BRIDGING THE THEORY-PRACTICE GAP: A CASE STUDY OF NOVICE TEACHERS’ REFLECTIVE PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT IN A TITLE I SCHOOL

by

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DEDICATION

For God and Malia—both of you have been the support I truly needed as I have written this dissertation, from the beginning to the end. For my mother, who rests in Heaven, I know that you have smiled upon me as I made my way through this journey. Your encouragement to always aim high truly inspired me to begin this journey! For my grandfather, who also rests in Heaven, words cannot truly capture how I feel. I truly wished that you could have seen your first grandchild make her way to the end. But, I know that you knew that I could make it—you always encouraged me; you were always there for me. Now, I am truly proud to say that I am the first “Cooper” to earn a Ph.D.!
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RACHEL COOPER BRAY
BRIDGING THE THEORY-PRACTICE GAP: A CASE STUDY OF NOVICE TEACHERS’ REFLECTIVE PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT IN A TITLE I SCHOOL
Under the direction of LUCY BUSH, Ed.D.

The purpose of this study is to describe the utilization of reflective practice inquiry by novice teachers as means to develop better instructional decision-making practices regarding their students who live in poverty. Research intentions are to discover a gap in the literature that addresses a potential nexus between novice teachers’ development of reflective practice as they instruct students who live in poverty and critical and social pedagogy. The study sought to answer the question of how does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices? In addition, the answers to the questions of what are novice teachers’ underlying beliefs about teaching children who live in poverty, and how do these beliefs help develop a framework for social pedagogy were pursued. The participants were limited to those who were teaching within their first three years at a rural, Title I middle school located in the Southeast. Four novice teachers from a school in the Southeastern region of the United States participated in the study. Pre-and post-semi-structured interviews, along with reflective journal writings and classroom observations were conducted during the course of the
study. Analysis of the data revealed the following findings: (a) Novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices are positively influenced by reflective practices when teachers are more aware of their student’s needs through continuous reflection of their instructional practices, (b) Teachers who acknowledge an understanding of the “language of the poor” (Harrington, 1962) tend to make instructional decisions that mirrors this concept, and it may or not be similar to their own socioeconomic backgrounds, and (c) Novice teachers’ underlying educational philosophical beliefs along with reflective practice help build a foundation for critical pedagogy, which in turn, supports an elementary foundation for social pedagogy. Findings of this qualitative case study support the research that reflective inquiry could aid in the development of better instructional decision-making practices for novice teachers. The results of the study may give educators research literature to improve professional development regarding reflective practice for novice teachers. This study may also lend support for school superintendents and policy makers charged with implementing reflective practice curriculum for educators’ professional development.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

“From its inception, American public education has had as one of its tenets the notion of being that remedy by which inequality of opportunity and poverty can be reduced, thereby becoming the great equalizer” (Growe & Montgomery, 2003, p. 23).

Background of the Study

Since the birth of this nation in 1776, the pursuit of happiness as a basic American Ideal has resonated loud and clear. Although there were echelons of American society (poor to affluent) during this time, American public education was thought to pave the way to pursue one’s dreams of happiness in achieving a place among those of a higher socioeconomic class, or of maintaining an affluent livelihood. Further, for those who were at the bottom rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, American public education was indeed the remedy to gain social grace, and ideally, higher socioeconomic status. Growe and Montgomery (2003) assert that Horace Mann, considered to be the father of American education, viewed education as being the “great equalizer of man” (p.23). Mann, who believed that the common man should be educated, truly believed that “education, then, beyond all other divides of human origin, is a great equalizer of conditions of men—the balance wheel of the social machinery” (Growe & Montgomery, 2003, p. 23). During this historical period, Mann’s influence on American education helped to build the idea of the American Dream, which one could achieve if he worked
hard enough in the educational arena. Although Mann’s influences greatly propelled the
notion that the American Dream could be achieved, there have been darker influences on
America’s public education. After the American Civil War (1861-1865), radical changes
were made within the structure of the American public education system. As a result of
these radical changes, since the late 1800s and into the mid-1900s, education in America
transitioned from an attempt to equalize students based on race to equalizing based on
socioeconomic class (Growe & Montgomery, 2003). The vision of the American Dream
or the American Ideal has indeed changed dramatically since the founding of this
country, and even during Mann’s influential period during the mid to late 1800s.
Whether American students of all socioeconomic status are on equal footing when it
comes to the American educational system is the question for this contemporary era
because “the institution of education—unfortunately still modeled on 19th century
structure—is not designed to meet challenges presented by the 21st century, and current
approaches are inadequate” (Lee, 2010, p. 4). If one has been paying attention to the
plethora of policy changes (i.e., NCLB, Race to the Top) that have been occurring within
the last decade of educational policy, then the answer is quite clear: American students
are indeed not on equal socioeconomic footing when it comes to being educated in an
American public school. Considering that the American Ideal is for all students to have
an equal education regardless of their respective socioeconomic and cultural
backgrounds, it is important now more than ever for educators to discover ways to obtain
this goal. While one may assert that the state of the American educational system within
all its facets (local, state, and university levels) has transformed in a positive fashion from
its initial beginnings in the 1700s, education in America, however, continues to have one considerable Achilles heel: the issue of poverty and its encumbering impact on the success of classroom instruction for America’s public school students. This causes a considerable barrier to equalizing public school education for all American students.

The issue of poverty in contemporary America is one that cannot be regarded lightly. Cass (2010) notes that “15.5 million children are living in poverty in America—the highest child poverty rate the nation has seen since 1959” (p. 5). Currently, per the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), “in 2014, approximately 15.5 million, or 21.1 percent, of all children under the age of 18 were in families living in poverty” (para. 5). In addition to the millions of children that live in poverty, these numbers combined with the fact that by the year 2035, minority students will represent over one-half of the K-12 enrollments in public schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008) presents a challenge for American public education. In addition to the obstacles that a culture of poverty imposes upon the American public school classroom, another challenge exists—the increasing number of minority students living at or below the poverty level entering schools across the United States. Currently, minority students “comprise a third of the student population across the United States” (Brown, 2009, p. 1) and thus, teachers across the country are facing students from culturally diverse backgrounds (Lin & Bates, 2010). Since America’s youngest citizens living in poverty mainly go to public schools for instruction (Suits, 2015), this indeed presents instructional barriers in the classroom for American educators. In addition, this subgroup that lives below the poverty line is a rapidly growing multiethnic, multicultural group
(Kena, Musu-Gillette, Robinson, Wang, Rathbun, Zhang, Wilkinson-Flicker, Barmer, and Dunlop Velez, 2015). Faced with the growing number of American students living in poverty and within a multiethnic, multicultural group, educators will need to find a way to equalize education for this demographic.

Hence, as the American population living in poverty continues to become more multicultural and multiethnic, finding ways to advance the American Ideal for all students becomes more pertinent for educators because they “[must] revise their strategies to meet the needs of today’s student population who require more education than prior generations because of the added international economic and competitive challenges” (Aguerrebere, 2009, p. 2). How can the education profession begin alleviating some of the effects that poverty has on classroom performance and achievement? How can federal and state educational policies mirror the increasing cultural, social, and economical changes that are happening in America? How can America provide an equal education for all her citizens when poverty has eroded the core of the American dream of equality in democratic education for all her citizens? So where does change begin? Moreover, consider the increasing minority population demographic as novice teachers initially enter their classrooms and unaware of the challenges they face when making instructional practice decisions. Lin & Bates (2010) found that novice teachers face this growing culturally diverse population of students; thus, to develop effective instructional practices, novice teachers need to develop stronger instructional practices that serve as the cornerstone to support the needs of this rapidly changing American society. In combination with the aforementioned barriers to students’
academic success is yet another concern to consider—the fact that many of the teachers entering and leaving the education profession have tremendously limited experience working with students who live in poverty (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Although vastly trained by their respective university teacher education programs in pedagogical knowledge, the authentic practice of teaching in a classroom may be particularly limited to various short-term classroom placements.

These short-term placements, whereas some pedagogical knowledge may be gained, do not allow future teachers the immense practice they may need to fully learn strategies that will help them to develop a stronger framework for critical pedagogy. Considering that developing a critical pedagogical framework would be a monumental undertaking, it could cause novice teachers, already burdened with a plethora of other demanding educational responsibilities, to become overwhelmed. Feiman-Nemser (2001) found that for novice teachers, the initial years of teaching are “intense” (p. 1026), and determine whether teachers continue to teach. Therefore, it is important to implement professional development practices that encourage and support beginning teachers as they continue to strengthen a foundation for critical pedagogy, so that they may not feel an overwhelming sense of failure if they are not able to develop a stronger critical pedagogical foundation as it relates to their instructional practices.

Gray and Taie (2015) found that 17% of teachers leave the teaching field within the first five years, and that first-year teachers who are in higher-poverty schools tend to leave at a higher rate. The focus of school districts should encourage the pedagogical development for their novice teachers to counter the plethora of issues that poverty
creates for them while they are in their own classrooms. Novice teachers need to understand that student poverty is a problem that schools are asked to continuously solve, and in addition, schools have been asked to educate the children of the poor so that they can escape poverty (Wagoner & Urban, 2014). Novice teachers need to develop reflective inquiry practices as a means of making a connection between addressing issues of poverty’s influence in the classroom and building a stronger foundation for critical pedagogy.

To transform America’s public schools, Akbari (2007) asserts that it is crucial that novice teachers develop reflective practice earlier within their initial years of teaching because “[teachers] … do not reflect upon their practices [they] will be likely to teach as they were taught, and thus ineffective teaching strategies…will be replicated” (p. 193). Essentially, teachers teach the way that they were taught (Kennedy, 1999), which can in turn cause teachers to use ineffective instructional decision-making strategies.

Moreover, Dewey (1933) states that “thinking may develop in positively wrong ways and lead to false and harmful beliefs” (p. 22), and this notion alone should compel educational policy to encourage novice teachers to begin their teaching careers in a more proactive manner when it comes to learning effective instructional practices. Although veteran teachers could possibly improve their instructional practices as it relates to this multicultural, multiethnic demographic living in poverty, training teachers through their initial teaching years, or formative years, as they develop their pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) and social pedagogy (Petrie & Moss, 2002) could prove to be a more proactive approach for the challenges in this research study. Indeed, reflective
inquiry could prove to be more effective as a proactive measure for novice teachers to strengthen their development of instructional practices as it relates to students who live in a “culture of poverty” (Harrington, 1962, p. 162).

Moreover, since education is considered a way for those who live within a lower socioeconomic class to climb the ladder of success, where better than to start with novice teachers as they begin their teaching careers? How can school districts begin to shift the focus for novice teachers’ reflective practice that demonstrates a foundational knowledge of the “culture of poverty” (Harrington, 1962, p.162)? How well prepared are novice teachers to forgo their own belief systems of poverty and culture to teach such a diverse population of students so that they do not teach the way they were taught?

Building on novice teachers’ reflections garnered through reflective inquiry is a way to cultivate novice teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge and beginnings of a stronger critical pedagogy, since the needs of this unique, multicultural, multiethnic population present a conundrum for America’s public school systems. The principal purpose of this qualitative case study was to discover how reflective practice inquiry could be used to help novice teachers’ development of stronger instructional practices. Additionally, a better understanding of the preconceived notions of novice teachers held regarding a growing multiethnic, multicultural student demographic would support the development of a critical and social pedagogical framework that would allow novice teachers to become proactive in their instructional decision-making practices as it related to culture of poverty and its effects in the classroom.
Perspective of the Researcher

I grew up in poverty as the first child of a single parent, who had a total of three children. I wondered how I could have been more positively influenced at a younger age if I had been encouraged more by my middle-class teachers that understood the different socioeconomic culture from which I came. Although I was studious, the desire to further my education was consistently hindered by the hunger and isolation that I felt much of the time that I was a student. I began to see that at that time, when I was in grade school, teachers were not concerned about my home life, for if they had been, I more than likely would have taken more of an interest in the lessons that they taught. When I graduated from college, I initially did not believe that I would become a teacher in a classroom, although I always had a passion to teach, and to especially work with students who had come from a poor background as my own— I only believed that I could serve as a role model for these students if I ever found my way into a classroom. Upon graduating from college with my bachelor’s degree, I initially became a social worker, and through the experience of helping families to cope with the daily strife of living well below the poverty line, I began to wonder how the school system could work with its newer teaching staff, so that their students could become empowered to take charge of their learning to find a way out of poverty, which in turn, would enhance their own future lives. Once I began working on a master’s degree in education, I began to see how it could be possible for teachers to find ways to understand how their students, who live in poverty, could develop a stronger pedagogy in relation to social justice to help their students learn.
In seeing the development of pedagogical strategies among my other professional colleagues, I began questioning how novice teachers, who are new to the profession, would be able to adjust and readjust their pedagogical content knowledge foundations to meet the needs of these students who are in need. I began wondering if novice teachers were initially prepared by their educational institutions to teach students that live below the poverty line. I wondered how district school systems are meeting the challenge of training novice teachers regarding the idea that poverty brings in a crucial need for new strategies to teach and reach their students. I wondered whether novice teachers are willing to find ways to supplement their pedagogical content knowledge regarding teaching in a culture of poverty. I also wondered whether novice teachers are comfortable questioning their own teaching abilities to become more reflective educators.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual frameworks that would provide a map (Maxwell, 2013) for my research would be Shulman’s (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning, which is based on Shulman’s (1986) theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), and additionally, Schön’s (1983) three principles of reflective practice—knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, and action-present—were acknowledged. Within the framework of PCK (Shulman, 1986), the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action is “related to [Shulman’s] theory of pedagogical content knowledge and includes the following components: comprehension; transformation (preparation, representation, selection, and adaptation and tailoring to student characteristics); instruction; evaluation; reflection; and new comprehensions” (Wilkes, 1994, p.1).
Further, it is important to ensure that teachers are “teaching in ways that connect with students also requires an understanding of differences that may arise from culture, family experiences, developed intelligences, and approaches to learning” (Darling-Hammond, 1998, para.4).

**Statement of the Problem**

Brown (2009) states, “American society is one of the most multiethnic, and multicultural societies of any nation in the world where currently minority students comprise a third of the student population across the United States” (p.1). Thus, teachers across the country are facing students from culturally diverse backgrounds (Lin & Bates, 2010). Novice teachers will need to discover ways to teach this unique population, as the numbers are steadily rising (Goldring & Bitterman, 2013). Engagement in reflective inquiry may be the key component in preparing novice teachers for their multiethnic, multicultural classrooms of a student population living in poverty. Future institutional teacher education programs should work along with local school districts to bridge the gap between the theory of reflective practice and the utilization of reflective practice in the novice teacher’s classroom.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to describe the utilization of reflective practice inquiry by novice teachers in a Title I school, along with a description of the combination of pedagogical content knowledge and social pedagogy that novice teachers need to assuage the effects the culture of poverty has on their instructional decision-making practices. This study seeks to address the schism that is widening between the rich and
the poor while seeking to add to the body of research literature concerning novice teachers’ development of a social justice framework while teaching within a culture in a rural, middle school in the Southeastern United States. The nexus of poverty and reflective practice will be illuminated using a qualitative case study. As a teacher in a small rural middle school in the Southeastern region of the United States, I am inundated with students of varying cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds where many my students are living within a culture of poverty. Even as a professional teacher of over 10 years, adding to my pedagogy to teach students from the background proves continually to be a daunting task, as my initial teacher preparation did not entirely provide me a means of incorporating a pedagogy that could possibly alleviate some of the influences that poverty has on instructional practices. As an in-service teacher, I wondered for many years how I could have been better prepared during my initial teacher training for the influx of a student population living in poverty. Over the years, I have served as a teacher mentor to several teachers, and I have noticed most novice teachers were concerned about only teaching their content, without a true regard for their students’ experiences, and how these experiences could possibly affect this instructional decision-making practices. As a teacher mentor, I noticed that novice teachers, once they completed their weekly lesson plans, hesitated often when the need arose to change their lesson plan throughout the course of the class period, or even throughout the course of the school day, even if it were obvious that their students were disengaged. Only after many conversations at various times of the school day did the teacher I was mentoring feel confident that it was indeed acceptable to use their professional judgment or intuition to
change his or her lesson plan, to ensure his or her students would learn the lesson’s material. I began to believe that if novice teachers had an opportunity to build on their reflective practice inquiry, perhaps they would be able to become better educators in the Title I school in which we worked. Reflective dialogue made by novice teachers will be examined in this study to discover the impact, if any, on novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices. Poverty continues to be the elephant in the classroom for professional educators when it comes to planning lessons, teaching lessons, and designing assessments for students. As professional teachers determine what instructional materials are needed to teach, many teachers consider that many of their students may not have access to certain technologies that would enable them to engage in many homework assignments because of their lack of required resources. Professional teachers continuously adjust and readjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of students who are unfortunately living in circumstances outside of their control.

In summary, the goals of this qualitative research case study are to 1) describe the culture of poverty in the classroom and its influences on the classroom setting; and 2) describe the pedagogical content knowledge and social pedagogy that novice teachers need to develop to assuage the effects the culture of poverty have on their instructional decision-making practices.

**Research Questions**

The fundamental research question that this study sought to answer was how does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices?
This study also addressed the following research questions: (1) How does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices; (2) What are novice teachers underlying beliefs about teaching children who live in poverty; and (3) How do these beliefs help develop a framework for social pedagogy?

**Rationale for Study**

Since my research goals were to discover the impact of reflective inquiry on novice teachers’ instructional practices, this study is unique in that it addressed an underrepresented research area regarding the development of novice teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge in combination with novice teachers’ development of reflective practice to combat the issues that poverty poses in classroom instruction. For novice teachers, the difficulty is finding innovative ways to effectively build on their initial pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) to educate an ever-increasing culturally diverse population of students who come from poverty. Reflective practice may be an innovative way to build teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge, and essentially, lend itself to a development of stronger critical pedagogical and social pedagogical knowledge.

