

An Investigation on School-Based YPAR Initiatives: Examining the Impacts of Teachers'
Attitudes and Practices

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Vanessa.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examined how teacher attitudes and practices and the role of a participant observer impacted school-based Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) initiatives. Typically, YPAR initiatives have been conducted after-school or in community settings and recently some researchers have begun collaborating with teachers to integrate YPAR into classroom settings. Previous work has alluded to certain teacher attitudes and practices impacting this issue of power sharing between youth and teachers. As such, the first objective of this dissertation examined how teacher expectations, teacher-student relationships, teachers' classroom management, and teacher power impact their facilitation during school-based YPAR initiatives. Also in this body of YPAR work, researchers have encouraged taking on the role of a participant observer. Providing technical support to novice adult facilitators, teachers in this case, allows for them to feel more comfortable when facilitating a YPAR initiative with their students. As a first phase for my dissertation, I engaged in pilot work that attempted to integrate YPAR into a school setting. In this pilot study phase, I noticed that the teacher I worked with relied heavily on my assistance when implementing a YPAR initiative with his students to a degree that seemed to jeopardize the integrity of the initiative. Thus, the second objective of this dissertation examined how taking on a participant observer role impacted teachers facilitation during a school-based YPAR initiative. Using ethnographic methods, I conducted case studies in two classrooms with teachers who implemented YPAR initiatives with their students. With the use of observational, formal and informal

interviews, my findings revealed that the two teachers attitudes and practices and my role as a participant observer impacted their facilitation of a YPAR initiative on varying levels and to different degrees. Limitations and implications from the current study are also presented to inform future work on school-based YPAR initiatives.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Denise: ...well I feel that the school's gonna do what it's gonna do and I feel that you know, sometimes I just feel like I just need to stay in my place...like you know I should like...I'm only a 6th grader.

~6th grade student at MBTA

Gina: ...I mean like people always look at me as a kid 'cause I'm young. Like I don't really think a lot of people take me serious that's why when I want to do something I ask my momma for help, 'cause they would take her more serious than me. Like they be like 'oh she just a kid, she really don't know what she talking about' and stuff like that...

~10th grade student at MBTA

The above excerpts are responses from two students interviewed for my dissertation when asked why they decided not to speak out about concerns they had with their school. These two excerpts spotlight an underlying civic educational issue in this country. For at least three decades it seems as if civic education has taken a back seat in school curricula (Levinson, 2010). Much of the current emphasis has been placed on mathematics, science, and reading. And while these subjects are essential to every student's education, I think there also needs to be an emphasis on civic education because young people will ultimately be the ones to sustain our society and the global community. Providing adolescents with the necessary knowledge about the democratic process as well as opportunities for them to be involved with civic activities will help develop youth into informed, active, and responsible adult citizens (Kaskie et al., 2008; Gunn & Lucaites, 2010). Additionally, research suggests that youth civic participation is

associated with positive developmental outcomes such as the development of citizenship, prosocial behaviors, as well as social skills (e.g., Youniss et al., 2002; Balsano, 2005; Duke et al., 2009). Furthermore, this body of work discusses the many benefits that communities receive (e.g., gaining resources and services) as a result of youth civic participation (Balsano, 2005).

Given the implications of civic education and political involvement for young people in America and its importance for our society, researchers have identified a civic empowerment gap amongst young people that needs to be addressed. This gap is most pronounced between white and minority youth, more specifically between African Americans and Whites. African American youth and other youth of color from under-resourced backgrounds demonstrate lower levels of civic and political knowledge and participation than their White and wealthier peers (Levinson, 2007). In a chapter by Meira Levinson (2010), which I plan to elaborate on in detail in chapter 2, she discusses several factors that contribute to this civic empowerment gap, in addition to “five essential reforms” for civic education. She places a strong emphasis on involving minority youth in civic activities so that they’re exposed to opportunities to learn how to effectively address structural and political issues that impact their lives as well as the people around them.

Purpose of the Current Study

My dissertation attempts to further explore the civic empowerment gap by integrating Youth Participatory Action research into an urban school setting. Youth participatory action research (YPAR) is a technique that provides youth the opportunity to participate civically within their schools and communities. With the assistance of

adults typically as facilitators, YPAR is a social science and advocacy-based approach that aids young people in thinking critically and tackling structural, individual and group level disparities that affect them, their peers, and/or their communities (Schensul et al., 2004). YPAR is especially appropriate for disenfranchised youth because it helps them develop a greater voice in shaping community level socio-political, cultural, educational, and public health matters (Schensul et al., 2004). Previous literature proposes that young people involved with YPAR activities increase their chances of gaining psychosocial, math, literacy and science skills, essential knowledge about their specific topic, greater insight into the justice system, and a belief that together they can make a difference (Schensul et al., 2004). This body of work also suggests that through YPAR young people are given the opportunity to think critically about real world issues which can make learning meaningful to students. Furthermore, this work has indicated that positive relationships can develop between students, teachers and parents and can be sustainable over time. For example, safe spaces can be created through involvement with YPAR in which trust is developed between both parties. Moreover, adults can serve as a mentor to youth and youth can help adults implement a new approach to dealing with issues (e.g. using new and advanced technology).

More often than not, YPAR studies are conducted either in after-school or community settings (Wilson et al., 2007; Kohfeldt et al., 2011). However, some researchers have begun to integrate YPAR into school curriculum because of the way in which it engages young people in inquiry-based learning that challenges and motivates them to problem solve (Berg, 2004; Phillips et al., 2010). One major objective of YPAR is for young people to lead a research project and exercise power throughout all phases of

the project (e.g., identifying the problem, developing a research plan, data collection, and taking action for change). Adults involved serve as facilitators providing assistance in developing young people's skills, such as training youth in various research methods, guidance for time management, and assisting with conflict resolutions. Despite the primary goal of YPAR being youth-led, many researchers have reported power sharing between youth researchers and adult facilitators as a problem in some phases of the YPAR process (e.g. Ozer, Ritterman, Wanis, 2010; Phillips et al., 2010). Because YPAR is an approach that promotes youth voice and leadership, and because schools are traditionally hierarchical and adult-led institutions, some work has recently taken a closer look at this power sharing issue between youth researchers and adult-facilitators in school-based YPAR initiatives. For example, Emily Ozer and colleagues (2013) investigated several questions regarding middle school students' autonomy when participating in a YPAR initiative in a daily elective class in school. The authors reported that even though participating students experienced some power constraints during the "problem selection" and "action steps" phases, "students did manage to experience meaningful power" throughout the other phases of the project (Ozer et al., 2013). The authors also go on to state that the adult facilitators (e.g. teachers) reported feeling compelled to persuade students to tackle issues they felt would align with the interests of the "administrators or other stakeholders" at the school (Ozer et al., 2013). Ozer and colleagues conclude by stating that their current work highlights strategies used by both students and teachers to maximize students' autonomy when participating in YPAR initiatives.

This body of work also encourages researchers to take on the role of a participant observer when collaborating with novice adult facilitators (Berg, 2004). Considering YPAR will be a new approach to these adult facilitators, being present to provide technical support can put them a little more at ease and make them feel comfortable when implementing a YPAR initiative. As a participant observer, any questions from the adult facilitators can be answered; help with lesson planning can be provided; in addition to assisting as a co-facilitation if any aspects of the project become overwhelming to the adult facilitator.

As a first phase for my dissertation, I engaged in pilot work that attempted to integrate YPAR into a high school setting. This helped to shape my dissertation. In this pilot study phase I worked with a high school teacher in a college town in the Midwest to investigate and understand why minority students either did not sign up to take or dropped out of AP or AC (advanced placement/accelerated), in addition to what factors contributed to minority students successfully completing AP or AC courses. There were three major issues I noticed from my pilot work. The first was how essential my role as a participant observer was for the teacher facilitating the project. The teacher I worked with for the pilot study required a great deal of assistance facilitating the different activities with his students, because he did not feel completely confident implementing this YPAR technique with his students. Secondly, I noticed that the relationships the teacher had with his students and the discipline strategies used in his class impacted the YPAR initiative with his students. Lastly, the limited autonomy he was able to exercise in his classroom presented an issue of power sharing between him and his students. Due to outside barriers, such as time-constraints and course requirements, many of the major

decisions that were to be made by the students were made by the facilitating teacher. This negatively impacted student engagement during the project. In the second phase of my dissertation work, I explore these key points to better understand how certain teacher attitudes and practices impact school-based YPAR initiatives in addition to how taking on the role of a participant observer can also impact a school-based YPAR initiative.

The current study will investigate this issue of power sharing by looking more closely at adult facilitators, in this case classroom teachers, who have teamed up with a university researcher to introduce YPAR to their students. While reading through the literature on YPAR in schools, much of the work discusses the process of doing such work with teachers and students, in addition to constraints or tensions experienced during the project (e.g. Ozer, Ritterman, & Wanis, 2010; Phillips et al., 2010; Kohfeldt et al., 2011). However, I did not find any work that took a close look at the adult facilitators (i.e., teachers) implementing YPAR initiatives with students. I think taking a closer look at teachers can help to further understand why power sharing between teachers and students reports to be a problem in many school-based YPAR studies. Furthermore, I investigate the ways in which taking on a participant observer role impact school-based YPAR initiatives. To do this, two research questions are addressed:

1. In what ways do teachers' attitudes and practices impact their facilitation during a school-based YPAR initiative?
2. How can taking on a participant observer role impact a teacher's facilitation in a school-based YPAR initiative?

Scholars have examined a plethora of factors that impact student learning in school, and within that literature there have been a number of teacher attitudes and practices investigated. However, for this study I will investigate teacher expectations, teacher-

student relationships, classroom management, and teacher power because these were four teacher attitudes and practices that presented issues during my pilot work.

Organization of the Dissertation

In chapter 2, I will review literature relevant to my current study. I will begin with reviewing theoretical frameworks related to YPAR, and highlight the Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker's (2010) Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment (TYPE) framework that will help guide my work. I will then provide definitions of the teacher attitudes and practices I plan to investigate; after which I discuss these teacher attitudes and practices in regards to how the issue of power sharing could arise in various phases of a YPAR initiative. To conclude, I will discuss the method of participant observations, and how important taking on this role can be for implementing a YPAR initiative.

Chapter 3 will outline my research methodology. I will begin by discussing the pilot study that helps to inform my current study. I will give an overview of my dissertation design and discuss my decision to use a participant-observer approach for my study. Next, I will revisit the study objectives and research questions. I will continue by providing a detailed description of the research site; participants involved with my study; and my procedure for entering into the school site and training the teachers, as well as an overview of the students' projects. I will conclude by discussing my data collection, data sources, and data analysis.

In chapter 4 I will discuss the major findings of my study. I start off by restating my research questions and providing a table summarizing definitions for each teacher attitude and practice, and give examples of how both teachers demonstrated each in their

classrooms before and during their students YPAR initiatives. Then I will provide my interpretation of the research findings as they relate to my research questions.

Chapter 5 focuses on researcher effects in my current study. I will discuss my role as a participant observer in both classrooms, in addition to how this role impacted my project. I will use interview and observational data to support this discussion.

Finally, in chapter 6 I will summarize the findings and revisit this issue of power sharing by discussing my findings in relation to the theoretical framework that helped to guide my work. Finally, I will discuss the implications of the current work, and provide recommendations for researcher and teachers seeking to implement school-based YPAR initiatives with youth in the future.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

In my first chapter I provided a brief overview of Meira Levinson's (2010) chapter which talks about a civic empowerment gap that exists between minority students and white students. I will begin this chapter 2 by discussing her work in further detail because it lays a foundation and rationale as to why I chose to integrate YPAR into a classroom setting.

Earlier I mentioned that Levinson discussed several factors in her chapter that contribute to the civic empowerment gap. Her first argument is that there is a lack of civic knowledge among African American students. Previous research has highlighted racial and class differences in civic knowledge and engagement such that white and higher-income students are more likely to score significantly higher on tests than low-income students of color (Baldi et al., 2001). Additionally, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reports that African American elementary, middle and high school students performed significantly lower than their White counterparts on standardized tests of civic knowledge in 2006 (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, & National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007). Furthermore, a recent 2010 NAEP report indicated that this is a continued gap between African American and White American students (NAEP, 2011).

Secondly, she posits that young Whites have more positive attitudes towards civic participation than do young African Americans. For example, in a study that included young (ages 15 to 25) Latinos, African Americans, and Whites, researchers reported a significant difference between African Americans and Whites with regard to their beliefs about whether they could make a difference in solving problems within their community; African Americans were less likely to believe they could make such a difference (Lake Snell Perry & Associates & The Tarrance Group, 2002).

Finally, Levinson (2010) argues that there is a difference in participation in civic activities by minority youth. For example, Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) reported that young Latinos were less involved in civic activities (e.g. volunteering, membership in any group or organization, or attending a community meeting) than Whites or African Americans. They also reported that young African American adults were less likely to participate in “insider” activities (e.g. campaign donations) and more likely to participate in “outsider” activities (e.g. protests) than young White adults (see also Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996). I speculate that these reports could be due to minority youth lacking exposure to civic activities. Balsano (2005) along with other researchers posit that when adolescents witness significant adult figures participating in civic activities, adolescents are more likely to also participate in civic activities (Yates & Youniss, 1996).

Levinson (2010) concludes her chapter by providing “five essential reforms” that she thinks can help alleviate this civic empowerment gap among poor urban minority students. She first suggests a commitment to improving urban schools and reducing the dropout rate by improving the quality of urban schools (e.g. better/and more resources for the school); secondly, she recommends restoring civic education to school curricula by

offering more civic courses for students to take in addition to resources for these courses; third, Levinson proposes to reform history education so that students are able and encouraged to bring their lived experiences to school and relate them to what is in history books so that they can co-construct their learning and make it more meaningful; her fourth recommendation is for schools to provide opportunities for students to engage in empowering practices such as participating in classroom and school elections, mock trials, discussing controversial issues, or participatory action research; lastly, she suggests that urban teachers should also be provided with civic learning and opportunities at schools so that they too have the chance to gain civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes that in turn can be used to motivate and teach their students to become active civically.

My dissertation will aim to address the fourth of Levinson's (2010) "five essential reforms" for urban schools by integrating this YPAR technique into an urban school setting. In the following sections my literature review will have three objectives. The first will be to highlight key conceptual and theoretical frameworks related to YPAR and discuss the theoretical framework that will guide my work. Second, I will provide readers with definitions and background information on each teacher attitude and practice investigated in the present study. Additionally, I will discuss these teacher attitudes and practices in regards to how power sharing issues could emerge throughout various stages of YPAR, citing previous work and referencing my own recent experiences. Finally, I will discuss the method of a participant observer, how important taking on this role can be when implementing YPAR initiatives making reference to my own experiences as a participant observer.

Theoretical Framework

YPAR is a set of techniques that seek to promote activism and empowerment among youth, particularly youth of color due to the limited opportunities they have to voice their opinion about structural systems or policies that impact their lives. Much of the YPAR work is grounded in empowerment theory (e.g., Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, et al., 1992; Gutierrez, 1995) and the critical consciousness theory (e.g., Freire, 1973; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Both typically have three phases to their concepts. First, the individual engages in critical reflection on inequities that impact their lives and/or the people around them; next, the individual develops a sense of agency to address these inequities (e.g. gaining knowledge or resources to take action); and finally, the individual takes action against these inequities (e.g. Freire, 1973; Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, et al., 1992; Gutierrez, 1995; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Researchers have also expanded on these two theories, particularly for minority youth to consider what life experiences and civic opportunities minority youth have engaged in that help to promote long-lasting activism (e.g. Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003; Watts & Guessous, 2006).

YPAR initiatives are typically youth-centered and youth-led with adults serving as facilitators. This approach allows for young people to voice their opinions and exercise their power to improve issues in their schools or communities. Using a youth-centered/youth-led approach this provides young people the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to address social inequities; boost their confidence; develop into informed and active citizens; and gain social and 21st century skills (e.g. Zimmerman, 2000; Youniss et al., 2002; Balsano, 2005; Duke et al., 2009). Adults facilitating YPAR

initiatives can provide resources and supervision to young people due to youth typically not being afforded the same rights and responsibilities as adults (Zimmerman, 2000; Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2010). Furthermore, adults can also provide guidance and social support throughout YPAR initiatives when necessary (Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2010). Given the many benefits of adult-facilitators in YPAR initiatives, recent YPAR work has discussed an issue of power sharing between adults and youth (e.g. Ozer, Ritterman, Wanis, 2010; Phillips et al., 2010; Ozer et al., 2013).

