having two mentors in the classroom supported the mentor's professional development and the continuity of the CCCP classroom:

> We have enough mentors working with us. So, for instance, if Maria, an actress we brought in, has a schedule for Tuesday and Thursday, but she calls in the morning of the class and says she needs to prepare for an audition so she cannot come in. Our job is to say, that's okay. Take the day off. Go prepare for your audition because if you get the job and then you do your shoot and you come back with so much more experience to give to the kids.

Polo and Jessica viewed the work the mentors attained in the profession as an asset for the classroom environment. Polo and Jessica would ask another mentor to fill the place of the absent teaching artist. However, since two were in place at a school site, the continuity of the program was not halted.

Polo and Jessica also wanted a classroom model where the two teaching artists could be responsive to classroom diversity and representation. Polo shared the importance of having two mentors with different gender identities: "Generally, our two filmmakers were a male and female

pairing because of the dynamics it creates. The kids could kind of see two professionals working together on a consistent basis and learn a lot from that." Polo added, "We intentionally try to create a gender balance. A male filmmaker and a female filmmaker so that kids can see both sides. And they can see who they want to talk to for whatever reason." Polo described an early classroom experience where a female student preferred to work with Jessica during the editing stages. The student mentioned she liked working with Jessica because she knew the technology better and she was female. Polo laughed as he shared the interaction, but it provided insight into how both Jessica and Polo would later create the classroom experience for their students.

A trait both Polo and Jessica cited as important for the teaching artists was patience. Polo stated:

> Our work is to develop skillsets. So, we look for mentors that are patient, that when we listen to them speak, they have a certain empathy for the kids that they're working with to make sure that they have the expectations, because they do have to create a product and they do have to have kids finish a film, working it on their own as much as they can.

Jessica added:

> One of the ingredients is patience. You need to be able to sit through the most ridiculous story, the most horrible story or just a kid that thinks they know, a kid that wants to challenge, a kid that wants to explore challenging authority. Then you need to have empathy, because the minute that you think you know that kid better than that kid knows themselves, you're really hurting the kid's progress, because assumptions are so painful for a kid.

Jessica often reiterated final student products were never meant to be at the level of "Scorsese"; the mentor's focus in the process was the student's personal and academic development, where the journey was more important than the product. Patience, according to both Polo and Jessica would prepare the mentor for the CCCP classroom.

As their program grew and as mentors were being hired, Polo and Jessica recognized they needed to develop a program to support the development of their teaching artists and create a schedule for ongoing development. The training started organically when the program was small. Polo described the initial training program: "We would ask the mentors to come or our classes, to observe us teach." Polo found incoming mentors had significantly reduced anxiety after observing him and Jessica teach. Polo added, "We just wanted them to work with us, free from stress." The new mentors would work with Polo and Jessica for approximately six months. When the mentors would take over their own classrooms, Polo and Jessica provided the guidance the mentors needed as they adjusted to their own classrooms. Polo commented that some of the mentors had more filmmaking expertise than he had but added that in collaborating with him, they gained his experience working at school sites with young children: "Some of them have better experience than I do when it comes to filmmaking, but they don't have any experience when it comes to the school and how to work with kids in the school." Part of the training reminded mentors that they would step into a space with 30 students and 30 different personalities.

Aside from the different personalities in the classroom, Polo and Jessica asked mentors to interact with the school staff. Polo was adamant about the collaborative role the teaching artists must play at the school site: "Our goal is for them to understand the classroom, the school

environment. What does the principal do? What does the counselor do? Who's the school psychologist?" The intention, Polo explained, was to provide the mentors a network of support at the school site. Students were sharing stories that might put them in vulnerable spaces; the mentors might need to direct the students to find additional supports.

The last task of the mentor training was to continue the support throughout the school year. Moreover, Polo and Jessica established monthly meetings to touch base with all of the teaching artists. Jessica told a story of walking into a classroom and the mentors were doing all of the work:

> Unfortunately, I walked in on two filmmakers holding the boom and the slate and another filmmaker saying action, and there were no students being involved. It's not getting the best film. It's about having these kids be able to do what you're doing without being asked. The kids should take some ownership in that process.

The purpose of the monthly meeting was to support mentors who would in turn support their students' production teams. CCCP staff dialogued about challenges, discussed new learning, and created next steps for the following weeks collectively. Polo and Jessica used this monthly time and space for mentors to work collaboratively towards their collective goal: creating the conditions for students to tell their stories.

Creating Creators Cinema Project: The Classroom Environment

It is significant Polo and Jessica visibly changed their demeanor when asked about the classroom. Their energy, their smiles, and their posture changed as they discussed their classroom environments. Polo described the foundation for the learning environment:

> Creating Creators is learning together. We really focus on making sure that the students experience a place where all of us—the instructors, we're learning from them. The mentors are learning from them. We're learning from the classroom teacher. The teacher collaborates with us because they learn from us the things that they don't know. They don't know filmmaking, but they know instruction.

Additionally, Polo and Jessica both discussed the importance of setting a safe space for all participants to learn. Polo described how providing context for the students to acquire new skills meant that the students had to listen to one another, thus creating a space for students to be vulnerable:

> So, it's really about them becoming closer to who they want to be. That takes a space in which all of us are very carefully creating experiences that would allow them (the students) to understand that they need to be more clear for themselves. They need to know that writing is important, whether they like it or not. They need to know that speaking is crucial, whether they like to speak or not. They need to know that expressing themselves so that a group can listen to them, it's crucial. In the current environment, it's more important than ever.

They started their classes with having all the students write a story.

Polo and Jessica told students that the films they produce by the end of the school year would be displayed publicly. Both Polo and Jessica commented that this motivated a few students to write down their stories. Polo and Jessica set preliminary expectations for all students before they wrote. Their stories needed to have a beginning, middle, and end. If the script was incomplete, they would be eliminated. Polo described that initial process:

> From then, all of our kids have to write a story. So, all of them go through that. They write a story, just typical beginning, middle, and end type of story. What we want then to do is to make sure that they completely learn that they're telling that story for another person. Now they're telling that story for a third person to understand.

Jessica repeated comments from skeptical teachers who said, "My kids are going to stare at the paper and not write anything." However, Polo and Jessica developed a method to start the students writing. Jessica described the process she gave to students:

> What I had discovered is when you kind of isolated it to three separate ways of what you like to write—like, how do I get inspired? I saw something in a piece of art. I saw a movie that really inspired me. Okay, now cross the two.

Polo described this process as innovation:

> So, one of the things that we wanted to do is as they come up with ideas, in the process that we have—and we have them take two different things that they've already experienced and put them together and see if there's a third thing that comes out of there. What that does is it allows them to see how innovation can happen. You have one idea and then another idea, then you have a third idea. Then we want them to take that third idea, which might be a combination of the two and then take that idea fully independent process and expand that idea.

Jessica reflected on that process and said that before they used that method, many of the stories generated were retellings of *The Walking Dead* (Alpert, Herd, Kirkman, & Luse, 2010-2019) or renditions of *The Wizard of Oz* (LeRoy & Fleming, 1939):

> There really was no innovation passed because their head was still completely filled with media that they're constantly consuming. They were just consumers outputting different versions of the same media. They weren't innovators yet. So, we had to get them to realize that first.

The initial activity prepared the students for the learning that happened in the next few weeks.

Jessica and Polo commented that when the students realized the influence media had on their thoughts, it opened the door for them to both critique current media and its impact on their lives, and to tie this learning to the academic goals of the course. Polo stated:

> Okay, well why do you think you are reading these books? Why do you think you're reading these stories? Why is it that you're not interested in English class? Is it because it is in book form? Are you interested but for some reason other people aren't? Are you frustrated about why you can't connect what you're going in English class with the real world? Well, you can. Life imitates art. Art imitates life.

Jessica explained subsequent conversations were often about how stories and the characters in the stories were based on someone the author knew, experience the author had, or even something that happened in the real world. As a class they explored one another's stories. Jessica pointed out:

> We start to explore an everyday story or something that they had gone through so that they could see how each other related to each other and how life stories can be very different but have similar themes and that can be a source for a story. So, it's like media that we consume, pictures that we see, art that we see, real life that we experience can all be a source for a story.

Polo and Jessica returned to literature as a source for creating story. They created an assignment to adapt a book. However, they reminded student to make it their own, to go from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

At this point, approximately three weeks into the course, the focus was on building autonomy in the classroom. Polo and Jessica wanted students to take more ownership of their own learning. They described two processes in play. The first process involved writing the story, and eventually, groups choose which story to produce. A second, simultaneous process involved creating the production teams to film the story (see Appendix E). Though simultaneous, I describe each in turn below.

All students started writing their stories and prepared for a pitch session where they read their story to the class. The class voted on which stories to produce. Jessica described the process:

> Once the story idea was cultivated and encouraged to be written down, we would have what's called a pitching session. This is just like real life. You have to summarize it in a sentence or two. You have to understand what's your log line. You have to sell it. You have to be enthusiastic about it. If you're not, if you're really scared and you just read it, it doesn't matter how much prep you did. It won't translate to the audience you're trying to sell it to.

The students decided which stories were produced. The expectations were high. Students understood if they wanted their stories told, they need to have the whole class behind it. Polo said, at this point, the classroom teacher was vital to the students' successful pitch. He said, "The way we bring the classroom teacher into the process is that we remind them, the expert in your

classroom is your teacher. We have an expertise in filmmaking, but your teacher knows writing." Polo and Jessica commented on the coordination it took between the two teaching artists and the classroom teacher, so that all three adults are working towards the same goal. Working with the classroom teacher helped students understand that writing once and being done was not writing. Polo commented, "Writing is editing. So, they can go through that process with their classroom teacher."

During the pitching session, all students stood in front of the class and read their stories. Jessica commented on an intentional element during this process:

> I discovered that it has to be the students and their peers picking the stories. It cannot be the teachers or the filmmakers, at that point, because the stories are coming from their peers and they're going to have their lives and their memories and everything judging these stories. The kids need to have full buy-in. So, if they like it, they're the ones that picked it ad they're the ones that wrote it, they'll have full buy-in. It's going to be our jobs then to help fix those stories so that they are more elaborate and developed, and guide the kids to understand why their stories need to be more elaborate and more developed.

Once everyone pitched their stories, the number of stories were whittled down from 30 to six.

Concurrent with the pitch session was the development of the production teams. At the high school level, with approximately 30 students in the class, three production teams with 10 members were created. The process for group creation was student-centered and supported by mentor guidance. Students voted for three responsible peers to lead each team. The expectation was these three students would take on the role of the producer. The characteristics, Jessica

described, to fulfill this role were "someone that's motivated, that is not afraid to ask what to do, the most responsible, the most on time, that is always doing their work, the student who is on top of things academically." This created the structure for the "chain of command" according to Jessica. The mentor, instead of talking to all 30 students at once, spoke directly to the producer. The producer, in turn, relayed information to the team or asked the mentors for support during the production process. The students, at this stage, understood the need to take on more responsibilities in their learning and that they would be supported throughout the process but not micromanaged.

In the first semester, a series of technical and organizational workshops provided students a framework to complete their films. For example, teaching artists organized workshops on producing, screenwriting, directing, cinematography, sound mixing, lighting, and development. After the class selected producers, networking sessions were planned to create the production team. This process required students to talk about their strengths, areas for improvement, and why they wanted to take on a certain role. Polo said:

> Some kids don't want to be leaders yet. They're just not ready for that. Some of the kids want to be leaders. They want to tell people what to do and then they realize they are not prepared for this. It's a wake-up call and it's a phenomenal example because we, as filmmakers, we manage the people that we bring on board.

Polo said the importance of this step was the relationship students had with their peers and with their classroom teacher. As they learned to manage the conflicts in their production teams, the classroom teacher became a valuable resource in conflict management. Polo said, "Teachers and students, by the third month, start looking at each other as learning partners, the classroom

environment shifts." The production teams, when established, created a company name, a common vision, and a collective responsibility to completing their goal.

The last part of the first semester was geared toward finalizing the story and implementing their production plans. The production team chose two of the six stories from the initial pitching session. Teams of students in the production team developed the two stories to prepare for a final pitch for the class to vote on which story would be produced. Once the story was picked, a team of students within the production team worked collaboratively to create a preliminary draft of a script, brainstormed scenes and locations, and found actors for the production. The first semester built student autonomy so that in the second semester, the production teams were using mentors as guides and consultants.

The second semester was dedicated to production. Students finalized their scripts, auditioned actors to play parts in the film, and located venues for their scenes. They spent approximately nine weeks on filming, three weeks on editing, and the final weeks on marketing and branding. During the second semester, students were autonomous, requesting guidance as needed. The public presentation of their films occurred in the last weeks of the school year (see Appendix F).

Discussion

This study aimed to answer two research questions:

- To what extent do the participants involved in CCCP establish the conditions for critical pedagogy?
- In what ways do participants characterize the impact CCCP had on their lives?

In the discussion section of this chapter, I used the theoretical frameworks of critical pedagogy, constructivism, and situated learning to analyze the institutional history and foundations of CCCP. I used inductive analysis to establish the extent to which the founders of CCCP established the condition for critical pedagogy in their program. Lastly, I summarized the impact that CCCP has had on the founders personal and professional lives.

Data collection for this portion of research yielded 174 pages of interview transcripts from Polo and Jessica, representing six hours of audio. I immersed myself in the data with three passes at the transcripts and three passes at the listening sessions of the audio recordings. I used an inductive analysis approach on the data, as outlined by Hatch (2002) and summarized in Figure 1.

The CCCP piloted their secondary program at the Los Angeles School of Global Studies in 2011. I witnessed their development of curriculum; the students commented on their experiences; and I saw many final products: films students had completed. However, I had not used an analytical method to describe what was occurring in the classroom. The Loyola Marymount University doctoral program provided the tools for systemic analysis for me to describe the CCCP program to a wider audience. I opened to the chance to interview the founders of the CCCP as a way to unpack their classroom environment and translate their program into an educational context.

Upon listening and reading the transcripts of the interviews of Polo and Jessica, I had one particular question in mind: What would my frames of analysis be? My research question asked, to what extent do participants in the CCCP establish the condition for critical pedagogy? After my first read through, I began to identify elements that are found in critical pedagogy. Critical

pedagogy is an approach to instruction, a set of beliefs or principles that guide instructional choices. In telling the story of CCCP, I found the supplemental frameworks of constructivist and situated learning theories provided the practical applications that critical pedagogy alone could not surface. I used the initial step of identifying frames to create the domains referenced in Step 2 of the inductive analysis. The domains for critical pedagogy came from the philosophical principles of critical pedagogy (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009). The domains for constructivist learning theory came from Driscoll's (1994) five conditions for constructivist learning. The domains for situated learning theory came from Lave and Wenger (1991; see Table 2).

In Step 3 of the process, I identified salient domains and assigned a code to those domains. I coded the transcripts digitally, using different colors to code. If there was an overlap between the different theoretical frameworks, the color of the text corresponded to one domain while the color highlight corresponded to the other domain. In few instances, all three frameworks overlapped. When this occurred, a separate symbol was assigned. The salient domains for critical pedagogy, constructivist learning and situated learning theory, used for further analysis appear in Table 3.

Table 3
Salient Domains Supported by Data: The Founders

Critical Pedagogy	Constructivist Learning Theory	Situated Learning Theory
• Cultural Politics • Historicity of Knowledge • Resistance and Counter Hegemony • Praxis • Dialogue and Conscientization	• Complex Learning Environment • Social Negotiation • Multiple Perspectives • Student-Centered Learning	• Community of Practice • Shift from peripheral participation to full participation

In *Theory and Resistance in Education: Towards a Pedagogy for the Opposition*, Giroux (2001) wrote of the importance of "linking pedagogy to social change" that critical learning that connected students' histories and experience supported transforming the spaces at school sites into areas of resistance and possibility (p. XX). Reading the transcripts and remembering the interviews, the underlying sentiment that both Polo and Jessica put forward was to create a space for students of color to experience school differently than they had in their past. For Polo, a career in the arts was never an option presented in his schooling and for Jessica, the real-world application of knowledge remained absent from the curriculum. In their interviews, both recognized that culture, class, race, and gender shaped the decisions made in their early schooling. Polo and Jessica's involvement in schools, predominantly of color, in impoverished neighborhoods, is an intentional political act to change the learning space for their young filmmakers.

Kincheloe (2004) described the recognition of the complexities of schooling, particularly those that impact traditionally marginalized segments of our society as the "first step for critical pedagogy-influenced educators in developing a social activist persona" (p. 2). Kincheloe added that critical pedagogy should empower teachers and students to intentionally act in ways that push students and educators to higher levels of achievement previously believed impossible. In looking at the CCCP founder's work through their words, critical pedagogy became the first lens I used for analysis.

Establishing the Conditions for Critical Pedagogy

Schools and the classroom are spaces of resistance to dominant views of learning (Freire, 2000; Giroux, 1983; Shor, 1992). How curriculum is presented and what information is included

or excluded presents content to students that supports or challenges the dominant narrative of society. In telling their life histories and the development of the CCCP, Polo and Jessica described how they challenged the dominant view of learning and created a space for students, teaching artists, and schools to transform educational spaces. Darder et al. (2009), in their introduction to *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*, presented a "set of heterogeneous ideas" that form the foundational philosophical ideas behind critical pedagogy (p. 9). Of the nine philosophies, there were five that surfaced during the interviews of the founders of the CCCP. I detailed the most salient examples in the following sections. Darder et al. (2009), briefly described each philosophy, and I used examples from the transcripts of Polo and Jessica to illustrate the connections I made between the philosophy behind critical pedagogy and the formation of the CCCP.

Cultural Politics

According to Darder et al. (2009), "Critical Pedagogy is fundamentally committed to the development and enactment of a culture of schooling that supports the empowerment of culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students" (p. 9). Furthermore, Darder et al. (2009) stated the importance of teachers learning "to recognize how schools have historically embraced theories and practices that serve to unite knowledge and power in ways that sustain asymmetrical relations of power" (p. 10). Polo and Jessica, in their interviews, commented on the way's adults dismissed their views during their childhood and how schools, in general, perpetuated the tradition of dismissing youth as partners in learning. In an effort to create a professional learning space in their classrooms, Polo and Jessica attempted to transform the "asymmetrical relations of power" (Darder et al., 2009, p.10) by reminding their students of

shared purpose of learning. Polo, commenting on the classroom environment and his philosophy of education, asserted, “We’re all learning from each other. It’s a constant learning atmosphere.” Polo further punctuated this point in describing the relationships between all participants of CCCP:

> One of the things that we are trying to really create is an environment for learning. Our motto is learning to learn together. That really focuses on making sure that the students experience a place where all of us—the mentors are learning from them. Eventually the students are learning from each other.

Jessica pointed out, in her initial work with students, she was, “just constantly learning with them. It just fueled me and my own creative work.” In this respect, the traditional banking model of education, where the instructor is meant to fill the empty vessels of the student is upended and a new culture of learning is created in the classroom (Freire, 2000). The culture that Polo and Jessica wanted to create was one where students were accountable to one another through their collective aim at creating a visual story. Power in the classroom was shared by all participants in the classroom environment. This will be further explained through the voices of the teaching artists and filmmaking students in later chapters.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the role of high-stakes testing has placed arts education on the periphery of education reform. Lipman (2009) argued, the “accountability-as-surveillance” culture created through the high-stakes testing model pushes schools to avoid controversial topics around race, culture, and income inequalities (p. 368). Polo and Jessica talked about their students’ films that covered topics of gender identity, bullying, living in poverty, sexual orientation, and various forms of discrimination. By allowing youth to tell their own stories, like

the CCCP did, youth counter dominant agendas and bring many of these controversial issues out for open discussion. According to Darder et al. (2009):

> critical pedagogy seeks to address the concept of cultural politics by both legitimizing, as well as challenging, experiences and perceptions shaped by the histories and socioeconomic realties that give meaning to the everyday lives of students and their constructions of what is perceived as truth. (p. 10)

Youth create their stories through a shared learning environment where mentors support the development of visual communications using filmmaking as the tool for learning. The asymmetrical power relationships found in schools were reduced through the philosophy behind the CCCP classroom. Everyone was learning together through the shared stories developed by the young filmmakers.

Historicity of Knowledge

According to Darder et al. (2009), "critical pedagogy supports the notion that all knowledge is created within a historical context and it is this historical context which gives life and meaning to human experience" (p. 10). In addition, the knowledge and lived experience students bring to the classroom "must be understood as historical—this is, being constructed and produced within a particular historical moment and under particular historical conditions" (p.10). Furthermore, educators should create the conditions for students to understand that since history is human made, humans can and have transformed history for the better. Polo provided the context for the school in this study:

> There's a lot of challenges especially in places like this school in Southern California. The area is filled with—there's a lot of gang violence there. At the beginning of the year, they had like three or four shootings. So, these kids feel that.

Polo and Jessica shared a story of two students who applied for a summer paid internship with a local organization. The students came highly recommended for the program and made it to the final stages of the interview process. When the organization asked the students for their social security numbers, they were no longer viable candidates for the paid internship. The two students reported the news to Polo and Jessica, Polo asked the students, "What are you going to do about it?" They responded, "We want to make a documentary about the opportunities undocumented students lose by not having a social security number." Their responses were in part to the environment created by the CCCP founders. The two students immediately saw how they could positively impact their community by voicing their concerns around opportunities lost to undocumented community members. They saw how human agency could bring about change in their current conditions (Giroux, 2001).

Resistance and Counter Hegemony

Darder et al. (2009) posited the theory of resistance used in critical pedagogy is to untangle the complex reasons that students in marginalized groups counter the dominant agenda:

> It begins with the assumption that all people have the capacity and ability to produce knowledge and to resist domination. However, how they choose to resist is clearly influenced and limited by the social and material conditions in which they have been forced to survive and the ideological formations that have been internalized in the process. (p. 12)

The concept of resistance is also used to uncover the type of "oppositional behavior" students use as a way to counter the undemocratic conditions created by the school site or to perpetuate the status quo (p. 12). Counter hegemony is used alongside resistance to highlight the ways in which critical pedagogy is used to counter the dehumanizing practices that exist in a hegemonic context. Both Polo and Jessica mentioned being dismissed as youth, Polo in the classroom space and Jessica in the film and acting space. The ways in which they wanted to create their classroom spaces were in direct response to how they experienced being dismissed and seeing their very own students being dismissed in the education landscape. In discussing pedagogy development with Polo, he stated:

> One of my teaching artists wanted to bring in a movie directed by Scorsese to illustrate a filmmaking concept. I asked him if there were any students' current stories that could highlight that concept. He gave me two examples. I suggested to him that he use those instead of Scorsese. We can use stories they create as examples of those concepts, they [the students] are part of the storytelling process. When we use artists outside of the classroom we discount the contributions the young filmmakers make.