For school districts, the difficulty is continually encouraging teachers to create culturally responsive classrooms for students living in poverty. Because more research is needed in this area, insights garnered from this study will support teacher educators and policymakers who are concerned with implementing professional development regarding effective reflective practice and social pedagogical practice development for novice teachers.
Significance

A central aspect of critical teacher research involves studying students so that they can be better understood and taught (Kincheloe, 2011). Freire taught that all teachers need to engage in a constant dialogue with students, a dialogue that questions existing knowledge and problematizes the traditional power relations that have served to marginalize specific groups and individuals (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011). Challenging the hegemony within education is imperative to begin a transformation to more equalized education for American students who attend public schools. Furthermore, “critical teachers help students frame these problems (about their communities) into larger social, cultural, and political contexts to solve them” (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011, p. 161). By doing so, teachers help students to begin to transform their learning processes. However, before beginning teachers can begin to help students to think critically of the world in which they live, an understanding of the background of the students that they teach will allow novice teachers to improve their pedagogy for students in a lower socioeconomic status. Additionally, by allowing novice teachers to have reflective dialogue regarding how to teach students who have different cultural and socioeconomic beliefs systems than their own may enhance their instructional decision-making. Ultimately, a better understanding of the underlying foundations of novice teachers’ beliefs will aid in making an effective response in planning future professional development that will allow novice teachers to garner an understanding how the culture of poverty can affect their implementation of engaging instructional practices.
Methodology

Building on research literature about reflective inquiry and its effects on teachers’ instructional practices, my research intentions were to discover a gap in the literature that addressed novice teachers’ development of critical and social pedagogy through the use of reflective practice. Since it would be imperative to understand the various attitudes and belief systems that influenced novice teachers’ instructional practices about students from a poverty-defined background, a paradigm that was aligned with social justice (Mertens, 2015) was ideal. A transformative paradigm utilized as a framework for this research study was essential because this paradigm accepts the “differences of perceptions as equally legitimate” (p.32), and gives a voice to multiple realities regardless of the “social, political, economic, ethnic influences … [within the] constructions of reality” (Mertens, 2015, p. 32).

Moreover, the transformative paradigm “directly addresses the politics in research by confronting social oppression at whatever levels it occurs” (Mertens, 2009, as cited in Mertens, 2015, p. 21). This researcher wanted to hear the voices of the novice teachers, who may not be able to identify with the cultural or socioeconomic status of their students. By elucidating the voices of novice teachers as they establish their own pedagogies for students who live in a culture of poverty, this researcher hoped to shed light on a possible framework for training future novice teachers in developing stronger critical pedagogical content knowledge and enhancing novice teachers’ knowledge of social pedagogy as they begin teaching. As novice teachers move toward becoming
“transformative intellectuals” (Giroux, 1985/2010, p. 36), their awareness and greater insight into their students’ lives will, perhaps, create change.

Limitations

The location of the population for this study was confined to that state of Georgia due to the timeframe of this study. The shorter timeframe limited the number of participants in this study, where the participants were limited to those who were teaching within their first three years at a rural, Title I middle school located in the Southeastern region of the United States. All four participants were novice teachers who held Bachelor’s degrees only within a content area, and were initially alternatively certified either through a Master’s of Arts in Teaching (MAT) or through a state Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP).

Delimitations

One delimitation for this study was the generalizability of this study due to the demographics of the school district and the population of the Southeastern region of the United States. The study’s participants were located at a rural school district in the Southeastern region of the United States.

Design Controls

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Mertens, 2015), I provided thick description, excerpts from interviews with novice teachers, interview protocols, reflective journal protocols, and transcripts from pre-and post-semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher. Triangulation was made through the collection of reflective writings,
transcripts from interviews with novice teachers and excerpts from this researcher’s notes of novice teachers’ classroom observations are provided.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purposes of this qualitative case study, key terms utilized in this study will be defined as follows:

*Culture of poverty* is a structural concept defined by social institutions of exclusion, which create and perpetuate the cycle of poverty in America (Harrington, 1962).

*Pedagogy* is teacher knowledge within a cultural context; or where knowledge is discovered through cultural discourse (Anderson, 2009).

*Poverty* is determined by the U.S. Census Bureau, which:

determines poverty status by comparing pre-tax cash income against a threshold that is set at three times the cost of a minimum food diet in 1963. In 2012, the most recent year for which data are available, the poverty threshold for a family of four was $23,492. The official national poverty rate was 15.0 percent. There were 46.5 million people in poverty. Especially notable trends are the consistent increase in child poverty and the consistently high poverty rates among African Americans and persons of Hispanic heritage. (Institute for Research on Poverty, 2014, para.1-3)

*Novice teacher* is a “beginning level teacher…while this universally takes place at the beginning of the teaching career, it may also reoccur with subsequent job responsibility or environment changes” (Toma, 2007, p. 18).
Reflecting on practice “generally means teachers thinking about their underlying values and beliefs about teaching and learning and comparing these to classroom practices” (Farrell, 2008, as cited in Farrell & Ives, 2015, p. 595). Additionally, the terms reflective practice inquiry, reflective practice, and reflective dialogue will be used as synonyms for this term.

Social pedagogy is a holistic pedagogy with roots in education.

Title I is a program that provides financial assistance through state educational agencies (SEAs) to local educational agencies (LEAs) and public schools with high numbers or percentages of poor children to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards…schools enrolling at least 40 percent of children from low-income families are eligible to use Title I funds for schoolwide programs designed to upgrade their entire educational programs to improve achievement for all students, particularly the lowest-achieving students. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016, http://www.ed.gov/, para 1)

Summary

This dissertation is divided into five chapters and an appendix section. The first chapter will provide a concise introduction of poverty, the rationale for the study, the rationale for using qualitative research methods, statement of the problem, and the research questions. The second chapter will include a comprehensive literature review. Chapter three will describe the methodology, such as how the selection of cases, data
collection methods, and analysis of data collected, validation strategies, any ethical issues, and the positionality of the researcher. The fourth chapter will describe in detail each case, along with themes and vignettes from each case illustrated. Chapter five will include the findings of each case study, with thick description using quotes from the study’s participants. Implications for public policy and future research will also be included in chapter five. An appendix section will include copies of the IRB approval, informed consent forms, interview protocols, demographic protocols, and documents provided by novice teachers.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

"I believe that the school must present life—life as real and vital to the child as
that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground.”

(John Dewey, 1897, p. 79)

The American education profession, for at least the 200 years, has transitioned
throughout an array of America’s reform eras. The nineteenth century was an era of
common school reformers, the twentieth century brought Progressive Era reformers, Civil
Rights, the Black Power Movement (Goldstein, 2014), and Johnson’s War on Poverty,
and the 21st Century brought the nearly invisible vestiges of Bush era-No Child Left
Behind (NCLB) and the Obama-era Race to the Top reforms. “For two hundred years the
American public has looked toward education to close troubling social gaps—[first]
between Catholics and Protestants… [and now the gap between the] poor and rich”
(Goldstein, 2014, loc. 101). Throughout each distinctive reform era, there was a schism
between the poor and rich, where the poor clearly did not receive equitable education.
Although Mann (1848) believed education to be the great equalizer of man, nearly two
hundred years later, American teachers are continuously looking for ways to train
teachers to ensure an equitable education for students who live in poverty. The notion of
education as a way to achieve the American Ideal continues to be a common thread
woven amongst the two hundred years of reforms in American society. As the number of
students living in poverty continues to rapidly increase, therein lies another problem—the effect that the culture of poverty has on novice teachers’ classroom instructional practices. Likewise, changing public perception of teachers’ roles as reflective practitioners will be challenging. Giroux (1985/2010) maintains that schools are the guardians of “critical democracy” (p.36) and as such, these institutions should hold that teachers are transformative intellectuals who “combine scholarly reflection and practice in the service of educating students to be thoughtful, active citizens” (p.36). Further, Giroux (1985/2010) asserts that Dewey argued the notion that teacher-training programs that emphasized only technical training were a disservice to the nature of teaching. Giroux’s (1985/2010) argument illuminates the bridge-theory practice gap for novice teachers, where their technical training received through their teacher preparation programs, i.e. garnering pedagogical theories, is not substantial for finding ways to “examine the underlying nature of school problems” (p.36). Teacher preparation programs are more concerned with training teachers in the “how to” and not enough of “what works” (Giroux, 1985/2010). For example, classroom management techniques and classroom organizational skills are “management pedagogies” (Giroux, 1985/2010, p.37) that are mainly taught in teacher preparation programs. Overall, Giroux’s issue with these types of management pedagogies is that the “notion that students come [with] different histories and embody different experiences linguistic practices, cultures and talents [that are] strategically ignored” (p. 37). Therefore, for teachers to be
transformative intellectuals, schools must be viewed as “economic, cultural, and social sites that are inextricably tied to issues of power and control” (Giroux, 1985/2010, p.38). Shor (1987) asserts that to produce students who are critical thinkers of the official curriculum, teachers themselves must first be critical learners who motivate their own students to do the same. As schools are the keepers of a critical democracy where American public school students are to receive an equalized education, one must consider the fact that most educators equate students who are from a lower socioeconomic class as ones who will have lower academic achievement (Rothstein, 2008). To begin to eradicate this conviction, advocates of social and economic reform should begin to align themselves to ensure better schools and social/economic equality for all American students (Rothstein, 2008). Since American public school teachers are considered the keepers of critical democracy, the question then becomes how will America’s schools find a balance in educating the multitudes of multiethnic, multicultural students that live in a culture of poverty and that are entering classrooms at a record pace? The number of immigrants entering American classrooms is continuously increasing. As such, as immigrants continue to arrive in America, some escaping abject poverty in their home countries, and continuing to live in poverty as they settle here in America. This is creating an influx of other dilemmas for teachers and educators in American schools. Many educators pose the question—how should immigrants be assimilated into American society? Will immigrants be required to take part in learning America’s culture, when immigrants’ own cultural narratives could be considered just as important?
Perhaps the answers lie within Ravitch’s (2002) assertion that “America's newcomers did not come to our shores…to become consumers. They came to share in our democratic heritage…to become possessors of the grand ideas that created and sustained the democratic experiment in this country for more than two centuries” (“Diversity, Tragedy, and the Schools: A Considered Opinion,” para 11). Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that for America’s multicultural, multiethnic population to participate in a shared, democratic heritage, educators must find a way to ensure this is made possible.

How will schools begin to support novice teachers as they attempt to make the connection between their theory and practice when it comes to teaching students who have varying races, cultures, and social classes? Banks et. al (2001) advocate for professional development programs that will help teachers to understand the “complex characteristics of ethnic groups and how such variables influence student behavior” (p.7). In addition, Banks et. al (2001) assert that for teachers to be effective, they must “use knowledge of their students' culture and ethnicity as a framework for inquiry” (p.7).

Perhaps if professional development programs for teachers are used as a solution to encourage understanding of the cultural variables that influence student behavior, then a stronger American heritage, one that embraces critical democracy, will be fashioned. This qualitative study was a response to Toma’s (2007) assertion that “research in teacher induction uncovers the challenges and perplexities novice teachers face, and proposes means to assist the novice in adapting to the complexities of the teaching environment” (p. 13). One major challenge for novice teachers is how to implement effective
instructional practices that will support stronger pedagogy. Additionally, Toma (2007) notes there is a paucity of research literature regarding the connection between novice teachers and their reflective dialogue. There are several other challenges that novice teachers face, such as demands of teaching students, communicating with parents, and lack of support from colleagues (Johnson, 2004). One of the ways to address these challenges for the novice teachers in the transition period of teacher induction, which Feiman-Nemser (2012) considers “a time of intense learning” (p. 10), is with “metacognitive decision-making” or “teacher reflection” (Toma, 2007, p. 13).

Addressing these challenges using reflective dialogue could possibly make this time of intense learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2012) easier for novice teachers.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to discover the impact reflective inquiry may have on novice teachers’ development of critical and social pedagogy. To understand how novice teachers’ engagement in reflective inquiry could be a beginning step to alleviate the effects of poverty in their classroom instructional practices, it is important to address the research literature regarding Dewey, reflective inquiry, professional capital, novice teachers’ pedagogical preparation, critical pedagogy, and social pedagogy. The fundamental research question that this study seeks to answer is how does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices? This study will also address the following research questions: (1) How does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices; (2)
What are novice teachers underlying beliefs about teaching children who live in poverty; and (3) How do these beliefs help develop a framework for social pedagogy?

To address the research questions for this study, a qualitative case study methodology was conducted because this approach uses an exploratory process through a variety of data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Tellis, 1997). A convergent mapping pattern (Machi & McEvoy, 2010) for the literature review was conducted to illuminate the need for a professional development initiative to train novice teachers while they are teaching in their multiethnic, multicultural classrooms of students who live in poverty.

This review of literature reflects the cycle of poverty for students that began with the beginnings of America’s educational system in the 18th century and continues to be America’s foremost educational dilemma today (Goldring & Bitterman, 2013). Since the Progressive Era, throughout the last one hundred years, American education has seen the effects of poverty continue to influence the classroom although there have been many reform movements; this literature review reflects this notion, and in addition, the educational aims used by many to improve the barriers that poverty has on America’s classrooms. A discussion of Dewey, Schön, critical pedagogy, reflective practice, and novice teachers supports the literature review, where the discussions illuminate the paucity of research on novice teachers and their development of social pedagogy through reflective practice inquiry. Shulman’s (1987) Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action, Schön’s (1983) Reflective Practice, and Social Pedagogy (Petrie & Moss, 2002) are utilized as theoretical frameworks.
Figure 1: The four interacting approaches for the development of a social pedagogical framework for education

Transformative Paradigmatic Viewpoint

Guba and Lincoln (1994) posit that a paradigm is a "set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates of first principles…it represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world,’ the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts.” (p.109)
Mertens (2015) asserts that the transformative paradigm “places priority on the axiological assumption as the guiding force for conceptualizing subsequent beliefs and research decisions” (p.29). Mertens (2007) posits that “the basic beliefs of the transformative paradigm provide an overarching framework for addressing issues of social justice and consequent methodological decisions...the role of the researcher in this context is reframed as one who recognizes inequalities and injustices in society and strives to challenge the status quo, who is a bit of a provocateur with overtones of humility, and who possesses a shared sense of responsibility.” (p. 212)

Merging both perspectives regarding the transformative paradigm from the aforementioned researchers helps to identify the placement of this research case study, since the purpose of this qualitative case study is to discover how reflective practice may be utilized to help novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices and development of an understanding of social pedagogy. The transformative paradigm was utilized as a framework for this research because this paradigm “provides a philosophical framework that explicitly addresses issues of power and justice” (Mertens, 2015, p.25). Discovering novice teachers’ different perspectives of their multiple realities of classroom instructional decision-making practices is imperative. Within the framework of the transformative paradigm lies critical theory, and since critical pedagogy lies within critical theory, it important to note that critical theory’s “real value lies in the ability to establish possibilities for reflexive thought and practice on the part of those who use it.
In the case of teachers, it becomes invaluable as an instrument of critique and understanding” (Giroux, 1985/2010, p. 36). It is crucial to see if novice teachers’ reflective practice development will transform their classroom instructional practices. Critical theory has its theoretical foundations in the Frankfurt School, where the initial focus is to “rethink and radically reconstruct the meaning of human emancipation” (Giroux, 1985/2010, p.27). As novice teachers utilize the concepts of rethinking and reconstructing the meaning of human emancipation for themselves and how it relates to their students, students would be able to construct deeper and astute meanings of their making empowerment through their own education. As novice teachers become liberated, he or she will become anew, “no longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom” (Freire, 2014, loc. 596). Therefore, before novice teachers can begin to embrace social pedagogy, the foundations of their teaching philosophy should mirror critical theory. Within the context of the classroom, students who live at or below the poverty level where their teachers who do not present an educational philosophy conducive to effective classroom instruction should be considered at an oppressive level. Therefore, it is important for novice teachers to first identify those students who are at risk within their classrooms, and reform their educational philosophies in order to teach those students.

Freire (2000) posits that to surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity (loc. 598).
By doing so, novice teachers are elucidating the needs of an oppressed society within their own classrooms. One of the initial causes that novice teachers have is understanding the oppressed society within the hierarchical structure of their own classrooms since they themselves may be oppressed—Freire (2014) asserts “only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both” (loc. 598); therefore, as the idea of they themselves being oppressed, novice teachers open the door to allowing their students to take charge of their own education. By highlighting the lives of their students that live in poverty, novice teachers allow students to tell their own narratives. Dimitriadis and Kamberelis (2006) assert, “Freire argued that the goal of education is to begin to name the world, to recognize that we are all ‘subjects’ of our own lives and narratives, not ‘objects’ in the stories of others” (p.120). Informing students and teachers of the multiple levels and confines of power within the classroom could possibly allow both groups to consider others’ view of reality, and allow both groups to possibly reconstruct their conceptions of their own enlightenment.

Further, Freire (2000) argues “in order for the oppressed to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform” (loc.598). Once novice teachers can transform their own pedagogies regarding their students who live in a culture of poverty, then they can support their students to recognize that there is a possibility garnering an effectual education once they realize this is the “antithesis” for without them being oppressed, “the oppressor will not exist” (Freire, 2014, loc.614).
For Freire (2014), the central problem is, “how can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation” (loc. 614).

