

Educación and Culturally Relevant Teaching in U.S. Public Schools:
Lessons from the Haitian Community Center in Miami, Florida

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Dedication

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Abstract

The U.S.'s history of racial politics continues to shape the educational experiences of Haitian American students in public schools. Despite their presence as the second most visible immigrant group in Miami, Florida, Haitian American students' experiences continue to be masked by pan-racial categories used for statistical purposes.

Investigation into the experiences of two teachers and nine Haitian American students at an ethnic community-based organization (CBO) known as The Haitian Community Center (HCC), through a qualitative case study design, illustrated how Haitian American youth and families were drawn to this organization based on a shared immigrant, linguistic, and racial experience. Data in this study also revealed how the HCC's Youth Leadership Development Program (YLDP) emphasized knowledge and skills through educación. How HCC students and teachers interpreted and filtered messages about their schooling experiences with others at the CBO illuminated implications for culturally relevant practices in school. By examining the work that was being done at the HCC, this study contributes to a gap in literature related to Haitian American students in the U.S. Likewise, this study extends conversations related to educación and culturally relevant teaching practices for educators in U.S. public schools. Data in this study also reveal a strong relationship between schooling practices and the work being done at ethnic CBOs, which also has implications for researchers interested in the educational experiences of students from similar immigrant and racial minority backgrounds.

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Chapter 1

Haitian American Education in Miami, Florida

Contemporary debates in U.S. public education often gravitate towards discussions about high-stakes testing and accountability. Often missing from these discussions are the effects of education policies in the lives of students from marginalized backgrounds, particularly as it relates to their education in learning experiences outside of regular school hours. Some scholars have argued that these debates present only a narrow, invidious view of education (Michael, Andrade, & Bartlett, 2007; Noddings, 1986). It also contrasts with some immigrants' belief, constructed through values carried from their native country to the U.S., that schooling has a role to play in students' development as moral individuals and community leaders *in addition to* building knowledge through academic coursework (Valenzuela, 1999).

Beliefs about the role of education among Haitian American immigrants in the Little Haiti ethnic enclave of Miami, Florida, are one case in point. In this study, I refer to all Haitians living in Miami as Haitian American because, "individuals are bicultural in a sense that neither culture is foreign to them" (Zephir as cited in Etienne, 2011, p. 11). In one interview, a fifth grade Haitian American male student named Jake shared with me why he believed that his teachers at his afterschool program were more caring than his teachers at school. According to this student, his afterschool teachers were more like his mother because, "they protect [him] and tell [him] what's right." Unlike accountability discussions focused on measuring students' knowledge of different content areas to prove that they are receiving a "good" education, Jake's description of what he desired for his

education included a teacher who provided him with a moral compass. Jake's sentiment about school and his perception of a caring educator was echoed in multiple interviews and field notes throughout my study in the summer and fall of 2011.

Other scholars have written about these conflicting expectations between some immigrant communities and the U.S. public schools' academics-only orientation through the framework of *educación* (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999; Wong, 2008). According to Reese et al. (1995):

The term *educación* encompasses, but is not limited to, the formal academic training the child receives. Although *educación* and the English term "education" overlap in important ways, *educación* has a broader meaning. The term invokes additional, nonacademic dimensions, such as learning the difference between right and wrong, respect for parents and others, and correct behavior, which parents view as the base upon which all other learning lies. (p. 66)

Based on this definition of *educación*, test scores and other accountability measures currently employed in U.S. schools are inadequate for determining students' progress in school. Weighted just as heavily as content knowledge, *educación* emphasizes the importance of youths' development into good, socially conscious members of society (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999; Wong, 2008).

To address this disconnect in the Little Haiti community of Miami, the Haitian Community Center (HCC) created the Youth Leadership Development Program (YLDP). Well known for its wide range of services for the entire Little Haiti community, the HCC was created to support newly arrived Haitians and Haitian Americans of all ages. Its

services include support for issues related to the law, education, housing, and medicine.

The sociopolitical landscape of Miami's community, and Haitian immigrants' position in this context, makes the HCC's services critical. The educational experiences of Haitians in Miami have long been viewed through the intersections of racism, poverty, and a history of academic underachievement. These realities, complicated by their linguistic and immigrant identities, continue to shape the educational experiences of youth in this community. To help Haitian American youth navigate life in this context and to succeed in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS), the HCC created its YLDP. Based on the HCC's mission, I argue that educación and culturally relevant pedagogy best describes the type of education this ethnic community-based organization CBO is attempting to reinforce.

Racism

Based on a history of racism towards Haitian Americans in Miami, I argue that HCC's youth program was created to provide Haitian American youth with an educational space free from victimization. At first glance, Miami's tropical scenery and multilingual inhabitants appear to make this area an ideal vacation spot for visitors who tout the beauty of the city and its weather. Beneath this beautiful and rich exterior, however, is an area of the U.S. that is "undeniably southern" (Stepick, Grenier, Castro, & Dunn, 2003, p. 24) in its race relations. As a major theme that arises in this research, the city's race relations and rich immigrant history have important implications for why the HCC still exists. Though the HCC attempts to provide a race-neutral setting by catering

only to Haitian American students, youth were still engaged in discussions about their racial identities in relation to classmates at the HCC and at school.

During the mid 1960s, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “noted Miami’s emerging racial triangle and warned against the pitting of refugees against Blacks in competition for jobs” (Portes & Stepick, 1993, p. 39). King’s comment reflected Miami’s changing landscape. Black residents, still crippled economically from racist policies including Jim Crow laws, were now competing with non-White Caribbean immigrants as well. Cuban immigrants, for example, arrived in South Florida and built a significantly powerful ethnic enclave (Little Havana) as a result of the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, significant numbers of Cuban (Mariel refugees) and Haitian immigrants came to the U.S. to escape political unrest in their countries. The unequal reception of these two groups by the U.S. government influenced the immigration experiences of Haitian and Cubans in the city, which would later have a tremendous impact on Haitian Americans’ lack of economic opportunities and lower levels of education. According to Portes and Stepick’s (1993) historical study of Miami:

The coincidence of the two flows not only underscored the glaring disparities in the receptions accorded to each group. No government official ever attempted to summarily deport a Mariel refugee; U.S. Coast Guard cutters towed and escorted boats carrying Cubans to Key West, not back to Cuba. No matter how disparaged Mariel entrants were by the media, they were still Cuban and thus effectively insulated from the fate awaiting the boats from Cap-Haitien and Port-de-Paix. (p. 53)

Unlike Cuban refugees, whom the U.S. acknowledged as political refugees because of its foreign policy towards Cuba, Haitian refugees who were also fleeing from political oppression were not given the same amnesty (Portes & Stepick, 1993; Stepick et al., 2003). Cushioned by a politically and economically stronger community, Cuban refugees had the support of other Cuban immigrants who had already integrated themselves into Miami's political system. In contrast, Haitian boats were often intercepted and towed back to Haiti (James, 2009). Without the social and political power that Cubans in Miami had, the U.S. government failed to support Haitian refugees fleeing to the U.S., and many Haitians who made it to the shores of south Florida were detained in Miami for deportation without a right to trial. This lack of support by the federal government, which translated into the unwelcoming environment in which many Haitian immigrants found themselves, had direct consequences for economic opportunities in this group.

Little Haiti & Poverty

Despite the U.S. government's lack of support, Miami still became a hub for the largest concentration of Haitian refugees in the U.S. during the 1970s and 1980s (Portes & Stepick, 1993). According to the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program (2005), "by the late 1980s, there was a solid presence of Haitians in the Jackson/Little River area...christened 'Little Haiti'"(p. 3). Modeled after Little Havana, Little Haiti was constructed to promote economic opportunities and Haitian culture among Haitian Americans living in Miami. Little Haiti spans roughly 54th Street to 86th Street, and is located between Interstate 95 and the Florida East Coast Railways (Brookings Institution

Metropolitan Policy Program, 2005). This area is located less than one hundred blocks from wealthier tourist areas such as Brickell Village and the Wynwood Art District in downtown Miami.

Today, Little Haiti's neighborhood is a blend of old homes, apartments, car dealerships, rundown mini-malls, and old churches. The colors of Little Haiti reflect the bright pastels of the Caribbean. Names of businesses are written mostly in Haitian Creole, while others are written in English or Spanish. Coconut and palm trees stand tall amidst bungalow-styled homes with bars on their windows, and trailer parks span large areas contained by old, silver-wired fences. Dirt roads, makeshift shafts, clotheslines, and cars parked on patches of dirt and grass are clearly visible through these fences. Children and adults can be seen sitting on stoops outside or walking on sidewalks adjacent to busy roads. Many of these children and adults are long-time participants at the HCC. Unlike the people in Little Havana, members of the Little Haiti community arrived to Miami with less economic and political power, and this continued as they integrated themselves into communities that also held less economic and political power.

Haitian Americans in Miami are overrepresented in low-wage jobs and have the highest poverty rate (11.5 percent) among employed workers (Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2005; Portes & Stepick, 1993; Stepick et al., 2003). In light of both Black American and Black immigrant communities, Portes and Stepick's (1993) historical study notes that, "as late as 1982, the Economist observed that 'Miami is not a good city in which to be Black'" (p. 39). This pan-racial identity positions Haitians in the Black racial category, which oversimplifies the reality that "a tangle of conflicting

and often contradictory perceptions, attitudes, and interactions yielded a confusing scene where racial solidarity alternated with class and ethnic factionalism as well as economic competition” (Portes & Stepick, 1993, p. 178). As will be explored in chapter six, Portes and Stepick (1993) find that:

Black derision of the immigrants’ culture is nowhere more evident than in the schools. In the early 1980s, when Creole-speaking students started to appear in significant numbers in predominantly Black city schools, the word Haitian became an epithet, standing for foreign, backward, dirty, unintelligible, and ignorant. (p. 191)

At times, the racial location of these communities in Miami’s social imagination created animosity, particularly as it related to competition for jobs in an overall poor economy for Blacks in this city (The Federal Reserve System and Brookings Institution, 2008). At other times, this racial proximity prompted Black American and Black immigrant communities to become allies, especially when they fought together for racial equality during the 1980s and 1990s (Portes & Stepick, 1993).

Separate from Black Americans who struggle economically in this city, researchers emphasize that Little Haiti contains one of the largest populations living at or below the poverty line (The Federal Reserve System and Brookings Institution, 2008). According to the Federal Reserve System and the Brookings Institution (2008), “Little Haiti is much poorer than Miami as a whole. According to the 2000 U.S. census, the poverty rate in Little Haiti was over 44 percent, more than three times that of the Miami-

Fort Lauderdale Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)” (p. 48). Participants in my study argued, and showed me, how this fact shaped their experiences in school.

Miami & Education

Despite the history of their immigration and visibly poor socioeconomic status in the city, Haitians in Miami continue to remain a statistically invisible group in public education. On June 8, 2010, for instance, one of Miami’s most popular newspapers printed an article titled: “Haitian students now welcome at South Florida schools: In a change from the past, new arrivals from Haiti in South Florida schools are finding a warmer welcome” (Charles, 2010). Compare this title to the U.S. Department of Education’s 2010 published report on Florida public schools’ state-wide progress (United States Department of Education [ED], 2010) and the question becomes: Who are these Haitian students? Even though there are approximately 125,000 Haitians living in Miami-Dade County alone (www.factfinder2.census.gov), making them the largest West Indian group and second largest visible immigrant group behind Cubans (Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2005), their presence in educational research and school policy is nearly invisible. The U.S. Department of Education’s 2010 “EDFacts State Profile-Florida” (ED, 2010) document illustrates this relative invisibility. The document only displays achievement statistics for students who are categorized as: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian / Pacific Islander, and American Indian (ED, 2010).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2008-2009 database (www.nces.ed.gov) displays similar descriptors. For example, data from NCES describes Little Haiti Senior High School’s student enrollment for this time period as composed of:

0 Native Americans; 2 Asian / Pacific Islanders; 945 Blacks; 89 Hispanics; and 2 Whites (www.nces.ed.gov), even though Little Haiti High is located in the Haitian American community enclave and serves its community (The Federal Reserve System and The Brookings Institution, 2008). According to The Federal Reserve System and The Brookings Institution's (2008) case study on concentrated poverty in the U.S., Little Haiti High "has the worst graduation rate and performance record in the county. A desire for better education leads many Haitian families to either leave Little Haiti or place their children in private schools" (The Federal Reserve System and The Brookings Institution, 2008, p. 52). Education statistics published by the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program (2005) illustrate this point:

Only 10 percent of Miami-Dade Haitian adults over 25 years old have a bachelor's degree, and only 5 percent of Haitian adults living in the city of Miami are college educated. Similarly, while 16 percent of adults in the U.S. do not have a high school degree, the rate is twice as high in Miami-Dade (32 percent). It is even higher among Haitian adults—53 percent do not have a high school diploma in Miami-Dade, and 73 percent are not high school educated in the city of Miami. (p. 7)

What the U.S. Department of Education and the NCES data neglect, and what I argue the Federal Reserve System and the Brookings Institution (2008) highlight, are questions such as: *How are Haitian American students' experiences in schools different from those of other students lumped into the Black racial category?* Haitian students' Black phenotype (Waters, 1999) and the U.S.'s de facto practice of "the one drop rule, whereby

any discernable trace of African ancestry is enough to classify a person as Black” (Lopez, 2003, p. 17), assumes that these youths’ educational experiences are the same as those of all other Black students. In reality, “Florida’s Haitian population in the 2000 census was nearly 270,000, making it the largest in the United States, surpassing the number of Haitians in the New York metropolitan area” (Stepick, Grenier, Castro, & Dunn, 2003, p. 22). Woven throughout this thesis is a powerful example of how pan-racial and pan-ethnic discourses marginalize the voices of the Haitian American community in Miami. Despite being lumped into a pan-Black category, Haitian Americans in Little Haiti have identities that are situated in a complex, historical process that is unique to Miami’s metropolitan city. Moreover, this study highlights how these factors shape students’ educational experiences at the HCC and impact what culturally relevant pedagogy in this space looks like.

The Study

In this context, the HCC’s Youth Leadership Development Program strives to shape Haitian students’ educational experiences through educación. Though many of the studies on educación describe what schools in the U.S. could and should be, none of these studies were conducted in a Haitian U.S. community context (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999; Wong, 2008). As one contribution to this discussion, my research explores how the work of this program is currently impacting the educational experiences of Haitian American students in this community. Specifically, data in this study suggests that Haitian American youth at the HCC are taking lessons

about the process of schooling, based on their experiences in school, to the CBO and are filtering these discourses as it relates to them.

In particular, this study explores how the work of the HCC illuminates educación and culturally relevant pedagogy—both its practices and limitations—in an afterschool program housed in an ethnic CBO. Woven throughout this study are three main arguments: 1) the HCC is a site where educación is the intended model for education; 2) dominant schooling practices pervade the HCC’s youth program, which limits educación and culturally relevant pedagogy from occurring fully; and 3) HCC teachers and students use the CBO’s space to reflect on their experiences in traditional public schools.

Dominant schooling practices have consequences for how HCC teachers see the roles of educators and students. It also impacts the way that *achievement* and *success* are imagined among youth and adults at the HCC. These discourses also impact the ways students see themselves in school. More importantly, I argue that this study—though it takes place in an ethnic CBO—provides insight into the importance and challenges of educación and culturally relevant practices in school.

Chapter two provides a review of the literature on educación and culturally relevant pedagogy. This theoretical framework will be the lens through which I argue that educación is present at the HCC, while culturally relevant pedagogy struggles to emerge above pervasive messages about schooling, race, and ethnicity in the U.S.

Chapter three highlights the methodological framework and research design that led me to this interpretation. In chapter four, I describe how the HCC’s youth program emphasizes educación by teaching youth how to “do” school. The ways that teachers

approach this work, however, highlights ways that pervasive messages about “how to do school” limit their attempt to be culturally relevant. In chapter five, I emphasize how the HCC exemplifies educación through its focus on education as an intergenerational and community initiative, which moves this goal beyond the individual student. Through the lens of educación, chapter five also explores ways that normative beliefs about parental involvement in school and the racialization of Miami’s Haitian American community restrict the culturally relevant work taking place at this CBO. In addition, chapter six discusses how the presence of educación at the HCC enables students to explore their own identity. At school and in their broader community, Haitian American co-ethnics and non-Haitian Americans often position Haitian American students into various identities. At the HCC, however, Haitian American students are able to filter and process these messages about who they are by using their own words to define themselves among peers who share their struggle. Lastly, chapter seven discusses the implications for this research in schools and CBOs throughout the country. Though this study takes place outside of a U.S. public school setting, I argue that this CBO’s work provides valuable insight into ways to improve the educational experience of students from other racial, ethnic, and linguistic minority backgrounds in school. As the next chapter illustrates, this discussion has already started among scholars whose work focuses on the roles of educación and culturally relevant pedagogy in school and the experiences of students from marginalized backgrounds.

CHAPTER 2

Educación & Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

With its focus on youth leadership development through education, the HCC's work with Haitian American youth illustrates aspects of educación and culturally relevant pedagogy in practice. Though presented separately in this chapter, educación and culturally relevant pedagogy are connected by a shared concern for how students from minority backgrounds experience school in the U.S. For Haitian American students at the HCC, these frameworks support the ethnic CBO's view that schooling in the U.S. should be shaped by everyone involved—teachers, students, families, and their community.

Educación and Education

Though phonetically similar, educación is not education. This concept focuses on students' relationship with the world through knowledge and social consciousness. Valenzuela (1999) argues that educación is a much larger term than education because it includes individual action, as well as academic achievement. Who is seen as an educated person in these spheres, and how they come to be viewed in this light, depends on a combination of individual actions and knowledge. Individual action, which requires "competence in the social world, wherein one respects the dignity and individuality of others" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 23), is supposed to reflect one's community values. Educación is identified in schools through students' interpretation of educators' level of care towards them. Because this aspect of education is viewed as necessary for students'

academic success, many Haitian American families send their students to the HCC's youth program.

Educación and Values. Moral development and the importance of including family and community values in school is one of the biggest differences between educación and education. Whereas education in U.S. public primary and secondary schools tends to focus on an academic orientation only (Valenzuela, 1999; Valenzuela, 2000), educación in schools emphasizes youths' moral development equally (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995; Smith-Hefner, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999; Valenzuela, 2000). According to Reese et al. (1995), educación differs from education in that:

The term invokes additional, nonacademic dimensions, such as learning the difference between right and wrong, respect for parents and others, and correct behavior, which parents view as the base upon which all other learning lies.

(p. 66)

In educación, family and community values are made explicit in school curricula and discipline policies. When schools align their curricula and policies to honor youths' realities, students become motivated to succeed in the classroom because they feel that schools care about who they are by validating lessons being taught in their communities (Valenzuela, 1999). Unaligned school curricula and policies tend to have the opposite effect (Valenzuela, 1999).

The use of school discipline policies that are incompatible with students' family and community beliefs is one example of how schools can unknowingly dissuade

families from participating in partnerships with educators at school. In Reese et al.'s (1995) study of 121 Spanish-speaking families of kindergarten students in Los Angeles, California, they found that many parents believed in the value of corporal punishment as a legitimate form of discipline. Confused with child abuse, they also found that many schools rejected this practice (Reese et al., 1995). More specifically, Reese et al. (1995) highlight:

That this issue [was] of great concern to parents [was] indicated by the number of times which it surfaced without prompting in the interviews and by the passion with which the views were expressed. Parents of both higher and lower achieving students [expressed] emotions ranging from concern to outrage about what they [regarded] as school interference with family discipline practices. (p. 70)

As Reese et al.'s (1995) point illustrates, values that help youth develop into “good” and “moral” human beings, as those identities are perceived in their community, come directly from students’ lives outside of school. These beliefs are subjective and context-specific. Thus, normative school policies and the values that guide them might not always align with community values. For parents in Reese et al.'s (1995) study, schools’ rejection of parental beliefs about discipline implied that educated parents do not use corporal punishment. Highlighted in this study is one way that an educated person might be perceived differently in different contexts. To educate students, schools must study students’ contexts and assess the criteria that define an individual’s academic success.

Rooted deeply in family and community teachings, educación extends beyond the classroom even though its achievement is measured by students’ performance in school.

Values taught by parents and practiced in the community are expected to continue in the classroom and are weighted equally with academic-oriented content. To educate students through educación, family and community values are not made tangential to academics. High test scores and stellar grades are not adequate qualifications for an educated individual. Family and community expectations must also be reflected in the student's behavior.

Educación also rejects the notion of value-free school curricula and discipline policies. In Valenzuela's (1999) ethnographic study at Juan Seguí High School in Houston, Texas, for example, she found that U.S.-born Mexican and Mexican-born high school students embraced the importance of learning and knowledge, but opposed the biased and invidious nature of their schooling. In this case, the notion of a value-free curriculum and discipline policy was visibly but silently being rejected by students whose identities were constructed outside of the dominant White, middle class, Standard English American norm.

Focused on respect for students' family and community values, educación has the ability to support academic success. To illustrate this point, Michael, Andrade, and Bartlett's (2007) study of one bilingual high school, Gregorio Luperón High School in New York City, found that the school's values reflected their students' community through cultural artifacts, which then contributed to their non-native English speaking majority's success in school. Cultural artifacts are visible and audible reflections of beliefs and values. They include "books, grades, and labels like 'bad boy' or 'good student'" (Michael et al., 2007, p. 169). In Michael et al.'s (2007) study, native Spanish

speaking students learned from a curriculum written and delivered in both Spanish and English. They earned grades based on their knowledge of content, and were labeled “high achieving” due to their ability to excel in academic subjects taught through Spanish. This achievement was due to their bilingualism, not in spite of it. Like the students’ community, Gregorio Luperón High School demonstrated the importance of knowing both languages. More importantly, they educated their students according to that standard.

In contrast to Michael et al.’s (2007) study, the stress on the importance of learning English over that of content knowledge was reflected in the low standardized test scores of students in Valenzuela’s (2000) study. In addition to recognizing this bias, students interpreted Texas’ state-sanctioned language policy as a rejection of their native language, and by extension, a rejection of them. Taken for granted, the significance of how an English-based school curriculum participates in the “[fracturing of] students’ cultural and ethnic identities, creating social, linguistic, and cultural divisions among the students and the staff” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 5) was ignored. Meanwhile, the factors contributing to student underachievement were not thoroughly critiqued.

Though nuanced, values emphasized through educación generally focus on discipline and social responsibility (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 21). In educación, these values are taught explicitly in schools and are reinforced through partnerships between students, teachers, families, and students’ entire community. Students are not only expected to develop into youth who embrace these values, but they also learn to expect these principles to be present in their relationship with educators. Book knowledge without

emphasis on these values, in the eyes of youths' community and family, leads to Valenzuela's (2000) argument that, "one can therefore . . . [still] be poorly educated" (p. 525). Thus, educación emphasizes the significance of strong partnerships among different stakeholders. As the next section illustrates, partnerships in educación are based on relationships built through care.

Caring relationships. Reciprocal feelings of care are critical to educators' ability to apply educación principles in school. Students' and teachers' ability to recognize this care is equally critical. Though there is no monolithic definition of care (Schultz, 1998), there is an assumption that schools know how to care for their students (Katz, 2007; Schussler & Collins, 2006). Part of this interpretive process is complicated by debates over what the purpose of education in U.S. public schools *is* and what it *should* be. Present or not, caring relationships and teachers' respect for students' families and communities are silently interpreted and internalized by students, which has consequences for their performance and behavior in school (Valenzuela, 1999; Valenzuela, 2000).