Darder et al. (2009) asserted:

> Freire consistently stressed that it is a political imperative to develop a strong command of one's particular academic discipline. He believed that a solid knowledge of the authorized curriculum was essential...if radical educations were to create effective counterhegemonic alternatives for their students. By so doing, they could competently teach the "official transcript" of their field or discipline, while simultaneously creating

> opportunities for students to engage critically classroom content, from their existing knowledge and the events and experiences that comprise their living history. (p. 13)

Giroux (2011) recognized:

> [Any] viable notion of pedagogy and resistance should illustrate how knowledge, values, desires, and social relations are always implicated in relations of power, and how such an understanding can be used pedagogically and politically by students to further expand and deepen the imperatives of economic and political democracy. (p. 72)

Polo and Jessica stressed, during the interviews, the ideas and products students created were meant and used for the collective learning in the classroom. Polo and Jessica also stressed how using the student-created content placed students at the same level of professionals and that broke down the asymmetry of power and positioned students to interact with the world with a higher level of autonomy. Jessica described the philosophy behind CCCP:

> Creating Creators program really developed out of is making sure that kids were graduating with more self-direction, self-ownership, entrepreneurial skills, development skills than anything else, because they're going to get an amazing academic experience because they have these amazing teachers. But now, because they're challenging their teachers, they're going to get even more out of their academic life and they're getting life skills from working with professionals. So, ultimately, that became the goal of Creating Creators, to create real creators who weren't afraid to challenge the norm and kind of come up with defining themselves as that way.

Praxis: The Alliance of Theory and Practice

Praxis is a continual cycle of reflection, dialogue, and action (Darder et al., 2009). Polo and Jessica, throughout all of the interviews, highlighted the ways in which reflection and dialogue informed how they implemented their curriculum. Whether it was discussion between the two founders, working with their teaching artists, or working directly with their students, Polo and Jessica used a question-posing format to unpack the teaching and learning that happened in their classrooms. Praxis will be highlighted further in the subsequent chapters.

Dialogue and Conscientization

Once of the most significant aspects of critical pedagogy defined by Freire (2000) is the principle of dialogue:

> Dialogue is thus an essential necessity. And since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's "depositing" ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be "consumed" by the discussants. (pp. 88-89)

Polo and Jessica talked about students filming scenes during their projects. Jessica stated that even when she knew the scene would not come out the way the students wanted, she refrained from stopping their progress. Instead, when they watched the scene, she asked questions about the scene, and through that questioning, helped the students' discovery of alternative ways of filming the scene.

Dialogue was not solely used for the purpose of filming. Polo talked about challenging gender norms in the classroom with students. Jessica commented on the role of diversity in film

and supports students' understanding of their role in choosing characters, names of characters, and plot points. Both Polo and Jessica agreed that through dialogue, students retained learning and transferred their learning to practices with their production team members.

In a similar fashion, during professional development with the teaching artists, Polo and Jessica used a question-posing format to unpack many of issues the teaching artists find in the classroom. Through the question-posing format, the group collectively came to consensus about how to solve the issue. The conscientization principle came from the ways in which all the storytelling unfolds in the CCCP classrooms. According to Darder et al. (2009), conscientization "is defined as the process by which students, as empowered subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities which shape their lives and discover their own capacities to recreate them" (p. 14). Students' stories were unfiltered when first presented. The process the founders used to develop the stories allowed for students to present their lived experiences in the communities they belonged, and, through presenting their stories to the class, build an understanding of their realities and open up dialogue between peers around the topic.

Constructivism

While the frame of critical pedagogy was evident throughout the creation of the organization and their work with students and teaching artists, the constructivist frame was abundantly visible through Polo and Jessica's descriptions of the classroom settings. Driscoll's (1994) five conditions for constructivist learning proved the appropriate tool to unpack the CCCP classroom. There was overlap between the conditions for critical pedagogy and constructivism.

Producing a film creates the complex learning environment: the first condition Driscoll (1994) highlighted. In the first class, students were made aware that they would be producing a film that would be played to an outside audience. Polo said each school is different; some have been invited to screen their films at local theaters, the Creative Artists Agency (CAA), or in their school's auditorium. Wherever the venue, students knew they would have a real audience for their films. The complexities of the learning environment were established through the authentic activity; their film would be public. The environment was further complicated by introducing a social element to the classroom. Production teams completed the final products together. In general, 10 students were a part of production team. The art of filmmaking is a collaborative effort, so one person cannot do it on their own. Polo explained the roles of the production team:

> We pay attention to the students' strengths as they break into different roles of a filmmaker, they become producers, assistant directors who are the ones in charge of the crew, editors who have to take the footage and try to make it into an actual story.

Jessica expanded, "the director, audio engineer, and cinematographer find their crew. They have to sell their crew to each other. They come together as a team." Jessica added:

> Everything going forward is going to be a group decision. They're going to have to be identified as a team, not an individual anymore. We make them create LLCs to understand that they're going to be pumping out a project that's going to be the responsibility of all the people on the crew.

The process of finding a team happened in the first semester while individual students were working on pitching their own stories. The learning environment was further complicated by the

type of stories told by the young filmmakers. Polo described how when stories were pitched, some students became vulnerable in the process of sharing:

> We had kids who identified as LGBTQ come out in their stories. So, they wrote those stories about themselves and their experiences and they turned it into a narrative. What was really interesting is that they found how well-accepted they are within their group.

Although this part of the process of learning in classroom was under the constructivist lens, critical pedagogy found itself in resistance and counter hegemony. The student's story served as a vehicle to combat the homophobic culture in which many of the students find themselves. Polo added, "The kid was in tears. Why do you want to accept this story? The crew said because it was a good story." The student's lived experience connected to the next condition of Driscoll's (1994) environment for constructivist learning, social negotiation.

The next condition that Driscoll (1994) presented as an element for constructivist learning was social negotiations. Driscoll posited students need to have opportunities to share ideas, opinions, and perspectives so new knowledge is collectively constructed. In their production teams, students presented their individual stories and collectively nominated two stories they wanted to pitch to the whole class. The stories were pitched to the whole class and three were selected by the class. Jessica continued:

> Between the two that they pick, the class then votes for the one that they want, based off of the rubric of reading the story. It's really all student driven at that point. Most of the kids will come to the conclusion that the stronger story had a beginning, middle, and end. It made the most sense. It had a strong conflict.

The stories that were selected were not necessarily the ones that the production team presented. This presents the next condition for a constructivist classroom, multiple perspectives.

Driscoll's (1994) third condition for a constructivist learning environment is opportunities for students to hear from multiple perspectives. The production team has to work collaboratively to produce, shoot, and edit the film. Throughout the whole process, team members gave input around how to tell the story visually. This input involved how to stage the scene, the costumes the actors wore, and the music and sound played in the background. The opportunities to hear from multiple voices were embedded in the way the students interacted. Jessica explained the process of preparing students for this complex environment:

> Because we were asking them to bring it, to bring a professional film to life in a school setting, they had to prove to us in the first semester that they're mentally aware, mentally ready. So, managing their emotions, being able to work together and be creative. All of those things were taught in the Creating Creators mentality at the beginning of the year so that when you get to production you're not going uphill. Because beginning in the second half of the year, you're running.

Polo added:

> We have an intentional process for helping kids listen. We ask the producers to have the conversation with the crew member to find out what is going wrong. Do they not understand their role? Are they having troubles at home? Do they feel they are not being listened to? By having these conversations students realize how to support their team members.

The task of students engaging in conversations to share ideas, deal with conflict, or problem solve issues invited students to share their points of view and collectively find ways to complete their film projects.

In both critical pedagogy and constructivist learning environments, an important element is a student-centered learning environment. In critical pedagogy, it is alluded to in the elements of cultural politics, resistance, counter hegemony, in dialogue, and in conscientization (Darder et al., 2009). For Polo and Jessica, students were at the center of learning. The stories were created by the students. The decisions of roles were up to the students. With some support from the teaching artists, the planning of the shoot was student generated and the decisions for editing and sound mixing were student generated. "The best way of learning is failing." Jessica asserted, "By allowing students to fail in a lot of these really challenging lessons, student could identify their errors, learn from them, and retain the knowledge better than if I just told them what to do." Jessica shared an experience of walking into a CCCP classroom with new teaching artists:

> I walked into a classroom with two filmmakers holding the boom and the slate and another saying action and there were no students being involved. I said to them, this is not ok. You haven't done your job, because it isn't about getting the best film at this point. It's about having these kids be able to do what you're doing without you saying, do this or that. The kids should take some ownership in that process.

Through the interviews, the founders of CCCP were clear about making the classroom a space where the students were at the center of the learning experience.

Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Lave and Wenger's (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* is the third lens I used to answer the question to what extent do the participants involved in the CCCP established the conditions for critical pedagogy. Two domains are essential for understanding situated learning theory: communities of practice and peripheral participation to full participation. Polo and Jessica found students and adults learned through social interaction, initially as observers then as full participants. Polo and Jessica learned they could not simply ask a filmmaker to go into their classrooms and replicate the work they were doing without observing the curriculum in action. Likewise, Polo and Jessica observed as students became more proficient with certain elements of the classroom, they could ask the students to support the learning within the classroom by showing other students how to complete tasks. I will describe the classroom and the professional development cycle of the CCCP through the lens of situated learning.

Community of Practice

Wenger (1998) described a community of practice as:

> a theory of learning that starts with this assumption: engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn and so become who we are. The primary unit of analysis is neither the individual nor social institutions but rather the informal communities of practice that people form as they carry out shared enterprises over time. In order to give a social account of learning, the theory explores in a systemic way the intersection of issues of community, social practice, meaning, and identity. (p. 1)

The shared enterprise in the CCCP classroom was producing a film and all of what that process entailed. The shared enterprise for the teaching artists was creating space for young filmmakers to take charge of their projects, using the mentors as creative supports to complete their projects.

Polo and Jessica wanted to create a professional environment for students. From their first day of instruction, they referred to all of their students as *young filmmakers*. They transformed the classroom to a professional space when the young filmmakers knew they were there to produce a visual story. Jessica described the classroom:

> It needs to be the most authentic space it can possibly be to the real-life situations that we go through every day making film. So, both Polo and I feel like we want to be there too. Because if it doesn't feel like a film set, if it isn't a writer's room, an authentic writer's room, it's like I almost feel like I am wasting my time.

Polo added, "once the authentic space is set, it is easier for Jessica and I to expect more from the students." The students understood very quickly they belonged to a community of creators. This set the stage for legitimate peripheral participation to full participation in the community.

Legitimate Peripheral Participation to Full Participation

For the teaching artists, peripheral participation started with the planning for their professional development. When a filmmaker was hired, they were first asked to observe classes and debrief the observation with Polo or Jessica. Polo described the initial stages of the training:

> We ask the filmmakers that are going to be in the classroom to start working with us so that they have six months of training with us. Then, in an actual classroom with kids and then they're actually working with us and with a teacher that can give them ideas of what to think about when working with students. Some

filmmakers have better experiences when it comes to filmmaking but they do not have any experience when it comes to the school and how to work with kids.

After the training in the classroom and during monthly sessions, teaching artists were assigned to support a filmmaking class. It is through this structure that teaching artists become full participants in the CCCP. The perspective of the teaching artists during this process will be highlighted in the next chapter. The salient point is that teaching artists were recruited for their professional experiences in filmmaking but needed support with establishing the creative environment in the classroom setting. As they became confident in working with students and guiding them through the production process, they were ready to take on a classroom without the founders' direct supervision. However, the collective learning and engagement did not stop once the teaching artists were in the classroom. The teaching artists continued their learning through the monthly professional development meetings, alongside other teaching artists and under the guidance of the two founders, Polo and Jessica.

For students in the classroom, the process was similar to the teaching artists. Jessica described how the classroom setting and the purpose behind CCCP changed as she became more involved in the classroom space. She said, "I wanted to create something different that kids were excited to go. We had to shift from just filmmakers coming in and sharing our experiences to filmmakers who are there to develop kids." It was when both Polo and Jessica decided to develop students as filmmakers that they started noticing the talents students brought into the classroom. Through a question-posing format, Polo created a space for students to articulate what they learned and prepare them to show others in the classroom how to complete a task

during the production process of their filmmaking class: “Here is what we’re going through, what do you think?” The students initially respond with confusion or a blank stare:

> Okay, so what have you learned? And then eventually they start understanding that they already know a lot more than they think. If they already know that then they can start working with each other and then I can be more of a creative support for them than someone who has to go and say, do this and that. If you bring them to the point of seeing themselves as creators then, you can say, you are a filmmaker, let’s get to work.

The goal for Polo and Jessica was for students to become full participants in the filmmaking process, where they are making the creative decisions and using Polo and Jessica and the teaching artists as a creative resource. Polo added, “So, they create their own opportunities now that they have developed a skillset. And they recognize their own skillset.” The young filmmakers became full participants by taking on roles as experts in a particular process. Polo described the students’ transformation in the classroom, “They just understood it and they liked it, the editing, the Garage Band, all of that. Every one of these kids understood different things.” As they understood it, they would share their knowledge with other students. The students were at the center of their learning.

Creating Creators Cinema Project Impact on Founders

This section provides a space for Polo and Jessica’s descriptions of the impact CCCP had on their personal and professional lives. When asked about the personal impact that CCCP had on Polo and Jessica, both participants had ample avenues for discussion. Polo and Jessica both talked about giving back to the community and developing young artists as impactful.

Personal

Polo started with relevance: “I’ve always wanted to be relevant. I wanted to make sure I leave my mark on the world.” Polo continued his flow of thought by adding that the only way to make a mark was through people:

> You can put a statue or building up. But people won’t know who built it. But you can do something with a human being. I know there are kids now who are in college remembering what I said or did, that is my mark in the world.

Polo recalled growing up in South LA: “I saw a lot of the broken families and communities. As a kid you can’t really do much. But I always thought, what if an adult would care?” Polo described how he felt that through CCCP, he was in a position to be the adult who cared, who created conditions for students to find value in themselves through the arts:

> I don’t have a lot of money. But I’ve given myself. And I’ve given of myself as much as I can. I value people. The most important thing in this world are people, people either damage the world or heal the world.

Polo witnessed lives change: the sparkle of creativity in a student who did not see a future for themselves. As far as Polo was concerned, the personal impact involved was there was one more person in the world who could create a story that had the potential to change lives.

For Jessica, the communities she served changed her perspective around education dramatically. Jessica described her educational trajectory: “finish high school, get a 4-year degree, maybe a graduate degree, find a job to pay your bills, and that was it.” Jessica described how when she arrived in LA and began to volunteer at school sites, her perspective on educational trajectories was blown away. Jessica added, “not all schools and districts give a

roadmap for their students. Kids are not always exposed to the arts, or even shown different ways to reach their goals." For Jessica, CCCP forced her to come out of her shell and become an advocate for a vulnerable population for "people who are outside of myself." Jessica believed through CCCP she had a platform to take a stand for justice, particularly within an industry that dismisses children and their contributions to the arts.

Professional

Both Polo and Jessica spoke about their growth as artists, as entrepreneurs, and how CCCP opened doors for them because of the work they do. Polo started with his growth as an artist: "So, what happened was I was able to learn to become a better filmmaker because I had to articulate it to someone who knew nothing about filmmaking." Jessica added:

> Kids ask deep questions. I have to ask myself, why is it not translating. I get to analyze the concepts and become more clear as an artist, as a director. I get to practice and work through my thoughts with students, my art is more vetted and ready to go after working it through a workshop with the CCCP students.

Polo recounted his learning in the CCCP classroom: "I learned to really articulate a story. I owe the way that I write now to a bunch of students who kept asking me questions or telling me that my idea was stupid." Polo said his professional growth was directly tied to the CCCP: "I had become a better storyteller. And then I had to learn all the technology. The kids will dismiss you if you don't know." Polo qualified his last statement, "You don't have to know everything, but you have to learn how to work with students to figure out the answers." Both Polo and Jessica alluded to becoming better script writers and being more organized around their writing, using the structures they created for the classroom. Polo said, "I write much better scripts because I'm

thinking of how I'm teaching the kids, which is very specific, as clear as possible, to have an understanding of story." Jessica commented, "I am more on top of my scripts and more confident to share it with strangers, artists, and business people." In addition to growing as artists, Polo and Jessica described their growth as entrepreneurs and how CCCP opened up opportunities for them and the CCCP program.

Polo described, in professional spaces, talking to professionals in the industry, it was hard to get an audience with top executives. Jessica added, since many filmmakers are pitching projects, finding an audience with funders is difficult. However, when Polo and Jessica shared the stories of what was going on in their classrooms, the conversations shifted. Polo mentioned, "When you talk about the work I've been doing with Creating Creators, people are asking for meetings." Jessica added:

> I have something to talk about. The work my young filmmakers are doing. People that I've never imagined I would talk to are taking a moment to listen to the program, because you are doing something for the future of the industry.

Polo added, "Industry executives are saying, my goodness, you're teaching kids to tell stories? You're creating this world for them. Okay, we need you on our side because this is our audience." Their entrepreneurial drive stems from their continual development of the CCCP program. They wanted to prepare the young filmmakers to take advantage of opportunities that would open up for them as more studios learned of the CCCP program and offered ways for studios to involve themselves through funding, providing professional panels or visits, or developing a program of their own. Polo and Jessica both shared that many studios want to support educational projects but oftentimes do not have the connection with school districts,

principals, or students. CCCP could be the bridge to get more arts programs in schools that needed them. Jessica concluded by stating, “A program like ours can be a bridge that connects the filmmaking industry to school sites.” The personal and professional impact that CCCP had on the founders transformed the way they interacted with their respective communities, all in the hope of creating a space to amplify students’ stories.

Chapter 4 examines the CCCP from the perspective of the teaching artists.

CHAPTER 4

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT: THE TEACHING ARTISTS

CCCP expansion could only be possible through the constellation of teaching artists who joined the team to support young filmmakers. In this chapter, I highlight the role teaching artists held at CCCP, the professional development they undertook, the classroom environment they created for their students, and the personal and professional impact the CCCP offered them.

During CCCP's first expansion, Polo and Jessica recruited teaching artists from their immediate professional networks. The teaching artists emerged from the ranks of producers to screenwriters to animation artists and editors. The first round of CCCP hires of teaching artists focused generally on storytellers. Polo and Jessica wanted storytellers who could create an environment where students could take risks, become vulnerable, and generate story ideas. Through organizational processes, CCCP developed standards for their teaching artists. The minimum requirements for employment with CCCP included completion of an undergraduate degree and experience working on a film, though CCCP placed a higher priority on experience with filmmaking rather than on the type of degree obtained. CCCP focused initial recruitment on artists who carried a prominent role in the filmmaking process. The CCCP initially searched for artists who were screenwriters, directors, producers, or editors. Polo and Jessica believed these experiences brought a specialized level of knowledge that created the ideal CCCP classroom. The network of artists grew through word of mouth.

Creating the Space for Teaching and Learning

The teaching artists carried expertise with storytelling. They understood the process of generating a story idea, developing the story structure, and creating the story plot. However, very

few had taught in a public classroom setting. Polo and Jessica developed competencies for K-12 teaching over many years. Their main concern involved the mechanism for how to develop a positive and equitable classroom experiences for all CCCP students. Polo and Jessica developed curriculum for the school, but curriculum alone would not suffice. Polo and Jessica's vision for the CCCP classroom environment required an understanding of working with youth, managing a complex creative process, and producing multiple films. The teaching artists needed to develop additional skills to implement the vision of CCCP.

To mitigate their concerns about ensuring effective classroom experiences, CCCP made structural requirements as part of their partnerships with school districts. For instance, teaching artists worked in pairs. In every CCCP classroom, two teaching artists collaborated with instruction. This team-teaching model allowed for a small student-to-adult ratio. CCCP found this effective when CCCP instructors needed to workshop with teams on specific editing components, for example, while allowing the other teaching artist to manage the other production teams. This pairing also increased the level of personalization offered to student production teams and individual students. In addition, teaching teams provided immediate opportunities for feedback during classroom instruction and reflective practices after the lessons. CCCP intentionally paired a female filmmaker with a male filmmaker to create an inclusive environment. Polo and Jessica found, from their experience working with CCCP youth in the classroom, students would gravitate to teaching artists for industry experience, expertise, and oftentimes personality traits. Regardless of the reason, CCCP wanted to create an environment where students would reach out for support and guidance through the filmmaking process.

Methodology

Semi-Structured Interviews

In the case study design, the perspective of the teaching artists added to a complete story of CCCP. Data emerged from two individual interviews with the teaching artists at the research site. I developed questions directed at their teaching approach and analyzed these through the first segment/section/part of my research questions, which asked about the extent CCCP educators create conditions for critical pedagogy. In the first half of the teaching artists' interviews, I limited the questions to their introductions to CCCP, the training they received from the CCCP founders, and the environment they wanted to create in the classroom. During the months before the teaching artists started instruction, CCCP provided professional development training. The training consisted of an overview of curriculum for the year, strategies for managing the classroom environment, and the educational philosophy of CCCP. The teaching artists were inducted into the environment CCCP aspires for every classroom and student.