In this, the oppressed must discontinue being the instrument for the oppressor through his or her own liberation. Furthermore, novice teachers must recognize that students are more than mere vessels in which to deposit knowledge. Simply depositing knowledge, or “banking” (Porntaweekul, Raksasataya, & Nethanomsak, 2015) can have detrimental effects. Moreover, Porntaweekul et.al (2015) assert that “Freire, the Brazilian educationalist, argued against this ‘banking’ model of education characterized by the educator making ‘deposits’ in a passive, disempowered learner” (p. 25), if not, then the knowledge that novice teachers impart on their students living in a culture of poverty becomes a mere “gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider know nothing” (Freire, 1968, loc. 989). Furthermore, Freire (1968) rejected this notion for educators, instead he asserts that educators must impart knowledge unto their students as a way of allowing those same students to invent and reinvent themselves. In this, novice educators are allowing for critical reflective practice through this impartation of knowledge, as they continue to evaluate and reevaluate ways (using reflective inquiry) to impart knowledge to their students that live in poverty. Guba and Lincoln (1994) assert that only one reality exists for positivists. Moreover, one may argue that the post positivist ideology, as viewed by some as the real reality, could be utilized in discovering novice teachers’ beliefs systems and how they affect their instructional practices; however, the post positivistic viewpoint can be “reductionistic in
that the intent is to reduce the ideas into small, discrete set to test, such as the variables that comprise hypotheses and research questions” (Creswell, 2013, p. 9). Since the purpose of this research is to delve into the underlying reasons that compel novice teachers reflect on the instructional practices regarding their students who live in poverty, and to discover the novice teachers’ multiple realities of their classroom experiences, it would be at a benefit for this research study to utilize a transformative paradigm that would allow for a more comprehensive view of the multiple realities/perceptions that novice teachers have. Identifying the various attitudes, beliefs, and philosophical assumptions of novice toward their students with respect to their classroom instructional practices is ideal.

Alignment of the Transformative Paradigm with the Purpose of the Study and Response

A transformative worldview holds that “research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political change agenda to confront social oppression at whatever level it occurs” (Creswell 2013, p. 9). Transformative research contains an action agenda for reform that may change lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher’s life (Creswell, 2013). Since it would be imperative to understand the various attitudes and belief systems that influence novice teachers’ instructional practices about students from a poverty defined background, a paradigm that is aligned with social justice (Mertens, 2015) would be ideal. The transformative paradigm “directly addresses the politics in research by confronting social oppression at whatever levels it occurs” (Mertens, 2015, p. 21) where, in terms of this research study,
oppression can be found at the novice teachers’ classroom level. To transform novice teachers’ perception about the students (who live in poverty) that they teach, this research case study sought to consciously delve into the development of social transformation in the form of critical and social pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy focuses on the issues of race, gender, and sexuality and how the issues within these domains should be taught in education. In this case, critical pedagogy could be utilized due to the issue of multicultural, multiethnic students who live in a lower, socioeconomic class and novice teachers’ ability to build a rapport with them through their instructional decision-making practices. Since critical pedagogy lies within critical theory, it important to note that critical theory’s “real value lies in the ability to establish possibilities for reflexive thought and practice on the part of those who use it; in the case of teachers, it becomes invaluable as an instrument of critique and understanding” (Giroux, 1985/2010, p. 36). Reflexive thought and practice development for novice teachers is imperative. Overall, critical pedagogy is fundamentally concerned with understanding the “relationship between power and knowledge… power comes from everywhere, from above and from below” (Giroux, 1985/2010, p. 72). As novice teachers understand their own power, they become aware of the balance between power and knowledge. But, in order to do so, novice teachers will initially need to develop compassionate values along with rational thought as an emancipatory goal (Stephens, 2013). Noddings (1984) describes this compassionate values approach as caring, which
involves stepping out of one’s own personal frame of reference into the other’s. When we care, we consider the other’s point of view, his objective needs, and what he expects of us. Our attention, our mental engrossment is on the cared-for, not on ourselves. Our reasons for acting, then have to do both with the other’s wants and desires and with the objective elements of his problematic situation. (p. 24)

Once novice teachers develop compassionate values toward an emancipatory goal for themselves and their students, they will demonstrate a caring educational philosophy.

Human Capital Pipeline

Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital, which is derived from economic capital, as the sum of real or potential resources that can be gained through a network of connections. Utilizing Bourdieu’s (1986) conception of social capital as a foundation, Best (2010) defines the term “human capital pipeline” as the “preparation, recruitment, and retention of highly effective school teachers and leaders” (p.1). Best (2010) posits that as schools attempt to find ways to increase academic achievement and to decrease the achievement gap for diverse groups of students, they must confront the challenge of increasing the aptitude of their teaching staff. Successful building of human capital for teachers will require strong attention to this human pipeline. Further, Best (2010) recommends that state educational policy should focus on “clinical training that addresses content”, and “examine professional development of priorities to align with state and district goals” (p.1). Dewey (1910) posited two reasons for training thought, and for this
study, training novice teachers’ thought during professional development on reflective thinking. Dewey’s (1910) first notion was to first to curb incorrect thinking that leads to “false and harmful beliefs”, and second, “the need of systematic training would be less than it is if only the danger to be feared were lack of any development is even greater” (p. 22). Dewey’s (1910) second reason should be enough evidence that novice teacher should begin their teaching careers with professional development that encourages them to train their thoughts away from impulsive instructional decisions that could negatively affect their students who live in poverty.

Shulman, Pedagogical Content Knowledge and the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action

Shulman (1987) emphasized teaching reform based on the following questions:

What are the sources of the knowledge base for teaching? In what terms can these sources be conceptualized? What are the implications for teaching policy and educational reform? In Shulman’s view, “pedagogical content knowledge is a form of practical knowledge that is used by teachers to guide their actions in highly contextualized classroom settings,” where pedagogical content knowledge “builds on other forms of professional knowledge, and is therefore a critical—and perhaps even the paramount—constitutive element in the knowledge base of teaching” (Rowan et al., 2001, p.2). Developing a framework or knowledge base for teaching is imperative (Shulman, 1987). Within the pedagogical content knowledge that must be acquired by preservice teachers enrolled in teacher education programs, preservice teachers must be
able to adapt their own reasoning and action for classroom instruction through pedagogical reasoning and action. With this concept in mind, Shulman (1987) developed the Model of Pedagogical Reasoning based on his concept of pedagogical content knowledge. Shulman’s (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning contains several categories:

- Content knowledge;
- General pedagogical knowledge; with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter;
- Curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as ‘tools of the trade’ for teachers;
- Pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding;
- Knowledge of learners and their characteristics;
- Knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and
- Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. (p.8)
Table 1

*Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s capacity to transform content knowledge into pedagogically sound form that is adaptive to the needs of a diverse group of learners</td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s capacity to prepare, present, adapt, and tailor specific instructional materials for a specific group of students in the classroom</td>
<td>Transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers present information in the form of group work, questioning techniques and other ways to determine student’s knowledge.</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers check to make students understand the instructional material.</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers review and critically analyze their own lessons.</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers garner new understandings of their own teaching, their own students’ comprehension of instructional material. Experience is gained from teaching.</td>
<td>New Comprehensions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Note: Adapted from Shulman, 1987)*
Defining Reflective Inquiry/Practice and John Dewey

As one searches the research literature for a definitive definition of the term “reflection,” one finds a plethora of scholars’ interpretations for this term. Therefore, to garner a stronger understanding of the reflective practice, one must note that the practice of reflection began over 2,500 years ago with the ancient Greeks as they practiced reflection as contemplation in search of truth (Lawrence-Wilkes & Ashmore, 2014). Although this may be the case, this research study utilizes a modern interpretation of the term reflective practice, where most scholars trace the roots of the term reflection to educator and philosopher John Dewey (Akbari, 2007).

Dewey (1910) asserts that reflective thinking is “the kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration” (p. 3). The subject at hand for novice teachers is whether reflective practice is influential in that it impacts their instructional decisions. Beliefs should be investigated to understand upon what ideals do exist (Dewey, 1910). Before novice teachers can truly transform their own students’ perceptions, they must first investigate their own underlying educational philosophies regarding students who live in a culture of poverty. Initially, novice teachers have difficulty incorporating reflective thinking as it relates to their instructional practices. Novice teachers should be reminded that reflective thinking exists in two phases—at first, there is a “state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty”, and second, one makes an “act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle, and dispose of the perplexity” (Dewey, 1910,
p.12). Dewey’s conception of the two stages of reflective thinking describes the
dichotomy that exists for novice teachers. Parallel to Dewey’s first stage, novice teachers
enter the classroom in varying states of doubt and hesitancy in their own ability to teach
students who living poverty. In Dewey’s second stage, novice teachers begin to look for
ways to improve their instructional decision-making practices to improve their overall
teaching practices. Dewey (1910) asserts that reflective thinking must be an objective for
education. By utilizing consecutive reflective thinking, one commences “putting the
consequences of different ways and lines of action before the mind”, where “it enables us
to know what we are about when we act” (p. 17). Most importantly, “it converts action
that is merely appetitive, blind, and impulsive into intelligent action” (Dewey, 1910, p.
17). Fundamentally, this notion is where novice teachers should be at the start of their
teaching career—“blind” to the influence their instructional practices have for their
students who live in poverty—yet another after much continuous attention reflecting on
teaching practices, novice teachers become more aware of the various nuances that aid
them in teaching this group of children.

Utilizing Dewey’s definition of reflection from his foundational work, *How We
Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educational Process*
(1910), Akbari (2007) defines reflection as “action based on the active, persistent and
careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the
grounds that support it” (p. 9). Finlay (2008) posits that Dewey acknowledged the act of
reflection as a focused form of thinking that is “grounded in doubt, hesitation, or
perplexity related to a directly experienced situation” (p. 8). Principally, reflective practice can be considered a critical thinking process. Porntaweekul et. al (2015) assert “reflective thinking… is generally understood as a part of the critical thinking process, referring specifically to the processes of analyzing and making judgments about something that has taken place” (p. 25). Moreover, this perspective of reflective thinking/critical thinking shares a strong connection to Dewey’s (1910) viewpoint. Porntaweekul et. al. (2015) maintain that Dewey “suggests that reflective thinking is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge and of the grounds that support that knowledge” (p. 25).

Schön and Reflective Practice


there is nothing strange about the idea that a kind of knowing is inherent in intelligent action. Common sense admits the category of know-how, and it does not stretch common sense very much to say that the know-how is in the action —
that a tightrope walker's know-how, for example, lies in, and is revealed by, the way he takes his trip across the wire, or that a big-league pitcher's know-how is in his way of pitching to a batter's weakness, changing his pace, or distributing his energies over the course of a game. (pp. 50-51)

Schön (1983) posits the following quotation to define the second principle of reflective practice, reflection-in-action:

> If common sense recognizes knowing in action, it also recognizes that we sometimes think about what we are doing. Phrases like ‘thinking on your feet,’ ‘keeping your wits about you,’ and ‘learning by doing’ suggest not only that we can think about doing but that we can think about doing something while doing it.

(p. 54)

Schön’s (1983) third principle of reflective practice, action-present, is elucidated by the following assertion:

> A practitioner's reflection-in-action may not be very rapid. It is bounded by the "action-present," the zone of time in which the action can still make a difference to the situation. The action-present may stretch over minutes, hours, days, or even weeks or months, depending on the pace of the activity and the situational boundaries that are characteristic of the practice. (p. 62)

All three reflective practice principles provide a direction for understanding novice teachers’ development of reflective inquiry. Teachers should reflect before, during and after instruction to improve their instruction. Akbari (2007) asserts that a
reflective teacher…is one who critically examines his practices, comes up with some ideas as to how to improve his performance to enhance students’ learning, and puts those ideas into practice, what Schön (1983) calls the cycle of appreciation, action, and re-appreciation. (p. 194)

Utilizing the Deweyian concept of reflective practice which involves experiential learning, educationalists have built their foundation for the actualization of reflective practice for professional educators by theorizing varying reflective practice models.

Language: The Focus to Translate and Communicate Knowledge

Heath (1983) studied children’s language and how it was affected by the cultural community in which they lived. It was important for educational research in that after Heath’s (1983) ethnographic study from 1969 to 1978 of two areas in the Piedmont Carolinas increased interest in improved educational methods for students of minority and working-class backgrounds. The teachers who participated in the ethnographic study considered this historical period as a “challenge of the crisis of integration” (p. 356). Heath (1983) studied a White working-class community and a Black-working class community, where as an anthropologist and linguist, she studied the language learning habits of children who lived within both sets of each community. What Heath (1983) found as a result of her study was profound. Heath (1983) asserts “the place of language in the cultural life of each social group is interdependent with the habits and values of behaving shared among members of that group” (p. 11).
Further, Heath (1983) argues that the “focus on culture” (p.11) is a learned behavior for language as opposed to race, where members of such social groups may not differ racially, but their respective histories, patterns of face-to-face interactions, and ways of adjusting to the external environment and to individuals within and outside their groups have shaped their different patterns of using language (p.11).

Therefore, children’s development of language is socioeconomic, not racial. Heath (1983) considers the teachers of her ethnographic study as “learning researchers” who used “knowledge from ethnographies of communication and their classrooms” (p. 354). As these learning researchers continued to teach and “embedded class materials into the lives of the students”, students then began to learn to “translate and expand knowledge” (p. 355). The students’ perspective of their educational experience was transformed through their teachers’ constant focus on language where there was an articulation in language structure and use, and the students learned to “code switch” (p. 355) between the formal and informal rules of their classroom and their own respective communities. Further, students became engaged individually and as a group in translating and organizing community knowledge into the classroom and classroom knowledge into the community…Students engaged in a process of self-awareness by which they, in a sense, re-constructed a social and cognitive system of meanings. (p. 356)
Heath (1983) posits that as teachers become learning researchers of their own students, through the study of students’ their language habits, and communicating, at times, in their students’ own language that was formed within their own communities, they conduct a “two-way channel” (p. 354) between their students’ communities and their own classroom. It can be inferred that as students transform their own educational perspective by code switching, teachers can be successful in their own classrooms by performing likewise.

Social Pedagogy

In the United States, the concept of social pedagogy is not as fully developed as a theory. Scholars and researchers are more familiar with the term critical pedagogy, which has previously discussed previously in this literature review. A critical pedagogical foundation supports the framework for social pedagogy. Finnish researcher Dr. Juha Hämäläinen is the author of several works regarding social pedagogy, where he researches ways to develop school pedagogy in the school context in some of his older works in Finnish. Hämäläinen is a professor at the University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio, and is a leading researcher in the areas of social policy, social theory, and ethics. He is the author of several prominent works about social pedagogy in Europe: “Developmental Psychology, Youth Sociology and Social Pedagogy – Three Perspectives on Youth Work and Youth Work Policy” (2012), “Defining Social Pedagogy: Historical, Theoretical, and Practical Consideration” (2015), and along with his colleague, Dr. Elina Nivala, “Social Pedagogy” (2015).
According to Hämäläinen, social pedagogy refers to a broad pedagogic tradition consisting of different understandings of the nature of social pedagogy. These understandings are shaped by different concepts of man and society, philosophies of science, moral theories, and even political interests.

Social pedagogy is not only about pedagogic theory but also a discipline and branch of studies. In some countries, it refers to a profession. As a professional system/field/activity it often, in some countries, concerns educational activities outside school and differs from school pedagogy. In some countries, social pedagogy is closely connected with social work. (personal communication, April 26, 2016)

For the purposes of this research study, however, establishing social pedagogy as an extension of critical pedagogy was imperative in that novice teachers would be initially be able to understand the culture of poverty, and the language of poverty in which their students converse. By doing so, novice teachers would be able to aid their student’s overall educational experience. Once novice teachers develop their critical pedagogy through their reflective practice inquiry, they can begin to embrace social pedagogy.

Social pedagogy contains nine key principles of practice (Petrie et al., as cited in Stephens, 2010):

1. A focus on the child as a whole person, and support for the child’s overall development;
2. The practitioner sees her/himself as a person in relationship with the child or young person;

3. While they are together, the children and staff are seen as inhabiting the same life space, not as existing in separate hierarchical domains;

4. As professionals, pedagogues are encouraged to constantly reflect on their work and to bring both theoretical understandings and self-knowledge to the process;

5. Pedagogues are also practical – their training prepares them to share in many aspects of children’s daily lives such as preparing meals, making music, being involved in physical activity or using creative arts and crafts to help children express themselves;

6. When working in group settings, the children’s relationships with each other and staff are important resources.

7. Pedagogy builds on an understanding of children’s rights that is not limited to procedural matters or legislative requirements;

8. There is an emphasis on team work and on valuing the contributions of other people within families, the community and other professions;

9. The centrality of relationship and, allied to this, the importance of relationship.

In this research study, the terms social pedagogy will be utilized as a synonym for sociopedagogy (p. 9)
Although social pedagogy has not been fully established as a theory (Hämäläinen, 2016), it is possible that by garnering an understanding of the underlying beliefs (Petrie et. al., as cited in Stephens, 2010), that could help novice teachers develop a holistic view of their students who live in poverty. Should novice teachers begin to perceive their students’ needs holistically, then a framework for social pedagogy can be built.

The Effects of Poverty on the Growing Minority Student Population

Socially, poverty is a foremost issue in the United States, since it makes a deep impact for students’ learning experiences (Milner, 2013). President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty in 1965 addressed the detrimental effects of minority children living in poverty. Because of several states’ unwillingness to fully integrate their school systems, poverty was a consequence for many minorities. Johnson’s War on Poverty ensured $1.2 billion per year for the funding of various programs including the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was the “precursor to the Bush-era No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)” (Goldstein, 2014).