Researchers have developed frameworks that discuss the importance of adults allowing youth to have decision making autonomy when engaging in civic activities or research projects that impact their lives. For instance, Louise Jennings and her colleagues (2006) developed a conceptual framework for youth empowerment. These authors examined four theoretical and practice-based models to support their proposed model of critical youth empowerment (CYE). The resulting CYE model seeks to develop critically aware and active citizens by supporting and encouraging young people to engage in activities that help develop their communities in a positive way (Jennings & Green, 1993). Their model consisted of six key dimensions of critical youth empowerment, one of which is equitable power sharing between youth and adults (please refer to Jennings et al., 2006 for further details on their model). In this dimension the authors suggest that when adults delegate tasks to young people to incorporate a youth decision making process, this allows young people to develop vital skills for their future. They also state that although relegating power to youth can present challenges, gradually relinquishing power to youth over time can support and teach young people how to effectively manage positions of power (Jennings et al., 2006).

Researchers have also developed frameworks that closely investigate the extent to which adults and youth are involved with youth empowerment projects. For example, Kirshner (2008) conducted two years of ethnographic fieldwork from three youth activism organizations. From this examination he identified three guiding practices each of these organizations implemented over the course of working on youth-led activism projects. The first guiding practice he presents is *facilitation*. He describes this approach as youth leading, implementing, and making decisions throughout the project; and describes adult's role as providing resources for youth and guidance when needed. The second approach is an *apprenticeship* guiding practice. Using this approach young people engage in and implement youth-centered activities developed by adults; adults are also involved in key decision makings for projects. The final guiding practice consisted of a *joint work* approach. Using this approach both youth and adults implement the project and also make decisions together. Kirshner also discusses how in his fieldwork with the three organizations each implemented one dominant practice, but at times incorporated the other guiding practices. Furthermore, he describes the learning benefits each guiding practice can produce for youth individually from one another as well as when all three practices are implemented together.

Naima Wong and colleagues (2010) developed a typology of youth participation to also closely investigate the extent to which youth and adults are involved with youth empowerment projects (See Figure 1). Similar to Kirshner's (2008) work, these authors categorized various levels of youth participation in civic empowerment projects. However, their framework offers a broader spectrum of categorization for youth participation than does that of Kirshner (2008). As such Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker's

(2010) Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment (TYPE) pyramid will be the framework guiding my dissertation work.

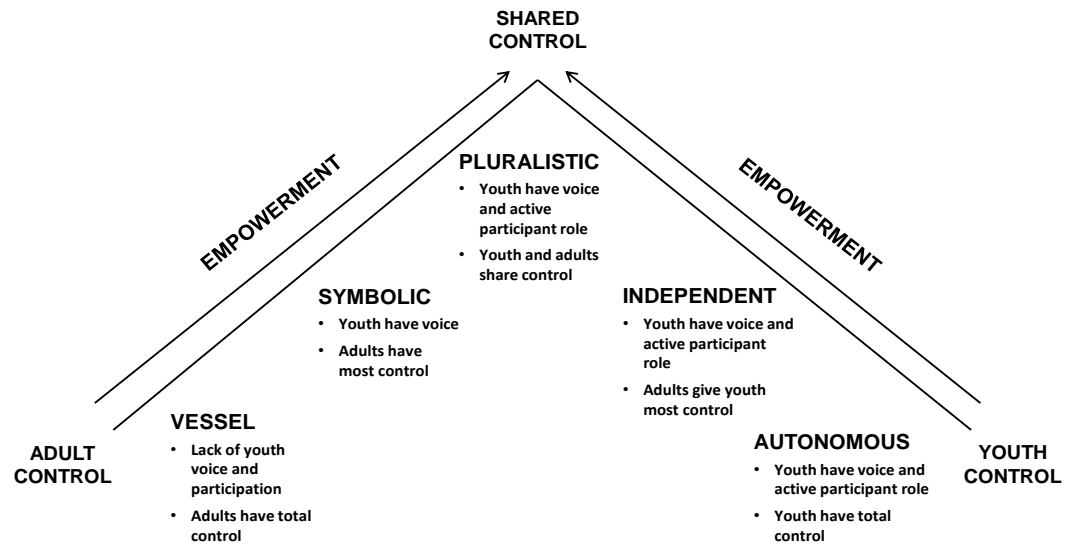


Figure 1. The TYPE pyramid (Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2010)

In their framework, these authors recommend increasing shared responsibility between youth and adults for optimal youth development and empowerment. Their framework includes five categories of participation: vessel, symbolic, pluralistic, independent, and autonomous. The first type of participation, *vessel*, refers to adults implementing and leading civic activities with “little to no input” from youth. With this type of participation adults decide what the agenda will be for the activities or projects and will determine what lessons will be learned by youth. The authors explain that although youth can gain valuable skills, this type of participation typically has a low likelihood of empowering youth.

In the second adult-driven type of participation youth are given the opportunity to voice their concerns about issues; brainstorm potential solutions for these issues; and also present their concerns and ideas to decision-makers. With *symbolic* participation adults may provide formal or informal opportunities for youth to share concerns and develop their ideas (e.g. youth advisory boards, research projects, etc.); however, youth ultimately have little influence on the final decision-making. Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker indicate that although their growth towards empowerment is limited because they have little power in decision-making, youth still are able to build competence and self-efficacy by exercising their critical thinking skills.

Pluralistic participation is characterized as a shared process between youth and adults. With the nature of this participation both youth and adults work together to set an agenda to tackle an issue(s) and develop solutions for the problem. The pluralistic approach allows youth and adults to draw on each other's strengths (e.g. creativity from youth, wisdom from adults, etc.) to problem solve the issue. The authors suggest that this type of participation can create a favorable environment for empowerment and positive youth development because adults can provide social support, resources, and serve as a role model to youth.

Independent participation is described as adults relinquishing their power to youth to problem solve issues. Through this participation, adults provide an environment for youth to work in and the necessary resources to implement their work but are not included in any other aspects of the process. Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker argue that this approach can lead to high levels of empowerment if completed successfully; however, has the potential to be detrimental to youth's empowerment. For example, they

explain that young people could lack skills to develop a plan of action or could take longer successfully implementing their plan which could lead to frustration for youth.

In their final participation type, *autonomous*, is characterized as youth carrying out their own project or activity without the assistance of adults at any phase of the activity or project. In this type of participation youth create their own spaces to address their concerns and brainstorm solutions. Much similar to the independent participation approach, youth have the potential to develop high levels of empowerment through this autonomous approach; however, it can also be detrimental to their empowerment. The authors state that without the help of adults youth could potentially miss out on resources or connections that could help them successfully complete their activity or project.

Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker reason that what sets their framework apart from others is their use of an empowerment theoretical framework, a strong emphasis on both youth and adult involvement, and their five various levels of participation. The authors also recommend that researchers in the participatory action research field need to continue to closely investigate youth-adult partnerships. They argue that there is still a considerable amount of research needed to better understand how successful partnerships between both youth and adults are established and sustained over time.

The Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker's (2010) framework of youth participation provides theoretical grounding for the current study. Traditionally, schools are structured in a hierarchical order. While the idea of engaging students in YPAR research projects appeals to teachers who seek to empower future leaders, the reality is YPAR is an approach that can, in some ways, challenges teachers to alter the antiquated structure of classrooms and schools.

The remaining portion of this chapter will discuss the four teacher attitudes and practices explored in the current study. I will provide readers with a clear definition of each teacher attitude and practice in addition to background information; and will also discuss each in regards to how power sharing issues could emerge throughout the various stages of YPAR by citing previous work or referencing my own experiences.

Furthermore, I will discuss prior work that has highlighted the benefits of becoming a participant observer while conducting qualitative research, in addition to drawing on my own personal experiences.

Teacher Attitudes and Practices

Teacher Expectations

Educational research has done extensive work investigating how various teacher attitudes impact schooling and student learning. Teacher expectations have been a notable focus of research in the education field. Broadly defined, teacher expectations are teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and predictions about their students' ability to actually do his or her school work (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Jussim & Eccles, 1992; Sorhagen, 2013). Over the past 40 years, scholars have researched a number of student academic outcomes impacted by teacher expectations. For instance, there have been a number of studies that investigated the impact of teachers' thoughts about their students' ability in reading, math, and vocabulary knowledge achievement (e.g. Jussim et al., 1996; Sorhagen, 2013). In this body of work scholars have also examined different factors, such as gender and previous academic achievement that can influence teacher beliefs about students' academic ability. Some research has even looked at how a student's socioeconomic status (SES) and first name influence teacher's beliefs about students'

academic ability (e.g. Wood et al., 2007; Anderson-Clark et al., 2008; Kelly & Carbonaro, 2012). This field of work has also investigated how teachers' expectations impact student behavior (e.g. Demanet & Van Houtte, 2012).

While this work has looked both at the factors that influence teacher expectations as well as student outcomes, self-fulfilling prophecy has been a major concept scholars in this field have examined. The self-fulfilling prophecy is any positive or negative false belief that leads to its own fulfillment (Jussim, 1986; Madon et al., 2011). There are typically three stages to this process. The first involves an individual (the perceiver) holding a false belief about another individual (the target); next the perceiver treats the target person according to their belief; finally, the target responds to the treatment from the perceiver which affirms the initial belief (Madon et al., 2011). Previous research has provided evidence that when teachers have certain expectations for their students, teachers can sometimes act out those beliefs in the classroom. For example, Brophy and Good (1970) reported that when teachers had high standards for students they had high expectations for, teachers would frequently praise the students when they met their expectations, and when teachers had low standards for students they had lower expectations for they did not praise those students as frequently when those students met their expectations.

Ray Rist (1970) demonstrated that teachers gave special treatment to students from a high social class background by arranging their seats so that those students received more attention during class, and in contrast students from a lower social class received less attention in class due to their seating arrangement (Rist, 1970). Some research has also indicated that teacher expectations have a substantial impact on

outcomes for students who come from a vulnerable background (i.e. low-income) and who are already low achieving students (Jussim et al., 1996; Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2001; Sorhagen, 2013).

So how could teacher expectations impact a school-based YPAR initiative? As mentioned earlier in chapter 1, YPAR is a method primarily used with disenfranchised youth to allow them to have a voice in matters that directly impact their lives. If teachers who are looking to integrate this method into their classrooms have preconceived beliefs about their students ability from previous achievement, SES/social class, or any other attribute then students could be facing setbacks at the onset of the project. In a study by Kohfeldt and colleagues (2011), these authors discussed how teachers engaging elementary students in an afterschool YPAR initiative struggled with assumptions about youth's maturity level at their school. The students involved with the project voiced their concern to their principal and teachers about graffiti on the walls in the schools bathrooms. The students explained that youth at their school did not have an outlet to express themselves and therefore students used the bathroom walls to do so. These students presented an idea of placing white boards in the bathroom so students had an outlet to express themselves. The teachers, however, had opposition to this idea. Kohfeldt and her colleagues reported that the teacher felt the white boards were a "bad idea" because the students "couldn't handle that" and it would only encourage the students to "write mean things on them (white boards)". Much like other YPAR initiatives, the school in this study wanted student involvement to address concerns at their school, however, were not comfortable implementing the students' ideas. The adult facilitator

(i.e. teacher) underestimated the students at the school, which made it more difficult for the students to share and implement their ideas about how to improve their school.

Teacher-Student Relationships in the Classroom

Teacher-student relationships, for example, have been reported to be one of the most essential factors for an effective learning experience. Teacher-student relationships have been linked to a number of developmental outcomes for students as well as teachers (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). On the students' end, successful teacher-student relationships have been linked to students' connectedness to school, and various educational and motivational outcomes. For teachers, positive teacher-student relationships have been associated with a healthy school and classroom environment, and motivation to dedicate additional time and resources for student learning (Birch & Ladd, 1998; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Osher et al., 2007). On the contrary, negative teacher-student relationships have been reported to have negative impacts on student schooling (Fine, 1991; Gehlbach, Brinkworth, & Harris, 2012; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Murdock, 1999).

So what classifies as a healthy teacher-student relationship? Some authors have drawn on the attachment theory to characterize a healthy teacher-student relationship, such that when students have a relationship with a supportive and caring adult (i.e. teacher) that in turn influences the student's development (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Pianta et al., 2003). For example, Boynton and Boynton (2005) recommend five strategies teachers can demonstrate they care for their students: showing an interest in students' personal lives; greeting students as they enter the classroom; watching for and addressing students who demonstrate strong emotions; genuinely listening to students;

and empathizing with students. Some researchers posit that teachers not only need to be supportive and caring towards a student's overall well-being, but supportive and caring towards the students learning as well (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Patrick et al., 2001).

Other authors have suggested that teacher's social and emotional competence (SEC) is a key factor in healthy teacher-student relationships. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) describe SEC in five emotional, cognitive, and behavioral competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management, and relationship management (Zins et al., 2004). The authors characterize self-awareness as being able to recognize their emotions, emotional patterns, and tendencies; and knowing how to generate and use positive emotions (e.g. enthusiasm) to motivate learning in themselves and others. Teachers who are high on social awareness are described as knowing how their emotional expressions affect their interactions with others; these teachers are also culturally sensitive when it comes to interacting with students, parents, and colleagues. The authors describe teachers who are able to make responsible decisions as being able to do so and consider how their decisions can impact themselves and others; these teachers are also characterized as being able to respect others and take responsibility for their actions and decisions. Lastly, they describe teachers competent in self- and relationship-management as being capable of controlling their emotions and behaviors with others, especially in difficult school and classroom situations. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) argue that once teachers possess these five competencies, that then will lead to healthy teacher-student relationships that could lead to favorable developmental student and classroom outcomes.

Among the literature on teacher-student relationships, authors have also discussed how these other factors can negatively impact these relationships. Researchers today have reported that many students are coming to school unprepared and with emotional and behavioral issues (Gilliam, 2005). These students often make a teacher's job more challenging. Students who struggle to manage or control their emotional behavior can often times act out in class by misbehaving and causing negative distractions in the classroom which can negatively impact teacher's teaching (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). If teachers are having a difficult time with challenging students in their classroom, that can sometimes lead to frustration for the teacher and student, ultimately creating friction in their relationship. This can lead to teacher burnout and students can become disengaged in school and experience feelings of alienation which can result in poor student performance (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Hamre & Pianta, 2006; Murdock, 1999).

There has not been much work done that studies the teacher-student dynamic with YPAR in classroom settings (e.g. Ozer, Ritterman, & Wanis, 2010); and I am attempting to coherently synthesize literature from both teacher-student relationships and YPAR for the purposes of my study. With consideration to the implication teacher-student relationships have on student success in the classroom, let's consider more specifically how these relationships could impact students when participating in a school-based YPAR initiative.

Traditionally, schools lack opportunities for young people to "exercise developmentally-appropriate autonomy" which is a major objective of YPAR (Ozer, Ritterman, & Wanis, 2010). As mentioned earlier, YPAR is an approach to engage young

people in solving issues that impact their lives, as such one of YPAR's major principle's is for young people to lead their action research with the facilitation of adults. More specifically, teachers would need to establish a certain level of power sharing that allows students to take the lead during a YPAR initiative (Jennings et al., 2006; Ozer, Ritterman, & Wanis, 2010). But the nature of the relationship teachers have with their students could dictate how much power is relinquished to their students; suggesting that healthy teacher-student relationships foster better power sharing between teachers and students when implementing a YPAR initiative.

