

**Respect by Design:
How Different Educational Systems Interact with Mutual Respect in Classrooms**

by

Whitney M. Hegseth

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Donald Peurach, Chair
Professor David K. Cohen (deceased), Co-Chair
Assistant Professor Allison Alexy
Professor Deborah Loewenberg Ball
Professor James Spillane, Northwestern University

Whitney M. Hegseth

whegseth@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-1199-7462

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DEDICATION

To the memory of a beloved mentor and friend,

David K. Cohen.

This work exists and persists because you respected me first.

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This project was a labor of love. It would have been impossible, and certainly less enjoyable, if I had not been supported by many wise and big-hearted individuals. I acknowledge below those who played integral roles in helping me to succeed, and to thrive, while doing the very work that lights a fire in my belly.

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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic and comparative study examines interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. I define mutual respect as the work of intervening on those power asymmetries typically found in classrooms — both between teachers and students, and among students — by way of according children increased equality, autonomy, and equity. I partnered with four elementary schools, situated across two educational systems (i.e., Montessori and International Baccalaureate) and two national contexts (i.e., Washington, D.C. and Toronto). Through participant observation, interviews, video-cued multivocal ethnography, and document collection, I analyzed: 1) the ways in which educational systems design for mutual respect; 2) how teachers understand and manage mutual respect in practice; and 3) the experiences of teachers and leaders as they manage designs for mutual respect in practice.

Overall, the findings from this study provide clearer understanding of how and why systems might design for mutual respect, and how and why approaches might differ across systems. What is more, the findings suggest that a system's relationship with its environment can shape the trajectory of mutual respect within the designs of a system, the practical logics of teachers, and the social contexts of classrooms. This study contributes an analytic framework — informed by the literature and elaborated via empirical study — for describing, comparing, and reasoning about the relationship between educational systems and increased equality, autonomy, and equity for students in classrooms.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Locating Mutual Respect in Educational Systems

In recent years, there have been varied efforts to disrupt the status quo of schooling. This study probes the intersection of two such efforts.

The first effort addresses the weak center that is common in U.S. public education.¹ Historically, central offices of schools and school districts have largely delegated to teachers the work of organizing and improving upon classroom instruction. Without coordinated guidance and support from these central offices, students' experiences of ambitious and socially just teaching are likely to vary — widely — given differences among teachers.

As foundational as this balkanized approach to schooling may be in the United States, the landscape is changing. Increasingly, researchers are reporting evidence of school districts that are transforming themselves into *educational systems*.² By educational system, I mean a group of schools either created by or allied with a central office, with the schools and central office hub working together to organize, enact, and improve upon teaching and learning in classrooms. These systems have stronger centers, which can support more excellent and equitable instruction across classrooms and schools. In the pilot study, I examined four different educational systems, attending to the relationship between their hubs and the instruction I observed in classrooms.³

The second effort to disrupt the status quo of schooling addresses an erosion of respect, and at a moment in time when society grows ever more diverse, and ever more polarized. A decline in respect is as much a scholastic problem as it is a societal one. Research indicates that

when students experience respect in school, there is more equitable achievement, and an increase in student engagement, resilience, and self-confidence.⁴ What is more, educational scholars suggest that affording students more respect may better prepare them to be democratic citizens who engage productively in conflict resolution.⁵

Despite – or perhaps in response to – mounting disrespect in society, in recent years there has been a sustained press to treat and teach children with more *mutual respect* in schools. I define mutual respect as the work of intervening on those power asymmetries typically found in classrooms — both between teachers and students, and among students — by way of according children increased equality, autonomy, and equity.⁶ Such efforts range from treating students as sense-makers to more culturally responsive pedagogy.⁷ So, even as the practice of mutual respect remains more exception than norm in schools, the landscape is, again, changing.⁸

At the onset of this dissertation, I selected two systems from the pilot study to further examine interactions between system hubs and classroom practice. In my early analysis of the data, a theme emerged regarding what these systems were attempting with their stronger centers: Among other things, they were designing for increased symmetry in the daily interactions between teachers and students, and among students. These two systems were replacing variable attempts at mutual respect with more systemic efforts, and they were doing so at scale.

In short, these educational systems were disrupting the status quo of schooling in the aforementioned two ways. And so, rather than focusing on the disruption that is system-building *or* the disruption that is more mutually respectful teaching and learning, this dissertation sits at the intersection of the two by examining those educational systems that make mutual respect central to their improvement agenda.

From this study, we will learn more about the relationship between systems and mutual respect in classrooms by tracing mutual respect in: 1) the designs of systems, 2) the practical logics of teachers, and 3) the social contexts of classrooms, as co-created by students, teachers, and school leaders.⁹ Further, in this study, we will begin to appreciate how a system's relationship with its environment can shape the trajectory of these designs, logics, and social contexts in ways that hold consequence for students' daily experiences of equality, autonomy, and equity.