Johnson’s rationale regarding the passage of the ESEA was that it would “bridge the gap between helplessness and hope for more than 5 million educationally deprived children”, and that Johnson knew that “education is the only valid passport from poverty” (Goldstein, 2014, loc. 1893, 1906). Johnson intended for the ESEA to begin alleviate the effects of Jim Crow laws and other previous civil rights violations during the Progressive Era had on schooling for African Americans and other minorities in the United States.
Although a major reform of its time, ESEA was not enough to counter the effects of decades of minority children living in generational poverty—it is evident today that overall, the “the United States is a nation of poor children” (Astuto & Allen, 2009, p. 3). In fact, it is argued that the United States has “a larger child poverty problem” than most industrialized countries, including “France, Spain, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom and Canada” (Astuto & Allen, 2009, p. 3). The number of people living in poverty in the United States has increased, where in 2012, 46.5 million people, or 15 percent of the total U.S. population, lived in poverty…19 million [were] living in the South, and 16 million [were] children (Institute for Research on Poverty, 2015). Of these numbers of those living in poverty for the Southern region of the United States, 26 percent of the population living in poverty were Blacks and Hispanics (Institute for Research on Poverty, 2015). “This poverty rate is not statistically different from the 2011 rate, and remains 2.5 percentage points higher than in 2007, the year before the Great Recession” (Institute for Research on Poverty, 2015, para. 3). NCES (2016) found that almost 15.5 children under the age of 18, or 21 percent of the entire population of U.S. children, were living in poverty in 2014. These statistics demonstrate the U.S. population living in poverty is increasing at a steady rate, with the percentages for Blacks and Hispanics increasing more than any other ethnic population since 2007. Brooks-Gunn & Duncan (1997) found that while there is a plethora of research literature on poverty and its effects on children, more “precision [was needed] to “allow researchers to disentangle the effects on children of the array of factors associated with poverty [because] understanding of
these relationships is key to designing effective educational policies to ameliorate these problems for children” (p, 56). Further, Corcoran (1995) states, “if poverty were intergenerational, this would violate the U.S. ideal of equal opportunity” (p. 237). Poverty, with its damaging impacts on children (Guo & Harris, 2000), needs to be addressed in the classroom because of its associated factors—learning disabilities, developmental delays, emotional/behavioral problems (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997), and low academic achievement (Guo & Harris, 2000). In addition, Guo and Harris (2000) found that the connection between the level of cognitive stimulation at home and [a child’s] intellectual development was stronger and more relevant after reviewing a multitude of research literature on poverty and its effects on children. Currently, a fundamental reason schools, educational experiences for students, have not improved substantially in the United States is because “federal education policy has not adequately addressed the ways in which poverty and inequality influence student learning and school performance” (Noguera & Wells, 2011, p. 11). Brooks-Gunn & Duncan (1997) state that:

Hundreds of studies, books, and reports have examined the detrimental effects of poverty on the well-being of children. However, while the literature on the effects of poverty on children is large, many studies lack the precision necessary to allow researchers to disentangle the effects on children of the array of factors associated with poverty. (p. 56)
Pritchard (1993) found that the long-lasting effects of poverty influence people socially, economically, and psychologically; the influence of poverty, in turn, affect the learning curve for these students from this socioeconomic status.

In recognizing that the number of students that are living in poverty is rising, it is imperative that “educators... revise their strategies to meet the needs of today’s student population who require more education than prior generations because of the added international economic and competitive challenges” (Aguerrebere, 2009, p. 2). In response to Aguerrebere’s recommendation, one intervention strategy would be to start with novice teachers and their utilization of reflective inquiry as part of their professional development. After two hundred years of starts and fails of the American education system attempting to equalize education for its students, this one intervention has the potential to claim the challenge of poverty through an awareness of ensuring critical democracy in the classroom for novice teachers.

It is imperative to identify how to combat the effects of poverty within the classroom because of the challenges that educators have in developing new pedagogies to ensure the equal education of all students, particularly the population of multiethnic students living in poverty. Moreover, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008), there will be over 90,000 more children under 18 years of age in the year 2025 than in 2000; projections show that by 2035 the percentage of white children and children of color will be equal, with children of color becoming the majority thereafter” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008, as cited in Quinn, 2011, p. 2).
Further, data taken from the most recent U.S. Census, the National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan (2016) found “the poverty rate for blacks and Hispanics greatly exceed the national average. In 2014, “26.2 percent of blacks and 23.6 percent of Hispanics were poor, compared to 10.1 percent of non-Hispanic whites and 12 percent of Asians” (NCES, 2016, para.10).

What this means is that novice teachers, without proper in-service training in teaching students whose backgrounds do not parallel their own, could possibly have difficulty making effective instructional decisions of their students who live in poverty, which could come at a cost to ensuring educational equality for all students. It is imperative that novice teachers learn to make successful instructional decisions because “teachers must employ the skills and attitudes to accommodate their students' cultural characteristics” (Pope & Wilder, 2005, p. 323).

Novice Teacher Preparation for a Changing Diverse Population

Research studies have shown that many novice teachers enter the field of teaching lacking the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to instruct culturally diverse students. “Evidence has revealed that teachers and teaching can be the most powerful inside of-school predictors of success for students” (Milner, 2010, p. 6). A critical issue challenging the field of education is the “preparation of novice teachers for multicultural, multiethnic settings” (Brown, 2009, p.ii), where the “major shift in the demographics of the United States with the increase in minority enrollment in public schools continues to place an enormous challenge for teacher education and teacher education programs to
produce teachers who are both culturally sensitive and literate” (Gay & Howard, 2000, as cited in Brown, 2009, p.1). Research also indicates that few novice teachers enter their first classrooms prepared (Mehlig, 2013). Haberman (1995) maintains that teachers in high-poverty environments tend to fail because they are unable to connect with their students to encourage their students to engage in the learning process.

By bridging the gap between the home and school culture, teachers provide an educational environment that is conducive to learning (Hinds, 2004). In addition, at-risk students are at a disadvantage because their cultural backgrounds may create a barrier to their participation in instructional activities (Hinds, 2004). Brooks-Gunn & Duncan (1997) question the importance of poverty for children and if the lack of income influences children’s’ daily lives.

To improve the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students, it is fundamental that teachers understand the association between pupils’ home culture and school learning (Peralta-Nash, 2003). Cochran (1993) states teacher education programs should help teachers look at the contexts in which they will be working and comprehend the communities from an insider perspective. “Soaring teacher attrition rates combined with the changing growth of the student population pose a staggering challenge to schools in the U.S.” (Russo, 2008, p.16). Further, once novice teachers enter the classrooms as new in-service teachers, they are …particularly vulnerable because low-performing students are usually assigned to them as opposed to their colleagues who have more experience (Quinn, 2011).
Therefore, it is important that novice teachers receive adequate professional development as they are entering their own classrooms. Identifying effective instructional strategies for themselves may be difficult for novice teachers because while they typically are more familiar with reading theoretical literature about teaching, as this is a necessity, however, the lack of in-service experiences exploring the culture of poverty so that they may add to their pedagogical content knowledge may come at a disadvantage to their students. By merely requiring teachers to utilize reflective inquiry would not be enough. It is important that novice teachers synthesize the information garnered throughout the reflective inquiry process, which could make a difference in subsequent classroom practice (Hiatt–Michael, 2001). Is it indeed important for novice teachers to understand fully how a child’s school development may be associated with the fact that he/she comes from a home considered at the poverty level. In addition to having an understanding how the culture of poverty influences pedagogy, novice teachers, through subsequent professional development, need to be made aware of reflecting on their instructional practice could add to their pedagogical content knowledge.

Through reflective dialogue, novice teachers may begin to develop an understanding of how the culture of poverty could affect the instructional decision-making practices. It is essential that novice teachers use reflective dialogue to develop a stronger social pedagogy, where “therefore, [novice] teachers must acquire knowledge of diversity, understand how diversity impacts learning, and recognize the relationship between classroom interactions and classroom success” (Brown, 2009, p.23).
In turn, novice teachers could perhaps blend this beginning knowledge of the culture of poverty along with an understanding of critical pedagogy to teach this diverse population of students. Additionally, Milner (2010) posits that teacher education programs, which focus on preparing teachers in content knowledge, may miss the chance to help teachers find ways to build a stronger rapport with their students. Perhaps one way of ensuring novice teachers’ development of a socio pedagogical instructional foundation is by strengthening their pedagogical content knowledge through professional development that incorporates the use of reflective practice.

Summary

Overall, a review of the research literature represents a need to study an intervention to support a socio pedagogical framework for novice/novice teachers as they enter their classrooms of a diverse population of students who live in a culture of poverty. Finding a way to incorporate collaborative reflective dialogue into professional development for novice teachers would be imperative in helping to establish a foundation for critical and social pedagogy for novice teachers.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

At the beginnings of American public education, the belief was that education was the indubitable elixir for all social ills, one being that of inequality of opportunity and poverty (Growe & Montgomery, 2003). However, education in America has transitioned from looking at equalizing students based on race (i.e. Brown v. Board of Education) to equalization based on socioeconomic class. A generally accepted definition of the American Dream is that all students, regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic to have equal access to free, exemplary education. Through education, one can move from the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, to the higher echelons of society. Freire (2000) argues that “for the oppressed to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform” (p.49). Students in classrooms must begin to recognize that there is a possibility of garnering an effectual education once they realize this is the antithesis (Freire, 2000). Further, Growe & Montgomery (2003) assert that equal access allows the opportunity for all children to develop their own human capital, making themselves marketable in a capitalistic economic system.

While one can reasonably rationalize how public education can be the great equalizer, how is it possible to ensure that all students receive a quality education despite
a plethora of issues that educators encounter in the classroom today? One substantial issue for educators that hinders classroom instructional methods is student poverty. How will educators alleviate the effects that the culture of poverty (Harrington, 1962) brings to the classroom? This culture of poverty is the elephant in the classroom that needs to be consistently addressed through educators’ instructional practices, if the educational system intends to assert itself as a great equalizer (Growe & Montgomery, 2003).

Additionally, by the year 2035, minority students will represent over “one-half of the K-12 enrollments in public schools” (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008). With such a combination of the factors, (i.e., higher levels of students living in poverty, and a higher student body that are from culturally diverse backgrounds), teacher preparation programs will need to find a way to train future teachers so that their instructional practices will be effective for higher levels of student academic achievement. How vigilant are novice teachers in forgoing their own subjective belief systems about the culture of poverty to teach such a diverse population of students living in poverty? What instructional method, if efficaciously utilized by novice teachers, could prove effective in alleviating some of the effects that the culture of poverty has on classroom instructional decision-making practices? Perhaps the answer to the questions is educators’ utilization of reflective thinking to improve their pedagogical content knowledge.

After reviewing the research literature to elucidate a nexus of novice teachers’ reflective thinking and their development of a pedagogy that is empathetic of the non-
academic needs of their students, it is apparent that more research is needed to make a closer correlation between both concepts. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand novice teachers’ perceptions concerning reflective inquiry as it relates to their students who live in poverty. This chapter details the design of the research study, population, sample, data collection methods, analysis of data, and how the data is reported.

Problem/Purpose Statement

Brown (2009) asserts “American society is one of the most multiethnic, and multicultural societies of any nation in the world where currently minority students comprise a third of the student population across the United States” (p. 1). One of the main challenges for many at-risk students that live in poverty is bridging the gap between their home cultures and the culture of school (Hinds, 2004). Per Hinds (2004), the cultural background of many at-risk students may limit their ability to fully participate in classroom activities. Reflective inquiry may be the answer to the question of how to prepare novice teachers for their multiethnic, multicultural classrooms of students living in poverty. Bridging pedagogical theories that novice teachers learn through teacher preparation programs to their novice teaching practices is key. Consequently, it is crucial to conduct a study that explores the impact of reflective inquiry on novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices to give them an insightful lens into their students’ diverse lives.
Research Questions

The fundamental research question that this study seeks to answer is how does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices? The study addresses the following three research questions: (1) How does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices; (2) What are novice teachers underlying beliefs about teaching children who live in poverty; and (3) How do these beliefs help develop a framework for social pedagogy?

Participants

The population for this qualitative case study is novice teachers teaching in a rural Title I school district. Four novice teachers from a rural, Title I school district located in the Southeastern region of the United States aided in the selection of cases for this study. A school-level gatekeeper made the initial contact with novice teachers under their supervision, after this researcher made initial contact with the rural school district’s superintendent. The cases selected for this study were novice teachers who are within their initial three years of teaching. Teacher gender did not play a factor in the selection of cases.

Population/Sample

A rural school district located in the Southeastern region of the United States was utilized for the research study. Located in a county that has an estimated population of 21,000 people, where the median household income is $34,877, 30. % are living in poverty, 50.1% of the county’s residents are employed, 45.5% White and 52.7% Black or
African-American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), the rural school district has four schools—primary, elementary, middle and high—with an overall student population of over 3,000, a teacher population close to 200, and a student/teacher ratio of 16 (NCES, 2016). There is one district-level school superintendent that supervises each of the four building-level principals at each school. Each case study involved a novice teacher that has the level of experience of zero to three years of teaching as identified by his or her building level principal. The cases were randomly selected within a rural school district, so that novice teachers of differing genders, ages, races/ethnicities, educational philosophies, and years’ experience (0-3) in a classroom setting were represented. Permission to interview and observe novice teachers’ classrooms was requested through the school district office and the building level principal.

Permission from the school superintendent and building level principal was granted to the study’s researcher. Through the guidance of the building level principals, an email was sent by the researcher to all the school district’s identified novice teachers. The email included an explanation of the case study, duration of the study, its potential contributions to novice teacher education, and clarification for novice teachers that participation in the study will not minimize novice teachers’ professional standing in the school district. Principals and appropriate school district personnel received copies of the initial email that was sent to all district novice teachers. This email only requested participants for this case study. A description of the research study, duration of the study, and contact information for the researcher were included in the initial email.
No other subsequent emails were sent; neither was any information given to principals and other school district personnel so as not to identify the study’s participants.

Procedure/Data Collection

The researcher initially contacted the school level administrator (gatekeeper) to inquire about potential novice teachers for this study. The gatekeeper requested that researcher send a general email to all novice teachers in the district that request voluntary participation in the research study. Only information such as those questions produced for the semi-structured pre/post interviews was requested, in addition to the amount of years teaching experience selected novice teachers have, when the initial contact was made with the building level principal. All appropriate action to obtain permission for this case study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board.

Once the IRB for the research study was approved, and after an initial contact with gatekeepers (school district superintendent’s office and direct supervisor of novice teachers, usually a building level principal), this researcher inquired via email into the number of years of teaching experience for each randomly selected teacher, and school contact information for the randomly selected novice teacher. The building level principal emailed random novice teachers in the school district to solicit participation in the research study. The building level principal then emailed and informed the researcher that any novice teachers within the school building that wanted to participate in the research study were given the researcher’s contact information. The researcher then selected the first four novice teachers that responded to their principal’s email after the
building level principal gave the researcher the school email contact information for the selected participants. The local school research site and school district gatekeepers were contacted for proper access to the research site, which was the novice teachers’ school building. The researcher did not inform the building principal of any identifying information regarding the novice teachers. All four teachers were located in the same building, but taught different subjects on varying grade levels. School and district gatekeepers was informed of the researcher’s intentions for the research study regarding novice teachers, which included contact outside of school hours only.

Apart from an initial email requesting personal contact information, no emails were exchanged via the school district’s email server. After the researcher made face-to-face contact with each of the participants to review and collect his or her signature for the informed consent for the research study, the researcher then collected the personal telephone number and personal (non-school) email address of each participant.

In the initial interview with the novice teachers, this researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to inquire about their teacher education program, gender, age, any previous teaching placements, race/ethnicity, and educational philosophies about students living in poverty. This researcher did not ask for any identifying information such as teacher name, location of school, or residential address, since each participant was included in this research study under an alias.
During the research period, participants were asked to review their beliefs about students they teach that live in poverty via interview questions. Although students were present during classroom observations, no data were directly collected from them. No students were videotaped during the research study. There were no student interviews in this research study. Classroom observations made by this researcher and any researcher notes pertaining to classroom observations focused entirely on novice teachers to help this researcher understand novice teachers’ metacognitive processes during classroom instruction that was observed. Adequate procedures were made by this researcher to obtain access to the school/research site. Participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the research period. All efforts were made to ensure the minimal amount of disturbance to novice teachers’ classrooms and contingent activities. After every interview, researcher reviewed notes with each study participant in order make sure that the researcher had included accurate responses to participant questions.

A decision was made by the researcher not to record any telephone or classroom observations so that participants would feel more at ease. This researcher wanted to ensure participants that there was a needed level of trust between this researcher and each participant. Since there were no recordings made, this researcher felt that this was a way to obtain a more accurate depiction of participants’ feelings regarding their beliefs, and a more natural rapport was built between the researchers and each of the study’s participants.
Participants were asked to write on three, separate writing prompts regarding their reflective practices, where a maximum of 250 words were requested by each novice teacher. The participants recorded their reflections onto a Microsoft Word document that was emailed to the lead researcher. Prior to making their own reflections, participants were informed that their responses would be used in the discussion of the study. After each participant completed their reflections, this researcher contacted each participant via telephone so that each would be aware that their reflections had been received, and so that the researcher could answer any questions or concerns that each participant may have had about the research study. After participants completed their three reflective writing prompts, a classroom observation of the novice teacher was conducted. The researcher made notes during the observation of the classroom atmosphere, and the interaction observed between the researcher and his or her students. Participants were asked to complete another semi-structured interview at the conclusion of the research study, so that the researcher could compare their responses before and after the research period.

Any information given by novice teachers, such as the school name, students’ names, novice teachers’ colleagues’ names, location of the school) is included in the research study. Any data collected respected the rights of all the study’s participants, and their respective schools using pseudonyms.

Gatekeepers and research participants requested to obtain a copy of the results of the study. Triangulation of the data was achieved through pre-and post-semi-structured
interviews, reflective journal writings, and this researcher’s notes regarding novice teachers’ classroom observations.

Rationale for Qualitative Methodology

Kincheloe et al. (2011) posit that a key area of teacher research requires the study of teachers as students to better understand them and find a better way to teach them. Since this research study included novice teachers as participants, it is important to note that the information garnered from this case study of novice teachers will contribute to the body of literature regarding novice teachers who teach in a rural setting with students who live in poverty. Understanding the students that they teach will allow novice teachers to improve their instructional practices for culturally responsive classrooms.