Classroom Management Practices

Classroom management also has major implications for students learning environment. Classroom management has been described as actions teachers take to create a learning environment that promotes positive social interactions between students as well as between students and teachers, and it also actively engages students in learning (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). When students are chaotic, disrespectful, and disruptive the learning environment suffers because teachers can lose focus from their instruction and their students chance of optimal learning is diminished; inversely, when teachers establish a well-managed classroom this creates a teachable and learning environment for students and teachers (Marzano 2003, pg. 1). Similarly to teacher-student relationships, teachers can also experience teacher burnout if they have poor management of their classroom, which can negatively impact student and classroom outcomes (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009)

Early work on classroom management identified some of the critical factors that help to create effective classroom management; these factors included: “withitness”,

which is a teacher's ability to know what's going on in the classroom at all times; classroom flow and transition; student classroom expectations; and variance of student seat work (e.g. Brophy & Evertson, 1976; Evertson & Emmer, 1982; Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Kounin, 1970; Marzano, 2003). Some work has also discussed the impact of teacher-student relationships on effective classroom management (e.g. Marzano, 2003; Plax & Kearney, 1990; Sheets, 1994; Sheets & Gay, 1996). Recently, researchers have also proposed a new approach to promoting effective classroom management. For example, Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) model of the prosocial classroom, the authors also posit that teachers' social and emotional competence (SEC) can impact classroom management. The authors suggest that when teachers are higher in SEC they are able to implement more effective classroom management strategies (e.g. quickly addressing disruptive behavior, strategies for engaging students in instruction, etc.). They argue that when teachers control their emotional expressions and are more proactive than reactive to student behavior in the classroom, they can better promote excitement and pleasure in learning for students in the classroom.

Given what we know about the impact effective classroom management has on student learning generally, I think there needs to be an integration of this work with YPAR. I think effective classroom management when engaging students in school-based YPAR initiative has implications to foster positive developmental outcomes for students involved. Consequently, I feel the opposite of this could be damaging to youth involved with school-based YPAR initiatives. In a study by Ozer, Ritterman, and Wanis (2010), the authors discussed how there were a few occasions in which students were lacking in engagement with the project. They reported in an observation that some students were

“poking” and “talking over” each other to seek attention. In a different observation the researchers noted that the students involved with the project were “energetic and unfocused”, were constantly “goofing around”, and that they felt it would be challenging to get them to “buy into action research”. The authors also noted that the teacher lacked the experience managing the dynamics in the classroom given the un conducive conditions of the classroom setting (i.e. large class size in an inadequate space), which also went into their questioning their ability to engage the students in a meaningful project. Circumstances such as this could leave teachers feeling exhausted and frustrated. In turn, this could lead them to using an authoritarian approach rather than having the students lead the project. In other words, if students are having difficulty focusing and leading the project, teachers may become frustrated and decide to take control and instruct students on what to do instead of students having autonomy to make the decisions. This counteracts the primary mission of YPAR which is to allow youth to make decisions in matters affecting their lives.

Teacher Power

School teachers have multiple responsibilities in school settings that extend beyond teaching in the classroom. They have to be skilled in dealing with students psychological needs, deal with unruly classroom behavior, manage classroom time, communicate and work with parents regarding their child in addition to other responsibilities outside of the classroom (Squires, Huitt, & Seagars, 1983; Jones & Jones, 1986; Friedman, 1999). Because of all their duties, teachers have been reported to experience the highest level of job stress in the US and in other countries (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009).

Researchers have attributed teachers' stress to demands both inside and outside of the classroom. Such stressors can include strenuous workload, student behavioral problems, problems with parent-teacher relationships, or conflicts with colleagues (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Other research has attributed their stress to feelings of powerlessness in decision making for their classroom and school (e.g. Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). Research on teacher autonomy has stated that increasing teacher's autonomy can lead to more effective teaching in addition to higher levels of job satisfaction (Friedman, 1999; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). This body of work also states that when teachers lack autonomy they often use pedagogical techniques and work towards educational goals they do not believe in (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009).

Though efforts have been made to increase teacher leadership in schools and teacher autonomy in school decision making, there still exists a bureaucratic system in which teachers continue to feel a sense of powerlessness. Schools are notorious for being institutions with a hierarchical structure, and if teachers are limited in their ability to impact school decisions, this could be even more difficult for youth.

Though teachers may decide to engage their students in a YPAR initiative in hopes of increasing youth's voices in decision makings at their school, these teachers are also still very much aware of the administrative structures in place at their school. As such, teachers may feel inclined to step in and "guide" students in a more "appropriate" direction during any phase of the YPAR process if the teacher has concerns about any of their ideas. Moreover, because of their knowledge about their schools political system, teachers may feel inclined to take on more of a leadership role before even beginning the

project with their students. Teachers could either feel that their students' ideas for the project will be shut down or that they may need to guide the project so that certain academic requirements are fulfilled. I experienced this very same issue during my dissertation pilot work, which I will discuss in detail later in chapter 3. The teacher from my pilot work was very much interested in implementing a YPAR initiative with his students however he also needed to fulfill academic requirements for the course.

Other researchers have also reported experiencing this same issue. Ozer and colleagues (2013) talk about how the teacher-facilitator acted as a navigator in the schools political system. These authors discussed how the teacher thought the principal would reject the students' idea of evaluating teachers' performance and therefore suggested that they collect the data before presenting their idea for the project to the principal and present their findings to the principal after the project was completed (Ozer et al., 2013). This example illustrated the teacher's knowledge about the school's political system and how she guided their project to avoid a potential constraint.

Participant Observer

The qualitative method of participant observation has been widely used throughout ethnographic research. This method is used to provide researchers with an "insider" perspective to study a specific group of people or a specific context (Israel et al., 2005; Yin, 2009). Additionally, this method allows for the researcher to gain a better insight into the different dynamics among a population or context (Israel et al., 2005). Implementing this method requires the researcher to assume an active role within the research setting, which allows them to observe and experience the reality of the participants in their study (Johnson, Avenarius, & Weatherford, 2006).

Using this method of a participant observer can be extremely time-consuming for the researcher. Not only will they have to physically spend time at the research site, they will also have to spend a great deal of time recording their experiences in the field because it is often difficult for the researcher to write down their experiences while in the field (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, it could become difficult for the researcher to remain objective when collecting their observational data. The researcher could potentially place their own personal biases when documenting events they witnessed while in the field.

However, the benefits of being a participant observer can exceed the costs of doing such work. Individuals' behaviors can sometimes contradict what is shared with a researcher through a different method (e.g., interview, focus group, or survey). Considering this inconsistency, observations can be a powerful tool to confirm what people share through other data collection methods (Israel et al., 2005; Yin, 2009). Additionally, using the participant observer approach, the researcher has the opportunity to observe events or situations in "real time" that can provide further insight into questions the researchers has regarding their study, which might not have surfaced through the use of other methods. Moreover, this knowledge can also inform the researcher to use other methods to follow-up with what was observed.

Using the method of a participant observer can also be advantageous in an YPAR initiative. Researchers using this method can provide support to facilitators who are new to implementing YPAR with young people (Berg, 2004). This support can be in the form of acting as a co-facilitator if the ratio of students to facilitator is rather large; being present to answer questions novice facilitators may have about the process; or simply being present to put the facilitator at ease while implementing the YPAR initiative. This

was something I was able to do while conducting my pilot work. For instance, the adult facilitator in my pilot study shared his concern about not feeling completely confident with implementing the activities for the YPAR initiative with his students. Subsequently, we decided to have additional prep meetings prior to each new activity he would implement with his students; additionally, I offered to attend his class on days in which his students were working on the project to provide technical support where needed.

Taking on a participant observer role in a YPAR initiative can also allow the researcher to document the process of YPAR and identify any challenges experienced and work towards improving them for future YPAR initiatives. For example, Evelyn Phillips and colleagues (2010) studied the process of a YPAR initiative that was implemented into an urban middle school program (i.e. Higher Academic Achievement Program, HAAP). The research team used the method of participant observations and interviews as a means for data collection. The authors revealed challenges of implementing the YPAR initiative in addition to discussing three key recommendations for future YPAR researchers.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

For my dissertation I used ethnographic methods to conduct a multiple case study to investigate the impacts of teachers' attitudes and practices and the role of a participant observer during school-based YPAR initiatives. This type of design method allows for an in-depth examination of a specific topic or phenomenon that has lacked existing literature (Yin, 2009). Multiple case study designs involve two or more cases and are considered to be more compelling than a single case study because data from multiple case studies are used to explain the phenomenon (Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Yin, 2009). For my project I conducted two phases of case studies. The first phase of my work consisted of a pilot case study in a high school classroom in a college town in the Midwest, the second phase consisted of case studies in two classrooms at a charter school in a suburb of a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. I also used the method of becoming a participant observer for my study. Previous work has suggested the importance of providing technical support to teachers when beginning to implement YPAR in their classrooms because action research and youth voice are potentially new to teachers (e.g. Berg, 2004). This chapter will describe in detail the methods used to collect data for both phases of my work to answer the research questions driving my dissertation.

Pilot Work

Prior to beginning my dissertation work I wanted to pilot my study proposal so that I could become familiar with any conceptual or methodological issues that could

surface in the context of my main study. At a local public high school in a college town in the Midwest, I worked with a teacher (Mr. Johnson, pseudonym) to implement a YPAR initiative with his students. Mr. Johnson was the site advisor for a program geared toward supporting high-achieving minority high school students. Mr. Johnson initially expressed to our research team his interest in conducting a YPAR initiative with his students during their last quarter of their 2010-2011 academic school year.

In initial conversations with Mr. Johnson, he shared his concerns about why minority students received less encouragement to sign up for AP/AC courses than white students that attended his school. He also shared his concerns about how even when minority students sign up for AP/AC course they received less support while taking these courses which, he explained, often ended up in the student dropping the AP/AC class. Realizing these issues in his school, Mr. Johnson wanted to facilitate a research project with his students so that he and his students could better understand why minority students either did not sign up to take AP/AC courses or dropped out of an AP/AC course; additionally, he wanted to better understand what factors were associated with students successfully completing AP/AC courses. Once this information was collected, he then wanted his students to present their work to staff and administrators at school in hopes they would develop a support systems for students enrolled in these courses.

Before beginning the project with his students, I met with Mr. Johnson for 2 weeks to plan and train him on how to conduct a YPAR initiative with his students using a training manual I developed as part of my pilot work. Once beginning the project, I observed his class sessions three times a week while his students worked on their project; however, eventually I became a participant observer at the request of Mr. Johnson. After

each class session I would have regular debriefing sessions with Mr. Johnson to capture his thoughts about the progress of the project, the dynamics between each of the groups and any questions he may have had either from that day's session or generally about the YPAR process. I also used student evaluation forms to gain a better insight in to any confusion students had with the instruction or activities for their project, and also clarify any general questions students had about their project. Towards the end of the project I conducted interviews with several of his students to assess their thoughts about the project.

Lessons Learned from Pilot Work

There were three major logistical issues I noticed after piloting my dissertation work, all of which have been consistent with previous YPAR work both in school and out of school settings. The first problem I faced in my pilot work was this issue of time constraints. Although the students were able to complete the project, there were things on the initial schedule that we were not able to successfully complete. For example, we were not able to fully adhere to some of the foundational activities in my training manual. Due to this project being just one of many assignments in Mr. Johnson's class, there were other assignments and projects that also needed to be finished, and as such some activities from the YPAR initiative could not be done. I should note that because Mr. Johnson selected the students topic for the research project those activities cut from the schedule were not as detrimental to the process as it could've been if the students picked their own topic.

Another challenge I faced during my pilot work was not being able to conduct as many interviews as I originally planned to. The students were given time in class to work

on their project on average 3 days a week for a little less than an hour (55 minutes) for 5 weeks; however, many of Mr. Johnson's students needed to complete other assignments for his class. Additionally, Mr. Johnson structured his class so that the students could use that period as a study hour to complete work for other classes or receive additional assistance for other core courses. Furthermore, considering the project was being implemented during the students last quarter of the year, many of the students needed to study for their final exams of the school year, which resulted in many of these students opting not to volunteer to participate in the interviews in order to complete assignments and study for their final exams.

Also, although some students volunteered to be interviewed (7 students), about 80 percent of the other students were not able to participate either because they never returned their consent form or their parents did not want to consent for their child to participate in our study. Some of the students mentioned that their parents were not comfortable with either being contacted to participate in the study or were not comfortable with our research team having access to the academic records and therefore did not want their child to participate in the study.

Another issue my pilot work highlighted was the importance of providing teachers with more than just technical support. Prior to Mr. Johnson beginning the project with his students, I trained him for two weeks, walking him through the steps of conducting a YPAR initiative using the training manual I developed. I also observed his class on days his students worked on their projects. While observing I offered to help answer any additional questions related to YPAR, and/or provide additional support in the classroom when needed.

During the first two weeks of the project I noticed that Mr. Johnson relied heavily on my assistance, so much so that I ended up leading most of the activities with him providing assistance at the beginning and end of the class period. This arrangement seemed to jeopardize the integrity of the project for several reasons. First, Mr. Johnson's students seemed to grow frustrated during the first two weeks of the project because at the start of the hour he would go through the instructions for tasks to be completed by the end of class. However, his instructions would conflict with the actual tasks on the students' weekly agenda. Secondly, his students also seemed frustrated because Mr. Johnson would regularly have to step out of class to perform other duties related to his other position (i.e. academic/behavioral specialist) leaving some of the students procedural questions related to the project unanswered (e.g. "Where should we submit this assignment?"). Finally, the major objective of my work was to train teachers and integrate YPAR into school curriculum, but because Mr. Johnson relied on me to lead most of the sessions, the beginning stages of my work consisted of me leading the facilitation with his students.

Following the first couple weeks of the project I decided to set up a meeting with Mr. Johnson so that we could revisit the objectives of my pilot work and his class' project to ensure that we both could meet our goals. During this meeting Mr. Johnson expressed that he wasn't comfortable leading the activities and asked if I wouldn't mind helping to facilitate the sessions. Consenting to his request, I decided to become a participant observer for the rest of the project. Initially, I considered the training and consistent debriefing sessions sufficient enough for him to facilitate a YPAR initiative with his

students, however, in hindsight I realize that introducing a new approach to teachers can be somewhat overwhelming due to their existing work load and this nuanced approach.

The last, and perhaps most important lesson I learned, was the issue of student involvement throughout the entire YPAR process. In my pilot work Mr. Johnson dominated most of the major decisions for his students' project (i.e. YPAR topic and method of data collection), because of the limited time the students had to complete the project. When Mr. Johnson initially expressed interest in implementing a YPAR initiative with his students with a topic already chosen, I mentioned that this type of work is better implemented when the students can decide their own topic because they will have a vested interest in the project because it most likely will be something that impacts them or other people in their lives. Mr. Johnson suggested that he choose the topic for two reasons: the first was because of the small time frame the students had to complete the project; and secondly, because the project needed to be related to the program the students were in because of curriculum guidelines. Understanding these parameters, I initially was uneasy about implementing this project because I was concerned about student engagement with the project. I felt that some students would view this project as "busy work" for Mr. Johnson's class. I also was concerned that some of his students would not critically understand the underlying issue related to their research topic as Mr. Johnson did (i.e. students receiving support for AP/AC courses) because it was not a topic they chose to research and therefore may not have a vested interest in it.

However, once the project began I noticed that the students had mixed opinions about the project. On one hand, some of the students enjoyed working on the project and did not consider it "busy work" for the class. On the other hand, there were others who

did view the project as “busy work”. In my interviews and observations it seemed as if most of Mr. Johnson’s students were frustrated with the structure of his class for various reasons, and therefore viewed the project as just another assignment for his class rather than understanding why minority students received less encouragement to sign up for AP/AC.

Additionally, I was not confident if the students were able to critically draw the connection between their research project and the underlying issue of students receiving support for AP/AC courses. From my interviews and observations it seemed that all of Mr. Johnson’s students understood the importance of their YPAR topic in regards to how it applied to the academic future for minority students; however it did not seem as if the students critically understood the underlying issue in the way Mr. Johnson viewed it. I think had the students been able to decide what specific issue to address that impacted their own lives, Mr. Johnson’s students may have been able to emotionally, critically, and meaningfully connect to their project and learn the necessary steps to become change agents for issues that impact their world.

Reflections from Pilot Work

Conducting my pilot work for my dissertation shed much insight into the various conceptual, logistical, and procedural challenges that could surface when implementing a school-based YPAR initiative. Although, each school could have its unique hurdles specific to their particular context, schools can still share general challenges when implementing YPAR (e.g. school schedule, teacher load, testing, etc.).

Despite the fact I conducted my pilot work to anticipate logistical barriers when working with schools, there were other questions raised in the process of doing this work.