I chose a semi-structured interview approach for my data collection with the teaching artists of CCCP. Thomas (2016) described semi-structured interviews as one of the most common formats used in small-scale social research. The interviewer provides the structure with a list of topics to be covered, instead of specific questions, and the interviewer has the freedom to follow-up points from the initial responses. Although I have met the teaching artists at various occasions, this is the first time I delved into experiences around the teaching and learning aspects of CCCP. I was aware of the importance of a relaxed atmosphere that allowed for collaborative conversation. I follow Galletta's (2013) approach, which provides a three-segment outline for semi-structured interviews. In the first segment, the interviewer needs to establish a comfortable environment for the participants. In this segment, the questions are open ended, broad enough to

allow participants to share their experiences. I listened for meaningful aspects of a participant's story to return in the later segments. In the middle segment, I shifted to questions that connected more to the research questions. Galletta (2013) recommended extending probing questions "beyond clarification to meaning making on the part of the participants towards the research topic" (p. 50). In the last segment, Galletta (2013) advised posing questions that reflect theoretical considerations to "offer participant opportunity to explore opening narrative in relation to theory driven questions" (p. 52). In this three-segment format, I asked the teaching artists about their background in filmmaking and their introduction to CCCP. I probed more deeply into the training they received from CCCP founders. Lastly, I asked about the classroom environment they wanted to create in the CCCP classrooms. In this final segment, I analyzed themes that relate to critical pedagogy, constructivism, and situated learning.

In the second half of the interview with the teaching artists, I inquired about their classroom practices. Again, I followed Galletta's (2013) three-segment approach to semi-structured interviews. In the first segment, I asked about their classroom environment. In the second segment, I posed the questions more specifically about the interactions with students. In the final segment, I asked questions about their pedagogical approach and interactions with students in general. I was interested in themes that related to situated learning, involving students as full participants in the filmmaking process (see Appendix G.).

The names of the teaching artists interviewed for this study will be kept confidential by using pseudonyms. In order for the identities of the students participating in the CCCP classrooms to remain confidential, the identity of the teaching artists must also remain anonymous. The teaching artists shared stories and experiences working with youth in the

Southern California School that could unintentionally identify them. To protect participants, both teaching artists and students in Chapters 4 and 5 have pseudonyms to keep their identities protected.

Teaching Artists: Introductions to Creating Creators Cinema Project

Alan and Maria are both filmmakers. Alan went to a private university's film school in southern California and Maria went to a public university's film school also in southern California. They both met Polo through their respective professional networks. Maria met an actress involved in a variety of activism projects: "I followed her activism online. One day she was filming a music video at a school in South LA. She said she had been working with Polo Muñoz, that Polo does amazing work with kids." Maria had been working with youth in different capacities for several years and had finished a three-year documentary on youth and the importance of mentorship in the arts when she met Polo:

> I was invited to a party and met Polo, then I really got to talk with him. We talked about different things that I'm involved with, with my documentaries, and producing, and also acting. One day I saw Polo at an event and he asked me if I would be interested in meeting with him and Jessica, that their program was expanding to other sites and if I would be interested in utilizing my knowledge to help empower youth.

Maria smiled and, with a bit of a chuckle, continued by saying, "Yeah, definitely!"

Alan met Polo through attending an American Film Institute (AFI) Film Festival. He said, "I was involved in kind of a semi-offshoot, where they had a camera crew going to interview filmmakers and asking them about children's programming and children's education in film and such." Alan knew of Polo and about the work Polo did with youth but only in a

tangential manner: “I think after five years of going to film festivals and always running into Polo, I was like, I need his number. After about four to five years he invited me to come into his classroom.” Alan enthusiastically agreed to visit a classroom, “It was kind of fun. I had never had any film program growing up.” Alan elaborated about his experience in K-12: “There was no filmmaking, you could take a class, but it was still just iMovie. The cameras were camcorders. There was no structure to it.”

Alan’s last comment emerged as a strong theme from both teaching artists. Maria and Alan reflected during their interviews on their primary and secondary school education. Their involvement in the CCCP began from a hope to open creative doors for the youth they serve, doors of which they were unaware in their K-12 experiences. Maria curiously shared, “I wonder how I would have developed as an artist if I had these experiences much earlier in life.” Both Maria and Alan showed visible excitement thinking about how the young filmmakers they work with would develop as artists in their adulthood.

Creating Creators Cinema Project: Professional Development

Prior to the CCCP expansion, Polo and Jessica invited their filmmaking friends to give a workshop, presentation, or provide feedback to students in the CCCP classroom. Alan remembered walking into a CCCP classroom along with Polo. Alan recalled Polo saying, “And now Alan is going to tell you about how to utilize locations for independent short films, and he (Polo) turned the classroom over to me.” Alan remembered talking to the students about finding locations based on the easiest access to: a school classroom, a hallway, a storage area. Alan visited several classrooms initially as a guest speaker for Polo. Alan presented on a variety of aspects around storytelling and filmmaking.

In a similar manner, Maria was introduced to the CCCP classroom through guest visits. Maria provided acting workshops and storytelling supports in the classroom before fully committing to taking on a classroom. The observation process began organically through the initial start of the program; however, it proved to be a valuable tool when new teaching artists were invited to participate in the program.

Before taking on classrooms of their own, Maria and Alan participated in professional development under the guidance of Polo and Jessica. During the summer months, CCCP created a weeklong introduction to the CCCP classroom for new teaching artists. During the school year, the founders and the teaching artists met monthly to discuss successes, challenges, and practical issues that would prepare the teaching artists for how to deal with common concerns existing in the CCCP classroom. Throughout the year, the CCCP founders visited classrooms and provided support and guidance to help teaching artists improve their classroom practices.

The Summer Training

Alan described the summer training as a fruitful introduction to the CCCP classroom: "We'd have a lot of filmmakers. Filmmakers, we're all artists so there are all different ideas on doing things. Ultimately, at the end of the day, we're practicing our own presentations on different ideas. Then we'd be basically troubleshooting." Alan described the troubleshooting aspect of the training, where the teaching artists were identifying the strengths of their presentations, areas of confusion, and how best to support the needs of the young filmmakers in the classroom. Alan recalled:

> Polo would say, try not to be at the board the whole time. You can use the board, but if you're just at the board, you create a division, students are there and teachers are here.

> We want to create a professional environment for the young filmmakers, not replicate the classroom setup.

Maria and Alan both highlighted how important the education philosophy behind CCCP was in their preparation for the CCCP classroom.

Alan explained the philosophy of CCCP through the metaphor of guardrails:

> The approach is to not tell the young filmmakers how to do things, but we're the guardrails on the highway. They're driving. When they veer off a little to the right, we're there to kind of keep them from going off the edge. Sometimes you do have to let them take the wrong off-ramp and make the mistake and then they learn from it. A lot of the time, they won't see their mistakes until it's actually on camera.

Alan continued his explanation:

> There are, I guess you could say rules you sort of have to work around in film because the eyes don't work in certain ways. The way you cut, it will confuse the brain, it sounds weird but the placement of things on camera, your brain will shift, and you can or can't tell the story correctly because you're confused. Helping the young filmmakers understand that is to have them fail at it. If they do it incorrectly and then they see it, they'll understand what I'm talking about.

Maria said the CCCP philosophy of education was tied to her experiences as a producer:

> I need to have a passion for it. It needs to be something I believe is going to have a positive impact on either my community, a community, something that will hopefully inspire youth, young people or people in general to create their own stories. So, my thing is always people will come to me and ask if I could film something for them. And I will

> say, what if I show you how to so it yourself? Then that way you actually have more control over what you're doing and you're learning.

Both Maria and Alan believed the young filmmakers should tell their stories and used them as a resource to help them create those stories through the medium of film. Both Maria and Alan felt that the CCCP summer training provided a sufficient introductory experience for them to take on their own classrooms.

Creating the Professional Space, Monthly Meetings

> Alan chuckled as he described the monthly meetings:
>
> We have snacks and we all just kind of laugh. None of us take ourselves very seriously, for the most part. Yes, we're serious about this program but we don't take ourselves so seriously that we're going to alienate anyone. This is meant to be a learning experience for all, but it's also meant to be an enjoyable experience. We push one another forward and we're supportive of one another which is kind of why it works.

Alan described the professional space as a place to take risks, be vulnerable, and support each teaching artist's growth in the classroom. The professional space created through the monthly meetings added to the collective knowledge of the teaching artists and allowed the filmmakers to troubleshoot classroom management, delivery of instruction, and support the goal of helping students learn how to produce a film.

Maria described the professional development as very impactful: "Working with the CCCP team, you're actually working in the community. You're applying what you know, sharing your knowledge, but at the same time you're gaining knowledge from whatever struggles the people that you're working with are going through." Maria continued, "It's this collaborative

learning environment. It's not top down, it was not let me stand at the front of the classroom and lecture, it's let's learn together, let's create together, let's work together and create a collaborative environment." Alan added that the meetings covered both philosophical issues around classroom instruction and practical issues the teaching artists experienced in classrooms:

> During our monthly meetings, we were reminded that students' needs drive the facilitation of learning. If we show them a new technique like lens flare, it's a great tool, very potent, but when it's in every shot it really doesn't look good. You have to give context for why filmmakers use those techniques in their projects for our young filmmakers to be able to decide for themselves.

Alan also explained some logistical issues discussed during the monthly meetings. Teaching artists were asked to both show students how to back up the work they created on film but to also provide a second back up for the teaching artists to keep in the case of an accidental erasure of content. Alan added: "One of my students accidentally erased the card with four days of work on it. We discussed in our teaching artists team how to avoid this in the future. We came up with backing up the student's back up." The professional development topics were created as the program developed; the teaching artists provided much of the content for the monthly professional development. The founders used the dialogue to support the development of the teaching artists.

The Ongoing Development: Classroom Visits

Maria and Alan mentioned how they were introduced to the CCCP classroom. As they took on classrooms of their own, they talked about being visited by Polo and Jessica and given feedback about their classroom practices. Alan described the visits:

> Polo and Jessica would shadow us, or we would shadow them. It usually did happen once a month where they'd come and shadow us. Basically, they'd just be guests in the class. They let us do the whole show, but they'd be there to support as we broke into groups.

Alan also described the visits as opportunities for reflection:

> They would give us notes in class. For instance, Polo would say, you pulled the equipment out and the kids see the equipment. No student is going to listen to you because you've got those toys out on your desk. Either take out the equipment after you do your presentation or let them play with the equipment and work stuff out then have them set it down and then explain some stuff. The mystique of having equipment out kills everything else. And they're right.

Teaching artists were also invited to shadow Polo and Jessica while they taught their classes. Alan shared the experience of shadowing Polo: "We'd shadow them, see how they operated in class. Everyone's schedule is a little different and classes overlapped. When we did shadow them, it was really just to observe and support." Both Maria and Alan shared that the ultimate goal for the observations and training was for the filmmaking program to succeed in each individual classroom. They recognized that what worked in one classroom did not necessarily work in another classroom. The philosophy was to be flexible enough to support the needs of the students in the classrooms they served.

Both filmmakers recalled receiving feedback from Polo and Jessica that reinforced the learning environment CCCP wanted to create in the classroom. Alan described the reminders:

> A lot of the time, Polo and Jessica were saying, yes, you have this great background in camera work, but you need to let them understand it. You're there. Don't try to impress

them. Don't try to show them things. Don't give them too much. Show them what they ask for. As they learn they will ask for more.

In essence, Alan said, "They're constantly just reinforcing the idea of how to basically help the young filmmakers become better filmmakers and not just kind of lecture at them." In the monthly meeting, the ongoing discussion revolved around how to best support the young filmmakers' growth in storytelling.

The Creating Creators Cinema Project Classroom: Team Teaching

Polo and Jessica, shown in Chapter 3, described the importance of having two teaching artists in the classroom. This aspect was so important structurally that it was included in the contracts with schools and districts. They discussed the varying levels of expertise the filmmakers hold, how that would bring more elements into the CCCP space, and the importance of having a female and male teaching artist in the classroom to provide a multitude of perspectives in the creative space. I asked the CCCP teaching artists their thoughts on team teaching to offer a perspective that Polo and Jessica may not have provided in their description of the team-teaching element in the classroom.

Alan felt team-teaching was a worthwhile application of the CCCP model:

Actually, that's one of the things I like most about it because, one, I will say that my specialty is really not post-production, which is to say editing, technical, computers and whatnot. I know how to edit. I know how to do sound. I know how to do these things but I'm not the best at them.

Alan recalled observing Polo and Jessica during post-production in one of their classrooms, where Polo requested for help from Jessica with fine-tuning editing for some students. Alan

shared this to illustrate the importance of having two filmmakers in the classroom; it demonstrated collaboration, in addition to displaying how each teaching artist is comprised of a variety of strengths and areas for improvement. It is in recognizing their areas of strengths and weaknesses that builds the learning environment for the students. Alan continued:

> The idea that there are two filmmakers, two advisors in the classroom lends to the idea that you have two different types expertise. I might not be good at one thing, but the other person is. I might not have an aptitude in acting, which I can assure you I do not, the other person might.

By pairing the two teaching artists, CCCP not only wanted to support collaboration amongst the students, they wanted their instructors to live it in the classroom. Alan explained, "Having two different minds and two different filmmakers really creates a different dynamic. Everybody learns differently." The young filmmakers in the classroom had access to two perspectives that could help guide their visual storytelling and see collaboration in practice.

Maria concurred with Alan's description and added her perspective on the team-teaching elements of the classroom:

> Quite frankly, I think that it's really better to have. . . There's a girl problem and a guy problem. The relationships in high school are interesting and a young lady getting into a fight with her boyfriend on set doesn't necessarily want to talk to another guy. Having a different dynamic in class is really a positive thing.

However, Maria highlighted the dynamic was not solely based on gender. Maria talked about the variety of experiences, talent, and expertise each teaching artist brings to the classroom: "You have instructors at different levels in their careers as well. You have some that may be around for

a few years, some 10 years, 15 years. Different levels of accomplishments." In addition, Maria asserted, in a similar fashion as Alan, that professional filmmakers may have studied film but may still need support in different aspects of the visual storytelling process: "And so sometimes the dynamics are that maybe I know editing, but maybe I need a little help with writing." Reflecting on her own experience Maria shared her personal strengths and areas where she appreciated additional supports:

> For example, me, on the technical side, I'm good at the technical. Camera, equipment, all that. But I'm also an actor, so I utilize the creative, and you have somebody who maybe is just a writer or director who is not used to the other side of the actor. There is so much more to being an actor that just what you see.

Maria articulated the importance of the team-teaching model is in how the two teaching artists used their expertise to enhance their shared learning and to provide spaces for young filmmakers to see those aspects in context.

For both Maria and Alan, it was evident that working with another filmmaker in the classroom added value to the learning experience. Maria exclaimed, "We learn together! It shows students that collaboration is possible." Alan added:

> Sometimes we do have instructors that will have differences in opinions. And it's okay to have those differences in opinions in front of students, as long as it's done respectfully. Students also see it's okay to have a difference of opinion and be able to move past it. Talk about it, figure it out, and then move past it.

Maria and Alan highlighted, during their interviews, that collaboration was key in the CCCP classroom and were thankful that they had another filmmaker in the classroom to support the young filmmakers' development.

The Creating Creators Cinema Project: The Creating Creators Cinema Project Classroom

The professional tone of the CCCP classroom is set on Day 1. Maria described the professional and creative tone of the classroom:

> You're not speaking to them as children. You're speaking to them as colleagues, as young filmmakers. And when you do that, they in turn reciprocate. You don't treat them like little kids because that's not what the program is. We're working with young filmmakers. And when they are challenged, they rise to that.

From the onset, the young filmmakers were given their roles in the classroom. The creative space was theirs and the mentors were there to support the young filmmaker's development. Alan added that the roles and the tasks for the class were closely aligned. As young filmmakers, they are tasked to produce a visual story that will be shown publicly: "You know you're going to screen your film here. You need to plan accordingly. We only have so much time." The roles and tasks provided the context of what developed next in the classroom: a growth in confidence and autonomy, increased levels of collaboration, and young filmmakers learning how to manage their emotions during a creative process.

The first classes began with every student writing their own stories, the stories they wanted to pitch to the classroom. The stories needed to have a beginning, middle, and end. If the story lacked one of the structural elements, it was eliminated. Using the framework established by Polo and Jessica, the teaching artists created the space for students to draw inspiration from

film, music, literature, art, and begin the writing process. Alan described the process, “It’s almost like you’re tricking the kids. These kids are coming in thinking it’s movies. Along the way, we were secretly sneaking in English and communication skills and all these different things.” Students were required to pitch their stories to the whole class. The class, in turn, voted on the stories on which they collectively wanted to work. For a class of approximately 30 students, the teaching artists would divide the class into three production teams with 10 students per team. Once the stories were selected, the teaching artists described the roles that need to be distributed in the team to accomplish the task (see Appendix I for roles taken from CCCP curriculum outline). Alan described the progression students made from the pitch stage to the beginnings of the production team work:

> The kids are required to present. The kids are required to pitch. They figure out their way to stand properly and talk. They don’t put their hands in their pockets. They get more comfortable in front of a group and they also start building one another up as well because they all want the movie to succeed.

Alan added:

> You kind of have to push them to get stuff going initially, but after a while you’ll get that one person on the crew who will figure it out on their own. They will have the equipment out and the camera ready to get going on their own.

As the momentum built in the classroom, the production teams had their story, scripts were being written, and locations were being scouted. Both Maria and Alan commented on how the confidence of the students grew and the young filmmakers started making their own decisions around the creative and technical aspects of their visual stories.

Alans shared a story of his class:

> The class which I had last year, they we all new at it and they were all still kind of discovering their voices. It was interesting because kids that we had problems with initially became the people who were the driving force. The kid I could not get to talk, they picked his film and then he ended up being one of the most vocal people, acting in it. He acted in one other film. He really wanted to pursue acting.

Maria recalled arriving to class and being surprised about what she heard and saw:

> The young filmmakers will surprise you. Sometimes they're just—Oh, we filmed when you weren't here. And then you watch their footage, and they've got it all down. They've got the ADs [assistant director], they've got the slate, they've got their scenes and everything.

Maria and Alan highlighted how the classroom environment fostered student collaboration which, in turn, built students' confidence to make more decisions on their own.

Delving deeper into the production team process, Maria and Alan emphasized the importance of collaboration. Maria earlier described how collaboration was demonstrated through the team-teaching model. She also discussed the importance of collaboration in the production teams: "They will actually talk to each other, look at each other. In teaching them how to collaborate we talk about, how do we work together to create something, how do we get through this shoot day together." The language used in the classroom was about the collective need to create the story, not the individual's need. The collaborative language used in the classroom revolved around solving the problems collectively. Maria recalled a time when one actor was sick and did not attend class, and the production team had to solve the problem: "Then

they have to problem solve. They have to think about working through the problem. If we can't shoot this scene, can we shoot a different scene with another actor who is here?" Maria remembered the students solved the problem by listening to opinions from different members of the team and arriving at a solution that fit with their immediate needs. However, the collaboration in the production teams was not only observed while solving problems. Alan recalled a student in the production team who had an excellent idea for a rewrite of a scene:

> This student was not the strongest writer in her team, but she had a great idea. She knows she struggles with writing so she passed it on to the writer who does a good job ironing out the dialogue. They'll sit together and as a group they'll come up with more refined story.

Alan felt that as the filmmaking pathway grew, the collaboration was second nature to students:

> The collaboration in the freshman year is a little bumpier because they're still getting used to one another. I feel that as the program continues through a pathway all the way through high school, those kids will have a different experience.

Maria shared that the collaborative process generally moved from the production teams to a shared knowledge exchange in the classroom:

> So, when we're in class, sharing our knowledge with the students, if I get stuck on something, they can jump right in. Or if they get stuck, I can jump in, and so that sort of dynamic is really good in the classroom. Then when they go to the production groups they know that they could know something or they can learn something from someone else.

The excitement in the collaborative process was when students start to build on one another's strengths and support the development of areas when they needed to improve.

The CCCP curriculum also delved into the socio-emotional development of their young filmmakers. They did this through a process they called "managing your emotions." Alan and Maria talked extensively about this developmental part of their classroom environment. Maria described presenting this aspect to the students in every meeting they had together:

> Managing your emotions is extremely important. From the beginning of every class that we start, we talk about managing your emotions. If we feel that we're angry, then we need to take a breath. Let one of the instructors or teachers know you need to take a moment. Collect yourself. And then we can talk about it.

Maria and Alan described how the filmmaking process could create a high stress environment, with deadlines to meet, budgets to keep, and adults to manage. Teaching young filmmakers how to keep their emotions in check provided support when they experienced a high-stress environment. Maria added:

> As instructors we have to remind each other, because this is not something we learned when we were children. This is something we're learning as adults. A lot of adults don't know this as evidenced by our current political climate.

Alan reminded students, "Adults also need to manage their emotions." Alan said that though he got laughs from students, the idea was that this process is difficult for everyone. If young filmmakers could get a handle on managing their emotions, that prepared them for life, not just filmmaking. Both Maria and Alan talked about having to meet with production teams throughout

the year to help them iron out issues they were having interpersonally, reminding the students to address the issue right away so that the creative process did not get hindered by the conflict.

Alan summed up the CCCP classroom by stating:

> Ultimately, the Creating Creators curriculum—allows the students to discover some of their own storytelling techniques. The young filmmakers are redeveloping their own understanding of what their specialty is and their own understanding of their own technique and style.

Maria added:

> They basically learn how to solve their own problems, and it translates into other things as well. Their teachers will say, oh, they're doing better in their writing. They weren't writing before. Or now they're actually reading more, and they weren't reading before. And it really, it trickles down into all these other areas. I think it permeates other areas of their studies, and just raises their level of commitment to themselves. And understanding their role within these different circles. I think that's something that happens gradually throughout the year.

Managing your emotions had become a mantra for the teaching artists, and we will see more of it in Chapter 4.

Discussion

This study aimed to answer two research questions:

- To what extent do the participants involved in CCCP establish the conditions for critical pedagogy?
- In what ways do participants characterize the impact CCCP had on their lives?

Semi-structured interviews revealed elements of critical pedagogy, constructivism, and situated learning theory. I also analyzed the data to explore how these theories might help scholars describe pedagogical and curriculum approaches in arts education. The inductive approach used in Chapter 3 allowed me to identify emergent data and describe the extent to which the teaching artists establish the condition for critical pedagogy in their program. I then summarized the impact that the CCCP had on the teaching artists' lives.

In analyzing the transcripts and listening to the interviews of both Maria and Alan, I was quick to note the similarities of language, philosophy, and implementation of curriculum the teaching artists shared with the founders of CCCP, Polo and Jessica. An inductive analysis approach aided in my data analysis of the semi-structured interviews. I followed the same approach I used in Chapter 3 that was outlined by Hatch (2002; see Figure 4).