In addition, Yin (2011) notes five features of qualitative research that apply to this case study:

1. Studying the meaning of people’s lives, under real world conditions;
2. Representing the views and perspectives of the people (participants) in a study;
3. Covering the contextual conditions within which people live;
4. Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behavior;
5. Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone. (p. 9)

The research study fits into the case study criteria because novice teachers’ perceptions of their own educational philosophies regarding students who live in poverty
were illuminated, novice teachers’ own perspectives of reflective practice are represented through reflective writings, the context in which novice teachers’ work is their own classroom, and the researcher observed participants’ classrooms; findings from the study help to identify why reflective practices may be utilized by novice teachers to garner a deeper understanding of the social issue that exists in their classrooms, as recognized by the novice teachers themselves through pre and post interviews with the researcher, and the study used triangulated data: pre/post semi-structured interviews with the researcher, reflective journal writings, and classrooms observations documented with researcher notes. Moreover, should novice teachers be allowed to delve into the reflective dialogue with their colleagues, their beliefs regarding how to teach students who have different cultural and socioeconomic belief systems than those of their own changed in a positive manner. Ultimately, a better understanding of the underlying structures of the beliefs of novice teachers aided in making an effective response in planning professional development workshops that will allow these teachers to understand how the culture of poverty can affect their instructional practices.

The use of qualitative research for this case study has been utilized to understand further the perceptions of novice teachers regarding reflective inquiry. For this researcher, uncovering the underlying belief systems that novice teachers held is essential in understanding how to begin preparing novice teachers to teach in culturally responsive classrooms with students who live in poverty. By allowing novice teachers to delve into deeper understandings of their own beliefs regarding poverty in relation to reflective
inquiry, novice teachers could begin to develop a foundation for their own critical and social pedagogy in order to teach this population of students who live in poverty.

Research Credibility

Data was triangulated using pre-and post-semi-structured interviews, online reflective journals, and this researcher’s notes of classroom observations (See Table 2 below). Stake’s (1995) critique checklist was utilized to determine whether this case study fit the definition of a case study.

Stake (1978) defined a case study as the “study of the particularly and complexity of a single case, aiming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi).

Qualitative Methods of Data Collection

To begin to understand whether reflective inquiry by novice teachers could be a viable way to enhance their beliefs, a multiple case study research method could be an effective way to improve novice teachers’ training.

Flyvbjerg (2006) defines case study as

the detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena, a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but it may be useful in the preliminary stages of an investigation since it provides hypotheses, which may be tested systematically with a larger number of cases (p. 2)
Table 2

Data Collection and Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process of Interpretation</th>
<th>Process of Data Analysis</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Method of Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key themes identified.</td>
<td>Identify key themes</td>
<td>Researcher constructed questions</td>
<td>Pre Semi-Structured interviews</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Novice teachers’ interactions/rapport with their students observed and noted through researcher notes.</td>
<td>Researcher notes about teacher decision-making practices observed during classroom observation.</td>
<td>Video/researcher reflective notes</td>
<td>Classroom Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key themes identified.</td>
<td>Shulman’s (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning, which is based on Shulman’s (1986) theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), and additionally, social pedagogy (Petrie &amp; Moss, 2002) which will be used as a context for novice teachers’ classroom observations.</td>
<td>Three reflective writing prompts where novice teachers respond to in 250 words</td>
<td>Reflective Journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key themes identified.</td>
<td>Identify key themes</td>
<td>Researcher constructed questions</td>
<td>Post Semi-Structured Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Selection

Novice teachers from a rural school in the Southeast region of the United States who are within their first three years of certificated teaching were recruited for this study. The novice teachers were selected based on educator certification level, location of teaching placement in an area identified as having a population in high poverty in a rural setting (Title I), and current placement in a certificated teacher setting. The race and gender of the selected teachers were randomly selected to conduct this study. The categories allowed for a broader perspective of teachers’ beliefs regarding reflective inquiry of students living in poverty.

Semi-Structured Interviews

At the commencement of the research study, novice teachers were telephoned and interviewed separately through semi-structured interviews by the researcher. The researcher documented the interviews through field notes. In the semi-structured interviews, novice teachers were asked about their beliefs regarding their educational philosophy regarding students who live in poverty, reflective inquiry, in addition to questions about their education, gender, age, any previous teaching placements, and their own race/ethnicity. This researcher asked for novice teachers’ age, gender, and the college they attended as a means of making a distinction between the different case studies. Novice teachers were given an alias for his or her own case study. No parts of any novice teachers’ actual names were utilized, and novice teachers were not told which of the aliases belonged to their study information.
Opened-ended questions were asked regarding novice teachers’ own analysis of their instructional practices. The initial pre-semi-structured interview questions were:

1. Think about your overall teaching experience. Did you feel that you had a strong grasp of pedagogy when you initially began to teach? What are some new theories about teaching that you have discovered since you have been teaching in the classroom?

2. Based on any of your teaching experiences, are there instructional problems that you anticipate when you are planning lessons for you students?

3. While teaching, have you ever had to change course, or “think on your feet”?

4. As you were teaching, has it been your experience for an instructional lesson to run off course? How were you able to recognize when your lesson was not as effective as you would have liked? What did you do to “save” your lesson?

5. Based on any of your teaching experiences, do you feel that you have the ability to transform your student’s perspective about their educational process?

The researcher, during the pre-semi-structured interview, asked questions for more clarification pertaining to each participant’s responses. The researcher recorded the participant’s responses into a Microsoft Word document that was separate per participant.

The post semi-structured interview questions were:

1. Describe your reflective practices as a teacher. What teaching/instructional reflections do you have before teaching, during teaching, and after teaching a lesson?
2. If you were to relay reflective practice advice to a first-year teacher, what would that advice be?

3. Do you feel that your teaching lead to a transformation of your students’ perspective about their educational process? How were you able to recognize this transformation?

As participants answered the questions, the researcher recorded their responses onto a Microsoft Word document. The researcher asked questions for clarification to ensure that the researcher completely understood each participant’s responses.

Reflective Journal Writings

By allowing the participants to freely document their own thoughts and feelings regarding their experiences, this researcher gathered a deeper understanding of each participant’s perspectives. Boud (2001) found that journaling could enhance reflective practice in that it can be used as a “device for working with events and experiences in order to extract meaning from them” (p.9). Teachers were asked to write three reflective journal writings during the duration of this research study that consisted of a minimum of 250 words each. This researcher provided the reflective writing prompts for the study’s participants. Each participant received the same three prompts. The reflective writing prompts were:

1. Reflect on the time before you began to teach in the classroom (this may or may not have been this current school year). What were your initial feelings about teaching in a Title I school? Were you prepared pedagogically?
What challenges did you anticipate? Does teaching in a Title I school have its advantages and disadvantages that affect your teaching practices?

2. How often do you reflect on your instructional decisions? Is there anything you would change about your instructional decision-making?

Are there any theories on reflective practice that have influenced the way you think about your instructional decision-making?

3. In his seminal work, *The Other America*, author Michael Harrington states, that “there is…a language of the poor, a psychology of the poor, a worldview of the poor. To be impoverished is to be an internal alien, to grow up in a culture that is radically different from the one that dominates the society.” What do you believe that Harrington means by this statement? Do you feel that you understand this “language of the poor”? Do you feel that you have to change any of your instructional strategies to acknowledge this language?

After participants completed their reflective writing prompts, participants emailed the writings to the researcher for analysis.

Classroom observations

The researcher observed the classrooms of the participants to observe the rapport between the participants and their students. No identifying information regarding participants’ students was utilized, since the primary focus of this study was on the novice teachers. Additionally, participants’ students were not interviewed in this case study. Field notes were taken by this researcher regarding the level of interactions the
novice teachers have toward their students. Shulman’s (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning, which is based on Shulman’s (1986) theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), and additionally, social pedagogy (Petrie & Moss, 2002) were used as a context for novice teachers’ classroom observations and reflective journal writings, for this researcher to make an analysis of novice teachers’ reflective practices as it relates to their instructional decision-making practices. After the researcher conducted participants’ classroom observations, a post structured interview was conducted where the researcher typed up each participants’ responses.

Transcribing

Vignettes of the study’s participants’ individual cases as it relates to their classroom observations were utilized to make novice teachers’ reflective practices transparent (Campbell, 1996). The researcher transcribed all interview data that were to analyze said data for recurring themes of poverty, instructional practices, culture of poverty, reflection, and reflective practice through the use word processing software. As each participant was interviewed, the researcher typed participants’ responses. After each participant's’ response to any question, the researcher read each of their responses back to them to make sure that there was no deletions or additions to their comments.

No audio recordings were made throughout the course of the study because the researcher felt that a more natural rapport could be built with the study’s participants by doing so. Howell’s (1972) participant observation phases—establishing rapport, in the field, recording observations and data; and analyzing data—were followed during this
qualitative study as it relates to the collection of data. Rapport was established by this researcher through the initial contact with each participant. Individually, this researcher asked questions about non-academic areas, such as favorite likes and dislikes about various real-world subjects, so that each participant would begin to feel more comfortable answering the study’s semi-structured interview questions.

The participants were interview separately. Since the researcher was also an educator, the participants were more accepting of the researcher’s conversation about various topics unrelated to the study. Once the researcher was in the field, it was not difficult to fit into the educational environment, because as previously stated, the researcher is quite familiar with the inner workings of the school environment. As a colleague, the researcher could fit into the participant's school environment, building a rapport with the study’s participants was a smoother process. Each participant voluntarily answered pre-and post-study questions, three- 250-word journal writings, and participated in a classroom observation.

Data Analysis

After transcribing the pre-and post-interviews and classroom observations, along with reflective journal writings, the researcher looked for any initial a priori themes among the data collected: poverty, thoughts, feelings, instructional practices, culture of poverty, reflection, and reflective practice. After establishing the main themes from the data collected, the researcher looked for a commonality among novice teachers’ perceptions of how reflective inquiry can bridge the gap between theory and practice.
using natural coding (Dey, 1993). For the purposes of this qualitative research study, a focus of the language of the participants was vital because of the two-way communication channel with their students.

Summary

In summary, this chapter outlines the methodology for this case study. Since the researcher studied the impact of reflective inquiry on novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices, Shulman’s (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning, which is based on Shulman’s (1986) theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), and social pedagogy (Petrie & Moss, 2002) were also discussed as lenses for novice teachers’ classroom instructional practices and reflections on their own instructional decision-making. The rationale for a qualitative methodology, along with the rationale for a case study for this research was discussed in this chapter. The population was identified as the rural novice teachers in a Title I school district in the Southeastern region of the United States. The method of collecting a sample from this population was discussed. Purposeful sampling was used to select four novice teacher cases. The plan for data collection was outlined, along with the method of transcription for all data collected. Shulman’s (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning, and social pedagogy (Petrie & Moss, 2002) was utilized as a context for novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

This study examined the influence of reflective inquiry practice had on novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices. In addition, this study sought to determine whether reflective practice influences novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices, and to discover novice teachers’ underlying beliefs about teaching children who live in poverty, and whether these underlying beliefs helped novice teachers develop a framework for social pedagogy.

A qualitative research method was used to conduct the study. Data were collected, and then organized to answer three research questions. Pre-and post-semi-structured interviews, reflective writings, and researcher notes regarding classroom observations produced triangulated qualitative data.

The semi-structured pre-interview questions (Appendix B) were used to gather qualitative data; the reflective journal writings prompts (Appendix C) were used to collect qualitative data, and semi-structured post-interview questions (Appendix D) were used to gather qualitative data. Researcher notes were made during classroom observations to collect qualitative data.

The following research questions were used to guide the study: (1) How does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices? (2) What are novice teachers’ underlying beliefs about teaching children who live in poverty,
and (3) Does reflective practice and novice teachers’ underlying beliefs inform a framework for social pedagogy? The chapter includes literature regarding reflective practice, thick descriptions of participants’ responses to their pre-semi-structured interview questions, reflective writings, researcher notes regarding classroom observations, and post-semi-structured interview responses. The chapter ends with a chapter summary.

**Literature Claims About Reflective Practice**

A review of the literature revealed a need to study an intervention that would support the development of novice teachers’ reflective practices to a sociopedagogical end. Giroux (1985/2010) asserts that as schools are guardians of a critical democracy where teachers should educate students to become selfless, attentive students in service to their own society. Although teacher preparation programs train teachers on pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), they tend to lean more toward “how to” (Giroux, 1985/2010), and not enough of best practices for students. Giroux (1985/2010) asserts that for teachers become transformative intellectuals, they must begin to elucidate issues concerning power and control because combined, both can hinder the academic success of students. To begin to support teachers in finding a sociopedagogical framework in which to instruct their students and illuminate issues that hinder student success in the classroom, professional development has been mentioned in the research literature (Banks et al., 2001) as a key component for school policy makers as a remedy. In addition, Toma (2007) notes the fact that the research literature connecting reflective practice and novice teachers in scarce.
In addition, research literature that also includes researching novice teachers in a rural setting is scant. Moreover, Dewey (1933) posits that reflection should be an objective for education.

Data Collected

Based on the research literature regarding the nexus of reflective practice and poverty, the pre/post semi-structured interview questions, classroom observations, and reflective journal writings were developed and utilized. Additionally, as part of the pre-semi-structured interview, novice teachers were initially asked about their overall educational philosophy regarding students who live in poverty.

The population for the study was novice teachers who were in their initial three years of a teaching placement, where each participant did not have any prior teaching placements. Brooklyn and London are in their second year of teaching, whereas Phoenix and Sydney are in their first year of teaching. The novice teachers all taught in a rural, Title I school in the Southeastern region of the United States. The following table gives descriptors for each novice teacher who participated in the research study:
### Table 3

**Participant Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Teacher Preparation Program</th>
<th>Self-Identified Socioeconomic Class during Childhood</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree in Sociology; MAT for initial certification</td>
<td>Poor; single parent upbringing</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree in Biology/ MAT for initial certification</td>
<td>Lower Middle class; single parent upbringing</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Phoenix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree in Biology/ MAT for initial certification</td>
<td>Lower class, self-identified as poor; single parent upbringing</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree in Biology/stat e alternative teacher preparation program for initial certification</td>
<td>Middle Class upbringing</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brooklyn, age 30, is in her second year of teaching. She identifies her upbringing as poor, where she was raised by her mother. She attended college where she received her Bachelor’s degree in Sociology, and since she was not initially certified to teach, she received her Masters of Arts in Teaching to become certified to teach.

Phoenix, age 24, is in her second year of teaching. She identifies her upbringing as lower middle class, where she was raised by her mother. She attended college and received her Bachelor’s degree in Biology, and received her initial certification to teacher through a Master of Arts in Teaching degree.

London, age 29, is in her second year of teaching. She identifies her upbringing as lower-class and poor; she was raised solely by her mother. She attended college and received a Bachelor’s degree in Biology, and received an initial certification to teach through a Master of Arts in Teaching degree.

Sydney, age 24, is in her first year of teaching. She identifies her upbringing as middle class, with both of her parents living in the home. Sydney received a Bachelor’s degree in Biology, and she also received her initial certification through a state alternate teaching program.

Theme One: Cycle of Poverty

The theme of cycle of poverty was clear amongst all the participants’ pre-semi-structured interview question regarding a participant’s educational philosophy of students who live in poverty educational philosophy responses.

Brooklyn: “Education is the key to success. Without education, the cycle of poverty will continue. When we think of education and when we think of educating others,
as a society, we mostly think of formal education: sitting in a classroom in a school building or on a university/college campus advancing our education with hopes of earning a degree or some type of certification to obtain a great job or successful career. We do this with hopes that we will have financial stability and live a life that is not poverty stricken. To ignore that poverty is a problem…is not enough because the cycle continues. It has to be broken by education and with…education success can be achieved.”

Phoenix: “Children have four basic needs: shelter, safety, love, and food. I think that kids in poverty who do not have one, or more than one, or several of these needs at home. This is my first concern. Kids in poverty don’t get that at home. I think that the parent works job after job to keep them afloat.”

London: “I generally spend a little time with those students; mentoring them too. Just try to have fun with them. I identify with them a little bit more. We have some pretty poverty-stricken kids at this school.”

Sydney: “…even though they’re in poverty they can get the same information. They still have the opportunity to get it. They just have to take different routes.”

Theme Two: Novice Teachers’ Grasp of Pedagogy

Research literature indicates that novice teachers garner a foundation of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987) during their initial traditional teacher training. Participants were initially asked during the pre-semi-structured interview about their overall teaching experience, and whether he or she felt a strong grasp of pedagogy when he or she initially began their first year of teaching.
Novice teachers should have a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge to develop critical pedagogy as a continuance of their pedagogical content knowledge, which in turn could lead to novice teachers’ sociopedagogical approach to education. Participants had the following responses regarding their pedagogical content knowledge:

Brooklyn: “I feel like I have a strong grasp of pedagogy, but it’s difficult to implement. I feel like the master’s program just prepared me, but not for teaching like it should.”

Phoenix: “I do feel like I had a pretty strong grasp of pedagogy and content knowledge. Very much so, the content knowledge. First, I learned that you don’t have to be so rigid. At the beginning of the year, I was like, you don’t have to do this…now, I’m like it’s okay if we don’t finish. I’ve become more relaxed. [Concerning my teacher preparation program], they taught the general, be a better professional—don’t let a kid be a friend. An old-school teacher would probably feel they [the students] are way too comfortable around me. It’s easier for them to relate to me because I’m younger.”

London: “I had a really good grasp of it [pedagogy]; I’ve learned more as I’ve gone along. I love being able to answer my students’ questions. As I’m going over stuff with them, I remember stuff from before. I have a good background in my content like how to teach it. I just know that everything doesn’t go as planned. Things go differently for different children.”