Throughout the course of my pilot work I noticed various dimensions in Mr. Johnson's relationship with his students. Generally speaking, most of his students seemed to like Mr. Johnson and most knew he was genuinely concerned for their academic future and overall well-being. In the hallway I would observe them "high fiving" him, shouting out his name to greet him, and holding brief conversations with him during their passing time in the hallway. However, in the classroom some of his relationships with his students seemed to be different. Although Mr. Johnson's students seemed to like him as a person, I wasn't convinced they respected the content (i.e. tasks and assignments) of his class. In my short time of observing his class and in the interviews I conducted, it seemed as if many of his students failed to see the significance of assignments for his class. Some of the students I interviewed shared frustrations of how they would work to complete assignments or projects for his class and how he lacked consistency to collect or return their assignments. Also in my interviews with his students, Mr. Johnson would sometimes fail to remember the dates some assignments were due and would occasionally forget to collect them or would collect them long after the due date, this was something I also noted in my observations.

In my interviews with his students, they also shared frustrations with me about the organization of his class. They mentioned how Mr. Johnson would often rearrange the agenda for the class, which would leave some students confused. These same students also shared their dissatisfaction on how some of his instruction lacked clarity.

Another key observation was Mr. Johnson's strategy for correcting disruptive behavior. Mr. Johnson promptly corrected disruptive behavior once exhibited in his class. However, in his approach of correcting student behavior it would at times seem to leave

the student(s) feeling embarrassed or upset in front of the class. Although Mr. Johnson's approach to dealing with disruptive behavior would most often be very brief and rarely took away from his instruction, some students seemed to be severely impacted by it. However, in cases where Mr. Johnson noticed his students' frustration he would usually speak privately with him/her about the situation and this would often alleviate their frustrations. However, there were instances where the student would still be frustrated, which caused the student to lose focus on their classwork. It is also noteworthy that he was usually tougher disciplining students whose parents he knew well.

One last reflection is that Mr. Johnson's autonomy throughout the process of the research project. As I mentioned earlier, he made the decision to choose the topic for his students' project because of reasons beyond his control (i.e. time frame and curriculum guidelines). While I understood the many demands Mr. Johnson faced when instructing his students, I questioned what type of impact these demands had on his students experience with their project. Even though Mr. Johnson had positive personal relationships with his students and showed a genuine concern for their academic future and overall well-being; and was very much passionate about engaging his students in action research, I wondered how these barriers impacted their learning and commitment during the project. More specifically, I wondered how Mr. Johnson's teaching practices and attitudes impacted his students' project?

Methods for Dissertation

Study Objectives and Research Questions

The work conducted in the pilot stage of my dissertation has suggested that some of teachers' attitudes and practices and having a participant observer role can have an

impact on implementing school-based YPAR initiatives with students. As such, this study will address the following questions:

1. In what ways can teachers' expectations, relationship with students, classroom management, and power impact their facilitation during a school-based YPAR initiative?
2. How does taking on the role of a participant observer impact a teacher's facilitation in a school-based YPAR initiative?

School Site

The school site for my dissertation work was at Melrose Business and Technology Academy (MBTA; pseudonym), a charter school in a downriver suburb of Detroit, Michigan. MBTA is managed and operated by a for-profit educational management organization (EMO) company established in 1996 and is chartered by a neighboring university in Ypsilanti, Michigan. MBTA has been servicing students in grades 6-12 for about 15 years. MBTA's enrollment for the 2012-2013 year included 360 students, primarily African American, in middle and high school. Most of their students are from the inner city of Detroit with the exception of some students coming from smaller communities in and outside of Detroit. MBTA's instructional staff consisted of 18 teachers in the middle and high school. About 70 percent of the teachers were female, and around 20 percent of the teachers were African American. Additionally, about one third of the staff taught both middle and high school classes.

During the 2012-13 academic year MBTA underwent major changes due to its recent label as a priority school because the school did not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) during the 2011-2012 academic year. According to the Michigan Department of Education, a priority school label is one in which a school's performance is in the bottom 5% when compared to the Michigan state educational standards. Once given this

label the school has one of four intervention models to increase student performance: a transformation model; a turnaround model; restart model; or a close model. Collectively, MBTA chose to implement the transformation model which required the school to replace the school leader (principal), develop programs to enhance student performance, and increase teacher's instructional time (extending the school day to 4pm).

Participants

The adult participants for this study included eight middle and high school teachers and two administrators. Of the eight teachers that participated in my study, two facilitated YPAR initiatives with their students, Ms. Davidson and Mr. Schultz (pseudonyms). Ms. Davidson is a 36 year-old white 6th grade teacher in a self-contained classroom. She reported teaching 6th grade for 8 years at MBTA. Mr. Schultz is a 57 year-old white high school math teacher. He reported teaching math for 5 years at MBTA. The other six teachers involved with my study either taught science, English, or social studies to middle school, high school, or both middle and high school students at MBTA. The range of teaching experienced varied from 2 to 30 years. The two administrators' in the study included the school leader (i.e. principal), who reported serving as the school leader for 8 years at MBTA. The other administrator was an instructional coach for the school and served in that position for one year at MBTA, previous to that she reported being an English teacher for 6 years.

Student participants for this study included 35 middle (26 students) and high school (9 students) youth from MBTA. Among the middle school students, 22 of the students were African American, two were of Latino/Hispanic descent (Puerto Rican and Mexican American), one Caucasian, and one bi-racial student. The overall sample was

54% male (14 boys) and 46% female (12 girls), with their ages ranging from 11 to 15 years of age. Among the high school students there were seven African American students, one Caucasian student, and one Mexican American students. A little more than half of the class were boys (5 boys; 4 girls), and their ages ranged from 15-16. Majority of the middle and high school students lived in the city of Detroit, Michigan and were bussed to the school.

In addition to participating in YPAR initiatives in their classes, both groups of students were recruited to participate in pre- and post-interviews at the start of the 2012-2013 academic school year. All of the high school students were consented to participate in both interviews; and of the middle school students, 21 were consented to participate in the interviews.

Overview of Projects and Teacher Training

During the spring of 2012 I met with the school leader at MBTA to present the project I wanted to implement with a few teachers at his school. He agreed and presented my project to his instructional staff. Initially I was to work with three teachers, however, due to one teacher being promoted to an administrative position for the following year she was unable to participate in facilitating a YPAR initiative with her students.

Over the summer of 2012 leading into the fall 2012-13 academic school year both teachers were trained on how to facilitate a YPAR initiative with students using a training manual I developed. During separate training sessions/meetings I walked them through the YPAR steps for facilitating a project with their students. We also discussed subject areas of where to integrate the YPAR initiative. Once the school year began, I started

having regular meetings after school or during the teachers prep hour with both teachers to finalize plans for their students' projects.

Mr. Schultz facilitated a project with his 10th grade engineering class during the third quarter of the school year. He integrated the project into his students' environmental engineering unit. His students decided to research major cities to study the impacts industrial buildings had on the environment and people living in the city. The students also constructed a mock city by arranging factory buildings, business buildings, residential areas, a vacation resort, and a national park in a way that minimized harmful industrial effects and created a growing economy. After creating their mock city, the students then brainstormed ways in which their project could inform Detroit city officials on how to restructure their city to make it more environmentally-safe and economically thriving. Finally, his students planned to contact their city officials to present their project once completed.

Ms. Davidson integrated her YPAR initiative into her students' social studies final project. After our planning meetings and training sessions, Ms. Davidson decided to have her students complete a photovoice project, which uses the method of photography to visually present and communicate to others their lived experiences (Wang & Burris, 1997). Ms. Davidson thought the photovoice project would be a fun learning experience for her students and integrated it as the final for her students Western Hemisphere – Global Issues social studies unit. Her students conducted an analysis of their school by identifying things they liked about their school and things they wanted to improve using photography to capture their stories. The students then compiled their pictures into a presentation format to present their likes, dislikes, and recommendations for

improvement to their class. One group was then selected to present their project at a school board meeting at the end of the year.

Procedures and Data Collection

Adhering to IRB policy, only students who received parental consent participated in the pre- and post-interviews; however, every student in both classrooms participated in the projects. Students were compensated with a \$15 gift card to a store of their choice for the first interview, and received a \$10 visa gift card for their second interview. All adult participants signed consent forms to participate in my study, and received a \$20 visa gift card as compensation.

Using a combination of qualitative methods, I collected data consisting of student interviews; adult interviews; field notes from participant observations; notes from debriefing sessions; and finally student work from both projects to investigate how teacher's attitudes and practices impacted school-based YPAR initiatives. These methods are described in detail below.

Participant Observations

Consistent with what previous work has suggested and findings from my pilot work, participant observations were conducted at least 3 days a week for the entire school year (Berg, 2004). In Mr. Schultz class I conducted observations of his engineering class during regular class sessions and during the students YPAR initiative. He allowed me to participate in some of the students engineering projects such as building a robots arm, an egg drop project, and building a catapult. This helped me to build rapport with the students and make them feel more comfortable when conducting their pre- and post-interviews. Mr. Schultz also regularly included me in his discussions with his engineering

class and invited me to provide feedback to his students during student presentations for his class.

My participant observations in Ms. Davidson's class were much different than in Mr. Schultz. In Ms. Davidson's class there was an issue with overcrowding mixed with student behavioral problems, which prompted me to take on a more active role in her class and become somewhat of a student teacher/intern. During afternoons in her class, I assisted Ms. Davidson by helping students with classwork, dealing with student squabbles, and chaperoning field trips. Much like Mr. Johnson in my pilot work, Ms. Davidson too had multiple duties at MBTA which resulted in me occasionally subbing for her class while she fulfilled other duties. Additionally, on days in which she was absent I assisted the substitute teachers assigned to her class. I also helped Ms. Davidson to co-facilitate the project by taking students around to take pictures while she stayed in the classroom to work with the other students.

All observations included detailed written and/or verbal field notes. I also included verbal and written analytic memos throughout my observational field notes to reflect on my thoughts while collecting observational data. My participant observations allowed me to structure and refine the interview protocols used in the student and teacher interviews to better gather information for my research objectives.

Student Interviews

I conducted 30 interviews with both groups of students before beginning their projects, and 29 interviews upon completion of both projects. These interviews occurred during the students' class period or afterschool. Teachers were not present at the interviews so that students could openly reflect on thoughts about their school, teacher,

and project. Both of the student pre- and post-interview protocols were semi-structured. Overall, both groups of students were asked to share their thoughts about their school, teacher, classmates, and their research project. I also asked general questions to gain additional information about the student participants.

Adult Interviews

A total of 10 semi-structured adult interviews were conducted with the 8 teachers and 2 administrators. In the interviews with Mr. Schultz and Ms. Davidson, I asked both teachers a series of questions using a semi-structured interview protocol. I asked these teachers to share their thoughts on using a YPAR approach with young people and also reflect on the projects they facilitated with their students. Next, I asked questions to get their perception on the specific teaching attitudes and practices each displayed in the classroom. I also asked them general questions that allowed me to gather background information on both teachers. Lastly, I asked them to share their thoughts about the recent changes their school was going through.

For the interviews with the administrators and other teachers, I also asked a series of questions using semi-structured interview protocols. Generally, I asked the administrators and teachers to share their thoughts about using YPAR as a method to engage young people in social change in schools and communities; I also asked what their thoughts were about the recent changes the school was experiencing; and finally, I asked them general questions to gain additional background information on both the administrators and teachers.

Debriefing Sessions with Teacher Facilitators

Debriefing sessions were conducted after every YPAR session with both Mr. Schultz and Ms. Davidson during their teacher prep hour, lunch hour, or after school. My debriefing sessions ranged from about 10-20 minutes. In our debriefing sessions I asked both teachers what their thoughts were on the progress of their student projects, their thoughts about the group dynamics; whether or not they had any questions about facilitating the projects; and also prepped for the next session. I documented these debriefing sessions in my field notes for that specific day.

Additional Data Sources

For my study I also utilized additional data sources from both projects. Due to both projects being integrated into classroom curriculum, students were required to complete assignments related to their projects. In Mr. Schultz class, he instructed his students to complete 5 essay questions reflecting on their project and construct a power point presentation. Ms. Davidson required her students to present their photovoice projects to the class using either PowerPoint or Prezi presentation software. Her students also completed worksheet assignments at the beginning that helped them to organize their photovoice projects.

Qualitative Analytic Strategy

My analysis used the approach of triangulating data across multiple sources from my project to ensure interpretive validity. This consisted of participant observational field notes, memo field notes, and interview data from students, teachers, and administrators. Using an inductive and deductive process, I reduced the data to see what emerged as important and relevant to my study.

My interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. I, along with a research assistant, and two transcribing companies completed this task. Once finished, I cleaned the transcripts according to Siedman's (1997) by deleting specific characteristics of oral speech "mm's" and "um's" but making sure to maintain the voice of my participants.

First, I read through the interview transcripts, observational field notes, and memo field notes with an open mind to see what emerged as interesting, important, and relevant to my study. I then returned to the transcripts and field notes to review what was marked and extracted anything that was most compelling to answer my research questions. Next, I organized the interview and field note excerpts into categories based off my research questions, making sure to note any excerpts that overlapped with other categories. These categories included: teacher expectations, teacher-student relationships, classroom management, teacher power, and impacts of participant observer. I also separated these categories specific for both teachers.

With the excerpts extracted from the data and grouped into categories, I first created a table in chapter 4 with the four different teacher attitudes and practices. I provide definitions for each attitude and practice, as well as examples of how Mr. Schultz or Ms. Davidson exhibited each attitude and practice prior to and throughout their students' projects. Next, I address my research questions by discussing in what ways both teachers impacted their students' projects, including excerpts from both the interview and observational data. Finally, I discuss the researcher effects my role as a participant observer had on my current study, using excerpts from interview and observational data.

CHAPTER IV

Research Findings

In this fourth chapter I will present the findings from my study by discussing both teachers implementation of the YPAR initiatives with their students. To answer my research questions I used several data sources: observational field notes, in-depth interviews and written artifacts of student work from the two YPAR initiatives. The findings in this chapter represent a slight cross case analysis because I'm also going to include pilot data that was conducted at a different school in another city. Table 1 includes definitions and examples of what the four teaching attitudes and practices investigated in my study looked like for both teachers during my interviews and observations in both classrooms.

As mentioned in chapter 3, I used Robert Yin's (2009) recommendation of using multiple sources as evidence for my case study. I triangulated my data using an inductive and deductive process. Before discussing each teacher's enactment of their YPAR initiative, I will first introduce them and discuss their background at MBTA. Following this introduction, I will present the teachers enactment of the YPAR initiative discussing their implementation approach and how it relates to the Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker's youth participation framework. Before proceeding with my findings, below is a revisit to the research questions guiding this study:

1. In what ways can teachers' expectations of their students impact their facilitation during a school-based YPAR initiative?

2. To what degree does the nature of the student-teacher relationship impact student engagement during a school-based YPAR project?
3. How does the nature of a teachers' classroom management impact student engagement during a school-based YPAR project?
4. In what ways does a teachers' power in a school impact their ability and initiative to support students engaging in a school-based YPAR project?