Although I had observed and met with both teaching artists at my school site, I used the data gathered from their interviews to paint their experiences in Southern California High School. I asked them to speak of their training and classroom instruction when they were led by both Polo and Jessica. My research question asked, to what extent do participants in the CCCP establish the condition for critical pedagogy? In a similar fashion to Chapter 3 of the study, during my first read through, I identified elements that are found in critical pedagogy, constructivist learning theory, and situated learning theory. I created the domains referenced in Step 2 of the inductive analysis. The domains for critical pedagogy come from the philosophical principles of critical pedagogy (Darder et al., 2009). The domains for constructivist learning theory came from Driscoll's (1994) five conditions for constructivist learning. The domains for

situated learning theory came from Lave and Wenger's (1991), legitimate peripheral participation (see Table 1).

Salient domains emerged in step three of the process and I assigned a code to each of those domains. I used the same color code for the teaching artists' transcripts as I used for the CCCP founders' transcripts. When overlaps emerged the highlighted color and the text color indicated the overlap. The salient domains for further analysis are shown in Table 4.

Steps 5 through 9 continued through the analysis I presented with the data. Although the first research question attempted to assess the extent to which the conditions of critical pedagogy exist in the CCCP environment, the data that emerged more salient in the teaching artists

Table 4
Salient Domains Supported by Data: The Teaching Artists

Situated Learning Theory	Constructivist Learning Theory	Critical Pedagogy
• Community of Practice • Shift from peripheral participation to full participation • Assume more responsibility	• Student-Centered Learning	• Historicity of Knowledge • Resistance and Counter Hegemony

interviews revolved mainly around situated learning theory and constructivism. There are overlaps that allude to critical pedagogy: those overlaps will be discussed later in the chapter. I will begin with situated learning theory, then constructivism, and tie those two learning theories in with elements of critical pedagogy.

Situated Learning Theory

Lave and Wenger (1991) posited, "Learning is not merely situated in practice—as if it were independently reifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practices in the lived-in world" (p. 35). Lave and Wenger

(1991) further explained that participants in learning "contribute inseparable aspects whose combinations create a landscape—shapes, degrees, textures—of community membership" (p. 35). From the data that emerged from the teaching artists interviews, I describe the learning environment supported by the CCCP teaching artists that establishes the conditions for students to move from a role of legitimate peripheral participants to full participants in their filmmaking classes.

Community of Practice, Full Participants, Responsibility

In Chapter 3, I described how Polo and Jessica, through their CCCP, wanted to generate a community of creators. Polo and Jessica wanted to create an environment where teaching artists and the young filmmakers learned from each other. The young filmmaker's task was to complete by the end of the school year a visual story through the medium of film that was all their own. Polo and Jessica's goals were echoed through the teaching artists' voices. Using situated learning theory as a lens to view the emerging data, I saw strong elements of community of practice, shifts to full participation, and students assuming more responsibility for their own learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) described learning as a social practice: "learning involves the whole person; it implies not only a relation to specific activities, but a relation to social communities—it implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person" (p. 53). Maria talked about the training with the other teaching artists as her first step into learning how to create the environment for the CCCP classroom: "Not only are they training us in a sense to be facilitators of learning in the classroom, but we're doing it with each other as mentors [teaching artists]." Maria described how meeting other teaching artists gave her opportunities to learn more about filmmaking techniques:

> We're learning from each other. I remember observing an instructor in class, that instructor knows editing really well. I need to watch them. Or that instructor knows how to use Black Magic really well, I want to learn more. And then it's just how so we combine our knowledge.

Following the lead of the CCCP, Maria mentioned how she introduced the CCCP program to her students in Southern California High School. Maria said, "So you're not speaking to them as children. You're speaking to them as colleagues, as young filmmakers. You don't treat them like little kids because that's not what the program is. We're working with young filmmakers." CCCP students were immediately thrust into the role of filmmakers; the intention was to create a space that did not replicate the traditional school classroom for the students.

Lave and Wenger (1991) stated that learning tasks or activities do not occur in isolation. They occur as "part of a broader system of relations in which they have meaning" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). Maria described how when students learned about the different aspects of filmmaking and the roles involved in creating a visual story, students wanted to take part in the new roles and support the collective creation of the film. Maria remembered a conversation with a pair of her students:

> One student said she wanted to be the director. I told her the director is responsible for the artistic vision of the film, the director needs to communicate that vision to everyone involved so that the vision is captured in the final edits.

The young filmmakers were given workshops to support their understanding of the various roles and asked to try a variety of roles out to see how their personalities, dispositions, and relationships with others supported their development in the various roles. It was through their

social interactions that the young filmmakers practiced their creativity, leadership, and collaboration skills. Maria punctuated this point when she told students:

> This program is "your knowledge is just as important as my knowledge," and how are we going to work together to get to this goal [producing a film]? Yes, we're going to make a movie, but really the important part is how we learn to work together during these projects.

Establishing the environment for learning together was an important aspect of the CCCP classroom, and it established the community of practice in which all participants were to engage.

Maria and Alan highlighted the transformation the CCCP classroom made over time. Maria shared:

> When you walk into a Creating Creators classroom—Let's say we come into a classroom about two or three months into the program. You got students that are bringing ideas to the table, because they're testing something out at home and decide to tell their production team, "You know what? We can shoot it this way."

Alan recalled a class in their third year with the CCCP program at Southern California High School:

> Watching juniors work is just shocking because they all sat there and they're like, "I want to do this. Can I be the camera man? Yeah, we're thinking about doing this." Another student in the production team asks if he could do the sound because he really wants to try it out. They form their own teams without even being prompted. In the freshman class we kind of have to get people interested; some crack under the pressure. They want to produce. They want to be in charge, but they don't realize how much work it is. By the

> junior year, you have students who bring in their own projects. They want to do their own thing. You have students who do things that go above and beyond.

As students gather more knowledge, Maria and Alan observed that production teams, which generally consisted of 10 students, took more ownership of their collective project and brought in more of their creative ideas to accomplish their vision for the film. Lave and Wenger (1991) described, "The practice of the community creates the potential 'curriculum' in the broadest sense—that which may be learned by newcomers with legitimate peripheral access" (p. 93). As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, the curriculum provided the structure for the creative process to emerge. Students told their own stories using the medium of film. Throughout the year, students practiced techniques to tell their visual stories with the guidance of the teaching artists.

Lave and Wenger (1991) also asserted, "The effectiveness of the circulation of information among peers suggests, to the contrary, that engaging in practice, rather than being its object, may well be a condition for the effectiveness of learning" (p. 93). Maria and Alan both shared the importance of building autonomy in the classroom. They wanted their students to take risks and share their ideas freely to their respective teams. Maria felt the success she saw in the classroom was when "they figure out how to basically solve their own problems on their own." Maria elaborated on this point:

> When we're in class, if I get stuck on something, they can jump right in. Or if they get stuck, I can jump in. That sort of dynamic is good for the classroom. Students see that filmmakers do not know everything. This person can know this, this person can know that. That translates over to when they go into their production groups, one person knows this, and vice-versa.

Alan added:

> Some of the time, the guardrails become unnecessary and they learn to do it themselves. It becomes less of the teacher or the filmmaker having to go and say something to the students so much as the students saying, "I'm having this problem technically. What do you think of this?" It starts to become less of a filmmaker student and more of an actual collaboration between a professional and someone who is trying—What's the term?—that it's like an apprenticeship almost to an extent, but it's their work.

Lave and Wenger (1991) stated, "Newcomers' legitimate "peripherality" provides them more than an 'observational' lookout post: It crucially involves participation as a way of learning—of both absorbing and being absorbed in—the 'culture of practice'" (p. 95). After a year with their high school students, both Maria and Alan believed the young filmmakers took ownership over their roles in the classroom and became full participants in the community of filmmakers that CCCP provided.

Constructivism

Maria and Alan's description of the classroom environment, working with young filmmakers, highlighted key elements under the constructivist lens as outlined by Driscoll (1994). Of the five elements, student-centered learning was the most salient.

Student-Centered Learning

Maria and Alan are storytellers. Throughout the semi-structured interviews, both teaching artists told stories of their young filmmakers. At times, these were very specific, and at other times, they spoke in general terms about their interactions in class. The overarching themes

behind their stories were the learning that took place in the environment they co-created. I will share a few of their stories that highlight the element of student-centered learning.

Maria recalled entering a classroom and the production team shared with her that their teacher had given them time to film:

> Oh, we filmed when you weren't here. The teacher let us go film. And then I watched their footage, and they've got it all down. They've got the ADs, they've got the slate, they've got their scenes and everything. They've coordinated all these people. They've even brought in other classrooms. They said they needed more extras.

Maria, smiling from ear to ear, remembered how satisfied the production team felt that they were able to take charge of their film and produce scenes they needed on their own. Maria asserted, "And when they are challenged, they rise to that. They rise, and then they will surprise you." Maria described how many CCCP students took pride in telling their personal stories. From the onset of the class, students wrote their own stories and presented them to the class. Three stories were chosen and three production groups were created to produce the film. The young filmmakers used the first semester to develop the chosen story further and were provided workshops to introduce the roles many would take on during the production phase of their creative journeys in the second semester.

Alan shared his experience with a 10th-grade student who wrote a story and presented it to the class:

> The class which I had, it wasn't—They were all new at it and they were all still kind of discovering their voice. It was interesting because kids we had problems with initially became the people who were the driving force. This one kid, I could not get to talk. The

> class had picked his film and then he ended up being one of the most vocal people, acting in it. He acted in one other film. He really wanted to pursue acting. He would constantly ask me questions about how to do this or that or the other.

Alan remembered the young filmmaker and how motivated he was to learn more about acting. Alan recalled when he was young, few adults paid attention to his interest or growth. Alan shared, "I don't think that when I was their age I had anything—There was no one watching me discover these things or no one kind of guiding me or seeing how I was trying to do something." For Alan, this personalized approach to learning was a clear advantage to the young filmmakers as they practiced the creative arts.

Maria shared a story of a student who had a talent for the arts but had not been offered an opportunity prior to CCCP to use his talents:

> I remember when I walked into the classroom the first day. He was the student sitting at the front of the classroom. He was drawing. He was drawing graffiti, like graffiti art. But he was drawing. I look at it, and it was really good. I didn't know anything about this student. I remember walking by. I looked. I said, "Wow, you did that?" And he looked at me, just kind of sits back, and he's like, "Yeah." And I'm like, "That is really cool. You know people get paid a lot of money to do that?" And he kind of looked at me like I was crazy.

Maria mentioned that it took a while to get this particular student to engage with the class:

> He was that one kid that would sit in the front, but he'd be drawing while we were doing our work. It got to the point where we were storyboarding. And so, what we did, my co-

> instructor and myself, we had this idea: let's have him story board on the fly. We'll have the students throw out ideas. And he would draw them.

At this point in her story, I heard the excitement in her voice, the speed of the tale increased and Maria shared what happened next:

> Somebody would throw out an idea, then he'll draw it really quick. And then we'd do the next one, and the next one, and the next one. And it became this really fun thing where everybody was interacting. And he was just loving it! After that he started being much more involved. By the end—by the second half of the year, he had expressed interest in being a director of photography, which is the person that shoots. Then he basically led his whole team to finish the film.

Maria recalled that she was able to observe this student's transformation; his grades in all his classes improved, and the young filmmaker showed excitement for the following school year, excited to continue his growth as a filmmaker.

Alan described a student who had a natural eye for catching things on screen that were inconsistent with the film:

> He was one of the students that had a natural eye for seeing why things didn't work in a shot in terms of performance and story. He literally sat there and—I could see immediately, but I've been doing this long enough—that from shot A to shot B is the reaction from one character and the reaction from another character were so far apart. He [the student] said, "I'm way too big in this shot. I come off way too high. This is the wrong performance and he's too low." They had another take where he was small. His

> character was less extreme. You can explain that, but you can't, per se, teach that. It's more of a discovery.

Alan commented on the importance of seeing where the students were at and helping them discover their talents by exposing them to the art of filmmaking. Alan described another instance where he had the opportunity to observe students discovering a new technique:

> I saw students doing something called Movie Master. Spielberg likes to do them. Alfred Hitchcock is kind of famous for them. They're this thing where they'll start on something innocuous. They'll start on someone picking. These young ladies decided that this young lady was going to be reading a book in the library. She picks a book off the shelf and then she walks across the room. You think she's the subject, which is someone else. It's interesting way to introduce the whole scene. It's a moving shot and that's really advanced—even college students don't do that. I don't see student films at USC doing anything like this, so you all are ahead of the curve. I told them, "I see what you're trying to do. Here's how we can kind of make it a little bit better."

Alan's excitement continued as he concludes his thought:

> The film fulfills all their requirements of class and they do learn things, but ultimately, it's just kind of a spark that they'll discover their own thing. You've got kids who want to act who suddenly decide that they want to write. You have writers who decide that they want to direct or artists who decide that they want to discover the sound aspect of it.

Alan is thrilled witnessing students discover their interests and supporting their journey of self-discovery through filmmaking.

Had I more time with both Alan and Maria, I would have heard a tale of each one of their students. In capturing their voice through the semi-structured interview, I was able to hear the excitement and passion as they each spoke of their experiences in the classroom. In the CCCP classrooms, students were at the center of learning, their talents and ambitions showed through their work with the teaching artists and their creative peers.

Establishing the Conditions for Critical Pedagogy

In analyzing both the semi-structured interviews of Maria and Alan, the most salient aspects of the professional environment they wanted to create in the CCCP classroom was for students to take ownership of their own learning. Whether students solved problems collectively to accomplish a task or they took responsibility for creating their own timelines to produce their film, students' stories and learning were at the center of the creative space. As illustrated through the lens of situated learning theory and constructivism, teaching artists created a space for students to collaborate, took on filmmaking roles, and worked on stories that directly tied to their lived experiences. Although the initial pass through the transcripts may not speak directly to critical pedagogy, the overlap of themes paints a strong image that conditions for critical pedagogy exist as a foundational piece for the CCCP teaching artists.

Historicity of Knowledge

As discussed in Chapter 3, the founders of the CCCP program ensured that "knowledge [was] created in a historical context" (Darder et al., 2009). The teaching artists created structures in the classroom for students to share their knowledge with others in the classroom through narrative stories. I share in more detail the contents of some of their stories in Chapter 5;

however, both Maria and Alan illustrated the power of that process is for all the students. Alan shared:

> The principal of the school talked about how he didn't like the high school films because they were all—one had drugs, one was about police brutality, and another one was about gangs. Those were the plot points of the film. I said to him, but none of those films were about those things. All those films were about controlling their own reality and that's what it was. Every student who wrote them, they're all trying to control their own reality and grasp their own reality.

Alan added:

> The point that I guess I drew from it all is that if I can help them use this medium or this tool to kind of voice their opinions and develop their own voice, I'd rather see this next generation of filmmakers be better than the one before it.

What Alan pointed out through this exchange with the principal is that the lived experiences of the students in the context of the community they were living provided controversial plot points for the school administration. Alan, however, did not discount their contributions and instead recognized their stories as an opportunity that students had to communicate their current circumstances. By sharing their stories, it shed light on how students in the Southern California High School were living and provided an outlet for some of the difficulties the young filmmakers saw in their community. Moreover, by providing an alternative perspective to the principal, Alan created a space to challenge the dominant narrative and validated students' lived experiences in the community as a complexity that cannot be resolved by censoring students' stories. To that

point, it offered the principal an opportunity to view the needs of the students outside of the school context.

Maria shared a learning opportunity that presented itself after the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections. Maria walked into her the CCCP classroom after Donald J. Trump was elected:

> The next day the students appeared scared. So, we walk into the classroom, there's a kid just completely quiet. Really just like on the verge of tears. Another one said, "Is my mom going to get deported, or something?" And so, I looked at my other instructor, and I was like, "Oh shoot, okay, how can we—how can we like figure this out?" Ok, let's just ask some questions like, "How do you feel? Okay. Write it down." Basically, what we did was spend about 15 minutes having all the students write down how they felt and why it made them feel that way. And then they started sharing. So, we utilized the writing portion of it for them to express themselves.

Although not directly related to the filmmaking class, the teaching artists were aware that the event that just occurred required a space for students to share their thoughts. The relationships established with the students allowed the students to feel empowered to share the impact the election had on them and their families. The historical context was not ignored; it was intentionally incorporated into the class to provide relief for the students who felt impacted by the election.

Resistance and Counter Hegemony

Maria and Alan both described their experience in the CCCP classroom as a learning space. Both were interested in breaking down the traditional hierarchical role adults play in the classroom. Maria made the point, "You're not speaking to them as children. You're speaking to

them as colleagues, as young filmmakers." Maria further elaborated that as students learned new techniques, she might rely on them to help with a task at hand. Maria described the classroom environment as a collaborative space where everyone was learning from one another. Maria also compared her K-12 experience with what she helped creates in the classroom as being vastly different:

> So, I remember schooling to be very much like everybody in rows faces the front of the classroom and someone is there lecturing. They [the teacher] might ask a question here and there. But it's very much that whole ATM deposit information spit it back out. But with Creating Creators, when you walk into a classroom, and the students have—let's say we come into a classroom about two or three months into the program. You have got students that are bringing ideas to the table, because they're testing something out at home and said, "Oh, you know what, can we shoot it this way? Because I was trying this out with my family" or "I was shooting a video with my friends, and I really think this would be cool."

Maria showed how the CCCP classroom resisted the traditional banking model of education and how that resistance allowed for students to voice the direction of their own learning (Freire, 2000; Giroux, 2001).

Alan shared that as students moved through the CCCP program, they took more initiative around their learning: "Working with students who have been in Creating Creators for a few years is shocking because they all sat there and they're like, well I want to do this. They start their own teams without even being prompted." Alan added that by their junior year, "they want

to do their own project. They have their own plan and then they execute it." Alan shared a specific story of a student when went out to look for their own location:

> I know there was one student who literally scouted a location to film it. It was supposed to be a dress shop or a wedding or something. She went out and found her location and then got permission and they all went and filmed there.

Students felt empowered to take initiative and take an active role in their filmmaking projects. As Giroux (2001) stated, "Elements of resistance now become the focal point for the construction of different sets of lived experiences, experiences in which students can find a voice and maintain and extend the positive dimensions of their own cultures and histories" (p. 111). Maria and Alan set the stage for students to counter the traditional role school has played in society and to create a new experience where the young filmmakers decided the direction for the learning to continue.

Creating Creators Cinema Project Impact on Teaching Artists

The second research question I wanted to uncover in this study was the impact that the CCCP had on the different participants of the program. In this section, I want to highlight the impact the CCCP had on the teaching artists Maria and Alan.

Personal

Maria remembered the struggles she experienced in elementary school:

> In second grade, I had just learned English again, because I learned English, and then we moved to Mexico for a year. Then I enrolled in school there and forgot all my English. Then I came back. I was made fun of, because I didn't know English. I didn't pronounce words correctly. So that was hard for me.

Maria continued to share her experience in the classroom and how she saw herself in each of the students in the classroom. She said, “It’s just one of things where being in the classroom with students who are like myself, growing up, same sort of background. Single parent household. My mom had six kids. Raised us on minimum wage from McDonalds.” Maria saw an immediate connection between her life and lives of the young filmmakers in her class. The Southern California High School was a Title I school where over 95% of the student body received free or reduced lunch and 99% of the students are Latinx. Maria commented, “I see so much of myself in them.” Maria described how the program reminds her of how far she has gone professionally, as an actor, producer, and director. Maria reflected on her accomplishments:

> I see that—Wow, I came a long way. Maria does not stay in her past too long. She quickly smiles and shares, and here I am. I get to come back and show [the young filmmakers] what I’ve learned. They don’t have to go through 20 years of struggle. I can share my knowledge and see what they are going to do with it.

Maria felt huge satisfaction being part of an arts program that guided students to think of their futures differently. Maria reminded me, during the interview, about the joy she felt in demystifying the process of storytelling. Maria did not have these outlets growing up: “I feel like if I had this program when I was growing up, I would just—God, the possibilities. I just wouldn’t have maybe hated school so much. I really felt completely repressed in school.” Maria was excited students had two days a week where the environment was all about the students and what the young filmmakers could create with the CCCP program guidance.

Alan referred to two ways of looking at experience: students either had to struggle like everyone else to be part of the artistic club or they could make it a bit easier for young

filmmakers to avoid the barriers that exist in the arts. Alan said, “If I can help someone else avoid some of the potholes along the road to success, I will.” Alan told a story of an undiscovered artist to illustrate the enrichment he felt working with the CCCP young filmmakers:

> It was really disheartening to me recently when someone pointed out there is a—Man, I just blanked on the lady’s name. A gentleman in New York purchased a large cache of undeveloped film and books of film and photos at an estate sale. We’re talking like 25, 30 boxes of stuff. He looked though it and figured out it was one filmmaker—amateur filmmaker—and she was a nanny. She was a brilliant photographer. Now they have six or eight coffee table books of her work. They said that she’s like Ansel Adams. She would have been huge. No one knew who she was. She died her work being in boxes. It’s kind of heartbreaking to think that there’s a lot of great talent out there. Everyone has that winning lottery ticket. Some people never get a chance to cash it in. Working with the CCCP students, it feeds your soul when you see some of these students come up with an idea for the first time. It’s like watching them discover light for the first time or walking in a movie theater and seeing color after it’s only been in black and white. You never get to witness that in your day-to-day life but in the classroom, you are seeing that with those students.

Alan appreciated working side-by-side with the young filmmakers. Alan particularly enjoyed reading the scripts. Alan felt he received access to insightful ideas from the young filmmakers:

> That's kind of what feeds my soul, we have a long way to go but when I'm seeing these students—When they develop their own voice, they don't listen to the other voices that might be pulling them away from school.

Alan felt that by going to the classroom and helping students develop their creativity, students had a better chance of reaching their goals, whether they included filmmaking or not. Alan, a self-proclaimed workaholic, said his film work pays the bills and fulfills his passion. However, his teaching work, being in the classroom, and mentoring students is his karma work; it fulfilled his personal commitment to the community he served.