Sydney: “I did not feel prepared to teach at all. It was not my field. Biology was my thing. Having to break down things for them was very hard for me.”
It’s a lot easier now because I can do different things, such as break things down. I can use these different tools or methods to break things down for my students to understand: foldables, interactive notebooks, Nearpods, and technology to drive students to engage more.”

Theme Three: Teachers Reflect to Increase Students’ Understanding

Schön (1983) posits that to be a reflective practitioner, teachers should reflect before the actual action of teaching. Novice teachers were then asked to reflect on their instructional problems that they anticipate when they are planning lessons for their students.

Brooklyn: “With me teaching lower level students, I do think about what if they don’t understand it? Is it too much for them to grasp this standard? How can I teach it to them in a different way without it being too difficult for them to think?”

Phoenix: “Just really time. I plan thinking about time. I usually try to leave a little leeway for the next day. They ask a lot of questions. I really give them time to ask questions.”

London: “It’s always about is this simple enough for them understand. Usually I type it out the way it would be condensed. So maybe my student is very literal. If I create it myself, I read through it a few times to see if it’s okay for everyone. I don’t like to confuse them. Not having right resources that go with instruction. There’s a direct link between students who live in poverty and how they learn in class. In this area, poverty limits what they are exposed to. I was a poor white kid myself.”
Single parent… I kinda identify with them more because of my experience.”

Sydney: “It will be more so of actually of trying to get the information to the students who haven’t heard about it. Students with disabilities who aren’t able to grasp information. What can I do to help all students?

I may not be able to get it the same way. It makes me go deeper to make everything right.”

Relating to the research literature on Schön (1983), teachers who must think during teaching or reflection-in-action, per Schön (1983), participants were then asked if, during their teaching, did they have to change course or “think on their feet”. Participants stated:

Brooklyn: “Yes, I have. The students didn’t understand the lesson. It was in the [content area] class, and we were [content area subject matter]. What I did was pulled [students] out, we got some lower level books, and YouTube— they got a better understanding of this.”

Phoenix: “Oh yeah. One day we were learning, [content area subject matter] or something like that. It was a lecture day for me. That day I was asking a question— that they were looking at me with blank stares.

I started thinking, what are they thinking? I told the students to literally ‘stand up and shake everything out’. Then I just went to my computer and printed out a worksheet about [content area subject matter]. I put them into partners. I felt like that day, it wasn’t going to work out. If it had been the beginning of the year, I would’ve felt like, what am I gonna do? I wanted to do something instead of have them just listen to me.”
London: “Yes, I have. Every week.”

Sydney: “Absolutely, that’s an everyday thing. I felt nervous. I can’t let them see me sweat. We were working on a task project—one class got it. I had to break it down for one class, rearrange things. One class that got it—normally once I talk about it the next day, all notes are put up. I ask them to explain the information in detail. Once I see the class can explain it in detail, they have to break it down to where a two-year old can understand. Some of them can actually explain. Sometimes, I have to give them more examples. So, we need to go back and go back to where we need to be. I tell them to talk among themselves before they explain it to me. They are allowed to hear it from a classmate before they hear it from me. A lot of times, their focus is everywhere.”

The research literature indicates that for teachers to become transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1985/2010), they should initially have an awareness of their students’ perspective. The third pre-semi-structured interview question queried participants whether they felt that they had the ability to transform their students’ educational process. Participants stated:

Brooklyn: “Yes, I do. At times, I feel like if I can’t meet them in the classroom. I have to meet them outside. I have one male student, and he’s just hung about dropping out of school. I try to share with him the things I went through. I tell him, ‘If you want to sit in class and not do anything, I don’t want you to have to struggle like I did. I just don’t want you to have to go through that.’ I try to be encouraging, and try to make them take responsibility for their education.
I have a young lady, mentoring, it’s her background, that holds her back. Her mom is 32 with five kids. I want her to see what it’s like not being around that all the time. I do feel like I can make them take responsibility for their education.”

Phoenix: “I do. I think I’m learning ever more as a coach. We are so influential. Just myself. I think back to middle school. I remember teachers that were important to me. I think that we can definitely change their minds about going to college. You can make them so interested in your subject, that you can change their mind. Does it happen with every student? Not all, at least it’s that one.”

London: “At this point, I honestly feel that I have influenced the students, as far as giving them confidence. I had a student to tell me that he wanted to be a science teacher. I hope. As long as you help one person. You can’t save them all.”

As evidenced by the aforementioned responses, novice teachers have a general understanding of the students that he or she teaches. All of the responses relay that novice teachers felt that they could at least change one student’s perception about his or her educational process. Since novice teachers’ teaching philosophy toward students who live in poverty should mirror critical theory, they will need to continuously “rethink and radically reconstruct the meaning of human emancipation” (Giroux, 1985/2010, p. 7) to help not only one student transform his or her educational process, but all students that they teach. The researcher observed all classrooms of the novice teachers, making observation notes. The following is a description of each novice teacher’s classroom that will be discussed within the context of Shulman’s (1987) Model of Pedagogical
Reasoning and Social Pedagogy (Petrie & Moss, 2002). The researcher observed Brooklyn’s classroom. The room was setup in several rows that faced the front of the classroom. I noticed that the classroom was indeed colorful, and appealing to the eye. Although I was informed prior to the classroom observation that several of the students in the classroom had Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), I was not able to identify which students had an IEP. What I could observe was that the classroom material had been prepared that was tailored to specific instructional materials for the group of students that had an IEP. Brooklyn questioned students on the content material after the initial quiz where she, as the teacher, could determine student’s understanding of student knowledge of the content material being discussed. Along with her co-teacher, she continuously checked to insure students understood the material. The rapport between Brooklyn and her students was evident, where students asked questions in a respectful tone of voice, and both teachers responded in the same quiet tone. I even noticed that one student raised his hand for help, and patiently waited several minutes as Brooklyn and her co-teacher were helping other students. As will be later discussed in this chapter, Brooklyn reflected on her classroom practice (Shulman, 1987), and analyzed her own lessons, and by doing so, she expressed that more teaching/instructional experience was gained from teaching. Again, as will be explained through the reflective writings that Brooklyn completed, it is obvious that this pedagogue constantly reflects on her work (Petrie & Moss, 2002).

I observed Phoenix’s classroom. The classroom is a somewhat larger than the average classroom at the research site since Phoenix teaches science, and her classroom
has several lab stations set up around her classroom. The larger classroom setting allowed for the students to be paired with their peers where it appeared to look more comfortable, given the larger space. Her students were working on a content area quiz. As students worked, Brooklyn walked around to check for comprehension of material. I could determine that she was in the process of adapting content area information to the needs of diverse student learners. Students were in pairs on a research project of their own choosing, as long as it related to the content area. By allowing the students to work on their own chosen research project, Phoenix tailored instructional materials for her group of students. As students worked in pairs, she went about the room to ask students questions about their various chosen topics, and to check to make sure paired students understood the research project. There were three female students working near the area where I was sitting. I noticed that the students were initially off-task where the conversation was about another subject. Phoenix approached the students, and asked if they needed any help. One of the students stated that she was “looking up somethin’” on the computer, and the other two students laughed quietly. It was evident that Phoenix noticed that they were initially off-task, which was more than likely the reason she came over to check on the students. After one to two minutes of conversation, and once Phoenix left to answer questions for another student on the other side of the classroom, I noticed that the students got right back on task without any argument from either the students or teacher. Phoenix also asked various questions about the content of the students’ research projects, to check for student understanding. As will be discussed later, Phoenix does reflect often on her lessons (Petrie & Moss, 2002).
Phoenix expressed that as students comprehended the instructional material (the research project), she could determine what needs students next year would need to complete the research project.

I was able to observe London in the computer lab with students as they worked on their research projects. The setup for the computer lab is in a U-shape, where London was able to walk around the lab to aid students as needed. She adapted the content material for a diverse group of students by allowing the students to use technology (computers) to complete the assignment. London also informed me that there is also usually another certified teacher in the room whenever she teaches this group of students, so the researcher was able to determine by this statement from the teacher that this is the group that included students with IEPs. On the day of my observation, the other teacher in the classroom was not present, according to London. I did note that London was still able to tailor the instructional materials to the group of students with IEPs, through questioning to ensure that students individually understood the assignment. London’s interactions with her students felt natural and easygoing. One of the male students stood up and walked over to London in what appeared to me to be an attention seeking gesture. Before reaching London, he put his foot up in a chair, in a motion to tie his shoes. London asked the student if he needed help, and he responded with a simple, “yeah” and walked back to his station and sat down. London then walked over to his computer station to help. Since I noticed that no other student got out of his or her seat to seek attention in this manner, I asked London about the student. London informed me that the student is a great student and pleasant to teach. Although the students were working on
computers, the noise level in the classroom was at a comfortable tone. It was obvious to me that there is a level of respect for the resources (computers) in the classroom, which helped me to identify one of London’s classroom expectations as being followed by the students. Throughout my observation during the class period, she did not have to mention even one time that the students were off-task while being on the wrong websites, which can be quite common for students of this age group (teenaged). As will be mentioned later, London reflects on her lessons continuously (Petrie & Moss, 2002), and is able to garner new understandings of her teaching, her students’ understanding of the instructional material (research project assignment). London reflects in a reflective writing (discussed later in this chapter) that she gains experience through teaching (Shulman, 1987).

I observed Sydney during a makeup work session for the students. From what I could observe and note was that each student had to conference with Sydney regarding completion of a list of assignments for the course. As she conferenced with each student to check for comprehension of the individual assignments due, she would allow the students to complete a missing assignment. I noticed the most interaction between Sydney and her students than in any other classroom because she conferenced with all her students one by one. As each student approached Sydney, there was a brief conversation about any assignments that had been overlooked by the student. The interaction was interesting in particular with one student, who obviously had already conferenced with Sydney right before I walked into the classroom to conduct a classroom observation. This male student was working with another female student to get his missing assignment
completed. Although the students were engaged in a lively conversation about random teenaged topics, none inappropriate, they were actively engaged in completing the missing work out of what I could determine was a real concern to complete makeup work for Sydney. As various students conferenced with Sydney, she would always call out “Chicago, you finished with ma work yet. Or is you over there talkin’?” The student would respond (several times) with “Yes ma’am, I’m finishin’ it rite ni”. It was evident to me that the student understood Sydney’s concerned manner that he turned in his work completed soon, or he would have to “suffer the consequences” of have a zero for this assignment. Sydney and “Chicago” were communicating through the use of code switching. As has been aforementioned, Sydney states that she reflects (Petrie & Moss, 2002) and analyses her lessons. This novice teacher, in her reflective writing (that will be discussed later in the chapter), states that she has garnered new understanding of her own teaching since the beginning of the school year, and felt that her students understand the difficult content material more than they did at the commencement of the school year. Sydney also stated that she has gained experience from teaching. (Shulman, 1987).

Schön (1983) posits that teachers should reflect before, during and after instruction in order to improve their instruction. With Schön’s concept in mind, Brooklyn, Phoenix, London, and Sydney were asked to journal their reflecting practices. The following are excerpts from reflective writings from the novice regarding their own reflective practices:

Brooklyn: “I reflect on my instructional decisions daily. When it comes to my instructional decision-making, the only thing that I would change is the fact that I often ask co-teachers for permission to make a decision in the classroom. I know
that along with teaching comes trial and error, but I am so afraid of making a mistake in front of my students. There are theories on reflective practice that have influenced the way that I think about instructional decision-making. I use past experiences to help mold and guide my present experiences. An example would be a time when students were working on an assignment that incorporated [content area] standards. Last year the students had a difficult time doing [the assignment]. About 90% of the students wanted to summarize the [assignment]. This year when the assignment was given, I reflected back on how difficult it was for the student to understand how to do the [assignment]. [Eventually] the students were then given an alternate assignment …then write another [assignment] independently. They did a better job writing the [assignment] independently this year because we wrote one together as a whole class.”

Phoenix: “I try to reflect on my instructional decisions often. I feel that reflecting on your decisions is the only way you can grow as a teacher and better yourself. At the beginning of the year, I was very rigid in my instructional decision-making. I had a plan for each day and was insistent on completing every part of that plan before class was over. However, over time I began to realize that a lesson you intended to take one class period can sometimes take days, while other times, it could take 20 minutes. It took me a few months into my teaching practice to realize this and once I did, I became so much more flexible. What I would like to do is become even more flexible in the future and allow more time to use data from formative assessments to drive my instruction. Right now, I feel as though I don’t
take the time to really look at formative assessments and use them in a positive way to influence my instructional decisions. I will often use ticket-out-the-doors to close a lesson and then I will look at them and use them to decide where I pick up the next day, or if I need to review. However, I would like to take more time to separate them out and maybe put the students into groups and do remedial assignments, or whatever is necessary depending on the results of the formative assessment. I do not do this enough and that is something I would like to change in the future.”

London: “As a novice teacher, who is learning and trying to improve my practice every day, I would say that I reflect on my instructional decisions daily. When it comes to my instructional decisions, I try to think of things I could have done differently, as a teacher, and ways that I could have try to think of things I could have done differently, as a teacher, and ways that I could have presented my instruction differently to my students. When I think about things that I would change about my instructional decision-making, I think about the things I can do next year so that I can maximize the learning experience even more. I also find myself reflecting and changing my instructional decisions from class to class. What I mean by that is not every class. I learn as the day and the year progresses what works best for each class, and I decide to change my instruction accordingly so the learning experience is maximized the following day.”
Sydney: “Reflecting on my instructional decision is a daily task for me. With each day, a different need arises amongst the students that has to be addressed. It may be something as simple as if students are ready for a quiz or a test, or even if they have enough something understanding to move on to the next section of material. When it comes to my instructional decision-making, I would change some things simply because there is always room for improvement with everything you do. I can always obtain new knowledge and pass it onto my students which may result in better understanding and application for them.”

Theme Four: Transformation of Students’ Educational Perspective Through Classroom Practice

Concerning critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1985/2010) and sociopedagogy development (Petrie & Moss, 2002), Brooklyn, Phoenix, London, and Sydney were asked in the post-semi-structured interview whether she felt that her own teaching lead to a transformation of students’ perspective about their educational process.

All the novice teachers felt that she could transform at least one student through their classroom practice:

Brooklyn: “Yes, I do—not all of them—you know how they say if you reach one, they feel a sense of achievement and success. They start smiling, and say, oh, I know what’s going on. Not all of them, but some of them.”

Phoenix: “I do think that I have. I don’t think I have transformed everyone one of them only a few of them. Many have told me that they didn’t really think about college.”
But now, they’re like, I want to go and be a teacher, and I want to be a vet. (Novice teacher teaches science). I like to think I’ve made them think about their future.”

London: “I don’t know for sure. I hope it has. You feel like you make a difference but you just never know. I think at least one, and that has to make a difference. I don’t know. You can just tell when you make a difference. Their whole demeanor changes toward you. I can’t think of an *aha* moment. I just hope, I can think all I want. But you just never know with a kid. You can usually tell when you’re getting through. They’re more respectful. They want to help you. They want to volunteer in class. I do have one student that’s really grown in class. I remember that one day he was just nice and polite. I like to think I had something to do with that.”

**Summary of Findings**

In summary, the three research questions resulted in the following three findings:

1. Novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices are positively influenced by reflective practices when teachers are more aware of their student’s needs through continuous reflection.

2. Teachers who understand the “language of the poor” tend to make instructional decisions that reflect their own socioeconomic backgrounds.

3. Novice teachers’ underlying education philosophical beliefs help build a foundation for critical pedagogy which in turn, supports a foundation for social pedagogy.
The aforementioned analysis of these findings indicate that educators should find ways for novice teachers to develop reflective dialogue through professional development toward improving novice teachers’ development of instructional decision-making practices that support students who live in a culture of poverty.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter five is presented in five different sections. Section one is an overview of the study that includes information from chapters one through four, such as the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, and rationale for the study. Section two of this chapter summarizes the three major findings regarding the research questions. The third section includes a discussion of the findings of the study, along with implications and recommendations for the field of novice teacher education for each finding. Section four of this chapter gives recommendations for future research, along with the researcher’s personal reflections in section five.

Section One: Overview of the Study

Horace Mann (1848) considered “education…the great equalizer of the conditions of men—the balance—the wheel of the social machinery” (1848, para. 9). Therefore, since American education is generally considered to be the gatekeeper of American democracy (Dewey, 1933), it is critical that teachers become transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1985/2010). The vision of the American Dream can be fully realized by all students once teachers are self-aware of their own sociopedagogical abilities to transform their students’ educational processes. This study examined the influence that reflective practice had on novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices for students who live in a culture of poverty.
Understanding the need for professional development of reflective practice is essential for educators. In response to the literature review, three research questions were developed for the purposes of this qualitative case study: (1) How does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices; (2) What are novice teachers underlying beliefs about teaching children who live in poverty; and (3) How do these beliefs help develop a framework for social pedagogy?

At the commencement of the research study, the researcher felt that novice teachers did not fully reflect on their instructional practices regarding students who live in poverty, and attended Title I schools. Because of these beliefs, the researcher intended to discover if novice teachers indeed understood reflective dialogue, and demonstrated an understanding of critical pedagogy.

In chapter one, the background of the study was discussed, where the introduction of poverty, the rationale for the study, the rationale for using qualitative research methods, statement of the problem, and the research questions were introduced. Key terms were also identified in chapter one. Because of this case study, educators and policy makers may be able to recognize the significance of reflective inquiry as a solution for improving the instructional practices of novice teachers who teaching students at Title I schools.

Chapter two reviewed the literature in support of this qualitative study. This case study is a response to Toma’s (2007) position that teacher induction research uncovers issues that novice teachers face, and suggests ways that novice teacher development can be improved.
Toma (2007) also found that there is scarce literature regarding the nexus of novice teachers and their reflective dialogue development regarding students who live in poverty. The review of research literature reflected a need to study a solution to support a sociopedagogical framework for beginning teachers as they enter their classrooms filled with a diverse population of students who live in a culture of poverty. Discovering a way to incorporate collaborative reflective dialogue into professional development for novice teachers would be important in helping to establish a foundation for social pedagogy for novice teachers.