Table 1. Definitions and Examples of Teacher Attitudes and Practices

Teacher Attitudes & Practices	Definition	Example from Mr. Schultz	Example from Ms. Davidson
<p>Teacher Expectations</p> <p>(Brophy & Good, 1970; Trouilloud et al., 2002; Jussim, 2009)</p>	<p>Teacher expectations are described as teacher's beliefs about their students' ability; their belief about students' normative behavior; and the academic standards set for their students.</p>	<p>Mr. Schultz explained to the students that he treated homework assignments like a job, he gives them an assignment and expects it to be finished by the date and if they don't turn it in on time then he expects the student to have a good reason for why it's late. He also told his students that because it's the beginning of the year he was going to go a little easy on them and will only mark them down slightly if their homework is late. (Field note, September, 28, 2012)</p>	<p>Today Ms. Davidson spoke to her class about how disappointed she was in their social studies test scores. She told her students that she was "extremely disappointed that a lot of you all didn't even attempt to answer the questions and just left some of them blank. I gave you an opportunity to retake the exam for a higher grade and you still don't take it seriously". She continued and ended telling her students that "the amount of you guys that aren't taking your education seriously is disheartening, only two people passed with a 'C' and the next highest grade was a 'D'". (Field note, May 15, 2013)</p>
<p>Teacher-Student Relationships</p> <p>(Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Patrick et al., 2001; Pianta et al., 2003)</p>	<p>Teacher-student relationships are described as the degrees of warmth and trust between teachers and students; level of conflict and confrontation between teachers and students; the type of interactions between teachers and students; levels of dominance between teachers and students; and the levels of respect between teachers and students.</p>	<p>Mr. Schultz asked Ashley to put her phone away but she ignored him and kept talking to other students while playing on her phone. Mr. Schultz asked her again and she continued to ignore him, finally he started walking towards her to tell her again and some of the other students told her to put her phone away and Ashley responded and yelled "Yeah, yeah I heard him, I don't need y'all tellin' me!" (Field note, December 5, 2012)</p>	<p>"Okay. How would you rate Ms. Davidson on a scale of 1 to 10 as a teacher?"</p> <p>"I would say a 10, because well Ms. Davidson's smart, she's been very patient with us even though we're like a bad class. She's been patient, she's been trying to juggle you know 30 something kids, and so I feel that her being the only 6th grade teacher that she's really doing a good job for almost 30 something kids. And I feel like she has like a time for everybody. Like, Kacey for example, she knows how to talk to Kacey on a mature level and then some of the other kids in here that you know play around, class clowns, she would talk to 'em on a more funny level, but she still tells them to do their work. And I think Ms. Davidson is the funniest teacher anybody could have. And I think she just you know, she gives great advice and tips, things like that." (Denise, 11, 6th grade)</p>
<p>Classroom Management</p> <p>(Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2003)</p>	<p>Classroom management is described as the type of teacher-student relationships that exist in the classroom; how often class disruptions occur; the actions taken to deal with disruptive and antisocial behavior; whether or not classroom rules and procedures are followed; whether or not the teacher communicates expectations to students; and if the teacher actively engages students during instruction and classroom discussion.</p>	<p>Mr. Schultz was teaching and Ashley started throwing pennies at David. Mr. Schultz walked back and said "Okay, I'm tired of trying to get you guys to settle down!". He told David and Martin to move to the front and told Gina and Ashley to move towards the window. David was the only student to move and when he sat down Ashley started throwing pennies at him again. David responded and said "See! That wasn't even me doing anything!". Mr. Schultz just stood at the front looking at Ashley with his eyebrows raised and his arms folded. He started teaching again and Ashley continued to throw things at David. (Field note, November 26, 2012)</p>	<p>A couple students said they didn't know what else they needed to do and Ms. Davidson made an announcement saying "I gave you guys clear directions, why can't u follow them? You make me want to pound my head against a concrete wall!"...she continued and said to them "I had fun stuff planned for you guys but you guys are KILLING ME, you guys keep bickering and arguing with one another and some of you keep thinking that you're better than one another!" (Field note, February 25, 2013)</p>
<p>Teacher Power</p> <p>(Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009)</p>	<p>Teacher power is defined as how autonomous teachers are in their classroom and school; teachers' beliefs about their ability to make decisions for their classroom and school; and leadership roles teachers are given at their school.</p>	<p>"... an athlete I had was acting up really bad, called me a name so I write him up and nothing happens to the student athlete. The kids see that and think "oh...write ups don't mean anything". So all of a sudden now when I say 'write up' students will say 'oh go head Mr. Schultz, I don't care'. But when I write them up, they all of a sudden get in real deep trouble. Whelp why was it serious with one student and not the other? And so it's a case of not just the teacher's classroom management and it might be the policies of the school where certain (students) don't get punished like others would..." (Mr. Schultz Interview)</p>	<p>"...ya gotta take the good with the bad, ya know for me I LOVED being able to teach the way I wanted to teach, if I want the kids to sit on the floor the kids can sit on the floor, if I want the kids to do hand stands they could do hand stands, if I need to show movie clips or a movie or a book or this that or the other I was able to teach how I wanted to teach, I wasn't micro-managed..." (Ms. Davidson Interview)</p>

Ms. Davidson

Ms. Davidson joined the MBTA teaching staff in 2005 as a 6th grade teacher in a self-contained classroom. She graduated from college in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in speech pathology with a minor in math. She earned two master's degrees in cross categorical special education and educational leadership. During my interview with Ms. Davidson she shared how she initially did not want to be a teacher and that it wasn't until she began working as a preschool teacher she "fell in love with teaching".

My first interaction with Ms. Davidson was at an initial meeting with the teachers interested in facilitating a YPAR initiative with their students. My first impression of Ms. Davidson was that she was somewhat unenthusiastic about the project, such that I thought she may have felt coerced into accepting to participate. However, towards the end of the meeting I sensed that she just may have been exhausted from fulfilling end of the year responsibilities. Our interactions thereafter evolved into a colleague/co-worker relationship culminating into a friendship at the end of the school year. During the times I was in Ms. Davidson's classroom I was privy to discussions she had with other colleagues about the school changes for next year; student progress; frustrations she and others had with administration at the school and the school's managing company; as well as things she and her co-workers did outside of their school and teaching. Her classroom drew a lot of traffic primarily after school because she had great relationships with everyone at the school, including the students. Ms. Davidson also genuinely cared about the school. In addition to teaching, she was active on many committees that served to improve the school and student experience at MBTA. She also regularly attended school

board meetings to learn about the changes for next year at MBTA and share any concerns from teachers and students about these changes.

Overall Ms. Davidson was a pretty exceptional teacher. Teaching didn't seem like "just a job" for her. Many of her attitudes and practices towards her students combined the approach of the symbolic and pluralistic types of youth participation from Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker's (2010) framework. In her class she provided students the opportunity to voice their opinions about school and classroom matters. In addition to being passionate about her students' educational well-being, she also took a genuine interest in her students' personal lives. Ms. Davidson would often ask about her students' family; hobbies and interests they had outside of school; how their evenings and weekends were; and was also able to sense her students temperament. She was always friendly with her students, joking and laughing, but made sure to maintain a teacher-student relationship by setting boundaries with her students. At times I even witnessed her advocate for current and past students when it came to their educational and/or personal needs in school improvement meetings or directly to administration; she was never afraid to voice her opinion when it came to issues about the school.

When enacting the YPAR initiative, her implementation approach was a hybrid of the symbolic and pluralistic types of youth participation, which was consistent with what I observed during her regular instruction.

Ms. Davidson's Expectations of Students

Ms. Davidson set high academic expectations for all of her students while implementing the YPAR initiative. During her students' project, she constantly communicated her expectations of her students; and times when they failed to meet her

expectations, she would share her concerns, and also give her students opportunities to share their position as to why he or she did not meet her expectations.

Once beginning the project Ms. Davidson shared with me in one of our debriefing sessions after school how “surprised” and “happy” she was that some of the students she initially thought would be disengaged were in fact “really into” the project. Throughout the project, Ms. Davidson pushed her students to elevate their thinking to develop ideas to improve their school. The following illustrates how Ms. Davidson challenged a student to brainstorm more ideas to include in his presentation.

Today during the project Ms. Davidson walked around to see how her students' presentations were going. She noticed that Justin didn't have many suggestions as to what administrators at MBTA could do to improve their school. She told him that he needed to add more and he responded and said "I can't think of anything else". Ms. Davidson responded and said "I know you have more ideas because during our discussion you were throwin' them left and right!" Justin laughed, went back to his seat and worked on adding more ideas to his presentation. (Field note, April 17, 2013)

Justin was a student Ms. Davidson constantly had to badger to make sure his assignments were submitted on time and that they were of decent quality (e.g. completing the assignment in its entirety, sloppy writing, etc.). He was also one student Ms. Davidson thought would be difficult to engage in the project due to his work ethic. However, after beginning the project she continued to push Justin to become actively engaged in the discussions and also complete his work for the project. During the project discussions Ms. Davidson had with her students, Justin was one of the students who constantly provided ideas for different activities and programs MBTA could implement to improve their school.

Ms. Davidson also made efforts to push students who were already doing exceptionally well in her class, by challenging them and providing opportunities for them

to develop additional skills while working on the project. This next excerpt details a conversation Ms. Davidson and I had about requiring a group of girls, who were doing exceptionally well academically in her class, to use a new presentation software to present their project.

After school Ms. Davidson and I were debriefing and preparing for the project tomorrow. She mentioned that she was going to instruct Kacey, Abbey, and Desiree's group to use Prezi to create their presentation. She said they would probably whine about it but she didn't care because she wanted to challenge them. Ms. Davidson said she knew that they would be able to be creative with that software and figure out ways to incorporate music into their presentation. (Field note, April 24, 2013)

These high expectations were consistent with her regular instruction. Not only did Ms. Davidson challenge high achieving students in her class, she also challenged students whose academic levels were below grade level and students that had individualized education programs (IEP). The following excerpt is an example of a student named Leland who was a special needs student in Ms. Davidson's class who suffered a traumatic brain injury a few years earlier. As a result of this injury the state of Michigan required that he have an IEP. Even though Leland's academic work was different from his peers, Ms. Davidson made sure to include him whenever she was engaging her students in board work during her instruction.

For math Ms. Davidson was going over problems on the board and calling on students to walk her through the problems. After she finished one problem she looked towards Leland and said "Leland, I'm coming for you next". She began asking him how to do the problem on the board, he was silent and shrugged his shoulders. Another student, Mason, then jumped in to start walking her through the problem but Ms. Davidson sort of yelled at him and said "I said Leland!" and gave him hints so that he could walk her through the problem. (Field note, November 9, 2012)

YPAR is an approach that encourages young people to think critically about inequities, brainstorm ways to improve these circumstances, and lets their voices be

heard. By engaging in these exercises youth are also able to develop vital 21st century skills for adulthood. During her facilitation, Ms. Davidson had high expectations for her students. Even when her students had learning disabilities, she never lowered her expectations for them. She instead created opportunities and encouraged them to meet her expectations. These high expectations allowed for her students voices to be heard and develop skills for their future such as critical analytic, problem solving, public communication, and media literacy skills.

Ms. Davidson's Relationships with Students and Classroom Management

Throughout the project Ms. Davidson's relationships with her students seemed to be pretty consistent with what I observed during her regular instruction. During the project she would joke and laugh with her students, discuss interests that her students had, find out about their lives outside of school and things her students did on the weekend, and even tried to learn the new "cool words" that were part of her students daily dialect. During the project it was also apparent that she was familiar with their different personalities. Ms. Davidson knew when her they were upset about something, when they weren't feeling well, and when they were moody. She also knew what to do to make them feel better. This next example illustrates a time during the project Ms.

Davidson used humor to settle a disagreement between three students.

While working on their Photovoice projects Abbey and Desiree complained to Ms. Davidson about Carl singing and that it was distracting them from their work. Ms. Davidson asked Carl to stop. A few minutes later Carl became upset and decided to go talk to Ms. Davidson at her desk. He mentioned that it wasn't fair that Abbey and Desiree could talk but he couldn't sing. Ms. Davidson said "I agree with you that you can't sing but THEY CAN TALK!", yelling loud enough for Abbey and Desiree to hear her so they would get the hint and stop talking. Ms. Davidson then asked Carl "would it annoy you if I went QUACK QUACK QUACK!?" Carl smiled and nodded "no". She then sarcastically said "even though you may have a nice voice, some people can't focus on their work when

you're singing". Carl replied and said "ok" laughing and walked back to his seat and continued working quietly. (Field note, April 29, 2013)

Although she used humor to settle some disputes, there were times when Ms. Davidson grew very frustrated with her students because of their disagreements and the disrespect towards one another. When this happened it typically resulted in her losing her temper and yelling at her students. The following excerpt recounts a time when Ms. Davison corrected the behavior of two students by yelling at them in front of the class.

Ms. Davidson was working with Sophia at her desk when she noticed Carl and Dorian laughing and goofing off. Ms. Davidson yelled "I didn't know the pictures you guys took were so funny, quit goofin' off and get back to your work!". Dorian smacked his teeth and started working but Carl was upset and folded his arms and just sat at his desk pouting for the rest of the day. (Field note, April 22, 2013)

In my interview with Ms. Davidson, she reported that there were a handful of students who were disruptive and disrespectful in her class this school year, Carl and Dorian were two of these students. These two boys repeatedly bickered with others in class, wandered around the class without permission, and were sent to Mr. Jensen's office (behavioral counselor) because of their behavior. Nevertheless, whenever Ms. Davidson corrected their misbehavior in front of the class these two students typically responded similarly to the example above. Often times if Ms. Davidson noticed her students were upset from her correcting their behavior she would speak to them privately about their behavior and apologize for yelling at them in front of the class. This was something I also observed her doing during her regular instruction.

Today the students were being extremely loud during centers. Ms. Davidson consistently had to yell over her students to get them to quiet down. Mason was at the smart board with his group playing the math game, he sort of screamed because he was excited to get the answer correct. Ms. Davidson looked up and yelled "Mason if I hear you yell again you're gettin' lunch detention!" After centers, Ms. Davidson talked to her students about how disappointed she was in their behavior and noise level today. She then apologized to Mason and said

“Mason, I apologize for yelling at you because you weren’t the only one yelling”.
(Field note, January 7, 2013)

Furthermore, in my pilot work Mr. Johnson also had similar techniques when correcting his students’ behavior. Mentioned in Chapter 3, Mr. Johnson would frequently correct disruptive behavior in front of his class, which also left some of his students feeling humiliated and agitated causing them to lose focus on their work for the project. However, he also spoke with students privately if he noticed he/she was upset with the way he corrected their behavior.

Although Ms. Davidson’s strategies for correcting her students’ behavior resulted in some of them feeling embarrassed, upset, and at times, checked out from working on the project for the remainder of the day, their project was never in jeopardy of falling short from completion. Typically, the relationship between Ms. Davidson and these students was mended by the following day, which seemed to be because her students liked her as a person, and respected her in addition to the boundaries she set in her classroom.

Generally, YPAR follows six cyclical steps. The first is building the foundation, which usually involves team building activities. This step is vital because it allows adults and youth establish cohesiveness among each other when engaging in a YPAR initiative. Furthermore, team building helps to establish trust and create a safe space for adults and youth to discuss sensitive and controversial issues that impact their lives. Despite Ms. Davidson having a handful of students who were disruptive and disrespectful this school year, this did not seem to affect her students YPAR initiative. The personal relationships she had with her students allowed her to work well together with them on the YPAR

initiative and reach their end goal, which was presenting their Photovoice project to the school board.

Ms. Davidson's Teacher Power

During the YPAR initiative Ms. Davidson made every effort to ensure that whatever resources her students needed were available, and that they understood the overall goal of the project. For example, because her students were going to present their work using PowerPoint she reserved the library so that they could work on the computers. She also purchased a new presentation software called *Prezi* and challenged her advanced students to use this software to present their projects.

Before beginning their actual project, Ms. Davidson had her students conduct a “mock” Photovoice project and had them take pictures of things they liked and things they thought needed to be improved in their school parking lot and surrounding outside area. She did this so that her students were familiar with what they were going to do for their actual Photovoice project. Because she was impressed with their work on the “mock” project she decided to share their work with her colleagues at a staff meeting. As a result of her doing this the administration began making changes to the parking lot and surrounding outside area, and Ms. Davidson made sure to make her students aware of what was happening. The following excerpts illustrate how Ms. Davidson shared what changes were beginning to be made as a result of her sharing her students’ mock projects with the staff and administrators at MBTA.

Before continuing to take students around to take pictures of the school, Ms. Davidson told her students about yesterday's leadership meeting where she shared their mock Photovoice projects with staff and administrators. She told them about how they asked questions like “what did they do? Gather up all the trash in the parking lot and put it in one pile?” when looking through the pictures of the trash in the barbeque grill. Ms. Davidson said she told the staff and

administrators “no they found that in the barbeque grill outside!” She told her students that the staff and administrators responded saying “Ew, gross! That is disgusting! And ridiculous...somebody needs to do something about that!”. Ms. Davidson then said to her students that even though this was just a mock project, it has already begun to change some things in this school and that she hoped they (her students) had fun doing this project but also took it serious because they had the power to make a serious change at MBTA. (Field note, April 30, 2013)

Today before Ms. Davidson’s students went outside to work on the garden, she said “I don’t know if you guys have had a chance to look inside that grill outside but they already removed all the trash that you guys took pictures of, take a look at it if you get a chance”. (Field note, May 2, 2013)

After completing the project, Ms. Davidson expressed how much she enjoyed working on the project with her students. In her interview with me she shared how she was planning to incorporate this same project with her students next year. She also shared how she would make the project yearlong so her students could see the actual changes being made at their school and follow up with administration if they were unhappy with what was happening at their school. Below is an excerpt from her interview.