Professional

Alan and Maria both talked about their professional growth while working with the CCCP. The impact they shared is testament to the learning environment they created in the classroom. Alan admitted:

> Honestly, I will say my writing improved a bit because I understood a different aspect of character and I actually see how they write. The more you read scripts, the more you do this, the more you see where things are wrong on your own.

Alan talked about how in reading students' scripts and mentoring them to develop a stronger story, he himself began to recognize how he could improve his own script writing: "I can see why things didn't work here and why they did." Alan added that working with the CCCP students has changed his approach to camera work and directing:

> I learned a lot about the camera that I've never learned before. My directing is probably very different than it was several years ago when I first started. My whole approach to things has evolved a little bit because working with them [the students] and seeing their

> fresh ideas or their fresh approach to old ideas has kind of given me different ways of doing things.

During the interview Alan reflected on his experience with the CCCP students and spoke profoundly about his growth as an artist through the teaching and learning process.

Alan spoke directly to the impact that working with CCCP students had on his perspective on the film industry. Alan spoke of the untold stories that could not make it to film because of the structural inequalities that exist in the film industry:

> I want to see more Latino storytellers. *Black Panther* was this huge, giant hit. I think about all the other untold stories because a lot of filmmakers never thought they had a chance because it was an industry run by a bunch of White guys. That's enriched me as a filmmaker and given me a different appreciation for basically the work that's out there.

On top of Alan's growth artistically, Alan felt he needed to advocate for his students, and particularly, challenge the film industry to tell more diverse stories.

Maria described how the CCCP program tied her to her young filmmakers. Maria shared that when she was on set she talked about the young filmmakers she worked with at the school:

> I tell everybody about my students. I will be on sets, and sometimes like the crew will be complaining, and I'll be like you want to see something cool? Then I'll show them a video of the kids. A few people will get a spark in their eyes, like, "I want to do that."

The spark Maria saw helped the crew remember that they were opening the doors for many new young talents and that their successes inspired her students to continue along their creative paths. Maria acknowledged her work with students gave her a different level of access to communicate with crew members on set.

Maria also mentioned how working with CCCP allowed her to continue her creative work outside of the classroom. This allowed Maria to continue her professional growth through her industry experience and to bring in that experience to her students. Maria shared:

> I get an audition today, and I'm teaching, say, in three days, and that audition booked me in three days, and I end up booking that, and I'm working in three days. I can call them up and say, "Hey, I booked a job. I'm going to be acting on this TV show. I won't be able to make it to class." It also allows us to grow because we're still continually working, developing professionally, building our credits. We're doing, we're still continuing work. And as artists, it's so hard. This business is so hard. And so you go out on thousands of auditions and maybe you book one or two. Or you have been developing a script for 10 years and you're finally going to be able to shoot it. And you need a week to shoot it or two weeks to shoot it. But then after that you're not going to be working. So being able to take those two weeks off from instructing and then being able to come back to a job, it's just the best of both worlds. Because what normal job would allow you to take two weeks off and then come right back? They don't. They don't understand.

Maria spoke directly about the business model for CCCP. The founders wanted the teaching artists to continue to grow professionally in the industry. Their growth was immediately applied to the CCCP classroom, both in sharing of their experiences and applying their new knowledge in their mentorship and support of the students.

Chapter 5 will look at the CCCP from the perspective of the students, the young filmmakers enrolled in the course.

CHAPTER 5

THE CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT: THE YOUNG FILMMAKERS

Polo and Jessica piloted their cinema program through an elective class at the LASGS one year before I took on the role of principal. In the years that lead up to this study, I spoke to many LASGS students about their involvement with the filmmaking course. LASGS students talked about their evolution of thought as they more actively participated in the cinema program. I remember a few students talking to me about learnings that revolved around production team collaboration, their autonomy concerning creative decisions in class, and, in particular, their interest in careers with the film industry.

Santa Ana Unified wanted to create a filmmaking pathway from elementary school to high school. The district funded the development and progression of classes at their school sites. Their approach to the filmmaking pathway was drastically different than the program at LASGS. As I approached my study, I was interested to hear from the students who participated directly with the CCCP as a fully funded program under the direction of both Polo and Jessica.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the case study of the CCCP enabled me to view CCCP from a variety of perspectives. In Chapter 3, I looked to the creators of CCCP to understand how the organization developed and the implicit and explicit philosophy behind CCCP's development and implementation of filmmaking instruction. In Chapter 4, I interviewed the CCCP teaching artists, to provide a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the classroom environment created for students participating in the CCCP program. Chapter 5 adds to the thick description of the CCCP program by including the perspective of the students participating in the cinema program. Taking multiple perspectives into account allows research to develop "a more rounded, richer, more

balanced picture" of CCCP (Thomas, 2016, p. 5). In Chapter 5, I discussed student perspectives about their learning with CCCP and the impact the program has had on their lives.

Methodology

Focus Group

In delineating the participants for my study, it was important to include students who were in CCCP classrooms. I elected to employ focus groups and semi-structured interviews to collect student perspectives on the program. My goal for the focus group was to engage with students, in their lived realities of the classroom, and, more importantly, allow them to describe more effectively their own experiences in the CCCP classroom (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013). Focus groups provided an avenue for collective conversation that capitalized on the group structure created in the CCCP classroom.

An advantageous aspect of a focus group was the opportunity for participants to "take over" or "own" the interview space, which resulted in a richer conversation than a one-on-one interview can hold (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013). Although I have worked with CCCP over many years, I came into South California High School as an outsider. I did not have close relationships with the student body, and, as such, I was initially viewed as an outsider. To mitigate the outsider perspective, I worked to create a natural environment where the group of students felt comfortable to engage in conversation. I explored student learning and analyzed emergent themes from the conversations I had with them in the focus group interviews. For the focus group, I focused on an overview of student learning inside the CCCP classroom. The filmmaking class asked students to work in teams. In these teams, students negotiated, argued, compromised, and resolved conflict as they completed their projects. Morgan (1997) suggested a

focus group as the method to answer the research question with "a research interest in group behavior [that] might not be well served by data from individual interviews" (pp. 12-13). To finalize this process, I carefully considered both the setting for the focus group and the selection of the participants.

Focus groups, although not entirely natural, can approximate a more natural interaction than an interview (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013). Establishing a natural setting lowers affective filters in students who are talking to an outsider. The focus group environment was conducted in the class of study immediately after the school day and lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. In the focus group session, I started with questions that asked students to describe why they chose the filmmaking class and asked them to describe the classroom environment. In particular, I focused on how the course unfolded for them, highlighting their perspectives. As stated by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2013), "The intensely social nature of focus groups tends to promote a kind of memory synergy among participants, and it can motivate efforts to bring forth the 'collective memory' of particular social groups or formations" (p. 40). The formation involved students within the CCCP class, and the "collective memories" I was interested in uncovering were the classroom interactions and learning within the classroom (see Appendix H.).

Semi-Structured interview

Aside from the focus group, I was interested in hearing the experience of two students who were in development of a special project for the CCCP founders. I chose a semi-structured interview approach for my data collection with the two students of CCCP to provide an opportunity to hear of their special project in a quieter setting. Thomas (2016) described semi-

structured interviews as one of the most common formats used in small-scale social research. I followed the format I used for the focus group interview and asked more specifically about their special project: the formation and work that went behind the production of their documentary (see Appendix H).

Selections Criteria

The selection of the students was purposeful to solicit diverse perspectives from the CCCP class. The focus group approach aimed to create a comfortable environment for 60 minutes for a conversation about their classroom experiences. The size of the group was also important. As Morgan (1997) stated, "small groups run the risk of being less productive because they are so sensitive to the dynamics among the individual participants" and "large groups typically require a higher level of moderator involvement" (p. 42). If the size is too small, there may not be a lively discussion; if the group is too large, not all participants will have the opportunity to engage. I relied on the CCCP teachers to recommend students for the focus group. The size of focus groups was designed to foster a lively discussion. I also considered student diversity (broadly defined) and a combination of students in the 10th and 11th grades who may have had differing years of experience with CCCP. Gender diversity was also important, and when possible, students who had held a variety of roles in their groups over the years, such as directors, producers, editors, writers, and cinematographers, were part of the selection criteria. I began with a selection of 10 to 15 potential participants knowing that natural attrition would occur prior to the scheduled focus group meeting. The participant pool narrowed to seven students for the focus group. Four participants were 11th graders, three were 10th graders, four had been in the program for two years and halfway through their third year, while the other three

had completed one year and were halfway through their second year. Four students identified as female and three as male.

Polo and Jessica suggested the two participants for the semi-structured interviews. The two students had been working on an out-of-classroom project that aligned with the mission and vision of the CCCP founders. The two students' special project spoke volumes of the philosophy behind CCCP, and I wanted to capture it for my study. The two students who were in the 11th grade had been part of the program for two complete years and were halfway through their third year (see Table 5). All students chose a pseudonym prior to their interviews, and I used those pseudonyms for the rest of the dissertation.

CCCP Students: Introduction to the CCCP Class

The focus group atmosphere provided a calm space for the collective dialogue to emerge. There were many inside jokes between participants and a level of camaraderie from the different grade levels that allowed for an open conversation to occur. Each participant was introduced to the cinema program in a distinct way. AJ, Ella, and Frank were introduced to the class initially as a speech and debate class in their ninth-grade year. The class evolved into the filmmaking class

Table 5
CCCP Student Participants: Focus Group

Pseudonym	Grade Level	Years with Program	Gender
AJ	11th	2.5	F
Ana	10th	1.5	F
Trevor	10th	1.5	M
Fez	11th	2.5	M
Ella	11th	2.5	F
Sara	10th	1.5	F
Frank	11th	2.5	M

Table 6
CCCP Student Participants: Semi-Structured Interview

Pseudonym	Grade Level	Years with Program	Gender
Aye	11th	2.5	M
Bee	11th	2.5	F

quickly in their first semester. Fez was coming into the Southern California High School through a permitting process and was told to take the course as a condition for his enrollment, a decision he would later disclose as one of the best decisions for his life. These four students, AJ, Fez, Ella, and Frank began the program in its first year at the school site with Polo and Jessica as their teaching artists for the class. AJ commented, "Two people came in, by the names of Polo and Jessica, and they started saying, 'Oh, we're going to make some videos." I feel like I had an opportunity, like it could be my career." There was collective agreement among all participants after AJ's comment.

Ana and Sara remembered seeing an advertisement for a filmmaking conservatory at their middle school, so when they joined the class in their ninth-grade year, the school's second year having the program, they were delighted. Trevor mentioned his older brother had graduated from the school and told him that if he saw any programs that interested him to take advantage of the opportunities the school provided. When he saw the filmmaking class, offered in ninth-grade, he jumped at the opportunity. Trevor offered his take on the decision: "I tried out the class, and it kind of gave me a way of writing that I had never really had before. I started to enjoy it." This comment elicited a positive response from the participants with laughter and nods of approval.

Creating Creators Cinema Program: The Pitch

The CCCP students described their learning over the years with Polo, Jessica, Maria, and Alan. The first semester started with the pitch. The CCCP students described writing their stories and preparing their pitch to the class. This was a structural part of the curriculum that Polo and Jessica used as a precursor to forming the production teams. All students wrote a story; they pitched their story to the class; and through a series of rewrites and feedback, three stories were selected as the focus for the year. Fez shared, "We started off with narratives, so you would write a story, basically, or proposal, and you would try to sum it up (for the class)." Fez continued:

> You would go in front of the class and you would pitch your idea, and you'd be the only one. And then after, everyone would give feedback. It wasn't really like criticism, but more structured feedback and people giving you ideas as to how you could expand on an idea or where you could go with that.

AJ admitted that she cried the first time she pitched her idea:

> It was like our first—Well, technically, our first pitch was about, like, our life, and, like, the character we are. And, like, I just cried. I was, like, oh, my God. But, like, after, pitching was like not as hard anymore. I love getting the feedback about things, to make, like, the story better.

Ana shared how the pitching sessions and, in particular, the feedback she received, helped her in developing her story:

> Definitely the feedback and critiques given made us like stronger writers and readers at the time. Jessica and Polo just giving us advice on how to make the story better, it also helped the other students on how to give critiques to others.

For all participants, the pitching session set the tone for the class environment they described in the rest of the focus group conversation.

As the CCCP students talked about the pitching session, their conversation moved to feedback and critique. AJ said they became more comfortable listening to the stories and heard examples of feedback from the founders and teaching artists who modeled for them the appropriate ways to give constructive feedback. Shortly after the modeling, the young filmmakers began to ask their own questions to help the storytellers unpack their tales. AJ said she would ask her peers, "Like one of the questions we would ask is, like, what is your intent to that story?" Ella added quickly, "And another one would be instead of saying—I don't like this idea—You would just say, 'You could improve it by…' or 'A suggestion I would tell you is…' It's always—you could always improve on this idea." Fez contributed by describing the importance of clarity in the pitch session:

> The pitch session taught us to really get your ideas down and try to really clarify your ideas, and the thing that really helped was it really taught you how to express your emotions or your ideas more through words.

In addition to expressing emotions through words the pitch allowed the students to expand on their ideas and hear perspectives from other students. All participants mentioned the cinema program created a safe space for students to share their ideas.

Creating a Safe Space

Fez asserted that the pitch session that occurred in the fall semester was the first stage for establishing a safe space for the students:

> I think the safe space was really created for me, at least, through all the pitching sessions started by Polo and Jessica. You know, especially as teenagers, freshman year, we like to kind of make fun, and they [Polo and Jessica] kind of taught us that when it's serious, and to set the tone, really, for the rest of it, and just—it's fun to mess around, but this person really needs some like structured feedback. If you went up [to pitch], we already knew that you weren't going to get made fun of. But you would actually have people that would expand or help you expand your ideas, would give you, like, input or even like challenge your ideas.

Fez continued:

> It just made this space where even when we interacted with other students, it was more like, what's the point of making fun? Now we just have a safe space where all of our ideas are really understood, and we get a lot of feedback, and it's just—it's a safe environment for all your ideas, or even doubts, or anything really. And I think it was for me created through the pitching session.

Trevor talked about the space in the classroom:

> We don't have to worry about anyone judging us because we're all different. We all come from different backgrounds. And so, it's always nice to be able to work with other people, and if anything, it makes us all better, working with other people.

For AJ, the safe space was not only in the classroom but had grown with her peers outside the school day:

> For me, it's like a safe space because everybody in that class knows like what to do and, like, what, like, everybody wants to do. And for me, like, I started growing since

> freshman year, when we started having like outings outside of that class. So, it just grew on and on, when new people in the class started coming in, and we would like all talk, and have fun, and just bring it back to, like, the class.

Ana described the classroom space as a transformation over the year:

> It was more like you're in this certain group of these certain people the entire year, so you learn to go really close with them. You develop strong friendships with them, and it gets to the point where you can be yourself. Like you know no one is going to judge you, because you've all seen how each other is.

From the conversation, it was evident that the initial conditions for sharing ideas, expanding on ideas, and receiving feedback came from the tone and structures set in place for the pitch session, and through that involvement, the CCCP students kept that nonjudgmental culture and used it to commit to support one another's growth.

The pitching session went through a sequence of rewrites until the stories were shared for a classroom vote. The students decided which three stories to choose to focus on for the rest of the year. AJ described how she listened to pitches and decided if the speaker had painted enough of an image for her to support: "Well from what I see, it's like—if I see someone pitch, and I can see like an image, and like I can see a story behind it, I would like pick that story." Trevor added:

> We kind of selected our few favorites of what we think could make a very good story. Then those writers would move on, make a little bit, expand on it a bit more, and give us more details, like maybe characters or what kind of setting and everything, or what struggles they might go through. Then we pick whatever one kind of feels conformable doing, or feel like they're more confident they can make the story the best story possible.

The structure that the CCCP curriculum created in the classroom allowed for students to take ownership over the stories they produced. First, by eliciting stories from each participant, then by having them pitch their stories to the class, then through a collective democratic process that reduced the choices to three stories that would be produced in class during the year. Fez summarized the process that would eventually lead them to joining a production team:

> Yeah, so everybody will write kind of an idea that they have. They'll grow on that idea. We'll do a pitch. We'll listen to everyone's pitch, give feedback, and usually, we'll even have like a second pitch, so the person, after they've already expanded the ideas, and they have a little bit more time to think, will do a re-pitch. We'll get, like, a final pitch. We'll choose usually like three ideas, and we'll get together. We know, if you see that image, then obviously, you're going to want to be on that team. So, you'll be on that group. The groups will separate. And then you'll just assign roles based on your interest and what you like. And we'll just start production.

After the stories have been chosen, the young filmmakers build their production teams.

Creating Creators Cinema Project: The Production Team

Once the three stories were collectively chosen for the year, the CCCP teaching artists had the young filmmakers decide which story they wanted to be involved in producing. Trevor shared:

> Normally, kind of split it up to who likes what story, and more often, it's a pretty equal split of the group. There might be like one or two on opposite sides, but like it's pretty good. And sometimes like halfway through the year, they might switch teams, but that's, like, very rare.

Fez offered that choosing the story provided a range of opportunities, sharing a collective visioning of the story, discovering a new role to play on the team, and building ownership over a shared production.

> Yeah, I think it's usually just like if you—if you like that story and you can really envision it, then you'll go with that story. And that's the really good thing about it, because you know that everyone on your group sees the same vision, or they want the—They understand the emotions. They understand the story, and they could even help you expand on it, because they also have their own ideas to go with it, too. So, like, it'll usually be like, "Oh, I like your story. I know I could capture the frame of what you're trying to, like I already have the shots in my head." So, then they'll be like, "Oh, I'd like to be a cinematographer, director, whatever, for your group." And it'll just usually play out like that.

All the participants in the focus group gave a unified affirming nod with the description of the formation of the production groups. The excitement and noise in the group rose when asked about the roles they played in their respective production teams.

Creating Creators Cinema Project: The Roles

During the first semester, while students were writing their stories to prepare for their pitch, the CCCP teaching artists introduced the variety of roles needed to complete a production (see Appendix I). The young filmmakers learned the name, purpose, and function of the roles, such as screenwriter, producer, director, actors, and gaffers just to name a few. The focus group participants were either midway through their second or third year in the program. The young

filmmakers spoke of their roles they played with authority and described how they came about choosing their different roles in their production teams (see Appendix I).

Sara felt that the roles emerged when they first built their production team, focusing on students' interests:

> I personally think that the roles come when you're first building your production team. That's when you really find out who has, like, the most interest in whatever roles there are available, so like, cinematographer, director, producer. Like, you'll get some information on them, and you'll know more about what they really mean in the industry.

Sara added that she preferred to direct: "Personally, I like directing more because I feel like I have more control over what is happening."

Ana described the process in her production team as one where they identified the strengths of their team and decided what roles fit best for the production:

> The way we assigned it was more of seeing what everyone was kind of better at, like their strengths. So yeah, for example, mine was more writing based, so I wrote scripts. It was—it was kind of easier on mine. But as for some people, it was more camera work. For some people, it was storyboarding, because people were artists. So, they just kind of took the storyboarding more. And others worked really well with sound.

Ana found as student discovered their areas of interest, the needs of the production were fulfilled.

Trevor added to the group conversation by describing the process his production team used to decide on the roles for their story:

> Yeah, I guess, like, how me and my group kind of said is, like, we all kind of sat down, and we're like, okay, who feels most confident and comfortable doing which roles? And some people naturally went to more music, so they had kind of went to the music, for background stuff. Some went to sound. Some went to the camera. Some went to, like, being, like, crew members, to help out, and stuff. And me myself, I kind of gravitated more towards the writing, and more directing aspect, because I've kind of done similar things like that in past years. And as time went on, I've kind of learned stuff from my team members, since they've gotten good at all of their roles. I've kind of become somewhat of a jack-of-all-trades kind of thing.

Trevor highlighted in his description, one of the strengths of working in a collaborative team, knowing one's strengths and also learning from one another to improve areas for growth.

Ella described her production team's process as their strength coming from their prior knowledge:

> I would say that how you choose your roles is what—is what you know best, and what you feel most comfortable with, but sometimes it will, kind of most of the times, it's what you know. So, from myself, I know more—I know more camera, so I would feel more comfortable taking camera, and sometimes, I would take role as an actor, because I know I like to do that.

Ella shared that another aspect of the collaborative teams, roles seemed fluid and students were able to experiment with different roles in the production team.

Fez spoke more intuitively around the executive functions in managing the production team. Fez spoke directly to the observational part of deciding roles:

> Well, there's a lot of roles. I mean, you have your directors, cinematographers, actors, gaffers, even, grips, writers, writing supervisors. It's a super long list. But the way I usually like to—because I usually like to have an input at least to how the groups are going to go—but the way I like to kind of assign roles is seeing, before we start choosing the groups, who's interested in what. If I see someone like playing around with the camera a lot, then you already know—and so it's a learning space. You don't necessarily have to know—you don't have to know the equipment in order to do that. So like if there's someone who I just see always acting or just messing around, or even improv, because there's people just like take on weird roles and stuff. You'll see them kind of like—I don't want to say talk to themselves, but you can see them really getting into kind of just making up their own thing. So, if I saw someone like that, then I'd really—an actor. And if I saw someone on their computer a lot who really liked to spend time on a computer, then music or editing. And so I think choosing the roles should be based more on what someone's interested in, because you don't always know. We've always been taught, you don't have to know what you're doing, just as long as you have the passion of learning, you'll learn it, because it's a learning space. Yeah.

Fez reminded the group that the process of the CCCP experience was to learn. In his description of the roles for the production team, he highlighted that curiosity and personality were strong factors in deciding the role the young filmmakers played in the production team.

Creating Creator Cinema Project: The Production

During the next part of the focus group conversation I asked the young filmmakers about the process of production and some of the common struggles and successes they experienced

throughout the process. The CCCP students' responses almost exclusively revolved around collaboration as both a struggle and as a success.

Struggles

Trevor shared that off-task behaviors often slowed down the production process. Trevor commented, "Some of the struggles I guess we went through, or me and my group, was sometimes people kind of got too carried away with messing around, and so some—that kind of slowed our production a bit." Trevor added when the off-task behavior occurred, the team would intervene and remind the production team of the time line to complete the film:

> And when like the other team members would say, "Guys, come on. Let's go get on track." Most of the time, they would, but there was always like once or twice when they just wouldn't, because they just for whatever reason never wanted to work that day. They wanted to have a free period. And so what happened was we kind of had to slow production and kind of, like, talk it out a bit. And we managed to get through it, because like stuff happens, and so it was open, and it was—we all talked to each other pretty well.