Despite arguments against a definition of care (Schultz, 1998), many scholars cite the work of Nel Noddings to argue how important this aspect of relationships is to helping students succeed in school (e.g. Hoagland, 1990; Katz, 2007; Schultz, 1998). Broadly speaking, care in schools is characterized as a "relationship between people that is marked by a desire to understand the other and help the other reach their potential, as well as the concern for an organization that has the capacity to succeed or fail" (Schussler & Collins, 2006, p. 1464). Thus, caring relationships are present when educators and

students attempt to understand the other's values and identity. Schussler and Collins (2006) suggest that students are not the only ones who benefit from these relationships, as teachers and the school as a whole capitalize on individual attempts to care for each other.

Noddings (1988) describes the process of caring enough to learn about an individual, and then to validate them, as confirmation. Confirmation reveals to students an attainable image of themselves (Noddings, 1988, p. 224). For students schooled through educación, confirmation is displayed through schools' respect for students' lives outside of school. This includes visible partnerships between students' schools, families, and communities, as well as the incorporation of family and community values into school culture and classroom lessons.

Schultz (1998) suggests that this process is difficult to accomplish in schools due to pervasive messages about learning and education. Schussler and Collins (2006) suggest that two of these pervasive messages include: 1) adherence to the belief that care and academic achievement are mutually exclusive, and 2) a presumption that schools and teachers know how to care. In educación, care is not only part of the formula for student achievement, but a precondition to academic success. In U.S. schools, for example, care between teachers and students can look different. Teachers might believe that they are showing care by planning lessons that they believe are effective and engaging. On the other hand, students might not see their experiences and stories reflected in those lessons, and fail to be engaged as a result. Likewise, students might find that the teacher's focus is on planning lessons around standards without a focus on who they are as individual

learners. Though the teacher in this scenario might be effective for some students in that fictional classroom, other students might not find that teacher to be effective at all. Pervasive in this model is the idea that an effective teacher equates to a caring teacher. Administrators who examine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom can reinforce this message in teacher evaluations if attention is not paid to the students' lack of engagement. In an educación model, however, care is determined by students and not by the administrator evaluating the teacher's instructional skills.

Failure to discuss the importance of how to care in relationships between teachers and students has tremendous consequences for performance in schools. Valenzuela's (1999) study of U.S.-Mexican youth illustrates this point. Whether U.S.-Mexican youth identified as being authentically or aesthetically cared for had a tremendous impact on their academic performance. In her study, Valenzuela (1999) found that:

Teachers expect students to demonstrate caring about schooling with an abstract, or *aesthetic* commitment to ideas or practices that purportedly lead to achievement. Immigrant and U.S.-born youth, on the other hand, are committed to an *authentic* form of caring that emphasizes relations of reciprocity between teachers and students. (p. 61)

Unlike authentic care, aesthetic care is superficial. Aesthetic care only requires teachers and students to care about schooling as a process reflected in high attendance rates, completed homework assignments, and proficient test scores. This type of care lacks the confirmation requirement that is present in authentic care. Authentic care requires that educators and students know each other in order to engage in a reciprocal, caring

relationship (Noddings, 1988). Though Valenzuela's (1999) study is helpful for thinking about how students are engaged in an interpretation of care with their teachers, the HCC participants in this study revealed that this critical component of schooling is complicated by the reality that care is defined differently among individuals and their context. In other words, due to the complex identities and experiences of the individuals involved in building relationships, many factors influence how care is interpreted.

Consequently, schools' emphasis on aesthetic care over authentic care—technical mastery over relationships—perpetuates the feeling that schools are uncaring, which negatively impacts student performance (Valenzuela, 2000). In Valenzuela's (1999) study, she found that some students dealt with feelings of rejection from educators by inverting their feelings of authentic care and confirmation (Noddings, 1988) for teachers. One student in the study, Susana, who was once asked by a former science teacher to stop raising her hand so much in class, illustrated this defensive tactic by “lower[ing] her expectations about the likelihood of forming productive relationships with teachers” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 72). Instead of validating Susana's curiosity by encouraging her excitement in class, the teacher failed to recognize the consequences of his comment. Had the teacher and Susana had a better, closer relationship, the remark might not have had such a detrimental effect on Susana's future participation in other classes. Likewise, a closer relationship with the teacher might have encouraged Susana to interpret the remark as being light-hearted, or her teacher could have understood Susana's sensitivity to such comments and might have refrained from saying anything at all. As this example

illustrates, the messages educators are conveying and the ways students are interpreting them depends on the type of relationship teachers and students have built.

One example of how authentic caring relationships can be built between students and adults in an educational space comes from a Chinese American youth CBO. Low-income Chinese American youth in Wong's (2008) study shared their interpretations of care at their respective schools. They discussed how many of them found their ethnic CBO to be much more caring than their school environment. Wong's (2008) study found that the CBO differed from school because it trained tutors to build relationships with youth while still focusing on their academic success. It also fostered a family atmosphere that centered on academic success. As a result, Wong (2008) concluded that the CBO, unlike the youths' schools, was able to support their Chinese American students by providing them with a "sense of trust and caring, sense of ethnic self and identity, sense of home and safe space, [and by] serving as role models" (p. 710). Like in Valenzuela's (1999) study, the CBO emphasized authentic care over aesthetic care in order to support their students in this way. More importantly, students at the CBO responded to this type of care through their drive to excel academically at the center.

As one aspect of youth development, authentic care promotes youth access to social capital (Michael et al., 2007; Schussler & Collins, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999; Wong, 2008). According to Ream (2003), social capital is broadly defined as "the availability and utility . . . [of] relationship networks from which an individual is potentially able to derive various types of support via social exchange" (p. 238). Viewed in this light, social networks are forms of currency; relationships can be converted into other forms of

capital. To gain access to social networks, relationships between individuals must be built through trust.

With the ability to inhibit or encourage the building of social capital, care forces educators to examine the way school practices can divide or unite students. Valenzuela's (1999) study describes schools' emphasis on aesthetic care as being a subtractive schooling process, which detrimentally impacts students' ability to participate in social capital. She found that many non-native English speaking students longed to be accepted by native English speaking peers because of their school's emphasis on the primacy of Standard English. Students who spoke and were literate in Standard English received higher academic marks. As a result, many non-native English speaking students in her study felt pressure to assimilate quickly, so that they could participate in study groups and classroom discussions with proficient Standard English speaking peers (Valenzuela, 1999). Students who did not assimilate quickly often felt alienated and marginalized. While this caused many non-native English speaking students to feel disrespected by their school, this subtractive schooling process also unintentionally produced wedges between student groups, which contributed to students' underachievement (Valenzuela, 1999).

On the other hand, Schussler and Collins's (2006) study demonstrates how social capital can be built by encouraging authentic forms of care in schools. Schussler and Collins's (2006) study at Middle College, an alternative high school, illustrates this process through the school's mission: Inclusion for all. As a requirement for students to be enrolled and for teachers to be hired there, all parties had to buy into this mission. In

their study, Schussler and Collins (2006) found that many students who enrolled at Middle College did so as an alternative to dropping out of school completely due to “the low quality of interaction between students and their school” (p. 1462). One student in this study explained how “a ‘fine, attractive, athletic guy’ and the ‘the guy that wears dresses and black coats and mascara’ do not think twice about cordially greeting each other in the hallways” (Schussler & Collins, 2006, p. 1478). In this school, the social marginality that often divides students in school, and that often prevents them from benefiting from social capital (Valenzuela, 1999), was minimized.

To illustrate how learning and care can be viewed as interdependent, Schussler and Collins (2006) also cite an interview with two students who stated that teachers will “suffer if you suffer . . . they’ll try and get you to care. They’ll try and get you learning” (p. 1462). Key to this relationship is teachers’ attempts to demonstrate authentic care for students (Valenzuela, 1999) and students’ acceptance of those teachers and their care (Noddings, 1988). When teachers showed students genuine concern for their academic progress, students reciprocated this care by trying to learn—for themselves and for their teachers. In contrast to the students in Valenzuela’s (1999) study who displayed their frustration with forms of care they perceived as superficial, students at Middle College used their relationships with teachers to capitalize on learning opportunities, and ultimately to achieve academic success (Schussler & Collins, 2006). Though care was interpreted differently among students in both studies (Schussler & Collins, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999), I argue that the interpretation and politics of care is even more

complex than these two studies demonstrate. Likewise, not all scholars agree that the presence of caring relationships can be viewed succinctly.

Critiques. The recognition of care is deeply contextual and subjective, and some scholars disagree about its role in school. Critics of the role of care in school as a way of promoting academic success among students do not argue about its value, but rather about whether or not it can truly be accomplished in ways that all parties recognize equally (Hoagland, 1990; Katz, 2007). One concern that these critics assert is the ability of all parties in a caring relationship to be non-judgmental (Hoagland, 1990). These critics highlight the role of personal bias and experience in shaping the way that care is given, received, and perceived between individuals. Because of the identities and experiences that individuals bring into their relationships, the ability to fully confirm an individual depends on the interpretations of those who are involved. As with every interpretation, reading the other person is never going to be completely accurate.

Though differences of opinion exist about whether or not authentic care can always be present in schools, some argue that institutions are discursively constructed spaces (Gee, 1999/2005; Fairclough, 1989/2001). Viewed in this way, schools have the potential to be shaped into caring spaces. Likewise, the process of schooling is not static, even though current education policies and longstanding ideologies make changing the way that schools operate difficult to imagine (Apple, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The roles of community and family values and the extent to which they are infused in curricula and school policies, along with the role of school-community partnerships, distinguishes educación from education. While these scholars recognize the

inhibition of these policies and ideologies, they still advocate for educación principles to be reinforced in schools. The next section discusses how to encourage educators to employ culturally relevant pedagogy as a way to infuse students' family and community values into classroom lessons and school policy.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

As one way to promote educación, some researchers contend that culturally relevant pedagogy in schools is important (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The integration of students' culture in teaching and school curricula, known as culturally relevant pedagogy, has long been upheld as one essential way to bridge students' cultural backgrounds and school. In this study, I use Gutstein, Lipman, Hernandez, and de los Reyes's (1997) definition of culture to describe:

The ways in which a group of people make meaning of their experiences through language, beliefs, social practices, and the use and creation of material objects . . . and because culture is continually being socially constructed . . . it cannot be reduced to static characteristics or essences. (p. 712)

Based on this definition, culture exceeds the boundaries of race, national origin, and language. On the other hand, these aspects of an individual or group can also be used to characterize commonalities from which culture can be imagined.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is generally characterized as developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive, which means that teachers use "students' cultural orientations, background experiences, and ethnic identities as conduits to facilitate their teaching and learning" (Gay, 2002, p. 614). Often confused with concepts like

multicultural education (Banks, 1993; Erickson, 1987; Gay, 1979), culturally relevant teaching is a “pedagogy of opposition” (Ladson-Billings, 1992b, p. 314) and centers curricula and instruction directly around the students seated in the classroom (Smith-Maddox, 1999). This teaching method has been argued to be especially, but not exclusively, beneficial to students from marginalized backgrounds in the U.S. because it emphasizes high academic standards, critical thinking and problem solving in the context of students’ lives, creative and courageous instruction styles, and cultural competence.

Furthermore, culturally relevant teaching practices affirm and build students’ identity through their emphasis on cultural competency (Gay, 1979, 1985, 1994; Gutstein et al., 1997). Culturally relevant pedagogy refers to ethnic identities “as the dimension of a person’s social identity and self-concept that derives from knowledge, values, attitudes, the sense of belonging, and the emotional significance associated with membership in a particular ethnic group” (Gay, 1994, p. 151). Gay’s (1994) study on identity formation in school argues that students begin school with self-ethnic pride. Through socialization in school, students internalize subliminal messages disseminated through curricula. Over time, they learn to respond to the beliefs and attitudes assigned to their ethnic identity (Gay, 1994). Educación and culturally relevant pedagogy are both concerned with how students perceive their level of care in school—particularly as they interpret the ways that schools respect the identities they bring into this space and how this influences their educational experience—and they are also both critical frames for interpreting Haitian American students’ schooling experiences in this study.

Research on culturally relevant pedagogy tends to highlight academic disparities among African American and Mexican American students (e.g. Gay, 2002; Gutstein, et. al, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1992a, 1992b, 1995). To address the absence of research highlighting culturally relevant pedagogy with Haitian American students in the U.S., this study theorizes ways that culturally relevant pedagogy can also be used to enhance the academic performance of students in this community.

High standards. Emphasis on high standards is one central component of culturally relevant teaching. This belief positions teachers as the gatekeepers to students' academic success. Whether or not students are able to succeed depends on their teachers' approach to lesson planning and curriculum design. Through teaching expertise and curriculum design, teachers reinforce this value by: (1) believing that all students have the potential to rise to high expectations; (2) teaching beyond the curriculum set by their districts; (3) viewing the high-stakes testing movement in education policy as being tangential to their instruction; and (4) striving to grow as skillful practitioners.

Many researchers suggest that culturally relevant teachers are characterized by their belief that all students can achieve high standards, so they challenge students intellectually (Erickson, 1987; Gay, 2002; Gutstein et al., 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 1997; Lee, 1998; Lipman, 1995; Tate, 1995). In Ladson-Billings's (1992b) research with eight teachers recognized for their success in teaching African American students, she noted how one teacher believed that "all children can learn . . . maybe not every subject matter to the same degree" (p. 317), so she refused to accept student failure. As Ladson-Billings's (1992b) observation suggests, culturally relevant teachers are not

discouraged from setting high expectations for their students even when negative stereotypes are attached to different facets of their identity (Gay, 2002). At the same time, teachers engaged in culturally relevant teaching are not unrealistic about variability in student performance and the rate at which individuals achieve.

With the belief that all students can be successful, culturally relevant teachers critique the experience of schooling rather than the students who are experiencing the schooling process. In other words, teachers do not view student failure as a deficiency stemming from the student, but focus instead on their own practice. Teachers enter a process of critical reflection that questions how they have chosen and used curricula and instructional strategies (Erickson, 1987; Gutstein et al., 1997). For example, Erickson (1987) illustrates reflection on student failure by suggesting that “when we say [students] are ‘not learning’ what we mean is that they are not learning what school authorities, teachers, and administrators intend for them to learn as a result of intentional instruction” (p. 344). By questioning student failure through the lens of pedagogy, culturally relevant teachers maintain high academic expectations and modify their instruction and curricular choices to help all students succeed.

Curriculum and instruction. Along with high expectations, culturally relevant teachers do not see the curricula and standards assigned by districts as limitations (Gay, 2002; Gutstein et al., 1997). These teachers are confident that the intent of education is not to deliver facts for memorization but to teach students skills that will empower them; Gay’s (2002) study argues that if “the primary focus would be on these substantive elements instead of the content in which they are embedded, then it would be easy to find

entrees for the inclusion of multicultural education” (p. 624). Adding to Gay’s (2002) argument are scholars such as Lee (1998) and Ladson-Billings (1997), who suggest that curricula for culturally relevant teachers should come from students’ interests and identities, and should also be grounded in the complexities of the real world.

To show how this works in the classroom, many studies have illustrated culturally relevant pedagogy in mathematics classrooms (Gutstein et al., 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1997; Tate, 1995). Most studies observed how culturally relevant math teachers posed problems to be analyzed and solved with students, without the use of traditional worksheets or problem sets (Gutstein et al., 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1997; Tate, 1995). This approach to math encouraged critical discussions about math concepts.

Many of these studies have focused on culturally relevant teaching practices in math classrooms because of the necessity of this knowledge for economic advancement in the job market, which then leads to social advancement (Ladson-Billings, 1997). This reality is especially critical for students from traditionally lower socioeconomic communities. To illustrate this point, Ladson-Billings (1997) argued that, “algebra is a curricular gatekeeper . . . urban students cannot continue to be tracked out of it; in the current arrangement of the curriculum . . . [it] can mean increased educational and economic opportunity for students” (Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 698). Perhaps Ladson-Billings’s (1997) belief in the critical role of mathematics as a key to social mobility explains the abundance of research in this area.

Though culturally relevant pedagogy is touted as a valuable method in the classroom, some studies highlight its obstacles as well. Gutstein et al. (1997) provide an

example of the assumption that educators are using curricula in culturally relevant ways even though most curricula are infused with Eurocentric ideologies. This multi-year study of eight teachers in one predominately Mexican American school examines the implementation of the MiC Math Curriculum developed in the Netherlands and adopted by some U.S. school districts to “be Americanized for U.S. schools” (p. 717). In the case of the MiC Math curriculum, the only culturally relevant way that it was used was by Americanizing the curriculum (Gutstein et al., 1997). Although Gutstein et al. (1997) briefly mention how the students in their study were predominately Mexican American with strong ties to Mexican culture and the Spanish language, they failed to interrogate how an Americanized curriculum that is centered on Eurocentric epistemologies would still have been inappropriate as well as inadequate for these students.

Testing and standards. In addition to teaching beyond district-prescribed curricula, teachers engaged in culturally relevant pedagogy are not intimidated by high-stakes testing (Menken & Garcia, 2010; Smith-Maddox, 1999). These teachers view state testing as being congruent to their own expectations for student achievement or tangential to their instruction (Menken & Garcia, 2010). According to Smith-Maddox (1999), the national standards movement that continues to occupy the agenda of education policy in the U.S. “pertains to the call for tests to serve as indicators for determining whether the desired standards are being met and learning has occurred” (p. 303). In contrast to educators who view high stakes testing as a way to punish schools,

teachers engaged in culturally relevant pedagogy view it as relatively unimportant compared to what they see as education's larger purpose: To empower students.

Lipman's (1995) study, for example, witnessed how one teacher, "gave [students] their standardized test scores and mapped out a plan with them for improvement" (p. 204), without centering her entire curriculum on test performance. While a few teachers were focused on teaching "subject-wise" test-taking strategies, students in this particular classroom were taught to believe that mandated tests were an administrative task and not the purpose of their education (Lipman, 1995). Above all, these studies show that culturally relevant teachers recognize the congruence, as well as the incongruence, of standards involved in accountability and high-stakes testing (Menken, 2008; Menken & Garcia, 2010). Instead of focusing solely on testing strategies, culturally relevant teachers embrace high-stakes assessments as another routine task.

To teach in these culturally relevant ways, teachers must be skillful. Culturally relevant teachers are reflective practitioners who embrace growth, change, and criticism (Gay, 2002), and they are experts in their subjects (Ladson-Billings, 1997). Studies citing the skillfulness of teachers engaged in this process characterized them as critically reflective, analytical, and caring teachers who viewed their teaching as meaningful, a calling, or both (Gay, 2002, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1997). Gay (2002) extends teacher knowledge to include "critical consciousness of self and others for all teachers [as] an important pillar of culturally responsive teaching" (p. 619). More specifically, Gay (2002) argues that teachers must use a critical cultural consciousness to reveal and analyze behaviors in educational settings that may influence the pedagogy they bring to

their classrooms. Implied in both scholars' observations is the importance of culturally relevant practitioners' prerequisites of skillfulness, knowledge ability, and critical reflexivity.

Cultural competence. Cultural competence is another critical component of culturally relevant teaching (Erickson, 1987; Gay, 1979, 1985, 1994, 2002; Gutstein et al., 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1992a, 1992b; Lipman, 1995). Educators engaged in culturally relevant teaching demonstrate cultural competence by interrogating their own practice and using resources to instruct students based on the different identities in the classroom. Cultural competence is not viewed merely as knowledge that is imparted to students, but as a process that engages teachers and students reflexively. Through cultural competence, teachers validate multiple facets of student identity. For example, some teachers might include different languages and speech networks into daily instruction (Erickson, 1987). For Haitian American students, this work is even more challenging and necessary. Like speakers of many Southeast Asian languages (Hornberger, 1992), for example, Haitian Americans have little access to bicultural resources due to their status as a minority among other minority language communities in the U.S.

To teach students cultural competency, culturally relevant teachers reject a colorblind ideology. Toward this goal, teachers recognize the need to assess their own cultural competency. Researchers note that culturally relevant teachers confront the false illusions of colorblindness and neutral policies (Gay, 2002). The failure to confront a colorblind position is problematic when working with ethnically diverse students because

it reinforces the belief that “the educational enterprise is culture neutral” (Gay, 2002, p. 617). By engaging in critical self-reflection, teachers can deconstruct their own biases towards education and knowledge. More importantly, they can recognize the limitations of their assumptions regarding students’ culture, language, and race (Tate, 1995). Teachers’ validation of students’ linguistic identity, for example, helps them to see that the rejection of certain facets of their identity is not a requirement for academic success. In Gay’s (1979) study, which highlights how student identity is validated through multicultural texts, she found that:

Children who are secure in their identity, feel good about themselves, and are excited about what is happening in the classroom, are more likely to engage eagerly in learning activities and achieve higher levels of academic performance than those who find the classroom hostile, unfriendly, insensitive, and perpetually unfamiliar. (p. 327)

Since U.S. schools are sites where hegemonic practices get reinforced, students who do not come to school with privileged Western epistemologies are labeled as low academic achievers (Erickson, 1987). Lumped into an imagined Black racial category in traditional school data practices, identity validation and construction is a complicated reality for Haitian Creole speaking students in the U.S., particularly due to the fact that they are not a visible linguistic minority group (Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2005; Stepick, 1998).

Sociopolitical Consciousness. As another aspect of teaching students to be culturally competent, culturally relevant teachers encourage students to critique their

positions within American society. They encourage students to interrogate hegemonic practices, and teach them to challenge knowledge production from authoritative figures, including themselves (Erickson, 1987; Gay, 2002; Gutstein et al., 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Lee, 1998; Smith-Maddox, 1999; Tate, 1995).

Viewing it as an important aspect of being a successful student, teachers reinforce the belief that education is more than mastering subject matter content. In lessons about literacy, for example, they teach students that reading and writing is “less about instructional methods than the social and political purposes of literacy . . . [it is] for human liberation and social empowerment” (Ladson-Billings, 1992b, p. 313). Students in these classrooms also engage in conversations about ways that social stratification is present in their lives.

Students still critique their position within their community and their school even when teachers do not intentionally engage in culturally relevant teaching, which can have detrimental consequences for students’ identity development and academic performance (Gay, 2002). Gay’s (2002) work also reminds educational stakeholders that “students of color are perceived to have more social adjustment problems in school . . . some of the disciplinary problems created by these students are simply their resistance to the kind of social, personal, and academic treatment imposed on them by teachers” (p. 618). Students finding themselves unrepresented and discriminated against within this system will find ways to show their critique, sometimes through forms of resistance (Gay, 2002; Erickson, 1987).

By engaging in the critical aspect of culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers assist students in building cultural capital. According to Smith-Maddox (1999), cultural capital “consists of societally valued tastes and consumption patterns that reflect the cultural background, knowledge, disposition, and skills that are passed on from one generation to the next” (p. 10). The cultural capital necessary to succeed in U.S. schools includes knowing how to access teachers, counselors, and school administrators as resources. Currently, academic achievement in the U.S. takes for granted that students have Eurocentric forms of cultural capital, such as the ability to speak and be literate in English. Thus, culturally relevant teachers view the purpose of education as a way to help students build cultural capital, which empowers them to achieve academic and socioeconomic success.