Interviewer: *Would you want to do something like this (Photovoice) again with future students?*

Ms. Davidson: *I LOVED the photovoice project, I did. I think it’s a great project I think the high school ya know could really utilize it...it’s just getting them to step outta the box. I probably not have it be a final project, maybe I’d do it as a midterm and then that way we could see if the changes are made by the end of the year or something put in place.*

Not only did I observe Ms. Davidson feeling empowered throughout the YPAR initiative, I also observed her feelings of empowerment and autonomy in many areas at MBTA. Ms. Davidson spoke often about how she “loved being able to teach the way she wanted” in her classroom; how she appreciated the administration providing necessary supplies and resources to their teachers; and allowed the teachers and staff to plan fun activities for the students. Additionally, Ms. Davidson was never afraid to voice her

opinion on issues she had at MBTA and also supported teachers and students to do the same. In her interview, Ms. Davidson discussed how she would sometimes accompany students to the principal's office if students had concerns about school matters.

Interviewer: *What about students here, do students voice their opinion on things that they want to see changed?*

Ms. Davidson: *Well, yes and no. There are some that do...there was a group of kids that wrote letters to the principal about students in their class, but then there was some that vent to teachers and then the teachers will go and tell whoever's the person that needs to know. I got a couple of times where I've gone into the (principal's) office with students so they can talk and feel comfortable when talking about stuff they have problems with at the school...*

Furthermore, in my observations I witnessed how she advocated for students at MBTA. The following excerpt highlights an incident in which she spoke up to the school administration for two students, who walked 3 miles to the school every day, to receive bus service considering the harsh 2013 winter season.

After school two male students came to Ms. Davidson's class. She asked "how did all of it pan out" and the male students said "fine". Ms. Davidson then turned to me and told me that she saw them walking to school from their home in the freezing cold and that they also walked to school yesterday. She said after she heard that she "marched down to Mr. Kennedy's office and demanded that they be put on a bus route because they only lived 3 miles away and it was too cold and long for them to be walking to school". (Field note, January 23, 2013)

YPAR is an initiative that seeks to promote youth voice, activism, and empowerment among disenfranchised youth. Throughout her students YPAR initiative, Ms. Davidson continuously encouraged her students to "take what they were doing serious" because it had implications to improve their school, in addition to their lives and their peers lives at MBTA. Additionally, her students were able to develop civic competency and public communication skills from presenting their project to the school board. Furthermore, I think Ms. Davidson's actions during the initiative, in addition to

throughout the school year, modeled to her students ideal strategies on how to address issues in schools or communities (e.g. taking mock Photovoice projects to staff meeting; advocating for bus service for two male students; etc.). Although, assessing her students' levels of empowerment development was not feasible for this current study, I know, because of what they shared in their interviews, many of her students felt confident that Ms. Davidson would support and advocate for them if they ever had issues at MBTA or even outside of school.

Summary from Ms. Davidson's YPAR Initiative

In many ways, Ms. Davidson's methods for enacting YPAR were extremely close to the ideal YPAR facilitator. Considering the setbacks she had with classroom management, she was able to work through these issues to help her students reach their end goal, which was bringing their concerns to the school board. With her hybrid approach of the symbolic and pluralistic types of participation, Ms. Davidson worked well together with her students while facilitating their project. She listened to her students ideas, provided resources to her students (e.g. computers; advanced presentation software; etc.), provided guidance and support when necessary. Even at the school board meeting, Ms. Davidson was there to support her students when presenting their issues to the school board; in which most were well received and discussed to find solutions for (e.g. new lunch vendors because of complaints by students).

Ms. Davidson was never apprehensive to relinquish power to her students when it came to making decisions for the project. Throughout the project, she made sure to place high expectations on all of her students to maximize their learning and development over the course of the project regardless of any learning disabilities or educational setbacks.

This approach allowed her students to develop vital 21st century skills necessary for adulthood. Additionally, the good personal relationships she had with her students allowed them to trust her and have a good working relationship with her. Moreover, the fact that Ms. Davidson felt empowered and autonomous at MBTA allowed her to demonstrate effective ways to address issues in schools and communities.

Mr. Schultz

Mr. Schultz has been teaching high school math at MBTA for four years. After serving 4 years in the US Marine Corps and 3 years as a police officer, Mr. Schultz graduated from college in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science degree in technical communication. He also earned a master's degree in education. Before beginning teaching at MBTA, he spent 19 years working for a major corporation as a salesperson, trainer, and manager. In my interview with Mr. Schultz, he shared how his previous positions led him to teaching because he was "always teaching or tutoring others".

My first interaction with Mr. Schultz was also at the initial YPAR meeting with Ms. Davidson. At this meeting Mr. Schultz appeared very excited to work with me and participate in my project. During the meeting he brainstormed ideas as to what subject to integrate the YPAR initiative in for his engineering class, and discussed some of the work he would do over the summer to prepare for the project. However, once I began observing in his classroom, Mr. Schultz's demeanor towards me shifted towards feelings of suspicion and anxiousness. Because of my relationship with MBTA's charter school authorizer (which I will discuss in detail later), Mr. Schultz would often jokingly refer to me as a "spy".

In general, Mr. Schultz seemed to be liked by many of the staff and students at MBTA. During lunchtime he allowed students to hangout and eat their lunches in his classroom. In his interview he indicated that he opened his classroom to students who didn't feel comfortable eating in the lunchroom because of bullying. Mr. Schultz also provided after school math tutoring to students who needed extra help understanding the material. He was always engaging his students in discussions on issues that impacted the world and related them back to things they were learning in school; also bringing in additional resources that supported these discussions. Furthermore, Mr. Schultz sought out grant money for his engineering class to do hands-on projects to add to their learning experience. Lastly, Mr. Schultz was also an active member on the school improvement committee.

When enacting the YPAR initiative with his students, his implementation approach was a hybrid of the pluralistic and independent types of youth participation, which was consistent with what I observed during his regular instruction.

Mr. Schultz's Expectations of Students

Mr. Schultz seemed to have fairly traditional academic and behavioral expectations for his students while implementing the YPAR initiative. He constantly emphasized to his students the importance of having a strong work ethic and being able to work in groups regardless of any individual differences that could exist within the group. He even discussed the importance of them working together regardless of whether they were not particularly fond of their group member(s) or not friends outside of class. However, there were times when his expectations for his students were contradicted by what he tolerated from them throughout the YPAR initiative. For example, after a few

weeks of working together on the project his students experienced some conflict in which Mr. Schultz agreed to let them split up into two groups, all the girls in one group and the boys in the other. The excerpt below recounts this event.

Today Gina yelled to Mr. Schultz that she was quitting the project. Mr. Schultz walked over and asked Gina what was going on. She responded and said "they (Taylor and Keith) just drew with red pen all over the map after I spent weeks drawing in pencil! And then they don't even listen to none of our ideas! I'm sorry I'm not trying to be disrespectful but Aaron don't never be here but when he show up he start givin' all these suggestions and opinions and it's like they just do what he say, he wasn't here when we started the project, they were all listening to me". Mr. Schultz responded and said "ok guys it sounds like you've had your first group melt down. Let's talk about this, sometimes you'll have these kinds of issues working in groups, but in real life you can't quit or give up because that would be like you quitting your job. What were some of the rules you guys are working from?" Ashley jumped in and said "I think there should be an 'STFU' rule because y'all don't listen to other people's ideas". Mr. Schultz responded and said "I hope that doesn't mean what I think it means", Ashley started laughing and Mr. Schultz said "you can't say stuff like that because that is unprofessional". Michelle jumped in and said "Mr. Schultz they only listen to Aaron, I think we'll be better off working separately"...after about 10 minutes of discussing the issue his students decided to that the girls were going to work on the brochure about the city and the report write up and the boys were going to finish drawing out the blueprints of the city and put together the presentation....after class Mr. Schultz mentioned to me that he really wanted his students to be able to work out their issue and work together on this project. He also mentioned that he wished they didn't have to be divided by sex but that they liked working that way. (Field note, April 17, 2013)

The conflict his students were experiencing did not seem like an irreconcilable disagreement. When Mr. Schultz intervened to help his students work through this disagreement it seemed that he lacked the skills needed to resolve their conflict which led him to appease his students by allowing them to separate into two groups. Mr. Schultz seemed more concerned that they complete the project rather than using that conflict as an opportunity to show them how to problem solve conflicts in groups. Ultimately, his students ended up working independently from one another because each of the girls

submitted their own brochure and the boys submitted two separate maps of the same mock city.

Mr. Schultz also had some issues getting his students to submit their work on time during the YPAR initiative. Given that he clearly stated the consequences for late work in his class and also advised when he expected them to submit their work for the project, there were some who seemed to not respect deadlines in his class. These next excerpts illustrate two different events where Mr. Schultz's students failed to submit or complete their assignments for the project. The first is an example of one student who did not submit his final report for the project even after Mr. Schultz provided them opportunities in class to complete this assignment. The second is an example of a group of students who had not yet completed the final presentation for the project.

*Today Mr. Schultz asked Aaron where his write up for the project was. Aaron responded and said that he didn't have a chance to use the computer at home and started explaining how his mother and sister were using the computer last night and that was why he wasn't able to submit his assignment to Mr. Schultz. Ashley interjected by laughing loudly and blurted out "this n**** always got a damn excuse for why he don't have his work". Mr. Schultz told Ashley to please be quiet and continue working on her catapult project; he then turned to Aaron and firmly said "I've already given you time in class to complete this, I need you to submit your assignment by tomorrow". (Field note, May 13, 2013)*

After making his announcements for today, Mr. Schultz asked if Keith, Taylor, and Aaron were ready to present. Keith responded and said but we don't have Taylor. Mr. Schultz looked up at Keith with his eyebrows raised and said I don't think it matters if Taylor is here if you guys have your presentation done you need to present. Keith then said that they needed to finish some things up before presenting. Mr. Schultz responded and said "I expect you guys to present tomorrow, that will be your last time to present at all". (Field note, May 15, 2013)

Most of Mr. Schultz's students submitted their report write ups for the project April 30th through May 3rd, which is when he told them they needed to submit their work. Aaron, however, submitted his write up for the project 2 weeks after the due date (May 16th), and

did not seem to have any mark downs for its tardiness because Mr. Schultz did not make a point to mention that to him. In the second instance, Keith, Taylor, and Aaron presented the next day (May 16th).

Consequently, while observing his class, Mr. Schultz's contradictory expectations were consistent with what I observed during his students YPAR initiative. Particularly when it came to how he evaluated his students knowledge about class material. For example, for their midterm exam Mr. Schultz allowed them to use their notes, work in groups, and also gave them the option to take their exam home and return with it the next day. Furthermore, he even provided his students with some of the answers to the exam. The following excerpt recounts this event.

When class started Mr. Schultz announced to his students that he had a surprise and told them that they would be taking their midterm today. He followed up and said that they would have 3 hours to work on their midterms (Monday and Wednesday class periods) and would be able to use their notes, books, and each other. After he passed out the midterm exams, Keith said "you're giving us the answers too?" and Mr. Schultz responded and said "well not all of them"At the end of the period Mr. Schultz gave his students the option to take the midterm home or leave it with him, and all of his students took their midterms with them. (Field notes, January 7, 2013)

Mr. Schultz's approach to evaluating his students' knowledge about the material did not seem to challenge them very much, even though in class he always emphasized what they needed to know for their exams. Instead his evaluations allowed for his students to pass with little difficulty because of the resources they were permitted to use on their midterm and (assuming) final. In my opinion, using this approach does more harm than help to high school students. I speculate he allowed them to use these resources to avoid backlash from his students because a good portion of the midterm asked questions about material I did not observe him cover in class lectures or activities.

Mentioned earlier, in addition to promoting youth voice and activism YPAR also allows young people to develop 21st century skills, such as social competency and problems solving skills, essential to their future. As a consequence of Mr. Schultz allowing his students to separate into two groups rather than working through their conflict, his students were less likely to develop problem solving and intrapersonal skills. Furthermore, during my observations in Mr. Schultz's class there were a number of instances in which he failed to penalize his students for late work; even when he communicated his expectations for submitting work in his class and what the consequences would be if any of his students submitted late work. This pattern was consistent during his students YPAR initiative. Due to Mr. Schultz's leniency with his assignment deadlines it seemed as if some of his students did not use their time in class effectively to reach specific goals for the YPAR initiative.

Mr. Schultz's Relationships with Students and Classroom Management

Mr. Schultz seemed to be liked by most of his students. Yet he had difficulties managing their behavior during the YPAR initiative. In my interview with Mr. Schultz he reported that the administration instructed the teachers to "up their classroom management and deal with it on their own" because the office was trying to discourage the teachers from writing referrals to the office. Consequently, this request from the administration made disciplining students that violated his classroom policies extremely difficult. Over the course of the project there was an enormous amount of disrespect directed towards Mr. Schultz. I witnessed his students holding conversations with each other during his instruction; using an excessive amount of profanity; using their cell phone throughout the class period (e.g. answering phone calls and texting); occasionally

getting up to leave the classroom without receiving permission; and, at times, engaging in unsafe horse playing during times when he was facilitating their project and when his students were expected to be working on the project. The following excerpt recounts an instance in which one particular student exhibited these disrespectful behaviors towards Mr. Schultz instead of working on the project.

The 2nd bell rung during class and Ashley got up and opened the door to ask a student something. Mr. Schultz said “Ashley what are you doing? You should be working on the project”. Ashley didn’t respond and kept talking to the student in the hallway, Mr. Schultz walked over towards the door trying to get her attention but she kept talking...a few seconds later she walked out and came back to class about 2 minutes later and told Mr. Schultz “all I needed was some paper towels”. Mr. Schultz told her that she’s supposed to ask before leaving class and receive a pass. (Field note, March 25, 2013)

While Mr. Schultz was helping Tiffany with an assignment for another class she had with him, Ashley was listening to music on her headphones; Martin was talking to Michelle about things unrelated to the project; Taylor was working on the project but David was also distracting him occasionally. After helping Tiffany, Mr. Schultz went and told Martin, Michelle, and David they could be working on the write up for the project. They all got some paper out to start working on the write up but eventually reverted back to what they were doing. (Field note, April 16, 2013)

The students in Mr. Schultz class also seemed to be aware of the lack of consequences he or she would receive if they violated any classroom rules. Below is an incident where Mr. Schultz attempted to correct the behavior of one student during the YPAR initiative; however, instead of complying with, the student continued to be defiant.

Today Ashley kept messing with Gina. She kept calling Gina a gorilla and Gina responded by calling her a thing. Gina tried to do her work but began to sigh heavily and I could tell she was getting upset. Ashley continued messing with Gina and started saying that she needed to go to the zoo. Mrs. Greer (math instructional coach) told Ashley to stop it and Mr. Schultz interjected and said “Ashley please stop, you’ve been instigating this entire year”. Ashley responded and said “what you mean I’ve been instigating this whole year? Y’all ain’t gone do nothin’ anyway”. Gina said something under her breath and Ashley snapped back and said “man shut up gorilla”. (Field note, May 15, 2013)

During Mr. Schultz's regular instruction his struggles with managing his students behavior was consistent with what I observed throughout his students YPAR initiative. Furthermore, it seemed as if Mr. Schultz overlooked the behavior of one particular student who displayed the highest amount of disrespect towards him. The following two excerpts recount events where Mr. Schultz overlooked the behavior of this particular student even when his other students brought her behavior to his attention.

