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Examination of How Integrating Ethnic Studies and the Transformative Student Voice Framework in a Voice-Based Program Reinvigorated a Sense of Community on a Middle School Campus

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by

Jasmine Banks

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

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Examination of How Integrating Ethnic Studies and the Transformative Student Voice Framework in a Voice-Based Program Reinvigorated a Sense of Community on a Middle School Campus

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my research to several people who have supported me to and through my path in becoming Dr. Banks. My circle that continues to surround me with care, inspiration, and productive pushes when it was challenging to clearly see and walk my path.

To my parents, Grams, and Granny who from a young age instilled the value of community in me. Seeing firsthand the immense ways in which you all advocated for, fought for, and loved your community motivated me in a myriad of ways. Thank you for helping the little girl in me learn from your experiences and find ways to grow in mind and, thus, power. More importantly, thank you to my parents for being my rock and for the endless sacrifices you both made to show up and show out for me; it does not go unnoticed, and I am blessed to have you both guiding me and holding me up in my own personal journey and purpose.

To the students, families, and educators that I have partnered with over the years, thank you for trusting me as a teammate in our work for change. You inspire me and continue to light a fire under me to be a social justice leader who puts community liberation at the forefront. I feel extremely honored to be alongside you and to witness you all step into your own purposes and gifts.

Finally, thank you to my chosen family who the universe brought into my life. You all have wrapped your arms around me and have enclosed me with your love, wisdom, and light. Thank you for reminding me daily of what it means to be a strong woman and leader.

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ABSTRACT

Examination of How Integrating Ethnic Studies and the Transformative Student Voice Framework in a Voice-Based Program Reinvigorated a Sense of Community on a Middle School Campus

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Jasmine Banks

The middle school of study seeks to develop leaders in this world. However, the traditional oracy curricula and voice-based program the school originally adopted sought to develop students as future employees. Consequently, the problem at hand was how to connect the oracy curriculum to the principles of social justice to actualize the school's mission.

This qualitative study explored lessons from educators who have taught a voice-based course in an in-person and virtual environment. Specifically looking at the decisions middle school educators considered when integrating transformative student voice and ethnic studies into a voice-based course. From the lessons, decisions, and perspectives of the participants, the study outlined the essential training and resources needed to effectively integrate transformative student voice and ethnic studies into a voice-based course.

The dissertation study primarily reviewed semistructured mid and post interviews and combined the data with supplemental classroom observations and limited curriculum review for a thorough examination of the findings. The findings indicated a significant impact on student voice and increases in student awareness and consciousness. In addition, the findings support the need for the middle school community to continue to engage in collaborative conversations and

on-going professional development surrounding the best ways to teach students in a voice-based course through the integrated use of the transformative student voice framework and ethnic studies.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The setting of this study was an independent charter school, Potentia Academy, a pseudonym, in the South Los Angeles area. The school was founded in 2018 with the mission of placing student voice at the center for change. The school empowered students to not only build their academic and social-emotional skills but also developed and honed their voices as young leaders. A pivotal feature in the school's program was the requirement that all students actively participate in a speech and debate course on a yearly basis. All students completed the speech and debate program, aligned to California English language development standards and common core state standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The school stated in its vision and programmatic model that it believes students can become creative thinkers and develop brilliant ideas, in that students' voices are powerful tools in crafting the world in which we want to live (Potentia Academy, 2023).

As such, in the study I explored a system with administrators and staff on how to be transparent with students about social justice issues, elevate student expression, and build an activist mindset. To elevate student voice and activism, it was important to describe the benefits ethnic studies had for students in a secondary educational setting. Therefore, the central topic of research for the study was to determine how secondary schools can successfully integrate ethnic studies into voice-based courses and pinpoint best practices and professional development for educators teaching said integrated courses.

This chapter introduces the research for ethnic studies and student voice, provides background information for the school, describes the purpose and significance of how the research connects to the transformative student voice framework, and describes the researcher's positionality. Lastly, the research methodology is briefly outlined.

In the U.S. context of the federal and state levels, Chapman et al. (2020) asserted that when ethnic studies programs cultivate a dual focus on developing critical consciousness and academic skills, these programs can decenter Whiteness and better serve the educational needs of students of color. Student voice should foster young people's capacity to take the lead in addressing issues most meaningful to them in and out of school.

A key component in developing student voice and activism is in providing student-centered learning that addresses marginalization by centering the life experiences, knowledge, and aspirations of youth of color, while designing opportunities that expand their knowledge and skills as leaders for change (Paris & Alim, 2014). As a result, the study included Zion et al.'s (2010) transformative student voice (TSV) framework to empower and promote student critical consciousness, voice, and thus, activism. The study conceptualized student voice as a critical race theory (CRT) challenge to traditional approaches to communities of color.

Secondary schools need to unpack power dynamics and the politics of student voice to pursue learning experiences that will be used within classroom instruction to develop students' voice and activist identity. Therefore, a review of the school's speech and debate curriculum was conducted through the lens of the TSV framework as outlined by the collaborative research team

Hipolito-Delgado, Kirshner, and Zion.[1] The TSV framework was helpful in identifying strengths and developmentally appropriate practices that can be used with adolescents to develop their critical consciousness, voice, and action in pursuit of systemic change.

For the purposes of the study, I completed a curriculum review of the instructional materials and scope utilized by the course educators. The educator used Voice 21's (2023) oracy curriculum. Voice 21 was dedicated to transforming oracy teaching and learning across a school, enabling all students to access and benefit from a high-quality oracy education. The goal of the program was to inspire long-term change and ensure all young people have access to a high-quality oracy education. Through establishing a whole-school commitment to oracy, teachers and school leaders were empowered, filled with passion, and motivated to ensure the voices of all students were valued in school and beyond. To reach that goal, Voice 21 partnered with schools and educational institutions to teach students to become more effective speakers and listeners to empower them to better understand themselves, each other, and the world around them. It was also a route to social mobility, by empowering students to find their voice to succeed in school and life. The curriculum followed an oracy framework that helped students promote growth in English Language Arts and inspired students to transform their lives and communities by igniting their leadership (Voice 21, 2023).

[1] At the start of this study, the curriculum framework was available on the Transformative Student Voice (TSV) website (transformativestudentvoice.net). Since that time, TSV has removed it from the website. An archived version of the website shows the roadmap and elements of the framework: https://web.archive.org/web/20220523030046/https://transformativestudentvoice.net/curriculum/

In addition, published work, including Hipolito-Delgado, C. P., & Zion, S. (2017) and Zion (2020) referencd the framework.

Statement of the Problem

The Voice 21 oracy framework and curriculum sought to develop students' communication skills to be more marketable in a growing economic landscape. As outlined in the organization's curriculum foci, a main factor in adopting this oracy framework was to combat the evidence that, upon leaving school, children with poor verbal communication skills are less likely to find employment (Voice 21, 2023). However, when reviewing the school's mission, there was a misalignment behind the rationale for adopting and implementing voice-based courses. As outlined by the school, the mission was to support students in knowing the power and potential of their voice because their voices are powerful tools in crafting the world in which we want to live (Potentia Academy, 2023). Voice 21 (2023) sought to develop students as future employees and the school sought to develop leaders. The problem at hand was how to connect the oracy curriculum to the tenets of social justice to actualize the school's mission.

Spring (2010) showed how the public educational system was and continues to be designed as outlined in law and public policy to sort and control students according to state needs. Due to this design, urban schools disproportionately push poor communities of color toward low-wage jobs and the prison industrial complex. For urban schools to combat the historical marginalization of youth, middle schools must hone tools and facilitate learning activities within their classrooms for students to explore their activism and overall voice. By utilizing an oracy curriculum that integrates social justice elements, staff will have the tools to empower students to explore their overall voice and purpose and combat the pervasive system of sorting and controlling students in which K–12 education was founded and continues to function.

Research Questions

To learn more about the practices, the secondary school could use a voice-based course to develop students' critical consciousness and voice. The following research questions guided this qualitative study:

- What can be learned from educators who have taught a voice-based course in an in-person and virtual environment?
- What decisions should middle school educators consider when integrating TSV and ethnic studies into a voice-based course?
- What are the educators' perspectives on the professional development and resources needed to effectively integrate TSV and ethnic studies into a voice-based course?

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and solidify instructional experiences and professional development best practices a middle school could implement to provide a way for educators to successfully integrate ethnic studies and the TSV Framework so adolescents can:

- Learn and understand root causes of inequality,
- Unpack and embrace their own collective action, and
- Be empowered to use their voice to transform systems of oppression that affect their academic and/or personal lives.

For the study, a cohort of eighth graders engaged in a speech and debate learning unit facilitated by four educators on campus. The unit encompassed developmentally appropriate

activities that mirrored the work of ethnic studies advocates and policy leaders to develop students' voice and activism.

Ethnic studies praxis for critical consciousness supported the criteria and premise of the outline set forth for the school. According to Hipolito-Delgado and Zion (2017), "People of color require an empowering identity, one that gives validity to their existence and inspires work to improve the socio-political circumstances of their community" (p. 702). The purpose of this comprehensive research was to examine and solidify academic learning spaces a school can follow to provide a way for youth to examine and understand root causes of inequality and empower them to collectively act to transform systems of oppression that affect them while maintaining the safety and productivity of a pedagogical space for all students.

Significance of the Research

This study was important because, in the United States context of federal and state-level educational reforms, the voices and activism of students of color have been largely disregarded. Chapman et al. (2020) contended that targeted and aligned curriculum supporting the social and academic needs of students of color is necessary to contest curriculum as the property of Whiteness and to forward the racial justice project, increasing access and equity in education for students of color. For urban schools that establish and communicate goals around academic equity and promotion, the schools must center the experience and liberation of students of color.

Scholars suggested ethnic studies curricula and critical race pedagogy can offer viable solutions to engage all students, including White students, while addressing the educational debt created by the structures of normative Whiteness (Au & Blake, 2003; Chapman et al., 2020; Hughey, 2012; Sleeter, 2001). K–12 education historically has fulfilled the role of aiding in

inequities in society by teaching young people of color to conform. By attacking head-on the inequities in schools reinforced by functioning as an instrument of conformity, an ethnic studies-based curriculum can show educators and parents the importance of changing the topics, conversations, and action that occurs in secondary schools across the country.

Research Design

I used a qualitative research study in this study. I used semistructured interviews, classroom observations, and a curriculum review. The students in the course were from eighth-grade student cohorts on the school campus. A total of 78 eighth-grade students engaged in the course. The four educators who facilitated the course were the participants in the study and engaged in qualitative data collection, including interviews and classroom observations. The goals of analyzing the interviews in combination with classroom observations and a curriculum review were to determine themes linking a connection between the critical consciousness of students and the development of student voice in the speech and debate course.

Data Collection

Semistructured, one-on-one interviews were administered with the educators of the course to support in completing a thorough content analysis. The educators included a lead facilitator who planned and led the course lessons and activities and three support facilitators who guided the student learning and discussions while the class was underway. A minimum of two interviews took place with each educator. An interview occurred during the implementation of the course and a post-course interview at the end of the school year. I administered at least two 60-minute interviews for each participant. The questions in the interview called for the interviewees to share their experiences in planning for and facilitating the course, describing the

course's potential impact on the students' sociopolitical lens, and exploring their mindset about the importance of student voice as seen in Appendix A and Appendix B. The goal was to complete a content analysis to determine themes linking a connection between TSV and ethnic studies in developing students' critical consciousness and voice as a result of the integrated course. Stemler (2001) outlines how a content analysis can also provide an empirical basis for monitoring shifts in public opinion. Therefore, data collected from the implementation phase of the course was objectively compared to data collected from the post-course interviews to determine the range of mindsets and beliefs the facilitators experienced related to how the course evolved students' thinking and voice. The feedback and statements shared will remain confidential and not get back to any other staff member of the school or other students who participated in the course in any way.Classroom observations were organized as another component of the qualitative study. During the 3-week course, I completed weekly observations for 60 minutes each. I gathered data on the tools, questions, and materials the educators presented to students during the class. I did not engage with students or interact with the educators during the observations. The observations took place in the usual classroom settings so as to not disrupt the routine of the classes.

The study included a full curriculum review for the pilot course. Educators used the TSV framework to guide their reflections on the 3-week course prior to the implementation of the lessons. The lead facilitator and planner agreed to share the TSV framework with students during the pilot to ground their understanding of effective collective action and a roadmap to actualize change. I collected weekly lesson and activity materials that the lead educator utilized for planning and facilitation of the student experience in the speech and debate course. The

curriculum review shed light on how the educators were able to integrate ethnic studies into the course and ground students' voice in the TSV framework.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the interviews, classroom observations, and curriculum review were analyzed using emergent and a priori themes. Stemler (2001) discussed two approaches to the coding of data: emergent coding where codes are drawn from the text and a priori coding where codes are created beforehand and applied to the text. I used a priori codes for all three forms of data collection to see similarities and potential differences during the analysis process. The codes focused on the themes of specific steps from the TSV framework, as well as themes connected to my literature review regarding student identity and cultural exploration, student civic action, operationalizing ethnic studies, and teacher planning and development. Document analysis and institutional artifacts produced during the class were reviewed to triangulate any potential findings uncovered during coding of the interviews, classroom observations, and curriculum review.

Positionality Statement

Regarding positionality, I spent almost 14 years working in the K–12 education space. I led in roles such as a special education teacher, athletics coach, instructional and leadership coach, and elementary and middle school principal. At the time of the study, I served as the Head of School for the middle school of study.

I kept in mind Major and Savin-Baden's (2010) three ways a researcher may identify and develop their positionality. For example, I located myself in regard to the subject (i.e., acknowledging personal positions that have the potential to influence the research). I was

privileged as an adult and school leader emphasizing students building their activism. This study may have placed educators in a vulnerable position, in particular Black and Latinx educators. In addition, my positionality as a Black woman may have presented gaps in knowledge and understanding for non-Black staff and students. The positionality also may have influenced their interpretation, understanding, and, ultimately, their judgment of the data (Holmes, 2020). Due to their belief in the importance of cultural heritage and pride for people of color, it was important I engaged in frequent reflexive practices to recognize positionality.

Limitations

A limitation of the study included the duration of the course. Due to the timeframe of the program, the course examination lasted only 3 weeks. Whereas, ideally, the data collection and research of the unit series would last at least a trimester since the school follows a trimester schedule.

Delimitations

One delimitation of the study was the research was focused on a single middle school that operated independently of a school district and, as a result, other schools. Although this design limited generalizability to other schools and districts, it allowed for a deeper understanding of the complexities and interdependencies of implementation across the organization. This allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the impact blending ethnic studies and a traditional oracy curriculum could have on student voice and activism.

Generalizability

The findings of the study were specific to the middle school of study. Under traditional research design, there are many threats to external validity that make it problematic to provide

recommendations and generalizations that apply to contexts outside of the middle school of study. Since other factors may have influenced the programming and learning structures at the middle school of study, I considered them before making recommendations that would apply to other secondary schools, in particular, other middle school settings. The findings may not have represented the experiences at all middle schools, although there may be applications to other schools. The narratives helped identify perspectives often not heard in traditional research on student voice and ethnic studies.

Assumptions

For the study, assumptions were at play. For one, I assumed public education schools were responsible for fostering young leaders in their students. I also assumed collective action was necessary and required for change.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were applicable to this research:

Adolescents: the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19.

Critical consciousness: marginalized or oppressed people's analysis of societal inequities and their motivation and actions to redress such inequities. Critical consciousness comprises components of critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action.

Ethnic studies: the study of the histories, experiences, cultures, and issues of racial-ethnic groups in the United States.

Oracy: proficiency in oral expression and comprehension.

Transformative student voice (TSV): a framework for designing and sustaining systemic opportunities for marginalized students to participate in social justice change in their schools and communities.