Classroom ecology. To promote cultural competency, culturally relevant teachers intentionally create a classroom ecology that emphasizes a student-centered model. Inside culturally relevant teachers’ classrooms, images of heroes and heroines from multiple cultural backgrounds are displayed, along with student work and learning strategies (Lipman, 1995). According to Ladson-Billings (1992a), teachers who use their classroom space to enhance student learning and achievement through visual stimulation, with the intent to promote cultural pluralism, create literate environments. Gay’s (2002) work with culturally relevant teachers echoes Ladson-Billings’s (1992a) and Lipman’s (1995) observations of classroom ecology by stating how “tremendously powerful lessons are taught by and through what is on display in the classroom” (p. 621). More importantly, culturally relevant teachers are able to construct environments where

students continue to see that “cognitive competencies are situated rather than absolute—that everyday representations and operations are neither incorrect nor impoverished, [but] merely different” (Lee, 1998, p. 269). Thus, culturally relevant teachers engage their students in critiques of social order through multiple mediums.

Through these practices, culturally relevant teachers reveal inequities in the schooling experiences of students from non-dominant backgrounds. Scholars stress the need for culturally relevant pedagogy in schools with students from lower socioeconomic and / or non-White racial backgrounds due to the subtle, pervasive teaching practices that have traditionally led to the unequal treatment of students from these backgrounds. Smith-Maddox (1999) makes this argument, noting that “throughout the [U.S.] educational system, the interplay between class and culture leads parents with different cultural knowledge, strategies, routines, rituals, and practices to negotiate different pathways for their children’s educational success” (Smith-Maddox, 1999, p. 305). Failure to respect the different forms of cultural capital that students bring into the classroom can lead non-White American and non-middle class students to perform poorly in school.

Moving Forward

The role of students’ families, communities, and cultures has always been an important factor in the explanation and understanding of academic success “not only at the collective (ethnic group) level, but also at the individual (context-specific) level” (Trueba, 1988, p. 271). Rooted in students’ family values and community lessons, Ladson-Billings’s (1997) definition of culture extends that of Gustein et al. (1997) by

adding that “[culture’s] transmission is both explicit and implicit” (p. 700). Despite the ways that academic achievement has been framed for many ethnic minority groups in the United States, Gay (1994) reminds educators that it is rare for discussions about obstacles and possibilities in public schools to occur without emphasizing growth rates among immigrant youth. She also points to the contradiction that “when reform proposals are presented, these groups and issues are conspicuously absent” (Gay, 1994, p. 151). As educación and culturally relevant pedagogy literature reflects, the lessons that students bring into the classroom from their families, communities, and cultures have been fundamental to the ways that educational disparities have been understood in the U.S. Since little has been written about Haitian American students’ experiences with educación and culturally relevant pedagogy in the U.S., this study will contribute to the literature by addressing these areas.

Chapter 3

Sense Making

During the start of the 2011-2012 school year (late August), students shared with me how teachers, others at the HCC, and they themselves were laying the foundation for the way they would be experiencing school for the rest of the academic year. Themes that emerged through data collection and analysis all point to the research questions that guide this thesis: (1) How can an ethnic CBO help educators and researchers understand educación? (2) How can this work help educators and researchers think more strategically about implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in schools?

Purpose

The investigation of these two research questions served two main purposes. First, this study attempted to understand ways that ethnic CBOs are currently contributing to the education of students from immigrant communities. Based on the data in this study, there is a direct, bilateral relationship between the HCC and students' experiences in their schools. Further analysis of this relationship illuminated how the process of schooling was also affecting students' education at the HCC. By exploring these issues through concepts of educación and culturally relevant pedagogy, I wanted to understand what traditional public schools can learn from students' participation in ethnic CBO programs. Despite their influence on students' educational experiences in school, ethnic CBOs like the HCC are relatively invisible as school partners. Though invisible, the pervasiveness of accountability discourses and dominant schooling practices still dictated how academic support and education was viewed at the HCC.

From the location of this invisible relationship, this study aims to help educators, in schools and ethnic CBOs, understand what type of educational experience students are seeking in out-of-school programs. Likewise, I hope that this study reflects how the schooling experience of students from ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically marginalized communities reflexively impacts youth programs and their practice. Many students at the HCC identified with the intersection of these social locations. Likewise, the HCC's youth program acknowledged and addressed how students' individual, family, and community identity influenced their educational experiences in school.

To transparently lay the foundation for how these questions and arguments were formed, this chapter explains how my own epistemological standpoints and the theories that I am committed to significantly shaped this study. Specifically, this chapter focuses on how my research epistemology has been influenced by postcolonial theory, poststructural theory, and feminist theory. As such, this study was designed using qualitative and ethnographic methods.

Theoretical Framework

Researcher epistemology. Like any researcher, I entered this study with epistemological assumptions that guided how I chose my research questions and designed the study. According to Lather (1992), epistemology refers to "one's philosophy of what it means to know" (p. 92). Deceptively logical, different epistemologies have long competed with privileged forms of knowledge maintained through systems of social stratification (Collins, 2000; Scheurich & Young, 1997) and political battles over what

makes research “scientific” (Berliner 2002; Feuer, Towne, & Shavelson, 2002; Burkhardt & Shoenfeld, 2003; Gee, 1999/2005; Lather, 2004; Raudenbush, 2005). The codification of evidence-based research into laws, like the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* of 2001, represents one example of the politics behind privileged research epistemologies (Berliner, 2002). Failure to recognize biases in epistemologies may result in epistemological racism (Scheurich & Young, 1997), which reinforces Western society’s ways of knowing while silencing others.

Despite my training in graduate research methods courses, I started my study at the HCC with my own epistemological biases. This was illustrated in one encounter with Bernie, a 30 year-old male volunteer at the HCC. Bernie was educated in Haiti and worked there as a journalist before coming to the U.S. While I sat jotting my observations one afternoon, a student approached me and said, “that man wants to talk to you” and pointed to the room adjacent to the program director’s office, located towards the far left of the youth activity room.

When I approached him, Bernie proceeded to say, “Can I ask you some questions?” without any explanation about why he wanted to ask me questions, and without explaining what the questions were. Though wary, I said, “Sure,” believing that his questions would be harmless. His first few questions were about my relationship with my significant other at that time. I became visibly uncomfortable, but stayed to be polite. Then he asked me questions about my sexual history. Stunned and offended by his question I responded with, “I’m not answering that.” Then I began asking him about the purpose of these questions. He explained that he was practicing interview questions for

his medical technician program at a local college. He expressed to me that he was shocked that he received the same reaction from adults at the HCC as he did from me. As Peshkin (1988) suggested, I made note of this moment for being a spot where I felt a heightened sense of emotion—anger in this case—which I needed to work through later.

The next day, I expressed my discomfort with his questions and how I thought he should not be interviewing people at the HCC without telling them what his questions were about first, considering the vulnerable population that goes to the HCC for services. In response, he reminded me that he did ask me if he could ask me questions, and argued that I was the one that had changed my mind. To his point, I realized that we viewed the process of interviewing differently. What I believed constituted a “vulnerable population” was viewed as an ignorant notion to Bernie. Because of my education, background, and status as an outsider at the HCC, I think that our miscommunication and my reaction to Bernie’s questions were based on my own epistemological racism. In other words, my offense to his questions was rooted in my education’s foundations in dominant, White, middle-class norms. Through this lens, Bernie’s questions were offensive to me. To Bernie, whose education took place in Haiti, his questions were harmless. For him, it was my reaction to his questions that caused him to be defensive and visibly confused. For me, it was my epistemological racism that interpreted his questions, which then led to our miscommunication.

A closer examination of my research questions reveals other methodological assumptions (Ercikan & Roth, 2006; Erickson, 1986/1990; Merriam, 2001). For one, focusing on individuals’ lived experiences hint at my belief that universalisms are not

accurate or productive for understanding how the meaning of school is relevant to youths' lives. In fact, my research questions suggest that the meaning of school is historically situated (Hall, 2001), locally defined (Erickson, 1986/1990; Gee, 1999/2005; Rymes, 2009), and negotiated (Bhabha, 1990) by individual Haitian Americans at the HCC.

To tease out the data collection methods that I used and the arguments for those decisions, this chapter explains the methodological framework that underlies my study. Based on my assumptions about knowledge, as they are reflected in the research questions, my concerns about issues of transparency and representation in research led me to a methodological framework inspired by poststructural theory, postcolonial theory, and feminist theory. Methods of inquiry were also selected based on these theories. According to Gee (1999/2005), "method and theory cannot be separated, despite the fact that methods are often taught as if they could stand alone. Any method is a way to investigate some particular domain" (p. 6). With this shared belief, this chapter illustrates how these theories inspired me to select particular tools of inquiry, informed my analysis, and shaped my writing. With this epistemological and theoretical grounding, interpretive research best describes the type of study that I pursued with participants at the HCC. Fundamental to this interpretive framework are poststructural beliefs about truth and knowledge (Hall, 2001), postcolonial theory's concerns with issues of representation (Bhabha, 1990; Mohanty, 1984; Said, 1989; Spivak, 1982), and feminist theory's emphasis on researcher reflexivity (Islam, 2000; Lather, 1992).

Though I present poststructural theory, postcolonial theory, and feminist theory as if they are distinctly unique, the issues raised through these theoretical lenses are more nuanced than different. Kumashiro's (2002) study of college students who identify as queer activists, for example, addressed his own issues of researcher reflexivity and representation simultaneously, through a Third World feminist perspective. Feminist poststructuralists also argue that "what we know and how we know is limited by our social positioning" (Lather, 1992, pp. 92-93). Perhaps the shared concerns among poststructural, feminist, and postcolonial researchers explain why many scholars have argued that there is no one platform for each theory (Collins, 1986; Lather, 1992; Mohanty, 1984; Zavella, 1993). One common thread in these theories, however, is a poststructural perspective about knowledge and truth that is fundamental to both postcolonial and feminist frameworks.

Poststructural theory. Poststructural theory's concerns about knowledge and truth were important for entering my study critically. According to poststructuralists like Hall (2001), discourse plays a central role in our understanding of truth and knowledge. Generally, discourse is described as language as a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1989/2001; Gee, 1999/2005; Hall, 2001; Rymes, 2009). Among the most important (yet under-recognized) productions of discourse, according to poststructural theory, are claims about "truth." Discourses that gain popularity as "truth" are supported through discursive formations that sustain "a regime of truth" (Hall, 2001, p. 76). Regimes of truth are "patterns in discourse that create the meaning of an 'object' or 'subject'" (Hall, 2001, p. 73). In this study, I view language as not only reflective of what we think in educational

contexts such as schools and youth programs in ethnic CBOs, but also as constructs of what we know and how we act in those spaces.

Many poststructuralists argue that meaning made through discursive formations in historical contexts and structures of power has the potential to be either oppressive or productive (Fairclough, 1989/2001; Gee, 1999/2005; Hall, 2001; Rymes, 2009). Linked to power, regimes of truth can produce knowledge. Constructed through discourse, “knowledge not only assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ but has the power to make itself true” (Hall, 2001, p. 76). Discourses that characterize knowledge at any one time are referred to by Foucault as episteme, and “will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at a number of different institutional sites within society” (Hall, 2001, p. 73). In educational contexts, including schools and ethnic CBOs like the HCC, regimes of truth govern how the purpose of education is viewed by stakeholders, as well as how academic success is defined.

When I entered the HCC, for example, I wondered what knowledge was being silenced. I based this question on my belief that Haitian Americans’ status in the U.S. is complicated by their racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities. To study the ways that Haitian American youth and teachers in Miami make meaning of schooling experiences through work in their communities, poststructural theory’s claims about “truth” and “knowledge” led me to believe that my study would be interpretive and context-specific.

Context-specific studies are often interpretive because they are focused on local meanings constructed by individuals (Erickson, 1986/1990; Merriam, 2001). Given the nature of schools, classrooms, and communities, poststructural theory supports

interpretive studies by asking researchers to interrogate “surface similarities [that] mask an underlying diversity . . . one cannot assume that the behaviors of two individuals, physical acts with similar form, have the same meaning” (Erickson, 1986/1990, p. 98). As the voices in my study revealed, not all Haitian American youth shared the same experiences in school. Further invalidating the practice of pan-racial categories, students in this study vocalized ways that their different experiences as Haitian Americans and linguistic minorities in Miami’s context distinguished each of them uniquely from each other and from other students placed in this category.

Postcolonial theory. Similar to poststructural theory’s concerns about knowledge and truth, postcolonial theory helped me to enter the HCC with an understanding that the way Haitian Americans at the HCC were recognized and represented throughout the study was a product of a negotiated historical process, infused with debates about racial, linguistic, ethnic, and citizenship politics. Postcolonial theorists often align themselves with poststructural and feminist beliefs about knowledge, and suggest that adherence to modernism perpetuates a crisis of representation. Bhabha (1990) even suggests that the “founding moment of modernism is colonialism” (p. 218). During an interview on the topic of representation and cultural difference, Bhabha (1990) contends that “Western modernity . . . was the moment when certain narratives of the state, the citizen, cultural value, art, science, the novel . . . [and other] major cultural discourses and identities came to define the ‘Enlightenment’ of Western society” (p. 218). For the West to maintain this identity, binary discourses between the Colonizer and the Colonized were reinforced (Said, 1989).

Through the lens of modernism, the West will remain known as the “developed” world with “a colonial hold on knowledge and skills” (English, 2005, p. 86) as long as discursive patterns in regimes of “truth” continue to reinforce this identity. In response to this long history of discursive practice in Western scholarship, particularly in the field of anthropology, Said (1989) describes postcolonial theory as an “effort to reclaim traditions, histories, and cultures from imperialism, and [as a way] of entering the various world discourses on an equal footing” (p. 219). Research on Haitian Americans in the U.S. suggests that they are no exceptions to this type of misrepresentation (Portes & Stepick, 1993; Waters, 1999).

Though postcolonial theorists recognize the dominance of colonial discourses on the representation of the Third World (Mohanty, 1984), also known as the Global south (English, 2005), they reject the idea that these individuals lack agency. They argue that as a subject within any discourse, an individual is “under the jurisdiction of a political authority, and hence passive and shaped: but [as] the subject of a sentence . . . is usually the active one, the ‘doer’” (Fairclough, 1989/2001, p. 32). While critiquing Western feminist scholarship’s representation of Third World women, for example, Mohanty (1984) extends Fairclough’s (1989/2001) position by suggesting that it is not women’s sharing of oppression in institutions and systems, but their agency that binds them as women within those systems.

Though subjects are agentive, Hall (2001) argues that they may reproduce dominant discourses, because “they are [still] operating within the limits of episteme, the discursive formation, and the regime of truth” (Hall, 2001, p. 79), whether they know it

or not. In this sense, colonial discourses are not always overt. Even more dangerous, colonial discourses and the silencing of marginalized people are often ideological. As an ideological practice, Spivak (1982) writes, “the most responsible ‘choice’ seems to be to know [ideology] as best one can, and, through one’s necessarily inadequate interpretation, to work to change it” (p. 263). Concerned with issues of representation echoed by postcolonial theorists, the analytic tools that I used in my study focused on ways to interpret meaning made by Haitian Americans at the HCC and the ideologies that underlay them.

Feminist theory. Though consensus among scholars generally points to different notions of feminist theory (Lather, 1992; Zavella, 1993), these scholars share poststructuralists’ concerns about the existence of “truth” and “knowledge.” Feminist scholars also generally agree that issues of gender construction and transparency are key components of this framework (Kumashiro, 2002; Vincent & Warren, 2001). In light of socially constructed identities, many feminist theorists aim to make the research process more equal through self-reflexivity. According to Lather (1992), self-reflexivity “is an altogether different approach to doing empirical inquiry . . . [that] disrupts received forms and undermines an objective, disinterested stance” (p. 95). By recognizing researchers as beings with values, beliefs, and experiences that are present throughout the study, reflexivity humanizes the research. As humans engage in research, Lather (1992) suggests that “the self-reflexive tale presents a ‘playlet’ constructed out of various experiences with the data and brings the teller back into the story” (p. 95). Through self-reflexivity, the researchers’ audience is provided with the assumptions, beliefs, and

experiences that have lead the researcher to the research question, data collection method, and analysis. Like any researcher, I brought my own lenses to my work with Haitian Americans at the HCC.

Grounded in poststructural theory's concern about knowledge, I conducted case study research at the HCC using ethnographic methods. In September 2010, I entered the HCC as a volunteer tutor three to four times per week during the school year. I formally collected data from June 2011 until October 2011, five days a week. During this time, my 14-month-long presence made me a permanent fixture in the HCC's yearlong program, which consisted of summer and academic year components.

As the next section highlights, I used analytic tools that helped me to analyze my interpretations of the data critically and credibly. Inspired by feminist theory's commitment to reflexivity and my role as the researcher, I also confronted issues of my own subjectivity and strategized ways to recruit participants ethically and transparently. Above all, these theories and methods are grounded in my research questions.

Research Methods

Qualitative case study. Based on my beliefs about truth and knowledge production, the methods that I used in this study were qualitative. Qualitative researchers “are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2001, p. 5). For data collection, I documented participants' experiences in field notes and interviews. Since qualitative case studies seek to illuminate researchers' and audiences' understanding of a particular phenomenon, this method was valuable to my work.

Guided by poststructural perspectives on the constructed nature of local meaning, the case study and ethnographic fieldwork were the primary methods for data collection.

One after-school and summer program in an ethnic CBO (the HCC) was the bounded system that defined my study (Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2003). The bounded system is “a single entity . . . a unit around which there are boundaries” (Merriam, 2001, p. 40). This bounded unit, the HCC, was established in 1991 with a mission to empower low-income Haitian American women and their families both socially and politically. Staff members and students refer to the woman who founded the HCC as “Big Mama.” To be consistent, I also called her Big Mama in this study. Their website provided this description:

HCC is an advocacy and social service agency located in the heart of Little Haiti, serving the needs of low income women and their families as well as victims of abuse, neglect, violence, discrimination and racism. Since 1991, HCC has championed and advocated for the rights of those who have been underserved, marginalized, disenfranchised, and discriminated against in South Florida.

Programs offered at the HCC include Adult Education and Literacy, Community Economic Development, Family Intervention and Empowerment, Health Promotion and Prevention, Immigration Advocacy, Citizenship and Public Policy, and Youth Development and Leadership. Because of its multiple services, this ethnic CBO can be characterized as a multipurpose CBO (Adger, 2001).

In this bounded unit, data collection took place in the HCC's Youth Development and Leadership Program. On the HCC's website, the Youth Development and Leadership Program is described as follows:

A year round after school and summer camp program [for] children ages 5 to 14 years old. Our after school program assists children with homework assistance, FCAT preparation, literacy activities, social skills development, as well as physical fitness. The program also offers cultural arts programs such as Haitian American folkloric dance and martial arts.

Though bounded, this ethnic CBO is not isolated from its sociopolitical context. Units of analysis are the "what" of what is being studied in a bounded unit (Yin, 2003). In this study, the units of analysis are 11 participants at the HCC: two female teachers and nine youth participants. Though the units of analysis may characterize this case study, they are not always the topic of investigation (Merriam, 2001). How these individuals made meaning of the purpose and process of school in their work at the HCC was the core category. To examine this core category, I coded data for individuals' meaning making, which was "the main conceptual element through which all other categories and properties [were] connected" (Merriam, 2001, p. 31).

Beyond providing a focus, the case study method provided deeper insight into contextual realities, which then made room for participants' voices. Loutzenheiser's (2007) research with queer youth argues that to investigate the multiplicity of lives and perspectives within the embodiment of an individual youth "necessitates a movement away from an overwhelming surety in observations and interpretations and the subject as

knowable. In these messy conversations, [Loutzenheiser is] working on / against and with an acknowledgement that truth is partial and murky" (p. 111). This is also an important point for Haitian American students. Their identities as students, leaders, Americans, Haitian Americans, racialized minorities, gendered, classed, and so forth all influence how they saw themselves at school too. To prevent casting Haitian Americans at the HCC as one monolithic group, case study research allowed me to "[listen] to [individuals], and then [interpret] at least a number of students' words and understandings in the context of their lives" (Loutzenheiser, 2007, p. 113). Focused investigations enabled me to learn how individual Haitian Americans made sense of school in their own community work, through their own discourse.

Ethnographic fieldwork. To collect data that contextualized the case study, ethnographic fieldwork was also conducted. Central to ethnographic fieldwork is the role of culture (Erickson, 1986/1990; Merriam, 2001). An investigation of culture "essentially refers to the beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of specific groups of people" (Merriam, 2001, p. 27). Definitions of culture have always been problematic though, because beliefs, values, and attitudes were only important to the individuals whose meanings made these components of culture significant. Not only were definitions of culture constructed and personal among the HCC participants in this study, they were also competing against dominant discourses that constructed identities of culture (Bhabha, 1990). As ethnographic fieldwork in this study illustrated, individual definitions of what it meant to be part of the Haitian American culture, even at the HCC, differed by individuals and contexts.

Due to the messiness of culture, significant amounts of time in the field were required to analyze competing discourses constructed in particular contexts (Erickson, 1986/1990). Since identities are also fluid and constructed within specific contexts, the ways that Haitian Americans interpreted their experiences and attached meaning to them were complicated as well. As an education-focused program, the HCC's youth program served as a space where Haitian American teachers and students interpreted, negotiated, and navigated their sense of self, school, and their membership in the HCC's Haitian American culture.

Field notes. Field notes were used to record ethnographic fieldwork at the HCC. Field notes generated from ethnographic observations were “highly descriptive” (Merriam, 2001, p. 131) and written soon after I left the field (Erickson, 1986/1990). Unlike positivist research's concern with generalizations for many people, regardless of different contexts, ethnographic case studies attempt to “optimize understanding of the case rather than generalizations beyond” (Merriam, 2001, p. 135). The rich descriptions provided in ethnographic work are the basis from which readers determine whether or not the case study's context fits their own situation (Merriam, 2001). In other words, the descriptive quality of my fieldwork provides the basis for my study's generalizability.

As a way to make my study more credible, the participation of multiple Haitian American participants contributed to the robustness of my research. Through multiple participants' interviews and experiences, my work focused on salient “universals, arrived at by studying a specific case in great detail and then comparing it with other cases studied in equally great detail” (Erickson, 1986/1990, pp. 107-108). By including more

than one Haitian American participant in my study, my research became more credible as data was triangulated across different participants' interviews and across time (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

Research Participants. In order to understand how educación and culturally relevant practices were present (yet limited) at the HCC, my interpretations of my research participants' experiences at the CBO were significant. Ms. Mesidor and Ms. Assade were the two teachers in this study. Ms. Mesidor was in her mid 40s and was a French teacher in the Miami-Dade County Public School District (MDCPS). Ms. Assade was in her early 30s and was working on her teaching certification at the time of this study. She was also a permanent substitute in MDCPS. Both teachers worked in schools with large Haitian American student populations, are Haitian American themselves, and have been the primary teachers in the Youth Development and Leadership program at the HCC for four years.

Nine Haitian American youth participants—five boys and four girls—were selected because of their age (older than 9 years) for IRB purposes, and because their attendance was consistent throughout the summer program [See Appendix A]. The five boys were Kervens (4th grade), Jake (5th grade), Jackson (5th grade), Zachary (5th grade), and Sebastien (6th grade). The four girls were Angeline (5th grade), Sherlande (5th grade), Maya (7th grade), and Regina (9th grade). Of these students, three (Jake, Kervens, and Zachary) were born in the U.S. and the rest were born in Haiti [See Appendix A]. Three of these students (Regina, Sherlande, and Sebastien) had lived in the U.S. for less than five years. Sherlande's family immigrated to the U.S. almost two years ago as a result of

Haiti's 2010 earthquake. All participants still had family in Haiti and strongly identified as Haitian American. All participants were also students in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. These teachers and students were purposefully selected because they were also participants at the HCC during the academic year, so by the time that I began to formally collect data, I had known them for ten months.