Gina and Ashley were horse playing around. Gina was writing something about Ashley on the board and Ashley was calling her names. Mr. Schultz told her to stop writing whatever she was on the board. Gina stopped writing on the board, as she started walking back to her desk she said "Mr. Schultz you don't never say nothing to Ashley". Mr. Schultz responded and said "she doesn't write on the board". Gina responded and said "Ashley be doin' stuff all the time and you don't never say nothing to her". Mr. Schultz then said "if it happens in other classes then I don't see that". Ashley got up, walked over and hit Gina, Gina then yelled out "she just hit me in my head! And you didn't even say nothin' to her". Mr. Schultz quickly looked up and continued to do work on his computer. A couple minutes later Ashley started calling Gina names again and Gina yelled "Mr. Schultz can you tell Ashley to stop messing with me"; Mr. Schultz responded and said "stoooooop". About a few seconds later, Ashley started calling Gina names again loudly and Gina said "Mr. Schultz you don't hear that?!? She's talking about me". The bell rung and both students walked out. (Field note, November 28, 2012)

Before class began Ashley called David a 'cunt' in front of the class. David looked at Mr. Schultz with a stunned look on his face and said "Mr. Schultz did you hear that?!?" Mr. Schultz responded and said no, then Ashley said "Mr. Schultz do you know what a 'cunt' is?" Mr. Schultz stood at the front of the classroom and starred at Ashley with a disappointing look on his face. Once class started Ashley said another inappropriate comment to David. David looked at Mr. Schultz and said "did you hear that?!?", Mr. Schultz continued explaining what they were going to be doing in class today. (Field note, March 4, 2013)

I suspect that he excused her behavior for one of the two reasons: 1) he was afraid of what this student's response would be if he took a more abrasive approach to correcting her behavior (e.g. being chewed out by the student); or 2) because he had this student in previous years, he knew the best way to dealing with her behavior was to ignore it.

Whatever the reason being as to why he allowed this student to be so disrespectful towards him during his instruction, I believe this ultimately influenced how some of his other students chose to behave in his class.

Mentioned earlier in this chapter, the first step of YPAR is building the foundation through team building activities to establish cohesiveness, trust, and a safe environment to discuss controversial issues. Although Mr. Schultz seemed to be well liked by most of his students, many of them did not respect him or the rules in his classroom. Not only did this make managing their behavior during the YPAR initiative extremely difficult for Mr. Schultz, his students were also very distracted which impacted their progress towards completing their project in its entirety.

Mr. Schultz's Teacher Power

Over the course of my time with Mr. Schultz he seemed very apprehensive to speak up about certain issues or how some things operated at MBTA because he feared it could potentially jeopardize his job at MBTA. In his interview with me he was afraid to share his thoughts about MBTA out of fear of either being fired or not being offered a contract to teach at MBTA again in the fall. During his interview he even instructed me to turn the audio recorder off so that he could share more of his thoughts about the school.

Interviewer: *Have you ever tried voicing your opinion about issues you have at this school?*

Mr. Schultz: *Yes I have...when I first started, there was one teacher (on the school improvement team) who did voice their concern much more vocally than I had, that teacher's no longer here...I'm not sure of the reason. That person and I have talked, and that person has made it clear as to why that person thinks they were let go...I'm tryin my best not to give away any gender relationship on this...but that person felt that person was a squeaky wheel and the squeaky*

wheel was of dislike and was considered to be too negative. Um so whenever I have voiced an opinion I've tried to put it in a positive light, I try to think of all the ramifications of what I will say before I'd say it and if it's a fight that I think would go badly I don't bring it up!

Consequently, this was a consistent theme throughout his students YPAR initiative. Mr. Schultz was very reluctant to speak up for certain resources his students needed for their project, as such, they had to find alternative ways to continue working on their project. For example, towards the beginning of their project, Mr. Schultz attempted to reserve the computer lab because he knew his students would eventually need the computers. However, upon requesting the computer lab he learned that another class had priority. It seemed as if Mr. Schultz did not want to explore alternative options for his students out of fear of potentially compromising his job due to previous ramifications and witnessing how another teacher lost their job at MBTA because they voiced their opinion. The following excerpt recounts this event.

Keith walked in from lunch and asked Mr. Schultz if they would be going to the computer lab to work on the project. Mr. Schultz responded and said "we will no longer be able to go to the computer lab for the rest of the semester because another class has priority. This is what happens when you have a certain amount of resources and also have a small class against a larger class". (Field note, March 25, 2013)

It seemed as if Mr. Schultz had a defeatist attitude. The school had at least an additional 30 desktop and laptop computers in the library. Furthermore, since his class contained a small number of students, there also was the idea of possibly compromising with the other teacher to allow a few students at a time to work in the computer lab on their project. These were two suggestions made by a couple of his students, in which Mr. Schultz rejected and stated "this is what was told to me from the office". Instead of

brainstorming along with his students other ways in which they could determine another way to use other computers in the school, Mr. Schultz seemed to just be compliant with what was told to him in the office.

As mentioned earlier, Mr. Schultz had an extremely tough time managing his students' behavior this school year. And although his approach to correcting some of his students behavior seemed to be somewhat "hands-off", other times it seemed as if Mr. Schultz only corrected their disruptive behavior whenever he noticed me writing notes about when they were being disruptive and distracted from working on the project. Mr. Schultz seemed more concerned with making sure none of his students' behaviors put him in a compromising predicament for his job rather than making sure they had meaningful engagement with the project. The excerpts below provide examples of just this.

During class today Ashley walked over to the open window and started yelling her little brother's name to get his attention. Mr. Schultz quickly got up and yelled "Ashley you're not supposed to yell out the window, Mr. Kennedy's office is right below us". (Field note, April 11, 2013)

This first example depicts an event in which one student was yelling out of the window at her younger brother. Instead of Mr. Schultz instructing that this student should not be yelling out of the window because that was inappropriate behavior and she needed to be working on the project, he instead instructed her to not yell out of the window because the window was right above the principal's office. In this second example it seemed as if my presence in his class made him uneasy to which he only *appeared* to actively facilitate his students in the project as opposed to *genuinely* facilitate and engage his students in this project meaningfully.

Several of Mr. Schultz's students were horse playing and playing on their phones instead of working on the project. I kept looking over at his students and made notes of the ones who were distracted from the project. When Mr. Schultz noticed I was watching the students who were distracted from the project he immediately got up from his desk to try to get them back working on the project. He walked over and asked the students who were distracted what they were working on and what needed to be done next. (Field note, April 16, 2013)

From the time I began my observations in Mr. Schultz's class, he made every effort to try and control his students' behavior that might cause disruption to other individuals outside of his classroom, particularly Mr. Kennedy (principal); furthermore, he also seemed to make sure he controlled his students' behavior while I was present in his class. I suspect this was because he was fearful of me sharing any concerns I had about his students' behavior with the administrators, and because he feared any repercussions from the administration (e.g. not being offered a teaching contract for the next year); these two speculations were both mentioned by Mr. Schultz quite frequently during my time in his classroom.

Over the course of Mr. Schultz's students' project, it also seemed as if he lost focus of what the overall objective and goal of their project was, which was to transform Detroit into an environmentally-safe and economically thriving city and present their ideas to city officials. While facilitating the project, Mr. Schultz seemed to be more concerned with his students "fulfilling requirements for my dissertation". The following excerpts are two examples of this.

Today they were still brainstorming for the project. Aaron and Gina were going back and forth trying to convince each other which one of the two projects they should do (recycling program vs. revamping the city of Detroit to become more environmentally-safe and economically thriving). Aaron argued that a recycling program could be integrated into the "revamping of the city of Detroit" and Gina was arguing to do the recycle project because it would be something they could start implementing at the school. Mr. Schultz interjected and urged them to think about their timeline mentioning that "Ms. Winborne will need you guys to have

the project done by the end of April and in some ways she's your boss and you will need to be able to meet her deadline". (Field note, March 25, 2013)

While Keith and Taylor were drawing the map for their mock city, David and Aaron were sitting discussing things unrelated to the project, and the girls were playing on their phones and gossiping about things going on at the school. Mr. Schultz walked over to try to get the other students back on track, he said "I see Keith and Taylor working on the project but the rest of you are just sitting and talking, remember you're going to have this project done for Ms. Winborne by the end of April because she's gonna have to take this back to her 'boss', so let's get goin'!" (Field note, April 22, 2013)

In these examples, the focus and priority were for his students to complete their projects for my dissertation rather than emphasizing how advantageous it would be for their community.

Throughout his students YPAR initiative, Mr. Schultz had much anxiety while facilitating his students' project that seemed to create setbacks that impacted their end goal (e.g. contacting city officials and presenting their ideas). After witnessing another teacher lose their job for speaking out on issues at MBTA, Mr. Schultz was extremely reluctant to voice his opinion about school matters. Thus, when it came to him seeking resources for his students YPAR initiative he lacked the confidence to advocate for certain resources his students needed. Additionally, because Mr. Schultz was reprimanded the previous school year for his struggles with classroom management, he seemed more concern with only correcting his students' behavior to avoid further scrutiny from administration rather than making sure his students engaged in meaningful learning from the YPAR initiative. Furthermore, he also seemed to lose focus of the overall objective of his students' project because he constantly reminded his students that they needed to complete their project for my dissertation rather than improving the city most of his students lived in.

YPAR seeks to teach young people how to diplomatically and effectively address social issues impacting their lives as well as those around them. As such, adults engaging young people in this work can serve as examples to model ways on how to tackle issues in their schools and communities. Mr. Schultz in this case lacked the confidence to model such examples, which seemed to have an impact on his students' engagement and motivation to have a vested interest in completing their project.

Summary from Mr. Schultz's YPAR Initiative

Mr. Schultz's hybrid approach of the pluralistic and independent types of youth participation seemed to make it tough for him to facilitate the YPAR initiative with his students. His approach to enacting the YPAR initiative sought very much to adhere to the goals and objectives of YPAR (e.g. maintaining youth voice); however, this seemed to impact the support he provided to his students to keep them engaged and motivated to work on the project. At the start of the project, Mr. Schultz was fully engaged in facilitating his students' project. However, after about two weeks into the project he became hands off and somewhat distracted from the project with other work he needed to complete (e.g. grading papers, lesson plans, etc.). His disconnection with the project seemed to influence his students' connection to the project such that they too became disengaged with the project.

In the beginning of the project Mr. Schultz established expectations for his students both academically and behaviorally; however, throughout the project his expectations seemed to become conflicting for his students, particularly when it came to their work for the project (e.g. submission deadlines and group conflicts). Furthermore, much of the disrespect from his students made it extremely difficult for Mr. Schultz to

manage their behavior during the YPAR initiative. Moreover, because of his scrutiny from the administration regarding his classroom management in previous years, Mr. Schultz was very anxious about his students' misbehavior. However, it seemed as if he only corrected their behavior if he noticed it would distract others outside of his classroom (e.g. principal). Finally, Mr. Schultz lacked the confidence to voice his opinion at MBTA because of witnessing a previous colleague lose their job. This made it difficult for him to fully advocate for his students needs during their YPAR initiative. Many of these setbacks seemed to greatly impact his students achieving their end goal, which was to contact their city officials and present their ideas on how to transform Detroit into a more environmentally safe and economically thriving city.

CHAPTER V

Researcher Effects

Throughout my time in their classrooms, my role as a participant observer impacted both Ms. Davidson's and Mr. Schultz's YPAR initiatives with their students very different. In my pilot work Mr. Johnson relied heavily on me to do most of the facilitating for his students project; which, in many respects, defeated the purpose of my project and my role as a participant observer. However, during my time as a participant observer at MBTA, my presence generated unexpected outcomes, particularly in Mr. Schultz's classroom.

Throughout both projects I was able to provide technical support to Ms. Davidson and Mr. Schultz. I was there to answer questions these teachers had and also debrief about their students work for that day and help prepare for future lessons for their students projects. Furthermore, because Ms. Davidson had a large class size I shared responsibilities that helped to manage her students, such as escorting groups around the school to take pictures.

During my first meeting and training sessions with both teachers, I communicated what my role would be during their students' projects. And while Ms. Davidson seemed to really enjoy and appreciate my presence in her class, I was not convinced Mr. Schultz shared those same feelings. The charter school authorizer for MBTA was an individual I've known for over 25 years and because Mr. Schultz had knowledge of this I noticed his anxiety whenever I conducted observations in his class. Initially when I began my

observations in his class, I thought it was natural for a teacher to be nervous to have an outsider observe their instruction; however, my assumptions eventually changed after a few observations. On several occasions Mr. Schultz jokingly referred to me as a “spy” to his students and other teachers at MBTA. For example, there was one instance in which a staff member entered his classroom and asked if I was a student teacher. Mr. Schultz replied with an implied tone “that’s the young lady doing the research project” while nodding his head to indicate that the teacher already knew who I was. After prompting the teacher’s memory, Mr. Schultz then jokingly referred to me as a “spy” to the teacher.

I arrived about 20 minutes before Mr. Schultz’s class began. A few minutes later a staff member walked in and asked if I was a student teacher. Mr. Schultz responded and said “no, this is the young lady who was doing the research project from U of M” slowly nodding his head. He continued and said “she sits and writes stuff down (mimicking how I usually take notes in his class), sometimes I think she’s a spy taking things back to Mr. Kennedy, no I’m kidding!” (Field note, October 3, 2012)

In some instances when he would refer to me as a “spy” I would reiterate my objective for being there and assured him that I was not disclosing any details of his class with administrators or the school’s authorizer. Other times in his class, Mr. Schultz would also reiterate to his students not to behave in ways that would jeopardize his job at MBTA, this was something I mentioned earlier in this chapter.

I believe his perspective of my role in his classroom impacted the interactions I had with some of his students in his class. When doing YPAR with young people the first step, team building, is critical because it helps to establish cohesiveness and trust among group members and also provides a safe space to have dialogue around sensitive issues. Although Mr. Schultz facetiously referred to me as a “spy” in front of his students, I got the sense that prior to my arrival on observation days he would prep his students to be on

their best behavior because he thought I had an influence to compromise his job. During my first few weeks in his classroom his students seemed to avoid interacting with me which I thought was strange because in Ms. Davidson's class it only took a couple visits for her students to warm up to me. It wasn't until Mr. Schultz had a substitute teacher that his students started to become comfortable and interact with me.

Mr. Schultz had a substitute teacher because he was on a field trip. Today was the first day I felt that his students started to warm up to me. I had my first interaction with Martin today and was able to make small talk with him while he worked on his worksheet and he even offered me some of his snack; Tiffany asked me more about what U of M was like and what college was like, she also shared what colleges she was interested in applying to. David also spoke with me for the first time and shared with me his plans to enter into the army after graduating high school. (Field note, October 29, 2012)

Considering it took longer for me to "break the ice" with Mr. Schultz's students, over the course of my time in his classroom I always felt like I was an outside observer as opposed to being an active participant observer like I was in Ms. Davidson's class. I think my role in Mr. Schultz's class influenced how he facilitated and how his students engaged with the project. The goal of YPAR is to engage young people to participate in activities or projects that seek to improve inequities that impact their lives or the people around them; therefore it is critical for facilitators of YPAR initiatives to be enthusiastic and motivated to meaningfully engage young people in these projects or activities. This was something Mr. Schultz seemed to lack when he was facilitating his students project. When Mr. Schultz was beginning the project with his students, he seemed to be under the impression that I would be leading the facilitation because the first day of the project he said "it's all yours today and for however long you'll need".

Today I arrived early to see if Mr. Schultz had any last questions before beginning the project with his students. He responded smiling and said "nope! It's all yours today and for however long you'll need!" I responded and said

“what do you mean ‘it’s all mine?’” and he said “you can do the project with them”. I then explained again to him what my role for the project would be and Mr. Schultz looked somewhat disappointed and said “ok, so it won’t be you leading it, it will mostly be me and you will help and observe?” (Field note, March 25, 2013)

This was a similar misunderstanding in my pilot work. After I explained to Mr. Schultz again what my role would be during his students’ project, he seemed to be somewhat disappointed and disgruntled. While facilitating the project with his students on the first day he seemed to be a little more quick-tempered than usual. For example, while Mr. Schultz was asking his students questions about the project they were going to be doing, Ashley, who he typically allowed to be disruptive in his class, was looking for a pencil to be the recorder for the group. Having difficulty hearing his other students who were answering his questions, Mr. Schultz “shhhd” Ashley in a forceful tone; however, he apologized to her after she explained that she was only looking for a pencil to record notes for the group.