Ella commented on the difficulty of having competing visions of the story and having to resolve those differences through dialogue and negotiation:

> One of the struggles that I would say also, too, is that we—You have directors, so what if that director has a different, like, vision for the project, and what if the cinematographer has a different idea, like, vision for the project? So, you would have to—you would have to collaborate with the cinematographer and director, so it'd be like, "I want it like this." And, because you can't just be like, "Oh, no, I don't like this." You would have to take

> the suggestion from, like, everybody to see like what would like—if the director liked the idea.

Fez synthesized the ideas shared and consolidated the struggles as issues of teamwork:

> Yeah, well, for a lot of the problems I had was teamwork, having to get really like your whole team working all the time, and having everybody collaborate, because sometimes you have conflicts between—maybe not even just the whole production, but like two people, and you won't notice it, but you'll notice that they're not working well together. Sometimes that would be hard. And then especially when it's like the last month of filming, where everybody's just trying to get everything done, and then it sort of feels like everybody hates each other at that point. But I think the struggle is really just collaborating all together, expressing what you want to get done, how you want to get it done, and just collaborating with the rest of your team.

Although most focus group participants agreed with collaboration being one of the hardest aspects of the production team to overcome, AJ offered the perspective of the individual. AJ felt she struggled taking on different roles in her production team. AJ commented:

> Well, one of the struggles I had was, like, the image of shooting, and, like, the whole storyboard thing wasn't really for me. So, I just would like tell people what to do, but, like, I'm still like growing on that. But like—I don't know. And also like editing, like editing skills is not for me, but I'm trying to do that.

AJ recognized her personal struggles with storyboarding and editing but offered the caveat that she was still growing and learning in those respective roles.

Successes

The focus group conversation shifted to the successes the young filmmakers felt working in their production teams. There was a collective sigh and subsequent laughter when Ana announced, “When it’s a wrap!”, however, as the focus group participants added to the list of successes they created a beautiful image of a CCCP collaborative process.

When addressing success during production, Sara concisely offered, “When we all agree on the same idea or the same vision.” Fez elaborated on the unified vision,

> I remember this one scene we were doing, and we – all of us didn't really talk about it too much, but somehow, all of us, like without even really realizing it, all of us were thinking the exact same like way we wanted the scene to go. And so we kind of walked out, and we were about to start like talking about how we wanted the scene to go, and it was pretty much on like how to go. And it was like, well, that's nice. Let's go. The scene will be over pretty quick.

The combined positive murmuring captured a shared experience for all of the focus group participants. The unified vision and execution of the scene seemed to be the epitome of the collaborative experience. Trevor offered specific detail about a successful executed by his production team.

> A success we had was in our movie freshman year, we had a sort of choreographed fight scene, somewhat, and it got improvised a little bit, because the actors couldn't memorize it fully, because we didn't have enough time to be in there, go through everything. And so, it was really nice to be able to like – it all managed to work out in the end. One of our actors, at the time, he had a broken leg. He was one of our main actors and stuff. And

> since he's going to be like one of the ones that are supposed to be running around or whatever, we changed the script, and managed to work around it, that – we just changed two of the characters, so instead of his character be the one running around, it was the other character doing it. And so that was pretty nice, to be able to do that.

The production team had to problem solve. Although the scene had to change because of external factors, they worked collaboratively to rewrite and sequence the new scene to fit their storyline. Frank joins the conversation by adding,

> One thing, especially when you're directing, that's always like a really good feeling to end the day with is capturing the like emotion of a scene so perfectly. And it's nice. It feels so great, because you're like, oh, my God, that was so great. And so just capturing whatever emotion you're really aiming for in that scene is probably like one of the greatest things to leave with.

AJ agrees with the addition and returns back to the initial comment of the production being a wrap,

> One of the successes is just really just finishing the project, like the thing, and just seeing it like, and seeing what we have done. Like it has like – yeah, it might not be as good, but like we're still working on it to make it like perfect, and that's what like my success is, like just finishing it and just seeing it.

In recounting their successes, the young filmmakers describe the production process, having a shared vision of the story, completing scenes that are well planned and capture the emotion of the scene, completing the production, and viewing the film publicly. In their brief descriptions, the young filmmakers paint the story behind the second semester of the CCCP program.

Creating Creators Cinema Project: Working with The Teaching Artists

I was not able to observe the classroom instruction directly for the study. Consequently, I asked the focus group participants directly to tell me about their interactions with the teaching artists in their CCCP classroom. The 11th-grade students worked with Polo and Jessica for two consecutive years, while the 10th-grade students worked with Maria and Alan for one full year. AJ was the first participant to talk about the interactions she had with the CCCP founders:

> Honestly, I think it's—They're so way different from teachers at school because they actually see something in you. They treat us—They don't treat us like high school kids. They treat us like we could be out there in the real industry, like adults.

Ella added:

> Piggybacking on what she said, they—Well, I'll always remember what Polo told us, like, the first, like, year that we did this. He's all like, "You guys are not high school kids. You guys are young filmmakers," that "We will never treat you like high school kids. You guys are young filmmakers," that "You guys can do this. Because high school kids, they wouldn't take this so seriously as you guys have been doing this."

Sara corrected the group quickly by stating, "Sometimes not even young filmmakers. Sometimes just actual filmmakers in the industry." Ana shared, "because they treat you how you are expected to be treated at an actual industry, and they treat you with the utmost respect."

Ella also explained the supportive environment the teaching artists created in the classroom:

> So they would just like treat us as young filmmakers, so they would help us in any way they can. And if—Sometimes they would just sit down, and they would be like, if you

guys need any help, we'll stay here. If you want help, just call us over. But we would try to figure it out on ourselves, and when we couldn't, they would help us out.

According to Ella, the teaching artists would make the environment supportive but would allow the young filmmakers to struggle and attempt to figure out problems before offering guidance.

Trevor recalled a few instances during lunch where Alan would see him working on a script revision and help:

> And I remember like some days I'd be working on the script at lunch with the other writer, and Alan would come over and kind of read it over, and he would give us some feedback on stuff maybe that kind of seemed a little weak in the storyline, and we'd manage to improve it. He never really gave us—like, told us to change it. He just gave us ideas of like different ways we could strengthen, different stories we can go with, or how maybe we'd want the character arc to go, or just general, like, story.

Trevor shared that the guidance was never forced or mandated. Instead, it was offered as a possible avenue to take to improve the storyline.

Fez answered the question by contrasting a teacher he would encounter in a traditional school setting with the teaching artists of CCCP:

> I think one of the big things that really separates them [CCCP teaching artists] from a regular teacher is that when they, when they really say that they're kind of there for you if you need them, they really are, and not just for when it comes to like workflow, but even just for advice. Because—and that's I think the big difference even in their title, instead of just being called like "teachers," they're mentors, because they really guide you without really putting—They don't put anything like in front of you and tell you, "Okay,

> you have to do it this way, this way, this way." They give you, like, they give you the idea and tell you, "Okay, shape it and personalize it. Make it your own way," rather than the teacher telling you, "You have to do this" or "You have to meet this requirement or that requirement" and this and that.

Fez also stressed how the flexibility of the teaching artists' schedules allowed for more personalized support during their production time:

> And like, I said, when they tell you they're really there for you, even if you need help for something that'll take like an hour past the time, or 30 minutes after time, or if you need, like, a Saturday to film, they'll be there, and they'll work, like, in every way they can to really give you that space, and to really help you with your ideas, to get your production done and do it your way.

Fez also highlighted the confidence he gained from the support the CCCP teaching artists provided to the young filmmakers:

> And if anyone wants to change your thing, then they'll just go out there and defend you to like the fullest extent. Like, "No, he knows what he's doing. He's got what he's got down," and they really put that confidence in you.

Sara concluded the conversation by stating that during post-production, when the film was due, "We had a lot of weight on our shoulders, and the great thing about it was that they were there for us when we needed that extra help." The focus group participants described a classroom environment of accountability, support, and trust. All the participants offered an affirming response towards the positive classroom environment created by the CCCP teaching artists.

Creating Creators Cinema Project: The Stories

Ana shared a story of a teenage Latinx girl seeking acceptance from her family. The traditional values of the family were in conflict with the young woman's journey in life:

> Mine was more of a—You know, a teenage girl who's, like, trying to get acceptance from her family, even though she has acceptance of all her like other friends and stuff, and it's hard for her, because they are a Hispanic family, so the standards are like pretty much set for her, but she's kind of going off that. And in the end, you know, everything turns out well and stuff, but it's the journey along that like really like interferes with it and develops the story.

Fez and Frank participated in the same production teams for two years. They described two stories, one from their ninth-grade year and one from their 10th-grade year. The first one concerned people who live on the margins, unaccepted by their peer groups either because of life choices or lack of popularity. The second film revolved around a dead girl who did not know she was dead. Fez described the film:

> Well, my freshman year, we did a film basically just on, just people not being accepted, I guess, like it was a homosexual couple, and also another student who wasn't, was kind of like, he wasn't one of those like popular kids, and so him not being accepted really into the crowd. And then last year, sophomore year, we did a film about girl who just couldn't be seen, so she was dead. She didn't know she was dead. And so she came to the realization that she was dead.

Sara explained her story of a teenage girl who reunited with her father after being abandoned by him after 10 years. They reunited in a boxing gym:

> It's about a 15-year-old girl who doesn't really have a father, because when she was five years old, he abandoned her mother and herself. And she eventually starts getting picked on, and she wants to defend herself, so she enters a boxing type of gym. And she lives in poverty, so she doesn't have as much money. So, one of the boxing coaches offers to make it free. And throughout the whole story, she ends up finding out that her coach is her father.

Ella shared the tragic story of the loss of a younger sister and the older brother who could not overcome the loss:

> So it was a little, a little brother and a little sister—I mean, a big brother and a little sister. And they were inseparable. They were, like, he was, they were like, they loved each other so much. So, he went to the little sister's soccer game, because the mom, I think, couldn't go. So, he went to the little sister's soccer game, and during the soccer game, the little sister had an accident, like, she kept on, it kept on reoccurring. So every soccer game where something would happen to her, she would get a concussion, and after like, there was one certain one that hit her really hard, and she passed away. And since the brother and—they were really close, he like, he couldn't like, he couldn't take the news that the sister had passed away, so like he would imagine her everywhere. Like even though she already has passed away, she—he would still imagine her, like, "Look, Mom, she's right there." So it would be like he couldn't bear it. So he would imagine her. So that was one of the stories from last year.

The focus group meeting was meant to get an overview of the program and find themes that connected with the interviews of the CCCP founders and teaching artists. I would have liked to

have met with production teams for each of the stories shared and asked the production team members to help me document the creative process from beginning to end. I would have liked to hear about the development of their stories, the inspiration behind the stories, the evolution of the stories, and the contributions that each production team member made for the final product. I will have to leave that for future studies of the CCCP program.

Creating Creators Cinema Project: The Student Team

Here I wanted to include the semi-structured interview I held with two CCCP young filmmakers who worked directly with Polo and Jessica developing a documentary that shines a light on the struggle undocumented youth have in the United States. The two students I interviewed chose to identify themselves as Aye and Bee. Both students, at the time of the interview, had worked together for two and a half years and were in the 11th grade. The selection of these two students to interview was intentional. I found that their project was emblematic of the philosophy of the CCCP, and, in particular, the philosophy of the CCCP founders, Polo and Jessica.

Their Story

During the summer of 2017, an opportunity was made available to Aye and Bee. A media organization that spotlights Latino Culture and Politics was looking for teenagers to apply for their paid internship program. The network wanted to hire Latino youth to help build stories to inspire, inform, and connect more Latino youth to brands and content developers. Aye and Bee were the only ones from the school to take advantage of the opportunity. Aye remembered, "When we heard about the internship, we got really excited. We were the only two students in

our class that actually signed up and came to the meetings." Bee added, "We had to go through a long process of interviews," but in the end they could not be hired.

Aye recalled hearing the information from the organization: "We were told by the company that they would not hire us because we were undocumented and since it was a paid internship, we couldn't get paid with them." Bee interjected, "We're just trying to get our dreams out there everything. We're just trying to show people that we have talent and not just because we're not from here means we don't have talent." Aye added, "We were rejected. It affected basically everybody in our community because we had such high hopes and they had such high hopes for us." This incident became the backdrop of their documentary project.

The news hit both students hard. They described talking to Polo and Jessica and feeling defeated by the experience. Polo and Jessica asked the two students what they wanted to do about it, they students decided to tell their story. They felt that many residents of the United States were unaware of the plight of the undocumented student. They wanted to elevate their voices by telling the story of lost opportunities for undocumented youth. Aye described the motivation behind the documentary:

> The film that we're working on is about issues and struggles. About what we face as undocumented citizens and how we are pushed away from being able to reach what we know we can and might be able to reach.

Bee added on to the description, "It's supposed to be, well, it's the American Dream everyone wants and it's just the opportunities are taken away just for a single paper."

Their Plan

Once the two students started working on the documentary, they made plans to interview community members, elected officials, and prominent figures who could help tell the story of the lost opportunities many undocumented immigrants face in the United States. Although they had experienced a few barriers, they had been using their contacts to hear more stories to shed light on the injustices they see as undocumented youth.

The also wanted to gather voices of fellow youth who have been kept from growth-experience opportunities because of their immigration status. Bee said:

> Since we already have perspectives of an adult, we also have the perspective of kids, kids that came here recently, and we pulled them aside and we asked them what the U.S. means for them. They all say the same thing: "the land of opportunities."

By providing multiple perspectives, the two students hoped to enlighten people who may not have regular access to undocumented immigrants and show that regardless of their immigration status they have common goals: to live the American Dream.

Aye and Bee worked with Polo and Jessica for two years, telling fictional stories based on real experiences. They had not learned about filming a documentary. Initially, they thought they would just film raw footage of interviews and edit them together. Aye talked about the planning: "It's a lot of planning. It's a lot of not getting people to say what you want them to say but it's just getting emotion outta people to tell a story." Bee added, "If you want more emotion on it, then that's what you need kinda thing. You need the lights to make it more dramatic." Along with visualizing the story, the students both added that planning meant scheduling

interviews: “It’s just a bunch of scheduling, a lot of scheduling.” Aye and Bee used their networks, including the CCCP founders, to begin their scheduling work.

Their Struggles

Aye and Bee described their documentary project as a struggle. Finding time after and before school and on the weekends had become difficult. Over the summer they admitted to being able to dedicate more concentrated time on the documentary, but since school started, their time had become limited. Regardless, they pushed on, hoping to change the community for the better.

Another struggle they mentioned was finding people to interview who were undocumented. Aye stated, “We wanted to interview, like, classmates, but there’s a lot of classmates that have been afraid to speak. They don’t wanna get deported.” Bee sympathized, “It’s understandable, like, we have fear of that as well. That’s why we are not putting ourselves in the documentary.” Bee said she told potential interviewees, “If we want the story we’ll help ‘em, make sure they don’t get shown in the camera. If they don’t want their voice recognized, we can easily change the way they sound.” The political climate after the 2016 elections left many undocumented students afraid to talk openly about their immigration status. Both students shared that many potential interviewees canceled on them last minute. Bee shared, “We planned this [interview] and we have nothing else to do so we would just, like, just sit there, probably go over the footage that we have.”

An internal struggle both students faced was their own insecurities approaching this project. Aye discussed how his internal voice the discouraged his progress:

> One of the things that kept running through my head was, oh, it's not gonna turn out this way. People are gonna be disappointed in us. We're gonna let our community down. People had such high hopes for us and we're just gonna let them down.

Regardless, as more appointments were kept, and progress on the documentary continued, Aye reminded himself:

> When I looked back I saw that we were accomplishing great things that have, our story there. We kept meeting with people over and over again so it really, helped to just keep a positive mindset instead of just going to the darkness.

Both students wanted to produce a documentary that would humanize undocumented youth to the rest of the nation, to build awareness of the struggles they experience daily.

Their Successes

While peer interviews were an area for struggle for Aye and Bee, they were most proud of completing interviews with a local judge from their community, a school board member, and an undocumented community member who graduated from Harvard College as an undergraduate student and later as a graduate student in Harvard's School of Education. Aye shared:

> The biggest success that we've had is getting [prominent figure] because she's also experienced it but not in the film industry, necessarily. She's experienced it outside so it's not just what's happening to people in the film industry so it's happening to everyone.

Aye continued to describe the interview: "During the interview she got really emotional. She started crying at one point and she told us more about other people that she knew that wanted to stay in the dark." Bee added that as the awareness of their documentary spread, they were able to make greater connections to tell their story: "People around us would say, if you need an

interview, you're welcome to get this person, and I'll get you there, and if you want to talk to this schoolboard member, they would give me their information." Bee continued listing the interviews they completed: "So far, we've got one of the school board members, a judge in the local courts." Aye added that the school board member knows the issue and wants students in her district to get the best out of their education but does not know to support her undocumented youth:

> We talked to her about what happened and she basically told us that she sees it a lot with students in our district and how it affects every student here and she wants us to have, like, a better future and she wants to be able to help us but there's not much she can do.

After speaking to the school board member and sharing their story with other community members, Bee recalled feeling joy that people wanted to hear their story:

> We scheduled a buncha stuff and everything and just thinking about it, it's like, you're happy about it. That people wanna hear and see this doc because you don't normally see two high school students wanting to do something huge for their community. They [the community members] wanna know about it. They wanna know when it's gonna be able to be shown on places and everything and that to me is the success and that's what I think we want is for people to hear about this and spread the word.

During this semi-structured interview, the two students were still in the production phase of their documentary. This project was a special project both students took on as a way to create dialogue and understanding around the topic of lost opportunities for undocumented youth in the United States. As of the writing of this chapter, I have not seen the final product.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to answer two research questions:

- To what extent do the participants involved in the CCCP establish the conditions for critical pedagogy?
- In what ways do participants characterize the impact CCCP had on their lives?

Student data provided more answers to the research questions. Furthermore, one can characterize their experiences and testimony using the chosen theoretical frameworks. As in previous chapters, I used inductive analysis to read the salient domains that emerged from the focus group and semi-structured interview to discuss the extent the conditions for critical pedagogy were established in the classroom setting. I then summarized the impact that the CCCP had on the students' lives.

In analyzing the transcripts from both the focus group and the team interview, there was clear overlap of language found in Chapters 3 and 4. My use of an inductive analysis provided a structure that allowed me to make sense of the data and answer my research questions (Hatch, 2002; see Figure 4).

I asked students about their experiences in the CCCP classrooms. I asked them to describe the tasks they were asked to complete. I asked about their interactions with the teaching artists. I also asked about the structures created in the CCCP classroom to support the completion of their projects. My first research question asked about the extent to which the participants in the CCCP established the conditions for critical pedagogy. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, during my first read through, I identified elements that are found in critical pedagogy,

constructivist learning theory, and situated learning theory. Domains created for the theoretical frameworks can be found in Table 1.

Salient domains emerged in step three of the induction analysis process and I assigned a code to those domains. The salient domains for further analysis are in Table 7. In my analysis, using the lens of the three theoretical frameworks, the data that emerged more salient for the students came from constructivist learning theory and situated learning theory. However, there are multiple overlaps with critical pedagogy that developed in the focus group conversations that I highlight later in the chapter.

Table 7
Salient Domains Supported by Data: The Young Filmmakers

Constructivist Learning Theory	Situated Learning Theory	Critical Pedagogy
• Complex Learning Environment • Social Negotiation • Multiple Perspectives • Student-Centered Learning	• Community of Practice	• Cultural Politics • Historicity of Knowledge • Praxis: The Alliance of Theory and Practice

Constructivism

The young filmmakers described the writing process at the beginning of the semester to prepare them to present their pitch. Every single CCCP student stood in front of the classroom and shared their narrative. During this process, students received feedback, revised their initial pitch, received more feedback, then decided collectively on the three stories to produce for the year. As they created their production teams, the young filmmakers identified their strengths, negotiated the roles they wanted to play in their team, and collaborated on producing a visual story, a film to present for public consumption. As the focus group described their classroom experience, the strongest emergent theme was that of constructivism.

As described in Chapter 1, Driscoll (1994) offered five conditions for constructivist learning. Four of the five conditions emerged from the data of the classroom description by both the focus group and the team interview. The complex learning environment was presented in the first days, the young filmmakers were expected to produce a film for the school community. The public display of work added the authentic piece that the young filmmakers discussed as a relief and success. AJ described the feeling at the end of the school year:

> One of the successes is just really just finishing the project, like the thing, and just seeing it, like, and seeing what we have done. Like, it has, like, yeah, it might not be as good, but, like, we're still working on it to make it like perfect, and that's what like my success is, like just finishing it and just seeing it.

The finished product was not completed on their own; it took their production team to work together, to share a vision of the story and to produce the final product.

When the students were organizing their production teams, the next two conditions of constructivism emerge: social negotiation and multiple perspectives. After students decided which of the three stories they wanted to produce, teams were formed, and roles were negotiated. The focus group members provided a variety of ways roles were decided: interests, strengths, and curiosities. At no point in the conversation did any students mention being forced to take on any role. Instead the negotiation went on throughout the production process, where roles could change, or roles could strengthen. Interestingly, the social negotiation did not solely pertain to the establishing of the roles. Many participants discussed adding their ideas and perspectives to the storyline. The production team structure provided the opportunity for students to share their perspective on how the story should develop. Trevor commented on holding team members

accountable for completing the task while Ella discussed negotiating competing vision of a story. The interpersonal skills to negotiate and offer a different perspective were strengthened throughout the year. All decisions were team decisions.

The last condition for a constructivist learning environment, according to Driscoll (1994), is a student-centered learning environment. When asked what stories they produced, students shared stories that connected directly to many of their lives: being accepted by family or friends, dealing with a traumatic event, the feeling of invisibility, abandonment, and the struggles of undocumented youth. Their stories were at the center of their learning. The teaching artist used film as a tool for students to unpack events in their lives and use the arts as an outlet for their emotions.

Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory was the next lens I used to answer the questions of the extent the participants involved in the CCCP established the conditions for critical pedagogy. The domain that emerged from the focus group and semi-structured interviews was community of practice. In Chapter 3, the CCCP founders discussed how they prepared students to engage with the work of filmmaking: they must treat the students as young filmmakers. The teaching artists reiterated that sentiment, voicing the belief that students could accomplish the task when provided with the environment to create. The young filmmakers shared that their experience in the CCCP classroom was drastically different than their other high school classes. The difference they described provided the context for creating a community of practice.

Ella described her introduction to the filmmaking community:

> Well, I'll always remember what Polo told us like the first, like, year that we did this. He's all like, "You guys are not high school kids. You guys are young filmmakers," that "We will never treat you like high school kids. You guys are young filmmakers, that you guys can do this."

Ella continued with her description, "So they would just like treat us as young filmmakers, so they would help us in any way they can." Sara went a step further and shared, "Sometimes not even young filmmakers, sometimes just actual filmmakers in the industry." In their depiction of the CCCP classroom, the focus group participants wore the title of filmmaker proudly. They belonged to the community of practice and completed the shared task with guidance from the CCCP teaching artists.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is not a single method of instruction, instead it is an approach to instruction that seeks to challenge the dominant culture and provide opportunities for students to confront systems of oppression in our society (Darder et al. 2009; Giroux, 2001; Giroux, 2011; McLaren, 2015; Morrow, 2002). Of the nine philosophies of critical pedagogy presented in the introduction of Darder et al.'s (2009) *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*, three emerged in the focus group conversation with the CCCP students as well as through the team interview. The young filmmakers alluded to the domains as they described their classroom experiences.

Cultural Politics

Cultural politics, according to Darder et al. (2009), aims to challenge the asymmetry of power that exist in the institutions of schooling. In addition, the focus is to support the empowerment of traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised students.

During the focus group conversation, many of the participants voiced the importance of the classroom environment created by the CCCP teaching artists, and, in particular, the students' role as young filmmakers. Although this may seem like a simple change of title, for the students it meant that they were given the responsibility of managing their own roles in the classroom, equals not only to their peers but to the teaching artists in the classroom. Sara punctuated this point when she added, "Sometimes not even young filmmakers, sometimes just actual filmmakers in the industry." The inclusion of the group of students into a community of practice broke down the traditional hierarchy found in a classroom setting and allowed for student to feel empowered to produce their own films.

Coupled with the disruption of the traditional teacher-student hierarchy, CCCP students discussed how their voices mattered in the development of their stories and learning in the CCCP setting. Ana described her learning by being more decisive and not allowing others to disparage her life decisions:

> I guess something that I really learned from this was you can't let anyone else decide for you. Like, you have to decide your own things, you know? You have to voice your own opinion. You can't let anyone else, like, put you down for something.

When Aye and Bee were not hired for the paid internship at the nonprofit organization, their impulse was to create a documentary that voiced the concerns of the undocumented youth in the community. Their effort to give voice to the voiceless embodied the concept of cultural politics.

Historicity of Knowledge

In the retelling of the films the young filmmakers produced, the student-participants spoke of struggle, abandonment, and the plight of the undocumented student, these stories provide the contextual background of their lived experiences. According to Darder et al. (2009), "students and the knowledge they bring into the classroom must be understood as historical—that is, being constructed and produced within a particular historical moment and under particular historical conditions" (p. 10). The teaching artists in the classroom did not alter their stories; instead, the young filmmakers used their lived experiences to enhance or change the stories they told.

Praxis: The Alliance of Theory and Practice.

> According to Darder et al. (2009):
>
> All human activity is understood as emerging from an on-going interaction of reflection, dialogue, and action—namely praxis—and as praxis, all human activity requires theory to illuminate it and provide a better understanding of the world as we find it and as it might be. (p. 13)

All participants at some point or another in the focus group conversation or interview alluded to trying things out, whether it was manipulating the camera, using the editing software, trying out different speech patterns or revising a script. The young filmmakers described how they reflected on their common vision for the story and how to implement their plans for their scenes. When asked about the teaching artists' involvement during those times of trying things out, the focus group participants said the teaching artists asked questions and guided them to figure things out.

Aye described how the CCCP teaching artists would approach her when she was looking at new equipment:

> Polo and Jessica, it was, like, "Okay, here it is, you tell me how it works and I'll just stand back here, and if you do something wrong, I'm gonna tell you, but I'm not gonna tell you how to fix it".

Ella described the support as close but not intrusive:

> And if, sometimes they would just sit down, and they would be like, "If you guys need any help, we'll stay here. If you want help, just call us over." But we would try to figure it out on ourselves, and when we couldn't, they would help us out.

It was in these structured opportunities where the young filmmakers were given time to reflect and put their new understandings in practice or seek guidance to continue that praxis was evident in their learning.

Creating Creators Cinema Project Impact on Young Filmmakers

Student told their stories. The films they completed with CCCP, the friendships they made throughout the process, and what they learned from working alongside the filmmaking professionals were important. The impact they felt working with CCCP follows. As the focus group conversation emerged, and after reading the transcripts three times, I categorized the impact that CCCP had on the young filmmakers' lives into five sections. The young filmmakers discussed managing their emotions, working in teams, time management, writing and reading, and identity as growth areas they acquired within CCCP.

Managing Your Emotions

Almost all student participants mentioned "managing their emotions" as an important impact from the CCCP. Fez described the importance of managing his emotions: "It's a really big skill that applies not just to the class, but just to life itself." Fez elaborated more on managing his emotions:

> It's managing your personal life and you're, like, I guess, work, life, not mixed together. So, like, at one point, I remember I was really frustrated at school, because I was having some problems, but you learn to not bring those problems there, because in there, you're just yourself. You can express yourself, so you don't have to bring all those bad things, because you're in a safe space. So, you manage your emotions, and you work through it.

AJ added to the conversation, "Managing emotions, like, that is hard for me, but with them [Polo and Jessica], it's just like they taught me, like, just manage your emotions. You're going to get through it." Anna contributed:

> You have to separate your personal life from work life because there are moments where you'll be frustrated because say something happened in another class, or with a friendship or something, and all of a sudden, you're lashing out on your team. Not on purpose, it's just you were frustrated from before. It's not your team's fault you are frustrated.

Trevor connected the impact of managing his emotions to building empathy with his team members:

> Also, the thing is like when you're working with people, maybe they're the one who's going through something. It's always good to be able to kind of keep an open mind and

> try to understand that they're going through something and try to work around it and work with it and kind of go with it.

Ella described how managing her emotions supported her home life:

> It [CCCP] has impacted my personal life. It helps me manage my time and my emotions, because sometimes there's, like, certain topics at my house that, like, make me want to cry, so I'm like, I can't. I have to be strong. It's for my mom. So, like, I have to, like, manage my emotions and like keep strong for the people who surround me sometimes.

Anna shared how managing her emotions had given her the tools she needed to remain calm in difficult situations:

> Well, for me it's like managing your emotions, that really impacted my home life, you know? Of course, life isn't all unicorns and rainbows, obviously, so you kind of need to manage how you feel and how you react when it turns into like a really difficult situation. You can't be freaking out. You can't be hyperventilating, crying. You can't be overreacting on these things. You have to kind of stay calm.

During the collective conversation, many participants talked about the frustration they felt throughout the creative process. They discussed working with others, finalizing decisions and the pressures of completing their films on time. Managing their emotions was one tool they had to support their team projects. More importantly, they described it as a skill they used to manage their lives.

Teamwork

Teamwork was another impact many of the young filmmakers described as a lifelong lesson. Ella shared her thoughts on teamwork: "Another big thing I would say is teamwork,

because you can't really do anything spectacular on your own. You can't just take credit for what they're doing. It involves other people." Anna described how learning how to work with her production team impacted her work in other classes:

> You know, in my geometry class, we get set in teams, and we change about every two weeks, so you work with new people every two weeks. I need to get used to them and work with them and pass this class. It's kind of, you know, I have the practice from filmmaking.

Time Management

Time management was also discussed as an impact that CCCP had on the students. Frank highlighted how managing his time changed the way he schedules his free time:

> And time management, you get home, and instead of just being like, oh, you know, I'm going to relax, you're like, oh, I can set up this amount of time for relaxing, this for homework, and this is that. And like you really develop that skill, and it just becomes a part of your daily life.

Frank mentioned that during the CCCP, they were reminded of how much time they had left in class and to plan out how that time would be used. The reinforcement of the skill became part of his other classes too:

> And same with all you other classes. Like if you finish early, instead of just relaxing, then I could go ahead and do this from another class, so then when I get home, I have this extra amount of time.

Ella described time management as the motivation one needs to finish a project: "Time management, when you have to do a project, and this is due by tomorrow, you've got to go, go,

go." Ella continued to share that as she planned her day, using time as a tool to organize the day: "If you have homework, you have to schedule a certain amount of hours for homework, and like, a certain amount of hours for like relaxing. You've got to, like, manage your time well." Managing time provided many of the focus group participants a tool to help their success in filmmaking and in managing their other responsibilities at school.

Writing and Reading

Three of the participants in the focus group talked about the impact CCCP had on their core academic classes. Trevor shared:

> The whole like writing aspect, the fact that since I did a lot of writing in this one class, essays and like sort of different reports and stuff like that, I can kind of, it was easy because I've been able to write entire stories sometimes in like one sitting. I can pretty easily apply that to maybe writing. Like I'm giving a topic, I can elaborate on that pretty well.

Sara added how she was shocked how the grades in her English class improved after participating with CCCP: "About the writing and the reading, surprisingly, my grades in just testing and my regular English class have improved a lot, because of the strategies and the skills that we've learned and have carried on with us."

Identity

Aye remarked about how CCCP created a space for him to find his voice and feel he belonged to a community:

> The impact the filmmaking class has had on me is it's giving us—it's giving me—a voice. Before I joined the filmmaking class, I was really shy. I was like that weird kid

> that no one wanted to talk to. I just was really antisocial. I still am now but not as much so I think you really gave me a voice and it really affected me personally. I'm out of breath. It really affected me personally because, like, I like to think of it this way, Polo and Jessica are my American Dream. They have not given up on me even though there have been times where I don't feel like I really belong here or I should be doing what I'm doing and they've been there and told me, "Hey, just because you're not from here, just because you don't have papers, doesn't mean that you can't reach this goal. There's these people telling you can't do it but we're gonna show you a way around that so you can reach this level of, I don't know, like, this level of greatness in you that I have not seen in myself."

In addition to feeling supported by the teaching artists in the class, Aye described how the safe space allowed him to overcome depression and his comfort with his identity:

> I think film has really, really impacted my life because I was—when I came into high school I was—struggling with sexual identity, sexual orientation, like, how I wanted to be seen. I was really holding that back but when I came into this class and I saw that there were people out there that actually loved and supported me and just really helped me. I was in a really dark depression and that within this class I came to overcome that, not just because of filming, necessarily, but it was the people in the class and how they showed love instead of what I had been through my whole life, which was neglect and depression.

Bee talked about the impact CCCP had on building up her confidence:

> Filmmaking really impacted my life because now I wanna do something about this filming stuff and I want it as a career and, as Aye said, Polo and Jessica are our American Dream, too. They're making me believe in myself more than I would ever. It's just incredible how there's people still out there that believe in you and know you can have a better future and everything and I mean film has become such a huge part of my life now that I'm really wanting to take it serious and no matter how long it's gonna take, I'm sure I wanna take it to that point because I have Polo and Jessica that are for sure are gonna help me and I know it.

Bee added that her sense of self, her ambition for the future, and her commitment to her family, changed in part, because of CCCP:

> My whole—it's like my—life has been in the photographs, kinda thing. We did a project here about taking pictures, like, down in 4th Street and my life has been crazy. I started out as a girl that didn't know what to do with her life, especially because knowing it was gonna be tough here, first coming, you know, you don't talk any English at all, none at all. I had a tragic childhood memory. I did get abused and, after that, I flew over, then in middle school, you see, I was, like, hopefully, I have good grades, I have to make good outta this and then it comes into high school and they were, like, "Film," and I was, like, "What, like, what?" And then as time passed by and everything and I started to enjoy it more and more and more, it's, like, I'm at least doing here something well outta my life and not wasting out on drugs or something. This distracts me from the real world, you know? Just the single camera, you can do a buncha stuff with it and knowing that we have an amazing teacher that supports us as well, especially me and Aye, she believes a

lot in us and she's also helped us to see that film can lead us in the right path, in the right way, and that's where I wanna be headed to and I was raised by a single mom so I don't wanna be, like, I don't wanna disappoint my mom because they're gonna say, "Oh, you can't raise your daughter." Like I wanna show and prove people that said that that she couldn't raise her daughters on her own, kinda thing, but it's just impacted me because my life is crazy but this is really changing it. It's really making me into a better person. It's not, yeah, just better, better.

Bee shared that changing for the better included her commitment to life:

It must be another thing about film that's making me wanna live. I had issues as well with depression. I would cut myself. I did try to commit suicide a couple of times. Unsuccessful, of course, because I was either stopped, as in almost caught, and I got sent to a hospital because of that. They thought I was crazy. I knew I wasn't crazy. I knew it was probably just a phase I was going through or I don't know that suicide was just in my head all the time and then after the film and everything it was, like, there's a better life out there for me. I don't know why I thought that committing suicide was a better way and I guess just filming made me realize that life can be a movie but you just can't come back or once your life is gone, you're gone, there's no way to come back even if you wanted to.

Trevor in our focus group conversation offered his personal transformation in class:

Okay. So middle school, I never really had too many friends. I was kind of that kind of lone kid that kind of wandered around to maybe different friend groups and stuff like that, kind of always alone and stuff. So, the film class has been such a great experience

> for me, because it's such a good environment. Like everyone knows each other, because we've all spent a year together. We've all built such good friendships, and have like—sometimes people go out, and we'll spend Saturdays, and we'll go around like the block, or whatever. And it's so much fun to be able to have so many friends and stuff like that. And so I've been able to kind of grow I feel like as a person a lot because of all the different experiences and different people I've been able to meet because of the film class.

All participants shared how the community built in the classroom, through the collective creation of the safe space, allowed students to exist without fear of judgement.

Future Plans

While not all students shared an explicit sense-of-self transformation, in describing their future plans, I sensed that their confidence and purpose have been positively altered through the CCCP classroom. The last impact that the students shared with me was about their future plans. Sara talked about feeling more confident in her decision making and recognition of what she wants for herself:

> Personally, I think with just making choices and making the right decisions and choosing what you're going to do wisely, and that has changed a lot since I started the program, because now I know how to kind of—I don't know how to put it in words—but how to really know that I'm interested in something and that I really want to do it. But making decisions and life choices.

Ana shared that her family wanted her to choose a business career but after participating in the CCCP, she found an affinity for writing:

> Well, my parents, since I was a kid, they were always like, okay, you have to be a businessperson, you have to be CEO, so you can make like a bunch of money. And I was always against that. I—hmm-mm. Not the career for me. And then I joined the film program, and I had a really good passion for writing, and now I want to become a screenwriter. And like, of course, again, my parents are still kind of against it, but I'm like, you know, kind of happy, you know. So I hope to pursue that career.

Ella wanted to be an actor but had not disclosed that to her parents yet:

> So ‘'ve never really told my parents like what I really want to do, because sometimes there's the typical Latino parents that, "Oh, yeah, you can't be this because you're not going to make it. You've got to make money, this and that." So it's like—and my mom wouldn't understand, because she's of like the older generation, so she doesn't really understand the business of anything. So she's just like, "Oh, I've got to do this." So she's always been the type that like if you tell her anything, she's just like, "Eh." So that's why I really don't tell her, because it's like she wouldn't know—I don't know how to explain it to her in Spanish. So I'm just like, okay, I'm just, I'll just tell her I'll be a teacher, but once like in college, I'm going to have to tell her the truth, because it's, like, my future. So I just—what I really want to do is become an actor.

Sara was unsure exactly what her future holds but was proud of the opportunities that have opened up to her and she felt that she has a direction to follow:

> As for future planning, before I even started the program, I've always been—it's the irony. I don't like little children, but I wanted to be a teacher. So after joining the program—Well, I mean, not only a teacher, but I've always liked the type of Hollywood,

> the fame, and the entertainment industry. And after starting in the film program, it has really opened a lot of doors, and lots of. well, opportunities also, but more so about like the knowledge, about what you can do in the industry, and what it offers, and what you can basically get out from it.

Fez shared that his father was interested in him becoming an architect. His father was a carpenter and he wanted his son to continue a trajectory that fit with what he knew. Fez however, felt that filmmaking program opened his eyes to another talent and opportunity for his future:

> My personal life was actually like really, really affected. It had a really big impact, because my dad was a carpenter, so his dream for me was to be a carpenter, but then grow into be an architect. And—but the ironic thing was that math was always like the weakest thing—my math scores were always the lowest out of any scores, science, English. And when I started doing the whole film thing, it actually, it was something that felt right, and something that actually felt natural to do, and something I actually enjoyed doing. And so that became something that it just kind of changed my outlook for—that I wanted to do from something that I kind of felt like I was forced to do, and something I knew I wouldn't enjoy doing, to just kind of giving me that opportunity to see and experience something that I actually want to do and enjoy doing.

The impact the focus group and team interview participants shared is demonstrative of the positive conditions created in the classroom by CCCP.

Chapter 6 synthesizes Chapters 3 through 5 and provides learnings from the study, implications for arts education in the K-12 setting, and potential avenues to take for future research.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION

When the filmmaking program first came to the Los Angele School of Global Studies, I was a skeptic. All students had to do was point and shoot, do some editing, and a movie was born. It was not until I became principal of the school that I could witness the environment Creating Creators Cinema Project (CCCP) created for my students. I observed classes, engaged with students throughout their creative process, and saw their stories develop over the school year. In my role as instructional lead for the school, I learned to appreciate the value the CCCP brought to our students. Although the CCCP existed on my campus, due to limited funds and a lack of the up-to-date technology, I could not observe a fully implemented filmmaking pathway.

Focusing my study on Santa Ana Unified at the Southern California High School, where the filmmaking program was fully funded and with an emerging pathway from fourth to 12th grade established, I was able to document the experiences of students moving through the pathway in the high school setting from grades ninth through 11th grade. After interviewing Polo and Jessica, along with the teaching artists and students, I appreciate even more how the program can transforms lives in the classroom. Giroux (2001) stated,

> If citizenship education is to be emancipatory, it must begin with the assumption that its major aim is not "to fit" students into the existing society; instead, its primary purpose must be to stimulate their passions, imaginations, and intellects so that they will be moved to challenge the social, political, and economic forces that weigh so heavily upon their lives. (p. 201)

Although CCCP is still maturing as an organization, the voices of all three participant groups demonstrated that the CCCP classroom stimulates the passions to change the community for the better. All three groups of participants touched on building autonomy and confidence around filmmaking. All three groups voiced the ways in which the CCCP classroom is different than the traditional classroom. All three groups discussed the positive impact participating in the program had on their lives. All three groups mentioned how their lives have transformed for the better.

The intent of this study was to tell the story of a burgeoning company that looks to disrupt traditional educational practices by putting students front and center of their own arts education pathway. No Child Left Behind and Race to The Top policies since 2001 have minimized arts education in favor of more narrowed practices around English language arts and mathematics instruction (Beveridge 2010; Chappell & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2013; Onosko, 2011; Tanner, 2013). The CCCP work from the perspective of the founders, the teaching artists, and the students showed that an arts focused curriculum empowers students to create a future for themselves through the creative arts.

Discussion of Findings

The data gathered from the life histories of the founders, semi-structured interviews of the teaching artists, and focus group discussion with the students revealed several emergent themes discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. In this final chapter I want to synthesize the data and discuss broader findings that emerged through the study.

Transforming the Learning Space

The classroom is transformed to a workspace. Polo and Jessica train their teaching artists to create a space that mimics the workspaces of filmmakers. In addition to transforming the

classroom environment, students are referred to as young filmmakers. The professional identity is built throughout the course of the year. When the students write, they are in a writer's room, where their ideas are welcomed, valued, and constructively critiqued. When the young filmmakers join their production teams, they become screen writers, producers, directors, actors, editors, sound engineers, and crew. They choose their roles and learn how to collaborate as a team to complete a common goal, produce a film for public consumption.

Reinforcing Their Professional Identity

Through workshops, personalized supports, and questioning, the teaching artists reinforce the identity of the young filmmakers. Polo described how after he shows one of his young filmmakers how to use a specific editing function, he uses that student as an expert in the class to support others in the classroom. The learning becomes internalized for the young filmmaker as they support other production teams with their new knowledge. Polo described this approach with the young filmmakers in the classroom,

> So, if we help them to understand through our messages, through our actions, through our helping them connect with each other, to help them making them network with each other, to them helping them appreciate other people's skills and how they need to work together in order to create, then they will find a group anywhere. So, everything is very purposeful.

Alan described his understanding of the process of reinforcing the professional identity through the metaphor of guardrails.

> Kind of the approach is not that we tell them how to do things, but we're the guardrails on the highway, I guess you could say. They're driving. When they

> veer off a little to the right, we're there to kind of keep them from going over the edge. Sometimes you do have to let them take the wrong offramp and make the mistake and then they learn from it. A lot of the time, they won't see their mistake until it's actually on camera.

Jessica described how people in general learn through failure. As artists, the young filmmakers need to learn from their failure and use it as an opportunity to make their dialogue better, their scene better, their editing better, all in the name of becoming better in their craft as filmmakers.

> The best way of learning is failing. I mean that's how most people learn. They don't learn from getting pats on the back. So, by allowing them to fail in a lot of these really challenging lessons, student could identify their errors, learn from them, and retain the knowledge better than if I just told them what to do.

Their professional identity as young filmmakers was reinforced throughout the year, so much so that during the focus group discussion, Sara shared her identity in the classroom, “Sometimes not even young filmmakers. Sometimes just actual filmmakers in the industry.” Ana added, “because they treat you how you are expected to be treated at an actual industry, and they treat you with the utmost respect.” All the students in the focus group felt a strong connection to their professional identity and felt that the teaching artists created the environment for them to grow as filmmakers.