Fine, Torre, Burns, and Payne's (2006) study with Black and White public school students throughout Los Angeles was helpful for thinking about how to recruit participants for my work. The goal of their study was to engage youth activists in participatory action research, so that they could recognize injustices in their school district and address these issues collaboratively with researchers, educators, and their community (Fine et al., 2006). To recruit students for their study, they "worked in school long enough to help identify a core of youth drawn from all corners of the school" (Fine et al., 2006, p. 819). Like Fine et al. (2006), I also spent ten months at the HCC, 3-4 days per week, before recruiting participants for my study. By spending a significant amount of time in the field, I hoped to address issues of transparency. Time in the field allowed me to construct my identity at the site as an observer-participant-researcher (Merriam, 2001) and allowed the individuals at my site to learn about the purpose of my study and my beliefs. By the time I invited participants into my study, they were already familiar with many of my standpoints (Collins, 1986; hooks, 1991). My goal was to ensure that the eleven primary participants who accepted an invitation to take part in my study joined the research on a more equal footing. By spending time in school before selecting

participants for my study, I was able to build relationships with youth and others at the HCC.

Although Fine et al. (2006) do not identify how many students participated in their study, Kumashiro's qualitative study (2002) justified focusing on seven participants because they "would offer a manageable number of stories to use in [his] study and at the same time provide a diverse range of experiences and perspectives" (p. 14). Similar to Kumashiro's (2002) manageable number of participants, my study focuses primarily on the experiences of 11 Haitian Americans at the HCC.

By conducting research as an iterative process, participants other than those who are the primary units of my analysis were also included. Their insights helped me to further understand theories emerging from the data. To build theory and to triangulate data, for example, other participants—educators, community workers, and peers of the participants—were sampled theoretically. According to Glaser and Strauss (as cited in Merriam, 2001, p. 79):

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges.

Though I have chosen 11 official participants for my study, Merriam (2001) cautions that the number of participants in a sample is not easily determined. In fact, "it always depends on the questions being asked, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, [and] the resources [researchers] have to support [their] study" (Merriam, 2001, p. 80).

Likewise, this study includes the voices of four other youth participants at the site—Kristin, Kati, Jennifer, and Mikael—because field notes revealed their participation in discourses related to themes that were emerging in this study. With Merriam’s (2001) caution in mind, factors that influenced my decision to focus primarily on 11 Haitian Americans directly related to the purpose of my study and time.

Research with one case, focused primarily on 11 participants, allowed for more time to be spent in the field and therefore helped to alleviate the burden of “primitive analytic typification” (Erickson, 1986/1990, p. 149). Primitive analytic typification relates to researchers’ early attachment to findings in the research process, which can blind them to alternate theories and explanations (Erickson, 1986/1990). As a student who began this project with the goal of graduating within two years, one case and 11 participants observed (formally) over a five-month time period appeared to be logical, based on the amount of time needed to engage in interpretive research ethically and credibly. This sample size also allowed me to focus on in-depth interviews with participants.

Interviews. For the purpose of comparing across cases, some interview questions were structured so that all participants received questions that were the same. In order to elicit responses that revealed each individual’s understanding of schooling and community work experiences, interviews were also unstructured (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Unlike a structured interview aimed at capturing precise data, an unstructured interview, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), “attempts to understand the complex behavior of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may

limit the field of inquiry” (p. 75). Based on my initial research questions, my participants and I frequently engaged in unstructured interviews because I focused on attempts to understand, rather than to explain.

Although interview questions were mostly unstructured as the study progressed, questions were still thoughtful, so that I did not position participants in ways that would solicit a particular type of response (Kumashiro, 2002). According to Kumashiro (2002) and Merriam (2001), positioning interviewees through the questions posed often occurs unintentionally. Likewise, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggest that qualitative researchers are realizing how interviews are not neutral tools, but “active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (p. 64). In other words, interview questions and responses were inevitably influenced by my tone, my perceptions as a researcher, the perceptions of the participant (which included the ways in which they positioned me as an interviewer), and the context in which the interview took place.

To prevent positioning interviewees, Merriam (2001) suggests that questions framed as hypothetical, interpretive, devil’s advocate, and ideal-type situations should be posed. In Fine et al.’s (2006) study, for example, researchers did not ask students directly about their personal experiences in school. Instead, their questions openly related to ideal situations and suggestions for politicians on ways to improve their school (Fine et al., 2006). In this study, similar hypothetical questions were posed. For example, to gauge ideas about how schools can be improved for students at the HCC, I asked an ideal-type question such as “What types of classes do you wish students’ schools offered?” [See

Appendices B and C]. I also asked a devil's advocate-type question such as "Some people believe that education statistics, created by the federal and state government, suggest that all students that fit into categories used for data collection share similar education experiences. What do you think?" [See Appendices B and C]. By interviewing Haitian Americans through questions that did not highlight my beliefs about controversial topics or my assumptions about their social standing, I attempted to avoid positioning participants in ways that would cause them psychological or emotional harm.

Problems of representation were not only present during interviews, but in the process of transcription as well. Unlike written compositions produced for graduate school, "nobody speaks in standard written English" (Rymes, 2009, p. 83). Thus, Rymes (2009) argues that the choice to include types of vernacular speech through transcription is a decision in which the transcriber holds the power. As a graduate student in the U.S., I am obligated to write in certain ways (e.g. standard English using APA style 6th edition). As a researcher mindful about issues of transparency and my relationship with participants, I attempted to honor their voices by transcribing their speech the same way that I transcribed mine. Therefore, all transcriptions have been modified into Standard English.

My decision to transcribe participants' interviews in Standard English is rooted in feminist and postcolonial theory. Feminist theory helped me to think about how researchers are positioned as having more power than their participants. In this power dynamic, Fine (1994) reminds researchers that "at this Self-Other border, it is not that researchers are absented and Others are fronted . . . instead, the class politics of

translation demands that a researcher is doused quite evidently in status and privilege as the Other sits domesticated” (p. 80). Reflecting on the power to essentialize through research and writing, Brayboy (2000) shares his experience of confronting “[his] own essentializing tendencies” (p. 420). After exploring the Self-Other dichotomy in previous research paradigms, Villenas (2000) suggests that the “fascination with the exotic was also a mirror of the ways in which West and East and North and South (First World versus Third World) were defined” (p. 77). Following a history of colonial research in which the Western world is upheld as the norm and the measure to which all non-Western cultures, people, and countries have been deemed insufficient (Mohanty, 1984), researchers can unknowingly continue in this tradition.

Arguments made in postcolonial theory have inspired me to select analytic tools that push me to think more critically about how to interpret meanings made by the Haitian Americans in my study. Tools for analysis were based in research traditions of grounded theory, negative case analysis, and critical discourse analysis. By selecting these particular methods, my hope was to read the data in multiple ways so that I could represent participants in my study transparently.

Grounded theory. Grounded theory is a process-oriented theory (Cresswell, 2008) that requires researchers to collect data based on purposeful and theoretical sampling methods, and then engage in a constant, comparative, and iterative process of induction and deduction to build theory. A key tool in grounded theory is the coding paradigm through which theory is generated from data. Merriam (2001) argues that there are three phases of coding in grounded theory: open, axial, and selective coding. Open

codes are usually “initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied” (Cresswell, 2008, p. 397). Initial categories are preset by the researcher and come from the research question, so open codes require data collected from purposeful sampling. After initial data has been collected and open codes have been identified, researchers collect data focused on theory development (theoretical sampling) (Cresswell, 2008; Merriam, 2001). Codes identified after the initial phase of open coding are axial and selective (Cresswell, 2008; Merriam, 2001). Whereas axial coding attempts to build relationships among patterns in data, selective codes are the categories where hypotheses are developed (Merriam, 2001). With these codes, hypotheses generated in grounded theory are not grand theories, but “an abstract explanation . . . of a substantive topic grounded in the data” (Cresswell, 2008, p. 409). By triangulating data and engaging in a constant comparative method of analysis, grounded theory helped me to avoid the misrepresentation of participants in my study. It also helped me to add credibility to my research (Yin, 2003). By using grounded theory to focus on the local meanings that Haitian Americans ascribed to their actions at the HCC, the data in this study led me to codes that highlighted their engagement in educación.

To alleviate the problem of personal bias during data analysis, which could then lead to the misrepresentation of the Haitian Americans in my study, negative case analysis was also used. Negative cases are data that provide disconfirming evidence to working theories believed to be emerging from the data (Erickson, 1986/1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since the tendency is for researchers to attend to data that *confirms* working hypotheses and theories, “potentially disconfirming evidence is less likely to be

recorded in the field notes” (Erickson, 1986/1990, p. 148). The purpose of negative case analysis, then, is to “refine a hypothesis until it accounts for all known cases without exception” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 309). By attending to both confirming and disconfirming data in my research, Yin (2003) suggests that internal validity in my work will increase and the quality of my analysis will improve.

Critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis provided another lens through which meaning in data could be further explored. Critical theory frames research questions in discourse analysis through terms of power (Lather, 2004; Merriam, 2001). Critical theorists not only recognize unequal distributions of power in society, but they also ask questions related to “Who has power?” (Lather, 2004), “How is power negotiated?” (Bhabha, 1990), and “What structures in society reinforce the current distribution of power?” (Hall, 2001; Merriam, 2001).

Critical to my analysis was the role of discourse. In this thesis, discourse was used to describe how language reflects a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1989/2001; Gee, 1999/2005; Hall, 2001; Rymes, 2009), which included “events, things, and pieces of language that mirror socially constructed norms and ideologies” (Cannella & Viruru, 2004, p. 61). I presented this definition of discourse not to assert a “truth-oriented definition” (Cannella & Viruru, 2004, p. 61), but to provide readers with an understanding of how I used critical discourse analysis in my study.

Behind words are Discourse models (Gee, 1999/2005; Rymes, 2009) and ideologies (Gee, 1999/2005; Fairclough, 1989/2001; Rymes, 2009). According to Gee (1999/2005), there is a difference between “d” discourse and “D” discourse. Whereas

“d” discourse refers to language used in social interaction, which includes written and verbal communication, “D” discourse is “‘language-in-use’ . . . melded integrally with non-language stuff” (Gee, 1999/2005, p. 7). Though “d” discourses provide clues for what people believe to be true, “D” discourses hint at ideologies as well as ontological, epistemological, and axiological beliefs. “D” discourses are held individually, but exist because their power is backed by society’s recognition (and support) of those discourses. Viewed in this way, critical discourse analysis methods provided me with a lens through which to ask questions about how Haitian Americans make sense of their work at the HCC and in their community through the ways they talked about their participation and the ways they acted at the site. By coding these discourses, the data in this study led me to themes found in literature related to educación (Valenzuela, 1999) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Likewise, in Miller’s (2006) study of Mexican children in the U.S., she argues that researchers must examine the discourses that shape students’ identities in schools in order to understand how they make sense of their experiences. Methods in critical discourse analysis also encouraged me to ask questions such as “How are ‘D’ discourses about school used to shape Haitian American teachers’ work in their community?”, “What are the ‘d’ discourses that provide clues for those ‘D’ discourses?”, “How might the ‘D’ discourses that students brought from school to HCC reflect Miami’s longstanding history of racial segregation among Latinos, Whites, African Americans, and Black West Indians?” (Portes & Stepick, 1993), and “In what ways do these ‘D’ discourses compare and contrast within and across different data in my study?”.

Moreover, triangulating analytic tools such as grounded theory, negative case analysis, and critical discourse analysis allowed me to closely investigate Discourse models and ideologies present in the ways Haitian American youth leaders made meaning of their own identities, schooling experiences, and work in the community. With the help of these analytic tools, my hope was to address issues of representation. Beyond analysis, however, postcolonial concerns about representation remained present throughout the thesis writing process as well.

Writing as Representation

Although triangulating analytic tools was helpful for producing more credible research, it still did not address issues of representation while I wrote my dissertation. After triangulation through data, methods, and theory were taken into account, and interpretive frames were shared through self-reflexivity, I was still challenged to ask: In what ways can my interpretations still “other” the participants in my study?

One major issue that I grappled over—repeatedly—as I wrote multiple drafts of this paper is how to identify the Haitian Americans in my study. Before I came to the HCC, I thought that I would identify participants in my writing as being Haitian. As ethnic Haitians living in the U.S., I thought that this label would prevent me from placing participants in my study “outside” of an idealized American community. When I asked students to describe themselves in our initial interviews, however, many did not reference race, ethnicity, or a national identity. Rather, they described themselves through their linguistic identities—bilingual Haitian Creole and English speakers. Some, however, commented that they are Haitian American, while others only reserved the term

American to reference Black Americans in their neighborhood. This identity is further complicated by Ms. Mesidor's point that even though some Haitian Americans have homes in Miami, they spend most of their time in Haiti and consider themselves to be more Haitian than American (personal communication, August 8, 2011).

Based on the fact that many scholars have attempted to address this particular issue in their own work through different rhetorical writing devices (Kumashiro, 2002; Lather, 1992), I believe that this question points back to arguments made in poststructural theory. If knowledge and "truth" are constructed individually and contextually, how can researchers present their interpretations of other people's interpretations without silencing participants in the process? In order to communicate cohesively in this thesis, I have opted to use the title of Haitian American to describe participants in my study, regardless of their citizenship status (which I did not ask them about). This purpose is two-fold: 1) to locate the individuals in my study at the HCC and in the U.S., and 2) to acknowledge that neither Haiti nor the U.S. is a place that is foreign to my participants.

My thesis is no exception to this discursive power play. Though I agree with the danger of reproducing inequities through the use of "normal" discourses (e.g. student, teacher, etc.), as a graduate student in the U.S. I too am subjected to power. According to Seed as cited in Cannella and Viruru (2004), "language has been used as a critical dividing factor to distinguish between 'civilization and barbarism'" (p. 38). In the U.S., graduate students are often forced to demonstrate their ability to write coherently in Standard English as a way to demonstrate their intellectual ability. Those who cannot write will not pass. On the other hand, being constrained by academic rules enabled me

to be creative (Fairclough, 1989/2001). According to Fairclough (1989/2001), power constrains individuals and forces us to be social subjects, but “it is only through being so constrained that [we] are made able to act as social agents” (p. 32). As such, I hope that my thesis is able to convey what Cannella and Viruru (2004) attempted to do in their own work when they explained that “It is [their] desire to provide thoughts and possibilities that are open to critique, that would generate new ideas and previously unthought-of possibilities, and that will most likely be different for each reader” (p. 3). Like Cannella and Viruru (2004), I recognize that the discourses arising from my own work can be viewed as reproducing various unequal discourses. As one attempt to disrupt this, I hope to trouble my own use of those discourses through my analysis and writing; however, I believe that the best disruption comes from questions and critiques raised by the reader.

Feminist scholarship suggests that, in addition to issues of transparency, researchers must attend to the ways power dynamics between the researcher and the research shape the study. Many of these dynamics are understood through binary relationships. One such binary is the researcher’s status as an *insider* or *outsider* or both. Though some researchers argue that *insider* researchers are more effective in conducting research with their community (Foley et al., 2000), many scholars also highlight how the *insider* versus *outsider* binary is a myth that is really situated and relational. Some scholars who might be labeled as ethnic *insiders* have illustrated this myth in their work (Brayboy, 2000; Islam, 2000; Villenas, 2000).

Authenticity of *insider* or *outsider* status also depended on “characteristics held by the definers of what is real” (Brayboy, 2000, p. 423). Rather than being based on

ethnicity, race, gender, education, or a shared socioeconomic background alone, researchers' *insider* status depends on the participants involved and the context in which both researchers and participants are situated. Though arguably a false binary, how participants viewed me through this status impacted how they interpreted my research, which challenged me to be as transparent as possible.

Researcher identity. As a Cambodian American female researcher who grew up with my own thoughts about how differently each individual in my family defined being Cambodian or Cambodian American, despite sharing the same ethnic identity, I learned early on to reject grand narratives about what it meant to be Asian, Asian American, or even Cambodian. When I first visited the HCC, I introduced myself at the outset as a graduate student in search of a site where I could also volunteer. Though long periods of time spent in the field gave me a better opportunity to identify local meanings attached to “truth” and “knowledge,” field notes and observations were still problematic because of my own researcher subjectivity. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), poststructural ethnographers argue that researchers are still subject to biases in their observations due to their own interpretations. This understanding is how I approached my role as the researcher in this study. Feminist scholars also share this concern, and extend this conversation to include problems related to researchers' status as *insiders* and *outsiders* during the research process.

Collins (1986) and hooks (1991) refer to the position from which experience-based epistemologies stem as “standpoints.” These standpoints are “a mixture of experiential and analytical ways of knowing” (hooks, 1991). Likewise, as a Cambodian

American female raised in the U.S., personal experiences have shaped my notions of social justice and oppression. As a former middle school math teacher, my experiences working with youth influenced how I interpreted the actions of Haitian Americans in my study. Past relationships with former teachers and students shaped the types of relationships that I created with my participants. My background as an immigrant in the U.S. influenced how I read interview transcripts from other fellow immigrants, and how I interpreted field notes.

Beyond common experiences, my oddly placed identity in the context of the HCC also challenged me to reflect on my own biases. As a Cambodian American raised in a tightly-knit two-parent household, for example, different variations of what constituted a family in youths' lives at the HCC forced me to see other, more complex models of family. In my past experiences in school, the idea that neighbors, aunts, uncles, and grandparents (as well as parents) consistently were involved in youths' lives at the HCC might have provoked some teacher colleagues to believe that these youth came from "broken homes" where parents were absent, which explained everyone else's presence. In the case of the HCC and its youth, that simply was not true. Before I could see the value of these complex models, I had to understand that all of my own personal experiences reflexively shaped my standpoints and influenced my analysis.

Standpoints are also shaped through education and dominant ways of knowing. Though undeniably relevant and present, individuals' standpoints are not always recognized as a valid analytic tool. For example, Scheurich and Young (1997) state, "all of the epistemologies legitimated in education arise exclusively out of the social history

of the dominant White race” (p. 8). In this process, epistemologies associated with Western cultures are privileged, while non-Western, non-White ways of knowing may be dismissed or simply ignored. Based on my own education in the U.S., I have also been trained in Western ways of knowing. As such, my interpretations and analysis are limited by the views that I have internalized and take for granted.

Some scholars recognize the conflict between false beliefs in objectivity and the interpretive nature of research, so they provide tools to help researchers identify their own biases and interpretations (Erickson, 1986/1990; Peshkin, 1988). For one, Peshkin (1988) offers a method of auditing subjectivity. While in the research site, Peshkin (1988) suggests that researchers maintain notes on “warm and cool spots” (p. 18), which are moments or spaces during the research process where the investigator’s feelings are heightened. By returning to these moments, Peshkin (1988) suggests that researchers can “attend to the orientations that will shape what [they] see and what [they] make of what [they] see” (p. 21). Towards a goal of transparency, Erickson (1986/1990) suggests “choosing a key event early in the analysis after leaving the field, and then writing it up as two different vignettes that make two differing interpretive points” (p. 167). In my work with Haitian Americans at the HCC, these tools were helpful to interrogate my own interpretive frames, especially as I struggled with my status as an *outsider* regardless of how comfortable students and staff members made me feel. By interpreting the frames that I brought to my research, I attempted to engage in a process of re-reading (Kumashiro, 2002), whether by monitoring my own “temperature” (Peshkin, 1988) or through theory triangulation (Erickson, 1986/1990).

Similar to lessons learned in Islam's (2000) work, I approached research in Miami's Haitian American community knowing that they are not a monolithic group and that I would be viewed as an ethnic *outsider*, even though I felt myself to be more of an *insider* based on my family's experience as immigrants in the U.S. As an ethnic *outsider*, the length and consistency of my work at the HCC led many youth and staff to embrace me as an organizational *insider* and a more permanent fixture (teacher) at the HCC.

My Asian ethnic appearance, however, always distanced me from those at the HCC. Distance would be displayed through constant questions such as, "Ms. Silvy, are you Chinese? Are you Spanish? Are you White?" These questions spanned the entire duration of my time at the HCC, often coming from the same students who had asked me these questions back in September 2010.

Haitian American teachers and staff eventually viewed me as an organizational *insider* based on our gendered experiences and professional background working with youth. Because identities are fluid, messy, and constructed, whether I was viewed as an *insider* or *outsider* at the HCC depended on the individuals and context. Furthermore, feminist theory's commitments to transparency and my researcher status forced me to be thoughtful about how these issues would impact the ways I recruited participants for my work and engaged them in interviews.

Given my interpretive epistemological position, I argue that poststructural, feminist, and postcolonial theories were helpful for strategizing ways to investigate my research question. Based on my own beliefs about knowledge and truth, however, no research method or theory will ever be perfect. Therefore, the methods I used to

investigate my research questions do not claim to be universal truths or grand narratives that represent all Haitian Americans, all immigrants, or all CBOs and after school programs (ASPs). Rather, my methodological framework and tools for analysis aim to contribute to different possibilities for ways to improve public education by illuminating the educational experiences of Haitian American students in ethnic CBOs.

Limitations

In addition to chasing the impossibility of finding a grand narrative or universal truth on this journey, there were other limitations. One limitation to this study was time; more time spent at the HCC would have meant more people could have been included in this study. If the constraints of graduation and funding were not an issue, I would have extended this study to include formal data collection over a longer period of time, in order to interview parents and other community members associated with the HCC. I would also have interviewed educators from the district and the schools to gauge their responses to questions similar to those that I asked the HCC's teachers and students. In order to build a stronger case for the lack of partnership between the HCC (and organizations like them) and schools, I would have also conducted fieldwork that studied partnerships between Miami-Dade County Public Schools and other ASPs and CBOs. This would have led to a cross-case analysis to help me better understand the HCC's invisibility to public schools in this area, despite their shared goals.

Most importantly, this study is limited by my inability to speak Haitian Creole. This linguistic component to my study prevented me from interviewing youths' parents, many of whom neither spoke English nor were literate in it. Though I could have hired a

translator to facilitate and transcribe interviews, I decided not to pursue this route due to time and financial limitations. Also, introducing a translator to parents would have created other issues related to interpretation. For example, the translator would first have to interpret my questions. Then the translator would have to relay their interpretation of my question to the interviewee, and then interpret interviewees' responses and relay them back to me. Ultimately, I would have to interpret the interviewee's interpreted response for myself. To eliminate the messiness of this chain, I decided not to hire a translator. Instead of focusing on these limitations in my study, I hope that readers will view these boundaries as points of possibilities from which this research (or others like it) can be extended.

As the next chapter highlights, this methodological framework helped me to arrive at the first theme that emerged in this study: The HCC is a place where students were learning to "do" school. Though rooted in an authentic caring relationship with Haitian American students and their families, HCC teachers' approach to preparing students to be successful in school reflected a strong focus on the technical aspects of schooling. Further analysis of this aspect illuminated discourses about what success in school looks like and how to succeed in schooling environments. As a result of their focus on technical mastery, barriers to HCC teachers' attempts to be culturally relevant were present. Not only does this complicate current studies related to educación, it also highlights a current tension that exists in U.S. schools as well.

Chapter 4

Lessons about How to “Do” School

Inside the YLDP’s room, a sign above the door read: Encourage Each Other and Love. At this CBO, encouragement and love was the motivation behind the HCC’s belief that students needed to learn how to “do” school in order to be viewed as academically successful. This perspective of educación was different than in Valenzuela’s (1999) study, where she suggests that students are often subjected to lessons about how to do school at the expense of providing them with authentic care. At the HCC, authentic care motivated the belief that Haitian American students needed to be taught how to perform the identity of a successful student.