Organization of Study

In Chapter 1, I introduced the study. I provided background information for the school in general and the specific legal principles that inspired this research. I described the purpose and significance of the research as well as my positionality and worldview since it impacted the lens from which I approached this study. In addition, I briefly outlined the research methodology. In Chapter 2, I explore a review of literature related to the research focus and questions. Chapter 3 includes a detailed description of the research methods. Based on interview and classroom data, Chapter 4 presents a discussion of the themes that emerged from the data and those related to the theoretical framework chosen for this research. In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings and provide recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examined how secondary schools, in particular middle schools, can successfully integrate ethnic studies into voice-based courses, which in turn will help shape the experiences of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students in courses integrating ethnic studies and student voice. To explore more about the practices secondary schools can use, I centered on three key research questions: What can be learned from educators who have taught a voice-based course in an in-person and virtual environment? What are the decisions middle school educators should consider when integrating TSV and ethnic studies into a voice-based course? What are the educators' perspectives on the professional development and resources needed to effectively integrate TSV and ethnic studies into a voice-based course? By focusing on these questions, I aimed to gather ideas and pathways for how to integrate ethnic studies into voice-based courses.

The literature review for this study begins with an overview of the TSV framework and then moves into the history of ethnic studies. The literature detailed the needed components and teacher training to consider and adopt to implement effective ethnic studies learning experiences. Given this analytical lens, the literature review explores the pertinent topics related to the research study including an examination of how ethnic studies can be integrated into student voice-based courses.

I describe the shifts and increased pressures for administration to implement ethnic studies courses and programming for secondary schools. Schools are responsible for finding and developing critically conscious, effectively trained adult allies for students to effectively engage

in a course that integrates ethnic studies. As a result, the literature review transitions into a final discussion of recent practices and studies that have operationalized ethnic studies by successfully embedding certain tenets into specific course offerings.

Transformative Student Voice

Defining Student Voice

As witnessed in the shared U.S. context of federal and state-level cases and educational reforms, students' voices, and activism independent of the school is largely sought to be inhibited by school personnel. According to Rudduck and Fielding (2006, p. 224), "When student voice is used to fulfill the pressures of school reform it only serves the 'competitive demands of a stratified society.'" For example, administering a school climate survey to students may satisfy the requirements of certain reforms, such as the requirement that school turnaround processes solicit students' opinions, but it provides students minimal power in determining school policy. Schools lean toward student expression when it is seen to increase student outcomes in academic efficacy, engagement, and school-sanctioned behaviors. However, pervasive school-based student expression should lead to the development of critical consciousness and an end to oppression in schools (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Sung, 2017; Zion & Blanchett, 2017).

Thus, it is vital for a school to gain clarity on the definition of student voice prior to making institutional and programmatic decisions. Zion et al. (2020) referred to TSV as the sustained systemic opportunities for minoritized students to inquire about the root causes of the problems in their schools and communities. Once the problem is identified, students address the issues by working with adult allies to develop and implement stronger policies and practices that

transform systems. Students should be empowered to act on controversial issues that matter, not become products of reform that reproduce learning and discourage students from developing their ideals. Facilitating dynamics where students merely make commentary on school reform is not enough to give them some authority over their learning and advocacy, let alone empowering them to have an impact on systemic changes (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006).

Historical Background

Adriana Chavira embodied the concept and potential consequences of student voice. A former journalist who taught at Pearl Magnet High for 14 years, Chavira stood behind her students' reporting. A student researched and wrote an article identifying an unvaccinated staff member. As the supervisor of the school paper, Chavira refused to censor the student's news article, saying, "They do have the 1st Amendment on campus, and they should not bow down to administrators to take down their stories if the stories are reported well," Chavira told the Los Angeles Times (Martinez, 2022). Chavira exemplified how a staff member can empower youth to use their voice and guide their expression under the veil of protections under the First Amendment.

Established legal principles govern student expression rights in public schools in the United States. The precedent case *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District* (1969) highlighted the efforts made by several students in Des Moines in 1965 to peacefully protest the United States's involvement in the Vietnam War (Eckes et al., 2018). The courts ruled that undifferentiated fear or apprehension of disturbance was not enough to overcome the right to freedom of expression, meaning student expression can be restricted only if it has a substantial school disruption or infringes on others' rights (Fleig, 2019). Consequently, understanding the

protected rights of students is the basis for equipping educators and students with the confidence and protections to reflect on, discuss, and organize around social justice.

When exploring and implementing a liberatory educational experience, educators must be well-versed in the protected rights and equally aware of the boundaries of censorship. For instance, *Bethel School District v. Fraser* (1986) and *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* (1988), are historical cases that censored student expression. The courts reinforced the stance that speech protected by the First Amendment for adults is not automatically protected for children and that school authorities can censor student expression in school-related activities for pedagogical reasons. As a result, school authorities can censor student expression that falls into prohibited categories such as lewd, vulgar, or indecent student expression (Eckes et al., 2018; Libertas Institute Staff, 2021).

Tinker v. Des Moines (1969) limited school retaliation against nonoffensive political expression while on campus, but there had not been any clear precedent on whether schools had any jurisdiction over off-campus speech. The court affirmed that through Tinker, schools may have a valid interest in regulating student speech off-campus that is disruptive but did not define when this regulation can occur, leaving this open for lower courts in future litigation such as the Supreme Court case of *Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L.* (2021). In its decision, the Supreme Court concluded that Levy's, the student, right to freedom of expression, protected under the First Amendment, had been violated since the social media posts did not cause substantial disruption at the school. The court ruled specifically for Levy that the school's interests in preventing disruption under *Tinker* (1969) were not sufficient to overcome her First Amendment rights (Husch Blackwell LLP, 2021).

These court findings and rulings provided a door for students to have the liberty to use their voice to express themselves, their concerns, and make calls for action. Schools looking to promote student voice should equip themselves with legal knowledge and precedents because it provides safeguards when guiding students during courses that broach social justice topics and equity-driven content. Based on legal statute, a middle school whose vision is to promote student voice should clearly articulate what students are permitted to do on and off campus when advocating for change.

Transformative Student Voice Framework

Hipolito-Delgado et al. (2022) are a collaborative research team that designed and studied youth civic learning beginning in 2010. This team, the critical civic inquiry research group (CCIRG), implemented multiple design-based research projects to develop new systems, practices, and assessment materials that engage students from marginalized backgrounds in rigorous academic inquiry by exploring issues relevant to their everyday lives and sharing their findings and policy recommendations with public audiences (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2022).

Transformative student voice work was built on four core values:

1. a conception of communication as dialogue,
2. the requirement for participation and democratic inclusivity,
3. the recognition that power relations are unequal and problematic, and
4. the possibility for change and transformation. (Robinson & Taylor, 2007, p. 8)

The values are extended upon with an ongoing commitment from each student and adult participant to build a climate of trust and openness, so no voice is excluded. In the TSV

framework, students follow eight steps to fulfill these values and, together, enact systemic change. These eight steps are captured in the figure below.

Figure 1

A Roadmap for Transformative Student Voice

Note. Adapted from *Transformative Student Voice* by C. P Hipolito-Delgado, B. Kirshner, & S. Zion, 2023, https://www.transformativestudentvoice.net/history-of-tsv, Transformative Student Voice, copyright 2023.by C. P Hipolito-Delgado, B. Kirshner, & S. Zion.

I reviewed unpacked, stamped, and integrated all eight steps in the student-based voice class. I explored the first five steps in depth with students and analyzed them to determine the development of their critical consciousness and activist voice. I reviewed the first five steps more deeply with students because in past student conversations and class activities, students and the instructor of the speech and debate course have been highly engaged in the first two stages of building community and identifying a problem. However, students have not discovered root causes without the aid of the teacher and have yet to collect and analyze data to develop, propose, and enact policies for systemic change. When working with students as partners with the school, a strong commitment to the entire TSV framework and process must occur. The theoretical basis for TSV is informed by research from community organizing, youth development, critical theory, critical pedagogy, and sociopolitical development. Transformative

student voice provides a process to acknowledge the multiple strengths youth can collectively possess to strive toward social and racial justice.

School personnel and leaders must support students in developing an activist process to enact change within the school and their community. Bautista et al. (2013) argued that the perspective of youth of color, especially in working-class, urban areas, is integral to understanding the problems in urban schools as well as approaches to transforming inequitable learning conditions and structures. Transformative student voice research has shown that when youth are given the tools and means to research and collaborate, they can craft and explore creative approaches to address said challenges or inequities. For instance, Hipolito-Delgado et al. (2022) assessed TSV participation for youth of color and found that years of participation in TSV report students having more involvement in social-political action in comparison to non-TSV peers.

Transformative student voice showed a positive impact on students' overall involvement and performance in school. Evidence showed that students from minoritized groups engage in school at higher levels when they see academic work as relevant to their lives, have opportunities for agency and voice in their classrooms, and meaningfully participate with adults in making their schools better (Cammarota, 2007; Thiessen & Cook-Sather, 2007).

Integrating Ethnic Studies in Nonethnic Studies Courses

Need for Ethnic Studies

Due to the increased participation and involvement in social-political action for TSV youth, it is important to use ethnic studies in conjunction with student voice-based courses. The school I chose for the research study had a strong oracy program in place. The instructor of the

course blended the provided oracy curriculum with their own findings of culturally relevant material. However, for the course to be sustainable and impactful long-term, it must have a dual focus on oracy development and ethnic studies. Thus, I collected historical accounts of the "why" behind ethnic studies to build a rationale for integrating ethnic studies in a nonethnic studies focused course.

Even when activities are designed to foster student voice or democratic participation, such as student councils or leadership, the activities are often regulated to "safe topics." Typical student activities in U.S. high schools include planning school dances and choosing a homecoming court. When student-led organizations are more robust, they are more likely to be in affluent, White schools. Student voice denotes different opportunities for young people of color. In many ways, student leadership and voice should center around youth actively participating in the school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers (Fielding, 2001; Goodwillie, 1993; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Kirshner, 2015; Levin, 2000). By conjoining ethnic studies and student voice-based courses, students can discover community based and societal issues that impact their everyday lives and experiences. In school, student conversations must include a deeper understanding of power and power dynamics that present themselves in schools. A foundation of critical consciousness is necessary for youth to best analyze and explore ways to support and promote their voice and action.

Ethnic studies originated from the critique that mainstream education reproduces existing social hierarchies. During the 1960s, high school and college students organized curricula that reflected a diverse student population and included "histories and paradigms focused on issues of race, culture, power, and identity" (Cuauhtin et al., 2019; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015, p.

107). Ethnic studies rose in attention across the field of education because of its focus on students having the ability to think critically and better understand how to connect students to their histories and communities (Bautista et al., 2016). In the U.S. context of federal and state level, when ethnic studies programs cultivate a dual focus on developing critical consciousness and academic skills, these programs can decenter Whiteness and better serve the educational needs of students of color. Scholars suggested that ethnic studies curricula and critical race pedagogy can offer viable solutions to engage all students, including White students while addressing the educational debt created by the structures of normative Whiteness (Chapman et al., 2020; Hughey, 2012; Sleeter, 2001).

Since then, many have examined the positive outcomes of an ethnic studies curriculum. One of the early onsets of the ethnic studies movement included Tuscon's Mexican American Studies. Tucson's Mexican American Studies course improved students' grades and dropout rates. Following the footsteps of the Mexican American Studies Movement in Tucson, Arizona, K–12, ethnic studies in California introduced its own form of curriculum and programming. K–12 ethnic studies in California were the result of educators' and community activists' calls to change the traditional curriculum to reflect the histories and experiences of racially minoritized groups in the United States. On September 13, 2016, Governor Brown of California signed Bill AB-2016 (Pupil instruction: ethnic studies: AB-2016, 2015). Bill AB-2016 (Pupil instruction: ethnic studies: AB-2016, 2015) required the state of California to develop ethnic studies curricula for K–12 schools. The bill encouraged every school district and charter school in California to offer ethnic studies courses and/or integrate ethnic studies curricula by 2020–2021 (Cabrera et al., 2014; Chapman et al., 2020). The fight for ethnic studies has continued and

progressed over time in California. On October 8, 2021, the Governor signed AB-101(Pupil instruction: high school graduation requirements: ethnic studies: AB-101, 2021). This bill added the completion of a one-semester course in ethnic studies to high school graduation requirements commencing with pupils graduating in the 2029–30 school year, meaning local educational agencies were mandated to offer the course by the 2025–26 school year (California Department of Education [CDE], 2023).

How to Integrate Ethnic Studies in Voice-Based Programs

Researchers have expressed the educational benefits of ethnic studies. With the rise in policies requiring ethnic studies courses, it is important to address and outline the steps needed to successfully integrate ethnic studies in student voice-based programs to ground the study and pilot course. As Rudduck and Fielding (2006) shared, students should be empowered to act on controversial issues that matter, not become products of reform objectives that reproduce learning and discourage students from developing their ideas and purpose. Far too often, schools give students a minor say in school reform, which is not the same as giving students authority over their learning.

Not only is student voice and experience limited, but the accessibility of ethnic studies is limited even further with younger aged students. Most of the studies that examined the challenges and benefits of ethnic studies curriculum focused on high school settings. Few studies focused on middle school students' experiences with ethnic studies and considered their voices when evaluating such programs (Berta-Avila, 2004; Nojan, 2020).

Despite the limited research on ethnic studies for adolescents in middle school settings, schools should consider specific curricular designs when seeking to adopt and implement ethnic

studies. Cuauhtin et al. (2019) shared that ethnic studies curricular designs should be responsive to:

a. the students in the curricular program with considerations of the demographic imperative as well as of each student present;
b. the community where the curricular program takes place;
c. the academic discourses of ethnic studies respecting students as intellectuals; and
d. our world—past, present, future.

Following these tenets will promote an effective ethnic studies course that utilizes classroom structures in which teachers promote collaborative, equitable, reciprocal relationships between themselves and students; scaffolding student learning; and drawing on students as a source of knowledge, in addition to content that engages with students' cultural identities and a student-focused classroom structure (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Sleeter, 2001; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015). This form of learning and civic engagement provides students with tools to explore their identities and engage with their community by identifying, reflecting on, critiquing, and engaging in social activism by standing against forms of oppression (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Sleeter, 2001; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015), which closely aligns with intentions of building collective action and policy as outlined by TSV.

Ethnic Studies Teacher Training

Importance of Establishing Adult Allies

For the transformative student voice framework to be effectively followed and implemented with students, students should be guided by supportive and critically informed

adults. When developing student voice initiatives, one of the greatest struggles is the role of the adult in these interactions. While collaboration among teachers and administrators can be difficult, partnerships between adults and students can be even more challenging. In classroom settings, power and status dynamics present challenges to student voice centered initiatives and programming. The skills of adult advisors have been consistently shown to be a critical component in successful student voice initiatives and successful after-school programs (Leonard & Leonard, 2001; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998).

Researchers have supported the pivotal role teachers play in empowering students to hone and use their voice for collective action. K–12 schools may articulate an emphasis on students using their voice but struggle to structure it in a way that elevates students' culture, opinions, and suggestions to create change. Students' perspectives are often consulted only if their insight helps satisfy state standards or raise school achievement (Taylor, 1997). Schools can fall into the trap of restricting students from exploring topics outside of the realm that the schools preemptively decide upon. As a result, it is vital to embed ethnic studies into student voice-based programming so educators can adequately support students in seeking out their own culturally responsive school-wide and/or community initiatives.

Lack of Teacher Training

Effectively implementing ethnic studies requires teachers who are well-versed in ethnic studies content and critical pedagogy. Unfortunately, credentialing and curricula standards create challenges for preparing educators to teach ethnic studies. For example, in California, teachers with social studies or English credentials have been able to teach ethnic studies; however, their

training and examinations have not included learning ethnic studies content (Au & Blake, 2003; Berta-Avila, 2004; Nojan, 2020).

