THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DISRUPTION: FINDING HUMANIZING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COVID-19 IMPACTED CLASSROOM

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For Nicky and Richie

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ABSTRACT

DISRUPTION: Finding humanizing opportunities in the covid-19 impacted classroom, provides a unique glimpse into how educators conceptualize their own professional purpose in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis and Black Lives Matter uprisings in 2020. In order to document teacher experience, I released a qualitative survey in partnership with the Chicago Teacher's Union that garnered over 800 usable responses and a sample representative of CTU's membership. Upon analyzing the submissions, I developed three chapters that detail the following: 1) How did some teachers manage to sustain and even strengthen their relationships with students during remote instruction? ; 2) How did teachers' diversity of responses to disruption and the autonomy that disruption allowed reveal the intentions of their own professional priorities?; and 3) Why and how did teachers incorporate lessons on inequality, racial injustice, and civil unrest in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd.

I find that the remote classroom and the context of crisis created opportunities to develop and recognize the significance of intentional intimate relationships that relied on social presence and emotional connection. However, teachers differently experienced this possibility based on how they used their professional discretion to mediate students' experiences of institutional demands. Their resulting pedagogical decisions determined the course and content of their virtual classrooms. Additionally, although largely convinced of their importance, most teachers are unprepared to engage in productive conversations around the social realities of racial injustice in their classrooms. DISRUPTION documents the diversity of teachers' experiences and their responses to the emergency shift to remote instruction. Beyond its contribution to limited literature on experienced teachers understanding of their professional identities, the study contributes to institutional studies by identifying educators' professional priorities and adaptations during a time of sudden and vast disruption to institutional cohesion and stability.

1. INTRODUCTION

It was like building a plane while trying to fly it—exhausting, frustrating, and seemingly futile.

[455*;* White veteran teacher at a racially/ethnically diverse low-income elementary school]

On March 17, 2020, Chicago Public Schools announced that they were closing schools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Chicago Public Schools, March 2020). Initially closed for a week, then a month, and then the remainder of the school year. The district began an experiment in districtwide remote instruction, but pre-existing and exacerbated unequal access to resources in conjunction with continual and rapid adjustments of policies and procedures left students, families, and teachers frustrated and confused. After the first extension, even Janice Jackson, the district CEO at the time, admitted, "We're not set up where we can replicate an entire student day through at online system" (Chalkbeat, March 2020). For teachers, it was a practice in improvisation:

> *It was hard. Multiple levels of feelings were involved. I think most teachers at first felt shocked and were grieving when we found out we wouldn't be able to see our students for the rest of the year. Once we got used to that, it was scrambling to try to make up for the inefficiency of CPS in terms of remote learning preparedness. I know myself and other teachers literally worked all night and got no sleep the first week because we were trying to contact students' families to make sure they were ok, and then come up with a whole new way to teach with minimal guidance.* [444; Early career teacher of unidentified race/ethnicity in a mostly Latine low-income elementary school]

Educators were learning new technologies while trying to teach to the best of their ability. There were so many questions: How often were teachers supposed to be in contact with students? How long did they have to be online? How could they engage families to supplement student learning? How would student learning ultimately be impacted? How were teachers supposed to reach students who did not have computers or internet access or food or housing? How were they supposed to process crisis for themselves while also helping their students cope?

After nearly four months of remote instruction and amongst the backdrop of global protests of racial injustice, I asked teachers to share their experiences of the transition to remote instruction and the disruption to their work. With this project, I aim to capture some of the methods educators used to adapt to student need, institutional instability, and a call to confront racism in the United States. Through this dissertation, I shed light on the question: How did the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and racialized civil unrest during the summer of 2020 impact what teachers prioritized in their (virtual) classrooms?

In times of crisis, we learn what our priorities are (Tavory & Fine, 2020). Acknowledging the pain and hardship, the upheaval of crisis can also create opportunities for re-evaluation and reflection. I argue that the shuttering of schools in the spring of 2020 and the demand to keep kids learning required teachers to reevaluate prioritization of their own professional responsibilities. Educators were asked to remain effective regardless of their own well-being, their competence with new technologies, or their students' willingness to engage. This pressure likely required educators to rely on prior training and experience in order to respond to policy and format changes in real time. Without a script, educators were imbued, or perhaps burdened, with a new creative opportunity—a new agency.

Through the three papers of this dissertation I explore how teachers differently exercise their agency and expertise. Taking teachers as experts in their professional and lived experiences, this dissertation relies entirely on teachers' self-perceptions. Such a phenomenological approach provides a sense of how educators are uniquely interpreting the contexts that they are responding to, even if their perceptions do not align with district data or student reports. Therefore, we also become witness to individual rationalization of responsibilities and intentional (rather than dictated) action. In other words, we see what teachers are actually doing and what they are choosing not to do, rather than simply what they are being asked to do.

This difference is significant because the structural and hierarchical commitments of dominant culture—by way of the institutional myths concerning education—in the United States encourage schools to operate in particular ways: to adhere to strict systems of accountability, to dictate proper speech and behavior, to proselytize a particular version of history. One way to conceptualize the relationship between individual teachers and the restraints of their station is to recognize teachers as *street-level bureaucrats,* however, Inhabited Institutionalism goes beyond the local context to consider how institutional forces or myths are internally taken up, resisted, or possibly transformed through the actions and reactions of the individuals that make up a particular organization (Hallett & Hawbaker, 2021). Critics of early social reproduction theories press us to consider the ways that agency and resistance still manage to exist within socializing institutions (Mehan, 1992). In education, these theoretical interventions tend to focus on the ways the students agentically navigate educational environments and expectations. However, teachers also contain this potential. Grounding this analysis in teachers' reflections reveals the ways that educators disagree with policy and exercise agency in navigating their professional role.

Since this dissertation explores the experiences of educators across the district, I am less concerned with how teachers navigated breaks in bureaucratic or organizational routine, that is their operation as street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 2010). Rather, I aim to reveal how disruptions in bureaucratic policies illuminate how teachers interact with institutional forces or myths related to the purpose of schooling. Reflected in both public discourse and in the data presented in this dissertation is a clash concerning the ultimate function of schools: between those voices expressing concern for youths' mental, emotional, and social health and the perhaps louder call to avoid learning loss. As inhabitants, teachers are able to integrate institutional myths regarding the function of schooling and organizational demands, such as the prioritization of apolitical and unemotional academics, with their personal beliefs about the purpose of schooling and education (Hallett & Hawbaker, 2021). As a result, teachers, regardless of external demands will enact their professional responsibilities differently. In this way, this dissertation emphasizes that teaching requires a deft negotiation of demands, responsibilities, and individual perspectives, just as any craft would.

The first paper in this dissertation, *(Dis)Connected*, highlights a subset of teachers that were able continue building and improving their relationships with students after the transition to remote learning. By utilizing social presence theory and advocating for the significance of intimacy in teacher-student relationships, I show—through these teachers—that remote learning and virtual instruction generally do not necessitate emotional distance. The emotional work these teachers display illustrates one way in which teaching and education are more than information transfer services.

In the second paper, *"Not Entirely Sure, but Will Need to Figure it Out,"* I discuss and critique educators' planned instructional choices for incorporating lessons on racial injustice following the murder of George Floyd. Through a racialized pedagogy of political trauma, I reveal strengths and weaknesses in the materials and activities teachers planned to use to engage their students in conversations about race and racism. Finally, in the third paper, *The Role of a Teacher,* I categorize teachers into five typologies based on their professional dispositions and the aspects of their professional role that they prioritized when adapting their pedagogy. These dispositions are the result of a triage process through which teachers negotiate between their expertise, institutional demands, and student need.

Connecting these chapters is a call for humanizing educational experiences that recognizes the importance of a dialogic relationship between teachers and their students. The pandemic showed us that schools and teacher can make quick changes. Upon the return to in-person learning, I urge that we continue to encourage teachers to be creative in their approaches and responsive to their assessment of students' needs.

How I Approach This Work

Inspired by efforts to uplift possibility and positivity in education research and question the transformative potential of the public-school classroom, I heed Robin D.G. Kelley's call to produce research based on what I am "fighting for" rather than what I am "fighting against." In full view of the stress, pain, and fear induced by the pandemic and civil unrest, what can we see in this unique moment that can lead us towards liberation? Warren asserts that, "By centering possibility in the visioning process, I urge that Blackness be understood as full of possibility, and in doing so, that subsequent actions one takes to alleviate the dehumanizing conditions of Black learners' schooling sustain an intense focus Black people—not as the subjects of our oppression, but as agents of our own (education) liberation" (2021, p.5).

In the development of this project and the orientation of my research questions, I rely upon the principles of Black Feminist epistemologies because of their mission to move our structurally violent and hierarchical society towards liberation and to allow all individuals the opportunity to self-define and experience wholeness in their humanity. While the citation and reference to Black Feminist Epistemologies my not always be explicit in this manuscript, adherence to BFE greatly influenced the questions that I chose to ask as well as how I approached and analyzed the data. Each chapter emphasizes the importance of concepts integral to BFE, such as care, intimacy, autonomy and the possibility of social transformation. Additionally, this ideology encourages us to see teachers' lived experiences as valid sources of expert knowledge (Collins, 2002). My affinity for this framework stems from my own identity as a Black Queer person, as well as an explicit orientation towards critical and engaged pedagogies. As a student and practitioner of Black Feminist and Critical pedagogies, I cannot remove their influence from how I approach research nor how I analyze my data. These pedagogies aim to move towards liberation and humanizing transformative educational spaces. As do I.

Although not exclusively about the experiences of Black women, or even Black people, DISRUPTION was conceived in response to the fight for Black liberation and a desire to engage radical imagination. How do we move forward with what Black Feminists have shown to be true and necessary in order to create a greater chance of a liberated public, especially in the spaces in which Black potential moves, and develops? How do we reconceptualize the purpose of education and the teaching profession to be one in service of Black humanity?

Methods

The three papers in this dissertation use and analyze data from a qualitative survey distributed in July of 2020 (see Appendix for survey protocol). Members of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) were invited to complete an online survey discussing their experiences during the transition to remote instruction. The link to this survey was distributed in the regular

CTU newsletter. Union membership includes approximately 25,000 classroom teachers, counselors, support staff, special education professionals, and arts/specials educators within Chicago Public Schools as well as several unionized charter schools (CTU Local 1). Despite discrepancies between union membership and the reported number of Chicago Public School teachers (22,000), CTU is representative of CPS, as only an estimated 1% of CPS teachers do not belong to the union (C. Caref, personal communication, November 23, 2021). Participation was voluntary and uncompensated. The response rate was approximately 5.5%, yielding 1200 responses over 10 days beginning July 19, 2020. Submissions that were less than 75% complete were dropped from the analytic sample. These submissions often left the majority of open-ended questions unanswered.

The resulting sample (n=859) is largely representative of the entirety of CTU membership (22,000) in terms of race/ethnicity, school socioeconomic status, and school location (see Tables 1.1 and 1.2). However, the sample is skewed towards veteran educators. Novice teachers were underrepresented in the sample. This may be because novice and early career teachers may have been more overwhelmed during this time period due to lack of experience or may not have a strong relationship with the union.

Table 1.1 Educator demographics: Survey sample vs Chicago Teachers Union

	Study Sample	Chicago Teachers Union
Teaching Experience		
1-3 Years	4%	40%
4-6 Years	11%	12%
7-9 Years	13%	8%
10 + Years	73%	45%
Race/Ethnicity[1]		
White	56%	50%
Latine[2]	18%	21%
Black/African American	17%	21%
Multiracial	3%	1.5%
Asian American/ Pacific Islander[3]	3%	4%
Middle Eastern/ North African	1%	--
Native/Indigenous	1%	0.4%
Other	2%	2%
Subject		
General Education	27%	--
ELA	15%	--
Social Studies	9%	--
Science	12%	--
Math	11%	--
Diverse Learner Educator	18%	--

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[1] Survey participants were allowed to check all categories that applied, therefore, percentages may not total to 100%

[2] CTU uses Hispanic as a comparable category; Latine is used as a gender-neutral alternative to Latino/a for individuals of Latin American descent that is more consistent with conventional Spanish-Language pronunciation than Latinx.

[3] CTU uses Asian as a comparable category

Table 1.2 School types represented by participating educators

	Study Sample	Chicago Teachers Union
School Location		
Central, Near North, Near South Sides	6%	2%
Far Northside	12%	10%
Far Southside[4]	8%	12%
Far Southwest Side	5%	8%
Northside	13%	7%
Northwest Side	15%	7%
South Side	8%	11.5%
Southwest Side	17%	17%
West and Near West Side[5]	16%	25%
School Racial/Ethnic Composition		
Mostly Latine	37%	34%
Mostly Black	23%	45%
Mostly White	8%	3%
Mixed/Diverse	31%	18%
Other	2%	0.5%
School Socioeconomic Make-Up		
High-Need/Low Income	63%	64%
Socioeconomically Diverse	32%	30%
Affluent	5%	6%
School Level		
Elementary (PreK-8)	73%	74.8%**
High School	27%	25.2%**

** Data from cps.edu/about/stats-facts/

The online qualitative survey was administered through Qualtrics in English. The use of a qualitative survey had significant advantages during the COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative surveys allow for much of the richness of data collected from interviews from larger and more diverse samples and increases reach and accessibility (Braun, Clarke, Boulton, Davey, & McEvoy, 2020; Jansem, 2010). Additionally, with opportunities for interaction limited by the pandemic, a qualitative survey allowed educators to have private, self-directed opportunities to express themselves and share their unique experiences.

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[4] CTU uses Far Southeast Side

[5] CTU uses West Side

The survey contained 20 items and took an average of 45-minutes to complete. The first seven multiple-choice questions asked participants about their demographics and teaching experience. Educators were asked to report the area where their school was located based on colloquial geographic areas of Chicago (i.e. Far Northside, West Side, Far South Side, etc.…), their teaching experience in years, subject(s) taught, the demographic make-up and SES of their school, and their own racial-ethnic identification. For questions on subject and identity, participants were permitted to select more than one response. Following, respondents were presented with a series of open-ended questions, one rank choice question, and two Yes/No/Maybes. Teachers were then asked to comment on their experiences transitioning to remote learning and any challenges or concerns about returning to the classroom. The final questions on the survey asked participants about their future curricular plans.

Research Context

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is a large urban district that served over 350,000 students at the start of the 2019-2020 academic year. That year, 76.4 percent of students were listed as part of the Free/Reduced Lunch program and 10.8% are identified as white (Chicago Public Schools, n.d.). In comparison, during this same year, 52% of teachers in the city of Chicago identified as white (Illinois Report Card, n.d.). CPS elementary schools include grades 1-8 and high schools include grades 9-12. In this study, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten educators will be included with elementary educators.

Chicago Public Schools shut down in-person instruction on March 17, 2020 (Chicago Public Schools, March 2020). The district began remote instruction the week of April 13th, often utilizing Google Classroom (Chicago Public Schools, April 2020). At this time, CPS announced that it would make laptop computers available for students that needed them. As a result, the district planned to distribute over 100,000 devices. The district also distributed 12,000 internet access devices to students with temporary or unstable living conditions.

CPS has demonstrated that SEL as a districtwide priority and key mechanism for district improvement (see October 31, 2017 CPS Press Release). In an effort to recognize the impact that a nationwide pandemic might take on youth mental health, the district decided that teachers should relax their grading policies in order to would "ensure the grades of students experiencing hardship are not negatively impacted due to circumstances beyond their control" (Chicago Public Schools, April 2020). This survey was administered at the close of the school year in July 2020, after the district had been operationally remote for three months.

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2. (DIS)CONNECTED: ESTABLISHING SOCIAL PRESENCE AND INTIMACY IN TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS DURING EMERGENCY REMOTE LEARNING[6]

The teaching profession has long been associated with emotional work and connection, however, the pandemic and summer of protests against racial injustice amplified the need for teachers to emotionally engage with their students. Accordingly, the extended period of remote instruction required that teachers learn new ways of connecting with students, both socially and emotionally and called into question what qualities were necessary for a meaningful teacher-student relationship building process. In this novel context, teachers relied on their "injunction to adapt" in order to migrate face-to-face (FtF) relationships to the virtual space (Everitt, 2018). Many of the informal paths through which teachers build relationships and develop intimacy became awkward and difficult, if not impossible. Though many studies focus on students' perceptions of teacher presence and availability, this study contributes to the literature on supportive virtual teacher-student relationships by detailing teachers' perceptions of their own experiences finding connection and intimacy. In this paper, I utilize social presence theory to capture some of the relational challenges that teachers experienced during the initial months of remote instruction.

My motivation for exploring teacher-student relations during a time of crisis comes from an interest in humanizing educational interactions and exchanges. The well-documented racial/ethnic disparity between teacher and student populations in the United States, as well as the consequences of cultural and racial mismatch, has long encouraged educational researchers to find ways to see and teach children of color as full human beings (Delpit & Ladson-Billings,

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[6] A version of this article was previously published in on July 17, 2022 in AERAOpen https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211069525

1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). The removal of social protections and the restructuring of daily life due to the pandemic, remote schooling, and racial protests made it difficult if not impossible to ignore a social partner's emotional well-being and life transformations. That is, stress, grief, and terror entered the classroom through collective experiences of uncertainty and instability, impacting classroom participants' ability and capacity to engage.

Teacher-Student Relationships and Intimacy

Relationships between teachers and students are of a particular and powerful kind. Teachers' relationships with their students can encourage cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement, making teachers key players in youths' development of social and emotional skills, sociopolitical awareness, and ability to cope with trauma (Dods, 2015; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012; Verduzco-Baker, 2018). Success in their role as socialization agents requires that teachers are able to establish strong and supportive, and thereby intimate, relationships with students.

However, building intimacy and permitting vulnerability is a dynamic process that evolves and shifts based on the interpersonal interactions of relationship participants (Reis & Shaver, 1988). The establishment of intimacy relies on a perception of the other as trustworthy, receptive, and accessible, which can be facilitated or hindered by differences in the social positioning—race, class, and or other status-holding identifications—of the participants. This is especially important when considering that in most major districts in the United States, the demographics of the teaching population does not match the student population. This discrepancy in concert with systemic biases and inequalities, contributes to disparate outcomes in discipline, expectations, and as a result academic success (Artiles, 2011; Cobb, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Morris & Perry, 2017; Picower, 2009).