In this interpretation of authentic care, the HCC recognized schools as institutions governed by implicit cultural codes, which were then used to explicitly judge the success of students in school. In this view of educación, students’ ability to demonstrate school-sanctioned behavior was weighted equally with students’ ability to demonstrate mastery of academic content. In part, this belief was rooted in the HCC’s recognition of Haitian American students’ need to counter prejudices associated with racism and poverty in their schools.

While reinforcing the importance of performing “good student” identities, as a way to fight stereotypes, HCC teachers reflected their culturally relevant practice by explicitly sharing their reasons for emphasizing these lessons with Haitian American youth. By extension, these conversations also engaged Haitian American students in conversations that allowed them to critique their own experiences in their community and

school. However, due to pervasive messages about what was more important—performing school-sanctioned behaviors rather than engaging in social critique—these conversations were limited.

At the HCC, success in school was viewed as a mixture of students' ability to perform school-sanctioned student behaviors and to master academic content. Academically, encouragement in school was focused on the work that students brought from school. Based on students' homework assignments, HCC teachers recognized the important role that the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) played in students' performance evaluations. While HCC teachers helped students to understand and complete their homework assignments, they also attempted to rationalize the importance of standardized tests so that they could support student success in this area. In this endeavor, HCC teachers were successful at helping students stay on task and motivated to complete FCAT prep work. On the other hand, HCC teachers rarely engaged students in a critique of the role of standardized testing in their daily educational experiences.

Though HCC teachers worked hard to reinforce the importance of Haitian American students' performance of a "good student" and "successful student" identity, as the CBO defined these identities, these strategies were not used for student leadership at the HCC. Rather than emphasize students' training into a leadership identity, the HCC treated Haitian American students as if they innately held this power. Based on a family view of the Haitian American community, this model was motivated by a belief that older Haitian Americans had a responsibility to be leaders for younger Haitian Americans. On

the other hand, when adults wanted to regain control of the youth program, they often reinforced larger discourses about the role of youth in the presence of adults. This was most clearly reflected in the ways that youth leaders were encouraged to be supervisors and organizers in YLDP, but then asked to retreat back into student roles in the presence of adult leadership.

Summer: Learning School-Sanctioned Behaviors

Haitian American youths' ability to develop the skills required to perform strong student identities was emphasized throughout the summer. Proper school conduct, as teachers at the HCC perceived this aspect of schooling, was stressed as much as academic performance. This work highlighted the HCC's belief that student behavior in school had a significant impact on whether or not HCC students would be viewed as successful in school. When I asked Ms. Joseph to describe her work at the HCC, for example, she stated that, "academically it's one task. And then you have another task which is to discipline kids." Ms. Joseph's point was supported by her belief that students' families wanted their students to do well in school, but they did not always understand what additional performances were required for students to create a "good student" persona. Through their participation at the HCC, Ms. Joseph shared that teachers at the site constantly communicated the importance of this aspect of students' school identity as families came to the site to drop off or pick up their student.

Ms. Assade confirmed this point by reminding me that when families came to the HCC to pick up their child, they often asked about the student's behavior rather than their academic performance on school assignments. On an afternoon where I was asked to

teach a math game to a small group of students in an adjacent room, for example, one fifth grade Haitian American student refused to play with the group. As a result, I asked her to leave the room and to return to Ms. Assade's room. Less than one minute later, a knock at the door interrupted my game. Ms. Assade had escorted the fifth grade student back to my room to ask why the student was sent back to her room. When I explained that the student refused to play the game, Ms. Assade stated, "Okay. She needs to learn that she cannot make these decisions by herself in school. She'll get in trouble. I have to tell her dad when he comes to pick her up." Moments like these, where students failed to perform the identity of a "good student," were viewed as coachable opportunities for families and students.

The goal of teaching students school-sanctioned behaviors was not to reprimand them for challenging rules or a social order in the classroom. Instead, these moments were meant to teach students strategies to perform the identity of a student who would be viewed positively by their educators in school. Family communication in a moment like this was also intended to be an opportunity to work with community elders and reinforce the importance of performing certain identities in school.

HCC teachers' emphasis on the role of student conduct in schools was fueled by a fear that youth were already being judged by racist stereotypes in school. In addition to fearing that Haitian American students would be viewed through racist lenses by teachers at school, HCC teachers emphasized the importance of student behavior to help students move beyond negative perceptions associated with poverty. During the second week of the summer program, I entered the room to find a camera crew interviewing HCC

students. Bright lights shined in my eyes as I entered through the peeling white door and into the YLDP room. Behind the bright lights and the video camera were three adults who I had never seen before. The adults were members of the local news station. They were interviewing three students about their participation at the HCC. During the interview, all of the other students in the program were expected to sit and listen silently. To Ms. Assade's dismay, the students were not silent. When the camera crew left, she told the room, "Us African Americans get portrayed negatively on t.v. We don't need to act like ghetto children." This comment was significant and hinted at reasons why the HCC viewed student conduct to be an important skill to learn as it related to Haitian American students' academic achievement in school.

On another occasion during the summer program, Jake was reprimanded for not listening to Ms. Assade's directions when she asked students to sit quietly while she explained a writing activity. After telling him the importance of sitting quietly while she explained her directions to the room, she then picked up her cell phone and began to call a teacher at Jake's school. She spoke on the phone with the teacher while the entire room listened to Ms. Assade's conversation about the importance of listening while a teacher gives instructions. After talking publicly about the importance of listening in class, especially for African American students, she then hung up the phone and asked me to speak with him. Indirectly addressing the class she then said, "I just talked to your school" while looking at Jake. Then she turned to me and said, "maybe if someone who doesn't look like me talks to him then he'll listen." At this moment she positioned me as a racial outsider. More importantly, she was reinforcing the message to students that

their racial identity in this U.S. context, mixed with their behavior in school, mattered to their image as successful students. By positioning me as a racial outsider who could comment on the added importance of Haitian American students' conduct in school, Ms. Assade demonstrated to HCC students that non-Haitian Americans have preconceived ideas about Haitian American students due to their racial identity. This act showed the class that my Asian American identity could explain to Jake how his racially Black identity, mixed with his misbehavior, could have a detrimental effect on his perception as a student. In this moment, Ms. Assade emphasized the importance of Haitian American students' racial identity as it played into their development of a strong student identity.

Students also shared their beliefs that educators feared students based on stereotypes. According to Kervens, some adults feared students like him—Black and male. During a focus group interview, Kervens shared that he wanted to change at least one aspect of his school. He wanted the security cameras in his school removed. When I asked him what the cameras at his school were used for he said, “me...just me.” Kerven's belief that adults at his school were monitoring his behavior—secretly and closely—supported HCC teachers' beliefs that how students performed various identities in school was just as important as how they performed academically in that space.

The HCC's emphasis on helping students develop the skills to perform school-sanctioned behaviors is rooted in the U.S.'s historical struggle with racism. Like the phenotypically Black students in Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) study, HCC teachers feared that Haitian American students would be lumped into a Black racial category and associated with beliefs that they are not interested in being academically successful

because schooling was associated with Whiteness. This fear impacted how “good behavior” was defined by HCC teachers. To counter this racism, HCC teachers thought that it was imperative for students to learn lessons about proper school conduct during the summer program, before they re-entered school in the fall.

In contrast to Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) study, however, this belief did not stem from a belief that students viewed school to be associated with Whiteness. Instead, they feared the way students’ behaviors would be perceived by educators in the school. HCC teachers’ responses to misbehavior at the HCC were always framed in terms of a fear that students would exhibit these behaviors at their school, which could cause them to be dismissed as being simply oppositional and defiant. They also worried that racist beliefs about students brought into the classroom by the teacher would be concealed by their emphasis on students’ inability to perform “good student” identities. To provide students with tools to fight this type of covert racism, HCC teachers believed that they needed to intervene before students went back to their schools and behaved in non-school-sanctioned ways.

As culturally relevant educators who wanted HCC students to be critical of injustice in their community, HCC teachers talked candidly with students about why Haitian Americans needed to behave in certain ways. The goal of this message was simply to make students aware of racist views that awaited them in their schools. By making these invisible rules transparent, HCC teachers attempted to empower students with this knowledge so that they could use their behavior to perform as successful students in their schools.

Messages about the importance of student conduct were taken seriously at the HCC because participants believed that HCC teachers authentically cared for their students. In many cases, students voiced their beliefs that HCC teachers cared more for them than their teachers at school did. During one of the most serious disciplinary incidents at the HCC that summer, Regina was caught inappropriately touching a male teen volunteer. The volunteer was an older high school student. I was told about this incident while walking into the site as Ms. Assade was escorting Regina outside. Outside the front door, Ms. Assade said, “Ms. Silvy, let’s take a ride to North Miami. I have to drop off some papers for Big Mama. Regina, tell Ms. Silvy what you did.” At that point, Regina looked down at the ground with embarrassment and was silent.

Days later, I approached Regina with a question about what happened that afternoon and whether or not she felt embarrassed by Ms. Assade’s treatment of her part in the incident. To that question, Regina explained that she was not embarrassed because she believed that Ms. Assade cared about her, unlike teachers at school. She explained that if the incident had happened at school, she would have been angry and embarrassed because she felt that teachers did not care about her. She illustrated this belief by explaining how she felt that teachers at school “were only there to get paid.” Whether or not this sentiment was true, it was Regina’s belief that she received more care at the HCC than at school. Due to this belief, lessons learned about student conduct were weighted more heavily at the HCC for Regina.

Although critical lessons about student behavior were heavily emphasized during the summer, the academic year presented another aspect of student achievement: the need

to excel on Florida's state standardized test. HCC teachers shifted their work with students from a behavior standpoint toward a focus on students' academic achievement. During the first few weeks of the academic year, students' conversations about school and their homework assignments reflected the importance of Florida's state standardized test. As such, the HCC's academic focus also emphasized the importance of the state's test. Since the HCC's work with students during the academic year was focused on academic achievement, and academic achievement in school was being framed in terms of being a successful test taker, this message was reinforced during the school year at the HCC as well. Unlike Valenzuela's (1999) finding that standardized testing illustrated a lack of care for students, HCC teachers believed it was their responsibility to help students become successful in school, regardless of how their success was measured. Similar to the summer part of the HCC's youth program, these beliefs about how to help Haitian American students succeed in school stemmed from pervasive messages about schooling.

Academic Year: Test Preparation

As the summer program transitioned into the academic after-school program on the first day of school, August 22, 2011, the YLDP's focus transitioned as well. Whereas students' character development was the focus of the summer program, their ability to complete and master school assignments was emphasized during the school year. Based on students' assignments and conversations, their first week of school's assignments already focused on their future performance on Florida's high-stakes test. Consequently, to support students' academic success as it was being measured in school, the HCC's

work during the academic year shifted to reinforcing the importance of standardized testing.

One ten-year-old student, Jennifer, illustrated the importance of standardized testing by sharing her first homework assignment of the year with me. While I assisted a first grade student with his math worksheet, Jennifer approached me with a writing assignment that needed to be completed for the following day. She shared with me that she needed to write ten sentences about her goals for that year. The first sentence she wrote was, "I want to do well on the FCAT." When I asked her why she chose that particular goal first, she explained to me that her teacher told her that she would no longer be allowed to take a Spanish language class, which was her favorite elective. She explained to me that her teacher would not let her take the Spanish class because her math FCAT score was too low, so she needed to take an additional math class instead. Thus, her goal was to do well on the FCAT that year so that she could return to the Spanish class the following year.

At a different table, five older students were engaged in a conversation about their first day of school and what they had learned. The topic that they were discussing was the rating of the different schools they attended. This conversation started by me asking Zachary, "How was your day?" To my question, he explained that the majority of his first morning at school was consumed by a speech that his principal had given about his school being "one team, one goal, no limits." When asked about what this mantra meant, Zachary explained that it was about the FCAT. He went on to explain that there was a large banner in the main office that displayed this message. After Zachary finished his

explanation, the four other students at the table engaged each other in a discussion about “A” schools and “B” schools. They explained to me that this rating system was based on FCAT scores. They also shared that their teachers told them about the rating system to motivate them to become focused on the FCAT, beginning with the first day of school. As students went around the table sharing the names of their school, Zachary and Angeline responded to school names with comments like, “that’s a C school” or “that’s a B school.”

Like other conversations that began at school, HCC students often brought and processed messages they had heard from school with Haitian American peers. Conversations about the role that the FCAT played in determining the quality of their education at school were often framed by the candid discussions that their schoolteachers and administrators had in class. Rather than use these conversations to critique the role of high-stakes testing in their educational experience, the HCC became a site where the primacy of standardized testing was reaffirmed. Like Valenzuela’s (1999) study with Mexican-American youth, students’ conversations highlighted ways that standardized testing played a significant role in the lives of Haitian American students. Not only did standardized testing consume a significant amount of space in their schools—discursively and actively—it also shaped how they viewed the quality of education in their community generally. Similar to the experiences of students in Valenzuela’s (1999) study, a critical view of how standardized testing impacted Haitian American students’ educational opportunities (or lack thereof) remained uninterrupted at the HCC.

Standardized testing and its importance were reinforced by HCC teachers as well, despite their critical view of what school success looks like. In conversations with Ms. Assade about what she believed HCC students should be learning in school, for example, her comments always gravitated towards the standardized curriculum. More specifically, she stated that testing is important for students. According to her, “it shows what you know . . . I believe that the people who created it created it for a reason, so I’m not against it.” Although Ms. Assade’s words emphasized the importance of standardized testing in students’ academic careers, her lessons about what students needed to learn during the summer program took a more critical view. During the summer, Ms. Assade emphasized the importance of students’ behavior as an indicator of their ability to be seen as academically successful, but during the school year, her focus was on helping students succeed in what schools emphasized as being important.

The irony of this shift was significant for the way that the HCC emphasized educación. In general, educación was reflected in the HCC’s building of relationships with students, families, and the community as a way to support students’ academic success. Based on the historical context of Haitian American students’ educational experiences in Miami, the CBO was viewed as a supportive and caring place by its participants. Through relationship building, students and families gained trust in HCC teachers. This included the support of HCC teachers’ belief that students needed to be able to perform strong student identities through behavior and high-stakes test scores.

In their mission to cultivate strong student identities, HCC teachers encouraged Haitian American students to be leaders in the program. Based on a family model of

education, older Haitian American youth were expected to take care of younger youth, just as they would do for their own younger siblings. In turn, younger youth were expected to treat older Haitian American peers with respect. Through the lens of family-oriented and intergenerational relationships, older Haitian American youth at the HCC were expected to have leadership skills before they entered either the summer or academic year program. As the following section illustrates, this was clearly demonstrated in the ways that Haitian American youth were positioned as leaders. On the other hand, pervasive messages about the role of youth in society and students in school often played into the quick promotion and demotion of leadership roles among youth at the HCC.

Student Leadership

In terms of character development, the HCC viewed Haitian American youth as innate leaders. Instead of teaching them skills directly, youth were placed into leadership positions that entailed overseeing programs for younger students. This model went beyond the literal teaching of leadership skills. It showed youth that the organization believed that they entered the CBO with untapped leadership abilities.

Older youths' leadership and the high expectations for their ability to accomplish tasks given by HCC teachers and administrators motivated younger Haitian American students to become leaders as well. By watching older youth assume leadership roles, younger students aspired to be in the same position as their older peers. Informally, this model taught students that they were already responsible for younger people in their community and inspired younger Haitian Americans at the HCC to want to come back

and volunteer too. Older youth were assigned tasks that included planning programs for younger students at the site, acting as room supervisors, coordinating the distribution of snacks and lunches, and being tutors in the tutoring program.

Trust in HCC students' abilities to rise to this level of responsibility was most clearly illustrated during the first week of the summer program. When I walked into the YLDP's room on the first day of the summer program, I quickly realized that there was no adult teacher. I learned soon after that the program had not hired a teacher yet and that the only teachers in the program at that point were a fifth grade student, a tenth grade student, and two eleventh grade students. These four students were responsible for planning and running the eight-hour program. The activities that were planned for the sixty students enrolled in the summer program included three parts: a morning literacy portion, lunch, and a late afternoon activity. To help these four leaders, three upper elementary students were recruited to be junior leaders by the four youth leaders. This structure continued for the first two weeks of the summer program until Ms. Assade was hired to be the lead teacher.

This leadership structure was reflected in the academic year, too. During the academic year, students were always encouraged to tutor each other. It was not uncommon to see upper elementary students giving spelling tests to first and second grade students. On one occasion, I noted how a second grade student was helping a first grade student with their printing. While watching her write sentences using her spelling words, the second grade student asked the first grade student to leave larger spaces between her words. When the first grade student failed to leave spaces that were suitable

to the second grade student's standards, the second grade student instructed the first grade student to place her finger between each word to ensure that there would be spaces in between each word. As the second grade student guided the first grade student's hand, she asked the first grade student, "are you in school? Make sure you leave a finger space." These conversations between students were not uncommon. In fact, these conversations were part of the culture in the YLDP room at the HCC. HCC teachers encouraged culturally relevant approaches to learning by establishing a collaborative learning environment (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In this environment, all students were learners, and they were also accountable for each other's learning.

During these conversations, older Haitian American youth were also teaching their younger peers the language that was often used in school. During the exchange between the second grade student and the first grade student, the older Haitian American youth showed how she went beyond helping her younger peer to successfully complete her homework. In that moment, she also taught her younger peer to perform the identity of a "good student" in order to be viewed in this discursive light at school. Above all, HCC teachers provided these opportunities by encouraging younger Haitian American students to view their older peers at the HCC as helpers, leaders, and learners.

Beyond school walls, student leaders saw their duty to younger students as being important to their community. According to Regina, being a teen volunteer built strong intergenerational relationships. According to her, "you might get old tomorrow, you'll be in a nursing home so . . . the kids will come and you will see the kids that you taught and the kids will be there for you." Regina was not the only student at the HCC to express

the importance of helping younger Haitian American students. The desire to continue volunteering at the HCC was also reflected in students' comments about wanting to return to the HCC to give back to their community.

As younger students saw older students model program planning and leadership throughout the summer, some envisioned what they would do when they returned as teen volunteers. Jackson, for example, expressed his desire to return to the HCC as a volunteer to impart his curiosity about geography and world history to younger participants someday. As he shared with me what he would do as a teen volunteer, he stated that:

I would bring more computers so they can use it. I would make them go on Google and search 12 good things . . . for the older kids, I would challenge them and I would give them a lot of multiplication. Like, for someone going into fifth grade, I would teach them stuff that they will learn in fifth grade so that it will be easier for them.

Jackson's view of the HCC students as leaders and volunteers, just like Regina's, came directly from older students and teachers at the HCC who modeled these possibilities for student leadership. By having older youth run the program without the presence of adults, students saw themselves as being responsible for one another. Students were also able to envision how they would assume their leadership roles differently for the younger Haitian American students around them. While students acted as program planners, tutors, and group leaders for one another, they also became teachers to their peers. As

they assumed these roles, their confidence grew. Their feeling of responsibility towards their peers also grew.

How HCC teachers reinforced the ways that youth continuously crossed borders in their roles as leaders and followers at various times throughout the day evolved into my observation of youth's limited leadership at the HCC. Limited leadership, to me, described the process of how youth were upheld as leaders in the presence of other students, but were later required to act as learners and followers in the presence of adults. More specifically, in the presence of adults the youth were often forced back into identity discourses related to children (Cannella & Viruru, 2004). When youth leaders were repositioned as children, they were not allowed to challenge those who were older. As the next section illustrates, the ability for youth to be seen and act as leaders, and then to be forced back into the role of students and followers, illustrated times when pervasive messages about the role of youth in this society were emphasized.

Limitations to Youth Leadership

Although students were positioned as leaders, HCC teachers frequently reminded them that they were also required to act as students and followers. These roles were reinforced when HCC teachers feared that they were losing control of student behavior in the YLDP room. They also positioned students back into these roles when they felt that students needed to be taught lessons about "good behavior."

This reality was illustrated in an incident that involved Maya being positioned as a leader in the classroom, and then repositioned as a student when Ms. Assade felt that she needed to take a break for talking too much during an afternoon movie. On this day,

I walked into the room and realized that most of the teen volunteers in the room were absent. As a result, Ms. Assade assigned Maya to be a volunteer. Her assignment was to lead group activities with younger students. During their routine post-lunch downtime, students sat on the floor in front of the television and watched the movie “Green Lantern.” As students became more talkative during the movie, Ms. Assade directed Maya to quiet the students. Maya then directed students in the room with, “if you can hear me, clap once. If you can hear me, clap twice.” As she clapped along with the students sitting on the floor in front of the television, the students became quiet and returned to watching the movie with minimal disruptions.

Towards the end of the movie, some students began talking loudly. Maya was one of them. Consequently, Ms. Assade sent the students who were talking to sit at the tables and to separate themselves for the remainder of the movie. Ms. Assade’s words were directed at Maya as well. Although Maya started the day as a student leader, the afternoon ended with her being treated as a student who needed direction instead of one who could provide the direction. From my viewpoint, this occurred because Ms. Assade wanted to illustrate how all students—including youth volunteers—were supposed to follow school-sanctioned rules. To assume a leadership role in the room, leaders were supposed to act as model students. They were not supposed to defy or question the rules.

As is the case in many classrooms across the U.S., the fear of allowing students to be leaders at all times illustrated a larger discourse about the role of students in the classroom. Students are often taught and encouraged to be leaders for other students, but only to the extent that they are displaying school-sanctioned behaviors. Power struggles

occur, however, when students are not leading others in ways aligned to teachers' expectations. In part, the practice of keeping students in learner-roles only is socially constructed and reinforced through language and public policy (Cannella & Viruru, 2004). Viewed in this light, the HCC's space was not immune. In schools specifically, HCC teachers reflected ways that adults often fight to keep students in a "submerged" state of consciousness . . . [whereby they] take advantage of that passivity to 'fill' that consciousness with slogans which create even more fear of freedom" (Freire, 1970/2006, p. 95). Similar to schools generally, when youth leaders stepped outside the boundaries of what was believed to be acceptable behavior, HCC teachers pulled in the reigns and disciplined those students. For teachers at the HCC, this was justified by their belief that students had to practice school-sanctioned behaviors so that they could be successful in their schools.

Learning to "Do" School:

To help Haitian American students succeed in school, HCC teachers expressed how academic success was only one aspect of how students were viewed as successful. In this space, teachers were transparent with students about their belief that to be viewed as a "good" student in school, youth had to exhibit certain behaviors in addition to excelling in their academic work. During the summer program in particular, the behaviors that were reinforced daily included requiring students to sit silently, sit up straight in chairs, work independently and quietly, raise their hands when they wanted to speak, listen to the teacher and not interrupt, and so on. When students were not following HCC teachers' directions, they were disciplined in front of the entire class so

that other students would also be part of the conversation about how to act appropriately. These lessons were important because lessons about student behavior were believed to be transferrable to HCC students' experiences in school. If students demonstrated their ability to follow these rules in school, according to HCC teachers, they had the potential to be viewed as academically successful as well. These expectations were motivated by HCC teachers' beliefs that students needed to perform identities that would provide them with tools to counter negative stereotypes associated with Haitian Americans.

Teachers talked explicitly about the need for students to perform a "good student" identity as a way to counter racist views of Haitian American and Black students. Part of the HCC's work in this area was to show Haitian American youth that they possessed leadership skills that were untapped. More importantly, students believed their HCC teachers' messages because they believed that these teachers authentically cared about them as individuals.