More immediate steps to address this issue should include rethinking what and whose perspectives are prominent in teacher education courses. That is, embedding critical scholarship across syllabi and moving beyond a single week or a few readings dedicated to scholars of color and marginalized perspectives. A teacher education rooted in ethnic studies is premised upon the understanding that schools are a part of the colonial project and have historically been sites of power, disenfranchisement, and violence. Such an approach to teacher education follows the lead of ethnic studies teachers to interrogate power, privilege, and positionality in relation to history (Buenavista & Ali, 2018; Coloma, 2006; Curammeng, 2017; Halagao, 2010; Halagao et al., 2009; Spade, 2015).

Training in Reflecting on and Addressing Assumptions, Biases, and Deficit Based Thinking

For teachers to interrogate power, privilege, and positionality in relation to history, an opportunity to engage in training centered on ongoing critical self-reflection is necessary. Teachers not trained in critical pedagogy and critical race theory may approach the teaching of ethnic studies with cultural assumptions and biases. Many U.S.-based educators have continued to be White; teachers of color have been an extreme minority (Berta-Avila, 2004; Sleeter, 2001).

> While being a person of color is not enough for effective teaching of ethnic studies, studies suggest that teachers of color "often bring more commitment and knowledge of social justice to provide students of color with challenging curricula than White teachers." (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015, p. 118)

In teacher education research, researchers pointed to the favorable impact of teachers of color among students of color, especially given their positioning as role models (Milner & Howard, 2004; Villegas & Clewell, 1998). Curammeng (2017) stated teachers of Color who have insights about inequality in the United States may present opportunities to develop unique relationships with students from similar groups.

Even with the inherent points of connection and favorable impact for teachers of color, White educators and educators of color have required training to become effective ethnic studies teachers. Yet, studies suggested White educators are more likely to enter the teaching force with limited cross-cultural experience and, therefore, tend to reproduce deficit-based thinking such as meritocracy and individualism ideologies (Gay & Howard, 2000; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Sleeter, 2001). To best support students in elevating their voice and activism, educators must be mindful of the pitfall Cook-Sather (2007) referenced. Cook-Sather (2007) stated that practitioners of student voice work argue we must beware of the potential for tokenism, manipulation, and practices not matching rhetoric that characterize some student voice efforts. In that, epistemologies and methods grounded in White supremacy concerns and rooted in values understood to be contradictory to the interest of the silenced will fail to capture the voices needed. Irrespective of race, quality ethnic studies teaching will result from teachers who possess love for the community of students they are serving and a commitment to work on their internalized racism and the implicit or explicit privileging of White supremacist norms (Berta-Avila, 2004; de los Ríos et al., 2015; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Kohli, 2014).

“Grow Your Own” Teacher Development

With the growing challenges of accessible effective ethnic studies teacher training, schools may want to consider establishing their own professional development and training offerings and pipelines. While many ethnic studies programs can be found on university campuses on the West and East coasts, this is not the case for most teacher education programs. Teacher education programs may need to identify grassroots community-based and national organizations doing similar work. For instance, there is much work within communities for “grow your own” models of recruitment as well as national networks and conferences committed to supporting teachers’ justice and equity (Curammeng et al., 2016; Gist et al., 2019; Valdez et al., 2018).

Green et al. (2020) discussed a partnership with a district-wide ethnic studies program, the ethnic studies professional development (ESPD) project, through which they designed and led a year-long teacher professional development series for middle and high school ethnic studies teachers in one school district. The ethnic studies teachers, who were majority White, were licensed in either English or social studies. The ethnic studies professional development project was grounded in tenets of critical pedagogy and youth participatory action research (YPAR). Recruited students developed and facilitated their own professional development sessions for ethnic studies teachers combatting antidialogical professional development. As a result, sessions primarily served as a space of dialogue, reflection, and foundational content ethnic studies teachers should know and understand. This included:

- A historicized understanding of ethnic studies as a field that is transdisciplinary, intersectional, counter-hegemonic, and liberatory, including knowledge of current ethnic studies scholarship, movements, and programs;
- Knowledge of institutionalized oppression, implicit bias, and White supremacy, along with knowledge of research about how these affect children, families; communities, teaching, learning, schooling, achievement, and well-being.
- Understanding that ethnic studies teaching is not just about delivering a body of content but also about embodying a critical stance alongside their students and the communities they constitute.

Kohli et al. (2015) established the trap of antidialogical professional development in that typically using banking methods and teaching technical skills, antidialogical professional development frames teachers as empty vessels. Antidialogical professional development does not offer teachers agency in their work and focuses on compliance. Kohli et al. (2015) noted Freire's (1970) four aspects of dialogical action—cooperation, unity, organization, and cultural synthesis—are fundamental to developing critical, social justice-oriented professional development for teachers. In summary, since professional development and training for teachers, especially teachers seeking to teach ethnic studies, should include dialogical action, it may be best for schools and institutions to grow their own practitioners in-house.

Operationalizing Ethnic Studies

K–12 schools may articulate an emphasis on students using their voice but struggle to structure it in a way that elevates students' culture, opinions, and suggestions to create change. Students' perspectives are often consulted only if their insight helps satisfy state standards or

raise school achievement (Taylor, 1997). Schools can fall into the trap of restricting students from exploring topics outside of the realm that the schools preemptively decide upon. As a result, it is vital to embed ethnic studies into student voice-based programming so educators can adequately support students in seeking out their own culturally responsive school-wide and/or community initiatives.

Adult and student leaders must be willing to learn from their experiences with the politics of student voice and, in response, change schools' norms and practices in the policy process (Welton et al., 2017). One way to do that is to be open to establishing youth spaces on campus. Goessling (2020) offered "youth spaces" as a structure centering those with direct experiences of oppression and trauma as experts and cultural producers to envision a more socially just future. Therefore, it can be assumed ethnic studies will provide a youth space when integrated into student voice-based courses.

Since the subject school for the study was based in California, I reviewed the California Department of Education's (CDE) website to determine best practices and outlined specific parameters schools and educators must follow when adopting and facilitating Ethnic Studies courses and spaces for youth. The California Department of Education stated the ethnic studies model curriculum shall include course outlines that offer a thematic approach to ethnic studies with concepts that provide space for educators to build in examples and case studies from diverse backgrounds that allow for ethnic studies to be taught as a stand-alone elective or integrated into an existing course (e.g., sociology, English language arts, and history), in which, ethnic studies should engage in a range of disciplines beyond traditional history and social sciences (CDE, 2023).

The California Department of Education (2023) detailed the importance of administration and teacher support when pursuing the model curriculum. For instance, the model should be easy to use for teachers with educational backgrounds in ethnic studies and for those without such experience. Thus, the model curriculum shall provide examples of different methods of instruction and pedagogical approaches that include access to resources for instruction (e.g., lesson plans, curricula, primary source documents, and other resources) districts are currently using. These recommendations and requirements are placed by the CDE. However, the California Department of Education has not provided a clear roadmap or pool of resources showing the likelihood of ethnic studies being operationalized for schools and districts across the state.

Most of the literature pointed to higher level means of embedding ethnic studies in schools and even less peer-reviewed research on how to integrate ethnic studies in nonethnic studies courses for students in middle school settings. Consequently, the literature review for this study required a search of expanded studies that included more diverse age ranges, educational levels, and culturally homogenous centered courses such as Muslim, Chicano, and Filipino studies to provide a foundation to explore a methodological plan in Chapter 3 of this study. These studies included discussions of practices that integrated ethnic studies in traditionally non-ethnic studies courses. Among the studies, the researchers determined that an effectively integrated ethnic studies course should include the following:

1. The syllabus and curricular arc provide an expansive, transnational, and transhistorical study of race in the curriculum not bound to U.S.-centric and diametric conceptualizations of race.

2. Students in education classes will have an expansive understanding of race and Whiteness that engages with ethnic studies and challenges the Black-White racial binary.
3. Teachers emphasize creating innovative, nontraditional, and explicitly politicized projects that disrupt/challenge/resist racial oppression in the classroom and society at large.
4. Students need increased opportunities to leverage critical research and critical civic inquiry. (Allen-Handy & Thomas, 2022; Halagao, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2017; Thangaraj, 2021)

Therefore, the research study reviewed how the educators embedded these characteristics into the curriculum scope of the oracy program to ensure students were able to unpack societal issues, problem solving, and plans for action. Unfortunately, the manner and effect of these efforts remain largely unclear. While the existing research highlights a need to adapt and integrate ethnic studies, minimal documentation shows such operationalized school-based actions in practice. To this end, the principles of ethnic studies and TSV provide a relevant lens through which current teaching practices may be examined. This combined theoretical frame was closely aligned with the mission of the school in the study. As the environment of the study, the school detailed the desire to empower students to use their voices to enact positive, community-based change. Once explored and put into practice, the social justice impact can be celebrated with students in the course and reiterated in the curricular matrix of the school's offerings long-term. It stands to reason, therefore, that research on these topics could inform the future operationalized practice of the school.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how a secondary school can integrate ethnic studies into a voice-based course and be a catalyst for TSV in and out of the classroom. I was interested in learning the role teacher professional development and instructional planning need to play to successfully integrate ethnic studies into student voice-based courses. I used the individual experiences of the educators, a curriculum review, and collective learning experiences during the implementation of the course to answer the research questions. My values as a Black practitioner and community leader are reflected in this topic selection based on the lived experience of not having the opportunity to learn about and explore injustices in their schooling.

This chapter includes the research design and logistical components of the study. The purpose statement, research questions, and the rationale for using a qualitative approach are presented. I also include an outline of the research methods, analytical plan, and timeline for completing the study.

Research Questions

As evidenced in the literature review in the prior chapter, ethnic studies evolved as a result of legislative mandates and research that highlighted the sociocultural and academic benefits of ethnic studies. Teachers have played a pivotal role in the effectiveness of ethnic studies and have had a profound influence over whether integrating ethnic studies and student voice reform will be successful. The educators' approaches in the dual implementation of ethnic studies and an oracy program directly impacted student success and had equity implications that can guide schools toward transformative changes that promote student voice and success.

In this study, I explored the steps of the TSV framework with students and analyzed it to determine the development of their critical consciousness and activist voice. I attempted to incorporate all steps in TSV in the speech and debate course with a particular emphasis on the first five steps. These steps were, building community, identifying a problem, exploring root causes, collecting data, and analyzing data. The last six steps were reviewed, unpacked, and explored more deeply with students because, in past student conversations and class activities, students and the educators of the speech and debate course mostly engaged in the first two stages of TSV, which included building community and identifying a problem. For students to fully actualize change and feel empowered to use their voice, they must discover root causes without the aid of the teacher and collect and analyze data to develop, propose, and implement policies for systemic change.

To learn more about the practices a secondary school can use to develop students' critical consciousness and voice, the following research questions guided the qualitative study:

- What can be learned from educators who have taught a voice-based course in an in-person and virtual environment?
- What are the decisions middle school educators should consider when integrating transformative student voice and ethnic studies into a voice-based course?
- What are the educators' perspectives on the professional development and resources needed to effectively integrate transformative student voice and ethnic studies into a voice-based course?

Zion (2020) argued that when students partner with adult allies to reimagine and take action to address issues, they can develop and implement better policies and practices that transform systems. The transformative student voice framework when coupled with an oracy curriculum supported educational leaders in structuring learning spaces to maximize the sociopolitical interactions with students and consequently, actions by students.

Rationale for Qualitative Approach

A qualitative study was appropriate because I sought to examine deeper analysis of a complex issue (Leavy, 2017). There was only one course and four educators in this study. Therefore, varied teacher perceptions were difficult to quantify, so the use of a qualitative research method was appropriate. Qualitative research allowed me to explore: "(1) how people interpreted their experiences, (2) how they constructed their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attributed to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). This was an example of hearing directly from participants about their experiences, reflections, and needs during and after the course was completed. This also informed how the school will utilize the course beyond the school year based on the educators' expressed reflections to determine next steps in professional development, curriculum planning, and pedagogical practices. The educators shed light on the course's strengths and areas of growth for further curricular development and adaptation for the school of study and other schools in the future.

The qualitative research included classroom observations, a form of fieldwork. This form of qualitative research allowed for extended firsthand interactions and experiences between the researcher, setting, and participants. I engaged in fieldwork to relate to and understand the participants, which allowed for reflexivity (Leavy, 2017). During fieldwork, I determined what

other data review types were beneficial, including document analysis, interviews, and artifact analysis.

Methodology

In this chapter, the research methodology is reported and organized according to the research questions. The participant interviews were the primary source of data collection and were supplemented by classroom observations and a limited document analysis. The triangulation of the interviews, classroom observations, and curriculum review revealed a positive impact in developing a curricular program with a dual focus on ethnic studies and developing students' voice and academic skills. I discuss the details about the participants, setting, data collection, and analysis plan below.

Setting

An independent charter school in the South Los Angeles area was the source of the study. Potentia Academy's mission was to empower students to develop and hone their voices as young change agents. As such, I explored a system with administrators and staff on how to be transparent with students about social justice issues, elevate student expression, and build an activist mindset.

At the time of the study, 186 students were enrolled in the school and the student population consisted of 78% Latinx and 22% Black students and a gender breakdown of 40% girls and 60% boys. Each student at the school was required to take the speech and debate course as an enrichment course. Once a week, all 186 students simultaneously engaged in a virtual speech and debate session with an assigned educator and their peers across the school. However, the eighth-grade students received an additional in-person session once a week with the lead

facilitator, meaning a total of 66 students received a more in-depth speech and debate session for an opportunity to deepen their oracy skills prior to entering high school.

The deliberate, explicit, and systematic teaching of oracy across phases and throughout the curriculum to the middle school students sought to make progress in the four strands of oracy outlined in Voice 21's (2023) oracy framework. The oracy framework was used as a basis of formative assessment and enabled the lead facilitator to gauge what students had or had not yet grasped and informed students of their progression and success in skill building during the course.

Due to the influence the curriculum had on the study, it included a limited document analysis. I conducted a document analysis by reviewing and analyzing the curriculum materials utilized for the course. I intended to draw on at least two sources of evidence: that is, to seek convergence and corroboration using different data sources and methods (Bowen, 2009). I reviewed the curricular plans for the three-week pilot course via a document analysis of the Voice 21 (2023) curriculum and a thorough review of the objectives, intended outcomes, integrated ethnic studies learning activities, and skill and conceptual progression of the lessons.

Site Selection and Access

The site was selected based on its diverse student population and its commitment to uplifting all students' voices and success as evident in the school's mission, vision, and values statements. I was employed as an administrator for the middle school in the study. I worked closely with the educators, facilitating the speech and debate course and therefore had access to request interviews with the educators, conduct classroom observations, and review course documents relevant to the study.

Participants

A total of 10 staff members supported the facilitation of the course and one lead facilitator planned, implemented, and assessed the course materials for the students. The lead facilitator and four support facilitators agreed to participate. However, due to the short window to conduct the research, I did not have time to gain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct research with students prior to the 2022–2023 school year's end. Therefore, this was a factor in my selection criteria of who would be considered a participant in the study.

Since the significance of the study was to support school-based educators to consider drawing from the findings of the study, it was important to hear from educators about their experience in planning for, facilitating, and reflecting on the experiences and outcomes of the course and what can be learned from it. The in-person conversations with the educators and thus, participants, detailed the purpose and objective of the course, the purpose of the research study, and were coupled with a consent form for the educators.

Regarding the positionalities of the facilitators of the course, the lead facilitator was also the founder of the school. He created the charter petition for the school and led the authorization process with a local district. In the petition, he outlined the mission of the school of empowering students to develop and hone their voices as young leaders. To propel the mission, he detailed the unique programmatic model of a required speech and debate course for all students. The teacher/founder identified as a Black man. His educational pedigree included a Bachelor's in African American Studies, Masters in Elementary Teaching with an emphasis on Curriculum and Instruction, and a Juris Doctor degree. His educational experience, professional background, and intersectional identities supported the integration of a voice-based course and ethnic studies. The

support facilitators had varied backgrounds and experience. One support facilitator was a White woman teaching sixth–eighth-grade science at the middle school. Another support facilitator was an Asian American woman working as a special education paraprofessional at the middle school campus. The final support facilitator was a Latino male educational professional working as an eighth-grade teaching assistant at the middle school.