Despite such challenges, strong teacher-student relationships, whether in-person or online, require intimacy (Cho, 2005; Darder, 2009; Song, Kim, & Luo, 2016; Song, Kim, & Park, 2018; Yin, Loreman, Majid, & Alias, 2019). Not only do students benefit from supportive emotional connections to teachers but positive teacher-student relationships also increase teachers' feelings of self-efficacy and well-being. Within this positive feedback loop, positive relationships likely fuel more effective teaching since holding students' trust and respect allows teachers to motivate and engage their classroom. Strong teacher-student relationships are then mutually beneficial, encouraging student engagement and supporting teacher well-being and confidence (Milatz, Lüftenegger, & Schober, 2015; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). In a time of high stress, teachers may be compelled to increase their intentional efforts towards connection with their students in order to develop trust and maintain engagement.

Immediacy, Social Presence, and Online Education

Regardless of the established significance of teacher-student relationships, once the pandemic required schools initiate remote instruction, connections were strained due to mental and emotional stress and digital inequalities (Beaunoyer, Dupéré, & Guitton, 2020). Much of what we currently know about teaching and crisis in the US, generally discusses teaching in the wake of tragedy, such as after a natural disaster or post-9/11, or in the midst of trauma for an individual student, rather than the experience of teaching during ongoing and collective crisis. This literature reveals that teachers are often called upon to be counselors and therapists, managing their own as well as their students' emotions, trauma, and stress (Alisic, Bus, Dulack, Pennings, & Splinter, 2012; Alvarez, 2010; Gay, 2007; Powell & Holleran-Steiker, 2015). These additional roles further the call for teachers to be especially present, relational, and available to their students.

Although has not been linked to the emotional toll of teaching during crisis, virtual education research regularly questions how teachers can counter the emotional sterility of the virtual environment. That is, how can teachers generate the types of intimacy that is facilitated in the classroom by immediacy behaviors, or actions that generate feelings of closeness and reduce psychological distance?

In the physical classroom, intimacy can be facilitated through immediacy behaviors such as the use of humor, eye contact, and physical closeness (Aragon, 2003). However, in the virtual space, many nonverbal and casual communication tactics that signal availability are absent (Eisenbach, Greathouse, & Kirk, 2018; Ghamdi, Samarji, & Watt, 2016; Song et al., 2016). This may be especially true for behaviors that are strongly associated with intimacy such as warmth or receptiveness. When students do not, or cannot, turn on their cameras, teachers have a more difficult time communicating through body language, facial expressions, or informal interactions.

In response, teachers may need to engage in relational virtual displays and pedagogical methods, or e-immediacy behaviors, that create opportunities to increase social presence and the possibility for virtual intimacy (Ghamdi et al., 2016; Mennecke, Triplett, Hassall, & Conde, 2010). Social presence describes the perception of psychological involvement with others online and has been associated with transactional presence, a measure describing teachers' perceived availability and connectedness (Shin, 2010; Song et al., 2018). Social presence theory, then, allows for understanding of "the *relative salience of interpersonal relationships"* in the online interaction (Öztok & Kehrwald, 2017)p. 5; emphasis in original). Defined in this way, (as Öztok argues social presence has taken on several meanings) social presence is an antecedent to intimacy in online education. While in the physical classroom availability and access are presumed variables, both availability and access have to be intentionally established in the virtual classroom before intimacy can be achieved. Teachers that generate greater social presence, by increasing students' perceptions of closeness despite a lack of physical proximity, produce more efficacious learning experiences and greater teacher-student relationship satisfaction (Song et al., 2016).

Teacher displays of vulnerability through high-quality contact or purposefully sharing personal information, or self-disclosure, have a greater impact on the quality of connection as compared to FtF classes (Kovacs, Pulfrey, & Monnier, 2021; Song et al., 2016, 2018). Song et al. (2016) interpret this to mean that teachers' communication practices and ability to connect is actually more important when instructing online. Therefore, traditionally FtF teachers may have to challenge scripts dictating classroom-appropriate emotional displays in order to be successful online (Hochschild, 1998; Stark & Bettini, 2021; Wharton, 2009). Although studies find there are rarely explicit or stated rules, teachers feel a professional expectation to abide by particular emotional display rules that require them to (Stark & Bettini, 2021; Thoits, 1989; Wharton, 2009; Zembylas, 2007). Unfortunately, vulnerability does not seem to come naturally in the online learning environment and despite its importance, teachers tend to engage in fewer immediacy behaviors when teaching online, reducing emotional evocation and estranging instructors from students.

Increasing Social Presence in Crisis

Effective social presence enables students to recognize their teacher's humanity. By conveying personal information, or making themselves readily available, teachers establish human connection leading students to more deeply engage in the classroom and motivating enhanced communication (Cayanus, Martin, & Goodboy, 2009; Shin, 2002). This is supported by preliminary findings which suggest that expressing some negativity or sharing negative experiences, dispersed between positivity, may enhance teacher approachability. Through e-immediacy behaviors teachers become more than simply instructors. By engaging in processing the pandemic and uprisings together, teachers and their students could participate in the reciprocal process of empathic understanding—learning each other as human, emotional, and fallible (Pedro & Kinloch, 2016; Zembylas, 2007). Together, teachers and students have the power to renegotiate display rules in the creation and maintenance of their own intimacies or affective connections.

Studies on social presence and teacher immediacy in virtual classrooms often examine classroom settings where teachers and students have little to no valuable or personal information about each other, complicating the initiation of relationship building (Song et al., 2018). In contrast, most of the teachers in this study's sample spent at least six months in FtF instruction with the students they discussed. This means that teachers and students were entering the remote education arena with established relationships that were then transformed by the transition from physical to virtual instruction. Since this period of remote learning was an emergency response, the teachers in this study, unlike those studied in much of the existing research, never intended to and were not trained to support virtual teaching. Their success was not guaranteed. Therefore, in this study I address the following: What, if any, methods and practices allowed educators to develop the social presence necessary to maintain strong connections with students during the initial months of sudden and unplanned remote instruction?

Methods

The procedures and sampling methods used for this analysis are detailed in the overall introduction. The data analyzed for this article explores educators' responses to the following open-ended question: "Think about your role and responsibilities as a teacher before and after the transition to remote learning. How would you describe your relationships with your students while remote teaching as compared to when you met in a classroom?" This question aimed to reveal how educators were in contact and relating to their students when unable to commune with them in a physical classroom, and sometimes not at all.

Coding and Analysis

To begin inductive qualitative analysis of the data, 100 question responses were reviewed which generated 13 codes in accordance with a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2012). These themes were then applied to all responses with room for new themes to emerge, if necessary. Given the exploratory and descriptive nature of this study, thematic analysis was chosen for its ability to identify common characteristics in data regarding lived experiences.

The themes captured comparative relationship quality (*consistent, worsened, improved*), factors that contributed to quality changes (*more personal, detached, less interactive*), as well as other mentions that facilitated teacher-student contact (*parental involvement, pedagogical methods, leveraged prior relationships*) and levels of buy-in from students (*engagement, inaccessibility*). Mentions of issues with technology or tech literacy and explanations of methods educators used to engage their students were additionally recorded. See Table 3 for full code descriptions.

Given that teacher-student relationships were expected to whither in the virtual space, I aim to establish a counternarrative that emphasizes positivity and possibility. Therefore, in this paper, I will focus on the themes related to cases coded as *improved* in which teachers mentioned that at least some of their relationships grew stronger, more personal, or more vulnerable. Many but, not all, excerpts coded *improved* were also coded *more personal.* For a broader focus that leaves room for multiple mechanisms to produce improved relationships, I focus on all relationships that improved, not only those that became more personal.

Table 2.1 Codebook for responses about relationships

Code	***Definition***
Changed	*Teacher comments that relationships with students changed but does not say how*
Consistent	*Teacher's relationships with class/students has largely remained the same as it was in the face-to-face classroom environment*
Detached	*Teacher states relationships/contact lacked warmth, intimacy, were less interactive*
Engagement	*Teacher expresses concern about student's involvement in lessons or attendance*
Improved	*Teacher notes relationships were better after the shift to remote learning*
Inaccessible	*Teacher shares that students disappeared or were difficult to reach*
Leveraged Prior	*Teacher utilized existing connections with students to connect during remote learning*
Methods	*Teacher shares pedagogical techniques or practices used to develop or maintain relationships with their students*
Missed Students	*Teacher expresses missing seeing students in person or having regular contact*
More Personal	*Teacher notes that teacher-student relationships became stronger, included personal disclosures, emotion, vulnerability*
Parental Involvement	*Teacher mentions use of or development of relationships with parents in connecting with students/class*
Stressful	*Teacher expresses that maintaining relationships during remote learning was a difficult experience*
Worsened	*Teacher expresses that teacher-student relationships were strained, declined in quality*

Results

Overall, teachers reported missing their classrooms and the kinds of relational interactions that FtF settings allow. Casual relational interactions were cited as key to the school socialization experience, both between teachers and students and among students. Their absence led teachers to express FtF learning as better for students than remote instruction. Exemplifying this sentiment, one teacher shared:

> *The classroom is a more conducive learning environment albeit exhausting. Providing on demand and immediate support from teachers and peers is always available in the classroom. It was not as easy and simple to provide effective support during distance learning. We all missed the communal classroom culture of even just saying good morning, or [I like] those new shoes or that's a cool bow you have in your hair. Kids need that interaction and support from their teachers and friends. School is where kids start learning how to interact with people in addition to academic engagement.* (180; White, Low Income Mostly Latine Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience)

As shared above, the classroom functions as a community whose established routines and culture were disrupted by the shift to remote learning. For this teacher, remote learning prohibited friendly interactions ("just saying good morning or [I like] those new shoes") that would help youth learn about social interaction. That is, remote learning debilitated schools' function as a place to informally develop social and social emotional intelligence. For many respondents the absence of casual relationship building opportunities, teaching to black boxes when students would not turn on cameras, and a lack of consistent attendance made it difficult to maintain relationships with students or encourage educational socializing. Subtracted of familiar aspects of intimacy, teachers described their interactions with their students as "detached" or stated they felt they "couldn't reach" their students:

> *In remote learning, it is close to impossible to know our students. We miss all the nonverbal cues, we miss the results of assessments we could give face to face, and we miss the opportunities for quick (and longer) individual conferences with students--places where we learn a great deal about their thinking as well as how they are feeling. In my school, we were not permitted to divide a class into groups and visit each one as they worked. I hope at least that part changes this fall. In addition, we are not permitted to have individual conferences with students. I see the logic of that policy, but I can't coach a kid in literacy in front of other kids.* (64; White Teacher in Socioeconomically and Racially/Ethnically Diverse Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience)

This "logical policy," which was effected at the school level, prevented individual student-teacher conferences and reflects a conflation of sexual and emotional intimacy that results in closeness between teachers and their students being stigmatized (Cho, 2005). The fear of inappropriate intimate connection when teachers were not supervised nor surveilled hampered connection as well as personalized and differentiated instruction. In schools where connection was prevented in this way, the online education setting proved ineffective.

Despite the general feeling that relationships were distant or even absent, several teachers were able to compensate for the distance produced by the online environment and admitted that some of their relationships with their students actually improved and became more personal. This group included just over 10% (n=91) of teachers sampled. Given their overrepresentation in the sample as well as in the district, teachers who saw improvement with some of their students tended to be white veteran teachers in high-needs elementary schools (See Tables 2.2 and 2.3 for details). Teachers working in affluent or mostly white schools were least likely to report improved relationships. However, Black (n=158) and Latine-identified (n=164) teachers were almost twice as likely to report improved relationships. That is, 15.2% (n=24) and 13.4% (n=22) of Black and Latine educators, respectively, stated that their relationships improved with at least some of their students compared to 8.87% (n=44) of white-identified (n=496) respondents. Although this is a finding that deserves further dedicated research this greater propensity to connect may stem from the unique investment Black and Latine teachers have in their race-matched students (Griffin, 2018; Royston, Madkins, Givens, & Nasir, 2020).

Table 2.2 Demographics of educators who stated relationships improved

	Percent of Improved Sample	Percent of Improved Within Group
Teaching Experience		
1-3 Years	5.5%	16.1%
4-6 Years	14.3%	14%
7-9 Years	5.6%	6.7%
10 + Years	74.2%	10.7%
Race/Ethnicity[1]		
White	64.0%	8.9%
Latine[2]	16.9%	13.4%
Black/African American	19.1%	15.2%
Multiracial	6.6%	22.2%
Asian American/ Pacific Islander[3]	-	-
Middle Eastern/ North African	-	-
Native/Indigenous	-	-
Other	-	-

Table 2.3 School Types Represented by Educators Who Stated Relationships Improved

	Percent of Improved Sample	Percent of Improved Within Group
School Location		
Central, Near North, Near South Sides	8.8%	15.4%
Far Northside	13.2%	12.8%
Far Southside[4]	11%	14.7%
Far Southwest Side	2.2%	5.3%
Northside	8.8%	7.2%
Northwest Side	14.3%	10%
South Side	11.%	14.7%
Southwest Side	19.8%	12.2%
West and Near West Side[5]	11.%	7.5%
School Racial/Ethnic Composition		
Mostly Latine	36.3%	10.5%
Mostly Black	26.4%	12.1%
Mostly White	2.2%	2.9%
Mixed/Diverse	35.2%	12.5%
Other	-	-
School Socioeconomic Make-Up		
High-Need/Low Income	62.6%	10.5%
Socioeconomically Diverse	34.1%	11.7%
Affluent	3.3%	7.7%
School Level		
Elementary (PreK-8)	73.6%	11.1%
High School	24.2%	9.7%

Teachers who were able to develop improved relationships with their students did so through: (1) Increased individualized attention and emotional concern for their students; (2) Developing deeper and more holistic understandings of their students; and (3) Providing a diversity of ways for students to engage.

Increased individualization and emotional concern

In order to make up for the absence of unstructured interaction, teachers who reported improved relationships met with their students in one-on-one sessions, small groups, or spoke to them over the phone. For these teachers, remote instruction created an opportunity to spend quality time with their students and differentiate or adjust their course plans based on student needs. During this dedicated time, teachers were able to check in with students not only about academics, but also about their mental well-being as impacted by the pandemic and racialized civil unrest. One-on-one conversation, inherently more intimate than a public forum, shifted the dynamics, depth, and possibilities for teachers' relationships with students:

> *While I had a great relationship with my students, remote learning brought my even closer to each of my students and their families due to the amount of increased 1:1 interactions. The students and parents reached out to me about more than just school issues. I'm still getting calls from students and parents for help with non-school issues.* (384; Black Teacher in Socioeconomically and Racially/Ethnically Diverse Elementary school, 10+ Years of Experience)

Here we see that this teachers' roles and responsibilities expanded as they learned more about their students and accepted more of students' lives in the virtual classroom and they became a source of information and support for students and their families.

Now able to talk privately or in smaller groups, teachers were able to make more space for students' emotions, especially fears surrounding the pandemic:

> *Though we did value socio-emotional growth of the students while we were in person before remote learning (advisory lessons, classroom contracts, etc.), I feel that SEL became even more important while we were remote learning. Students wanted to "just talk" to me and/or*

> *the rest of the kids in the class, and I allowed time to do so at the beginning and end of each class period. I know some kids were feeling anxious not only about not being able to see their friends, but also what the virus was doing or could potentially do to them and/or family. I was very much a counselor to them during remote learning, and I learned a LOT more about their personal lives during that time (i.e. younger siblings "attending" class, bringing pets to the screen to show us all, etc.). It was almost as though academic material took a step back and SEL took the spotlight.* (464; Multiracial Teacher in Mostly Latine Socioeconomically Diverse Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience)

With an increased focus on social emotional well-being this teacher was able to give their students a place to process worries and fears they may not have had other outlets for. Similarly, other teachers mentioned increasing their focus on social emotional learning and mental health.

Explicit instruction on emotional regulation and mental well-being was a purposeful and necessary focus that received less emphasis in during FtF instruction:

> *The role of my position became an advocate of coping skills. Relationships with students focused on health and well-being of the individual. I did everything in my power to create lessons that uplifted the child/family spirits. I didn't focus my lessons on mental health while teaching in the classroom.* (698; Black Teacher in High Needs/Low Income Racially/Ethnically Diverse Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience)

As reflected in other literature on teaching during crisis (Alisic 2012; Alisic et al. 2012), extending the classroom space in this way, required this teacher to act as a counselor. Teachers commented that some students came to rely on them, contacting them regularly to discuss both school and personal matters. Students opened up to teachers about issues going on at home and this gave teachers the opportunity to bond with quiet students as well as those that had been seen as disruptive in the FtF classroom. Exemplifying the possibility that could come from teacher and student disclosure, one educator shared: "*The bond with my students has strengthened. I shared my raw feelings with them and they reciprocated. No judgment, just support and empathy*." (145; Black Teacher in High Needs/Low Income Racially/Ethnically Diverse Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience). This teacher self-disclosed their own anxieties to their students, a vulnerability that was supportively reciprocated. Another said:

> *My relationship with my students was the thing holding remote learning together! I think the kids that did participate in their learning to a high level (attend live Meets, watch the videos, complete assignments, ask questions) were kids that did so because of the relationship we had built throughout the year. They wanted to see me and their friends, they knew my expectations, and they wanted to have some sense of comfort during a stressful time. The students that really struggled, I was able to get in touch with a couple of them, and they shared their issues. Being scared and stressed, having no adults at home to help them, family members being sick, I even had a couple students get COVID. I think in those situations, my relationship became more of a sounding board, or a counselor.* (194; White, Low Income Mostly Latine Elementary School, 7-9 years of experience)

This teacher also functioned as a counselor for their students, listening to their fears of the moment and the realities of their lives. Teachers such as the ones quoted in this section, compensated for the lack of shared physical space by expanding their social and emotional involvements with their students thereby making clear that they were available—a key aspect to establishing strong social presence.

In response to teachers creating space for emotion and vulnerability and increasing their availability, students recognized and took advantage of opportunities to make intimate disclosures during check-ins and phone calls with teachers as well as emails:

> *It depends on the student...with some students I developed stronger relationships. They sent me "chatty" emails when I asked how they were doing, perhaps out of boredom, but still, I learned more about some students and don't think I would have been able to elicit the same kinds of information when they were always around the listening ears of their peers.* (214; White, Low Income Mostly Latine High School, 7-9 Years of Experience)

These disclosures show students' willingness to trust and confide in their teachers—potentially in ways that might embarrass them in front of their classmates—exemplifying the uniqueness and significance of the non-familial teacher-student relationship. As noted by the following teacher, these relationships were only possible if both teachers and students contributed to developing intimacy.