Mr. Schultz was moderating the discussion his students were having on which project they were going to do. Things started to get hectic when he suggested that they have a recorder to write notes about what they were discussing. His students started having side conversations, and I overheard Ashley volunteer to be the recorder but said she needed a pencil. She started asking her classmates if they had one she could borrow. Mr. Schultz was trying to hear what Aaron’s idea for the project but had difficulty hearing him because Ashley was talking at the same time asking other students for a pencil. In an agitated tone he “shhhd” Ashley pretty loud. She didn’t seem to like that because she responded and said “Mr. Schultz I was JUST asking for a pencil so I could take the notes!” They went back and forth arguing a little until Mr. Schultz apologized and said “I’m sorry Ashley, I didn’t know you were going to be the one taking notes”. Ashley replied sort of mocking him in a whiny voice and said “I don’t even feel like doing it anymore” and folded her arms. (Field note, March 25, 2013)

Throughout the course of the project, Mr. Schultz seemed to be uninterested in and distracted from taking an active role facilitating his students’ project. As I mentioned earlier, he would often be working at his desk while his students worked, but if he noticed

I wrote notes about his students disruptive behavior during the project, he would immediately go over and try to refocus his students. Additionally, during his students project he also seemed to place a higher priority on his students to complete their project for my dissertation rather than how influential a project of this nature could be for his students and the residents of Detroit. The following excerpt illustrates how Mr. Schultz placed a higher priority for my dissertation than the benefits for his students' community.

Today all his students except for Gina and Taylor, because they were drawing the map, were distracted from working on the project. Martin and Michelle were having a side conversation; Keith and David were talking about a video game; and Ashley and Tiffany were listening to their headphones. Mr. Schultz walked over and said "ok guys I need those of you who aren't working on the map to start working on different aspects of the project...we have to get this done for Ms. Winborne by the end of this month because she needs this for her project". (Field note, April 8, 2013)

This example demonstrates how Mr. Schultz seemed more concerned that his students fulfilled requirements for my dissertation than the potential implications of their project for the city of Detroit. Furthermore, I suspect that he placed a higher priority of his students completing my project for my dissertation because he feared losing his job at MBTA or facing scrutiny from the school principal if his students did not complete the project.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this current study was to investigate the ways in which teacher attitudes and practices as well as having a participant observer role impacted teacher facilitation during school-based YPAR initiatives. This final chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section I will recap the key findings from the current study including a revisit to discussion power sharing issues in YPAR. Next, I will discuss implications from the current study. Then I will highlight this study's limitations. I conclude with a discussion on future recommendations and final thoughts for future YPAR researchers.

Summary of Findings

Ms. Davidson's and Mr. Schultz's teaching attitudes and practices investigated in this study presented some challenges throughout their facilitation of a school-based YPAR initiative. These teachers' attitudes and practices impacted their facilitation during their students' projects on varying levels and to different degrees.

In the beginning of their students' projects, Ms. Davidson seemed to have low expectations for her students while Mr. Schultz set high expectations for his students. However, once they began to facilitate their students' projects their expectations seemed to both switch. For example, Ms. Davidson initially did not want to include all of her students in the project because she feared it would be difficult to engage all of her students due to their varying levels of learning and differences in work ethic. However, after I re-emphasized how important it was to include all of her students she reconsidered

and decided to include all of them. She even placed higher expectations on her students during the project by challenging them to think of more ways to improve their school and also pushed some of her students to learn to use advanced presentation software (e.g. Prezi).

Mr. Schultz, on the other hand, began his facilitation by communicating his expectations of his students for the project. For example, he emphasized to his students the importance of having a strong work ethic and being able to work well with others in a group despite their differences; however, over the course of the project he seemed to make exceptions to many of his initial expectations of his students. For instance, his students had a difficult time incorporating each other's ideas into the project and after discussing their group's issue they decided that the best solution would be for them to split into two groups. His students ultimately ended up working independently from one another which contradicted his expectations of his students. In Ms. Davidson's class and in my pilot work, these teachers' students both had group conflicts, however both teachers guided their students in problem solving their issues so that they could continue working on their projects.

Additionally, his students did not comply with Mr. Schultz's work ethic expectations. There were only a couple of students who were fairly consistent with working on their project, others had an extremely difficult time working consistently on the project due to various distractions (e.g. cell phones, outside students interrupting Mr. Schultz's class, discussing things unrelated to the project, completing work for other classes, etc.). Furthermore, there were a couple of students who did not submit their work for the project on time, even after being instructed to by Mr. Schultz several times.

Much like any other teacher, Mr. Schultz and Ms. Davidson had their issues with classroom management this year. While Ms. Davidson had a few missed steps, Mr. Schultz's struggle with classroom management seemed to be incessant. Mr. Schultz had personal relationships with some of his students, which often resulted in these students taking advantage of their relationship with him. They often did not respect his classroom rules which made it difficult for him to manage their behavior whenever they were being disruptive or distracted during the project. Additionally, there was one student in particular who exhibited the highest level of disrespect towards him making it extremely difficult for Mr. Schultz to manage her behavior while facilitating the project.

Ms. Davidson also experienced disruptions and disrespect from her students; however, she seemed to deal with those situations much better than Mr. Schultz. Similar to Mr. Schultz, Ms. Davidson also developed personal relationships with most of her students. Throughout my time in her classroom I also observed her implementing several disciplinary interventions to control her students' misbehavior towards each other. Although she was inconsistent implementing these interventions, she never gave into her students misbehavior. During the project when her students were misbehaving she made sure to correct their behavior immediately so that other students would not become too distracted from working on the project. And despite there being cases in which her correcting a student's behavior would sometimes make them upset to the point where he or she did not want to continue working on the project for that day, these events were typically anomalies. Most of her students complied whenever she corrected their behavior during the project.

Teacher power in this study was rather unique because both teachers were on opposite ends of the spectrum. Ms. Davidson had no problem voicing her opinion about school matters. Mr. Schultz on the other hand, was extremely apprehensive about speaking out on school matters due to what he witnessed in the past and also because of what he experienced from the administration. Thus, when it came to their students' project, much remained consistent.

Ms. Davidson made every effort to provide her students with the resources needed to complete their project (e.g. purchasing new presentation software, and reserving the library to use computers). Mr. Schultz, however, was reluctant to request resources and help (e.g. library or discipline) during his students' project for a couple reasons. During my time in his class he often talked about how he was scrutinized the previous year by the administration because of his struggles with classroom management. Furthermore, he seemed apprehensive to ask for additional resources and help (particularly with classroom management) because of how he witnessed a teacher lose their job at MBTA because they spoke out about issues at the school.

Finally, my role as a participant observer impacted Ms. Davidson's and Mr. Schultz's facilitation of their students' projects very differently. Ms. Davidson took full advantage of my help for her students' project. I was able to remind Ms. Davidson of the core objectives for YPAR and also assist with some lesson planning before beginning the project with her students. I also shared responsibilities with Ms. Davidson during her students' project, by accompanying her students around the school to take pictures and assist students if Ms. Davidson was busy helping other students.

Mr. Schultz, on the other hand, had a lot of anxiety with me conducting observations in his class. In addition to referring to me as a spy, during the project he constantly reminded his students to be on their best behavior because I was present; that they needed to make sure to complete the project for my dissertation instead of benefiting the city most of his students lived in; and seemed to only correct his students behavior if he noticed me taking notes about it or if it was disruptive to the principal due to his classroom being directly above his office.

Revisit to Power Sharing Issue

Previous YPAR researchers have reported power sharing issues between youth researchers and adults throughout various aspects of the YPAR process. Furthermore, these researchers have reported that even when they explain the importance of youth voice in YPAR initiatives to adults, youth continue to experience power constraints throughout some aspect of the YPAR process (e.g. Kohfeldt et al., 2011; Ozer et al., 2013).

In the current study, there were no major issues with either teacher refusing to share power with their students. In both of their training sessions I made sure to emphasize how and why youth voice was an important aspect for their students' projects. Even though Ms. Davidson was apprehensive to include all of her students in the project before actually beginning it; after re-emphasizing why it was so critical to include all her students, she reconsidered. With her students, Ms. Davidson's facilitation approach was a combination of the symbolic and pluralistic participation in Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker's (2010) typology of youth participation. She did a pretty exceptional job facilitating her students' project, especially given this was her first implementation of a

YPAR initiative. Ms. Davidson provided an opportunity for her students to share concerns about their school and develop ideas about how to improve their school with the YPAR initiative as their final project for their social studies unit. She provided resources necessary to help her students complete their project. Whenever her students needed guidance, help, or support she stepped in to provide assistance, but stepped aside to allow her students to continue leading their project.

Ms. Davidson had a vested interest in her students project; she constantly reminded her students how important what they were doing was for them in addition to their fellow peers, which seemed to motivate her students to take the project seriously. She even served as an advocate for her students during their project. At a staff meeting Ms. Davidson shared her students mock project with the other teachers and administrations at MBTA in hopes they would begin to address some of their concerns. Furthermore, she was present at the school board meeting to support the student who presented her class' concerns and ideas for improvement at MBTA.

Mr. Schultz used more of an independent participation approach from Wong, Zimmerman, and Parker's model while facilitating his students' project. During the first two sessions of his students' project he was a very active facilitator when they were deciding what they would do for their project. He actually sat with his students and helped them think through their ideas. However, after deciding on what they would do for their project, he was very much hands off and only intervened when absolutely necessary. For example, when his students experienced their conflict (e.g. not listening to each other's ideas) which ultimately ended in them dividing into two groups, Mr. Schultz seemed to intervene at a point where his students were too frustrated to try and work

through their issues. I think if Mr. Schultz had been actively facilitating his students' project instead of doing "check-ins" and going back to his desk to continue doing his own work, he may have been able to help his students work through this issue before it escalated. Even when he tried to help his students work through their issue, he seemed to give them much autonomy with finally deciding to split into two groups, even though their decision contradicted his expectations of his students working together on the project.

While YPAR is an approach best led by youth to promote youth activism, adults still must maintain their role as an active facilitator. During YPAR initiatives adult facilitators can provide resources that may not be accessible by youth, social support, wisdom, serve as a role model, and also use their experiences for them to learn from. Throughout adolescence young people have much to develop and often need guidance from adults. YPAR is not a technique in which youth should be thrown into without active facilitation from adults because without the proper guidance youth can become frustrated or disengaged. In Mr. Schultz's case I think he gave his students too much independence during their project, which was detrimental for their group). Instead of encouraging his students to try and work through their problems working together to develop a plan to revitalize the city they all lived in, he seemed to just allow them to give up and work independently. Furthermore, he seemed to only want to empower his students in his classroom because he never emphasized their action step which was taking their ideas to city officials. Instead, he had them each complete a final report addressing a series of questions, with one being "how would you use the information and ideas about your mock city to inform governmental policy".

Implications

The findings from this current study suggest that the teacher attitudes and practices investigated all impacted the school-based YPAR initiatives implemented by Ms. Davidson and Mr. Schultz. Teacher power, however, is a concept that warrants further investigation. It might be assumed that adults who decide to engage young people in school-based YPAR initiatives feel empowered themselves to address concerns that impact their lives; but this is not always the case, particularly for the current study.

In Levinson's (2010) five reforms of civic education, she suggests that urban teachers should be provided opportunities to engage in civic learning and decision making at their respective school so that they in turn can teach and empower their students to do the same. More specifically, Levinson argues that "teachers in poor urban schools are often as civically disempowered as their students. Urban teachers work in institutions that are often incredibly bureaucratic, that discourage and even sometimes punish autonomous decision making, and that foster a culture of compliance rather than collaboration" (p. 353). She continues and states that these types of environments are not conducive for building civic skills or activism for adults in these environments, or youth for that matter. Mr. Schultz in the current study provides evidence for Levinson's very argument.

Many schools have a top-down hierarchy in which teachers and students may feel powerless. However, if teachers are looking to engage their students in YPAR initiatives, it is critical for teachers to first be empowered themselves if they are seeking to empower young people. During my time in Mr. Schultz's classroom there was no doubt that he cared for his students overall and educational well-being and wanted the best for his

students. But he seemed to always have a defeatist attitude when it came to dealing with short comings at MBTA. When his class was denied access to the computer to finish their project, instead of asking for access to the library where additional computers were, he instead said they would need to figure out a different way to access a computer. When his students' misbehavior became too overwhelming for him, I sometimes asked him about sending these students out to the office with referrals, he would always reiterate how the office instructed the teachers to "just deal with it on their own". And even though Ms. Davidson had to deal with the same issues from the office, this never stopped her from fighting to make administration deal with her misbehaving students even if her fight was unsuccessful.

Furthermore, Mr. Schultz had much anxiety whenever his students misbehaved in ways that would disrupt the principal due to his classroom being directly over his office. Moreover, he was extremely intimidated by my presence in his classroom. Realizing the strong relationship I had with MBTA's school authorizer could be very intimidating to Mr. Schultz, why was it that Ms. Davidson was able to get past my role at MBTA and continue with her typical daily teaching practices? More specifically, why was she more successful in implementing her YPAR initiative with her students than Mr. Schultz? I believe it was because she felt empowered to speak her voice at the school regardless of what the consequences were, and therefore was able to motivate her students to do the same during their YPAR initiative. This was something she also spoke about in her interview with me. While I believe the other teacher attitudes and practices investigated in the current study all impacted these school-based YPAR initiatives, I believe teacher

power warrants further investigation. You cannot expect teachers who lack empowerment within themselves to try and empower our future leaders through YPAR initiatives.

Limitations

The first limitation for the current study was my role as a participant observer. Researchers in the field of YPAR have consistently stressed the importance and benefits of being a participant observer when implementing YPAR initiatives (e.g. Berg, 2004). For the current study my participant observer role seemed to gravely impact Mr. Schultz's facilitation due to my relationship with MBTA's school authorizer. Yet I believe Mr. Schultz would have still experienced some sort of anxiety even if I did not know the school's authorizer as well as I did.

Additionally, as a participant observer in Ms. Davidson's class it was sometimes difficult to take notes while interacting with her students. Therefore, most times I would have to take notes after leaving the school which could potentially result in me failing to remember an important event that happened during my observations.

The second limitation of the current study is that data are based on two YPAR initiatives within the same school setting. As such, it could potentially be difficult to extend these same findings to another classroom or school setting. However, I would like to note that the preliminary findings from my pilot work helped to inform my dissertation work. However, this limitation has also been discussed in other YPAR studies (e.g. Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011; Kohfeldt & Langhout, 2012).

The third limitation of my current study was the limited time frame both teachers had to complete these projects. Previous work has indicated that it can take months to complete a YPAR initiative and therefore allotting enough time for teacher to implement

can be vital to successfully complete a project with students (e.g. Berg, 2004; Kirshner, 2008). However, depending on the nature of the project it can sometimes be difficult to determine how long a project can take, not to mention that the YPAR process is often cyclical and can be longstanding.

Future Directions and Concluding Thoughts

The research focusing on YPAR continues to be a thriving field. The data presented in this study make three recommendations for future researchers. The first is to continue exploring this issue of power sharing during YPAR initiatives. Although the current study did not experience many issues with these two teachers sharing power with their students, there is still a need for further investigation to understand adults thought processes as to why this phenomenon is occurring. For the present study, I believe the training the teachers experienced as well as my role as a participant observer helped to serve as a reminder to the teachers the importance of allowing youth voice and leadership in YPAR initiatives.

Secondly, adding on to Levinson's suggestion of providing teachers with opportunities for civic engagement at schools, I think this suggestion should be incorporated as an integral part for training teachers seeking to implement YPAR initiatives with young people. How can you expect teachers to empower students, when they themselves feel powerless in an environment in which they are trying to implement a YPAR initiative? I believe researchers who are planning to collaborate with teachers to implement YPAR initiatives, need to first develop their own sense of agency before seeking to promote empowerment within youth. When adults have actually experienced

what it takes to be an activist in schools, they in turn can share their knowledge and wisdom with young people on what it takes to solve inequities that impact their lives.

Lastly, I think there is a need for longitudinal studies to investigate the ways in which YPAR initiatives promote future activism. Previous researchers have begun to develop models that measure adolescents future activism (e.g. Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003; Watts & Guessous, 2006); however, there lacks empirical evidence that investigates how YPAR as a technique promotes activism into adulthood.

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