Speech and Debate Course Overview and Goals

To learn more about the goals and subsequent content of the voice-based course offered at the middle school, I reviewed and summarized several documents. The middle school offered a speech and debate course for all three grade levels; however, for the purpose of the study, I examined eighth-grade curriculum and lesson materials. The reviewed and summarized documents include the course outline, lesson slides, student handouts, and learning rubrics. The class lead and support facilitators were also interviewed to further triangulate the data, bringing attention to the course's goals, structure, and coursework for the eighth-grade students and subsequent instructional decisions by the educators.

The speech and debate course was grounded in achieving specific oracy goals as outlined by the Voice 21 curriculum. Voice 21 was dedicated to transforming oracy teaching and learning across a school, enabling all students to access and benefit from a high-quality oracy education. The goal of the program was to inspire long-term change and ensure all young people have access to a high-quality oracy education (Voice 21, 2023). Fred considered the Voice 21 program when creating the scope and sequence of lessons for the speech and debate course in the 2022–2023 school year for all sixth–eighth-grade students. Through establishing a whole-school commitment to oracy, the lead facilitator hoped students would be empowered, filled with

passion, and motivated to use their voice in school and beyond. These goals and a broad oracy definition were shared with students through initial lesson activities at the beginning of the course to establish a common sense of purpose with students. Oracy is the ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech. The following are speech and debate goals:

- Physical—How are you using your voice and your body to communicate?
- Linguistic—How are you choosing words to best connect with your audience?
- Cognitive—Do you have a strong, logical argument backed up by evidence?
- Emotional Social—Are you emotionally connected with your audience (humor, suspense, sadness, love, etc.)

The midinterviews (see Appendix A) were conducted during the planning stages of the course and prior to students participating in the latter half of the course. Whereas the postinterviews (see Appendix B) were conducted after the 3-week course was completed. Each pre- and postinterview was conducted over Zoom (www.zoom.us) for a 60-minute duration with each participant individually. Semistructured interviews were primarily utilized for the study to best determine the perspective, actions, and reflections of the speech and debate educators.

Every Monday, each eighth-grade cohort participated in an in-person 60-minute speech and debate class session. In the in-person session, students completed specific oracy-based games and skills-based activities outlined by the Voice 21 (2023) curriculum. The teacher also incorporated social justice related experiences that aligned with the TSV roadmap. These topics included studying slavery and the reconstruction era and the ethics of AI, to name a few. Prior to the study, students had completed three units. The first unit focused on building community. To establish a sense of safety and connection, the teacher implemented a class routine of students

completing a daily journal and sharing out experiences. Following the opening routine, students completed a speech game where students communicated with one another through play and game-focused activities that centered on the voice and linguistics component from Voice 21's (2023) oracy framework. For the second unit, the lessons focused on the cognitive domain in which students crafted an argument and response through analysis of social issues and school policies, Unit 2 aligned closely with steps 2–7 from the TSV roadmap. However, the instructor noted step 3, the collection of data, was intentionally skipped for the sake of time. Instead, the teacher provided students with data to analyze and prompted them to brainstorm solutions to presented problems. The students presented these brainstormed solutions in written essays and verbally in front of their peers.

For the purpose of the study, the lead facilitator looked to give students an opportunity to engage in steps 1–5 from the TSV framework. These steps included building community, identifying a problem, exploring root causes, collecting data, analyzing data, developing policy, and proposing policy. The instructor wanted to continue to give students data to analyze for the sake of time for the 3-week course so students could collectively practice analyzing data and propose policies that could be implemented. Due to time constraints, students did not have time to implement their policy during the school year, and thus, under the surveillance of the study.

Data Collection

Since the qualitative study included interviews, classroom observations, and a review of the course curriculum, I implemented a timeline to ensure an effective and diverse collection of data. At the beginning of May, I conducted a midcourse, semistructured interview with the educators. I completed teacher interviews and classroom observations during the timeframe the

course was implemented. For instance, at least one 60-minute classroom observation for each participant was completed during the 3-week course. In addition, I conducted semistructured interviews with the educators at the end of the course. This was followed by a curriculum review. This included reviewing the educators's lesson plans, facilitator guides, lesson materials, and the provided feedback to students.

Interviews

I used semistructured interviews for the study that incorporated open-ended and more theoretically driven questions. This aided me in eliciting data grounded in the experience of the educators in preparing for the speech and debate course, teaching the course, and analyzing collected student artifacts and work samples as well as data guided by existing constructs in student voice. The interview protocol included nonleading questions that provided the interviewee opportunities to share their experiences. The interview protocol introduced the researcher, the purpose of the interview, and was administered within the same available time frame across all interviews. The interview transcripts were coded to discover themes and patterns. Themes and patterns provided a window into the experiences that led to students' critical consciousness being explored as well as the ways in which their student voice developed: for instance, heightened awareness, cultural pride, and call to action (Galletta & Cross, 2013; Seidman, 2019).

The initial interviews were coordinated during the implementation of the course when students were participating. Whereas the postinterview was conducted after the three-week course was completed. The interview questions can be found in Appendices A and B.

Classroom Observations

As for the classroom observation, the course was facilitated for students once a week for 1-hour in-person sessions and once a week for 1-hour virtual sessions for a 3-week duration. I was present for each session for observations. During the observations, I looked and listened for evidence of, but not limited to, techniques and structures the teacher used to promote student engagement, on-task behavior, collaborative learning, and topics that aligned with the TSV framework and ethnic studies.

I collected class observation notes during the in-person and virtual speech and debate sessions. The in-person sessions were held in the library of the school where the speech and debate course routinely takes place. The virtual sessions were held in the students' traditional homeroom classroom. During the observations, I gathered anecdotal evidence of the instructional moves and materials the educators utilized to share the full scope of the TSV roadmap, and in particular dived deeper into steps 1–5. These steps included building community, identifying a problem, exploring root causes, collecting data, and analyzing data. For instance, what data did the lead facilitator present to students that he wanted them to analyze for step 4? Another example was how the lead and support facilitators structured the lessons and student groupings to promote collaboration for the analysis of data and synthesis for the development of policy in step 6.

The class observations looked for evidence of ethnic studies components. The educators focused on facilitating sessions and learning that went beyond the White and Black binary as outlined in the operationalization of ethnic studies section in the Literature Review. The speech

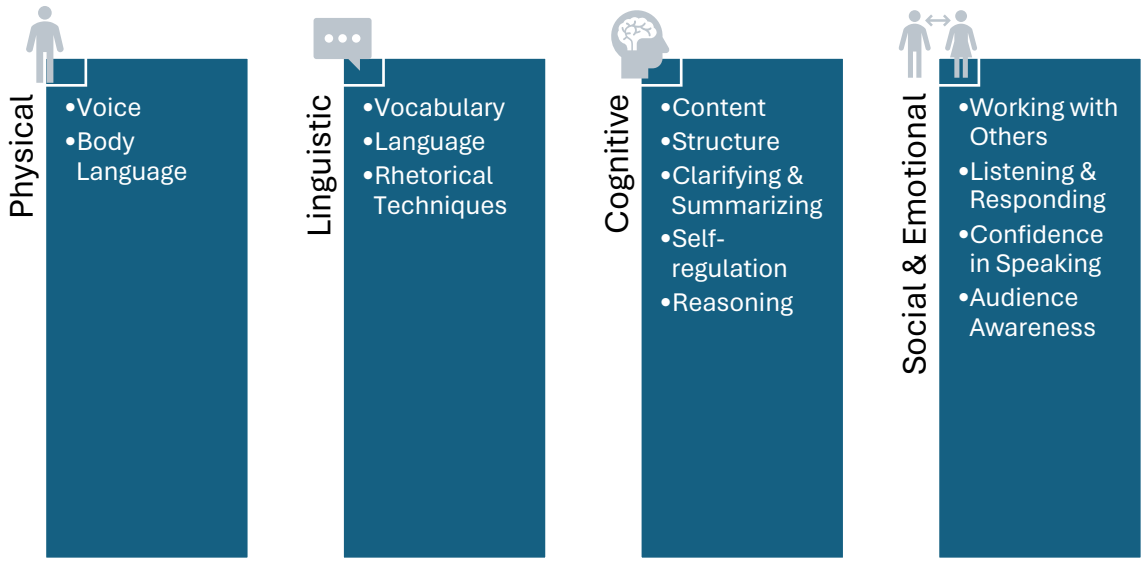
and debate course included topics that challenged the dominant binary racial logic in and out of the school and attempted to pursue ideas that were innovative, nontraditional, and politicized.

Curriculum Review

The deliberate, explicit, and systematic teaching of oracy across phases and throughout the curriculum supported children and young people to make progress in the four strands of oracy outlined in the oracy framework. The oracy framework included four categorical areas—physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills—enabling successful discussion by inspiring effective speech and communication. A more in-depth skill coverage of each of the four phases follows.

Figure 2

An Oracy Framework



Note: Adapted from *Voice 21* by Voice 21, 2023, School 21 Foundation, copyright 2023 by School 21 Foundation.

The oracy framework was used as a basis of formative assessment and enabled the lead facilitator to gauge what students had or had not yet grasped and informed students of their progression and success in skill building.

Due to the heavy influence the curriculum had on the study, the study also included a document analysis. I performed a document analysis by reviewing and analyzing the curriculum materials utilized for the course. I was expected to draw upon at least two sources of evidence: that is, to seek convergence and corroboration using different data sources and methods (Bowen, 2009). I reviewed the curricular plans for the voice-based course via a document analysis. Voice 21's (2023) curriculum constituted a document analysis because it contained text and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

I reviewed the objectives, intended outcomes, learning activities, and skill and conceptual progression of the lessons. When completing the curriculum review, I noticed the Think Law (2019) curriculum was incorporated. This provided a connection to ethnic studies and will be explored more in Chapters 4 and 5. The document analysis was used in combination with the other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation: "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Denzin, 1970, p. 291). The assumed triangulation of the curriculum review, interviews, and classroom observations revealed the positive impact of developing a curricular program with a dual focus on ethnic studies and developing students' voice and academic skills.

Analysis Plan

I analyzed data collected from the interviews, classroom observations, and curriculum review using emergent and a priori themes. Stemler (2001) discussed two approaches to the coding of data: emergent coding where codes are drawn from the text and a priori coding where codes are created beforehand and applied to the text. I used priori codes for all three forms of data collection to see similarities and potential differences during the analysis process. The codes focused on the themes of specific steps from the TSV framework as well as themes connected to my literature review regarding student identity and cultural exploration, student civic action, operationalizing ethnic studies, and teacher planning and development. I also reviewed the document analysis and institutional artifacts produced during the class to triangulate any potential findings uncovered during the coding of the interviews, classroom observations, and curriculum review.

Safety Measures

I implemented and followed safety measures to ensure the security of the study and corresponding components. For one, data and analyses were stored on a secure laptop and used password-protected storage. I will destroy recordings (audio, transcriptions) after one year. Also, a consent form was completed for the four educators to engage in the study. Finally, I used pseudonyms to protect the privacy of participants and the school.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Limitations

A few limitations presented themselves with the educator interviews. For one, the data was self-reported. As school leaders, the educators may have wanted to share interview answers

they thought would have pleased the researcher or show that the educator was credible to teach the course due to the researcher's positionality. If this was the case, an alternate protocol was required, such as having an adult interviewer who the educators did not see as an authority figure so the participants could be more honest during the interviews. In addition, due to the timeframe of the study, the data collection process was only 3 weeks long. Whereas, ideally, the data collection process would have lasted at least a trimester since the school follows a trimester schedule.

Another limitation included the desire to gather student accounts of their experience and reflections from the course. The data collection period occurred in the last month of school. Due to the short timeline and IRB protocols, I could not include students in the data collection process. Since student voice was at the center of the study, I believed it was important to gather student input about their feelings, insights, and suggestions for the course to effectively intertwine ethnic studies with an oracy program. Therefore, I encourage future researchers to include students in the study and data collection and analysis plan.

Delimitations

A quantitative survey was not chosen for the course of study since it could limit the scope and breadth in which an educator responds. Also, since there were not multiple educators who could have completed the survey, it would have been challenging to establish comparative data. By using interviews, the educators could go more in depth about their experiences and reflections from the course. This prevented the educators from being limited in the types of details they shared about the experience they had as practitioners for the course.

Validity

To support the validity and trustworthiness of the interview data, I followed certain steps. For instance, I followed the same interview protocol and thus questions for all of the educator interviews. Predecided prompts were utilized when the participants were vague in responses to maintain consistency across all interviews.

When conducting an observation, it was important to be aware of the Hawthorne effect. Tyner-Mullings et al. (2019) stated people often change their behavior when they know they are being watched as part of a study. To support the validity and trustworthiness of the classroom observations, I maintained certain steps. For instance, I did not interrupt the instruction or prompt the teacher or students during the observations. I sat at a separate table away from the seating and activity space of the students and educators. As a result, students were limited in the influence of the presence of the school leader. Students and teachers at the school were also accustomed to administrators entering their classrooms on a weekly basis throughout the school year in all of their courses. These typical visits included an administrator entering the classroom and taking observational notes to coach and support the teacher's professional development. Therefore, the educators and students authentically engaged in the course void of the researcher's presence.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Through extensive data collection, I investigated the ways in which a middle school implemented TSV and ethnic studies into their voice-based course. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and solidify instructional experiences a middle school can implement to provide a way for adolescents to learn and understand root causes of inequality, unpack and embrace their own collective action, and be empowered to use their voice to transform systems of oppression that affect their academic and/or personal lives. To achieve the purpose of learning more about the practices the secondary school can use to develop students' critical consciousness and voice, the following three research questions guided this qualitative study:

- What can be learned from educators who have taught a voice-based course in an in-person and virtual environment?
- What are the decisions middle school educators should consider when integrating transformative student voice and ethnic studies into a voice-based course?
- What are the educators' perspectives on the professional development and resources needed to effectively integrate transformative student voice and ethnic studies into a voice-based course?

To adequately answer these questions, I primarily reviewed and combined semistructured mid- and postinterviews with the supplemental classroom observations and limited curriculum review for a thorough examination of the findings. The semistructured interviews incorporated

open-ended and more theoretically driven questions to elicit data grounded in the experience of the teacher to discover themes and patterns to shed light on the educators' intellectual preparation for the course and their overall experiences teaching the course that leads to students' critical consciousness being explored as well as the ways in which student voice developed.

As a result, I identified the following four themes: (a) the shifting perspectives on student and individual collective voice; (b) the steps to integrate ethnic studies into the speech and debate course; (c) the steps to integrate the TSV into the speech and debate course; (d) professional development for ethnic studies and TSV integration. In the next sections, I use the participants‟ pseudonyms and share direct quotes using the initials S.P. to denote study participants.

Class and Educator Interviewees

To learn more about the goals and subsequent content of the voice-based course offered at the middle school, I reviewed and summarized several documents. The middle school offered a speech and debate course for all three grade levels; however, for the purpose of the study, I examined the eighth-grade curriculum and lesson materials. The reviewed and summarized documents include the course outline, lesson slides, created student handouts, and learning rubrics. I interviewed the class lead and support facilitators to further triangulate the data. This section details the findings of these data, specifically bringing attention to the course's goals, structure, and coursework for the eighth-grade students.

I chose the study participants due to their role in facilitating the course. Below is specific demographic and professional information for the study participants. The descriptions of the

educators are arranged according to their level of responsibility given the components and goals of the course, beginning with the educator with the least level of responsibility.