Deeper Understanding of Students' Lives

By increasing individualized contact with students, teachers were able to get to know their students beyond their academic identities. Video conferencing with students allowed teachers to see into their students' homes. One teacher stated that they became closer with their students because they "*went into their homes daily and they came into my home daily"*. (543; White Teacher in a High Needs/Low Income Racially/Ethnically Diverse Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience). Sharing home life can require vulnerability and in this case this vulnerability was reciprocated. Another teacher agreed that because remote learning allowed teachers and students to open up their homes, their private spaces to each other, they were able to see their students in new and fuller ways and in return, their students were able to see them as more than instructors:

> *I think that I was able to understand my students a bit better. It was like I became a person to them and their families. Look at it this way it's like I invited them into my space and they invited me into theirs. I feel parents were able to better see how the students performed and their strengths and deficits as well.* (792; Black Teacher in Mostly Black High Needs/Low Income Elementary school, 10+ Years of Experience)

When students witnessed teachers' private spaces they were able to see their teachers as humans with lives and interests beyond the classroom. In the following quote, the teacher shares some of the new information that video conferencing enabled teachers and students to share with each other:

> *Our relationships were great before we left and still great after. For the kids that did log on! We felt a like a community then and when we were online I did feel we got stronger because it was all new and we were all learning, doing, and going through things together. Like they heard my dog barking and wanted to see her which was cute. I feel like the kids and I in remote hot to know things we may not have known. Like a kid was always in front of Blackhawks posters. I knew he liked hockey but didn't know he was the biggest fan. Those types of fun things or if the mom walked by [I'd say,] Hola señora Rodriguez and she'd wave. We all shared this new experience which [brought us] closer* (398; White Teacher in Mostly Latine High Needs/Low Income Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience)

Here, normal occurrences like a dog barking or a mother walking around the house, contributed to humanizing the learning experience.

By being let in to their students' homes and getting to know their students' families better, teachers were better able to accommodate and adjust to students needs and circumstances. This teacher notes that in addition to the personal touch, the unique experience of living through a pandemic brought them closer with their students:

> *There was a huge shift in our relationship. Some I lost communication with all together (except for assignments). I worry about them…Others we build a bond that I think will last a lifetime. Some students had real concerns for their families and were depressed. We…really tried to boost those that needed it, back off on work when students needed it, applaud those that needed it, and bring back around those that we were losing...With pictures and videos and Google Meets I saw snapshots of these students' lives I never would have IN school. It was a very different relationship, but with a lot of hard work, it was still a good relationship. Maybe better because we were all struggling together. This class will have a special place in my heart forever!* (21; White Teacher in Mostly Latine Socioeconomically Diverse Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience)

The influx of personal information now available to teachers, gave educators an opportunity to be more responsive and considerate of student need and circumstances. Although, the teacher quoted above lost contact with several students, but they were still able to establish "a bond that…will last a lifetime." The emphasis in the latter part of this comment reflects the ways teachers valued the opportunity to craft genuine and strong relationships.

These exceptional and often unexpected relationships were developed through validating students, including personal contributions that brought students' home lives into the virtual classroom, and bonding through hardship. As one teacher said: *We became closer because we bonded over the fear of COVID and uncertainty* (195; Black Teacher in Mostly Latine High Needs/Low Income Elementary School; 10+ Years of Experience). Being at home allowed students to share parts of their lives that they cannot be brought to school. While it took "a lot of hard work", teachers seemed to appreciate getting to know their students in a new and more holistic way. This new way of knowing students allowed for greater responsiveness, more vulnerability, increased emotional connection and gave teachers an opportunity to change their feelings about some of their students:

> *I found that I built stronger, better relationships with some of my students during remote learning. I would give lots more written feedback on work they completed because I had more time respond and less work to respond to. My students kept 'Pandemic journals' and I learned so much about them as I read their weekly writings. I would have 'back and forth' conversations with them through Google Classroom about their lives, their feelings, their struggles. Some students who were quiet in class and who I honestly didn't know very well came alive when they wrote, and they shared so much more than they would have in a busy class. I formed much stronger relationships with those quieter students, and came to know them better. One young man who I judged to be a 'pain' in class and was one of my least favorite students came to the Meet sessions a little early some days. We started to have conversations and I developed a much stronger, more understanding relationship with him. I think of him in a much more positive light after our remote learning experiences. I miss seeing my students every day in-person but I feel that remote learning actually helped me build some solid positive relationships with students that I had overlooked or judged negatively in the context of a busy, pressure packed day at school.* (291; Multiracial Teacher in Mostly Latine High Needs/Low Income Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience)

Prior experience with students was often beneficial to success in remote, but the transition also provided some teachers with a fresh start. Teachers reported that certain students were better or worse behaved when attending school from home. Five teachers explicitly mentioned students who performed better after being removed from the distractions of the classroom. Whether it was getting to know quiet students better, noting positive behavioral changes, or learning more about students' home lives, the transition allowed teachers to experience their classes differently:

> *I know that this probably going to sound strange, but it allowed me to get to know some of them more than I did in the classroom. I had a challenging class this last year and there were disruptions and behavioral issues that were happening. These tended to take up a lot of attention. When we shifted into remote learning I got to hear from my quieter students and focus more on each individually. I incorporated daily questions, videos, feedback, posted their work and pictures and videos to maintain a sense of community, worked on Second Step, called and talked with them. Because of the social-emotional focus, I saw some of my quieter ones from class come out of a shell. I am in no way saying that remote learning was better than being in class or even an option, but this is my observation from my particular group of students in this particular case. (*637; Black Teacher in Socioeconomically and

> Racially/Ethnically Diverse Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience*)*

The two teachers quoted immediately above found that within the remote space, students they previously found to be disruptive were less so and students that were often quiet found ways to speak up. These changes were aided by changes in format that gave students new ways to engage with school and communicate with their teachers.

Diversity of Ways to Engage

Building strong relationships with students could be a burdensome and exhausting experience. Unable to commune with their entire class, some teachers made individualized efforts to reach students. Having to adjust their traditional practice in the moment, teachers expended energy innovating new ways to reach as many students as they could. This approach permitted greater equity in teacher-student contact so that they reached out to all students rather than focusing on students who for one reason or another, attract greater attention in the classroom:

> *Thankfully, I think I had pretty solid relationships with my students prior to remote learning starting, which facilitated the transition. In some ways, relationships were harder: there was less time for informal talks and just checking in with students, and it was much harder to create a sense of community as a class. In some ways, though, my relationships with students got better: because I couldn't rely on informal chats, I had to be more methodical about reaching out to students, which ensured that I was more equitable in my attention, as well as more creative with the ways I tried to connect with them (like making class challenges, using polls and surveys, sending letters, having a non-school related "opener" at the beginning of class, using CPS social media). I also had a little less on my plate in terms of grading and time in front of students, which meant that I had the energy to expend on cultivating these relationships with students. I didn't always have the time and space I needed for that during normal teaching.* (51; White Teacher in Mostly Latine Socioeconomically Diverse High School, 7-9 Years of Experience)

A more intentional and "methodical" approach increased and diversified the avenues through which students could participate. Remote learning therefore allowed teachers to utilize new technological platforms and use a variety of techniques to engage students. Similar to students whose behavior changed as a result of increased personalized and emotional attention, students surprised their teachers by benefitting from the change in format and took advantage of having options on how they engage with material:

> *In classroom: 30+ students, lots of time spent on classroom management, difficult to form individual relationships in the 15 minutes of small groups time that each student received each week. Remote learning: much less time spent on management, all students had some form of participation they were comfortable with (speaking aloud, typing to all in the chat, typing to me in the chat and having me either read it aloud or keep it to myself); small groups of students came on to have discussions of current events like race, share projects they have been working on, etc. I felt that my relationship with most students was better during remote learning than it was in person.* (124; White, Socioeconomically and Racially/Ethnically Diverse Elementary, 4-6 Years of Experience)

These alternative forms of engagement provided teachers with additional feedback about how their students felt most comfortable engaging. For example, as shown above students who were less comfortable speaking up were able to participate by typing into chat boxes or meeting individually with teachers.

Increasing the variety of ways that students could engage in school, often increased students access to their teachers, and in turn increased social presence. This teacher made themselves available to students for academic and relational interaction:

> *I got to know them better on a personal level. Because of scheduled office hours three times a day, and lunch time "chat and chew" we had time to just talk, and be. The quiet students who didn't say much ended up being super competitive when we played Kahoot. Students distracted by the silly kid across the room didn't have that distraction. We focused a lot on current events happening in their neighborhood, and even planned a virtual protest in a matter of days. Student engagement was at an all-time high.* (471; Latine Teacher in Mostly Latine High Needs/Low Income Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience*)*

Another, similarly recognized the role accessibility played in relationship building:

> *I contacted my students and parents weekly and made myself available to them even after hours. My increased accessibility strengthened my relationships with my students and their families* (73; Black Teacher in Mostly Black Socioeconomically Diverse High School, 10+ Years of Experience)

Supporting existing research on social presence, teachers increased student engagement by making themselves generally available and specifically available for emotional and personal connection.

Exemplifying all of the above trends that contributed to positive relationships, this teacher shows surprise at being able to become closer to their students. The shift to remote learning and the ability for students to engage differently, receive individualized attention, and share their full selves with a trusted adult changed the dynamics of the classroom. These shifts and improvements were possible despite teachers and students already having some sense of each other and previously established relationships.

> *My students expressed desire to meet longer than 1 hour. They requested that remain remotely. They further expressed the desire to continue working online. My challenging students who had issues focusing and doing poorly were surprisingly more attentive and eager to answer questions and continue online. I even provided a surveying asking my students about their experiences and feedback, and 100% came back with positive results of their experience with e-learning.* (693; Latine Teacher in Mostly Latine High Needs/Low Income Elementary School, 10+ Years of Experience)

Although, remote learning was not necessarily better, according to this last teacher, it had its silver linings (Kim & Asbury, 2020).

Discussion

Despite the sudden nature of this remote context, this study shows that at least some traditionally FtF teachers were able to maintain and strengthen relationships without significant training. This intimates that pedagogical methods that heighten social presence may have come more naturally to these teachers than the literature suggests. I identify increased individualization and attention to emotional well-being, more holistic understandings of students, and a diversity of methods of engagement as mechanisms through which teachers maintained and improved their relationships with students. These particular aspects of social presence signaled availability, access, and care—therefore serving as a bridge across the disconnection inherent in virtual education.

As expected, the teachers who experienced improved relationships increased their intentional efforts to connect. Individual and small group meetings allowed teachers have vulnerable conversations and learn more about students' lives and feelings while opening multiple lines of communication (email, chat, phone, video calls) provided many students with the opportunity to confidently communicate and perhaps also increase engagement (Elhay & Hershkovitz, 2019; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Song et al., 2016; Taladriz, 2019; Zhang, 2015). Future virtual educational classrooms should utilize the flexibility that technology allows and allow students to engage as they are most comfortable.

Teachers, in both physical and virtual classrooms, are called to provide psychological support (G. Wang, Zhang, Zhao, Zhang, & Jiang, 2020). Success and effectiveness providing such support requires skills beyond traditional pedagogical training and may not be comfortable for all educators. Counseling students takes time and emotional expenditure and must also be balanced with teaching academic skills. How the educators in this sample negotiated these responsibilities, and whether they consider psychological support as part of their practice, is likely a factor in their relationship satisfaction and success (Alisic, 2012). Additionally, it is often the case that teachers develop secondary traumatic stress (STS) from devoting emotional energy to students experiencing trauma (Stamm, 1995). In the case of the current global pandemic, we must consider the ways that the possibility of STS compounded with the trauma teachers may have been facing as individuals simultaneously worried about their students as well as their own and their family's safety.

In the post-pandemic era and as the nation continues to confront racialized violence and inequality, teachers will need training and support in order to effectively emotionally engage with their students. However, the recognition of this emotional component of the classroom can serve to strengthen teacher-student connection. As evidence to support the literature, teachers in this sample expressed being vulnerable, commiserating over fear and hardship, enabled greater intimacy and trust from their students (Cayanus et al., 2009; Zembylas, 2007).

Human connection and some degree of intimacy are integral to the success of online education. By increasing social presence through diverse forms of contact, encouraging emotional human connection, and individualizing instruction, teachers were able to maintain student engagement and deepen relationships in an historic moment. The responses from sample participants supports the prospect that strong teacher-student relationships may be a buffer for both students and teachers in times of uncertainty (Kim & Asbury, 2020; Kovacs et al., 2021).

Limitations and Future Considerations

After past crises in the United States, it has often been those that most need help that end up "invisible and silent" (Gay, 2007). In order for teachers to deepen connections with students they often relied on students, or students' parents, to take initiative and developed critical connections with caregivers (Kovacs et al., 2021). However, many teachers reached out to students and parents only to never receive a response. Teachers in this sample could only discuss their relationships with the students they were able to maintain contact with. Therefore, the mechanisms in this paper are only effective when some level of student buy-in to already exist and are unlikely be the catalysts of a relationship.

Teachers who were unable to informally or individually communicate with students were disadvantaged with regard to their success in garnering engagement and promoting achievement

(Eisenbach et al., 2018; Picciano, 2019; Song et al., 2016). Students had to show up in order to participate in the dyadic relationship-building process (Reis & Shaver, 1988; Song et al., 2016). Findings that only some students could be reached or were responsive encourages research on initiating virtual connection must consider students experiencing negatively impacted mental health, grief, demands of familial responsibilities, or food or housing insecurity who may not have had the mental, emotional, or technological capacity to invest in school or relationship-building.

Although many teachers admitted to eschewing academic content in order to more deeply consider their students' mental wellness, it is unclear if the newly intimate connections between teachers and some of their students actually facilitated or enhanced learning. Opportunities to teach criticality, especially of oppressive forces, should not be forgone for the sake of a soft notion of care (Cho, 2005). Doing so only does a disservice to the student. The reality of emotional care absent academic, pedagogical, or political care results in white teachers pitying and therefore being easy on students of color rather than balancing understanding of circumstances and care for well-being with high expectations (Delpit, 2006). Care cannot be an excuse to eschew rigor. While this study does not suggest that greater intimacy and care facilitated deeper learning, prior research suggests relationship satisfaction and social presence facilitate academic improvement in the virtual classroom (Pianta et al., 2012; Zhan & Mei, 2013).

Moving forward, research on education during the pandemic should ask how teachers' experiences with remote learning, will impact their future pedagogy. That is, how, if at all, will teacher continue to provide a diversity of mechanisms of engagement or seek individual interaction in the FtF classroom? Virtual schools and trainings for virtual educators should encourage teachers to intentionally include individual check-ins and opportunities for informal communication. Doing so may contribute to teacher satisfaction and student engagement (Spilt et al., 2011). Future analyses should also more deeply consider differences between teacher experience to possibly highlight myriad effects of resource disparities between schools and teacher professional orientations.

Schools are social spaces and the shift to remote learning threatened that integral aspect of education. The absence of traditional social relations greatly affected teachers' experience of teaching. However, this data shows that many teachers and students found other ways to relate to each other that may enhance how both approach their relationships in the future—relationships that were likely an important part of supporting the transition back to FtF learning.

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3. “NOT ENTIRELY SURE, BUT WILL NEED TO FIGURE IT OUT”: TEACHERS’ INSTRUCTIONAL CHOICES IN RESPONSE TO RACIAL INJUSTICE

In the months following the May 25, 2020, murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, uprisings and outrage inspired conversations about race and the realities of racism in the United States. The field of education was not immune to this trend. Between February 12, 2020 and June 1, 2020, *EducationWeek*, a popular education resource magazine and website, did not use the tag “race” on a single article (see edweek.org/race). Following June 1, 2020, and throughout the summer the website posted about race, racism, and education almost daily, sometimes multiple times. The posts cover: why educators should discuss race and racism, individual educators’ regrets on not having recognized the relevance of racism to schooling earlier, and tips on how to engage students in dialogues about race and racism. The willingness of a major trade publication to engage issues of race, racism, and schooling can be seen as a positive, albeit delayed and opportunistic, shift that hopefully shines light on those who have been doing work on race and education for decades. However, it also revealed that, for many educators, the skills necessary to teach students about race and racial injustice, specifically, were underdeveloped, leaving those making the attempt nascent, unsure, or unsupported in their efforts to incorporate complex, critical, emotional, and political lessons on race and racism into their classrooms.

The data analyzed in this article was collected as many educators grappled with their role in confronting racial injustice in the United States. Sondel et al.’s (2018) pedagogy of political trauma (PPT) describes teaching practices meant to help students process and respond to political events that cause them fear and pain. By extending PPT to consider the experiences of people of color as marked by the ongoing political trauma of racism, I propose a *racialized pedagogy of political trauma* (RPPT). Central to RPPT is an aim to develop racial literacy, defined as a dynamic understanding of race as a hierarchical system of social organization (Guinier, 2004). RPPT supports development of critical and transformative curricula on race by providing a framework for the types of materials and activities teachers might use to develop racial literacy.

Challenges to Bringing Lessons on Racism into the Classroom

(A. L. Brown & Brown, 2010; K. D. Brown & Brown, 2010; Gibbs, 2021)(Bonilla-Silva, 2006)Three institutional myths strengthen barriers to developing racial literacy in the traditional public-school classroom. The first is that we, as a nation, have moved beyond our violent and racist foundations. Traditionally, US curricula avoids discussing the current realities of racism, instead opting for a narrative that reduces historical racial violence to slavery and the civil rights movement and therefore places racial violence and the fight for racial justice neatly in the past (A. L. Brown & Brown, 2010; K. D. Brown & Brown, 2010; Gibbs, 2021). There is safety in putting temporal distance between the current moment and a racist past. Such distancing can suggest that the US is a post-racial colorblind society in which critical discussions of race are no longer necessary for social progress (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Ignoring recent racialized violence contributes to this narrative and disregards the lived reality of people of color.

When more recent racial violence does appear in school standards and curriculum it is characterized as isolated and resolved (Gibbs, 2021; Kolluri & Young, 2021). By analyzing state standards, Kolluri et al (2021) found that K-12 schools largely avoid any discussion of police brutality or historical movements against police denying students the context necessary to understand more recent strings of police violence against Black people as a pattern and systemic problem. Such standards reproduce a desirable narrative that avoid guilt, shame, and truth.

The second myth is that teaching that centers “race detracts from the development of core academic competencies” (Ríos, López, & Morrell, 2015). Education in the United States prioritizes standardized testing and content knowledge over student identity or civic development (Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Muhammad, 2018). Topics related to race and racism are believed to be too emotional, personal, and divisive to be academically productive. for their ability to deepen learning and engagement (Ríos et al., 2015; Studies, 2010; Swalwell & Schweber, 2016).