Chapter three discussed the methodology of the study. This study was conducted using a case study research approach (Stake, 1978) to collect qualitative data that demonstrated how reflective dialogue is utilized by novice teachers. Qualitative data were triangulated using pre-and post-semi-structured interviews with the researcher, classroom observations with the researcher, and most importantly, reflective writings completed by participants.

Chapter four presented the data collected and research findings. The chapter included thick description of the pre-and post-semi-structured interview responses made by participants, reflective writing responses made by participants, and excerpts from the researcher’s notes on the participant’s classroom observations. Chapter five contains a summary of the case study, discussion of research findings, recommendations for future studies, and final reflections.
Section Two: Findings of the Study

Three major findings, revealed through data analysis, were: (1) Novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices are positively influenced by reflective practices when teachers are more aware of their student’s needs through continuous reflection; (2) Teachers who understand the “language of the poor” tend to make instructional decisions that reflect their own socioeconomic backgrounds; and (3) Novice teachers’ underlying education philosophical beliefs help build a foundation for critical pedagogy which in turn, supports a foundation for social pedagogy.

The findings were revealed through the following themes: (1) cycle of poverty, (2) novice teachers’ grasp of pedagogy, (3) teachers reflect to increase students’ understanding, and (4) transformation of students’ experience through classroom practice.

Summary of Themes

Participants in this case study reflected on their instructional practices, their beliefs regarding students who live in poverty, and their own development of critical pedagogy. As a result, themes emerged in areas such as the cycle of poverty, novice teachers’ grasp of pedagogy, teachers reflect to increase students’ understanding, and transformation of students’ experience through classroom practice.

Cycle of Poverty

Novice teachers in this case study revealed through their educational philosophy statements their beliefs about the cycle of poverty and how education could be the key to success for stopping this poverty cycle for their students. Brooklyn wrote in her pre-interview regarding her educational philosophy that “without education the cycle of
poverty will continue.” In addition, Brooklyn noted that in order to break the cycle of poverty, one must

“teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime...the same concept applies to poverty and education. To ignore that is a problem and to just help out by just giving benefits is not enough because the cycle continues. It has to be broken by education and with education success can be achieved.”

Phoenix asserted that teachers are “influential” when it comes to their ability to transform their students’ perspective about their educational process, which in turn, could change their position in the cycle of poverty.

Phoenix stated:

“We are so influential. Just myself...You can make them so interested in your subject, that you change their mind. Does it happen with every student? But at least that’s one.”

One should note here that both Brooklyn and Phoenix initially considered themselves as products of child poverty, and since each teacher taught in a Title I school, they felt that they were able to relate more to their students who live in poverty. Brooklyn stated that she “took charge of her education” and was a “straight A student” although her single mother who “worked two jobs”. Brooklyn felt that she was successful in school because she knew what her mother “expected” and therefore, she “worked hard to get the grades that [she] did”. Although Brooklyn is currently a single mother herself, with one male child, she stated that feels successful at breaking her own cycle of poverty, and she tells her students about her experiences in order to be “encouraging” for them. At times,
Brooklyn stated that she felt that she “can’t meet them in the classroom...I have to meet them outside.” This novice teacher gave an example where she told this researcher that she had a male student who informed her that he wants to drop out of school. However, Brooklyn stated that she constantly tries to motivate him to stay in school so that he would not continue his family's’ cycle of poverty.

London stated that she is able to see the perspective of her students who live in poverty because she “identifies with them more”. To further explain how although she is a “poor white kid,’’ she identified with the majority black demographic of her Title I school, London stated:

“There’s a direct link between students who live in poverty and how they learn in class. In this area, poverty limits what they are exposed to. In this area, more of the poverty-stricken people are black. I was a poor white kid myself.’’

Overall, both Brooklyn and Phoenix saw education as a means to end the cycle of poverty for their students, whereas London felt that since she could identify with her students’ socioeconomic backgrounds, she could better help them to understand how education was important to end the cycle of poverty, because of her poverty “experience” where she lived with a “lower-income single parent, with my dad--saw mom every other weekend”. Sydney held a different perspective regarding the cycle of poverty because she self-identified as having a “middle-class” background, which she felt was not commonplace for the majority of her students’ socioeconomic status. Sydney stated that in order for her students to begin to end the cycle of poverty in their own families, students should believe that “even though they are in poverty, they can get the same
information...opportunity to get it. But they go through different steps. They just have to take different routes.” Further, Sydney states that “some days I feel I can help that one student that’s down and out...they’re working better if I’m talking to them in a calm and nice way.” It is evident that the participants in this study attempt to demonstrate compassionate values as they continue to rationally view and empathize with their students’ lower socioeconomic status. This rational and empathetic perspective is the emancipatory goal (Stephens, 2013) of critical pedagogy. Further, as novice teachers develop more of a critical pedagogical approach to their instructional decision-making practices, they will build a stronger foundation for social pedagogy.

Novice Teachers’ Grasp of Pedagogy

In order for novice teachers to develop reflective inquiry practices as a means of making a connection between addressing issues of poverty’s influence in the classroom and building a stronger foundation for critical pedagogy, they will need to have a strong initial grasp of pedagogy. In addition, by challenging the hegemony within education, novice teachers begin a transformation to more equalized education for their students who attend public schools. Kincheloe, McLaren, and Steinberg (2011) found that “critical teachers help students frame these problems into larger social, cultural, and political contexts to solve them” (p. 161). By doing so, novice teachers can support their students to transform their educational process. London felt that she had a “really good grasp” at pedagogy, and she’s been able to think about how to teach her content differently for her students. She stated that “things go differently for different children. I just know that everything doesn’t go as planned.” Sydney, who was initially certified to
teach in a state alternative teacher certification preparation program, felt she initially “did not feel prepared to teach at all” at the beginning of the school year.

However, Sydney noted that she was getting better because of the pedagogy instruction included with her teacher preparation program: “It’s a lot easier now that I am in the program. I can do different things to break things down...for my students to understand...it makes me go deeper to make everything right [for my students].”

Brooklyn felt that upon the beginning of her teaching career, she had a “strong grasp of pedagogy but it’s difficult to implement” because she teaches collaboratively with a veteran content area teacher on a daily basis, and this veteran teacher “doesn’t like co-teaching with me”; therefore, she stated that implementing any pedagogy in this particular classroom was more of a “hassle”. Phoenix believed that she had a “strong grasp of pedagogy and content knowledge,” where she learned in her first year of teaching that she “doesn’t have to be so rigid” and she has “become more relaxed” with regard to her pedagogy in the classroom, and because of this, she is able to be more successful in teaching her Title I students.

Teachers Reflect to Increase Students’ Understanding

Dewey (1910) maintained that reflective thinking is the process of constantly reviewing ideas; therefore, as novice teachers plan and re-plan their lessons from day to day, month to month, and year to year, they are engaging in reflective practice. Initially there will be a “state of doubt and hesitation” (Dewey, 1910, p. 12), as they plan; however, as the school year goes along, and as they become more comfortable with their teaching methods, then they will be able to “search, hunt [instructional materials] that
will resolve the doubt” of their instructional decision-making. Novice teachers in this study demonstrated an acquired understanding of the concepts within Shulman’s (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning: content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge (i.e., classroom management, organization of the classroom), curriculum knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. An awareness of learners and their characteristics and knowledge of educational contexts (i.e., communities and cultures) is evident as novice teachers in this case student practiced reflective thinking in relation to their instructional decision-making. In addition, Schön’s (1983) three principles of reflective practice—knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, and action-present—are evident throughout the course of this research case study as participants develop their reflective practice.

In this case study, Brooklyn, London, Sydney, and Phoenix demonstrated their engagement in reflective practice regarding their students who live in poverty. Through their engagement of reflective practice, they were able to make instructional-based decisions that each felt would be effective in the learning process for their students. Moreover, as the teachers constantly reflect on their practice, they also constantly engage in the reflective thinking process. Brooklyn stated that several times while she was teaching, she had to change the course of her lesson:

The students didn’t understand the lesson...we were learning author’s perspective--why did the author write what they wrote? Instead of going through the slideshow, it was a little bit much for them. What I did was pull them out, we got some lower level books, and they told me the author, purpose...they got a better understanding of this because the lesson took more than one day...[the] other
teacher [in the classroom suggesting pulling out students to read books, [view a] 
Youtube link. [The] TOD [ticket out the door] made the lead teacher realize they needed extra help.”

London stated that “every week” she had to change her instructional plans to meet the needs of her students. In particular, one of her students was “into computers” who:

“doesn’t like to do work. Not interested. [I had a lesson plan where the students used] Book Creator. He wouldn’t do it. I let him do a website. He liked it. Sometimes he really stumps me. [I have to] differentiate with him...[he has] a behavior problem [and] he lives with [his] grandma. He’s really mean to the other students.”

As part of her reflective practice, Sydney felt she had to change course “everyday” to make her lessons more effective. Her example was an instance when one class understood the instructional material, but she had another class that did not. Sydney stated that she had to “rearrange things,” where she had to give more examples to one class so that the students could better understand her lesson. Phoenix stated that she was lecturing her classes about cells (she teaches science), and after she asked a question, she was “met with blank stares.”

Phoenix explained that she then thought to herself, “they’re not thinking.” After a moment of reflection, Phoenix decided on a different course of action: she put her students into pairs to learn the instructional material because [she] “wanted to do something instead of having them listen to me.” As participants continue to engage in the reflective thinking process, or the cycle of appreciation, action, and re-appreciation
(Schön, 1983), they are able to critically examine their own performance in order to improve student learning in their classrooms.

Transformation of Students’ Experience Through Classroom Practice

Giroux (1985/2010) asserted that teachers should work toward becoming transformative intellectuals. Moreover, a critical component of understanding and elevating the likelihood that novice teachers’ instructional strategies will be successful lies in their ability to communicate effectively with students. By working to increase the effectiveness of instructional strategies with a student demographic that lives in poverty, novice teachers also strengthen their critical pedagogy. As novice teachers strengthen their critical pedagogy through the use of reflective practice, they begin to transform the educational process for their students. In The Other America, Harrington (1962) stated there is a language of the poor. At the time of this case study, the school used as a research site was officially labeled as a Title I school (see definition). As such, one could infer from the evidence of this school’s federal Title I status that the majority of the student population lived in a state of poverty, as defined by federal statutes. The novice teachers of this study’s research site demonstrated a way to communicate with students through the use of informal language that participants described as familiar or common to their students. In pre-and post-interviews, participants discussed the language they utilized to communicate with their students. Heath (1983) asserted that children’s development of language is socioeconomic, not racial; therefore, as novice teachers, or learning researchers (Heath, 1983) continued to embed instruction into their students’
lives, their students’ educational experience was transformed through their teachers’ constant focus on language. Phoenix described the language she used to communicate with her students in her Title I classroom:

“Now I know better ways, to make it even better. Relating to them. Not saying, ‘excuse me, ma’am stop talking.’ Now I say, ‘hey, girl, stop talking’. I just let them see my personality. I talk to them like they’re my friend. I know where to draw the line, if they start to get too comfortable. I feel like that has been better for me.

They [teacher preparation program] taught the general [pedagogy], be better professional--don’t let a kid be a friend. Old school teacher probably feels they are way too comfortable with me. It’s easier for them to relate to me because I’m younger.”

Further, Phoenix gave a classroom scenario which illustrates her use of the “language of the poor”:

“Yesterday we had a word search during [morning tutoring time]. We got a new girl, and she was asleep. I just let it go the first day she woke up during class. Today, I passed their papers back. I told her, ‘hey, girl, stay awake this time’”.

Since Phoenix was able communicate with her new student in a way that the student could understand what her classroom expectations were, Phoenix felt she was more successful the second time in having the student to complete her classwork, since she utilized language that was more informal (“hey, girl”) and direct (i.e., “stay awake”).
As teachers and students code switch through this two-way channel in the classroom between students’ language in their communities and the language of their classroom, a re-constructed awareness of power and knowledge (Giroux, 1985/2010) becomes more evident within both perspectives.

Section Three: Discussion of Findings and Suggestions for Future Research

In this section, a discussion of each finding is included, along with any theoretical and real-world implications and recommendations for future study.

Finding 1. Novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices are positively influenced by reflective practices when teachers are more aware of their student’s needs through continuous reflection.

Theoretical implications. As novice teachers enter their classrooms to teach, armed with only content area knowledge and limited pedagogical content knowledge, they will need to be able to develop a stronger awareness of the students they teach, explicitly for teachers that instruct students who live in poverty. Beginning teachers who are unfamiliar with the language of the poor (Harrington, 1962) will need learn how to communicate effectively with their students for their students’ educational process to be successful. As novice teachers open a two-way communication channel with their students that they can build a stronger rapport with their students, and increase the level of respect their students have for them.

Real-world implications. Should educators decide not to utilize reflective dialogue for novice teachers, the effectiveness of the instructional strategies could be negatively impacted. Through reflective dialogue, novice teachers could begin to
develop nominal instructional strategies, such as stronger communication strategies, that could improve their overall teaching practices. For one, classroom management in terms of discipline could be improved because of the stronger communication to the students of the teachers’ classroom expectations within the classroom setting.

**Recommendation.** Reflective practice should be incorporated into professional development for novice teachers so that they can build on their initial pedagogical content knowledge. Ideally, as teachers continue to teach, they construct their own ways to reflect, as evidenced in this study. However, instead of teachers having to find their own way to discover a method of reflective practice, perhaps a way of alleviating some of the initial uneasiness regarding reflection could be made through collaborative teacher learning groups that encourage reflection.

Finding 2. Teachers who understand the language of the poor tend to make instructional decisions that reflect their own socioeconomic backgrounds.

**Theoretical implications.** Understanding the students they teach and being able to effectively communicate classroom expectations is imperative for novice teachers. Although a teacher may not have had a lower socioeconomic upbringing, as in the case for Sydney, this does not necessarily determine that the novice teacher will not understand the language of the poor. For Sydney, the constant reflection of her instructional practices, and listening to her students allowed her to be able to communicate the seriousness of her classroom expectation that students have their makeup work completed and turned in on time so that students would not fail her class. For Brooklyn, Phoenix, and London, understanding the language of the poor came
naturally for each of them because they described being poor as children. Therefore, the ability to code-switch between the community language of their students and their classroom language was not as challenging for Brooklyn, Phoenix, and London.

*Real-world implications.* Professional development geared toward influential ways to communicate with their students who live in poverty could prove to increase the academic success of this demographic. In addition, district-wide book studies on language and its effect on culture would be recommended to support teachers as they learn to effectively communicate with students who may come from a background that is defined as poverty-level.

*Recommendation.* Teacher education should begin to delve deeper into bridging the theory-practice gap of helping teachers understand the culture of poverty through effective understanding of the language of the poor, and how this translates to instructional practices that allow teachers to communicate effectively with their students.

Finding 3. Novice teachers’ underlying education philosophical beliefs help build a foundation for critical pedagogy, which in turn, supports a foundation for social pedagogy.

*Theoretical implications.* Since social pedagogy is not a fully established educational theory, research data from this case study could be included in the body of research literature regarding social pedagogy.

*Real-world implication.* Since the European concept of social pedagogy views the education of the child as holistic (Petrie & Moss, 2002), the inclusion of this theory
into the framework of American education could prove to be transformative for teachers and their students alike.

**Recommendation.** Per Hämäläinen (personal communication, April 2016), as European research literature demonstrates a varied view of social pedagogy, American research on social pedagogy could take Europe’s initiative and begin conducting more research into this literature gap, and from this an emergence of a new educational theory could possibly be made. Based on the aforementioned thick description of the data collected through pre-and post-semi-structured interviewed questions conducted by the researcher, participants’ three, 250-word responses to reflective writing prompts, and researcher notes from classroom observations, the researcher has the following findings per research question:

**Research Question 1:** How does reflective practice influence novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices?

**Finding 1.** Novice teachers’ instructional decision-making practices are positively influenced by reflective practices when teachers are more aware of their student’s needs through continuous reflection. Participant responses from the post semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher demonstrate evidence of this finding:

Brooklyn: “The kind of reflective practice that I have is that before my students come in in the morning, I go over my lesson plans to make sure that I have what I need, after they leave, I go over what I need to add. Sometimes when I go home… I go over in my head, and think tomorrow I need to go over this, and I need to go over that. I know when I did the [content area material].
I scratched the surface with them, so the next class, I added more stuff, so each class got more stuff.

I would see the students’ reactions, and I would go back and research some stuff.”

Phoenix: “How do I reflect on myself on what I’ve done, and how do I change it? I see how the day went and say, I could have done this, the next time I teach this lesson, I can do this. As each class goes on, I can change it in some way— timing, engaging students more.

Before [teaching]—I wonder if it will all fit in the time frame. During [teaching]—if I feel like they’re not picking it up, I gotta pick another tactic, it’s weird because some classes will respond really well.

At the end [of teaching]—I look back and say, did this work, next year I teach this unit, do I have to change it? You’ve got to think on your feet, you’ve got to be flexible.”

London: “Usually just analyze things every day. Over the summer, I think of new things I can do. I reflect every day, every hour on my practice. What may work for the next group...you have to be innovative. What worked for this one, may not work for the next [class]. You have to find a way to improve it. Some things that may go perfect—don’t. Every hour—that would be how I reflect.”

Sydney: “With this being my second year, I always reflect back to last year.
When we are doing an assignment, I always think about what made it work. [I reflect] at home, when we do a lesson together, when the students are doing an activity.