Focus on Social-Emotional Learning

The CCCP founders, teaching artists, and students discussed “managing your emotions” as a cornerstone to the instruction in the CCCP workspace. Maria, an actor, director, and producer, talked about the stresses that occur on a film set. Meeting deadlines, keeping to a

budget, and managing adults can create a high stress environment. Jessica stated that the intensity of stress is heightened when coupled with the vulnerable spaces creative artists need to express their emotions. The skill of managing the emotions is vital to working in film production.

Although the CCCP founders, teaching artists and students discuss strategies they incorporated in the workspace to help the young filmmakers learn how to manage their emotions, all participants spoke of it in the abstract. Jessica said that managing your emotions allows you to work collaboratively in a creative space. Polo shared a series of questions he used to help student tackle the issue impeding their progress. Polo also added that in asking these questions, it helps students build connection with one another. Maria and Alan discussed how adults struggle with managing their emotions and provide tips to the young filmmakers on how to ask for a break or space to unwind. The young filmmakers shared how managing their emotions meant dealing with personal issues, building empathy with team members, helped deescalate stressful situation inside and outside of the classroom, as well as a skill that can be applied to all aspects of life. In my recommendations for future research I will discuss potential avenues this study could have taken using the social emotional learning framework.

Making a Learning Space

Polo and Jessica described the CCCP classroom as a "space for learning." Polo and Jessica both mentioned how working with young filmmakers made them better creative thinkers. Polo shared that his writing improved because students asked him many questions about his stories. Jessica described how working with CCCP helped her see diverse perspectives. The teaching artists, Maria and Alan described a similar experience. Alan felt writing dialogue

improved working with students while Maria felt that sharing the stories of working with CCCP youth helped her build stronger relationships on set. Polo, Jessica, Maria, and Alan also explained how working with a professional filmmaker in class, through the team-teaching aspect of CCCP, also helped them strengthen their knowledge base in all aspects of filmmaking. The teaching artists would use their strengths to enhance classroom instruction, but also use those opportunities to learn something new from their team teacher.

The students described the different types of learning that emerged from the CCCP classroom. Building interpersonal skills by working collaboratively in production teams was mentioned from all students. Many of the focus group participants discussed learning how to improve their writing from other team members or giving constructive feedback to make stories stronger. Students described how many of the skills they learned through filmmaking, managing your emotions, time management, teamwork, and writing positively impacted their other high school classes. They described that learning happened with the teaching artists as well as with their peers.

I could only document the learning space through the retelling of classroom practices and procedures from the perspective of the CCCP founders, teaching artists, and students. I will add more about this section in my recommendations for future research.

Pedagogical Implications

Students discussed the importance of their professional identity in the CCCP classroom. They felt their creative ideas were valued in the workspace. The experiential task of writing their stories, pitching their ideas to peers, forming production teams, deciding the roles they play, collaborating on a shared vision, and producing a film for public consumption, provided the

elements the young filmmakers needed to actively engage in the learning for the CCCP classroom. I will highlight a variety of pedagogical implications in this section.

Curriculum

The study demonstrated the value of curriculum centered on students, relevant to their lives and interests, engaging all the senses, aligned to standards that support college and career readiness. The stories that students created pointed to the social justice element of the student-centered work. Students created stories that reflect the lived experience of students of color from a high poverty community. Stories that ended with a positive message of hope for the future.

Classroom Management

In addition to curriculum, the approach to classroom management should be noted. The CCCP founders and teaching artists flattened hierarchies, all participants in the CCCP class were learners, were filmmakers. The shared approach to leadership allowed for students to problem solve their own struggles and create a system of mutual accountability where all participants focused on the common goal, creating a film to showcase to the public. Although interpersonal problems did not disappear completely, students were given tools to resolve conflict, manage problems, and build teamwork skills throughout the year. The classroom transformed to a working studio.

When the young filmmakers were engaged in the creative process, they were allowed to bring their authentic selves to the class. They received positive messages about their intelligence and worth as they contributed to the common goal of producing a film. By learning how to manage their emotions, student management became a secondary focus. Off-task behavior was

approached through a lens of empathy and support. Students learned to communicate to help their peers deal with the negative emotions that hampered their success.

Transferable Skills

The study documented the transferable skills acquired through CCCP, skills the young filmmakers applied to other classes. Students highlighted the content skills of reading and writing that developed through their CCCP work. Students commented on feeling more confident in writing essays for English classes or understanding the literature they read in other classes. In addition to their content skills, students acknowledged more skills acquired through CCCP. Every student described their ease of oral communication, teamwork, and time management. They describe how in other classes they were asked to take charge of group tasks or presenting class work. The reinforcement of these skills during CCCP instruction, built confidence with the students which allowed them to tackle work in other disciplines.

Connecting the Theoretical Frameworks

The learning environment created by CCCP was best described through the interplay of critical pedagogy, constructivism, and situated learning. Freire (2000) reminded us that a critical educators' role is to unmask oppressive power structures by using pedagogical approaches that promote, equity, justice, and love. McLaren (2015), added, that critical pedagogy attempts "to empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustices" (p.122). When students adopted a professional filmmaking identity, the power structures in the classroom were altered. The young filmmakers co-created a space for learning and creativity. The transformed space allowed students to take risks, share their stories, and create films that highlight and resist the injustices they see in their lives.

The learning space opened the doors for students to become "full participants" as filmmakers in the classroom (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Students actively asked questions and take ownership of their own learning. Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory described the process where novices work with experts in a sociocultural environment in activities that are tied directly to a "community of practice" (p. 29). The "community of practice" described in this study was filmmaking. The creation of this partnership between the teaching artists and young filmmakers in the classroom is possible because of workspace and professional identity the CCCP founders and teaching artists establish at the start of the program.

Constructivism best describes the elements of collaboration the young filmmakers describe both in working with their production teams and working with the teaching artists. Through social negotiations, listening to multiple perspectives, and reflecting on their work, students construct their stories to deliver to a wider audience (Driscoll, 1994). Constructivism is viewed through the structures the CCCP founders established to implement their program. From creating individual stories, to establishing the production teams, to the public viewing of their films, all elements of constructivist learning theory emerged.

The study could have used any single one of the three frameworks to analyze data. The three were used together to highlight important aspects of the CCCP experience. The intentionality of challenging dominate narratives in storytelling and classroom instruction comes through using critical pedagogy as a lens for analysis. Implementing gradual release of instruction and allowing the novice to move to an expert status to take on more responsibility over their learning space would not be seen without situated learning theory. The collaboration and interdependence the production teams described throughout the filmmaking process was

emphasized through the constructivist lens. Moreover, situated learning and constructivism do not center their learning around issues of oppression or structural inequalities. Including critical pedagogy as the foundational lens for this study provides the language school leaders need to advocate for equitable practices at school sites.

Implications for Schools and School Leaders

As a school leader, I have observed teachers place pressure on themselves in an effort to cover a certain amount of content in a given year. In schools where testing is a priority, the luxury of new approaches to instruction are generally brushed off as fads and traditional forms of direct instruction become the default approach in the classroom. Schools and school leaders have an opportunity to create an experience for students to foster their creativity and for student to take more ownership over their own learning, and in turn creating a more equitable experience for students at their school sites. By partnering up with an organization like the CCCP, school leaders could use arts as a tool to enrich student learning in the classroom.

Building a Pathway

My descriptive case study placed my research at a high school in a school district interested in creating a nine-year pathway for filmmaking starting in the fourth grade. The pathway serves a variety of purposes:

- Integrate an industry specific arts program with a rigorous academic program,
- Develop a sequence of technical and creative skills to prepare for college and career,
- Retain students in the district and at the school sites,
- Train K-12 teachers to integrate arts to core curriculum,
- Students work directly with arts professionals (teaching artists), and

- Place students stories at the center of the learning.

Programs like CCCP, are interested in establishing a multi-year program that can support and enhance student learning through a filmmaking pathway.

Schools and school leaders will need to set aside a specific budget to access an arts program like CCCP. A program like CCCP allows for students to build their professional identity, engage in experiential learning, and produce a tangible product for the public to see, and most importantly become storytellers in the process. Furthermore, as evidenced through the voices of the young filmmakers, many of the skills they highlight apply to other content classes, to their personal lives, and in developing their futures.

Importance of Storytelling

The interaction Alan shared with the principal of the South California High School is a great reminder of how detached school administration and teachers could be from their students' lives. The principal was concerned with the stories about drug use, police brutality and gangs. Alan commented to the principal that the stories were about students attempt to control their own realities. Offering a space for students to tell their stories creates an opportunity to build empathy and understanding for all members of the community. In our collective efforts to create conditions for students to be ready for college and career we neglect the importance for students to build understanding of their context in society and how to use that understanding to create their own conditions for success. Storytelling could be an avenue to help build students understanding of themselves to share with their community. Additionally, by sharing their stories through film or any other medium, it allows administrators and staff to understand the lived

experiences of students in their respective communities as well as build empathy and understanding at their school sites.

Creating a Network

Students graduate from high school where schools, school leaders, and teachers hope they have prepared their students well for post-secondary life. Unfortunately, knowing the outcomes of graduates is a task many schools cannot afford. CCCP introduces schools to mentors, filmmaking professionals, who give the young filmmakers access to a craft. If students are interested in continuing their education in filmmaking they are immediately connected to a professional in the industry. The skill of networking and nurturing professional relationships becomes a potential avenue for professional advice, internships, or collaboration on projects. Polo talked about having graduates of his high school programs return to CCCP school sites and work with CCCP youth. These network connections have the potential to develop the CCCP youth as they move from secondary spaces to post-secondary spaces.

Future Research

I recognize the difficulty in telling the CCCP story. The participants were only a small fraction of the students and adults working alongside Polo and Jessica. The administrator and district leads who signed the contract to establish the filmmaking pathway were not included as a part of this study. The perspective of the certificated teacher that managed the class during the days CCCP was not in the classroom was not included in this study. Lastly, the voices of the young filmmakers' parents were not captured in this study.

For schools and school districts to learn how a program like CCCP can be financed and in particular, rolled out as a pathway of study, the voices of district leadership should be

documented. The rationale for the choice, the process of vetting similar organizations, working with administrators and classroom teachers to integrate the program of study, should be an element of a future case study. In addition, a study that looks at the community impact from implementing a program like CCCP could add to the knowledge base. Are their impacts at the school site from peers and teachers, are their impacts with parents and community members, and are their impacts felt in post-secondary institutions receiving students who have completed a pathway in filmmaking.

Moreover, the voices of the certificated teachers that work alongside the CCCP teaching artists would add value to the study. Do their instructional practices change while observing how the teaching artist work with their students? Is the school community impacted with a deliberate arts pathway scheduled during their school day? Does the model CCCP created, build sustainability overtime with certificated teachers taking on a larger role as filmmaking instructor? It was clear from my study that I have only a superficial glimpse at the effects of CCCP offers to schools and districts.

Due to constraints from the change in program, I was not able to observe classroom practices and procedures directly. I relied on memory from the participants to retell the classroom experience. For a richer qualitative study, classroom observations would help tell a thicker description of classroom interactions between the young filmmakers and the teaching artists. To that end, using the framework of social emotional learning during classroom observations could provide a lens to describe elements that exist in a CCCP classroom.

Lastly, I would be interested to know if teaching artists in other arts programs could use the model Creating Creators Cinema Project established to create a program that focus on their

respective discipline, be it art, graphic design, and/or music to name a few. Could professionals come into the classroom and provide insights that many teachers feel they do not have around the arts?

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to describe the Creating Creators Cinema Project program from the perspective of the founders, the teaching artists, and young filmmakers who were housed in a high school setting in Santa Ana Unified. The research questions asked about the extent to which the participants establish the conditions for critical pedagogy and the impact CCCP had on their personal and professional lives. This study found evidence that four of the nine principles of critical pedagogy emerged from the data, cultural politics, historicity of knowledge, resistance and counter hegemony, and praxis (Darder et al. 2009). In addition to the four principles of critical pedagogy, elements of situated learning theory and constructivism emerged from the data. Furthermore, all participants of CCCP described a positive professional and personal impact that CCCP had on their lives. The findings also suggest that further research should be conducted to include classroom observations and the inclusion of more community members that are tied directly to decision making at the school site and classroom instructor that work directly with CCCP.

APPENDIX A

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT FOUNDERS INTERVIEW

The following are questions used during the CCCP Founders semi-structured interview:

1) Tell me about the events in your life that lead you to creating CCCP?
    a. What moments in your life history contributed to your vision/motivation to create CCCP?
    b. Are there any events, instances, moments that lead you to creating YCP?
2) Tell me about how CCCP developed?
    a. What is your role in the creation?
    b. Tell me about the process of moving from an idea to what CCCP is today?
3) Describe the CCCP classroom.
    a. Tell me about instruction?
    b. Tell me about student work?
    c. What is the mechanism you have to train teaching artists?
    d. What do you hope from the instructors, students, your network?
4) What impact has CCCP had on you?
    a. Personal Impact
    b. Professional Impact

APPENDIX B

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT OVERVIEW

CREATING CREATORS
"Learning to Learn Together"

Cinematic Arts Project

Grades 4th-12th

Creating Creators LLC
122 West 62nd St.,
Los Angeles, CA 90003
www.thecinemaproject.com

Mission Statement

To support and align the lessons in the 4th-12th grade classrooms, with the entrepreneurial, creative, and collaborative rigor of film production and 21st century skills of working professionals.

Triangle Model

All 3 work together to create an authentic learning experience.

Instructional Time

34weeks (2/wk) 68 days
1.5 hrs per day
102 total hrs

CREATING CREATORS COURSE PATHWAY

Grade	Class	Product(s)
4th	Beginner Film	5 Scripts/Films (3-5mins), Posters
6th	Intermediate Film	3 Scripts/Films (5-7mins), Posters
7th/ 8th	Homage to Film	3 Scripts/Films (5-7Mins), Posters (based on 3 film eras)
9th	Intro to Cinematic Arts	3 Scripts/Films (7-10Mins),Posters
10th	Cinema Streaming Series	3 Ads, Documentaries, News Broadcasts 3 Streaming TV Series, 3 episodes (3-5min each)
11th	Cinematic College/Career Prep	College and festival Application Portfolios 30 experimental projects (1per student)
12th	Cinema Senior Thesis	Student Internship and Senior Project

APPENDIX C

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT HOW IT WORKS

How It Works
Key Points to Remember

- Students write, produce, storyboard, cast, direct, act, film, edit, market, and premiere their own films under the guidance and support of 2 industry professionals and certified classroom teacher. Also, students create their own production companies (LLCs) and learn entrepreneurial skills through film.

- The project takes place during the day infused in an academic classroom and supports writing, reading, math, and communication skills. Projects follow a typical production timeline and finish by the end of the school year.

- The class curriculums are meant to be living documents that are tailored to the individual needs of the students, teachers, grade levels, and school district supporting ELA/ELD, 21st century skills, VAPA, and CTE requirements.

- Creating Creators is a development company that uses film to develop social-emotional skills, and transfers professionalism to future creatives. Students are challenged with the most authentic film experience possible, and premiere their films at local theaters, industry partner agencies, and film festivals.

General Process and Requirements

Students will go thru filmmaking from pre-production to distribution. All students will be required to have a notebook and pencil as this will be where they keep all their work and notes. Film production binders and production materials will be completed by groups.

Semester 1
Students will write several stories, form production companies, adapt to script form, cast, prep, and schedule for film production. They will also learn entrepreneurial skills, technical language (camera, lighting, sound), and mindful work ethic.

Semester 2
Students will film, edit, market, and distribute their films. Industry and community screenings will be co-ordinated by Creating Creators, participating partners, and schools. *Final films may screen at film festivals and will be available online.

Film Equipment Requirements
Based on grade levels selected by the district, a necessary list of equipment will be provided.

Field Trip and Professional Opportunities
Depending on school district location, Creating Creators may schedule special guest workshops, partnering industry or university field trips, and internships.

APPENDIX D

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT OUR STORY

Our Story

Over the past 10 years Creating Creators' founders, Jessica Just and Hipolito Munoz have worked in over 11 different school districts and have introduced more than 5,000 students to the world of film.

CEO, Jessica Just, has been a member of SAG/AFTRA since she was 5 years old. She graduated from NYU-Tisch School of the Arts and has worked for Miramax in post-production. Working her whole life in the industry, she knew there was a need for development of young artists and more integration of creative arts in schools.

CCO, Hipolito Munoz is on the board of several film festivals and Hollywood High School Film Academy. He produces film and television and his work with PBS brought his attention to the school districts.

Together Jessica Just and Hipolito Munoz have continued to bring the project to schools up and down California. In support of many artists that work from project to project, they connected their network of professionals to students and teachers to bring the students into new opportunities and raise their expectations for education and beyond.

Schools involved in the project have reported higher moral, attendance, and writing scores. Students graduate to attend Berkley, Harvard, USC, and have worked for Google, Forbes, Warner Brothers, among many others.

"The Cinema Project provides different opportunities for teachers to identify the talents, interest, and abilities of all students." -Irene Guzman, 4th grade teacher

COME JOIN US IN A CLASSROOM!

Visit one of our classrooms to see the program in action!

Email: Jessica@thecinemaproject.com

Visit us at www.thecinemaproject.com or

Facebook: CreatingCreatorsllc

Instagram: @CreatingCreators

Industry Collaborators

Cinematic Arts Project Overview Creating Creators LLC 3 of 5

APPENDIX E

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT STUDENTS IN ACTION

4th-12th Grade STUDENTS IN ACTION!

APPENDIX F

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT PROGRAMS

Courses

Full Year Class (4th-12th)

For 34 weeks, students work with two industry professionals and their classroom teacher during the day, to produce 3-5 short films *depending on grade level. Creating Creators film curriculum, entrepreneurial skills, special guests and field trips, are integrated seamlessly with the daily lessons of the partnering academic teacher. Full year course subjects deepen and build on prior knowledge as students advance through the Creating Creators course pathway. *See course pathway above. *Student internships also available.

Summer Class (4th-12th)

Summer courses run for 6-8 weeks and students develop social media marketing skills. The produce 3-6 commercials, music videos, advertorial, and youtube series project that place enthuses on content information rather than length. Students will also learn how to cross-platform market themselves on social media.

Teacher Professional Development

Teachers learn from professional filmmakers in an intensive 3 day workshop and at select times through out the year. Professionals will give teachers ideas on how to use film and media skills in the classroom. Teachers will produce their own short film and develop how to properly prepare their students for the year. They will also receive a Teachers Prep Matrix so they are prepared for the full year schedule of activities.

APPENDIX G

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT TEACHING ARTISTS INTERVIEW

The following are questions used during the CCCP teaching artist semi-structured interview:

1) What pseudonym would you like to use?
2) How did you learn of CCCP?
3) Tell me about your experience with team teaching?
4) Tell me about the CCCP training?
5) What does a CCCP classroom look like? (Ask follow up on interactions with students if not offered in initial response.)
6) How has CCCP impacted on your life?
    a. Professional
    b. Personal

APPENDIX H

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT STUDENT INTERVIEW

The following are questions used during the CCCP focus group and semi-structured group interview:

The Students (Focus Group)

1) Describe what you have learned from the CCCP course?
    a. How/Why did you choose to join the CCCP class?
    b. What have you learned from your CCCP class?
    c. Do you view films differently since you have attended the CCCP class?
    d. What are the struggles and success you have working with your teams?
    e. How do you work with the CCCP teachers?
2) What impact has the CCCP class had on you?
    a. Student life
    b. Personal Life
    c. Future plans

The Student Team (Group Interview)

1) Tell me about your film, from start to finish.
2) How were your roles established?
3) What struggles did you have during the process?
4) How did you manage the struggles?
5) What success did you have along the process that you want to highlight?
6) What impact has CCCP had on you?

APPENDIX I

CREATING CREATORS CINEMA PROJECT ROLES

FILM ROLES - *Definitions*

- **Screenwriter** - a writer who practices the craft of scriptwriting, writing screenplays on which mass media, such as films, television programs, comics or video games, are based.
  (Everyone can be a writer, no story is too small or unimportant. Must be ready to have empathy and vulnerability.)
- **Producer** - a person responsible for the financial and managerial aspects of making of a movie or broadcast or for staging a play, opera, etc.
  (Someone that you will listen to even if they are not your friend/that will help everyone.)
- **Director -** controls a film's artistic and dramatic aspects and visualizes the script while guiding the technical crew and actors in the fulfillment of that vision.
  (Someone that tends to learn and think visually.)
- **AD** - checks on cast and crew and maintains order on the set.
  (Someone who likes helping with directions/someone who stays on task.)
- **Actors** *(Everyone will have a chance to be, but must be ready to have empathy and vulnerability.)*
- **DP**- Director of Photography-sets a shot/operates the camera.
  (Someone who has an interest in camera work.)
- **Sound Engineer & Boom Operator** - Person who records with zoom and another person that holds the boom. *(interests in music etc.)*
- **Location Scout** - Looks for places to film based on story. *(*may also be your Gaffer or Grip later.)*
- **Gaffer - sets up light** *(lighting or electrical interest)/* **Grip** -watches and moves equipment *(likes helping out)*
- **Script Supervisor "Scripty"**- follows the shot list and takes notes on continuity and sound for each take. (*Someone who tells you, you are wearing two different socks.)*
- **Editor - assembles the story in either iMovie, Final Cut, Premiere, Avid or Davinci**
  (May have originally been the scripty, director, or actor. Has patience and pays attention to detail.)

***Note:** These are the main roles that will be needed for this activity, feel free to discuss the many other roles on a film set, and other discussion such as; education required, salary, and experience needed for such positions.

Once the film roles are defined take a minute and to decide which position would you like to be?

*Note: A producer may be someone that might not be your friend, but if they tell you to do something you will listen and generally they stay on task.

Film Take Workflow:

1.	Asst. Director:	"QUIET ON SET"
2.	2nd Asst. Direct:	"Quiet on Set"
3.	Asst. Director:	"Sound Speeding?"
4.	Zoom Operator: hits record on Zoom device …	"Speeding"
5.	Asst. Director:	"Camera Rolling?"
6.	Camera Operator: hits record on camera …	"Rolling"
7.	Asst. Director: reads off slate and hits the sticks together. AD leaves camera frame.	"Scene x apple take 1, 2, 3 ..etc" says "marker"
8.	Director:	"ACTION"
9.	Actors	"Dialogue"
10.	Director:	"CUT" or "RESET" or "BACK TO 1"

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