Another excuse for the exclusion or curricula on race and racism is that race is not an appropriate topic in what is meant to be an apolitical space (Pollock, 2009; Sue, 2013; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009). Ironically, calls to remove, restrict, or ban lessons on race and racism are political decisions. When classrooms adhere to such understandings of apoliticism they are actually encouraging the maintenance of the classroom as a space that instills and reproduces dominant oppressive politics and ahistorical discourse (Journell, 2016)

Racial Literacy as a tool for Humanization

While the ability for students to engage in tough, supposedly "controversial conversation" has been shown to strengthen civic attitudes and critical thinking, there is something larger at stake (Hahn, 2008; D. E. Hess, 2004; D. Hess & Gatti, 2010). Ashley Lipscomb, CEO and founder of The Institute for Anti-Racist Education, argues that colloquial use of "controversial conversation" is an insulting misnomer because "my life and my humanity as a Black woman should not be considered controversial" (personal communication). In other words, Black life is not up for debate and should not be a point of discomfort. Rather conversations about race and racial injustice are actually about the recognition of the systemic dehumanization of Black, Indigenous, and other peoples of color and should serve in the effort to affect change and recognize the humanity of people of color.

Avoiding race talk—defined as discourse relating to the topic of race (Sue, 2013)—in the classroom can induce cognitive dissonance in students whose histories and experiences are not reflected in the curriculum (Johnson, Bryan, & Boutte, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). Whether from students or the schooling institution, race avoidance also allows stereotypes, racialized patterns, and differential treatment to go unquestioned (Farago, Sanders, & Gaias, 2015). Both of these consequences are harmful to Black students and other students of color who are then left to reconcile and process their curricular erasure and invalidating school experiences on their own (Johnson et al., 2019; Kolluri & Young, 2021; Mayorga & Picower, 2018). In order to disrupt these violences, critical pedagogies, have long called for curricula to engage with race and racism (Ríos et al., 2015). Interrogating racism in the classroom strengthens the democratic project by cultivating the understanding and criticality necessary to engage in purposeful civic participation while also recognizing students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992; Ríos et al., 2015). By explicitly inviting race and racism into the classroom as experienced social and emotional learning objects we can humanize the classroom by recognizing the vulnerability, agency, validity of its members' lived experiences (Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Pedro & Kinloch, 2016)

Integrating lessons on race and racism and developing racial literacy empowers teachers and students to examine their learning with a critical lens by revealing gaps and selective reinterpretations embedded in curricula (Skerrett, 2011). Racial literacy, as conceptualized and defined by Lani Guinier, provides a framework for understanding race and racism as dynamic tools of "social, geographic, and economic control of both whites and blacks" (Guinier, 2004). Importantly, racial literacy is not a state to be achieved, but a process that permits ongoing analysis and diagnosis of the use and function of race in an adapting and accommodating society (Althusser, 1971; Leonardo & Porter, 2010). Therefore, the first tenet of racial literacy is that it is contextual and interactive, recognizing the importance of context in determining both the understanding and the response to racialized mechanisms of control. Second, racial literacy constantly attends to race in relation to power on “psychological, interpersonal, and structural” scales. True racial literacy “refuses to lose sight of institutional and environmental forces that both shape and reflect [individual] agency” (Guinier, 2004), p. 115). Finally, the third tenet of racial literacy is that it is intersectional and concerned with the ways class, gender, and other social markers interact with race to maintain and complicate racialized hierarchies.

Unfortunately, much of the literature and curriculum aimed at developing racial literacy ignore the second tenet and focus on issues of individual bias and recognizing and affirming difference (Laughter, Pellegrino, Waters, & Smith, 2021). Teaching racism as a conflict between individuals rather than emphasizing racism as a phenomenon impacting the structure and foundations of the United States distorts students’ understanding of sociocultural history and the lasting significance of such historical events (K. D. Brown & Brown, 2010). Failure to teach students about institutional racism suggests that institutions like slavery and Jim Crow laws had definitive endings, and can prevent youth from understanding how the legacies of those institutions can be seen in today’s sociopolitical context. Simultaneously, the focus on racism as interpersonal violence maintains stereotypes and pathological depictions of oppressed peoples by erasing the structural and historical explanations behind social and economic disparities.

Teachers as facilitators of Racial Literacy

Teachers are uniquely situated to serve as facilitators in developing youth racial literacy (Harbin, Thurber, & Bandy, 2019). At the end of her 2004 essay, Lani Guinier states that alone courts are not capable of solving racism in the United States and calls for Americans to return to school to be transformed into a racially literate populace. Schools prepare citizens to engage in the democratic process and are a key site of civic identity development (Giroux, 2015, (Mirra &

Morrell, 2011). Within the confines of their classrooms, teachers make choices about how they approach certain standards and how they frame the materials they use to meet those standards. These choices have political significance (Journell, 2016). As institutional agents, teachers not only transmit institutional knowledge and resources but their actions and decisions reflect how knowledge and practices are valued by them as individuals and in the larger sociopolitical context (Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Sondel, Baggett, & Dunn, 2018; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Avoiding opportunities to complicate and integrate race and racial injustice leave students of color to grapple with the incongruence of their racialized experiences alone and avoids disrupting the perceived normativity of white students' experiences. Whether they want it or not, teachers have the responsibility of developing youths' sociopolitical attitudes and civic knowledge.

Unfortunately, considering the aforementioned avoidance of racial violence in U.S. curricula, the current and past limitations on the discussion of race in the classroom, and the emotional nature of lessons on racism, regardless of intention, teachers are likely inexperienced and unconfident about teaching racism and developing racial literacy. Curricular restrictions on the inclusion of racial violence restricts teachers' access to texts and materials that facilitate lessons on racism. Studies of teachers' willingness and comfort in engaging controversial topics with their students reveal that most teachers do not feel they have the support or training to facilitate productive discussions on divisive issues (Byford, Lennon, & III, 2009). In Skerett's (2011) study on teachers' comfort with racial topics, educators expressed a need for administrative support and explicitly anti-racist curricular materials. Without such resources, teachers can find teaching about racism challenging due to inexperience, discomfort, as well as anticipated challenges to classroom safety. Unpracticed, educators can also provide students with inaccurate information or harm and offend, or even traumatize, students (Skerrett, 2011; Sue et al., 2009).

For teachers, traditionally expected to hold knowledge and be content experts, engaging their students in a topic they are unfamiliar with may be uncomfortable (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). The development of racial literacy requires a dialogic process between teachers and students, which inherently challenges teachers' positioning as content experts (Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Sondel et al., 2018). Instead of being the authority, educators might better serve as facilitators in order for discussion to be productive. This may be especially true for white teachers of children of color whose students have greater experience, and therefore expertise, with racism than their teachers(Journell, 2018). In order to for race talk, and racism talk more explicitly, to be successful in the classroom, teachers must be willing to eschew their status as knowledge authorities and be willing to learn alongside and learn from their students.

A Racialized Pedagogy of Political Trauma

In order to capture the ways educators responded to the diversity of emotions and fear in their students after the 2016 presidential election, Sondel et al. (2018) documented a pedagogy of political trauma. The objective of a pedagogy of political trauma is for "teachers to alleviate and/or mediate trauma caused by events in the public sphere while simultaneously working toward the democratic and emancipatory purposes of education" (p. 176).

First, teachers engaging in a pedagogy of political trauma developed vulnerable connections with their students through relational practices (Sondel et al., 2018). In order to attend to students' mental and emotional well-being, teachers allotted space for students to share and engage their emotions. Creating space for emotion, provides an opportunity for teachers to help students process while also validating students' reactions (Winans, 2010). Doing so effectively requires both teachers and students practice emotionally reflexivity which allows individuals to understand their social position in relation to oppressive power structures. Reflexivity, a skill integral to critical race pedagogy, requires each of us to constantly interrogate our positionality and perspective (Lynn, 1999).

Second, teachers utilized student curiosity about election process to engage them in civics lessons. Sondel notes that many teachers saw these lessons as simply supplying students with necessary knowledge. However, by providing information and deeply engaging students' inquiry, teachers bolstered student understandings of the social and political systems surrounding them empowering them as civic participants. With this knowledge, students could develop their civic identities through practice critical thinking through the discussion and analysis of current events and media (Sondel et al., 2018; Swalwell & Schweber, 2016) Finally, a pedagogy of political trauma asks teachers to develop students' critical consciousness and support them in disrupting and resisting the focus of their political trauma. Teachers in Sondel's sample provided students with tools and opportunity to analyze systemic inequality, examine social movements, and plan direct action (2018).

For this analysis, I lean on a pedagogy of political trauma because it is focused on the opportunities teachers create for their students to process and engage painful sociopolitical violence and political trauma. The components of a pedagogy of political trauma can be utilized to develop true race literacy to aid students in processing the devastating murders of Black Americans by police and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and disrupt systemic racism. The murders of George Floyd, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, and Breonna Taylor were moments of political trauma. The Black Lives Matter movement defines an era of political trauma. The Black experience in the US is marked by political trauma.

Given the trauma induced by the endemic nature of racism in the US sociopolitical system, I argue that Black, Indigenous, undocumented, transgender, and people of other marginalized identities are constantly navigating political trauma.

Therefore, a racialized pedagogy of political trauma recognizes the potential to systematically and intentionally integrate the development of racial literacy into the classroom by processing emotions, gaining knowledge, and activating civic engagement. The first tenet requires that teachers make space for emotion and vulnerability. A classroom engaging in a racialized pedagogy of political trauma recognizes and validates the fact that students constantly navigate and cope with racism as an ongoing political trauma. By making the stressor explicit and developing understanding of social position, racial literacy, can facilitate emotional coping. However, the process of establishing racial literacy can be uncomfortable, and perhaps even painful. It requires intimacy in that teachers and students must be self-reflective, vulnerable, and trust each other's' intention in order to move through guilt and shame and create space to envision the possibilities in liberation (Kelley 2002; Zembylas 2015; Zembylas 2019). Leonardo and Porter (2010) theorize humanizing violence as a way to describe the necessity and pain of reflexivity and racial literacy development. Humanizing violence describes the difficult and disruptive action required to unlearn dominant norms and ways of knowing in order to make space in the classroom for the validation of people of color's lived experiences and humanity. As potentially humanizing and disruptive, efficacious lessons on race and racism require the seemingly contradictory development of intimacy in collaboration with violence.

In the effort to build racial literacy and model interrogating racism, teachers could provide knowledge through readings and other texts, while providing opportunities to put the readings in context and make critiques of both content and source (Harbin et al., 2019; Skerrett, 2011). Importantly, lessons on racism should connect historical events to current ones. In tackling lessons on racial violence, teachers made explicit connections between where we have been and where we are as a nation support students' in order to help students process and understand contemporary racial violences (Gibbs, 2021). Additionally, students could be asked to make connections between course content and their lived experiences (Harbin et al., 2019). This exercise, as well as the inclusion of both fiction and nonfiction texts, actively prevents any misconception that racism is "unreal" or that anyone is unaffected by systemic racism (Boutte, Lopez-Robertson, & Powers-Costello, 2011; Lynn, Jennings, & Hughes, 2013). Finally, critical pedagogies are often focused on activating students as agents of change (Ríos et al., 2015). Similarly, a racialized pedagogy of political trauma utilizes the emotional and informational in order to encourage action. The opportunity to engage in anti-racist and social justice efforts not only allows students to operationalize their racial literacy, but it also functions to empower students. Through civic engagement students learn about their power. This aspect means providing students with the skills, encouragement, and resources to engage in social justice and anti-racist activism.

I suggest that a racialized pedagogy of political trauma speaks to the kinds of materials and activities teachers might incorporate in order to facilitate both student process of racism as well as develop racial literacy. The murder of George Floyd was a moment of political trauma emblematic of an ongoing phenomenon. Therefore, I examine the kinds of materials and practices teachers planned to use to respond to George Floyd's murder and how those methods might contribute to efficacious racism education.

Context: Chicago Public Schools and Racial Literacy

The Chicago Public Schools district has signaled recognition of the classroom as a possible site to confront race and racism. Following the murder of George Floyd, Chicago Public Schools released a resource guide called, "Say Their Names" that aimed to help teachers and parents have "productive conversations about race and civil disobedience" with youth. The 16-page Google Document is supported by the district's Office of Social and Emotional Learning and begins with links to help adults educate and care for themselves before going on to recommend activities, resources, and guiding questions.

The Reparations Won Curriculum is a Chicago-specific and locally developed curriculum intended for 8th and 10th grade social studies classes. The Reparations Won curriculum (RepWon), asks teachers to engage their students in discussions of race, police torture, and government neglect. The curriculum comes from a first of its kind reparations package and therefore, asks teachers and students to engage topics of police brutality and racism as means of recognition of and reconciliation for police torture survivors. RepWon argues that institutional racism allowed the systemic torture of mostly Black men to continue for two decades. Although mandated, it is unclear how many students actually experience this curriculum.

Although it is unclear how many educators in this sample interact with either Say Their Names or Reparations Won, given that the qualitative survey was disseminated by the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), they do all have some contact with CTU administration's open commitments to racial equity. Their website calls out racist district policy, supports the Black Lives Matter movement and advocates for police-free schools. Additionally, the union hosts its own training on how to teach RepWon.

Methods

The procedures and sampling methods used in this analysis are detailed in the overall introduction. This paper analyzes participants responses to the following question: How do you plan to incorporate information and lessons about police violence and civil unrest in your classroom?

Coding and Analysis

Data for this paper comes from teachers' responses regarding whether they planned to teach their students about racial injustice and civil unrest. Teachers who said they did not plan to do so, were then asked why they felt such lessons were not relevant to their classroom. Teachers who said they did plan to teach about racial injustice, were asked why and how they planned to carry out such lessons. Inductive coding analyses were used to explore teachers' responses. First, I examine responses from teachers who did not plan to engage their students in lessons on race and racism. Next, I analyzed responses from teachers who stated how they planned to teach about racial injustice explore. Analysis of these responses generated 30 codes which were then grouped into three themes according to a thematic analytic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2012). These broad themes categorize the strategies and methods teachers mentioned to teach about race and racism in their classroom.

Although the themes—Emotional Approaches, Exposure to Racism, Active Engagement—were developed absent of Sondel et al. (2018)'s work, I found *post hoc* that they largely aligned with the tenets those of a pedagogy of political trauma. Therefore, upon recognizing the similarity, I adapted the pedagogy of political trauma to account for the systematic integration of racism as ongoing political trauma into curriculum. Finally, in reviewing teachers' responses a fourth thematic category emerged of teachers who stated that they planned to teach about racial injustice, but were unsure in how to approach race and racism with their students. The codes leading to the development of each theme are detailed in Table 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.1 Codes Grouped by Theme

Emotional Approaches: *Opportunities for students to share feelings or process emotions related to incidences of racial injustice.*
• Opportunities for Emotional Expression—teachers planned to ask students about how they were feeling or create opportunities for students to share or process their emotions and reactions • Restorative Justice—teachers planned to use restorative justice practices to help students process their emotions • Social Emotional Learning (SEL)—teachers planned to use their SEL curricula to help students process their emotions
Exposure to Racism: *Methods and strategies that put students in contact with topics related to race, racism, and/or civil unrest, such as articles, conversations, or narratives.*
• Allotting Designated Time—teachers stated they would set aside time or use morning meetings to discuss recent incidences of racial injustice and civil unrest. • Reading and Discussion—teachers planned to host a discussion or read novels on the topics of race, and racism. • Multimedia—teachers planned to use videos, news clips, and movies to introduce information and stories of civil unrest and racial injustice. • Supplying Facts/Information—teachers stated they wanted to interrupt misinformation and ensure students had factual information about recent incidents of racial violence and civil unrest. • Historical Approaches—teachers planned to discuss the history of racial injustice in the US. • Current Events—teachers planned to regularly discuss current events with their students and would use these opportunities to discuss civil unrest. • Student Initiated Discussions—teachers stated they would engage issues of race and racism if students brought them up.

Table 3.2 Code by Theme

Active Engagement
• Critical Skills—teachers planned lessons that would empower students with skills necessary for sociopolitical/civic engagement such as media literacy or understanding political systems. • Curricular Integration—teachers planned to infuse topics of race and racism throughout the entirety of their curriculum. • Facilitating Student Understanding (Dialogic Engagement)—teachers planned to begin their lessons by assessing and engaging what students already knew about racial injustice • Student Civic Engagement/Activism—teachers planned opportunities for students to form clubs, do research and give presentations, or engage in activism related to racism and racial injustice.
Seeking Support and Resources
• Finding Resources—teachers share that they need to look for resources outside of their school resources • Seeking Collaboration—teachers mention wanted to collaborate with colleagues • Seeking District Guidance—teachers mention a desire for and willingness to follow district directives • Guest Speakers/Experts—teachers mention a desire to bring in a guest speaker or expert • Unsure—teachers share that they are unsure of how to integrate lessons on racial injustice and civil unrest

Results

Less than two months after the murder of George Floyd and amidst the back drop of a pandemic and global protests, I asked teachers if they would talk about COVID-19 and/or racial injustice. 87.66% of educators said they planned to explicitly discuss COVID-19, 10.81% said no and only 1.53% of teachers skipped the question. While this was not part of the traditional or planned curriculum, teachers were overwhelmingly willing to extend their curriculum and address current events. They were ready to address the trauma associated with a major public health crisis. However, in response to whether they planned to teach topics related to racial injustice only 61% of teachers in this sample stated that they planned to teach their students about the current civil unrest (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3). Those that said yes spanned all grade levels, subjects, and individual and school demographic categories. Of the total sample 28.27% said no and just under 10% (9.76%) did not answer at all. The difference in positive responses suggests that while there is a willingness to disrupt existing curricula and lesson plans to discuss significant current events, there is likely a reluctance to make the same accommodation to integrate current events related to racial trauma.

Table 3.3 Percent of Teachers Planning to Teach about Racial Injustice by Individual Demographics

	Yes	No
Teaching Experience		
1-3 Years	4.0%	2.9%
4-6 Years	12.0%	10.8%
7-9 Years	13.5%	11.7%
10 + Years	70.5%	74.6%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	57.1%	58.2%
Latine	16.1%	20.7%
Black/African American	18.6%	14.5%
Multiracial	3.9%	2.0%
Asian American/ Pacific Islander	2.0%	3.1%
Middle Eastern/ North African	0.9%	0.4%
Native/Indigenous	0.5%	0.4%
Other	0.9%	0.8%

Table 3.4 Percent of Teachers with Plans to Teach about Racial Injustice by School Demographics

	Yes	No
School Location		
Central, Near North, Near South Sides	6.3%	5.5%
Far Northside	11.0%	13.9%
Far Southside	3.6%	5.5%
Far Southwest Side	7.8%	6.8%
Northside	14.4%	11.0%
Northwest Side	13.5%	17.3%
South Side	8.0%	8.9%
Southwest Side	18.6%	16.5%
West and Near West Side	16.7%	14.8%
School Racial/Ethnic Composition		
Mostly Latine	37.1%	38.8%
Mostly Black	25.9%	19.6%
Mostly White	7.2%	9.2%
Mixed/Diverse	29.0%	32.5%
Other	0.8%	0.0%
School Socioeconomic Make-Up		
High-Need/Low Income	65.0%	65.4%
Socioeconomically Diverse	29.9%	30.8%
Affluent	5.1%	3.8%
School Level		
Elementary (PreK-8)	68.7%	81.1%
High School	31.3%	18.9%
Subject		
General Ed	27.2%	35.9%
ELA	15.3%	11.7%
Social Studies	10.8%	5.8%
Science	15.6%	10.3%
Math	11.7%	15.2%
Diverse Learner Educator	19.5%	21.1%

This reluctance is evident in the data. Despite the declaration by 61.2% (n=526) of respondents that they planned to discuss civil unrest with their students only 55.1% (n=473) responded as to *how* they planned to have that discussion. In comparison, 94.6% (n=706) of educators that planned to teach about the COVID-19 pandemic shared how they planned to integrate those lessons. Table 3.4 shows the percent of a demographic category that mentioned a given approach (ex. 35% of novice educators that supplied a written response cited active engagement approaches to teaching about race and racism). As shown in Table 3.4, trends in approaches were similar across school and teacher demographics.