Jade

Jade was a special education paraprofessional at the middle school campus. She identified as an Asian American woman. She was in her second year as a professional in education, as well as her first year at the middle school site during the data collection process of the study.

Roger

Roger was an eighth-grade teaching assistant at the middle school. He identified as a Latino male. He had been an educational professional for 4 years and completed one year of employment at the school site during the data collection process of the study.

Natalie

Natalie was the sixth–eighth grade science teacher at the middle school. She identified as a White woman. She led an advisory class for an eighth-grade cohort. Natalie had been an educational professional for 7 years and completed her second year at the school site during the data collection process of the study.

Fred

Fred was the founder and lead speech and debate teacher for sixth–eighth grade at the middle school. Fred identified as a Black man. Fred had been in education for 13 years and 5 years at the school site during the data collection process of the study.

Course Learning Environments

The course was facilitated in two different learning environments and methods for the eighth-grade students. Once a week for a 60-minute, in-person session, the eighth-grade students met with Fred in their individual cohort class. The eighth-grade students also engaged in a school-wide 60-minute Zoom session. The Zoom sessions were an opportunity for students to engage in a virtual lesson with Fred, with the support of their homeroom teacher and potentially a teaching assistant. Students received a majority of the lesson from Fred. Fred Zoomed into each class simultaneously and delivered the lesson directions and rationale, court case information, and product expectations for the specific lesson of the day. Natalie, Roger, and Jade served as in-person facilitators for the students. Their priorities included holding students accountable to on-task behavior, task completion, and striving for equity of voice in the classroom as students debated across classes via Zoom. I was present for the weekly in-person eighth-grade sessions and for the school-wide Zoom sessions for the observations. During the observations, I looked and listened for evidence of, but not limited to techniques and structures the educators used to promote student voice, collaborative learning, and topics that aligned with the TSV framework and ethnic studies. The findings from this study are reported here and are organized by the four themes outlined above.

Theme 1: Shifting Perspectives on Student and Individual Collective Voice

All four of the participants expressed an appreciation for the speech and debate class due to the positive impact it had on student voice and confidence. During the interviews, the participants shared how the course shifted their perspective around the capabilities and nuances of student voice. Due to their participation in facilitating the course for their eighth-grade

students, they began to see student voice as a vehicle for students to communicate in service of something bigger than themselves.

Before observing teaching practices, it was important to understand how the campus educators defined and interpreted the term, "student voice." During the midobservation interviews, I initially asked each educator, "How would you define student voice?" From these self-reported definitions of student voice, I asked additional questions to learn more about the educators' classroom practices in support of student voice. These questions were, "What aspects of TSV did you prioritize when preparing and planning for this course? Why?" and "What aspects of ethnic studies did you prioritize when preparing and planning for this course? Why?" Through 60-minute classroom observations of the four participating faculty, the findings moved beyond the educator's interpretation of student voice and documented how the four educators promoted student voice in their classroom practice for all students by first establishing an inclusive learning environment.

The following section includes the results of these interview questions by reporting each educator's approach to student voice in the classroom and subsequent pedagogy. Therefore, the results provide (a) their evolved definition of student voice, (b) perceived teaching practices and strengths, and (c) the believed impact the educator's moves had on empowering students. The discussion analyzes the educators' practices through the lens of the TSV framework.

Definition of Student Voice

To answer the research questions, I intended to retrieve details and information on how the educators' experience in partnership with students impacted their perspective of the potential and power of student voice in and outside of the speech and debate course. As a result, the mid-

and postinterviews included asking participants what their overall definition of student voice was and why during and after the course.

Initially, all four participants expressed a definition that encompassed an insular purpose, in that the participants detailed how student voice would allow for individuals to express themselves and communicate their personal needs. When asked to articulate her own definition of student voice, Jade stated: "Student voice is the ability for students to feel supported when they are sharing information about their thoughts and feelings, their connections to their cultural and ethnic identities, and others" (Jade, S.P). Natalie went into further detail about how the promotion of student voice can build students' self-advocacy and, thus, self-esteem. Natalie stated:

> I personally define student voice as students advocating for themselves, feeling comfortable, to ask questions, to say answers, to be curious and voice curiosity. Whether it be verbally or nonverbally. I think that student voice is something that could really advocate for their self-esteem, build upon their passions with their curiosity. And I just really want students to feel like they can advocate for themselves.

Fred agreed with the other participants and extended the scope of student voice to include other mediums of communication and expression.

> When I started, student voice was very much focused on oral communication, and it has now brought in various other means of communication, whether that be written words, spoken word, visual art. Any means of sharing their ideas and stories is using their voice to me.

All four mid-course interviews, had connections across the definitions from the participants. The educators initially viewed student voice as an individual academic and personal skill that required developing so students could make informed arguments and opinions and have the opportunity to express their feelings and/or advocate for themselves in and out of the classroom.

For the purpose of the study, it was important to consider and capture how the perspectives and importance placed on student voice shifted as the course progressed over time. When asked to articulate her own definition of student voice once the course was completed, Jade stated:

> I think that student voice now is uplifting people to discover and find their own answers. Providing them opportunities to be curious and to be independent in leading their own curiosities. Before I came to this school, I defined student voice as a young learner being able to speak out when something is bothering them or when they feel disrespected. In order for students to feel able to speak out and for students to get to a point where they're able to recognize what is not right for them, they need to be curious about what is working now, or what the existing structures are.

When asked to articulate his definition of student voice once the course was completed, Roger aligned on the movement from an individualistic purpose to a collective benefit.

> After finishing, I see student voice as using their voice to spread their ideas and thoughts whether it could be to advocate for themselves or others, or to just voice an opinion, and be able to speak what they feel.

When asked to articulate her definition of student voice once the course was completed, Natalie also embraced more of a community-oriented approach to a celebration of voice.

> My new definition of student voice is about the collective thoughts of how students are sharing their information. Allowing time for students to brainstorm and speak verbally and visually. Student voice is students being able to share their thoughts and feelings, and not feel judged.

In the postinterviews, there was an evolution of how the educators interpreted and defined student voice. The educators began to use words such as "we, others, collective" to denote a change in the purpose behind the use of voice. Before the course, the educators focused on the individual impact, and after the course, saw the power behind each student playing a role in the voice and the experience of the community being uplifted, which correlates with one of the main tenets of TSV.

Perceived Teaching Practices and Strengths

Fred shared that specific interactions with one of his eighth graders helped him come to this realization of the evolution of strong student voice. The student had conversations with him about her art and drawings and how it related to the content of the class or recent lessons. He shared that she was able to use her art to describe her nuanced ideas that were previously challenging to share via her writing. Fred continued,

> It doesn't mean that nuanced ideas are not there, they just need to be communicated through a different medium. Making sure the students have those channels is important because part of communication is adapting to an audience and actually honing in on some

of those natural aptitudes. Schools should not homogenize what communication looks like.

When reviewing the TSV framework, all four participants shared that the first step of building community is a strong point for the specific classes they support and the school as a whole.

To build a sense of community and trust, the lead facilitator for the course prioritized two activities with the students. The teacher incorporated daily journaling for the students and embedded learning games in the first few months of the course.

> The intention behind journaling is one, getting students used to translating their thoughts into written words on paper. Secondly, it is getting them comfortable, being emotionally vulnerable with the people who are sitting in the room with them. Even if they're not actually sharing out loud or showing it to anyone, the experience of connecting with that emotion is important. (Fred, S.P.)

Students were asked to write in their journals between 7–10 minutes. The only requirement was to not stop writing. Some sessions had journal prompts and others were free writes. The students could read and share their journals if they felt comfortable but were not mandated to.

Learning games were integrated in the course to build a sense of community between the students as well as the teacher.

> Second thing we do is we would play some sort of theatrical game. I would always play with them and be over the top, even more silly than they could ever be. The thought is that there is no perfection in it, and so just getting them comfortable, being weird, being a kid and making mistakes, and even making loud mistakes in front of one another created

> an environment where failure is normalized and failure is accepted, not judged." (Fred, S.P.)

Such activities included mirror games, vocal practices, and fun challenges.

The racial demographics of the school consist of 78% Latinx and 22% Black. As a predominantly BIPOC school, I used the classroom observations and interviews to determine how educators were structuring the integration of the TSV framework and ethnic studies to advance an overall student experience. I sought to determine the impact the focus of community and culture building at the start of the course had on student voice across the student body.

Educators' Impact on Empowering Students

To secure a welcoming and celebratory learning environment, educators articulated how the focus of the class is on celebrating student thinking and risk-taking more so than correct answers. For example, Fred entered the course with a specific mindset shift.

> We are looking more so at students' ability to come up with something to say that has some perspective. Even if it is incomplete, at least they can come with a decision or a perspective on a given issue. If we can start at that point, we can develop a formal argument and can tease that out to come up with evidence and things. But the ability to make a decision was really important. (Fred, S.P.)

Through the speech and debate program, the school aims for each of their students to find confidence in their voice and grow as advocates for themselves and their communities. These programs help students develop the research and logical reasoning skills to form clear and persuasive arguments and the confidence and performance and rhetorical skills to effectively communicate their messages.

The intentional community building enabled students to practice the communication skills activities and engage in the speech and debate lessons that integrated ethnic studies. Roger recognized how community building had elevated student confidence.

> Public speaking is very terrifying for a lot of people. I think we have multiple students across all classes who are willing to speak when given the opportunity to speak to the whole school.

In summary, by prioritizing the first step, building community of the TSV framework, students and adults involved in the course shifted their orientation from the individual to the collective experience and voice. The intentionality of building a community mindset and actions allowed for students to develop their skills and sense of purpose when advocating for change not just for themselves but for others as well. Consequently, the seeds of activism were planted in learning environments that cultivate community, critical reflection, and sociopolitical action (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2022).

Theme 2: Integration of Ethnic Studies in a Voice-Based Course

When referring to the interviews, all four participants provided their perspectives on how the speech and debate course utilized ethnic studies. For the purpose of the study, I provided a definition of ethnic studies based on existing literature. Per the literature review in Chapter 2, ethnic studies was defined as the study of the histories, experiences, cultures, and issues of racial-ethnic groups in the United States. I reviewed the steps to operationalize ethnic studies as outlined in Chapter 2 alongside the findings to determine the success and areas of growth for the school's integration of ethnic studies in the speech and debate course. The operational steps emphasized the importance of the following:

1. The syllabus and curricular arc provide an expansive, transnational, and transhistorical study of race in the curriculum that is not bound to U.S.-centric and diametric conceptualizations of race.
2. Students in education classes will have an expansive understanding of race and Whiteness that engages with ethnic studies and challenges the Black-White racial binary.
3. Teachers emphasize creating innovative, nontraditional, and explicitly politicized projects that disrupt/challenge/resist racial oppression in the classroom and society at large.
4. Students need increased opportunities to leverage critical research and critical civic inquiry. (Allen-Handy & Thomas, 2022; Halagao, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2017; Thangaraj, 2021)

Therefore, this section is divided into two subpatterns. Subpattern one focuses on the educators' intentional planning and facilitation steps that were taken to integrate ethnic studies into the voice-based course. This section is divided into two subpatterns. Subpattern two highlights the steps that need to be strengthened and/or incorporated in the speech and debate course for ethnic studies to be fully integrated in the course offering for students on campus.

Expansive Curricular Arc

Voice 21 (2023) is the traditional oracy curriculum for the speech and debate course. However, the school recognized that strictly following the Voice 21's (2023) curricular scope and sequence would do a disservice to the school's vision and mission. The school's mission statement reads as follows:

> We exist to ensure that each of our students has a unique voice that can be heard – a voice to advocate for the uplift of the community and people that they know and love. They will know the power and potential of their voice to change the world, and be educated with the knowledge and skills to do so. (Potentia Academy, 2023)

Fred made a conscious decision to note solely use the Voice 21 (2023) curriculum. Due to his legal background and identity as a Black man, he decided to infuse another curriculum that would equip students with legal knowledge and history. The infusion provided safeguards when guiding students during learning activities that broached social justice topics and equity driven content.

In light of the school's mission statement, Fred's decision to integrate an additional curriculum simultaneously upheld an ethnic studies approach. Fred also included tenets of the Think Law (2019) curriculum. The main difference between Voice 21 (2023) and Think Law (2019) is a centered focus of critical thinking and justice. According to Think Law (2019), the curriculum considers multiple perspectives, uses evidence to back up decision-making, and calls for students to be committed to continuous improvement of their thinking around every aspect of what they do (Think Law, 2019).

Think Law (2019) continued to describe the orientation students will possess when navigating the curriculum. For instance, Think Law (2019) wants students to consider equity, not equality in deciding what is needed for their work. They understand that what is legal is not always just and what is acceptable is not always fair, and actively seek to be the hammer that helps to bend the arc of history towards justice (Think Law, 2019). Fred shared in detail the rationale behind his integration decision,

> When I wrote the charter for the school, student voice and communication was at the center of the vision. My thought was that a student's ability to communicate is how we put learning into practice. But, there had to be something worth sharing -something about which they could be passionate and opinionated. And that led me to Think Law (2019). As a lawyer, I'm biased. But, the centrality of the law to all of our lives in America and our basic understanding of justice, fairness, equality, freedom lends it to being a compelling on-ramp for student communication. When they have conviction on a topic in the law, we don't have to convince them to communicate. They feel compelled to. And they want to work out the best way to get their point across. They want to make sure they are heard. And we have the conditions under which they are ready to learn to be master communicators.

Fred's intentionality along with the school provided an on-ramp of opportunities for students to engage in real life court cases and use their legal knowledge and analysis skills to make decisions in service of justice. At the beginning of each in-person and Zoom session, Fred shared the learning objectives and problems that students must solve. For instance, Fred highlighted scenarios that centered the First Amendment and free speech:

> As we teach students about their voices, it's important to ground them in purpose and explain why their voices matter. The First Amendment and its history is the perfect vehicle to do so. So much of our struggle to be "a more perfect union" is rooted in the power struggle between the powerful and the oppressed over the freedom of speech and expression. When students understand their role in this arc towards justice, they understand that the world they dream of won't be created unless they demand its

existence. They see the value in voice and are more willing and ready to engage in the hard work of learning how to advocate for themselves and their communities.

By blending components of the Voice 21 (2023) and Think Law (2019) curriculum, Fred grounded students' learning in the First Amendment and began to get students to enter into a phase of civic inquiry. Fred started with sharing the definition of free speech with the classes and transitioned into having the students think about freedom of speech in schools. This real-life application prompted students to think about when free speech is permissible and when it should be punishable. Students were encouraged to work in groups to brainstorm the examples for both sides by answering the following question(s):

1. If you were in charge of a school, would you have any rules against students communicating certain types of free speech? Why or why not?

One of those legal examples was the *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District* (1969) case. Fred introduced the case to students as an opportunity to build their critical inquiry and consciousness through the lens of the First Amendment.

> It is important to analyze free speech as it applies to schools. What are the boundaries of free speech within schools? We introduced the First Amendment and free speech through *Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)*, which is a case for students who wore black armbands in protest of the Vietnam War. After having a cursory understanding of that case in law, their job was to apply the First Amendment principles and to determine the limits and fact patterns involving schools in a series of cases.

In connection to the literature review and historical legal background of student voice, the middle school of study embraced its vision of promoting student voice by clearly supporting

students in knowing the power their voice can have and should be permissible to have on and off campus.

Civics and Community Orientation

As shown in the first findings theme, since community building was established first, educators and students were more willing to enter the space as collaborative learners willing to grow. The integration of ethnic studies also motivated students to engage and actively participate.

> There was an importance of teaching Ethnic Studies and moments from the past and current. I really believe that's part of the reason I saw such engagement with student voice. Certain things were resonating with students like parts of history that might have been repeated or just events happening now and to our world. There was a built-in advocacy with the speech and debate class, where I really saw them advocating for different things, whether it be fairness for a certain race or culture of people, or for people that identify as LGBT. (Natalie, S.P.)