But I get ahead of myself. Before diving into the details of this theory-building research, I first present a scenario from the pilot study, one which helped motivate my examination of interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. In this scenario, I describe a system where, even as the central office hub grows increasingly involved in guiding and supporting instruction, it takes a more conventionally balkanized approach when incorporating respect into classrooms. And so, we begin our journey with Mrs. Hayes.¹⁰

Respect on the Margins

Mrs. Hayes is a beloved 4th grade teacher.

She has been teaching at her public elementary school for over fifteen years, 4th grade for all save one of those years. Mrs. Hayes is appreciated by her school leader, admired by her colleagues, and adored by her students. Rather than teaching the same thing, in the same way, with every passing year, she continually attempts new methods and lessons to engage her students. She reports Pinterest is her best friend. Mrs. Hayes applied for a grant to get puzzle piece furniture for her classroom, affording students more flexibility over where they work. She keeps her moveable classroom wall open, joining efforts with another 4th grade teacher so their students have more peers and adults with whom they can connect. Students are excited to come

to school for her project-based approach to instruction; they televise their research on whether or not chocolate milk is nutritional, and present their coffeehouse poetry to an external audience. While these children are at school, Mrs. Hayes makes them feel known, and loved. She was voted Teacher of the Year, but she is far too humble to admit that to you.

The public elementary school where Mrs. Hayes teaches is situated in the suburbs of a Midwestern metropolitan area. The school is K-4 with fewer than 500 students. Every morning, the principal opens car doors, greeting children by name, knowing whether a sibling should be accompanying them. The students appear excited to be at school, even the approximately 1/3 of them who speak a different language at home, some of whom are very new to both the country and the English language. Every other week, the older children exhibit genuine care for their kindergarten buddies as they hold hands to guide them to assemblies; they evidence sincere excitement when cheering for a classmate who receives an award at said assembly. This school used to have an open-space model; frequent collaboration is part of its institutional memory, upheld by the more than 1/3 of the school's teachers who worked at the school then, and now. Parents value that this school was recently recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School, but the principal is far too humble to boast about the award.¹¹ Let's call this school Fair Oaks Elementary School.

Fair Oaks Elementary School, in turn, is situated in a public school district, which functions as its de facto educational system. It is at the district level that various resources are assembled (e.g., the Common Core State Standards, Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model, professional development) to guide and support instruction across the schools in the district.

With the above context in mind, we can now discuss how Mrs. Hayes worked to increase respect for and from her students.¹² She worried character education was being squeezed out of

the increasingly demanding curriculum at her school. Without such an education, Mrs. Hayes feared children would not learn how to take ownership over their behavior and learning; they would not learn how to be “one of the good guys” to the diverse people they encountered. Mrs. Hayes was empowered by the teacher leadership initiative her district was a part of in the 1990s. She was intrigued by a book a colleague shared with her, Stephen Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.¹³ And she was motivated by student misbehavior at Fair Oaks, and the staff’s desire to explicitly teach children to be better students. In response to all of this, Mrs. Hayes worked with colleagues to fold social-emotional learning into the curriculum. They did this before fully realizing there was a framework and *Leader in Me* model for schools, based on the book’s principles. And so, they made *Leader in Me* their own.

How, exactly, did Mrs. Hayes build up *Leader in Me* at her school? She and a colleague came up with the idea to have “Groves” every other week, where each teacher would have a multi-age group of students who would remain in that teacher’s Grove throughout their elementary career.¹⁴ Students would spend those roughly 40 minutes every other week learning a common lesson related to one of the *7 Habits* (e.g., “Be proactive,” “Seek first to understand, then to be understood”). Mrs. Hayes created most of these lessons for the first few years; however, she is quick to acknowledge Groves are a labor of love for the whole staff. The specialist teachers sacrifice their prep time every other week to make Groves possible, as this is the only time all students are available. Groves are followed by brief school assemblies, where each class takes turns presenting something related to one of the *7 Habits*, and where students are recognized for being leaders: helping a peer with math, or organizing a classroom material without being asked.

Fast-forward more than five years. Groves, assemblies, and the explicit teaching of the 7 *Habits* are still in place. Not only that, a few years after it began at Fair Oaks, other elementary schools in the district decided they, too, wanted to have Groves. And so, *Leader in Me*, and Fair Oaks' approach to implementing it, was adopted by the educational system. The superintendent reports *Leader in Me* is part of the district's social justice pillar — which focuses on the idea that every student has a voice and feels connected — and is pursued alongside its academic initiatives. The principal of Fair Oaks has changed, but the new leader incorporates 7 *Habits* language into his morning announcements (“make it a great day”), assemblies (“teamwork makes the dream work”), and the leadership chats he teaches to all classes every 12 weeks on topics like growth mindset. One sees references to being a leader in student work posted along school hallways, and one finds “YET” posters in every classroom. Teachers report students use 7 *Habits* language daily; kindergarteners implore their peers to “synergize,” 5th graders share how they “sharpen the saw” on weekends. The *Leader in Me* mindset is a part of these children.