Table 3.5 Demographics x Theme: Percent of Demographic Category Citing Theme Techniques

	Did Not Engage	Active	Emotional	Exposure	Seeking
Teaching Experience					
Novice (0-3 years)	6%	35%	20%	55%	20%
Early Career (4-6 years)	6%	34%	24%	60%	19%
Mid-Career (7-9 years)	5%	33%	18%	62%	32%
Veteran (10+ years)	10%	25%	17%	55%	34%
Teacher Race/Ethnicity					
Latine	5%	30%	11%	53%	25%
Black	9%	25%	21%	57%	28%
White	10%	28%	19%	56%	32%
School Socioeconomic Make-Up					
High Needs/ Low Income	8%	28%	19%	54%	30%
Socioeconomically Diverse	11%	26%	15%	58%	35%
Affluent	13%	15%	13%	50%	5%
Grade/School Level					
Elementary	8%	24%	21%	56%	32%
High School	7%	34%	10%	56%	29%
School Racial/Ethnic Composition					
Mostly Latine School	8%	28%	18%	56%	34%
Mostly Black School	7%	28%	20%	49%	29%
Mostly White School	16%	9%	44%	15%	16%
Mixed School	9%	27%	18%	62%	31%

Evading Race (n=72)

While 28.27% of the total sample explicitly stated that they would not engage topics of civil unrest or racial injustice in their classroom, only 30% (n=72) explained why. This group of teachers was primarily made up of veteran teachers 82% and included about 10% and 9% of white and Black teachers, respectively. Only 5% of Latine teachers said no. The most common rationale, overall and across demographics, for avoiding lessons on race and racism was due to concerns about developmental or age appropriateness. 31% of the teachers evading race stated that their students were too young taught PreK-5th grade. This concern reflects existing literature (Boutte et al., 2011; Farago et al., 2015). Teachers concerned about developmental appropriateness thought that their students would not understand. This Pre-K educator shared: *"I feel they might not understand the topic yet. I would read stories about how different we are and how we are the same"* (598; Black veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low income elementary school). Similarly, another early child educator invoked the Golden Rule: *"Not age appropriate. Will discuss being kind and a good friend to all. Treat everyone the way you want to be treated"* (814; White veteran teacher at a socioeconomically and racial/ethnically diverse elementary school). Both responses reflect a frame of racial violence as an individualist interpersonal problem.

Another teacher who believed that their students were too young stated: *"They are small children and I do not inten[d] to influence my view of [the Chicago Police Department] to anyone who is not mentally nor emotionally ready to understand how politics works."* (743; White mid-career teacher at a mostly Black low income elementary school) The latter part of this teacher's statement, similar to the teacher below, suggests a belief that young children cannot and perhaps should not engage with politics: *"I don't believe in talking about politics with my students—just like religion isn't discussed nor should politics with the younger ones"* (39; White veteran teacher at a mostly Latine socioeconomically diverse elementary school). Both of the above statements reveal a particular understanding of what kinds of content are appropriate for the classroom. Notably, only white teachers suggested that discussing race and racism was too political or not their responsibility.

An equal number of teachers (8) shared beliefs that teaching about race and racism was not their responsibility, that race and racism was unrelated to their course content, or that they did not agree with the politics of the moment. Responses reflecting a misalignment in politics often focused on perceptions of the protests as riots and destructive. Seven teachers also stated that topics of race and racism were issues to be discussed at home. Four teachers, all at High Needs/Low Income schools, shared that they already had a lot on their plates and that other topics were more critical to students' futures and learning standards.

Engaging Race

Those educators that did plan to bring discussions of race, racism, and racialized violence into the classroom, used a number of techniques. These approaches spanned three categories: emotional, exposure, and active. See Table 3.1 for definitions as well as the specific codes that made these categories.

Opportunities for Emotional Expression and Processing (n=88)

A racialized pedagogy of political trauma requires that teachers and students express, process, and reflect on their emotions in response to either ongoing or a moment of political and racial trauma. Of the three tenets of a racialized pedagogy of political trauma, teachers were least likely to explicitly state that they planned to devote class time to emotion: 17.8% (n=88) of the sample. 21% of Black teachers planned to make space for emotional disclosure in their classroom as compared to 11% and 19% of Latine and white teachers, respectively. Additionally, 17% (n=58) of veteran teachers planned to use emotional approaches compared to 20% of novice teachers and 24% of early career teachers.

> *"When the murder of George Floyd happened, we had a serious unpacking in my class as well as a discussion on the civil unrest. We talked and listened to each other. There was a lot of fear, anger, sadness, etc... It was heartbreaking. But, as I said before, my kids used these emotions and experiences to create art. It was truly amazing! In the future, I will still talk*

> *about the Black Lives Matter movement and why it is important to me as a white ally. I will be teaching it through the lens of theatre and the arts in general. I don't have a total plan yet, but I will soon."* (589; white mid-career teacher at a mostly Latine low income high school)

In the quote above, the educator and their students established vulnerable and intimate relationships that allow them to express difficult emotions. The teacher then provided students with an opportunity to reflect on and examine those emotions by making art.

Similar to the teacher quoted above, other educators also utilized opportunities to process through creative practices such as writing lyrics, making art and music, or free writing. "*I will allow students to express themselves via visual art. I will lead them into conversations as we view and appreciate related art pieces prior to developing their own*" (108; white veteran teacher at a mostly Black socioeconomically diverse elementary school). Several teachers planned to provide students to free write, journal, or engage in other expository practices to in order to supplement and digest information and traditional academic activities: *"We will be studying current events as part of our social studies curriculum, will assign writing assignments so that students can voice their ideas, and provide discussion time to share our feelings. We will also cover these topics as part of our SEL program"* (269; Black veteran teacher at a socioeconomically racial/ethnically diverse elementary school). Writing is believed to be a cathartic practice, useful for processing complex emotions (Baikie & Wilhelm, 2005; Winans, 2010; Zembylas, 2019).

A number of teachers making space for emotions and individual opinions, stated that the classroom would be an "open environment." *"I will allow students to voice opinions and concerns, without focusing on any one side"* (550; white veteran teacher at a socioeconomically and racial/ethnically diverse elementary school). This suggests that teachers were concerned about the possibility of appearing biased themselves or marginalizing students whose opinions might differ from their classmates. Others planned to supplement open discussions and environments with factual information or history in order to ground students' perspectives. To accomplish this, one teacher planned to use news articles: *"I am planning on using news articles and personal experiences for open discussions and or debates"* (509; white veteran teacher at a mostly Black low-income elementary school). Another emphasized "facts and valid sources": *"This too will be based on facts and valid sources of information as well as an open environment to discuss students' personal experiences."* (1161; unknown race mid-career teacher at a socioeconomically and racial/ethnically diverse elementary school).

Several teachers proposed using their morning meeting time, which is often devoted to social emotional learning (SEL) curricula, to have discussions about racism and/or the murder of George Floyd. Others planned to use restorative justice circles to provide students with a structure for sharing their thoughts and feelings: *"By using talking circles and other methods to talk with the kids to feel out where they are about it. From there I'll use that information and their feedback to form plans"* (193; Latine veteran teacher at a mostly white affluent elementary school). By first engaging students' in restorative justice circles, this teacher expressed a desire to develop lessons in response to what students concern and build upon their existing knowledge. SEL and restorative justice practices supplied structure for some teachers to engage with their students. However, from the limited responses, it was unclear how many teachers would also be disclosing or whether many "open discussions" were to be facilitated in a way to ensure students would be able to process and be affirmed. Without these kinds of supports, connections to lessons, or continual reflection, students may be uncomfortable being vulnerable or feel that teachers are making space out of a feeling of obligation rather than authentic care (Decuir-Gunby & Williams, 2007; Leonardo & Porter, 2010).

Exposure to Race and Racism (n=278)

The most common methods teachers shared in their plans to teach about racial injustice provided students with exposure to the concepts of race and racism. 56.4% of teachers cited a practice that would expose students and provide information on topics related to race and racial injustice. These methods included open discussions, reading news articles or novels, and history lessons to provide students with context for the protests and outrage students witnessed over the summer: *"We would discuss what happened and students would be able to ask questions and share how it [a]ffected them. We would look at the history of the country that has led to this point and discuss the different perspectives involved"* (132; white mid-career teacher at a mostly Latine low income elementary school). Many of the responses in the category were brief, stating variations of the following: "Through read aloud and class discussion," "Discussions and readings," or "As reading, writing, and discussion topics."

Exposure through narratives that explicitly name race and racism may help student to develop racial literacy and critique racial formations in the U.S.:

> *I can show videos and read books with the students to teach them. I will use questionnaires and readings on the topic. They will likely make a poster or some kind of presentation about police violence and civil unrest to demonstrate their new accurate knowledge. And basic daily conversations will be beneficial.* (570; Black veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low income elementary school).

Teachers cited fiction texts such as Something Happened in Our Town, The Hate U Give and Monster as their methods for introducing narratives about racism and racial inequality:

> *"We usually use children's books to begin our conversations. There is a book called Something Happened in Our Town that is good for helping students understand that bad things happen and how they can exercise agency when they do. We make space for community meetings and individual conversations with students. Following guidance from antiracism frameworks, we will be focusing a lot on positive representation and agency, but we will continue to make space to address problems in our classroom/school/city community and react as necessary"* (32; White early career teacher at a socioeconomically and racial/ethnically diverse elementary school)

These mentions were tied to desires to have discussions about the text or used as a jumping off point for conversation. Books and other texts can provide exposure to the impacts of racial categorization, differential treatment, and violence, however additional scaffolding and explicit connections are required to develop students' ability to witness, critique, and then respond to the endemicity of racism (Farago et al., 2015).

Skerret (2018) argues that in order to be truly effective in the development of racial literacy, teachers must consistently engage in conversations about race and racism. One way to be consistent is to integrate race-related topics throughout the year, rather than including a contained unit on race and racism. Several teachers, similar to the one quoted below, discussed embedding themes around racism and protest throughout their curriculum:

> *My curriculum is already built around oppression and social justice, so these ideas are already incorporated. We have four units: race, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, and socioeconomic class. In each, we read fictional texts about systemic oppression and pair it with non-fiction (mostly articles and research) to be able to see oppression as both data and stories, political and personal. The civil unrest portion isn't as embedded in the curriculum, so I think I'm the upcoming year, I'm going to try to highlight civil unrest in the stories, as well as identifying the stories themselves as acts of resistance. This will culminate at the end of the year with their final essay, which asks them to analyze an aspect of American culture in terms of systemic oppression. I'm going to add as part of their essay ways that the system might be changed and made more equitable.* (51; white mid-career teacher at a mostly Latine socioeconomically diverse high school)

Deeper integration also permits teachers to better demonstrate the systemic and endemic natures of racism in the US as well as allows students to feel that teacher value and are giving importance to discussions of racial inequality (Harbin et al., 2019). Ideally, this type of integration will not be restricted to social studies classes. Instead, critical engagement will occur across subjects (Sondel, 2018). In accordance with a racialized pedagogy of political trauma, students should also be encouraged to reflect on the information they are learning and connect it back to their lives (Harbin et al., 2019).

Active Engagement and Development of Racial Literacy (n=135)

The final tenant of a racialized pedagogy of political trauma asks that teachers act as civic agents by providing students with the skills and opportunities to be agents of change (Mirra & Morrell, 2011). Approximately at quarter of teachers (27.4%, n=135) that reported how they would teach students how to be critical, develop skills necessary for civic engagement, or would create opportunities for students to be activists. Responses included in this category also included practices that went beyond providing students with information to provide intentional opportunities for dialogic exchange between teachers and their students. Although some of the methods of teachers in this final group may appear similar to those above, the key difference is their emphasis on giving students the opportunity to understand systemic issues deeply enough to brainstorm solutions and recognize their potential roles in resistance and disruption.

Compared to practices meant to introduce or expose students to racial injustice, methods that took a more active approach offered activities, projects, and facilitated lessons that would encourage students to reflect and interact with the topics at hand. Active practices engaged students in a deeper analysis and understanding of racism. These teachers connected issues of race and racism with opportunities for students to develop critical skill or a sense of civic responsibility. For some this meant connecting lessons to skill development: *Guest speakers, lots of different reading from multiple perspectives, identifying bias in media, writing with claim and reasoning* (27; White veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low income elementary school). Practice identifying bias in the media and making reasoned claims will enable students to make their own judgments and arguments moving forward. This kind of practice engages traditional academic standards while building civic identity.

Other teachers planned to utilize texts in order to empower students and teach them how to exercise agency:

> *We read The Hate U Give, which is a perfect jumping off point. Students design their own Black Panther Party style 10-point programs, and this year I want them to bring those plans into real life action. We'll work through the racist history of police and how our current model hurts cops and citizens alike.* (767; Latine mid-career teacher at a socioeconomically and racial/ethnically diverse high school)

Another emphasized using texts to bolster what students already know and empower student voice and action:

> *We already do a lot of work on civil unrest and taking action. Finding lessons from Facing History and other curriculums. Having open dialogue about current events. Sharing facts about why we can and should defund the police and refund education, health facilities, community centers…helping them share their voice and perspectives. The kids already get it, it is the adults that need the learning. So, helping [students] use reading and writing to share their stories and take action* (560; Black veteran teacher at a socioeconomically and racial/ethnically diverse elementary school).

By having students reflect on their own power and agency, teachers in this group are developing civic engagement and understanding of social positioning. Teachers also planned to encourage students get involved in intervening in both school and community issues related to school-police relations and local policies:

> "*Listening to my students experiences and supporting their efforts at making change. Moderating schoolwide townhalls and helping to broker student conversations with our school's neighbors, the police academy and their cohort of new cadets.* (614; Asian veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low income elementary school)"

Methods in this category also allowed students to research and explore topics related to racism and civics:

> "*Examining pros and cons of various activism approaches; looking at youth involvement; exploring "the other side" (whatever that means for a student) of an issue in order to understand it; building arguments and policy proposals rooted in evidence and research; examining systemic racism and what that means; reflecting upon personal experience with police; probably a lot more."* (214; White mid-career teacher at a mostly Latine low income high school)

Here, student civic involvement is explicitly tied to learning to build arguments and students' personal experiences.

Teachers with more experience were less likely to engage in active engagement practices. Novice (35%) and early career (34%) teachers were approximately 1.5 times more likely to suggest active engagement activities than veteran teachers (25%). High school teachers were also more likely to mention active engagement practices increased, but less likely to mention intentional integration of emotional disclosures or processing. Although, early childhood and elementary level educators were more likely to have concerns around the age-appropriateness of discussions around race and racism in the classroom, they were more likely to provide students with space to process their emotions. The teacher quoted below used discussions about their kindergarteners' emotions to provide them with the language necessary to help understand not only themselves, but the impacts of their actions on others:

> *Same as with COVID-19, ask them what they know or what they've heard. Listen to their fears and concerns. Lead the conversation into ways we can make our school and classroom welcoming and safe for everyone. If a kindergartner says something that might be considered racist or a microaggression, understand that they repeat what they hear. They also sometimes don't have the vocabulary to express what they want to say. Engage them in a dialogue to clearly understand what they mean and where the statement or feeling comes from. Give them the language to express themselves appropriately and politely. Challenge things that are unfair and lay the groundwork to combat racist thoughts in their home with experiences that contradict the fears and prejudices that come from the unknown.* (680; Black veteran teacher at a socioeconomically and racial/ethnically diverse elementary school)

For this teacher, an individualist focus on students fears provided an opportunity to encourage reflexivity, educate students on racist language, and lay the groundwork for intervening in future encounters with racist statements.

Aspirations for Engaging Race (n=154)

There are many ways to introduce possibly difficult, divisive, and emotional topics with students, however, many teachers are still searching and learning for approaches that feel comfortable, achievable, and effective. Teachers in this sample are actively looking for guidance. 154 teachers discussed seeking support in some way. In responding to how they were going to teach about racial injustice and civil unrest one teacher said: *"I'm not entirely sure, but will need to figure it out"* (194; white mid-career teacher at a mostly Latine low income elementary school). Another responded:

> *That is a good question. It is sometimes difficult to keep a balance between intense lessons and information and keeping things light enough so students are further traumatized by current events. I will be doing lots of research in the coming weeks to make sure I can accomplish that.* (670; Multiracial Latine veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low income elementary school)

This teacher was not alone in questioning how to bring race and racism into the classroom. Among the 493 teachers that stated they planned to respond to racial injustice and civil unrest in their classroom, 89 (18.1%) shared that they were unsure on how to do that. Additionally, 3 of the 72 (4.2%) teachers who did not plan to teach about race and racism stated they were not going to do so because they did not know how.

While some teachers in this category simply said they were unsure, others suggested where they might turn for support. 20.8% (n=32) of educators seeking support talked about needing to find resources and searching websites like Facing History, Teaching Tolerance and others to find curricula they could use: *"Facing History would be a "go to" resource to teach about police violence and civil unrest." (725*). Teachers in Sondel's study also used materials and curricula from Teaching Tolerance and Teaching for Change revealing the reach and demand for such resources (2018). 20.1% (n=31) mentioned hoping to utilize district or administrative guidance in order to develop adequate lessons for their students. Although the district has released the Reparations Won curriculum and a resource guide for talking about race, racism, and racial trauma, neither were widely mentioned. Only nine teachers mentioned Reparations Won explicitly, with one stating: *"Reparations Won is a great starting point, followed by resources by Facing History and Teaching Tolerance*" (531; Black veteran teacher at a socioeconomically and racial/ethnically diverse elementary school).