Haitian American families also believed that HCC teachers authentically cared about their children, so they reinforced these messages through teacher-family partnerships at the site. During both the summer sessions and the academic year, family members were free to volunteer in the YLDP room and to work with students in the presence of HCC teachers. As the next chapter highlights, older Haitian Americans working with students at the HCC's site reinforced the view that elders in the community were also teachers. The presence of older family members in the YLDP room also

reinforced the view by students that HCC teachers were to be respected like a second set of parents in students' families.

Chapter 5

Community Education and Leadership

The HCC took pride in the educational progress of all members of its community, both young and old. Upward mobility through education was not viewed as a goal that was reserved only for newer generations. Instead, the Haitian Americans enrolled in classes at the HCC ranged from elderly to pre-school aged. This initiative to educate the community, in order to support the its advancement, was not just symbolic. The CBO pursued this goal through its work at the site and in the community.

Modeled after the HCC's educational initiative, Haitian American students talked openly about the importance of community in their personal goals. They shared stories about their parents' education at the HCC and how their parents' experiences were tied directly to their motivation to be at the CBO. They also explained how their parents' work to further their own education at the HCC inspired them to be successful at school, too. As discussed in this section, Haitian American students often illustrated how their educational goals, inspired by their parents' goals, were aimed at supporting the advancement of the Haitian community locally and abroad.

Educational Advancement is a Community Initiative

At the HCC, education was viewed as a community goal. Even though the HCC was founded by Big Mama, the site was meant to be a place owned by its members and sustained by the community's common goal: To support Haitian Americans through education. At this site, youth were not the only ones seeking educational opportunities.

In fact, many Haitian American youth participants came to this site because adults in their lives recommended the CBO to them based on their own educational experiences at the HCC. During an interview with Sebastien in the adult education room, for instance, he told me that he was participating in his first summer at the HCC because his dad “used to go to school here.” As Sebastien’s father’s participation in adult education classes at the HCC illustrated, the CBO’s education program also focused on Haitian American elders in the community. Among the more popular classes at the HCC were health education workshops, computer classes, citizenship classes, and general educational development (GED) courses. These classes were offered in addition to other social service programs available at the site. The presence of educational programs, and the popularity of these programs for Haitian American adults, was what attracted many families to enroll their students in the HCC’s summer and after-school programs.

Since the HCC’s services focused on the education of the community, this CBO reflected ownership by Little Haiti’s community as well. This was reiterated to HCC youth during Big Mama’s speech at the beginning of the school year. During the first week of school, Big Mama came into the YLDP room. Right before snack was passed out to students, she welcomed students back to the HCC. In the conclusion of her welcome address, she stated, “HCC is *your* center. *You* come here free of charge. HCC is *your* place. *You* are all leaders.” Throughout her motivational speech, Big Mama stressed to students that the HCC belonged to them. She emphasized the CBO’s belief that youth were valuable stakeholders in the HCC’s success and in the progress of their community.

Tied to education goals, Haitian American students' successes in school were not viewed as individual accomplishments. Their successes were touted as accomplishments for the HCC and the entire Haitian American community. Big Mama's speech and the HCC's tutoring program structure reinforced the notion that students had a responsibility to support one another at the site. This showed that HCC adults held high expectations for the youth in their community and that failure was not excusable by any means. If students failed to accomplish their own goal, then the burden of failure would fall on everyone at the HCC, not just the individual student. According to Big Mama, all members of the HCC's community were responsible for each other. Her emphasis on the shared ownership of the site was used to illustrate this point. When she finished her speech, a third grade student sitting next to me said, "I like it when she talks. She makes me want to listen."

Like Big Mama, students in this study shared how their academic success would someday be measured by their ability to give back to the Haitian American community in the U.S. and in Haiti. All participants in the study shared this sentiment. When I asked the boys what their parents wanted them to learn at school, Jake said, "My mom wants me to be a doctor . . . she wants me to help mostly everybody. People that are elderly and sick." To this comment, Zachary shouted, "Haitians! They need help! The earthquake!"

Academic advancement, viewed in this light, needed to occur in culturally relevant ways. Like Jake, Zachary wanted to be a wealthy businessman so that he could donate money to hospitals that catered to sick Haitian patients. Regina also felt the need to become a psychiatrist to help Haitian Americans who were mentally ill. As these

examples show, HCC students believed strongly in the relationship between high academic standards, academic achievement, and social responsibility.

Unfortunately, these culturally relevant opportunities were not present in school, according to stories shared by HCC youth participants. Based on interviews with students about their experiences in public schools, this view of academic success lies in contrast to their experience outside of the HCC. In Zachary's case, for example, academic success in school took place when students were able to master Standard English only. In the fall of 2011, Zachary entered his fourth year of the English Speakers of Other Languages program (ESOL). Though his verbal English skills sounded flawless and his writing skills were at grade level, he told me that he intentionally failed his ESOL tests so that he could stay in classes where he could speak Haitian Creole. As he shared this story with me, he stated, "I love Creole! ESOL is the only place that teaches Creole." In his experience, the only place where he could comfortably maintain his Haitian Creole speaking identity was in ESOL classes. Non-ESOL classes would force him to speak English only. Loss of his ability to speak Haitian Creole, in the course of being proficient in Standard English, was viewed as problematic for him in light of the educational goals that he was seeking.

As Zachary's story demonstrates for this linguistic community, capitalizing on educational opportunities included maintaining a strong Haitian identity and Haitian Creole language speaking identity. Further, as the following section demonstrates, the purpose of education at the HCC was viewed as an intergenerational initiative. Education was not focused on individual advancement only. In this light, parents and teachers

worked closely to support Haitian American students' success. This partnership positioned teachers as being more than educators and more like a second set of parents.

Visible Family-HCC Partnerships

As educational goals were intergenerationally supported and community-based, HCC teachers were viewed as more than educators in a traditional sense. This was most clearly illustrated in an incident that took place during the summer program, where Jake and his little sister were publicly reprimanded for chewing on pieces of plastic. At the end of one summer afternoon, students sat in a circle on the floor and were playing a game of hot potato. Upon finding out that a kindergarten student was chewing a plastic green ball, Ms. Assade stopped the game and called the kindergarten student's mom to tell her what the kindergarten student was doing. Her brother, Jake, was also called to the front of the room to tell his mom what his sister was doing over the phone.

While Jake was speaking, Ms. Assade saw that he was chewing on something too. She then asked, "What is it? Gum? Candy?" He then pointed to a plastic button from his back pant pocket to show her that he was chewing on the button currently missing from his other back pant pocket. Upon this discovery, she yelled, "You too?" which then sent the entire room of students into a fit of laughter. Three women from the main office ran into the room to see why Ms. Assade was yelling. After listening to her story, the three women also laughed at the irony of the situation. Rather than being amused, Ms. Assade began to cry. She then stated, "Y'all don't understand. If these kids choke, it's my fault. Jake's mom said 'when they're with you, they're your kids'."

This sentiment differs from the ways in which student conduct is often perceived in school. When students misbehave in school, teachers tend to look to address the student's actions with a consequence. According to Jake, who was often publicly reprimanded for his behavior at the HCC, Ms. Assade's method of addressing his actions made him believe that she cared about his overall wellbeing. He compared Ms. Assade's lessons about his behavior to what he learned at home by stating that both places emphasized his need to follow rules because, "when you're in public you don't want to be embarrassed." At the HCC, teachers felt responsible for student behavior and attempted to use misbehavior as a teachable moment to be corrected. The difference between this method of teaching student conduct and the approach students experienced at school was interpreted through the level of perceived care between teachers at the HCC and their schools.

To reinforce this view of care, families publicly supported HCC teachers' decisions. This support was present even when teachers' decisions conflicted with decisions made by students' families. During the first week of school, for example, two second grade twins were supposed to be picked up by their mother for soccer practice. After sitting in the YLDP room for two hours, only one of the twins completed his work. When their mother arrived to pick them up for practice, she stood in the doorway and waved for them to get up from their tables, pack their bags, and exit the room. In response, Ms. Joseph rose from the table of students that she was working with and commanded the unproductive twin to sit back down at his table despite his mother's

direction. In Haitian Creole, she explained to his mother that he was not allowed to attend soccer practice because his work was not complete.

In this moment, Ms. Joseph gave a direction to a student that contradicted the parent. Although the second grade student protested and pleaded with his mother, she eventually sided with Ms. Joseph and took only one of the twins to soccer practice. The other twin was forced to stay at the HCC to complete his work. Ms. Joseph's ease in dictating this parent's actions, despite the mother's initial decision, illustrated a distinct level of respect between HCC teachers and parents in that space. As this example showed, HCC teachers had as much authority as parents. Likewise, students listened to HCC teachers because they felt that these teachers were like their second parents in terms of care and authority.

In this partnership, families felt empowered to ask for help. Families were always welcomed to work with students at the HCC and encouraged to ask for academic help from HCC teachers if they needed support for their child. On many occasions, parents were seen working with students on their homework in the YLDP room. Family members were also seen walking into this space to briefly remind students about certain school tasks that needed to be completed. On the second day of school, for example, a third grade student's mother came into the room an hour after the after-school program started. As this mother yelled at her daughter in Haitian Creole, a student at her table explained to me that the third grade student was in trouble. The student's teacher had called her mother to tell her that the student had not completed a homework assignment. Rather than wait until her daughter went home, the mother decided to go to the HCC so

that she could talk to her daughter and her daughter's HCC teacher. Between the three stakeholders, the mother was hopeful that her daughter's assignment would be completed.

This partnership was successful because families had a relationship with HCC teachers even before many of the students were enrolled in either the summer or academic program. Staff already knew family members of HCC students because many of them were clients of other services at this CBO. Due to this pre-existing relationship, HCC students' families had a history at the site that went beyond their relationship with the youth program. Due to this relationship, families and teachers felt comfortable having many adults in the YLDP room to support youth.

When I asked HCC teachers and students if families were as visible at their schools as they were at the HCC, all participants said "no." Reasons they cited often included family members' comfort with language and communication. HCC teachers and students cited the lack of Haitian Creole speaking teachers in school as a barrier for parents' ability to actively partner with teachers and administrators. Ms. Joseph's experience working both at the HCC and in MDCPS led her to note the importance of the school personnel's ability to speak Haitian Creole as well. According to Ms. Joseph:

Parents are afraid to talk. How are they going to communicate with that teacher? Sometimes in the school it's not a Haitian community. They don't have any Haitians in that school. But, the parents rely on HCC's afterschool program and the teachers at HCC. They will say things, like, "please can you check and follow-up . . . he has this homework." But they're not doing that at school.

They're doing it here. They'd rather do it here because they know we're Haitian and we can understand each other.

This comment supported many comments made by students about how they often served as translators for their parents during parent-teacher meetings. For example, even though Sherlande's mother used to be an elementary school teacher in Haiti, Sherlande explained that at her school in Miami:

My mom does not feel very comfortable, because sometimes they [her family] speak a lot of Creole . . . and my mom, every time she's talking to the teacher she needs someone to translate the language.

In contrast to the experience of Sherlande's mother in the public school, the HCC's use of Haitian Creole validated her native language (Gay, 2002). More than symbolism, the use of Haitian Creole at the HCC confirmed her identity (Noddings, 1988). This practice reflected a level of care that was absent in Sherlande's public school.

Many scholars have also cited how this phenomenon is not new for immigrant parents from non-native English speaking backgrounds (Li, 2006; Valdes, 1996). Unlike in these studies, however, Haitian American families were encouraged to speak whatever language they felt most comfortable speaking at the HCC, which explained why they were present at this site. The CBO also provided families with teachers who spoke all three languages: Haitian Creole, French, and English. Based on this factor alone, students shared that their family members felt more supported by HCC teachers. Their comfort in this space enabled them to ask questions about students' learning often.

This partnership was visible in both the summer and academic year program. During the summer program, for example, a first grade student's father frequently came to ask specifically about his daughter's reading progress at the HCC. After dropping his daughter off in the morning, he always asked Ms. Assade, "What are you guys doing today?" Other questions would include, "Did you let her read to you today . . . When she says a word wrong do you correct her . . . [and] Do you make her learn to spell?" He asked Ms. Assade and Ms. Joseph these questions in Haitian Creole daily. In return, HCC teachers welcomed his questions with warmth and appreciation. Symbolically, these questions reflected a visible partnership between teachers and students' families for Haitian American youth at the HCC. As such, students viewed HCC teachers and families as visible partners, even when the adults in their families were not physically present at the CBO.

In contrast, the absence of students' families at their schools indicated to HCC students that families were either less comfortable at their school or that there was simply no reason for them to be there in the first place. While trying to understand this difference, many HCC students shared conflicting interpretations. Some attributed their parents' invisibility to their success in school. According to Jake, his mother's presence at the HCC was merely a reflection of his misbehavior at the CBO. Jake rarely saw his mother at school. To understand why his mother was not present in that space, unlike at the HCC, he said it was because he was generally successful—academically and behaviorally—at school. This observation differed from Ms. Assade's frequent comments to me about Jake's need for additional support in academics and social skills.

Also absent in Jake's reasoning was the reality that his mother's inability to speak English fluently was a barrier to her presence at school. As he explained in different interviews, he believed that he needed to continue to learn Haitian Creole so that he could translate letters and English conversations for his mother, who read and wrote in Haitian Creole and French only.

Jake's description of his mother's invisibility at school contrasted with her visibility at the HCC. At the HCC, her primary language was validated. HCC teachers who spoke her language effectively answered her questions about Jake's progress. Unlike Jake's experience at school, there was no need for HCC teachers to invite Jake's mother into that space. She went to the HCC on her own and felt comfortable with teachers. Based on Jake's reflections, this was not the case in his standard English speaking public school.

The reason why students and families were able to support this aspect of education was because the CBO's clients trusted the organization. Not only did families and students trust that the organization genuinely cared for the students and the Haitian American community, but the welcoming environment of parents in this space was a visible reminder of the partnership between families, teachers, and students. Though the HCC's educational program emphasized the importance of supporting the unique experiences of the Haitian American community, its efforts were often minimized by larger discourses that contributed to their community's invisibility. As the next section highlights, the HCC's attempt to educate its surrounding Miami community about

the unique experiences of Haitian Americans in the U.S. was often overshadowed by colorblind, race-neutral, and grand immigration narratives.

HCC's Leadership: Prioritizing Haitian American Identities and Experiences

In its attempt to advance the Haitian American community through education, the HCC saw the need to prioritize its community's unique experience. HCC members often partnered with non-Haitian Americans in their community to galvanize allies and to create a broader base of support for their work. Throughout its history, the HCC has been engaged in political mobilization and advocacy for Haitian immigrants in Miami's community.

During the last week of the summer program, for example, one of the secretaries at the HCC walked into the youth activity room, handed me a flyer, and told me to join their immigration rally. Then she rushed to put a pile of flyers next to the children's sign-out sheet on the teacher's desk for students and families to take home with them. Printed in bold red and blue capitalized font on white copy paper, the flyer read:

RALLY TOMRROW AT 10:30 AM / IN FRONT OF INS TO PROTEST U.S.
GOVERNMENT PLAN TO DEPORT THE LARGEST CONTINGENT OF
HAITIANS THIS WEEKEND AND THEIR REFUSAL TO APPROVE THE
HAITIAN FAMILY REUNIFICATION AS THEY DID FOR CUBANS TWO
YEARS IN A ROW. TOMRORROW – THURSDAY 10:30 AM / NO MORE
DISCRIMINATION! SEE YOU THERE.

The rally was focused on the U.S.'s plan to deport 50 Haitian refugees, and was also a call to President Obama's administration to establish a "Haitian Family Reunification

Parole Program” (Transafrica, 2011). The event was hosted by the HCC in partnership with other local organizations.

When I arrived at the rally, I noticed many supporters wearing black t-shirts with bright yellow words that read: I am transafrican. Other supporters at the rally carried white poster boards that displayed large, bold black letters with statements such as: “END RACIST IMMIGRATION POLICIES NOW.” Another woman carried a poster board that read “STOP DEPORTATION.” Parked on the curb next to the entrance of the INS building was a local news truck from Channel 7.

When Big Mama arrived in her bright red dress and large sunglasses, she greeted everyone in the crowd warmly. Big Mama once ran for political office and was well known in the community as a mighty advocate for Haitian rights. After she greeted a man with a leopard print hat, he handed her the bullhorn and she began to shout, “What do we want?” and the crowd of 200 responded with, “Justice!” As she walked up and down the sidewalk with her large bullhorn, she called out “No Justice!” and the crowd responded with, “World Peace!” Cars driving by the rally honked and drove slowly by the crowd. Drivers waved their hands out of their windows or signaled their support with a thumbs-up to the protestors.

Soon after the rally began, the crowd grew to its expected size of over 200 participants. The first two speakers at the rally indicated their belief that Haitians were not an independent group, but a group that was a part of the imagined Black racial category in the U.S. The first speaker explicitly stated this when he said, “We need to stop calling each other Haitians, African American, etc . . . we are all Black.” This was

echoed by the second speaker when she addressed everyone in the crowd as “my brothers and sisters” and stated that, “we are all African.” Omi and Winant (1994) describe this as Pan-Africanism, which is empowered by its ability to “link the specific forms of oppression which blacks face in various societies with the colonialist exploitation and underdevelopment of Africa” (p. 39).

Visible to the crowd were t-shirts that also suggested that people were there to support an “immigrant” cause. For example, an orange t-shirt read: “I am an immigrant / I am a citizen / I am documented / I am black, brown, red, yellow and white / I speak any language / I AM FLORIDA.” These words suggested an immigrant experience that was shared by all immigrants equally. This belief in one shared immigrant experience directly contradicted Big Mama’s cries of wanting Haitian immigrants to be treated like Cuban immigrants in the eyes of the U.S. government. Thus, for some protesters who had joined the event, the purpose of the rally was to advocate for a general immigrant experience for which this particular rally, focused on Haitian refugees, was merely an opportunity to express their agenda.

Illustrated above was an example of how the HCC’s attempts to highlight issues specific to Haitians in their community were often overshadowed by larger discourses. Ironically, this event showed how the HCC’s attempts to generate support outside of Little Haiti sometimes led to invisible tension between the specific needs of their smaller immigrant and linguistic community and communities that came together through their ability to identify with larger socially constructed identities. At the rally, for example, the large socially constructed identities were binary relationships such as: U.S. immigrant

versus non-immigrant, Black versus non-Black, English speaking versus non-English speaking, and so on. That day, most protesters came to collectively voice an “immigrant cause” or a “Black cause”, and voiced their issues using the dominant English language, even though the rally was meant to highlight a concern specific to Haitians in the U.S. However, because of the HCC’s identity and its position within these larger discourses, the multiple agendas at the rally minimized this point.

The HCC’s voice, and how it was overshadowed at the rally, is an experience often shared by marginalized communities in the U.S. In an essay that examined the experiences of Black American teachers from the South between 1890 and 1950, for example, Lewis (2008) described how these seemingly similar individuals, based on their racial and professional identities, engaged in their work through multiple positions. Like the protestors at the rally, these Black American teachers were engaged in the same kind of work but were motivated by different reasons. However, the fact that they were driven by different motivations was shrouded by their position in the same racial category. Furthermore, Lewis (2008) argues that, “race shrouded differences; it also served to silence by forcing a kind of group-speak when confronting the outside world. This speak often produced real hurt” (p. 347). Similar to the experience of HCC rally organizers, Lewis (2008) highlights how the teachers in his essay saw that “At various points many were both militant advocates of the racial advancement and conservative protectors of the status quo” (p. 345). Likewise, during the HCC’s mission to unite different members of Florida’s community to support Haitian American causes, there were times when the unique experiences of Haitian Americans were lost to these larger discourses. As this

rally demonstrated, how identities were interpreted in Miami's community largely depended on who people were and the purpose of their agenda. At the rally, everyone held signs and shouted "justice" and "equal treatment" together, but what they meant when they were shouting those words varied vastly. For some, "justice" and "equal treatment" were rally cries for racial equality, while others were there to support these initiatives for all immigrants, not just the fifty Haitians who were being deported. On the other hand, Haitians from the HCC were there to specifically advocate for the equal treatment of Haitian immigrants, but in this context these discourses placed the HCC's Haitian members into identities that aligned less with being Haitian and more with being "Black" and "immigrants".

Different identities reinforced in these discourses vary in terms of their political purposes. Gee's (1999/2005) political building task asks, "What perspective on social goods [are these pieces] of language communicating?" (p. 12). The primary social good that everyone was fighting for at the rally boiled down to justice and equity. Who these social goods were meant for, however, was clearly different for each individual at the rally. In order to address the issue of invisibility, the HCC's educational initiative went beyond educating Haitian Americans at their site, and included non-Haitians that were also living in their community. The HCC's attempt to voice Haitian American issues in Miami's context was directly related to their acknowledgment of being silenced within these larger discourses.

More specifically, the CBO's work outside of the HCC's walls aimed to address the ways that Haitian Americans were positioned statically in imaginary categories. In

other words, the HCC attempted to disrupt powerful narratives about Black Americans and immigrants in the U.S., and to remove Haitian Americans from the confines of these narratives. Towards this goal, the HCC engaged the broader Miami community to support issues specific to Haitian Americans. As the rally illustrated, education at the HCC was viewed as more than an individual endeavor. Education, at the HCC, was viewed as the responsibility of everyone in the community, regardless of age, language, race, or nationality.

Community Education and Leadership

Overall, education at the HCC was viewed through the lens of individual goals and community goals. Organizationally, the HCC fostered this particular perspective of education. Framed in terms of family and community, education courses were available to all members of the Haitian American community—young and old. It was because of watching older family members attend classes at the HCC that many students joined the youth program. The presence of older family members was not limited to adult education courses. Strong partnerships between older family members and HCC teachers were also present in the YLDP room. Not only did parents and guardians share information about student progress, but their levels of comfort and trust with each other allowed for HCC teachers to give advice to the adults whose children attended the program, and for the adults to take the teachers' guidance seriously. Part of this trust in HCC teachers' guidance came from the high expectations for them to authentically care for the children as well.

As this chapter highlighted, the HCC's education initiatives went beyond its walls. In order to garner support for Haitian issues in the U.S. and abroad, the CBO worked hard to engage the larger non-Haitian American community in political issues that were directly related to Haitians domestically and internationally. Their efforts to mobilize non-Haitian communities in issues specific to Haitians and Haitian Americans came from the organization's understanding of their position within larger discourses, which led to the silencing of their voices outside of the Haitian American community. Thus, to support causes unique to their community, HCC members attempted to educate the broader Miami (and Florida) community about issues that were specific to them.

Large discourses that contributed to the invisibility of the HCC's work often found their way into the HCC's space. As the next chapter illustrates, students used the HCC's space to examine their identities as students and as individuals. Based on the conversations that took place among students, there appeared to be a common understanding about how students' racial and immigrant identities shaped their education. More specifically, students' conversations reflected how they used the HCC's co-ethnic space to explore their racial and immigrant identities through discourses that were brought from their school.

Chapter 6

Co-ethnic Space: A Context for Identity Exploration

Even though non-Haitian American visitors to this space might walk into the YLDP room and assume that students all shared the same ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and racial identities, further observation reveals negotiated identities and diverse perspectives of how students saw themselves. In this co-ethnic space, students explored their linguistic and racial identities. Teachers supported these conversations informally and formally. Informally, teachers validated Haitian American students' linguistic identity maintenance by speaking Haitian Creole to parents during academic tasks. Formally, the teacher engaged students in conversations about race.