Due to the combined emphasis of community building and ethnic studies, the participants saw an increase in individual and collective student voice.

> Because of the class, he's been able to give his opinion. He's very happy to go up there. Maybe at first he had a little stage fright. But when I am in the course with this student now, he's gathering ideas from others so that he can give a full response. This is growth as well because he's also taking in what everybody else is saying, so that he can form a class opinion to share. (Roger, S.P.)

Cohen et al. (2018) stated that critical civic inquiry (CCI) aims to center the life experiences, funds of knowledge, and aspirations of youth of color from low-income communities, while also creating opportunities that expand their knowledge and skills as leaders and agents of change. The students in the speech and debate course synthesized their learnings and experiences to advocate for specific measures in response to the cases and scenarios introduced in the course. However, the students were not able to fully actualize the scope of CCI. Critical civic inquiry should have students discuss their experiences in their schools and communities, identify and pursue a problem relevant to their lives, develop evidence-based policy solutions, and communicate a call to action to public audiences (Blevins et al., 2016). Since the lessons and legal issues, and thus, societal problems were already embedded in the speech and debate course, students did not have the freedom to distinguish their own problems and examine the steps and policies to rectify the problem with community action within the confines of the class.

Embed Opportunities for Innovative and Politicized Projects

In the speech and debate course, students created reflections, engaged in discussions, and completed written, constructed responses. However, students did not complete actual projects in the course. This could be a potential pitfall since looking at cases with an overall view of who is impacted and why but may help to be focused and look at generational cases and apply solutions in reference to today's societal issues. The course focused more heavily on the foundational aspects of TSV (Steps 1–3) to provide students time to build a sense of community and connection with their peers as the priority. Once that brave space was established, the facilitators transitioned the curriculum into reviewing and analyzing legal case studies and court cases to expose students to historical proceedings and social issues. Due to the limited time of the course,

the facilitators prioritized these steps and the subsequent developmental process, which limited the opportunity for students to engage in and create politicized projects and therefore, consistently enter into steps 4–6 of the TSV framework.

Theme 3: Integration of TSV in a Voice-Based Course

When referring to the interviews, all four participants provided their perspectives on how the speech and debate course has utilized the TSV framework. The transformative student voice roadmap includes the following eight steps.

- Build community;
- Identify a problem;
- Explore root causes;
- Collect data;
- Analyze data;
- Develop policy;
- Propose policy; and
- Safeguard policy implementation (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2022)

The following section highlights the steps of the framework and evidence of how they were incorporated into the speech and debate course.

Foundational Steps

Steps 1–3. According to the literature review of the TSV framework and ethnic studies, community building is a necessary first step for the development of individual and collective critical consciousness and action. The participants unanimously celebrated the work the school has done in building a sense of belonging and inclusivity regarding the course due to the

prioritization of community and culture building at the start of the course before students were introduced to the standard curriculum.

As the lead facilitator and planner for the course, Fred sought out the Think Law (2019) curriculum that he could marry with the Voice 21 (2023) curriculum. Think Law (2019) provided an entry point to integrating not only, ethnic studies concepts, but also activities that followed the steps in the TSV framework. Fred used the curriculum to create the educator guides for the course. The guides included the connection to the common core standards, objectives, a scenario with an established law in question, probing questions, and the method for students to share their thinking.

> For instance, one of the objectives consistently incorporated in the lessons is thinkers will analyze a controversial problem, identify their emotional reactions to this problem, evaluate potential options to resolve the problem, and critique the problem. (Potentia Academy, 2023)

The *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District* (1969) case was revealed to students to engage with and analyze through the lens of the First Amendment and the TSV framework. Students were asked these initial questions to begin crafting their understanding of the problem and root cause(s).

1. How would you feel if you were a school principal at a school where these students wore these black armbands?
2. How would you feel about the armbands if you did/did not support the war?

Students used these reflections to establish reasons for whether or not to wear the armbands at school. The speech and debate course supported students in questioning and critiquing information and exited the realm of passive learning.

The skills developed in the speech and debate course translated to students' critical thinking skills being explored in other content areas. As the science teacher, Natalie noticed students' questioning skills blossomed as a result of the speech and debate course. In particular, Natalie stated that students progressed in the second step of the TSV framework.

> I've noticed, when it comes to identifying a problem, that specifically with my science class, students are asking so many more questions. They are using their voice to ask certain things to identify information. They're feeling confident to ask about what they are learning instead of thinking about it internally, there's been a lot of external questions and analytical thinking.

Students had to unpack specific clues and the stated law to come to a conclusion of the root causes and potential next steps towards a solution. For example, as a progression in the free speech series, students reviewed the court's ruling in the *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District* (1969) Supreme Court case. Fred shared in the lesson materials that the court explained the rule for free speech in schools: schools can only punish student free speech if the speech (1) Seriously disrupts the school or (2) will probably cause serious disruptions in the school. The students used the decision making of the court to then apply the legal consideration to more recent cases. One case was about a high school with 4,200 students. A student club called the Gay/Straight Alliance sponsored something called the "Day of Silence" at the school to raise awareness of discrimination against the gay and lesbian community. The case continued

to explain how during the “Day of Silence” some students could remain silent unless called on in class. Some students and teachers wore t-shirts that say, “Be Who You Are” as part of the “Day of Silence.” The day after the “Day of Silence,” a student wore a t-shirt that said “MY DAY OF SILENCE, STRAIGHT ALLIANCE” on the front, and “BE HAPPY, NOT GAY” on the back. Fred then posed the speech and debate question, “If you were the principal of the high school, would you do anything about the student’s t-shirt? Why or why not? Use the CER writing structure.

Once Fred posed a case scenario to students and gave them time to process the information, students had an opportunity to sort their evidence and build their reasoning. From the brainstormed reasons, students made a decision and backed it with evidence via a CER (Claim, Evidence, Reasoning) writing structure. The teacher reviewed the written responses and called on students to share their thinking and stance with others as a form of debate or potential consensus building.

The goal was not necessarily for the class to come to a consensus, but to establish a claim and course of action grounded in textual and legal evidence. This allowed for students to then transgress into step 4: collect data and step 5: analyze data.

Collect and Analyze Data

Steps 4–5

When the course introduced the court cases and legal scenarios to students, students had the opportunity to read information that included quantitative numbers and evidence that pertained to the case. The data was solely provided by the lead facilitator who constructed the lesson plans and materials. For instance, Roger stated,

> It was great for the cases to start simple and broad. It got the students really hooked into thinking, "Oh, what could this mean? And what are the different avenues we can pursue? So the students got even more interested in it. The cases being shared are real life applicable and so students could see themselves potentially in situations or visualize what was happening. Once more information and data was added, students would think, "Okay, now I have more evidence to back up my argument."

This shows that students enjoyed the structure of the class. The class structure enabled students to review and unpack evidence throughout the entirety of the lesson, not just as front-loaded material to start the lesson. Natalie noticed a level of motivation for students to utilize data in their thought processes and conclusions:

> The facilitators knew what the end result was, but the students were collecting piece by piece, little data to build up their sort of answer. That was really cool. They were slowly collecting data. It was almost like a little game of collecting bits and pieces of data which is such a good skill to have. I think the next steps would be for students to collect their own data in this class and in other classes as well.

The course provided avenues for students to interrogate provided data as an individual lesson progressed. Per the interviews, the structure of the lesson and delivery and expectation of data usage was engaging and motivating for students. This information included data, clues, hints, and additional legal stipulations that were sources provided by the teacher but not actively sought out and collected by students. Students did not engage in their own data processes. As outlined in the plans and materials, students did not have the opportunity to create their own plan to collect additional data points or statistics centered around the topic of the day or for a topic of

their choosing. This can be attributed to the time constraints of the individual lesson sessions and overall time frame for the course of study.

Universal Accessibility. Overall, the participants viewed the speech and debate course as an engaging and empowering learning space for students. Two of the four participants witnessed opportunities for the class to be more accessible to ensure each student participant fully met the intended outcomes of the course. One of those opportunities is to scaffold and break down the legal jargon and terms for students. For example, through her cofacilitation, Jade saw a level of investment in the course for the students she supports:

> I was presently surprised by how carefully they were reading through and working through their comprehension of every hint or prompt they were given. I had a few students mention, "Oh that's a trick question because this word specifically mentions that there was no murder at all." They were able to read between the lines, and also come up with non-traditional answers based off of their reading comprehension from the activity.

Since the students had the motivation to succeed in the course, Jade identified areas where students could benefit from specific scaffolds to increase their access to the legal material and overall mastery in the objectives for each lesson:

> I think something that would be beneficial for them is to include an asterisk or footnotes that define certain words. I know that a lot of the eighth graders I was working with were able to define and comprehend each word. But when I think about the sixth graders that I work with, I do think that some of them would have asked questions about what the word means, and having the footnotes will support them in their reading comprehension, and also allow them to interpret the word in the best way.

Roger also noted the suggestion of making the lessons more accessible to students performing at different literacy levels.

> Each lesson has legal terms and jargon. I do think it is important for our students to see and use these words. It would be helpful if at the beginning of the lesson, these terms are defined so everyone is on the same page and understands the content.

Equipping students with legal and civic terminology ensures all students are clear on the content. This supports students in spending their energy and brain power on comprehending the cases and disseminating the important evidence to make informed decisions and develop arguments grounded in legal thought.

Incorporating statistics. The speech and debate lesson materials rely heavily on qualitative data, such as demonstrative and documentary evidence. The course has yet to include quantitative data such as statistics. Roger stated,

> For the data collection and analysis, I think we need to include more numbers such as statistics so students can see how often actions are happening or how often something is happening to certain people. By bringing in more statistics, it will push their argument further.

In addition, Natalie believes statistics should be incorporated into the lesson materials:

> I think for students to move forward with a solution, there could be something where they're starting to look at statistics of how many times let's say something happens or to use that information in their negotiations. Students will start to think, "How many times has this action been cleared? Or how many times has it not?"

Roger and Natalie both see the potential to push students' analytical skills and overall worldview if they are able to see the probability of the occurrence of certain civilian actions and legal decisions. Including quantitative methods such as statistics would give students an opportunity to conduct their own mixed methods of data collection to better inform their rationale, decision-making, and collective action. It will also give students an opportunity to pressure test and measure the progress of their policies once they are solidified and implemented.

Policy and Communication

Steps 6-8

The mid- and postinterviews in conjunction with the document analysis of the lesson materials revealed that students did not engage in steps 6-8 of the TSV framework. For instance, students were able to establish and defend formal arguments and opinions based on the provided evidence and data. However, students did not establish real-life policies that impacted themselves or others. The educators of the study would like to see this explored with students to help them see the impact of their collective action in real time, not just based on legal cases or conjured-up scenarios as outlined by the curriculum.

For example, Natalie is looking forward to the course to continue so students can experience the later steps of the TSV framework. When thinking of the next steps the school should take to grow the program, Natalie suggested,

> Students proposing policies is a step I think we can take. I guess we could do it in small groups. Having small groups propose certain policies to what they learned about. Like whether it is in response to something happening currently in our country or when hearing about a real lawsuit. Students would be proposing a policy that would benefit

whatever lesson they are on. They could make an agenda, policy, cure, or suggestion that they would share with the whole school.

Similar to Natalie, the participants stated a desire for students to begin to apply their learnings to their own course of action and activism. As mentioned in Theme 2: Integration of Ethnic Studies in a Voice-Based Course, there is a missing component of students having the time and opportunity to collectively identify and implement a politicized project with the opportunity to enact meaningful change. Due to the timing of a traditional 9-month school year, the school was placed on a time constraint which prevented the educators and students from fully navigating and enacting all eight steps of TSV.

Despite the challenges and constraints, the participants revealed the positive consequences of the course. The school successfully prioritized supporting students in building their sense of belonging and community orientation alongside their critical consciousness.

Theme 4: Professional Development for Ethnic Studies and TSV

The personal and professional experiences of ethnic studies of the participants gathered during the interviews suggested steps the school can explore to strengthen their voice-based course. These suggestions may influence further research to support other middle schools looking to implement the TSV framework and ethnic studies into their own voice-based courses. In an attempt to further unpack the importance of professional development, I asked each participant to detail their experiences with ethnic studies and TSV.

Personal Experience With Ethnic Studies

Three of the four participants identified as a person of color and two of the four identified as women. Due to their personal identities and backgrounds, they all aligned on the importance

of ethnic studies. They each stated how their student experience in ethnic studies courses helped them feel valued in their lived experiences and connected to the learning material. For example, Jade shared how schools can support her new view on student voice.

> I believe, from my own experience, Ethnic Studies makes the curriculum more relatable. I'm able to be more curious about things because they relate to my identity, communities, and history. I've found the most joy in taking Ethnic Studies because I feel a personal connection to it. And in that connection, I am able to take more initiative to do my own learning, and to have my own sense of direction.

Therefore, the participants agreed that ethnic studies should be taught to students.

> I don't think we can teach anything that brings in the history of political science without bringing in Ethnic Studies. Because then, the story is simply incomplete of what we're telling students. (Fred, S.P.)

As the lead facilitator of the course, Fred infuses the TSV framework, ethnic studies, and oracy curriculum in his planning to develop students' critical consciousness in the speech and debate course. This stance is grounded in his own educational journey. Fred majored in African American studies, earned his juris doctorate degree, and is a practicing lawyer. Consequently, because of the intersection of his racial identity and educational training and identity, he has an intrinsic motivation to empower students and fully adopt the TSV framework and ethnic studies.

> We can have something that feels neutral but if the impact is not neutral, we have to look at who is being impacted. Oftentimes the impact is most acutely built in communities like ours. (Fred, S.P.)

Professional Experience With Ethnic Studies

It is important to unpack the remaining participants' professional experience leading and teaching ethnic studies to develop trends on the strengths and needs for the staff's training on the middle school campus. Only two of the four educators completed a course that focused on teaching ethnic studies with a minimum level of culturally responsive material. Those two participants completed teacher credentialing programs, whereas the other two participants, Roger and Jade, as teaching assistants have not entered or completed teacher credentialing programs.

Natalie mentioned how it is important for all educators to engage in ongoing training.

> I think it is really helpful to educate ourselves on current topics and what is considered culturally responsive teaching that is the most up to date. We're educating ourselves on how to teach things that are currently happening in our internal and external environment.

Fred expressed aligned viewpoints with Natalie on the importance of ongoing training due to his professional background.

> As a lawyer, someone who loved law school, I actually am someone who has done studies of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Specifically like the law as it relates to CRT. I think that is one of the best ways to develop a nuanced understanding of government and policy. Because if you dig deep into Critical Race Theory, you also are going to touch on subjects such as gender, sexuality, all of those different identity markers that go into it, and how folks relate to our country and the systems that broadly control our country. So for an intro to law class, it is probably one of the easiest ways to integrate Ethnic Studies because the history of the law, governance, and policy in our country is tied up in race and ethnicity.

Since Roger and Jade did not engage in a teaching credential program, they rely on the school to provide professional development for the voice-based course at the middle school. All four participants shared how the summer training prior to the 2022–2023 school year helped them understand and identify the key components of the course and subsequent plans. Fred led the summer session since he was the lead facilitator and curriculum planner for the course.

> We had the person running the course show us how to facilitate the course in PD (professional development). He showed us how to support students and how to engage in the course. (Roger, S.P.)

The summer session was the team's introduction to the course, the goals, and the structure of learning for all students. The session included a demo from Fred to the support facilitators such as Natalie, Roger and Jade. The demo included Fred presenting the lesson slides as if he was live with students. The purpose of the session was to review the components of a lesson, test out the computer and Zoom technology, and give support facilitators advice as to when they will be doing whole class conversations and small group conversations, which are ideal time frames for when to ask probing questions as outlined by the provided teacher guides. After the summer session, the facilitators were given weekly teacher guides that outlined the content, session goals, and suggested prompts to promote student thinking and voice. When asked how Roger utilized these materials, he said:

> To prepare, I would look over the material and engage myself with the questions that will be asked. I think a lot of our students have a lot of questions. So I prepared by hypotheticals, like what could be said as well as try to prepare for those who may be confused.