Finally, teachers also expressed a desire to collaborate either with social studies teachers in their building, school counselors, or their grade level teams: *"Talk to coworkers and school to come up with proper way to do this. We were already talking about this in June*" (542; Black veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low income elementary school). Another said: "*I plan on collaborating with the social studies teacher to provide opportunities for students to read, write, and engage in discussion about the topic" (558;* white veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low income elementary school*).* Others expressed interest in bringing in experts and guest speakers. *"This will be [in] my social emotional lessons, although I am sure I could find some science behind it. There are great resources are there, well thought out lessons I can use. I am not expert, so I will turn to the experts on this"* (21; white veteran teacher at a mostly Latine socioeconomically diverse elementary school). By seeking opportunities to collaborate, respondents acknowledged that they are not knowledge experts and needed assistance in implementing lessons on race and racism with efficacy.

Discussion

In this moment, it is not a question of whether Chicago-area educators believe discussions about racism and racialized violence belong in the classroom. It is clear that many do. The issue now is *how* teachers can engage these lessons and how they can do so beyond diversifying their curricula, beyond mere exposure. In this study, I used a racialized pedagogy of political trauma to categorize teachers' strategies for engaging topics related to race and racism in the classroom. By introducing relevant texts, teachers were able to expose their students and have discussions about racial injustice. However, fewer teachers report using these moments to empower students to take action and even fewer made space for students to process through complex emotions. These additional levels of engagement are important because teaching about race and racism should not simply be teaching difference nor solely teaching pain.

The data also suggests that discussions on race and racism may be avoided for a variety of reasons related to their appropriateness. Teachers in this study were more inclined to provide their students with information about difficult topics than provide opportunities for students to discuss their own experiences and process their emotions. This is not surprising since academics (objective) are often placed in opposition to feelings (subjective). Additionally, over a quarter of teachers who stated they would not bring discussions of race and racism into their classroom were early childhood and elementary educators concerned about the developmental appropriateness of such discussion. However, early career teachers cited as exposing and actively engaging their students in racial literacy development show that there are ways that lessons on racial violence and racial political trauma can be adapted to younger grades. Future studies should question the differences between these two groups of teachers.

Although the data does not necessarily expose how teachers are framing their discussions of racial injustice, it is clear that teachers are not entirely comfortable talking about race and racism. Most teachers used "white talk" or euphemistic language in stating how they would teach race and racism which both adheres to social norms dissuading talk about race and distances them from the topic of racism (Lazar & Offenberg, 2011). Only 31 educators used the terms race, racism, racial injustice, or related terms such as George Floyd, inequality, anti-racism, and Black Lives Matter in their responses. Instead teachers used terms like “these topics,” “the situation,” “current events,” or “bad things.” Effective racial literacy development requires that teachers practice reflexivity as well in order to examine hesitations talking about race and racism (Harbin et al., 2019; Lynn, 1999). Rather the societal norm of discouraging race talk, the lack of institutional support and training often leave teachers with inadequate skills to deeply engage (Richmond, Bartell, Floden, & Petchauer, 2017; Swalwell & Schweber, 2016).

Admittedly, it is unclear in this data, if the teachers who declared they would have a discussion had clear objectives and structures envisioned for these sessions. Although the commitment may be there, without classroom observations or student attestations we cannot know if lessons on race and racism are being done efficaciously. It is also not clear how many teachers engaging emotional and exposure approaches are clear about the system nature of racism. It should be noted that the question on including discussions of race and racism in the classroom was the final question on the survey. The placement as well as the fact that many teachers responded on their phones may have contributed to shorter responses. Therefore, it is possible that teachers who actually had crafted structured and detailed plans for their discussion series simply wrote “discussion.”

Conclusion

The informative approach to engaging race and racism in the classroom has its merits and its limits. Texts and media can be entry points for developing racial literacy. While creating space begins a conversation, without structure or integration into broader lessons, the likelihood of students gaining understanding of racism as a systemic issue or developing a sense of racial literacy is low. Deeper engagement requires that students interact with the complexities and harsh realities of racism in the United States. This can be difficult because race talk is often avoided because of the emotional response it can induce. Racism talk even more so. However, there can be possibility in emotion and vulnerability. Approached with care, emotions and feelings such as shame and trauma can be catalysts for envisioning a different future (Zembylas, 2019).

The significant number of teachers that shared that they are unsure how to tackle lessons on race and racial injustice signals that we cannot only rely on teacher education programs to provide the training necessary to have conversations about racism well. The urgency requires an increase in the availability and accessibility of resources for teachers who are currently in the classroom. As researchers, teachers, and communities seek to expand, supplement, and update resources aimed at developing racial literacy, we must consider both the kinds of materials teachers use as well as the kinds of materials teachers need. Necessary materials could include discussion guides that help to explicitly link popular texts to personal experience, history, and social structures; trainings in facilitation and transformative conversation; and inspiration for how to move towards action and disrupting racist norms in the school and community.

Currently, teachers looking for resources are doing so on their own time and of their own accord. While we can applaud these teachers for their efforts, this is not a sustainable model. Teachers need adequate support and resources from their administrations, districts, and community in order to be able to effectively work to develop racial literacy in their students (Gutiérrez, 2013). Not only to teachers require support in obtaining resources, they also must be supported first in their own self-reflective journeys and as they practice and learn how to best develop their and their students' racial literacies. That is, there must be room for teachers to rehearse and learn without risk of professional consequences or traumatizing students. By exercising an intimate and authentic care for their student’s humanity and taking on the status of co-learner teachers will simultaneously move away from their role as knowledge expert.

However, national emphasis on standardized and high-stakes testing will continue to make it difficult for schools and teachers to devote time to racial literacy development. Therefore, it is questionable whether such efforts could ever be institutionalized and remain liberatory as doing so might act counter to the goal of having these conversations. Laughter asks: “Can an institution display racial literacy or it is merely the racial literacy of the amalgamated individuals involved?” (2021, p.15). This question is key as we continue examine the role schools play in racial liberation. In this article, I expose the tension between the positioning of teachers as content experts as opposed to experts of their craft. The lack of experience interrogating race and racism in conjunction with accumulating demands from district, state, and federal boards of education seem to require demands that run counter to each other. However, in recognizing the power and importance of humanizing educational spaces, the necessary route appears obvious.

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4. THE ROLE OF A TEACHER: REVEALING PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS IN A TIME OF CRISIS

The transition to remote instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted schools' regular and long-established institutional scripts. The abrupt shuttering of schools meant that, at least in the early days of remote instruction, the rules for how to manage classes and what to teach students were unclear. In the absence of both consistent institutional demands and surveillance, educators had to rely on their own expertise for guidance. I argue that this period of institutional instability provided educators with a unique sense-making opportunity capable of revealing their understandings of their professional responsibility. I refer to such individual orientations as *professional dispositions*.

To understand how teachers conceptualize their purpose and function, I examine Chicago-area teachers' responses about changes in their self-articulated goals after the transition to remote instruction. This enables me see opportunity in the disruption to institutional cohesion and explore how the need for teachers to be creative and perform a sort of pedagogical triage revealed the aspects of the profession they felt were most urgent. I develop five professional disposition typologies: SEL-Focused, Counseling, Academic, Responsive, and Empowerment agents. I suggest that considering these typologies can enable researchers and teacher educators to better understand teachers' motivations and interpretations of purpose. Through this analysis and an interest in how teachers are interpreting and adapting their practice, I am "tracing what actors actually respond to and why" (Edwards, 2015, p. 781). I conclude by considering how these typologies may be useful in promoting teacher collaboration as a way to highlight the strengths of each of these teacher types.

Inhabited Institutionalism

As a social interactionist framework, inhabited institutionalism considers both how institutions influence, monitor, and control individuals as well as how the collective of individuals within proliferate and shape that institution. “[Inhabited Institutionalism] conveys an imagery of linked spheres…where institutions, organizations, and [social] interactions are connected and exert a force on each other and also retain partial autonomy” (Hallett & Hawbaker, 2021, p.11). Recognizing this partial autonomy is significant because it leaves space for us to acknowledge the fact that any institutions’ inhabitants enter with their own prior experiences, politics, and beliefs. Thinking about the relationship between institutions and those that participate in them in this way allows us to see teachers as more than simply institutional agents that carry out an institution’s will, but also as interpreters and determiners of the success of institutional demands.

Inhabited Institutionalism literature has previously been used to analyze how teachers’ collective responses to reform efforts determine whether or not an institutional reform results in successful change (Haedicke & Hallett, 2016). Theories of educators as institutional agents have explored similar phenomena (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015). In a paper that considers the ways that teacher agency influences the uptake of new policies, Bridwell-Mitchell states that “Teachers are institutional agents because their day-to-day instructional choices shape the implementation of reform and thus persistence or change in institutionalized instructional practices” (2015, p. 141). However, teachers are also institutional agents (actors whose understandings maintain, transform, or dismantle institutions) because they are the key way schools as institutions act upon and distribute social capital to youth (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). No matter their personal identifications, teachers serve, in part, to carry out the will of the school institution through direct implementation of organizational mandates such as discipline policies (Shange, 2019). Educators' daily decisions about what rules to enforce, how much time to spend on a particular subject, or who can speak can all communicate particular values and priorities to students (Journell, 2016).

Examining the flow between institutional agents, the organization and the greater social structure, while allowing each of these aspects to be distinct, not only reveals how institutional modifications are carried forward, but also how the personal—that is identity, politics, individual response to world happenings, and other factors not immediately tied to institutional obligations—may come in to influence the enactment of professional responsibilities. Literature on teachers of marginalized identities reveal the ways that teachers can bring their personal priorities into the classroom making clear that teacher practice is influenced by affiliations external to the organization or institution (Griffin & Tackie, 2017; Kohli, 2016; ross et al., 2016; Royston et al., 2020). This literature offers an extended view of teacher agency beyond that implicated in the success of reforms or the implementation of new practices. Considering schools as inhabited institutions and teachers as institutional agents permits a more holistic view of teachers.

As institutional agents in this sense, teachers influence how students come to understand the world and their place in it. Although generally bound by institutional or organizational norms, teachers, through teacher power, can potentially supplement and adjust their pedagogy in order to use their expertise to educate youth (Webb, 2002). Through these decisions, teachers can distribute social capital, defined as "resources embedded in social structure," which enhances students' capacity to successfully navigate the U.S. hierarchical, racist, capitalist social terrain. How teachers attend to this responsibility can function in service of proliferating dominant social structures or as a counter strategy to empower low income and marginalized youth (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Therefore, teachers' professional disposition—how they understand and orient their pedagogy and practice—can have implications for institutional resource distribution and social justice.

Teachers do not all carry out their institutional responsibilities in the same way. Given teachers' differentiated backgrounds and positioning within U.S. social and political systems, we should expect this difference despite similar training or work experiences. Although influenced and altered by professional training and organizational demands, we can assume that like students, teachers also bring their own funds of knowledge to their classrooms (Moll et al., 1992). These funds, reflective of prior experiences, influence their mission as educators as well as their pedagogical styles and priorities. Essentially, we can differentiate between teachers' goals, which may be common, and their means, which likely differ depending on a number of factors (Brain, Reid, & Boyes, 2006).

Teachers as Creative Professionals

What does it mean to be a teaching professional? Webb (Webb, 2002) cites three components of educational professionalism: (1) vast talent and skill (2) utilization of knowledge that supports the work and (3) autonomy for decision making that connects their skills and their knowledge coffers. Teachers hold expertise in content, methods, and implementation that is unique to their profession. This expertise along with their unique position and influence over youth development imbues educators with a certain power that could perhaps only be absolutely restricted if teachers were placed under constant surveillance.

Instrumental understandings of teaching obscure this reality by turning teaching into a job that relies on standardization and technical ability rather than a profession by suggesting that a teacher's job is solely to instill content and skill knowledge and foster academic success (Ajayi, 2011; Brain et al., 2006; Campbell, 2018). This orientation also denies the political nature of teaching and the ways that curricular and school policy decisions serve in social reproduction and maintaining social control (Ehman, 1980). However, the efforts to standardize the teaching profession or portray teachers as technicians also fails because teaching is necessarily a creative profession that requires adaptation. As adaptive professionals responding not only to changes in student need, but also policy and resource conditions we should expect variation in teacher practice generally, but especially in times of uncertainty. Teachers cannot wait for institutional powers to gather data and make decrees and so must rely on their own professional knowledge. For experienced teachers this likely includes heavy reliance on their arsenals of practice, past experience, as well as their own understanding of their purpose. This reliance on experience does not necessarily mean that teachers are committing to "good" pedagogical practices as their arsenal may be filled with what is "familiar and comfortable" rather than what is effective and developmentally appropriate (Campbell, 2018).

Campbell (2018), inspired by Lévi-Strauss, places teachers' approaches to practice in two categories: the adaptive and creative *bricoleur* teacher and the *engineer* teacher seeking objectivity. Although teachers are often bricoleurs, developing their practice based on training, personal experience outside of the profession, and student need, the ability to tailor and experiment is often limited by institutional mandates and attempts at professional homogeneity. Campbell states: "Without creating an environment where teachers can research, develop and create their own practice in unique, personal ways, there is limited opportunity for them to become the agents of social and educational change they might otherwise be" (p. 7). The COVID-19 pandemic and the dramatic shift to remote learning forced teachers into such an environment where they were required to rely on their own *arsenals of practice* and their peers while awaiting clear directives from district and school-level administrators (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; Everitt, 2012). In the context of the disruption and the stress that accompanies uncertainty some teachers may have taken advantage of the opportunity to be flexible and creative in their practices while others "may be inclined to simply follow the rules, using what they already know, closing down their inventive and resourceful impulses as pedagogical bricoleurs" (Campbell, 2018; Kim & Asbury, 2020). Given the novelty of the situation, it is understandable that some teachers came to embody *engineers*, relying on base institutional norms and objectives in order to keep moving forward.

Teacher Agency in Pedagogical Triage

Once schools closed, teachers were left to "find a way" to continue doing their jobs despite the dissolution of the supports schools traditionally provide (Kim & Asbury, 2020). In this moment, teachers were uniquely distanced from both their students and their students. Teaching from their homes, educators were restricted by new and often unfamiliar platforms, limited student attention spans, and digital inequities (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). In order to optimize their time with their students, teachers had to make critical determinations about what could successfully translate to the virtual classroom as well as what to cut and what to keep from their lesson plans for the year. In order to assist teachers in this negotiation, the district recommended that teachers avoid introducing new materials and focus on reviewing previously covered materials (Chicago Public Schools, April 2020). Reminiscent of the prioritization process of medical triage, even if following this guidance teachers were left to determine how to narrow their curricula and objectives so that they provide students with the resources and skills teachers themselves felt were most urgent.

Teachers, based on their professional dispositions, likely made different determinations regarding what elements of practice and content to address. Through pedagogical triage, teachers leaned on their perceptions of student need to pare down content and reorient instruction in order to meet immediate needs. Some teachers, in line with national concerns about student learning loss, focused on ensuring that students continued their academic learning. Others may have prioritized how students were processing their experience of the pandemic and the protests in response to the murder of George Floyd.

In this paper, I illuminate the differences and variety in teacher responses to disruption and by asking: How did the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and racialized civil unrest during the summer of 2020 impact what teachers prioritized in their (virtual) classrooms?

Methods

The procedures and sampling methods used in this analysis are detailed in the overall introduction. The findings of this paper examine teachers' responses to the following open-ended question: "Think about your goals for your students this academic year. Did they change at all with the shift to remote learning?" The objective of the above question on teachers' goals was to get a sense of how participants adjusted their practice and their expectations, if at all, during remote instruction. Analyzing responses revealed teachers' motivations behind the decisions they made when adapting their practice. Additionally, by asking teachers about *their* goals for their students, educators were ideally able to present their personal mission and motivation for their practice rather than their school's objectives.

Coding and Analysis

Using a purposive subsample, I reviewed teachers' statements about how their goals may have changed along with two research assistants. The subsample was made up of 200 respondents beginning initially with a random sampling that was then adjusted so that the demographics roughly matched that of the full sample. Upon initial review, the coding team used Excel to make a note of the kinds of changes each educator reported as well as the aspects of schooling or professional responsibility the respondent attended to. These memos were then reviewed in order to search for themes in accordance with a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Six thematic categories initially emerged from this inductive approach (see Figure 4.1). Each theme was defined to create a codebook. However, one theme (Social-Justice Oriented) described very few educators and responses overlapped with either the Counselor or the Empowering dispositions. The final five themes (defined in Table 4.2) were then applied to the full sample of 821 educators who responded to the question about their goals, using Atlas.ti qualitative analysis software. I then reviewed responses again within theme to develop full descriptions of the five professional dispositions.

Figure 4.1 Sub-Sample Professional Dispositions

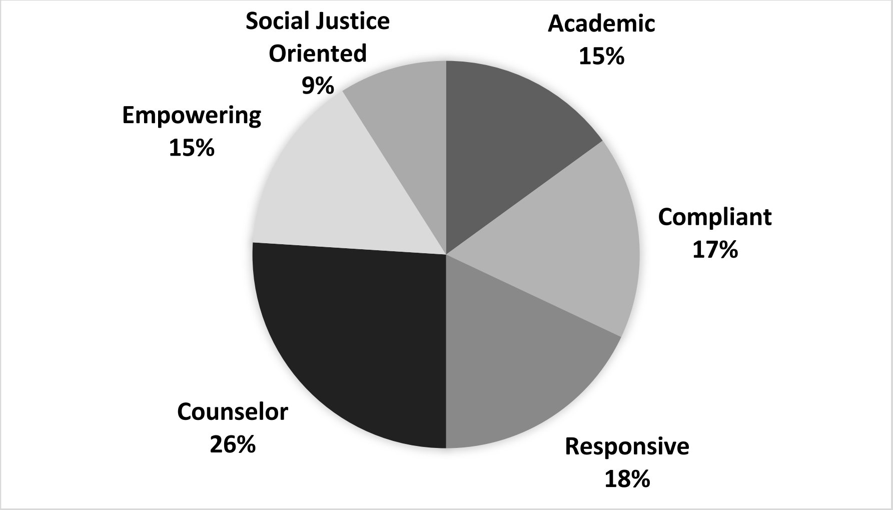

Table 4.1 Professional Dispositions Codebook

Theme	***Definition***
Academic	*Emphasized continued learning, covering required standards, assessment*
Compliant	*Focused on routine, prioritized contact with standards and participation over learning or mastery*
Counselor	*Prioritized student health and well-being over academic goals or requirements*
Responsive	*Flexible and focused on adapting to student need and circumstance*
Empowering	*Emphasized student autonomy, focused on teaching skills necessary for independence*

Although the dispositions are intended to display distinct typologies, some teachers displayed qualities of multiple dispositions. Therefore, teachers were categorized based upon the most salient topic in their response. However, given the brevity of most responses, most teachers primarily fit into one typology. It is important to emphasize that the professional dispositions described in this study are not meant to judge teachers or suggest best practices. Rather the purpose of the study is to explore the variety of ways teachers understand and carry out their professional purpose through instructional choices.