I always think about the school day, or how it went, or how I can make it better for next time. Before teaching, [I think about] what’s the easiest way to get what I want out of the students, during teaching, what can I do to get more out of what I’m looking for, after teaching what can I do for the next class…."

Research Question 2: What are novice teachers’ underlying beliefs about teaching children who live in poverty?

Finding 2. Teachers who understand the “language of the poor” tend to make instructional decisions that reflect their own socioeconomic backgrounds.

Teachers who come from a self-identified lower socioeconomic class felt that they better understood their students’ culture of poverty. Brooklyn, Phoenix, and London self-identified as having been raised in a poor to lower middle class background where there was one parent in the home (Table 2). Although Sydney described a middle-class, two-parent background, she is still able to code-switch (Heath, 1983) to communicate with her students to communicate her classroom expectations effectively because she stated that she has been “around her students” for a while to understand them. Finding number 2 is evidenced through participants’ reflective writing responses regarding Harrington’s (1962) language of the poor:

Brooklyn: “People who live in poverty are a group of people of their own kind. They are people who are separated from a society that is considered the
norm…with the norm [being] defined as a society in which the people who live in it are not burdened by poverty”. I absolutely understand the language of the poor that Harrington uses. Often times other people see us differently than we see ourselves. As a young adult, I was poor and living in poverty, but I did not realize it because my needs were being met. Taking a deeper look into it, however, I realized that I was [poor] because I received state assistance or benefits and all of my needs were not being met by me. Others (the rest of society) already viewed me differently than I viewed myself. They already knew what I did not know. I do not feel that I have to change any of my instructional strategies to acknowledge this language because as I have stated previously, I know language all too well because I have lived it personally. Teaching at a Title One school, I have already emphasized poverty in most if not all of my instructional strategies.”

Phoenix: “… people who grow up poor feel so separated from society in so many ways… impoverished students in Title 1 schools have to worry about having a home at all, having any food to eat at all, arguments between family members, not having parents that are present, taking care of smaller siblings, etc. These kids often feel very separated from kids who do not have issues such as these, kids who are not impoverished, and as a result there is a consistent divide between them... I feel that I can understand this “language of the poor” because I teach in a Title 1 school. I see kids of both types in my school and can understand this divide. I do feel that I often have to change my instructional practices.
I have to engage the students who are speaking this language, the ones who are worried about their growling bellies and where they will sleep the next night. I have to show my students I care very deeply for them before I try to teach them anything. I adjust my strategies in a way that allows these students to relate to me and understand me. Only when their basic needs are met can they learn anything.”

London: “I believe that Harrington’s statement is true to an extent. I believe it is true, because the poor are exposed to less, which provides them with little experience and knowledge of broader subjects. This gap leaves the poor excluded from a lot of different opportunities. I believe this is what Harrington meant by his statement. I believe I have a good understanding of the “language of the poor” because I was considered “poor” or “economically disadvantaged” my whole life. I think the fact that I grew up much like a lot of my students really helps me relate to them and the things they are going through and the struggles they face daily. I do have to sometimes change my instructional strategies and deliverance of my instruction to acknowledge the “language of the poor”. I have to constantly remind myself that these students I teach haven’t been exposed to the things that I have or even some of their peers. This is one reason I allow so much “sharing” in my class. I allow my students to share any experiences or stories they have, as long as it relates to our lesson. I do this because most of my students have never been out of this county. You never know, someone else’s experience may help them relate to the content and think about a topic differently and ultimately
maximize their learning experience. I try to stay very positive when interacting with my students. I try to remind them daily that they are worthy of going to college and obtaining the skills they need to fulfill their dreams. I think within an economically disadvantaged community, we are used to hearing the words, NO and CAN’T. I try not to say those words to my students, if I can help it. I believe it only takes one person to change our perspective of who we are and what we are capable of. It only takes one person believing in you to make you believe in yourself.”

Research Question 3: How do these beliefs help develop a framework for social pedagogy?

Finding 3. Novice teachers’ underlying educational philosophical beliefs help build a foundation for critical pedagogy which in turn, supports a foundation for social pedagogy.

Novice teacher participants in the research study demonstrated an initial understanding of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1985/2010), yet not a deeper embracement of social pedagogy as part of pedagogical content knowledge. Petrie & Moss (2002) detailed nine key principles of social pedagogical practice, where in this study, all four participants principally demonstrated the reflection of their own work, and demonstrated an understanding of the initial theoretical knowledge that must be firmly in place before entering the classroom. In addition, participants in the study indicated a self-awareness of the educational process itself. However, as Hämäläinen (Personal Communication, 2016) has indicated, social pedagogy as an educational theory is a new concept in
Europe, since it is closely related to social work theory. In the United States, there is no research literature that delves into the aspect of social pedagogy as an educational theory. Therefore, the finding from this portion of the study is important in helping to establish social pedagogy as part of education theory in the United States.

After transcribing the pre- and post-semi-structured interviews, Brooklyn’s, Phoenix’s, London’s, and Sydney’s three, 250-word journal responses, and researcher notes on each of the participant’s classroom observations, along with reflective journal writings, the researcher discovered the following themes among the data collected: cycle of poverty, novice teachers’ grasp of pedagogy, teachers reflect to increase student understanding, and transformation of students’ experience through classroom practice. After establishing the main themes from the data collected, the researcher looked for a commonality among novice teachers’ perceptions of how reflective inquiry can bridge the gap between theory and practice using natural coding (Dey, 1993).

For the purposes of this qualitative research study, a focus on language of the participants was vital because of the two-way communication channel with their students. As discussed in the review of literature, there is a paucity of research regarding the potential nexus between novice teachers’ development of reflective practice as they instruct students who live in poverty and develop critical and social pedagogy. Although this study was conducted with novice teachers only, a future study to include the voices of students who live in poverty could possible garner a deeper awareness of other ways that reflective practice could help this demographic. It is hoped that a future study would allow students to use reflective dialogue as a means of transforming their own
In addition, through random sampling in this study, the novice teachers that volunteered to participate in this study all had one commonality: none of the participants in this research study were initially trained through a traditional teacher education program. The initial research attempt was to find novice teachers, without any further thought as to whether the novice teacher had graduated from a traditional teacher education program. Upon discovering the novice teachers/participants had not attended a traditional program, the researcher began to question whether the novice teachers’ stronger, initial awareness of critical pedagogy regarding the students they teach was because of their alternative teacher preparedness. A future case study comparing teachers who completed a traditional teacher preparation program versus teachers who were initially trained through an alternative program (Teacher Alternative Preparation Program, Master of Arts in Teaching programs) would provide further insight.

Section Four: Final Reflections

The data analysis indicates that reflective practice can influence novice teacher’ instructional decision-making practices. I initially held the notion that novice teachers did not utilize reflection to improve their teaching practices. Based on my observations of teachers who appeared to struggle with students who attended a Title I school, it seemed as if teachers were unwilling to change their instructional practices to effectively communicate educational expectations to their students. However, my assumptions proved to be somewhat unfounded, as several novice teachers indicated in this research study that they continuously questioned the instructional decisions they made, even to the extent of reflecting on their own teaching decisions once they were at home, outside of
their own classrooms. I initially felt that novice teachers did not reflect on their instructional practices because of my own initial experiences with teaching.

When I initially began teaching, I did not have the awareness or the time to truly reflect on my instructional decision-making practices. My first year of teaching began in November, almost four months after the school year had begun. I was not initially certified to teach, although I held an English degree from a large, public state university, and a Master’s Degree in Education as well. When I began to teach, I was placed into a room with very little knowledge of pedagogy.

Because of this, I felt that I needed to make sure that I was more proficient in teaching the content material. I felt at the time that this was the easiest way to teach my students. Now, as a veteran teacher, I understand that knowledge of content is important, but what is more important is that as a teacher, one stops continuously to reflect on one’s practice, in addition to encompassing pedagogical content knowledge. Asking questions such as do my students appear to understand? How do I know that they are or are not understanding the content material? Am I communicating effectively so that students can understand my classroom expectations? Am I building a strong rapport with my students so that I can have effective and strong classroom management? Now that I have realized through experience that reflective practice is imperative, I would like for others—novice teachers, teacher educators, policy makers, etc.—to understand from my experience that reflecting on one’s teaching practice is key in building a stronger classroom that encourages students to change or rather, transform their own educational perspective.
When my students express a desire to become teachers, or even if students begin to understand that education is not only in the classroom, and that it is truly a lifelong process, then I am content in knowing that I have been a part of their transformation. The research literature on poverty indicated a need for teachers to discover a way to teach students who come from a socioeconomic culture that may have been different from that of their own. The participants in this study, except for one participant, identified greatly with the socioeconomic background of their students who currently live in poverty. These participants, in particular, self-identified as having a poor background. Understanding the background of the students that one teaches allows for a stronger rapport with students, as evidenced through the participant’s own reflective writings, and the researcher’s notes regarding the novice teacher’s classroom observations. Throughout the study, novice teachers indicated an awareness of the students they teach through reflecting on their own teaching practices, their own socioeconomic background, and a willingness to continue to add to their own pedagogical content knowledge to build a stronger transformative educational philosophy that could positively impact the educational process of their students.

As American education progresses to educate the twenty first century student, and to ensure that education is equal for all students, perhaps moving in the direction of strengthening teacher education and professional development would allow teachers to become transformative intellectuals through reflective practice. Dewey (1910) posited that “teaching is an art and the true teacher an artist” (p.288); therefore, as novice teachers continue their teaching careers, they should be encouraged and enabled to paint
the true picture for their students who live in poverty—that by students taking charge of their own education, they themselves will become transformed and liberated.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

MERCER IRB APPROVAL
21-Apr-2016

Ms. Rachel Cooper Bray

1501 Mercer University Drive

Tift College of Education

Macon, GA 31207-0001

RE: BRIDGING THE THEORY-PRACTICE GAP: A CASE STUDY OF NOVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIVE PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT IN A TITLE I SCHOOL (H1604128)

Dear Ms. Bray:

Your application entitled: BRIDGING THE THEORY-PRACTICE GAP: A CASE STUDY OF NOVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIVE PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT IN A TITLE I SCHOOL (H1604128) was reviewed by this Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research in accordance with Federal Regulations 21 CFR 56.110(b) and 45 CFR 46.110(b) (for expedited review) and was approved under Category 6, 7 per 63 FR 60364.
Your application was approved for one year of study on 21-Apr-2016. The protocol expires 20-Apr-2017. If the study continues beyond one year, it must be re-evaluated by the IRB Committee.

**Item(s) Approved:**

New study use of interviews and audio recordings

Please complete the survey for the IRB and the Office of Research Compliance. To access the survey, click on the following link:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K7CTT8R

"Mercer University has adopted and agrees to conduct its clinical research studies in accordance with the International Conference on Harmonization's (ICF) Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice."

Respectfully,

Ava Chambliss-Richardson, M.ED., CIP, CIM

Member

Intuitional Review Board

Mercer University IRB & Office of Research Compliance

Phone (478) 301-4101

Fax (478) 301-2329
APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
The following are questions for the novice teacher’s pre/post interview questions, other similar questions may follow during the course of the semi-structured interviews:

Initial novice teacher semi-structured interview questions:

1. Think about your overall teaching experience. Did you feel that you had a strong grasp of pedagogy when you initially began to teach? What are some new theories about teaching that you have discovered since you have been teaching in the classroom?

2. Based on any of your teaching experiences, are there instructional problems that you anticipate when you are planning lessons for your students?

3. While teaching, have you ever had to change course, or “think on your feet”?

4. As you were teaching, has it been your experience for an instructional lesson to run off course? How were you able to recognize when your lesson was not as effective as you would have liked? What did you do to “save” your lesson?

5. Based on any of your teaching experiences, do you feel that you have the ability to transform your student’s perspective about their educational process?
APPENDIX C

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL WRITING PROMPTS
Novice teachers will be asked to reflect on their teaching practices in a 250-word journal writing: The following are the reflective journal questions:

1. Reflect on the time before you began to teach in the classroom (this may or may not have been this current school year). What were your initial feelings about teaching in a Title I school? Were you prepared pedagogically? What challenges did you anticipate? Does teaching in a Title I school have its advantages and disadvantages that affect your teaching practices?

2. How often do you reflect on your instructional decisions? Is there anything you would change about your instructional decision-making? Are there any theories on reflective practice that have influenced the way you think about your instructional decision-making?

3. In his seminal work, *The Other America*, author Michael Harrington states, that “there is...a language of the poor, a psychology of the poor, a worldview of the poor. To be impoverished is to be an internal alien, to grow up in a culture that is radically different from the one that dominates the society.” What do you believe that Harrington means by this statement? Do you feel that you understand this “language of the poor”? Do you feel that you have to change any of your instructional strategies to acknowledge this language?
APPENDIX D

SEMI-STRUCTURED POST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Post Interview Questions:

1. Describe your reflective practices as a teacher. What teaching/instructional reflections do you have before teaching, during teaching, and after teaching a lesson?

2. If you were to relay reflective practice advice to a first-year teacher, what would that advice be?

3. Do you feel that your teaching lead to a transformation of your students’ perspective about their educational process? How were you able to recognize this transformation?
Text of email sent to principal for research study (this email will be sent from Rachel.D.Bray@live.mercer.edu):

To: Principal

From: Rachel Cooper Bray, Doctoral Candidate, Mercer University

BCC: Dr. Lucy Bush, dissertation chair

Subject: Research Participation Invitation: “Bridging the Theory-Practice Gap: A Case Study of Novice Teachers’ Reflective Practice Development in a Title I School”

Greetings,

This email message is an approved request for participation in research that has been approved or declared exempt by the Mercer University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The purpose of this study is to describe the utilization of reflective practice inquiry by novice teachers in a Title I school, along with a description of the combination of pedagogical content knowledge and social pedagogies that novice teachers need in order to assuage the effects the culture of poverty has on their instructional decision-making practices.

I would like to request the participation of novice teachers with experience of zero to three years. The confidentiality of each selected participant will be maintained. The time required for participation is approximately five hours per week for four weeks. Participation in the study will contribute to the overall research literature on novice teachers and their development of reflective dialogue.

This project was approved by the Mercer University IRB.
Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the dissertation chair, Dr. Lucy Bush (678-547-6390/ bush_lj@mercer.edu) and to Ava Chambliss-Richardson, Associate Director of Human Research Protection Programs, Office of Research Compliance, 1501 Mercer University, Macon, GA 31207. Email: ORC_Research@Mercer.edu.

Questions about this research should be addressed to Rachel Bray at

Rachel.D.Bray@live.mercer.edu

Thank you in advance for your assistance,

Rachel Bray
Doctoral Candidate
Mercer University
Tift College of Education

Rachel.D.Bray@live.mercer.edu
Tift College of Education

Informed Consent

“Bridging the Theory-Practice Gap: A Case Study of Novice Teachers’ Reflective Practice Development in a Title I School”

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigators

Rachel Bray, Doctoral Candidate in Curriculum & Instruction
Tift College of Education, Mercer University
478-232-2928

Lucy Bush, Ed.D. (Faculty Advisor)
Tift College of Education, Mercer University
3001 Mercer University Drive, BE 218
Atlanta, GA 30341
678-547-6390
Purpose of the Research

This research study is designed to describe the use of reflective practice inquiry by novice teachers in a Title I school, and the combination of pedagogical content knowledge and social pedagogies that novice teachers need in order to decrease the effects the culture of poverty has on their instructional decision-making practices.

The data from this research will be used in a qualitative case study about novice teachers to help develop future professional development activities.

The results will contribute to the researcher’s course of study by providing a foundation for planning future professional development for novice teacher’s reflective dialogue.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a pre/post semi-structured interview with the researcher; one classroom observation with the researcher; three 250-word reflective writing responses to prompts given by the researcher.

Your participation will take approximately five hours per week to complete pre and post semi-structured interviews with the researcher; classroom observations, and three 250-word reflective journal writings.

Potential Risks or Discomforts

There are no foreseeable risks associated with the study.

Potential Benefits of the Research

A benefit to participating in the study includes contributing to the overall research literature on novice teacher reflective inquiry development.
Confidentiality and Data Storage

Participants of the qualitative case study will be given pseudonyms. Data will be stored at the office of Dr. Lucy Bush for three years. Measures to maintain the confidentiality of all participants will be of the utmost importance. All audio recordings will be used solely for the purpose of the approved research study. The reporting and publishing of research findings and conclusions will be in a manner that does not permit identification of the persons whose records were used for the research. Research reports and publications will not include photographs or visual representations contained in the participants’ records. Only the investigator and advisor will have access to the data. When the purposes of the research project have been accomplished, the individual identities associated with the records or record information will be destroyed, and any links connecting identities to the records or records information will be destroyed in April 2019.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. As a participant, you may refuse to participate at any time. To withdraw from the study please contact either Dr. Lucy Bush, 678-547-6390/bush_lj@mercer.edu, or Rachel Bray, doctoral candidate at 478-232-2928/Rachel.D.Bray@live.mercer.edu.

Questions about the Research

If you have any questions about the research, please speak with Rachel Bray, Rachel.D.Bray@live.mercer.edu or Dr. Lucy Bush, bush_lj@mercer.edu.

Audio or Video Taping
The recording(s) will be used for analysis by the research team. The recording(s) will include pseudonyms for each participant recorded. No videotaping will be utilized within this research study. The recording(s) will be stored in a locked file cabinet in Dr. Lucy Bush’s office with no link to subjects’ identity and will be destroyed upon the completion of the IRB retention of records policy of three years. In April 2019, all audio recordings, and links to any audio recordings will be destroyed.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

This project has been reviewed and approved by Mercer University’s IRB. If you believe there is any infringement upon your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Chair at (478) 301-4101.

**You have been given the opportunity to ask questions and these have been answered to your satisfaction. Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this research study.**

__________________________________________  _____________
Signature of Research Participant  Date

__________________________________________  _____________
Participant Name (Please Print)  Date
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent  Date

Rev.08/19/2010