Personal Experience With TSV

It is vital to unpack the participants' professional experience leading and utilizing TSV to develop trends on the strengths and needs for the staff's training on the middle school campus. All participants shared they had not seen nor heard of the TSV framework prior to the rollout of the course and the study itself. However, I wanted to use this opportunity to determine each participant's perspectives on the framework and gauge their opinion on the usefulness of using it with students, especially in the speech and debate course. I reviewed the framework with each participant and provided definitions of each step. The participants expressed interest in the framework and saw alignment with the mission of the school of ensuring all students excel knowing the power and potential of their voice. Referring to the framework, Fred said:

> Something I want to push for is getting students to see that this reaction they have is emotional and based in what they believe to be true and right. I want them to see how they get the law to serve towards that end. That's essentially what the justice system does. We try to make it seem like it's solely based in logic. But actually, it's people knowing how to manipulate the law, to achieve whatever end they see just, and that is the level of mastery that I really want students to see and get to.

Professional Experience With TSV

The first professional experience with the TSV framework was during the implementation of the course. Participants stated that the school's emphasis on social-emotional learning and training provided an easier segway into the first step of building community and ensuring there was equity of voice in the latter steps of the framework during class sessions. For instance, Natalie said,

> There's a sense of community that I've seen with voice at this school. The relationships that are built between the educators and students has helped. I feel like there is a safety that students might feel here that maybe they haven't in the past. They are comfortable to speak or feel so it's okay to voice their opinion.

Fred, Roger and Natalie consistently had access to the teacher guides and held them in their hands during the in-person and Zoom sessions for all of the conducted observations. Natalie said the guide supported her in truly hearing and pushing students' thinking and voice during the lessons.

> My biggest goal is to listen. I think that students have these really good ideas or thoughts that are coming in this class. Not every student has the loudest voice in the room. I have to really listen to every student who's having a conversation with another student. This helps me be able to call on a student and say, "Can you please share that with the class? Because that is really going to add to this person's voice and suggestion. (Natalie, S.P.)

The structure of the class and teacher guides enabled Natalie to see the benefit of the TSV framework when working with students in the speech and debate course. The teacher guides included specific times and spaces for small group conversations and teacher prompts that could be asked at various points of the lesson to encourage discourse in the classroom. Roger agreed with Natalie on the usefulness of the guides to push students in navigating steps 2–3 of TSV:

> I engage myself with what questions will be asked. I prepare hypothetical responses and try to prepare for students who may be confused. (Roger, S.P.)

However, there was a missed opportunity to engage in staff development on the other steps of the framework to ensure plans and instructional decision making were consistent across in-person and Zoom learning sessions.

> Before the course started, we had the person running the course lead a meeting and PD (professional development). He showed us how to engage in a lesson which helped prepare us before the course even happened. (Roger, S.P)

The professional development session led by Fred gave staff a window into the course goals and guidelines that should be followed prior to students taking the course. The interviews also show the staff development did not occur during the teaching of the course and therefore limited the development of staff to immerse themselves through partnering, gaining best practices, and strengthening their skill set in response to students' reception or lack thereof when it comes to the implementation of TSV and ethnic studies.

Specific insights and patterns emerged because of the participants' expressed vulnerability during the interviews. These patterns detailed the areas of need for the campus of study to continue to strengthen the voice-based course and overall student voice at the school. In particular, the interviews provided robust information about the desire for the staff to be more thoroughly trained and developed to effectively facilitate activities and lessons that integrate ethnic studies and TSV.

Professional Development Needs

Training Accessibility

Based on the personal and professional backgrounds of the interviewees, there were identified areas of growth for staff training at the middle school. As the support facilitators,

Roger and Jade agreed they would like to see changes in the following year in the teacher training and time dedicated to the development of the team as it relates to the speech and debate course. Despite getting weekly teacher guides and materials, they both stated how more preparation time for them as support facilitators is needed moving forward.

As a teaching assistant, Roger expressed having a set time in his schedule to review the material will need to continue the following year so he can continue to be set up for success with students. Whereas Jade admitted she was not receiving the weekly materials.

> I have not been able to review the materials beforehand. I find that when I am supporting in our classrooms, I'm learning with the students as they are going rather than receiving it beforehand. (Jade, S.P.)

As a paraprofessional, Jade's responsibility consisted of supporting the students with individual education plans (IEPs) in the eighth-grade inclusion classroom at the middle school. During the observation, Jade consistently circulated in the classroom between the students on her caseload. She supported students during parts of the lesson when students were cued to speak in pairs or small groups and when they had to complete written reflections. Jade prompted students to support their thinking and process and provided quick feedback during the writing activities.

However, Jade was not provided the lesson materials prior to the session, so she had to quickly gain comprehension of the material and support students as the lesson went on. This is not an ideal way for her to prompt students' thinking, accommodate lesson materials, and support potential student misconceptions.

The classroom Jade supported struggled with classroom management. Since Jade is not the main classroom teacher of the course, she stated she did not feel comfortable resetting the

class or holding the entirety of the group to higher behavior expectations. Consequently, when the class was given clues or other student explanations/rationale from the other classes that were on Zoom, the class Jade supported at times missed crucial information and an opportunity to connect with other learners. Jade expressed this same sentiment in her midobservation interview:

> I think that one of the challenges for this course has been the added nature of Zoom. I found that the students sometimes are a little bit noisy, and they can't hear the Zoom room. I think that at the beginning of this course, having to communicate expectations for this course for students.

Therefore, a gap in educator support was identified. Unlike Roger, Jade was not receiving the weekly guide to adequately prepare for the course prior to teaching. In addition, she did not engage in the summer professional development session since she did not join the team as a paraprofessional until the Fall of 2022. Unfortunately, she did not participate in a make-up session during her onboarding to the school. In summary, it is important for all staff members, despite rank, to engage in staff development training in ethnic studies and the overall implementation of the voice-based curriculum to best support students' learning and transformation of their voices.

Non-Bias Training

Fred recognized his extensive history with ethnic studies as a student and educator prepared him to plan for and engage in crucial and at times sensitive topics. This encouraged him to think about the role noncontent based training plays in the overall development of staff:

> One thing that our school and other schools need to consider is ongoing bias training. I don't think of bias training as a way to weed out educators by a school. It's the ability for

> the adults to recognize their own biases and to name them and adjust their practices in accordance. (Fred, S.P.)

Fred's reflection correlated with Green et al.'s (2020) research in combating antidialogical professional development, in which educators should have access to training that supports educators in developing their knowledge of institutionalized oppression, implicit bias, and White supremacy, along with knowledge of research about how these affect children and communities. By understanding that ethnic studies teaching and the infusion of the TSV framework in schooling is not just about delivering content, educators will begin to embody a critical stance alongside their students and the communities they serve.

Conclusion

In an effort to answer the three primary research questions, in this chapter I presented the findings from a primary analysis of the coded interviews, coupled with the supplementary data collection of a document review of the course and classroom observations. The qualitative nature of this study centered the educator's voices in the research, allowing for a deeper exploration of what it means to be an educator that plans for and implements actions that uplift and empower student voice.

I provided the four participating educators' definitions of student voice over time, along with a description of their professional development experience, instructional strengths, and overall reflections from the course along with a summative report of the course's progression in implementing the TSV framework. Primarily through one-on-one interviews, the educators in this study were able to describe their experience, revealing the findings discussed in this chapter: (a) the role of community in creating an inclusive and brave learning environment for

multiethnic students; (b) the steps to integrate ethnic studies into the speech and debate course; (c) the steps to integrate the TSV framework into the speech and debate course; (d) professional development for ethnic studies and TSV integration. I discuss these findings and recommendations for practitioners and for future research in Chapter 5. Additionally, I outline recommendations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this qualitative case study, I sought to understand the instructional experiences of middle school educators and explore how their implementation of ethnic studies and the TSV framework in a voice-based course provided ways for adolescents to learn and understand root causes of inequality, unpack and embrace their own collective action, and be empowered to use their voice to transform systems of oppression that affect their academic and/or personal lives. I also sought to learn more about the influences of the speech and debate program the educators identified as contributing to their implementation of these classroom practices. To achieve this objective, four educators participated in two interviews and were observed in the classroom while facilitating the speech and debate course. In addition, I combined the interviews and supplemental classroom observations with a limited curriculum review to further triangulate the data. I coded the findings from the interviews, observations, and program documents that were reported in Chapter 4.

This qualitative study is significant because it centers student empowerment at the center of the research. Hipolito-Delgado and Zion (2017) captured the importance of empowerment by defining it as a process that acknowledges the desired outcome of sociopolitical liberation. Hipolito-Delgado and Zion defined empowerment as a process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power so individuals, families, and communities can take actional steps to improve their situations. The school and participants of the study actively stated the vision of getting students to know the power and potential of their voice to change the world. As a result, the speech and debate program consisted of a comprehensive approach to support its students

and hopefully inspire other middle schools with similar BIPOC demographics to develop students' understanding of self, the world, and the role they would like to play in it.

In this chapter, I share the major and minor findings, make recommendations for practice, and suggest areas for future research based on four derived themes. The four themes include (a) the shifting perspectives on student and individual collective voice; (b) the steps to integrate ethnic studies into the speech and debate course; (c) the steps to integrate the TSV framework into the speech and debate course; (d) professional development for ethnic studies and TSV integration.

Summary of the Findings

I will discuss the summary of the findings of the qualitative study in the order of the four sections outlined above.

Theme 1: The Shifting Perspectives on Student and Individual Collective Voice

The intentionality of the staff and focus on community building for students created safe and brave spaces for students, especially BIPOC students who are the key student demographic at the school. All the participants recognized and named how the focus on community building were key actions they personally believed in and pursued when facilitating the course and are recommended for other practitioners to prioritize when seeking to integrate TSV and ethnic studies into a voice-based course (Fred, Jade, Natalie, Roger, S.P)

Through classroom observations and interviews, it was evident the four educators regularly incorporated strategies that mirrored the foundational components of ethnic studies and TSV at the onset of the study as a commitment to honoring students' diverse backgrounds and experiences, engaging in action-based activities of trust building, and cultivating caring

relationships (Allen-Handy & Thomas, 2022; Halagao, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2022; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2017; Thangaraj, 2021).

However, the participants did not foresee having their mindsets and perspectives of the role student voice could play shifted throughout and after the course was completed. Participants addressed their observations of all students engaging in the course and willingly tackling historic and recent legal cases that impact marginalized communities. Students were eager to share their opinions in various forms of communication, such as verbal, written and visual representations of their claims and evidence. Due to their participation in facilitating the course for their eighth-grade students, the participants began to see student voice as a vehicle for change. Initially, the participants viewed and approached student voice as an individual articulating and advocating for their personal and academic needs to be addressed and met. By the end of the course, the educators' definition and orientation shifted to a more social justice approach. The participants' perspective shifted to seeing the power behind each student playing a role in the voice and the experience of the community being uplifted which correlated with community building, which is the first tenet of TSV (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2022). Therefore, the study answered the first research question because the integration of ethnic studies and TSV in a voice-based course impacts student learning and teacher learning. The course catapulted educators in shifting their perspective by embracing a collective voice orientation and the purpose and benefits of it in comparison to the previously pervasive acceptance of individual voice on the campus.

Theme 2: The Steps to Integrate Ethnic Studies Into the Voice-Based Course

While it was important to identify each of the described operational methods in Chapter 2, it was also essential to understand how each tenet could be explored as a best practice for

educators. Therefore, I also sought to find practical examples of ethnic studies teaching in the speech and debate in-person and virtual classrooms. The attendant description of each tenet, along with observed examples from the classroom, are shown in Chapter 2. The participants were partially successful in operationalizing ethnic studies in the speech and debate program. The lead facilitator made an instructional decision to not solely use the oracy curriculum. The lead facilitator combined the Voice 21 (2023) oracy curriculum with that of Think Law (2019), which followed more of a culturally responsive lens. The intentional instructional combination achieved the tenet of embracing a syllabus and curricular arc that provided an expansive, transnational, and transhistorical study of race in the curriculum not bound to U.S.-centric and diametric conceptualizations of race (Allen-Handy & Thomas, 2022; Halagao, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2017; Thangaraj, 2021).

Even with the curricular success of the speech and debate program, there still are areas of growth when integrating ethnic studies. Throughout the course, students engaged in activities and discussions centered around legal cases that impacted marginalized communities. This fostered a foundational critical consciousness within individual students and across the eighth-grade student body. Unfortunately, because of time constraints, the course was not able to fulfill one of the tenets of operationalizing ethnic studies. This tenet centered on increasing opportunities for students to leverage critical research and critical civic inquiry (Allen-Handy & Thomas, 2022; Halagao, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2017; Thangaraj, 2021). Students read and reviewed research authored by other parties but did not have the luxury of exploring their passions of research and inquiry. This produced a gap of students not having the time or opportunity to plan and devise their own politicized projects. When integrating TSV and ethnic

studies into the voice-based course, the facilitators and school must consider the scope and sequence of the course to fulfill all of the operationalization tenets and the complete eight steps of the TSV framework.

Theme 3: The Steps to Integrate the Transformative Student Voice Framework into the Voice-Based Course

The third theme and subsequent findings were vital in answering the first two research questions of the study. The data collection process produced educator reflections and practices that could yield strong results for the school of study in future programming and for schools looking to implement similar speech and debate offerings. First, the school of study shared aligned decisions on what made the course successful, as well as what the next steps are to further the program.

From the literature review, ethnic studies and TSV identify community building and trust as foundations for any collective learning and action. The participants highlighted students building the culture and sense of group identity as a foundation of the course and necessary for students to begin combatting societal problems together. Hipolito-Delgado et al. (2022) stated how TSV research shows that when youth are given the tools and means to inquire and collaborate, they can establish and implement creative approaches to address communal challenges or inequities. The purpose of the course should be for students to collaborate and work together in service of change. This can only be accomplished if the course actively embeds activities and opportunities for the students to build a sense of understanding of themselves and their peers to prosper as a unit (Cuauhtin et al., 2019; Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2022).

After a sense of trust and culture is cultivated, students can work toward developing a critical consciousness and call to action. In the course, the lead facilitator specifically included the ethnic studies tenet of providing an expansive, transnational, and transhistorical study of race as the basis of the course learning. Students were able to review past and current legal cases that they may personally relate to and find a sense of connection to. Students analyzed the cases and used evidence and data to back up their findings and suggestions.

The study revealed a learned lesson for the school participant and for other middle schools. Realistic time frames and long-term plans to navigate the TSV framework are important considerations to make. The data collection disclosed how the students did not have the time or guidance to collect their own data in order to pursue an autonomous purpose of study and policy. Both ethnic studies and the TSV framework call for students to plan, implement, and assess their own politicized or social justice-based project (Allen-Handy & Thomas, 2022; Halagao, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2022; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2017; Thangaraj, 2021) To make this a reality, the school of study and additional schools must be realistic in setting the scope and sequence of the course to allow adequate time for students to engage in evolving their critical consciousness and skills to do so. The school participant must increase the weekly time students participate in the course per year and expand the TSV roadmap to be a multiyear approach as students progress in grade levels.

Theme 4: Professional Development for Ethnic Studies and TSV Integration

The fourth and final theme successfully answered the third research question: What are the educators' perspectives on the professional development and resources needed to effectively integrate TSV and ethnic studies into a voice-based course? The findings show the importance of

educators in having a foundation in ethnic studies, the TSV framework prior to the course, and ongoing training during the facilitation of the course.