This chapter highlights that even though these conversations were explicit, they were often overshadowed by pervasive discourses about Haitian students' identity, language, and race. Despite these limitations, the uniqueness of the HCC's space still provided a context that was conducive for students to discuss issues of identity among themselves. Based on a shared, co-ethnic experience, they understood that the Haitian American identity was complicated, historically, by racism and xenophobia. They often talked about how these aspects of their education were a shared experience in school. Based on this shared understanding, there was a level of respect for one another and for how individual Haitian American youth chose to define themselves in each other's presence.

Language Identities

Though Haitian American students differed in the ways they defined themselves in relation to their peers, language more than race was the defining aspect of all Haitian American students in this space. Throughout this study, students identified themselves based on the language(s) they spoke rather than their race or their family's country of origin. While some students used their ability or inability to speak Haitian Creole as a way to define themselves as being Haitian or not Haitian, other students used their racial proximity to Black Americans to identify themselves as American only. Students not only used their social location in Miami's ethnically and racially diverse community to imagine who they were in relation to their community, but they also used each other to complicate their concept of self. These choices were not made in isolation; rather, students' negotiated identities were deeply rooted in a political struggle over who Haitian Americans were in the context of Miami specifically, and in the U.S. generally.

While many students celebrated the language(s) they spoke by using it to describe their own identity, other students also used their inability to speak Haitian Creole to define themselves as not being Haitian American. Individual students used their peers' ability to speak Haitian Creole as a way to measure the authenticity of their own ethnic identity. During the second month of school, for instance, a third grade student was working on her homework as I sat near her at the same table. While working on her spelling words, the third grade student randomly shared with me, "Ms. Silvy, people think that I'm Haitian because I go to a Haitian program [HCC] but I'm not. I'm just American. I don't speak Creole." After reflecting on the fact that her father, a Haitian Creole speaker and Haitian immigrant, always came to pick her up from the after-school

program, I asked her, “Isn’t your family Haitian?” In response, the third grade student said, “Yeah, but I don’t speak Creole!” For this student, her inability to speak Haitian Creole, especially at the HCC, allowed her to identify as American and not Haitian. Even though the student’s parents are both Haitian immigrants who seek services from the HCC, and have enrolled their daughter in a Haitian American after-school program, this student used her proximity to other races and languages in Miami’s community to identify herself as not being Haitian, in contrast to other Haitian Creole speakers at the site.

Though it took place at the HCC, my conversation with this third grade student illustrated how conversations about her ethnic identity began at school and were processed among her HCC peers. In school, her words reflected ways that her Haitian American identity was measured against those who were non-Haitian American. Since her classmates were not Haitian, they labeled her as being Haitian American because of her participation at the HCC. For this third grade student, however, participation at the HCC alone did not qualify her to be Haitian. To her, Haitian Americans were identified by their ability to speak Haitian Creole. She came to this conclusion through her participation at the HCC, where she observed “real” Haitian Americans speaking Haitian Creole. Thus, for this student, the HCC provided her with a space where she was able to negotiate tensions in her own identity. Though her family’s comfort at the HCC was revealed through their casual conversations with teachers and other service providers at the CBO, this third grade student was able to use this same space to define herself as not

being Haitian American based on her own criteria of what it means to be part of this ethnic group.

Like this third grade student, other students used their HCC peers to identify themselves as being more or less Haitian American. While some students chose to identify as more American than Haitian, other students used their ability to speak Haitian Creole to emphasize their Haitian American identity. During a post-snack treat one summer afternoon, for example, Ms. Assade brought a movie for students to watch. The movie was titled “Cast Away” and was dubbed in the French language. As students sat on the floor, many of them began to speak to each other in French and Haitian Creole. Students speaking during the movie appeared to be the most enthusiastic about the film. Jackson, while sitting on a chair two feet away from the screen, was among the students enjoying the movie most. At different points throughout the movie, Jackson turned around to other students seated on the floor and engaged them in conversations about how much French each of them knew. Students who knew more French visibly beamed with pride.

By selecting films dubbed in students’ native language, the HCC often celebrated students’ linguistic identities. This example illustrates how well HCC teachers knew their students. HCC teachers’ faith in students’ Haitian Creole and French language abilities motivated them to avoid showing English-only movies. This was critical for youth in this space, because language was a strong indicator of their bicultural identities, which they celebrated often. Most students who spoke Haitian Creole also spoke French. During this movie, for example, students with bicultural identities boasted their ability to

cross language boundaries while interpreting different words for other students near them. These students, which were the majority in this space, took pride in their ability to be more than simply American and monolingual English speaking.

Pride in students' complex linguistic identity was illustrated in student interviews as well. In individual interviews, it was common for me to ask students to describe themselves and then to receive responses about their language identity. Some students, like Regina, responded to questions about who they were by first stating descriptions such as, "I speak Creole, English, French, and I'm getting lessons in a little bit of Chinese." Likewise, Zachary responded to my question, "Who is Zachary?" with, "[Zachary] speaks English and Creole and he speaks a little Spanish." All students, like Regina and Zachary, identified language as their master identity marker (Johnson, 2008; Waters, 1999). Since they self-identified through language, many students in this study placed themselves into self-identified categories that went beyond the scope of how they might have been identified by teachers in school or by others in their community.

Beyond being a Haitian Creole language speaker or a non-Haitian Creole language speaker, the comments about their linguistic identities illustrated how HCC students saw themselves: as transnational youth whose identities were not bound by race. Though not clearly defined, the languages that students knew or wanted to learn played a significant role in how they saw themselves in relation to the HCC, their community, and their school. Contextually and historically, it is within the historical, linguistic, and immigrant identity of Little Haiti's enclave and Miami's community that students felt that they had access to different identities because of language. For these students,

participation at the HCC provided them with a space to negotiate their identities outside of the pan-racial (e.g. Black) and language deficit (e.g. English language learner) discourses that institutions normally used to identify them.

As the next section argues, the way that Haitian American students at the HCC chose to identify themselves, based on language, was influenced by their view of non-native English speakers in the U.S. This political choice was made based on how students viewed the importance of Haitian Creole, French, and English in their community. Since the Haitian American identity is couched in discourses dominated by race and citizenship, students' attempts to identify as Haitian-Creole speakers and Haitian American were often overshadowed by their identities as "Black" and "immigrant" in the U.S.

The Politics of Language Identification

The politics of language identification in the context of Miami's community, as a microcosm of the larger U.S. society, was illuminated during the immigration rally organized by the HCC (see chapter five). For example, while native Haitian Creole speakers from the HCC were at the rally to specifically advocate for Haitian immigrants and no other group, the voices of English speakers dominated the rally. During the rally, for example, I recognized adults from the HCC waving signs alongside non-Haitian Americans. These HCC elders were shouting and singing songs in Haitian Creole. At times, their chants and songs gained momentum with other Haitian Creole speakers in the crowd. These chants and songs, however, never lasted as long as those that were spoken

in English. Consequently, many of the Haitian Creole rally cries waned and were overtaken by those being shouted in English.

While this happened, I witnessed the leaders of the Haitian Creole chants and songs—three Haitian women and two Haitian men—shift their spoken language to English. In other words, they were attempting to shout along with their English-speaking rally members. During their struggle to chant and sing in the English language, Haitian adults turned to each other and giggled at each other's failed attempts. Eventually, these five protesters stopped shouting in Haitian Creole or in English and focused on waving their poster boards for the duration of the rally instead.

This moment illustrated how an aspect of some Haitian Americans' identity was slowly erased by dominant discursive practices in the U.S. For example, though this rally meant to highlight an issue specific to the Haitian American community, Haitian Americans were most effective when they were speaking English and not Haitian Creole. This instance showed how the English language held more political power than the Haitian Creole language in the U.S. Likewise, the rally illustrated how an individual's ability to be recognized as an English speaker allowed them access to social power.

Similar to the protesters at the immigration rally, the choice of HCC youth to identify with different language groups allowed them to access resources from the group with which they identified. For the third grade student who claimed to not be Haitian based on her inability to speak Haitian Creole, she was attempting to identify with a larger American category, which gave her access to more political power. Like at the immigration rally, the ability of Haitians to identify with a larger pan-Black category and

a larger immigrant group generally allowed for more supporters to provide a collective voice in support of a Haitian cause. On the other hand, students who chose to identify with their Haitian Creole language speaking identity attempted to break through these larger discourses. Those who emphasized their ability to speak multiple languages wanted to be recognized for their ability to cross language borders—for languages they already spoke and for those they had yet to learn.

In addition to language, race was another identity that was often discussed and negotiated at the HCC. Formally, teachers at the HCC discussed race in terms of why it was important for Haitian American students to act appropriately and to succeed in school. Informally, students discussed race with each other and used their access to the Black American racial category to position one another as being more or less American than others at the site. Despite HCC teachers' willingness to engage in discussions about ways to break larger racist discourses, they were often reluctant to identify and address racism between Haitian students at the site. As I discuss below, this was especially true for students who struggled with being labeled "Zoe."

Understanding Racism at the HCC

At the HCC, racism was explicitly addressed in whole group discussions about student behavior and why education was important. Despite HCC teachers' attempts to address racism through lessons about student behavior and the need for academic success among Haitian American students, they were not always aware that students were engaged in discussions about race with each other already. In fact, HCC teachers held a more idealistic view of Haitian youth experiences as it related to race.

For example, the day after Regina had acted inappropriately with a male student volunteer, Ms. Assade engaged all the HCC students in the summer program in a conversation about why her conduct was inappropriate. Towards the end of the discussion, I asked her to talk about why Zachary should have been commended for telling her about Regina's conduct and why it was important for students to not get upset about his report. When Zachary publicly pointed at Kervens and told her, "He called me a Zoe boy," to prove that students were upset at his report, Ms. Assade simply responded with, "Zoe boy just means Haitian. There's nothing wrong with that."

In contrast to Ms. Assade's assessment of how Zoe was used in discourse, I witnessed the event that Zachary was trying to help his teacher to notice. Before conducting a focus group interview with the four male participants in my study one day, I noted how Zoe was used to humiliate Zachary. On that day, instead of saying hello when I entered the YLDP room, he ran to me and asked, "Can we go outside for an interview please?" Caught off guard by his hastiness, I slowly responded with, "Hi Zachary. How are you?" His response was, "bad." When I asked him why his morning was bad, he said that the kids were mad at him because he told Ms. Assade what Regina had done with the male volunteer and that was why she was in trouble. Just as Zachary finished his explanation, Kervens, Jake, and Jackson marched over to Zachary's seat. Then Kervens whispered loudly, "Zachary used to be cool, but he told on Regina so now he's a Zoe boy." Zachary simply remained in his chair, stared at the ground, and pretended not to see the three boys standing in front of him. This incident was similar to incidents that I had observed in my work with students in MDCPS. Students' use of the term Zoe was

often associated with a negative incident or intention, which was the opposite of Ms.

Assade's understanding of the label.

This conflict between Ms. Assade's understanding and Zachary's experience with the Zoe identity reflected two things in that moment: 1) agreement with other students about how the word "Zoe" is multifaceted with historical and contextual significance, and 2) adults at the HCC were not completely aware of Haitian youths' continuous struggle with racial identity in Miami's community. In Ms. Assade's attempt to teach students ethnic pride at the HCC, she failed to help them critique the reality of how the Zoe identity has been used in their schools.

As Ms. Assade suggested, the Zoe identity is rooted in a positive image of Haitians. In practice, however, this identity is used to differentiate newly arrived Haitians from those who claim to be more Americanized. According to the Urban Dictionary (2012), a Zoe boy is someone who is "a real Haitian boy . . . you are more than proud to be Haitian" (Urban Dictionary, 2012). Black Dada, a Haitian American hip-hop musician popular among HCC students also sang a song entitled "Imma Zoe." His lyrics illustrate this definition with:

Said it's tatted on my chest respect my mind / I spit Creole anytime . . . Sak pase
to all my Zoes / What it do to the people I know . . . We seen the worst and felt
the pain / Cloudy weather filled with rain / United we stand, divided we fall /
They can't break me not at all / So Stack my chips never go broke / It's Tatted on
my chest cause I'm a Zoe! (Black Dada, www.urbanlyrics.com, 2012)

Like Ms. Assade's definition of Zoe, Black Dada's interpretation of this identity signifies struggle, strength, and triumph. Black Dada's words, such as "We seen the worst and felt the pain / Cloudy weather filled with rain" (Black Dada, www.urbanlyrics.com, 2012), speak to a long history that is both international and domestic. Internationally, the lyrics speak to the country of Haiti's successful abolition of slavery during the Haitian Revolution. Today, the Haitian American community still celebrates their hero of the revolution, Touissant Louverture, and his leadership in the establishment of Haiti as a free state governed by Black citizens. Domestically, these lyrics speak to the U.S. government's racism and discrimination towards Haitian refugees and Haitian Americans generally. In the opening of his music video, Black Dada depicts a young Haitian boy running from border patrols who are trying to arrest and detain him (Black Dada – Imma Zoe (Official Music Video), www.youtube.com, 2009). Before the song starts, the opening scene transitions quickly into the young boy becoming a teen who is still running from the police through his neighborhood. Then the boy finds a classic red View Master, looks through the lenses, and sees himself as a strong and proud Haitian, otherwise known as a Zoe.

As the video and song lyrics suggest, the Zoe and Haitian identity has not always evoked pride among Miami's Haitian Americans historically. In Stepick and Swartz's (1998) study of Haitians in Miami, for example, a participant shared that when two non-Haitians would fight in school they would curse at each other and "the curse word they [would] use [was] 'Haitian'" (p. 60). Based on interviews with HCC students, discrimination in schools was pervasive. Similar to the ways that some artists in Black

American popular culture have attempted to re-appropriate the word “Nigger” (Kennedy, 2002/2003), the Zoe identity’s proximity to the use of “Haitian” as a racial epithet hinders the ability of the Zoe identity to be seen positively by everyone. In fact, while HCC students playfully processed and negotiated their status as newly arrived Haitians or Haitian Americans among one another, they often did so by using the term Zoe.

Negative comments made towards Haitian students about their ethnic identity from other Haitian students were not rare. In contrast to how the term was used in Black Dada’s song, and understood by Ms. Assade, I never observed the term Zoe being used in a positive manner. Students often used this term to explain how they believed that there were in fact racist students among them.

In an interview with Sebastien and Jake, they answered my question about whether or not there were racist students among them by highlighting interactions with Mikael, a teen volunteer in the summer program. In their interview they shared that:

Sebastien: Yeah! Mikael! Like, you see Kervens, he always calls him Zoe boy. And sometimes he says, “You stupid Haitians” and stuff.

Silvy: How does that make you feel?

Sebastien: Well, I don’t really mind him so I act like I don’t hear it.

Silvy: How about you Jake?

Jake: Mikael, like, if he’s telling me to be quiet he says, “be quiet Haitian.” And I wouldn’t really mind because he always tells people that they’re Black and I tell him that he’s Black too. So he shouldn’t be making fun of us.

Silvy: So where do you think that comes from?

Jake: I think it's because Haiti's a poor country, so they don't have a lot of money so they think that they shouldn't have people that are happy.

All participants in this study talked about how the Zoe identity was associated with being Haitian, which was in turn used as an insult among other Haitians. Used in this way, the term Zoe was enacting an activity as well as constructing various identities (Gee, 1999/2005). Mikael's use of the term Zoe was his way of distancing himself from the negative connotations associated with being a Haitian, especially a newly arrived Haitian. Though Haitian American himself, Mikael's intentional use of this term conveyed the message to other students at the HCC that he was more American and less Haitian than others at this site. How Mikael would enact this activity and identity among Black Americans at school who were not Haitian, however, might have been more complicated because his Haitian American identity would have been more pronounced in that context. He was able to assert this identity at this site, however, because the only staff and clients at the HCC were Haitian American.

Jake's explanation of why Haitian American students, like Mikael, used the Zoe identity to distance themselves from other Haitian Americans is historically rooted. His reasoning pointed to past media depictions of this ethnic group in the U.S. Some Haitians in Portes and Stepick's (1993) study of Miami's history described these images as Haitians being positioned as "ignorant, illiterates, of not knowing anything, of not having any skills, of smelling bad, and since 1980 of having imported AIDS here" (p. 189). Not only was this image reflected in the media, but it was also present in the U.S.

government's treatment of Haitian refugees as well. During the 1970s and 1980s, for instance, Portes and Stepick (1993) highlighted how "proportionally, no other would-be refugee group has had so many claims for asylum denied as Haitians" (p. 188). Viewed in this way, Mikael attempted to distance himself from the negative images of what it meant to be Haitian in his life by calling other HCC students a Zoe boy or Zoe girl. He was also attempting to distance himself away from being the victim of racism towards Haitian immigrants in the U.S. In this process, Mikael's attempt to not be oppressed by the Zoe label and its history caused him to become the oppressor among his Haitian American peers instead.

While some students asserted that the Zoe identity was actually a positive identifier and not a negative one, these same students were often the ones who used it negatively the most often. During a group interview with Zachary, Regina, and Maya, Kristin (one of the teen volunteers) came to observe our conversation and then stayed to participate. The exchange between Kristin, Maya, and Zachary illustrated the complexity of how the Zoe identity is supposed to be used in theory and how it was actually used daily. As students shared with me how they believed that some students at the HCC were in fact racist towards Haitians, I asked Kristin if there was anything that he wanted to add. His response sparked this dialogue:

Kristin: I don't know. The racist thing came from, "you're a Haitian" and stuff like that.

Silvy: And when you say people, who are the people?

Kristin: Um . . . Americans. Black Americans.

Silvy: Black Americans?

Kristin: Yeah.

Maya: They call people Zoe all the time! He [pointing to Kristin] calls people Zoe all the time too! So don't believe this acting all innocent face.

Kristin: [Smiling slyly] I am a Zoe.

Maya: No! This is his serious face.

Kristin: I am a Zoe!

Maya: [Pointing and laughing at Kristin] He's acting all innocent!

Zachary: One time he called me a Zoe! He called me a Zoe boy! Zoe boy means skinny!

Maya: Zoe boy is rude!

As this dialogue illustrates, the racial identities of Haitians at the HCC was complicated by ethnic, linguistic, and immigrant identities that were all situated within Miami and the larger context of the U.S. As subjects in this context, students at the HCC were often using each other's identities in order to understand who they were in relation to other Haitian students. Ironically, many of the students who used these racial epithets to subject other HCC students to these identities came from families who shared the same immigrant story.

In agreement with Kristin, many students in this study noted how their racial and ethnic identities were contextual and directly related to the non-Haitian Black students in their school. Most of their discussions about how they understood their racial identities, outside of the HCC, pointed to ways that they believed they were different from Black

American students. On the other hand, students who attempted to avoid negative connotations associated with being Haitian and Zoe used their access to the Black pan-racial identity to avoid being teased at the HCC.

The reason why HCC students were able to explore and complicate their ethnic identities in this space was due to the CBO's family-oriented environment, which enabled students to explore these questions safely. As many HCC students indicated, messages about who they were as racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities was often assigned to them by their non-Haitian classmates at school. According to their non-Haitian classmates, HCC students were supposed to be defined by larger discourses about what it means to be Black American or an immigrant in Miami's community.

When students came to the HCC and interacted frequently with other Haitian Americans, other discourses about their identities became available to them. Haitian American students who had no other choice but to define themselves as Haitian in school then had the opportunity to compare and complicate their ethnic authenticity with co-ethnic peers. As a result, Haitian American students were able to associate themselves as being more Black, more American, better English speaking, more Haitian, or better Haitian Creole-speaking than peers who would otherwise be positioned into the same category as them at school. Due to the HCC's emphasis on family-oriented relationships and its strong political voice in the community, which emerged in a struggle against a complex racial and immigrant U.S. history, this site embraced all shades and definitions of what it meant to be Haitian American. Consequently, HCC students felt safe to

identify themselves within a broad spectrum of what it meant to be a Haitian American youth at the CBO.

Co-ethnic Space & Pervasive Messages

The HCC was only able to embrace a broad range of Haitian American youth identities because of the presence of pervasive messages about race, immigration, language, and student success. The presence of these messages were both empowering and disempowering. On the one hand, students were able to use their access to larger discourses to expand and complicate the ways they saw themselves. On the other hand, the emphasis on a euphoric view of Haitian Americans at the HCC prevented HCC teachers from engaging students in critical discussions about the process that they were using to do this work.

For example, Ms. Assade's inability to address co-ethnic racism directed at Stephan contradicted the ways that culturally relevant teachers use these teachable moments to empower students. Through teacher-led discussions, students should be able to explore the world through their own experiences in society. Generally constructed by dominant cultural practices that continue to privilege White, middle class, heterosexual, and Standard English speaking-dominant members of society (Smith-Maddox, 1999; Tate, 1995), teachers committed to culturally relevant pedagogy use instruction related to students' lives and identities to empower them to critique their place in this messy context.

Exemplified in Ms. Assade's comment to the whole group of HCC youth, however, was an attempt to adhere to colorblind dispositions often held by schools, too.

Just as it is used in school, the rejection of racism represented her attempt to reinforce an ideology of a potential sameness. Instead of engaging students in a critical conversation about race and racism as it related directly to Haitian American students at the HCC, Ms. Assade's emphasis on the positive meaning of Zoe highlighted her original lesson—that phenotypically Black students can counter racism through school-sanctioned conduct and academic success. Ms. Assade attempted to focus on colorblind discourses to reinforce this message, but her good intentions had the opposite effect. Based on conversations that Haitian American students were having with each other at the HCC, school was a site where messages about who they were as individuals were received. The HCC then became a co-ethnic space where these messages were processed.

In the next and final chapter of this study, I highlight the important relationship between the presence of educación and culturally relevant pedagogy in schools and the work of ethnic CBOs like The HCC. Specifically, I argue that schools are sites that determine if and how educación and culturally relevant pedagogy get translated into the work of ethnic CBOs. Reflected in the data and analysis of this study are the discourses that students and teachers bring from U.S. public schools to The HCC. How these discourses play out in practice—by students and teachers—is directly related to their educational experience as Haitian Americans in U.S. public schools.

Chapter 7

Interpretations: Implications for School & Research

This study is one contribution to the discussion that highlights the educational experiences of students from marginalized backgrounds in U.S. schools. Like Valenzuela's (1999) study, this research illuminates how educational organizations perpetuate the cycle of marginalization by engaging students in aesthetic forms of care in education rather than authentic forms of care found in educación. As such, this study forces us to ask two questions: 1) How do we disrupt this cycle and prevent reinforcement of the status quo in schools and in ethnic CBOs? and, 2) How does this study complicate or move forward what scholars have already discussed about educación and culturally relevant pedagogy in classrooms? Furthermore, this chapter was intentionally not titled "the conclusion". Rather than attempt to provide answers about ways that this research can "fix" education, I will attempt to use this space as a place where I hope readers will begin to explore more questions through the lens of *their* classrooms, *their* school buildings, and *their* work with *their* students.

Woven throughout this study is a distinct relationship between the HCC and schools. Education policies that governed how schools operated influenced how the HCC worked with its students and families. More specifically, rules governing how students come to be viewed as successful in the public school system dictated the expectations that HCC teachers had for Haitian American students at their site. As the next section explores, HCC staff operated with the belief that they had a responsibility to help Haitian American students succeed in their schools. Like many programs currently

operating in U.S. schools, this often led to the CBO's unintentional reinforcement of the status quo.