Not all responses met the criteria necessary for categorization. Uncategorized responses (32.9%) focused on changes in student behavior, the increased difficulty of teaching, or simply stated that goals changed, but did not explain how. Additionally, teachers who stated that their goals did not change without stating the nature of those goals, were also not categorized.

Results

Educators' responses revealed that changes in their lessons and teaching objectives were motivated by efforts to maintain participation, a need to simplify instruction to suit the often unfamiliar virtual environment, and an obligation to accommodate students' differences in access to resources or necessary course materials. Respondents discussed declines in student attendance and commitment to school. This latter trend was often explained by a change in the district's grading policy meant to avoid penalizing students whose grades declined in a time of high stress and crisis. These trends motivated many teachers to adjust their practice and there were meaningful differences in the types of changes educators made related to the professional responsibilities they chose to emphasize or forgo. Analysis of teachers' goals resulted in teachers being categorized across five professional dispositions: Academic, Compliant, Counseling, Responsive, and Empowering (see Figure 4.2). Tables 4.2 and 4.3 detail the demographic make-up of each professional disposition type.

Figure 4.2 Percent of Professional Dispositions

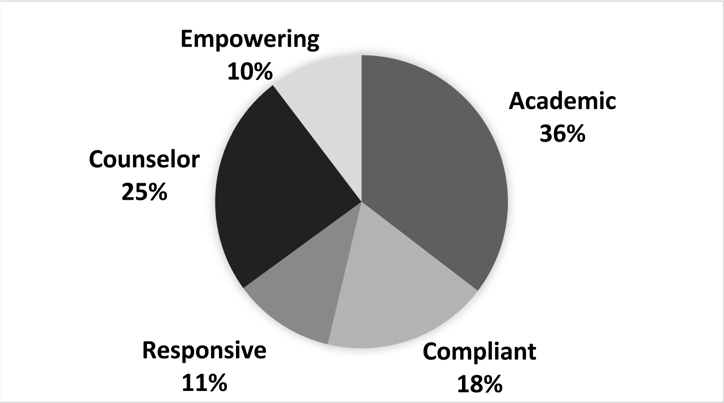

Table 4.2 Percent of Teacher Demographic Group within Professional Disposition Type

	Academic	Empowering	Compliant	Responsive	Counselor
All	35.4%	10.3%	18.3%	11.3%	24.7%
Teaching Experience					
1-3 Years	3.6%	3.5%	1.0%	6.5%	2.9%
4-6 Years	11.3%	7.0%	14.9%	6.5%	14.7%
7-9 Years	10.8%	22.8%	14.9%	14.5%	13.2%
10 + Years	74.4%	66.7%	69.3%	72.6%	69.1%
Race/Ethnicity					
White	53.4%	60.3%	56.5%	54.0%	53.4%
Latine	18.1%	12.1%	23.1%	23.8%	17.1%
Black/African American	20.1%	20.7%	13.0%	17.5%	18.5%
Multiracial	3.9%	3.4%	5.6%	1.6%	4.8%
Asian American/ Pacific Islander	3.9%	1.7%	1.9%	1.6%	4.8%
Middle Eastern/ North African	0.5%	-	-	-	1.4%
Native/Indigenous	-	1.7%	-	1.6%	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Subject Taught					
General Education	25.0%	24.6%	26.3%	17.6%	27.2%
ELA	11.9%	10.8%	13.6%	13.5%	15.0%
Social Studies	9.5%	10.8%	7.6%	12.2%	6.8%
Science	9.1%	9.2%	11.9%	12.2%	10.2%
Math	10.7%	7.7%	11.0%	10.8%	8.8%
Diverse Learner Educator	15.5%	18.5%	11.9%	12.2%	12.9%

Table 4.3 Percent of School Demographic Group in Each Professional Disposition Type

	Academic	Empowering	Compliant	Responsive	Counselor
All	35.4%	10.3%	18.3%	11.3%	24.7%
School Location					
Central, Near North, Near South Sides	8.2%	5.3%	5.0%	4.9%	7.4%
Far Northside	11.3%	15.8%	5.0%	18.0%	13.2%
Far Southside	10.3%	8.8%	8.0%	1.6%	4.4%
Far Southwest Side	2.6%	3.5%	5.0%	8.2%	4.4%
Northside	8.7%	10.5%	23.0%	11.5%	18.4%
Northwest Side	15.4%	22.8%	17.0%	11.5%	13.2%
South Side	7.2%	7.0%	7.0%	8.2%	7.4%
Southwest Side	19.0%	8.8%	16.0%	23.0%	21.3%
West and Near West Side	17.4%	17.5%	14.0%	13.1%	10.3%
School Racial/Ethnic Composition					
Mostly Latine	37.1%	33.3%	39.6%	49.2%	35.6%
Mostly Black	24.7%	19.3%	22.8%	18.0%	17.8%
Mostly White	6.2%	8.8%	9.9%	6.6%	12.6%
Mixed/Diverse	32.0%	38.6%	27.7%	26.2%	34.1%
Other					
School Socioeconomic Make-Up					
High-Need/Low Income	63.1%	57.9%	63.4%	74.2%	61.8%
Socioeconomically Diverse	32.3%	36.8%	30.7%	21.0%	31.6%
Affluent	4.6%	5.3%	5.9%	4.8%	6.6%
School Level					
Elementary (PreK-8)	67.2%	71.9%	74.7%	81.7%	77.3%
High School	32.8%	28.1%	25.3%	18.3%	22.7%

Type 1: Academic

Teachers placed in the *Academic* category emphasized making sure students continued learning. This group represented 35.4% of the sample. Compared to the overall sample demographics, academically focused educators included a greater proportion of Black educators and high school teachers. Elementary school teachers were underrepresented in this category. For this group of teachers, the objective was to make sure that regardless of challenge, students either covered the required standards or deeply engaged with topics covered prior to the transition.

Academic educators shared statements similar to the following: *"My goal was really just to keep students learning"* (35; White veteran teacher at a mostly Black low-income elementary school) and "*Goals changed. The focus became more about engagement and meeting academic goals." (458;* White veteran teacher at a mostly Latine socioeconomically diverse high school*)*. This meant instilling as much content as possible in order to make sure students knew the material necessary to succeed in the next grade: *"Obviously. I had to focus on the most essential skills to prepare them for the next level. The curriculum suffered major pruning." (40*; white veteran teacher at a mostly Latine socioeconomically diverse high school*).* However, as this teacher points out, in order to keep students learning teachers often had to pick and choose what to cover. It often did not seem possible to adequately cover all that had been initially planned:

> *"We definitely needed to pare down to the most important things to teach students this year. Since I also teach both math and science, my science instruction definitely decreased dramatically to make sure that the students got more time with math (the standardized-tested subject). Interpersonal/social-emotional/speaking/listening goals also went out the window due to time and technology constraints. Mostly, we focused on making sure that we were connecting with students and that they got a little bit of thinking time during the day. I started to just imagine the remote learning time more as enrichment than actual instruction, just because of the nature of everything: there wasn't really accountability for students (i.e., grades) and the focus was more on the ability to connect with other people and do a little brain-exercise while remaining safe. The priority was keeping kids safe and learning, and there was no way that the learning was going to be up to par with what they would normally get in sixth grade."* (177; White mid-career teacher at a racial/ethnically diverse low-income elementary school)

Academic teachers, such as the teacher quoted above, expressed that SEL was too difficult to engage in the virtual classroom. Therefore, they tended to simplify material and focus on meeting academic goals.

Aligned with the district recommendation to avoid introducing new material, many Academic teachers spent the end of the 2019-2020 school year strengthening students' mastery of topics previously covered:

> *"My goals shifted from delivering new content to trying to maintain the academic competences that we had achieved. This was partially due to the initial guidance that we'd be returning to schools. This was partially due to the inconsistent participation across my classes and the school as a whole. This was partially due to a lack of online tools and training to flip to remote learning."* (37; White mid-career teacher at a mostly Latine low-income high school).

Another teacher shared:

> *"Completely changed. I felt it is unethical and unprofessional to expect students to learn complex new material when access to the tech necessary was not available. Most of RL was about keeping what they had learned and adding new when the new was not too challenging. Learning is social. Impossible with the restrictions." (15*; White veteran teacher at a racial/ethnically diverse low-income elementary school*)*

For this teacher, the decision to avoid new material was not only about the challenges of teaching in the remote context, but also students' capacity. However, low student engagement made reinforcing academic learning difficult: *"Absolutely. I tried to keep up with teaching standards, but it was impossible. I felt that I couldn't reach my students." (26;* White veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school*).* Educators with academic professional dispositions understood their purpose as primarily focused on helping students learn and reinforcing that learning.

Type 2: Compliant

18.3% of respondents were labeled compliant. Teachers with compliant professional dispositions focused on students completing assignments, attending class, and following rules: "*My goals definitely changed. I was looking more for students to follow directions and do work independently than master the content at hand because that felt nearly impossible without being* *in the classroom."* (6; White Latine early career teacher at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school). As this teacher expressed, in the face of challenge, the desire for students to follow direction came before a desire to encourage learning. Often for compliant teachers, challenges associated with teaching remotely necessitated the shift to focusing on tasks and participation. Given that novice teachers were underrepresented amongst compliant educators, the shift to compliance may have been influenced by comfort with technology. Teachers likely found it difficult translate many of their practices to suit remote learning if they lacked familiarity with a variety of educational technological tools.

Due the difficulty of teaching in the virtual environment, educators lowered their expectations and instead of trying to keep students learning, focused on keeping students at least minimally engaged: *"The goals changed dramatically. I was disappointed because parents knew their child was going to pass whether they did the work or not. My goal change from teaching them how to learn, explore, question, and resolve to just keeping them on track to focus, not to look at their parents for the next step…" (272*; Asian veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school*)*. Compliant teachers stressed about students not engaging or investing the expected amount of effort during the remote learning period. The frustration compliant teachers expressed came not only from the seeming impossibility of quality teaching during emergency remote instruction, but also from a sense that the district changes to grading policy resulted in families being apathetic about school engagement. Therefore, educators with compliant professional dispositions were *"more focused on them participating than mastering a new skill"* (136; White veteran teacher at a mostly white affluent elementary school).

This was the key difference between compliant and academic-focused educators. For this type, control and routine are key aspects of classroom organization. The emphasis on making sure students showed up and turned in work resulted in efforts to increase engagement: *"My goals became more focused on them showing up and attempting to complete assignments than actually completing them well/ meeting standards. I tried to keep content in the lesson engaging, but it's difficult when there are so many barriers keeping students back" (34;* Latine novice educator at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school*).* For teachers with compliant dispositions, engagement was understood to mean participation and commitment to classroom practices and procedures.

Compliant educators emphasized task completion and compliance on behalf of their students but many were also compliant themselves, stating that their instruction would follow any district or administrative directives: "My goal is whatever CPS has as a goal" (22; Latine veteran teacher at a racial/ethnically diverse low-income elementary school). During this moment of instability and challenge, compliant educators held on to traditional and sure aspects of school.

Type 3: Counseling

In response to the stress and chaos of the pandemic, teachers who were labeled counselors put student mental health and well-being first and academics second:

> *"Though we did value socio-emotional growth of the students while we were in person before remote learning (advisory lessons, classroom contracts, etc), I feel that SEL became even more important while we were remote learning. Students wanted to "just talk" to me and/or the rest of the kids in the class, and I allowed time to do so at the beginning and end of each class period. I know some kids were feeling anxious not only about not being able to see their friends, but also what the virus was doing or could potentially do to them and/or family. I was very much a counselor to them during remote learning, and I learned a LOT more about their personal lives during that time (i.e. younger siblings "attending" class, bringing pets to the screen to show us all, etc). It was almost as though academic material took a step back and SEL took the spotlight." (*464; Multiracial veteran educator at a mostly Latine socioeconomically diverse elementary school)

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has been a priority of the Chicago Public Schools district for several years. The trickle-down of this effort was reflected in counselors' responses and was likely influential in making counselor the second most common professional disposition (24.7%). Counselors' demographics looked most like the sample.

Teachers with a counselor professional disposition often checked in with their students, reduced instruction, encouraged students to share their feelings, and increased the number of SEL lessons so as to help students cope with the emotional toll of living through crisis:

> *"With the remote period, it was simply about survival, and because it was unclear how long remote teaching would last, I sort of had a short-term focus instead of any long-term vision for the remainder of the year. Honestly, I found myself taking my students socioemotional needs into consideration more than ever, and so in that regard, the pandemic did help me to shift focus to what "matters." I still cared about them learning content, but I was thinking less about rigor and more about high engagement - what would students find interesting? I focused less on skill development because students wouldn't have my support as much to navigate challenging texts or get on-the-spot feedback on writing, etc." (214;* White mid-career teacher at a mostly Latine low-income high school*)*

This teacher clearly assesses the urgency of their usual responsibilities resolving to focus on students' social emotional needs and engagement in order to feel that they were adequately supporting and supporting. This understanding of engagement, as being interested, is different than that of compliant teachers who defined engagement as following rules and task participation.

For some teachers, this shift in focus, encouraged them to question concerns about students missing learning necessary to succeed in future grades:

> *Absolutely. I lowered my standards. All I cared about was that they were healthy and safe. Which is what I still believe. We say that kids should be at "this level" at a specific grade/age and we all know, everyone, even adults, meet certain standards at different ages. So I don't know why we are so worried about them 'falling behind' (31*; white veteran teacher at a mostly white affluent elementary school*).*

As reflected in the above quote, counselors repeatedly stated that their primary concern was about their students' well-being: "*My goal is for all of my students to be safe healthy and as happy as can be. This is always a goal of course but usually academics also plays more of a role" (4;* White early career teacher at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school*).* This desire to be sure students were "safe healthy and as happy as can be" was often related to students' home lives.

Recognition of digital inequities, challenging home situations, and the loss of family members encouraged counselors to become sources of support for students and their families. For many teachers, their focus on SEL was motivated by concern for student access to necessary materials and technology and the impact on students' ability to learn: *"I dropped all academic goals when we switched to remote learning. I had 19 students. For much of remote learning only half had devices and internet. The play field was broken. My entire focus was on how they are doing, and what do they and their families need" (13;* White early career teacher at a mostly Black low-income elementary school*).* This teacher's response acknowledges that without the traditional resources that schools provide—food, childcare, schools supplies, etc.—educating became a difficult and perhaps secondary task. As this educator emblematically stated: *Their socio-emotional well-being was at the top of my list as we shifted to [remote learning]. If a child's emotional and physical well-being isn't doing so well, how can we expect them to perform well in their academics? (42*; Latine novice teacher at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school*)*

Type 4: Responsive

Responsive teachers made up 11.3% of the sample and in their survey responses discussed trying to continuously adapt in order to meet students where they were. Novice and Latine teachers as well as teachers in mostly Latine, high needs, and/or elementary schools were over represented in the responsive category. Comparatively, teachers in mostly Black, socioeconomically diverse or secondary schools were underrepresented. Teachers in this category discussed repeatedly adjusting lesson plans or lessening academic demands based on student feedback or lack of adequate technology and support at home. Responsive teachers often reduced the amount of content or the complexity of the content introduced:

> *"My goals completely shifted into survival mode. I went from Science teacher that taught Social emotional learning once a week, or when an opportunity came up, to a Social-Emotional teacher that supported her students' routines with Science lessons. Academically I tried to challenge students, but as soon as one reached out because they were stressed, confused, overwhelmed, worried... it was back off the learning. Focus on the emotion, talk it (or write it) through and reach out to parent and social worker as needed. I am not worried about the academics as much as I am worried about the mental health. My goal still is to take care of my "kids"… They are a part of my heart so they are not just students. My goal is to keep these babies safe and know that someone cares about them first, and their ability to learn second." (21;* White veteran teacher at a mostly Latine socioeconomically diverse elementary school*)*

This disposition differed from the others in that responsive teachers' responses were about student need and explicitly about how understanding of student need determined teachers' instructional choices. While academics and counselors were inclined to focus on learning and emotional well-being, respectively, responsive educators were open to both.

Similar to counselors, responsive teachers appreciated not having to focus on preparing students for standardized tests and suggested that this freedom allowed them to focus on students' other needs: "*The stress of having to teach to a test and being evaluated on those scores went away. Instead, I focused on the holistic needs of my students"* (29; White early career teacher at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school). Responsive educators discussed adjusting their expectations and working to attend to “the whole child”: *“[My goals changed] drastically. I had to choose the most important concepts and trim the fat off unit plans. Had to be more mindful of the whole child (what’s happening at home) as to mot be an insensitive teacher with my agenda for learning. I had to learn a ton of new programs in a short span to do my job” (163;* Black veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school*).* This educator, as well as the one quoted above, were focused on keeping students learning, but were attentive to students’ emotional well-being so that they could “back of the learning” and increase emotional engagement when students were overwhelmed. This sometimes meant taking different approaches with different groups of students:

> *“With my juniors, since they had more responsibility in their households, I did a lot of SEL activities and focused many of the assignments around what they needed. I found that helped to get more involvement. With my freshmen I posted multiple videos showing different ways to think about the content and asked for more writing so they could explain their thoughts I covered most of the content I would have covered in the classroom, but not as deeply.” (242;* White veteran teacher at a mostly Black low-income high school*)*

Acknowledging that students had responsibilities at home, this educator negotiated between students’ academic and social emotional needs. Responsive educators’ instructional choices were motivated by a student-directed and dynamic understanding of student need and capacity for engagement.

Type 5: Empowering

Focused on student empowerment, educators in the final category found and created opportunities for students to be agents and develop self-regulation skills. Empowering educators made up 10.3% of educators. Black teachers were overrepresented in this category and teachers at low income schools were underrepresented. Respondents that taught Math and ELA, subjects critical to standardized tests, were also underrepresented in this category. As an immediate response to the shift to remote learning, empowering educators sought to ensure that students had the skills to successfully participate in the virtual classroom: *"My goals have shifted toward ensuring they know how to use technology, research, communicate with me, and develop a schedule for completing things assigned during e learning" (7;* Black veteran teacher at a mostly Black low-income high school*).* Related lessons included practicing typing, developing time management skills, learning how to use computer programs, and enhancing executive functions. Although non-academic, empowering educators saw these skills as foundational to academic learning.