Experience with Ethnic Studies

Educators should have a foundation in ethnic studies as a student and as a professional practitioner. The lead facilitator of the speech and debate course had experience as a student and teacher of an ethnic studies and voice-based curriculum. With this expertise, having the experienced educator leading the program created an access point to understand the overall purpose, rationale and impact of the speech and debate course. As for the remaining three participants and support facilitators, they only experienced an ethnic studies course as a student. An increased investment in facilitating the course of students occurs due to a base knowledge and experience of the tenets of ethnic studies and its purpose. This investment is the result of experiencing firsthand the impact of such a course and being motivated by the reflections and takeaways that followed suit. A voice-based course that integrates ethnic studies and TSV should be facilitated by individuals with that core knowledge and experience to best support students with sometimes navigating, processing, and challenging socially sensitive and charged topics (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Sleeter, 2001; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015).

Training Accessibility

Based on the personal and professional backgrounds of and personal reflections from the interviewees, there are identified areas of growth for staff training at the middle school. The support facilitators had not taught a full-fledged ethnic studies course nor experienced or taught a course that utilized the TSV framework. Both lead and support facilitators need ongoing training

in addition to course materials and guides. This would help staff align on best practices of discussing historical cases, sensitive topics, and methods to best pursue when traversing the TSV framework.

The professional development for the course facilitators should include nonbiased training. The facilitators experienced nonbiased training at various points in their education but had yet to experience nonbiased training that was either incorporated into the course's professional development in the summer prior to the school year or offered during the school year as a standalone training. According to the literature review, educators should have access to training that helps them develop their knowledge of institutionalized oppression, implicit bias, and White supremacy, along with exposure to research on how these affect children and communities: in particular BIPOC children and communities (Berta-Avila, 2004; de los Ríos et al., 2015; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Kohli, 2014). This aligns with the interviewees' reflections from the study. A nonbiased training would fulfill said goal and allow educators to construct their own understanding of how ethnic studies teaching and the infusion of TSV framework is equally about the richness of the content and assuming a critical stance alongside their students and the communities they serve.

In addition to reviewing the summary of findings, it is essential to think about the corresponding implications and make recommendations for change. In the next section, I make recommendations for changes on the national, state, local, and ground levels.

Recommendations

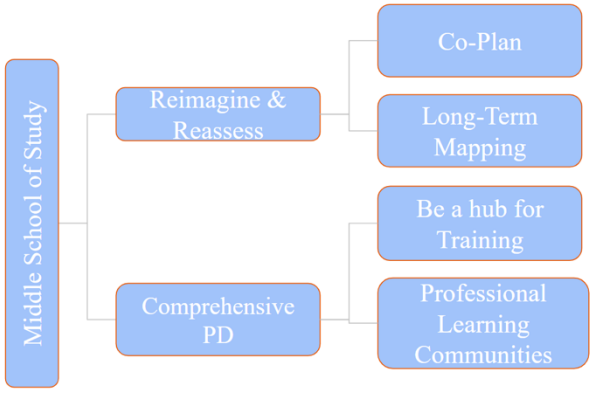
To best explore the intricacies and best practices of implementing ethnic studies and the TSV framework into voice-based courses for adolescents, it is important to note

recommendations for educators and school-based proposals. I further explore specific suggestions for programmatic and practitioner improvements in this section. The recommendations will be subdivided into two major sections.

Recommendations for the Middle School Participant

Figure 3

Recommendations for the Middle School Participant



Reassess and Reimagine the Voice-Based Course Progression

By engaging in this research, the school may be better equipped to meet the school's vision of students, knowing the power and potential of their voice to advocate for and uplift the community and people that they know and love, change the world and be educated with the knowledge and skills to do so (Potentia Academy, 2023). The key takeaway from the findings is that the school has an opportunity to reassess and reimagine a time and course progression that would allow for students to traverse through the full TSV framework, thus improving the efficacy and effectiveness of the voice-based program and being one step closer to achieving the school's vision. It is suggested for the school to stagger the implementation of the program over

a couple of years so students can developmentally approach the phase of planning and enacting their own politicized projects.

To accomplish a long-term approach to the course, the course facilitators and school leaders will need to have time to coplan and map out the course in the summer before the course is taught. The team will need to review the course's comprehension curriculum and materials and the next school year's calendar and schedule to identify opportunities for the course to be offered at a higher frequency or to determine if a multiyear progression is more appropriate considering the emotional and academic skill development of students in their middle school years. Recommended goals for the coplanning can consist of but are not limited to:

1. Establish communication skills benchmarks.
2. Equally utilize the Voice 21 (2023) and Think Law (2019) curriculum.
3. Integrate ethnic studies best practices influenced by the tenets of operalization.
4. Integrate the TSV framework.
5. Select prioritized cases that include diverse stories and histories.
6. Solidify the cadence of the course:
    a. Time and day of the course,
    b. Frequency of the course, and
    c. Time frame for when students will engage in Steps 4–8 of the TSV framework.

Additionally, this will support the school in being more transparent with staff about the course and its purpose, which will aid educators in communicating it to their students once the class commences.

Comprehensive Professional Development

Studies rarely focus on middle school students' experiences with ethnic studies and consider their voices when evaluating such programs (Berta-Avila, 2004; Nojan, 2020). The recent changes in educational laws and policies in California mandate for only high school students to complete an ethnic studies course (CDE, 2023). The state requirement for graduation can then prompt high schools and middle schools to more robustly think about and plan professional development opportunities for educators.

For instance, in California, teachers with social studies or English credentials can teach ethnic studies; however, their training and examinations do not include learning ethnic studies content (Au & Blake, 2003; Berta-Avila, 2004; Nojan, 2020). Unfortunately, the idealized student supports and experiences are outpacing the required training educators need to realistically fulfill the state's vision. This aligns with the profiles and backgrounds of the participants, in which two were credentialed teachers and experienced siloed training and the other two participants who had not engaged in ethnic studies centric professional development prior to coming to the school site. Unfortunately, the idealized student supports and experiences are outpacing the required training educators need to fulfill the state's vision. Therefore, the school site will need to continue to make a point of initiating its own hubs of training for its staff to make substantial gains when integrating ethnic studies and the TSV framework into the speech and debate course.

The study illuminated the need for the participants to have more than one initial training prior to the facilitation of the course. After the upcoming summer coplanning and goal setting, the facilitators will need to engage in training before, during, and after the course ends in the

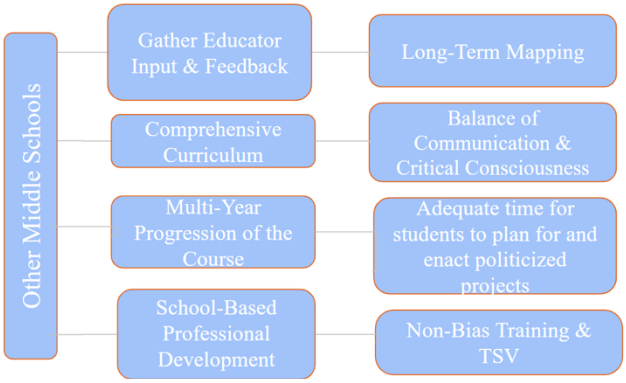
following school year. It is recommended for these trainings to emulate a professional learning community (PLC) structure. Brodie (2021) summarized PLCs, describing them as "groups of teachers who come together to engage in regular, systematic, and sustained cycles of inquiry-based learning, with the intention to develop their individual and collective capacity for teaching to improve student outcomes" (p. 560). PLCs can be seen as one such way of organizing education because they aim to produce collectively generated shifts in practice where teachers learn through collaboration (Brodie, 2021). Similar to the eighth-grade students, the diverse group of course facilitators would benefit from consistent and ongoing collaboration. This continued broad definition and approach of what is deemed an "educator" will also welcome a sense of openness and learning working towards a common goal. In addition to informing the school participant's programmatic model and corresponding professional development, this study may have implications for other middle schools and their teaching and training practices.

Recommendations for Other Middle Schools

There are important implications for other middle schools pursuing the integration of Ethnic Studies and the TSV framework into the voice-based course(s) offered on their campuses.

Figure 4

Recommendations for Other Middle Schools



Gathering Educator Accounts and Feedback

First, replicating the study, including interviewing and observing voice-based course educators, may provide other voice-based programs with valuable insight about their design. The school of study determined strengths and identified next steps to strengthen the speech and debate program because of the open space created for the educators to share their experience and lessons learned. Without this open forum, the school of study may have difficulties pinpointing the components being successfully implemented and maintained in regard to ethnic studies and TSV and the considerations for future planning and increased success for future school years. If school leaders listen to the thoughts and opinions of voice-based course educators in the field, they may learn more about the value and impact of the coursework, the struggles veteran and novice educators face, and the best practices empowering student voice on their campuses.

Comprehensive Curriculum

The school participants strategically chose not to simply rely on the oracy curriculum to meet the demands of the vision of the voice-based course because of the gap in correlated ethnic studies and TSV content. A school pursuing a voice-based curriculum that marries ethnic studies

and the TSV framework must thoroughly review and audit its existing curriculum to determine the lengths to which the curriculum is equally developing students' multilayered communication skills and critical consciousness. These two factors are crucial in an adopted curriculum to actualize the empowerment of student voice on a campus. Additionally, it aligns with the notion that students should be empowered to act on controversial issues that matter, not become products of reform objectives that regurgitate learning and limit students from developing their own ideas and purpose (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). This is why the school of study used and blended the Voice 21 (2023) and Think Law (2019) curriculums and a reason for other middle schools to think carefully about the adopted and implemented curriculum arc for their own voice-based courses.

Multi-Year Progression of the Course

Along with educator feedback, schools should devise consistent and thorough communication around the purpose of and the tenets of ethnic studies and TSV that will be threaded into the voice-based course. From the study, the classes only effectively pursued steps 1–4: community building, identify a problem, explore root causes, collect data and analyze data. Staggering the implementation over a longer period so students can adequately approach the phase of planning and enact their politicized projects is vital. Schools should consider having more frequent sessions in a single school year or look into a multiyear progression of the course.

School-Based Professional Development

The literature review identified a lack of ethnic studies training and professional development in traditional teaching credential programs. Even though California has mandated ethnic studies must be offered and completed by high school students by 2025–2026, teaching

credential programs have limited offerings for these focused trainings (Au & Blake, 2003; Berta-Avila, 2004; CDE, 2023; Nojan, 2020).

Ethnic studies criteria are still being applied in secondary school settings and the TSV framework is a conceptual approach applied more generally in some schools. For example, the study participants had not seen the TSV framework prior to teaching the course and expressed a desire to receive ongoing training to fully understand how to successfully get students to complete all eight steps during the course.

Due to the scarcity of focused and integrated professional development in credentialing programs, schools should consider reviewing and potentially revamping their currently offered school-based trainings. The research study magnified the positive impact voice-based courses that integrate ethnic studies and the TSV framework have on student voice and action. The class's success was largely due to the staff's entry point in being comfortable with facilitating culturally relevant topics via student-led community building, legal conversations, and analysis heavy activities. However, educators at other schools may have varying levels of comfort and skill when broached with the same curricular components. Schools will need to establish a scope and sequence of training and support that mirrors the skills and course progression needed to empower student voice and the implementation of politicized projects. The scope should include baseline, precourse nonbias trainings. This would enable staff to understand and adopt a role as a facilitator of student learning and community partner. The trainings should continue and encompass the flow of the TSV framework and roadmap so educators can gain the ongoing feedback and support to push their practice and subsequent skills and activist mindset of their students.

Future Research

At the onset of the study, it was clear more research was needed to learn about educators' experience when facilitating and supporting student activism in voice-based courses that integrate ethnic studies and the TSV. While this study accomplished that objective, several other areas of research must be examined to effectively prepare and train educators on best practices and support students in navigating the course and actualizing the entirety of the framework. More formalized professional development programs and the creation of long-term implementation plans are necessary for the realization of ethnic studies and TSV best practices, especially considering California states mandated implementation of ethnic studies for all high school students (CDE, 2023). For these reasons, future research possibilities include the following:

- To determine the impact on school culture and student voice, it would be valuable to replicate the study in several contexts to examine the variables in which the integration of ethnic studies and the TSV framework may either falter or flourish in a voice-based course. For example, it would be noteworthy to study:
    - Educators teaching at traditional public schools or do a comparative study of educators from a charter and a public school.
    - Educators teaching at high schools or a comparative study of educators from a middle and high school.
- To determine the impact on school culture and student voice, it would be valuable to replicate the study in a variety of contexts to examine the variables in which the

integration of ethnic studies and the TSV framework in a voice-based course impacts students. For example, it would be noteworthy to study:

  - The experience and reflections of students who have participated in a voice-based course in an in-person and virtual environment.
  - The students' perspectives on the professional development and resources schools should include to effectively integrate TSV and ethnic studies into a voice-based course.

- To determine the impact on school culture and student voice, it would be valuable to extend the duration of the course and, thus, research study. For example, it would be noteworthy to study:
  - The impact on the educators and students when the course timeline allocates sufficient time for students to engage in all eight steps of the TSV Framework in a single school year.
  - The impact on the educators and students when the course timeline allocates sufficient time for students to engage in all eight steps of the TSV Framework over a series of years.
  - The impact on the educators and students when the course timeline allocates sufficient time and resources for students to engage in all eight steps of the TSV framework that encompasses a service-learning project.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to learn more about the practices a secondary school used to develop students' critical consciousness and voice. The school developed an eighth-grade

voice-based program that infused ethnic studies and the TSV framework. From facilitating the course and working alongside students in-person and virtually, the educators named the instructional decisions made to promote culture building, societal awareness, and the students' intrinsic motivation to use their analytical and communication skills to conjure up and further their ideas for change. As a result, the educators' perspectives shifted regarding the role and power of student voice. The educators now embrace the course for the role it played in escaping individualistic student empowerment to be more of a collective catalyst and call for change. With this deepened understanding of the role and power of student voice, it is important for the school and educators to continue the momentum by collaborating to establish ongoing professional development and thorough progression of the course. By furthering the education, learning of the educators, and providing ample time for the course to evolve, students will be able to navigate all eight steps of the TSV framework and bring their collective ideas for change to fruition.

APPENDIX A

DURING-COURSE INTERVIEW

- What name would you like to be used as your pseudonym?
- How do you identify your race and ethnicity?
- And how do you identify your gender and what pronouns should we use when referring to you?
- How long have you been an educator at [name of institution]?
- How do you define student voice?
- How has [name of institution] had an impact on your understanding and support of student voice?
- How do students currently use their voice?
- What teacher development did you engage in to teach this course?
- What teacher preparation and planning went into designing this course?
- What aspect of TSV and Ethnic Studies are prioritized when preparing and
- planning for this course? Why? Ethic Studies is defined as the study of the histories, experiences, cultures, and issues of racial-ethnic groups in the United States.
- What did you prioritize when preparing and planning for this course? Why?
- What are your goals for this course?
- What will success look like and sound like by the end of this course? Why?
- What part of the Transformative Student Voice Framework are students using this week? Why?
- What aspect of Ethnic Studies is incorporated into the lesson for this week?

APPENDIX B

POSTCOURSE INTERVIEW

- What learning experiences have students had this week?
- What did you prioritize when preparing and planning for this course this week?
- Describe how students have engaged in the learning experiences this week?
- What part of the Transformative Student Voice Framework did students use in the course? Why?
- What aspect of Ethnic Studies were incorporated into the lessons for the course? Why?
- In what ways did students use their voice throughout the entire course?
- Describe the impact the activities and experience in the class had on your understanding and use of Ethnic Studies?
- Describe the impact the activities and experience in the class had on your understanding and use of Transformative Student Voice?
- If you could offer advice to the instructors teaching the class about how to support success for students who share your identities, what would you suggest?

  If you could offer advice to the schools looking to implement Transformative Student Voice and Ethnic Studies in a voice-based class, what would you suggest?
- What additional takeaways do you have this week?

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