How to “do” School: Implications for U.S. Schools

As this study illustrates, HCC teachers, parents, and students believed that the adults in this CBO authentically cared for youth. On the surface, however, the ways in which HCC teachers structured their program during the summer and academic year did not reflect Valenzuela's (1999) version of educación. Instead of focusing on relationships with students, HCC teachers believed that it was more important to teach students how to perform the identity of a successful student based on their understanding of how to “do” school. This included performing well on high-stakes standardized testing. Rather than finding this approach with Haitian American youth to be invalidating their identities, parents and students appreciated their teachers' goals and argued that they felt more cared for in this CBO than at school.

To understand the discrepancy between Valenzuela's (1999) interpretations and those of this study, I argue that the HCC's focus on the technical aspect of learning was possible because many youth already had a connection to the adults at the site. Many of the Haitian American youth in this study witnessed ways that family members and neighbors were service seekers and students at the HCC prior to those students' own participation. Youth participants at the HCC had also seen the work that the CBO was doing in the broader Miami community with other immigrant and racial minority groups, and knew that the mission underlying the work being done with youth was focused on their personal advancement as well as the advancement of their Haitian American

community. Because the CBO worked hard to affirm (Noddings, 1988) the Haitian American identity in many different ways, teachers in the youth program were already supported in this aspect of their work with students in their program. Consequently, this contributed to the belief that HCC teachers already authentically cared about Haitian American students like them, even before youth joined the program.

In U.S. schools, however, authentic care (Valenzuela, 1999) and the affirmation (Noddings, 1988) of student identities are not always awaiting youth when they enter the classroom. Due to researchers' and educators' recognition of the importance of this factor in the educational success and development of students, "interventions to develop social and emotional growth in schools have been the focus of research for the past two decades" (Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007, p. 397). In this discussion, many programs have been implemented in schools nation-wide. Among the different programs being implemented in U.S. classrooms to address this issue are: Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) (Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009; Carter & Pool, 2012; www.pbis.org), the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program (Mendiola, Watt, & Huerta, 2010), and the Responsive Classroom Approach (Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007). Whereas PBIS and AVID aim to make the rules for success in schools more transparent, the Responsive Classroom Approach aims to create a stronger sense of community to help students feel empowered in their classrooms. All of these programs integrate social skills and individual advocacy as means to support students in their academic success. Fundamental to these programs is the ability for students to build relationships with their teachers, classmates, and others in the school building.

Absent from these programs, however, is the urgency for students to be able to challenge the status quo. How students see themselves as individuals within these programs, and how they define their own educational goals, is not as important as how they become academically successful within this hegemonic matrix. As the next section discusses, the HCC's view of community education goes beyond school walls. Thus, its approach to confirming student identities in the educación of Haitian American students looks different than the programs mentioned above. Due to this work, I argue that the HCC has credibility in teaching students technical mastery at their CBO.

Community Education: School-Community Partnerships

Without attention to why parents are present or absent at schools or CBOs, students, teachers, and parents may continue to misunderstand their role in the academic lives of youth in schools and CBOs. As Jake's misunderstanding about his mother's presence at the HCC in light of her absence at school shows, the failure to interrogate this difference did not prevent him from engaging in his own misinterpretation. Instead of seeing how the dominance of Standard English was a powerful barrier that granted some adults cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977/2000), while simultaneously marginalizing people like his mother, Jake justified her absence in school by believing that he was doing well academically and behaviorally. Like the students in Valenzuela's (1999) study, the wedge between Jake's mother and his school was perpetuated when teachers at the HCC and in school failed to help him interrogate this difference in his mother's presence. Consequently, the academic and social support that his HCC teachers claimed that Jake needed was minimized by larger, unchallenged discourses.

The experiences of the youth in this study reflect the need for all parties to be culturally competent. For students like Zachary, ESOL class was not just a place that validated his home language. ESOL class was a space that could help him reach his personal goal of giving back to the Haitian community in the U.S. and abroad. To accomplish his goal, Zachary wanted to maintain his ability to speak Haitian Creole. Since ESOL class was the only place where he was allowed to speak, read, and write in Haitian Creole, he found this particular class more rewarding than the classes that upheld the dominance of Standard English (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Like his ESOL classes, the HCC became a place where his ethnic and linguistic identity was validated.

The ways that Haitian American students defined their educational goals in this study, and their thoughts about not feeling supported by their schools in this journey, contradict studies suggesting that phenotypically Black students simply reject education because of its association with Whiteness (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Haitian American students in this study did not reject school. In fact, the HCC's work to educate students, families, their community, and those who were not Haitian American reflected the opposite belief. Students like Regina and Zachary valued their education, but argued that schools did not support their educational goals as they related to their Haitian American community. Consequently, these students looked to HCC teachers and the CBO to fill these gaps.

Identity Exploration & School Practice

Though I argue that HCC teachers have less difficulty focusing on the technical mastery of schooling than most U.S. schools, because they do not have to work as hard to

prove that they authentically care for the youths' community in their program, this study shows that the issue of affirming an individual student's identity is messy and hard for teachers in both places. I base this argument on the ways that Haitian American students negotiated their own identities even among their peers, despite the HCC being a co-ethnic space. My observation of Haitian American students fighting to define their own identities by positioning other co-ethnics in the same space leads me to believe that the process of engaging in authentic care must be just as messy.

Likewise, this study highlights a different aspect of how wedges are created to prevent students from participating in the benefits of social capital (Valenzuela, 1999). In Valenzuela's (1999) study with U.S.-born Mexican youth, for example, she illustrates how the school's fragmenting of students' identities, through curriculum and pedagogy, leads to students being unable to build relationships. My study with Haitian American youth reflects how this same process can happen even in a Haitian American CBO geared towards supporting Haitian American youth specifically. With little attention paid to the ways that Haitian American youth are measuring aspects of their identities by the presence of their co-ethnic peers, a commitment to teaching students how to "do" school can still cause students to create wedges among themselves.

Though the HCC was a co-ethnic space filled with adults who authentically cared for Haitian American youth, HCC teachers' adherence to dominant discourses about how to succeed in U.S. schools limited their ability to be culturally relevant educators. Their failure to engage students in a social critique of their experiences as racial beings in a U.S. context, for example, forced students to engage in this process by themselves.

Though HCC teachers sometimes hinted at the role of racism in schools and Haitian American youths' community, strong beliefs about meritocracy and colorblind ideologies were still pervasive. As this study shows, critiques of colorblind positions and the bootstrap model of success in schools would allow students to share how their educational goals are connected to their racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities as members of a marginalized group in the U.S. On the other hand, the HCC's work with the Haitian American community and beyond illustrates how the ecology of culturally relevant schools is not limited to the aesthetics of a space. Rather, the visible work that comes from that space, and how it reflects the identities of the individual students in that space, counts as well.

Social Critique in the Absence of Social Critique

In this study, students showed how they were constantly engaged in social critique even when teachers were not engaging them in these discussions. Their struggles to define who they were, even among peers who categorically shared their ethnic, racial, linguistic, and immigrant identities, reflected larger discourses about the social position of Haitian Americans in Miami and the U.S. generally. Though students did not delve into the historical roots of racism towards Haitians, their experiences reflected this reality. Because HCC teachers did not engage students in conversations about the history behind the messages they were bringing from school and processing at the HCC, educators in this CBO missed a valuable opportunity to empower their youth. For example, when Zachary shared his belief that students were calling him a "Zoe boy" to shame him, Ms. Assade dismissed an opportunity to discuss the racially and historically

complex origin and usage of this word in Miami's context. Rather than engage the HCC students in social critique at that moment, she succumbed to her anxiety about this word and remained silent. Like many teachers in U.S. public schools, HCC teachers focused on an idealistic view of academic success. Through this lens, discussions about racism and xenophobia are viewed as distractions that could cause students to lose the motivation to work hard in school. As the HCC students shared, their teacher's inability to discuss students' experiences with racism and xenophobia did not shelter them from these realities. Rather, students' ability to identify these experiences, despite their teacher's silence, highlights the need for teachers to overcome their own anxiety in order to empower their students to critique their experiences.

Even without a formal forum to articulate their thoughts and analyses with teachers, HCC youth demonstrated how they still critiqued their community, and their standing within it, among themselves. Sometimes this process led to Haitian American students being positioned by other co-ethnics in demeaning ways. To help students productively participate in these conversations, teachers working with students from marginalized backgrounds must be ready to recognize and address the discourses that prevent this dialogue from occurring in the first place.

While this study provides insight into the relationship between U.S. schools and ethnic CBOs, more research needs to be conducted in order to further study this relationship and its impact on the educational experiences of students from marginalized backgrounds. Specifically, more research is needed to determine how the presence or absence of educación and culturally relevant pedagogy in schools influences the practice

of CBOs. Likewise, studies are needed to examine how these factors impact the educational experiences of students from historically marginalized backgrounds. In the next section, I discuss some potential avenues for extending this study.

Implications for Future Research

From this study, it is my hope that there will be more studies to investigate the relationship between schools and ethnic CBOs. As this study shows, there is a need to understand how schools can function more like multiservice CBOs so that they can be more actively engaged in students' communities. Investigations into the relationship between spaces that directly impact the educational experiences of students will provide insight into the ways that students interpret their education. It will also illuminate how educators choose to think about their pedagogy.

These studies can be approached in different ways. For one, my study could be expanded to include multiple sites within the lives of students. Grounded in my study, for example, researchers could do a more in-depth investigation of each individual student's life by spending time in their school and in their community, in addition to their time at the HCC. Data collected from these spaces, over a long period of time, could be used to highlight large discourses.

Likewise, interviews could include more voices from these spaces. Teachers, parents, and community leaders have voices that could—and should—be included in future studies. How these stakeholders see their work with youth, and what motivates the type of work they do with students in their community, should be investigated. As these discourses are exposed, future research should question how these discourses in the

different areas of students' lives reflexively impact each other. More importantly, researchers should ask: How do these beliefs and ideologies interact to shape the educational experiences of students from marginalized backgrounds? How do they impact students' academic success? These studies are critical for educators so that they can either support effective classroom strategies or interrupt dangerous practices.

On a larger geographic scale, multiple case studies could be used to compare different school-CBO relationships and their impacts on students from other marginalized backgrounds. My current study with Haitian American students at the HCC, for example, could be compared to a study that takes place with Cambodian American students in Long Beach, California. Both cities are large ethnic enclaves for each respective community. In these contexts, researchers could ask: 1) How do the school-CBO relationships in Miami and Long Beach compare and contrast? 2) How do the similarities or differences impact the educational experiences of these students who appear statistically parallel in schools? And last, 3) What could these communities learn from one another?

Grounded in my view of educación and culturally relevant pedagogy at the HCC, future researchers could explore the potential of U.S. schools to function similarly to multiservice CBOs and how this view of schools could impact the educational experiences of students from other marginalized backgrounds. For one, researchers might study how the relationships of different schools to their communities impact students' views of education at their schools. At the HCC, I argue that the focus on technical mastery was viewed differently than in Valenzuela's (1999) study because

students believed that the teachers and the CBO already honored who they were as ethnic, racialized, and linguistic individuals. Do students who attend schools with strong partnerships in their communities view their education in a similar light? What could the strength of school-community partnerships mean for the academic achievement of students in those schools? What might it mean for educators and the extent to which they understand, practice, and believe in culturally relevant pedagogy in their own classroom?

Further, the extent to which schools partner with the community has implications for parent involvement. As Jake's theory about his mom's presence at the HCC and her absence at school highlights, the ability of a school to reflect its students' community is critical. The ability for schools to employ people who communicate in the community's language(s) directly impacts parental involvement. Like Jake's example expresses, it also impacts the way that students see their parents' involvement in their education. With or without these future studies, Haitian American students at the HCC demonstrated that students with similar experiences still interpret their educational experiences through these various lenses. Based on this reality, I argue that the relationship between schools and CBOs is an important lens that needs to be investigated further.

Though this study takes place outside of a traditional school context, I argue that the experiences of HCC teachers and students reflect a fundamental relationship between educational practices in both places. Though this partnership is seemingly silent, I argue that the data in this study suggests the opposite to be true. Two years ago, when this study first started, I was working at North Miami Senior High School with a predominately Haitian American student body. During that time, I could see clearly how

emergent themes from this study could be transferrable to my work with students and teachers in that building. Today, as I write from the perspective of a school administrator in a Saint Paul Public School in Minnesota, with no Haitian American students, I can still see how this study contributes to current conversations related to educación and culturally relevant pedagogy in my school.

In light of educación, this research complicates other studies that argue that educación exists when educators focus more on relationships and less on technical mastery. This study also adds to conversations related to the presence of culturally relevant pedagogy in ethnic CBOs, as the HCC's work shows how teachers struggle to balance discourses about what education in schools *currently* look like, as opposed to what education in schools *should* look like.

As the relationship between HCC's teachers and students demonstrated in this study, there was a tension between teaching students how to "do" school within a caring educational framework. For example, while the HCC teachers believed that they were helping students to be successful in school, they often reproduced oppressive schooling practices. By focusing more on the reinforcement of school-sanctioned behaviors, combined with their failure to engage students in social critique, the HCC teachers' practice reflected a view that schools were neutral spaces while students were the ones who were deficient. Based on my analysis of conversations with the HCC teachers, this was not their intent. In their view, they were supporting students by teaching students the codes of power to "do" school (Delpit, 2006).

Viewed through a caring educational framework, however, I believe these moments represent missed opportunities that prevented teachers from being culturally relevant practitioners. Based on data collected in this study, it was clear that the HCC teachers cared about students and the HCC students cared about them. Due to this relationship, the HCC teachers had an opportunity to help students to critique their practice at the CBO as well as students' schools' policies and practices. The fact that the HCC teachers did not critique school practices and steered clear of critical conversations with students begs the question: Why not? Similar to Ms. Assade's avoidance of the complex "Zoe boy" discussion initiated by Zachary, I still wonder if the HCC teachers were scared or anxious of this topic. I also wonder if the HCC teachers were even critical of school policies and practices. How might their own beliefs have led them to reinforce oppressive practices under the guise of authentic care for the HCC students? To explore these questions, as a way to understand the tension between teaching students the codes of power in school (Delpit, 2006), authentically caring for students (Valenzuela, 1999), and engaging teachers in culturally relevant practices (Ladson-Billings, 2002), more studies should be conducted on this topic.

As data throughout this study shows, the ways that schools operate directly impact the ways that ethnic CBOs, like the HCC, function. When educators in CBOs aim to help students succeed in school, they feel obligated to work from the framework that schools have already created. This is especially true for educators working to support students from marginalized backgrounds in U.S. schools.

Due to this reality, the responsibility to teach through the framework of educación and culturally relevant pedagogy should not fall on ethnic CBOs alone. Schools also have a responsibility to change. As the data in this study reveals, the status quo does not stay merely within the confines of school walls. Consequently, the status quo in schools will continue to limit the ways in which ethnic CBOs work with students from marginalized backgrounds, just as this qualitative case study of the HCC illustrates. By recognizing the presence of these discourses in ethnic CBOs, education researchers and educators in public schools can see how important it is for schools to grow in educación and culturally relevant ways.

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Appendix A

Name	Age	Position in School	Birth Location
Kervens	9 years old	4 th Grade	U.S.
Jake	10 years old	5 th Grade	U.S.
Jackson	10 years old	5 th Grade	Haiti
Angeline	10 years old	5 th Grade	Haiti
Sherlande	10 years old	5 th Grade	Haiti
Zachary	10 years old	5 th Grade	Haiti
Sebastien	11 years old	6 th Grade	Haiti
Maya	12 years old	7 th Grade	Haiti
Regina	14 years old	9 th Grade	Haiti
Ms. Assade	31 years old	Substitute Teacher / Middle School	**NA
Ms. Joseph	**NA	French Teacher / Elementary School	Haiti

**NA: Represents unknown data

Appendix B

Interview Protocol for HCC Teachers

This interview will focus on your experiences as a youth leader / teacher at HCC. It should last approximately 30 minutes. As I mentioned previously, I will be recording this interview so that I can devote full attention to what you are saying. If you would like the recorder turned off at any point in the interview, please let me know and I will turn it off. I am the only person who will have access to the voice recording, and I will destroy the recording within 3 years of completing the study.

I will be submitting papers based on the interview for my dissertation and publication. I may quote you directly in my papers. However, I will not be using your name in reporting my findings. Your identity and confidentiality will be protected with the use of pseudonyms.

I want to emphasize that your participation in this study is completely voluntary, with very minimal risks, and that you may withdraw at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, data collected with your assistance will not be used. If you do not have any questions at this time, I'd like for us to begin the interview.

Interview Questions:

1. I want you to imagine that all of the students at HCC attend one school. If you were the curriculum coordinator for that school, what types of classes would you offer?
2. Can you describe how an effective school operates? How does an ineffective school in your community operate? What are some differences and similarities between these schools?

3. In your opinion, what do adults in this community think students should be learning in their school?
4. In your opinion, can you describe what HCC students' families' relationships with students' schools look like? Do you believe that parents are comfortable visiting teachers and administrators at their students' school?
5. Can you describe parents' role in HCC's after school program? How is it similar to or different from their relationship with students' schools?
6. Some people believe that education statistics like this (SHARE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DATA) at the federal and state level suggest that all students that fit into these categories share similar education experiences. What do you think?
7. What do you think this data (SHARE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DATA) says about students' education performance in Miami overall? What questions do you have about the data? Can you explain why your questions are important? Where do you think HCC's students fit in this data?

Probes:

Would you explain further?

Would you give me an example of what you mean?

Would you say more?

Is there anything else?

Appendix C

Interview Protocol for Youth

This interview will focus on your experiences in school and at HCC. It should last approximately 30 minutes. I will be recording this interview so that I can pay attention to what you are saying. If you would like the recorder turned off at any point in the interview, please let me know and I will turn it off.

I will write papers based on the interview to help other teachers learn about your experiences. I'll publish these papers in books and magazines for teachers. I may use your words in my papers, but I will not use your real name.

Remember, it's completely up to you whether or not you want to be in this study. You can say no. No one will be mad. You can also stop being in the study whenever you want. If you decide you don't want to be in the study anymore, I won't use any of your class assignments, interviews, or other information.

You can ask me any questions you have about the research study now. If you don't have any questions right now, I'd like to begin the interview.

Interview Questions:

1. How did you learn about HCC? Pretend that you are talking to a friend at school about HCC, how would you describe why you come to HCC? How would you describe what you do at HCC?
2. How does your family feel about your participation at HCC? How do your schoolteachers feel about your participation at HCC?

3. What other activities (e.g. church, tutoring, etc.) do you participate in outside of HCC? How did you learn about them?
4. How are your activities at HCC similar to what you do at school? How are your activities at HCC different than what you do at school?
5. How do you think your family members feel about your school? Can you describe your family's relationship with your teachers and school principal?
6. If you were the principal of your school, what types of classes would you offer to students (like you and others at HCC)? Would you allow your family members to participate in those classes?
7. Can you talk about what your family wants you to learn in school? Why are these things important?
8. Some people believe that education statistics like this (SHARE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DATA) at the federal and state level suggest that all students that fit into these categories share similar education experiences. What do you think?

Probes:

Would you explain further?

Would you give me an example of what you mean?

Would you say more?

Is there anything else?

Appendix D

Florida Department of Education Data

School Accountability Report ..

3/10/13 2:40 PM

[Return to Normal View](#)



You selected:
 District: DADE
 Years:
 School Grades:
 Report Type: Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Modify Selections | Return to Summary Reports | Return to List of Schools |

2009-2010 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Report - Page 2														Dade NORTH MIAMI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 7591															
Number of students enrolled in the grades tested: Click here to see Number of students in each group														Read: 1329		2009-2010		Did the School make Adequate Yearly Progress?		NO									
														Math: 1320		School Grade ¹ :													
This section shows the percent tested and performance for each group used to determine AYP (Parts a and c ²).														This section shows the improvement for each group used to determine AYP via safe harbor (Part b ²).						This section shows the percent of students "on track" to be proficient used to determine AYP via the growth model.									
Group	Reading Tested 95% of the students?		Math Tested 95% of the students?		72% scoring at or above grade level in Reading?		74% scoring at or above grade level in Math?		Improved performance in Writing by 1%?			Increased Graduation Rate ³ by 2%?		Percent of Students below grade level in Reading		Safe Harbor Reading		Percent of Students below grade level in Math		Safe Harbor Math		% of students on track to be proficient in reading		Growth model reading		% of students on track to be proficient in math		Growth model math	
	2010	Y/N	2010	Y/N	2010	Y/N	2010	Y/N	2009	2010	Y/N	2008	2009	Y/N	2009	2010	Y/N	2009	2010	Y/N	2009	2010	Y/N	2010	Y/N	2010	Y/N	2010	Y/N
TOTAL ⁴	99	Y	99	Y	21	N	52	N	85	90	Y	51	62	Y	79	79	N	49	48	N	22		N		57	N			
WHITE		NA		NA		NA		NA			NA			NA		NA			NA										
BLACK	99	Y	99	Y	17	N	49	N	83	89	Y	50	63	Y	83	83	N	52	51	N	19		N		55	N			
HISPANIC	98	Y	99	Y	37	N	66	N	90		Y	55	61	Y	66	63	N	38	34	Y	36		N		67	NA			
ASIAN		NA		NA		NA		NA			NA			NA		NA			NA										
AMERICAN INDIAN		NA		NA		NA		NA			NA			NA		NA			NA										
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	99	Y	99	Y	19	N	50	N	84	88	Y	50	65	Y	79	81	N	46	50	N	21		N		56	N			
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS	99	Y	99	Y		N	29	N	69	75	Y	32	41	Y			N	65	71	N	9		N		49	N			
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES KEY:	95	Y	95	Y		NA		NA	55	58	Y	20	46	Y			NA			NA									
Economically Disadvantaged - Eligible for free or reduced price lunch ELL - English Language Learners SWD - Students with Disabilities														Y/N - Was the required target met? Yes or No NA - is shown when the number of students in the group is less than 304 or the data are not applicable.															
¹ Under Florida's AYP plan, schools with a grade of D or F cannot be designated as making AYP. ² The "part" designations used in this table correspond to the three main paragraphs in the Federal regulations for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. The regulations, effective January 2, 2004, were published in the Federal Register, Vol. 67, No. 231, on December 2, 2003. Sections 200.13-200.21 describe the indicators to be collected and how to determine AYP. ³ The school-wide data for writing and graduation rate are used in Part a. Any group not meeting the reading or mathematics targets under Part a is reviewed in Part b-Safe Harbor. When the writing percent proficient is >90 or the graduation rate is >85, increases are not required. ⁴ If the total number of students in a school is greater than ten, adequate yearly progress for the school will be determined; however, a minimum of 30 students and represents more than 15% of the school's tested population or 100 students is required for each group within a school.																													
Note: All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. The Y and N designations indicate if there was a 1% increase.																													
Note: In order to maintain the anonymity and privacy of students, proficiency data is not displayed for values <=5% and >=95%																													
Percent Tested and Proficiency Levels (Part a and c²): A school or school district makes AYP if 95% of each group is tested, if each group meets the proficiency targets in reading and mathematics, and if the school-wide writing percent proficient and graduation rate increases.														Safe Harbor (Part b²): If any group in Part a does not meet the proficiency target, the percentage of students in that group who are below the proficiency target in reading or mathematics should be reduced by at least 10%. That group also must make progress in writing proficiency and graduation rate. No group is eligible for Safe Harbor if the school fails to meet						Growth Model: If any group does not meet the proficiency and safe harbor requirements, the percentage of students in that group who are on track to be proficient within three years should be 72% for reading and 74% for math. That group must also make progress in writing proficiency and graduation rate. No group is eligible for the Growth Model if the school fails to meet participation criteria for all subgroups and the writing, graduation rate, and school grade criteria for the									