Since they were promoting foundational skills that facilitated academic learning, educators felt it was appropriate to move away from academics. Empowering educators recognized that students needed support to in order to become confident learners that were engaged in their own academic careers:

> *"My goals in the classroom are to foster academically successful, confident young leaders who can advocate for themselves and take ownership over their own learning. My goal during remote learning was to make each child feel seen and emotionally supported. I wanted students to develop executive functioning skills so that they could engage in remote learning, but had few other academic goals." (211;* Latine mid-career teacher at a racial/ethnically diverse low-income elementary school*)*

Using the survey question on goals to consider their future goals, another educator shared:

> *"I think my goals this year are going to be simplified. I am going to focus on fewer math skills and content and try to feel less rushed to cover everything. I am also going to work on building students' ability to self-motivate and advocate for what they need. In remote learning, I noticed some students who had no qualms emailing me questions or asking me to make a video explaining a concept, whereas others never reached out. I knew this when we taught in the classroom but it became even more clear remotely, the students who learned the most content, were the ones who asked for what they needed" (431;* Black veteran teacher at a racial/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse elementary school)

Without the kinds of cues that are visible in the classroom gauging student understanding was difficult. As a result, students needed to take initiative and ask for clarity. For this educator, the shift to remote emphasized their responsibility to encourage students who did not feel comfortable or confident enough to ask for help or express a need. Empowering educators saw these skills as ones that would enable to students to navigate their new isolated situations and future responsibilities:

> *"Typically, my goals for students revolve around their educational growth. I want their math skills to improve. I want them to see themselves as capable and competent mathematicians. I want their math anxiety to go away, or at least decrease. This pandemic shifted those goals. For some of my students- the ones with supportive families, who didn't get sick, who had parents still able to pay the bills- these goals remained. For many others, however the goals were around stress reduction and coping skills. I wanted my students to make a plan for how they could care for their siblings, and not neglect themselves. I wanted them to know they had a support system, even when it felt like they didn't" (194;* White mid-career teacher at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school*).*

The objectives for student empowerment went beyond the educational goals. In this moment, teachers in this category wanted to help students recognize and take ownership of their agency with regard to their learning and their lives outside of school. Towards this end, empowering educators hoped that the skills and knowledge they passed on helped build students confidence and understanding of their own power: *"It just makes me double down on what I was trying to do: uplift student voice. But now the stakes are even higher" (62*; White mid-career teacher at a racial/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse high school*).* Overall, educators in this category understood their purpose as one that enabled students to thrive: *"While education is multidimensional I am very clear that my job is to teach my students so that they can thrive in the world however that may be." (65;* White veteran teacher at a mostly Latine low-income elementary school*).*

Interpreting Purpose

Although many compliant educators may have shifted into that category due to the new challenges associated with remote education, most educators' responses suggest the pressure of the moment encouraged them to focus on the aspects of school they found most important. Their shifts in practice, therefore, reflect their understandings of both student need and their responsibilities to their students. Academics understood this responsibility as a requirement to find ways to make sure students learned, while counselors interpreted their role to be one of social-emotional support. Empowering educators felt a responsibility to supply their students with the skills necessary to be independent learners and responsive educators understood their role to be to meet students wherever they were. Finally, despite any limitations, compliant educators understood the base requirement of their professional responsibility to maintain connections between schools and students. This group of teachers also importantly saw the importance of routine and stability in a moment of crisis. Additionally, the subjects that teachers taught seemed to impact the responsibilities they held on to. High stakes subjects, those tested on standardized tests, were more likely to have academic teachers and least likely to have empowering teachers. In turn, social studies teachers, a subject not included on state tests, were more likely to be responsive educators and less likely to be compliant. This suggests the pressure associated with high stakes subjects may disallow teachers to be as considerate of student circumstance even in times of crisis.

Discussion

Regardless of the challenges of teaching during a pandemic, teachers continued to work for and with their students after schools closed. Collectively, teachers held to institutional commitments, engaging students in academic content and skill building, despite reduced surveillance and reinforcement. However, through this study I reveal the deviations in how educators prioritized various aspects of schooling. Disrupting traditional school routines and practices created an opportunity for teachers to use their own professional prowess to provide students with what they felt were the most appropriate and necessary immediate services. Across all dispositions, teachers' approaches were aimed at increasing or maintaining student engagement. However, the differences in tactics suggest that there is neither common understanding of what student engagement looks like nor how to develop it.

Through a practice of pedagogical triage, teachers decided whether to reduce academic content, social emotional learning, or deep engagement. These changes were motivated by desires to maintain or increase engagement, meet student need, and navigate the challenges the remote classroom. For some teachers, effective teaching felt impossible while for others remote learning prohibited social emotional development. Academics kept students learning, compliant educators kept students working, counselors made sure students were mentally and emotionally well, responsive educators adapted, and empowering educators made sure students had the skills and confidence necessary to engage in all of the above. In combination, these professional dispositions described in this study represent the various developmental services we ask schools to provide.

Labeling and categorizing may seem counterintuitive to an emphasis on teacher diversity and agency. However, the above six categories are of course not mutually exclusive. The objective of a typology of professional dispositions is not to create absolute types but to begin to consider the variety of ways that teachers shape students' development through their dispositions and corresponding priorities. Understanding such typologies can assist in understanding institutional agents as they take up, interpret, and interact with organizational and institutional demands. Additionally, inhabited institutionalism encourages consideration of how institutional agents of various dispositions might interact and influence each other.

In Bell and Smith's (Bell & Smith, 2021) study on the impact of street-level bureaucrats' role perception on navigating administrative burden, the authors propose that holistic client focused roles can complement more efficiency focused role types to produce greater program access and client satisfaction. That is, by including and recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of individuals that support and prioritize client well-being and satisfaction in connection with those whose detachment ensure compliance, client-oriented programs may actually become more effective: "Together, however, these two role perceptions my serve to alleviate the psychological, learning, and compliance barriers that clients face in their interactions with the state" (p. 29-30). This benefit of interaction and collaboration may also be true for teachers.

Following crisis or disaster, teachers are often asked, implicitly or explicitly, to become counselors (Alisic, 2012; Williams, 2006). Alisic (2012) suggests that for many students experiencing trauma, exposing trauma repeatedly throughout the day may be burdensome. Therefore, it may be that teachers with compliant and academic dispositions provide a kind of respite. Other studies have also proposed that the kind of routine and order compliant and many academic educators seek can help create a sense of stability for youth (Ray & Hocutt, 2016). Experienced in collaboration with teachers who do choose to focus on SEL, it may be that together the various teacher types can all serve to support students in moving through crisis and trauma.

The teachers profiled in this paper reflect many of the trends revealed in several prior explorations of teachers' practices in response to crisis (Alisic et al., 2012; Alvarez, 2010; Gay, 2007; Ray & Hocutt, 2016; Singleton, 2001) However, in contrast to those the large sample used in this paper reveals the diversity in teachers' responses and approaches. Future research should examine the effects of particular dispositions on student outcomes or examine the organizational influences on teachers' instructional choices. Future studies should also explore whether students experiencing trauma benefit from contact with teachers of diverse dispositions. That is, does having a counselor teacher that develops coping skills at the same time as a compliant one that might distract students from trauma produce different educational outcomes than if a student had only one of those educators? Additionally, given that younger students tend to primarily be in contact with one general education educator, it may also be that intentional collaboration across professional dispositions will benefit efforts to provide students with more holistic educational environments.

In this paper, I show that teachers differently prioritized their responsibilities in performing pedagogical triage. The five professional dispositions profiled reveals just a few of the many responsibilities that teachers are tasked with. Given that only academics were primarily focused on learning standards, we might also question national concerns around learning loss over missed opportunities to develop self-regulatory, coping, or social skills. In attempting to engage with these larger questions, we should consider the ways that schools, epitomizing an institutional model with loosely coupled interactions might benefit from encouraging greater teacher-to-teacher social interaction and enhanced understanding of teachers' perspectives of student need.

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5. CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have detailed a few of the numerous adjustments that teachers had to make in order for school to continue after the disruptions of pandemic, racial violence, and civil unrest. Teachers made negotiations in relation to their students that impacted their practice, pedagogy, and curriculum.

First, I showed that despite the physical distance and coldness of remote learning platforms, a subset of teachers was able to maintain and even grow relationships with their students. By increasing students' sense of their accessibility and availability these teachers were able to generate social presence (Öztok & Kehrwald, 2017; Shin, 2002; Song et al., 2016). I identified three mechanisms through which teachers were able to tend to their relationships with their students: increased individualization and attention to emotional well-being, more holistic understandings of students, and a diversity of methods of engagement. Using these strategies, teachers learned about their students' lives and characters in ways they did not in the classroom. Significantly, these mechanisms allowed teachers to develop vulnerability and intimacy which likely helped students cope with fear and complex emotions related to the pandemic and the murder of George Floyd.

In the second paper, I adapted Sondel et al.'s (Sondel et al., 2018) pedagogy of political trauma in order to develop a *racialized pedagogy of political trauma* in order to examine teachers' plans for lessons on race, racial injustice, and racism. I argued that Black students and students of marginalized identities are constantly experiencing political trauma that warrants continuous and deep curricular engagements with race and racism. I found that teachers that planned to teach about race and racial injustice generally took three approaches: Emotional, Exposure, or Active. Most teachers chose exposure approaches which tended to avoid engaging students' emotions and personal narratives. Such approaches, although they may provide an entry point for racial literacy development, also fell short of empowering students to take action and develop their civic identities. Emotional engagement is critical to disrupting racism in US, because although it is systemic, its impacts have personal consequences. Creating space for exploring emotions and personal narratives also validates the experiences and knowledges of students of color, aiding in the humanization of their educational experiences (Gibbs, 2021; Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Moll et al., 1992; Paris, 2012). The goals of a racialized pedagogy of political trauma go beyond the development of racial literacy. By integrating elements of Critical Race Pedagogy, the approaches it requires provide material suggestions for the development of an affirming, humanizing and transformational pedagogy (Cammarota & Romero, 2006; Salazar, 2013)

Finally, the third paper revealed the kinds of pedagogical adaptations and prioritization teachers made in response to the shift to remote instruction using a framework of *pedagogical triage*. This paper reveals that as teachers scrambled to put together or adapt lessons, they attended to different aspects of their professional responsibilities and student need. Across the three papers we see the benefits of flexibility and a willingness for teachers to respond to students' needs. Paper three, specifically, reveals and codifies the variation in *bricolage* (Campbell, 2018). The five *professional dispositions* each focused on different of student need. Collectively, the dispositions represent the numerous responsibilities required of teachers—developing social emotional skills (counselor), facilitating content learning and mastery (academic), teaching independence and life skills (empowering), instituting of schedules, routines, and rules (compliant), and attending to student circumstances (responsive). I argue that each of the professional disposition types has there benefit and emphasize the potential in thinking of teaching as a collaborative process.

Combining the analyses from all three papers, shows that teachers of all dispositional types were able to improve relationships as well as engaged in active pedagogical techniques related to race and racism (see Table 5.1). These data also show that these dispositions are not absolute. That is, although counselors are more likely to have improved relationships with their students, they are not necessarily inclined to engage emotional approaches to teaching race and racism. Future research should further explore these complexities and consider which factors might encourage or depress particular pedagogical tendencies, such as care for emotional well-being. It may be that although counselors were concerned with students' social emotional well-being overall, they did not find teaching about racial violence appropriate due to their tendency to be elementary and early grade teachers. Or perhaps they are always already engaging student emotions and so left that aspect of their plan unmentioned. Interestingly, academics were over represented amongst educators using emotional approaches as well as those seeking support. Their insecurity around how to academically approach racial injustice and civil unrest, but checking in on how students were feeling was manageable.

Table 5.1 Professional Dispositions by Pedagogical Approach or Improved Relationship

	All	Emotional Approaches	Exposure Approaches	Active Approaches	Seeking Support	Improved Relationships
Academic	35.4%	42.4%	30.9%	30.5%	38.3%	35.7%
Empowering	10.3%	4.5%	6.9%	13.3%	11.7%	10.0%
Compliant	18.3%	15.2%	17.0%	14.3%	16.7%	10.0%
Responsive	11.3%	15.2%	13.3%	13.3%	10.0%	14.3%
Counselor	24.7%	22.7%	31.9%	28.6%	23.3%	30.0%

Several trends emerged across the three analyses which highlight the importance of emotions in the classroom. In both papers two and three, teachers appeared less likely to mention integrating and acknowledging students' emotions and social emotional well-being as students aged. This trend needs to be further explored. Although they are commonly understood aspects of early childhood education settings, relationality, vulnerability, and intimacy are also critical for older students as they continue to learn how to relate to their peers and themselves. As discussed throughout this dissertation, allowing emotions into the classroom creates space for students to process complex or difficult feelings related to racism, national crisis, and political trauma and dream of new potential futures (Zembylas, 2007). Finally, emotional engagement has also proven to be a protective factor against drop out and allows students to feel connected to and supported by the school organization rather isolated from it (M. Wang & Fredricks, 2014; M.-T. Wang, Brinkworth, & Eccles, 2013).

All three papers emphasize the importance of strong-teacher student relationships. Strong teacher-student relationships can promote teachers' feelings of self-efficacy and emotional engagement in students. In the first paper, this allowed teachers to have an often surprisingly positive experience teaching remotely. Strong relationships also help to develop trust, a necessary element to engaging in productive conversations about racial injustice and racial violence. Teachers also must establish a basic level of understanding of their students in order to accurately assess their needs, whether academic or emotional.

Despite all that it reveals, this content of this dissertation evokes an important question: How, if at all, will the experience of remote teaching and teaching through crisis impact how teachers return to the classroom? This was the question that initiated this project. However, with continued disruption over the two years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and a surge in efforts to restrict students' exposure to the realities of race and racism and LGBTQIA+ and explicitly trans experiences it will take time for us to answer it. My aim in crafting this dissertation was not only to establish a baseline from which we can answer the above question, but more importantly to establish a positive narrative about teachers during a critical moment. Integral to this document is an appreciation of teachers and educators and respect for the many hats we require they wear.

This dissertation serves to disrupt the commonly critical and disparaging discourse around teachers in both popular media and education research. Although we can acknowledge that many teachers make choices that are harmful to students—Black, Indigenous, transgender, and disabled students in particular—we also must acknowledge the structural and cultural influences that restrict, impact, and shape the teaching profession. Such structural influences include: the conception of schools as institutions of social reproduction and therefore proliferators of white normativity; teacher education programs that lack programs in trauma responsiveness, culturally sustaining pedagogy, or talking about race and racism with students; and societal pressure on high stakes standardized testing which reduces emphasis on deep learning. If we consider influential systems and structures beyond the individuals in the classroom, we can witness the skill in negotiating organizational demands, institutional responsibilities, and understandings of student need and recognize teachers as experts of their craft.

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APPENDIX

Qualitative Survey Protocol (Summer 2020)

Following are a series of demographic questions about you and your school.

1. Where is your school located?
    a. Far Northside (i.e. Rogers Park, Lincoln Square, Albany Park…)
    b. Northside (i.e. Lakeview, Logan Square…)
    c. Northwest side (i.e. Portage Park, Hermosa…)
    d. Central, Near North, and Near South Side (i.e. River North, The Loop, Dearborn Park…)
    e. West and Near West side (i.e. Humboldt Park, Garfield Park, North Lawndale, South Lawndale, Pilsen…)
    f. Southwest side (i.e. Brighton Park, West Lawn, Englewood…)
    g. Far Southwest (i.e. Ashburn, Washington Heights, Beverly…)
    h. South side (i.e. Bronzeville, Hyde Park, Greater Grand Crossing…)
    i. Far South side (i.e. Chatham, Calumet Heights, Pullman…)
2. How many years have you been teaching?
    a. 1-3 years
    b. 4-6 years
    c. 7-9 years
    d. 10+
3. What grade(s)/level do you teach?
    a. Pre-K-3
    b. 4-5
    c. 6-8
    d. 9-12
4. What subject(s) do you teach?
    a. General Education Classroom
    b. ELA
    c. Math
    d. Science
    e. Social Studies/Civics
    f. Special Education/Self-Contained Classroom
    g. Other (text box)
5. How do you identify among the following? (choose all that apply)
    a. Black/African American
    b. White
    c. Hispanic/Latinx
    d. Asian/Pacific Islander
    e. Native American/Indigenous
    f. Middle Eastern/North African
    g. Multiracial
    h. Other (text box)
6. How would you describe the racial/ethnic make-up of your school?
    a. Mostly white
    b. Mostly Black
    c. Mostly Latinx

    d. Mixed/Diverse
    e. Other (text box)
7. How would you describe the socioeconomic make-up of your school?
    a. Affluent
    b. Socioeconomically Diverse
    c. High-Need/Low Income

The following section includes short answer questions to capture your perspective, experiences, and opinions of the relationship between your teaching practice and current events. We appreciate you sharing honestly and openly.

8. How would you describe the transition to remote learning? What challenges have you encountered?
9. Think about your role and responsibilities as a teacher before and after the transition to remote learning. How would you describe your relationships with your students while remote teaching as compared to when you met with them in a classroom?
10. Think about your goals for your students this academic year. Did they change at all with the shift to remote learning?
11. Many anticipate that when schools re-open teachers will have to respond to the variety of ways that the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures, and recent civil unrest may have impacted students. Please rank your top three (3) concerns about schools reopening amongst the following:
    a. Student Learning Loss
    b. Differentiation/Attending to gaps in prior year coverage
    c. Reacclimation of students to school environment
    d. Staffing Challenges/Shortages
    e. Student Mental and Emotional Health
    f. Teacher Wellness, Health, and Safety
    g. Potential Continuation of Distance/Remote Learning
    h. Following CDC safety guidelines in the classroom
    i. Confronting death and loss with students
    j. Funding/Resource cuts and shortages
    k. Other (Please Specify)
12. What adjustments do you think your school will need to make to respond to those concerns?
13. What adjustments do you think you will need to make in your classroom to respond to those concerns?
14. Do you plan to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic with your students?
    a. Yes
    b. Maybe/Not Sure
    c. No
15. If yes or maybe, why do you think it is important to cover this topic?
    a. How do you plan to incorporate information and lessons about the pandemic in your classroom?
16. If no, why is this topic not relevant to your classroom?

17. Do you plan to discuss recent issues of police violence and civil unrest (i.e. protests, Black Lives Matter movement, calls for and against reform of police) with your students?
    a. Yes
    b. Maybe/Not Sure
    c. No
18. If yes or maybe, why do you think it is important to cover this topic?
    a. How do you plan to incorporate information and lessons about police violence and civil unrest in your classroom?
19. If no, why is this topic not relevant to your classroom?
20. Would you be willing to be contacted for further questioning over the phone or Zoom?
    a. If yes, text box for email address