In conversations with Mrs. Hayes, she marvels at how *Leader in Me* has grown at her school. There is institutionalized time every other week for this learning. Thanks largely to her, there are ready-made lessons for teachers to enact during that time. Initially, Mrs. Hayes purchased the necessary supplies for those lessons, but now there are dedicated resources for *Leader in Me*, such as a budget and parent volunteers. The 7 *Habits* language is pervasive throughout Fair Oaks, seeping into academic and social conversations alike. The rest of the district has noticed, and the practice of Groves has spread. In many ways, Mrs. Hayes helped to build something that is a resounding success at her school and in her district, something that can help teachers when attempting to bolster respect in classrooms.

And yet.

Fissures Between Respect on a System's Margins, Teaching and Learning at its Core

Based on what has been described thus far, one could argue efforts to cultivate respect in Mrs. Hayes' classroom and school are now being systemically supported. Her school district has named *Leader in Me* as one of its priorities, and the district is helping to spread Groves and the 7 *Habits* language across its elementary and middle schools. Even so, this district support is fragile for at least two reasons.

First, even as Mrs. Hayes' system adopted *Leader in Me* and the practice of Groves, the district continued to locate it along the margins of teaching and learning. As widely-used as this language and mindset are within and beyond Fair Oaks, teachers and leaders make clear that — much like weekly art or physical education class — there is a dedicated time for *Leader in Me* every other week, and it is a pillar different from the academic initiatives in the district. One Fair Oaks teacher reports that, while the common language is very helpful, she wishes she could embed this approach more deeply into her teaching. It has been a few years since there was a district training, and it would be nice to glean more ideas for how to infuse the 7 *Habits* into instruction, giving students increased ownership and connection throughout the school day, as well as during Groves.¹⁵

Second, though *Leader in Me* is now a system-wide priority, a few key individuals continue to determine whether and how it will be enacted and sustained. *Leader in Me* has grown stronger over the years, gaining a budget and traction throughout the district, but what if Mrs. Hayes retires? Who then will create the ready-made lessons for other Fair Oaks teachers to enact? What if, a few years ago, the newly hired principal at Fair Oaks had been unsupportive of *Leader in Me*, and didn't protect institutionalized time for it every other week? What if the district moves on to a different social justice initiative, and — ever concerned with equity across

its schools — the superintendent encourages Fair Oaks to adopt that new initiative? Any one of these scenarios, all of which are common for schools and districts, could compromise *Leader in Me*. Because the initiative is attached at the margins, rather than being embedded into the instructional core, changes for one of the above individuals could result in *Leader in Me* becoming detached from the entire school and/or district.¹⁶

Let us thus consider the implications of this case for teachers and schools across the U.S., for here we observe some recognizable themes. Regardless of whether a teacher is similar to Mrs. Hayes, or a school is similar to Fair Oaks, many teachers and schools share some important commonalities with this public school case. First, there is the increasingly common aim of teaching and according children more respect throughout the school day.¹⁷ Second, there is a common fragility underlying how those aims are often supported by the surrounding educational system: These systems make provisions for such initiatives along the sidelines of classroom life, and – either explicitly or implicitly – delegate to teachers the complex task of integrating such initiatives into their daily work.

This bricolage approach to school improvement – where schools and districts bring in various initiatives to address myriad educational priorities, without necessarily integrating these initiatives to one another, or to a common conception of what teaching and learning should look like – is a well-known tale.¹⁸ What we do *not* see, in cases like Fair Oaks, is a system-level examination of how respect for children might be integrated into core conceptions of instruction and schooling. Nor do we see efforts to design respect into the interdependent components of the system (e.g., how teachers are evaluated, classrooms are organized, or students are assessed), thus enabling respect to be continually reinforced in the minutiae of classroom life. What we instead see, in Fair Oaks and in many schools, is an individual finding a resource such as *Leader*

in Me, building it into the margins of teaching and learning at her school, and then working extremely hard to ensure sustained use of that resource.

Yet when an initiative like *Leader in Me* is attached to a system, versus being embedded into its core designs for instruction and organization, a whole host of outcomes can occur. When an initiative is located on the sidelines of a system, it is often teachers who must incorporate said initiative into classroom life, and into their teaching and learning. How teachers do this, whether they do this, varies.

Further, it is often teachers who must decide whether and how the many ‘sideline initiatives’ in a system work together, as well as through their classroom instruction. For example, in the Fair Oaks case, alongside *Leader in Me*, some teachers are piloting project-based learning, while others are getting trained at the district in culturally responsive pedagogy. Thus, district resources aimed at teaching and treating children with respect abound. But how teachers work through the harmonies and discords of these multiple approaches to respect, or whether they simply choose their preferred approach and leave the others at the margins of classroom life, again varies.

Finally, when an initiative sits at the margins of a system, it often falls on those individuals who build or bring in such attachments — like Mrs. Hayes — to expend enormous amounts of energy and time if they wish to support coherent and stable implementation of the initiative across classrooms. How and whether this is done is not only variable, but also volatile, given its undue reliance on already overworked individuals.

The case of Mrs. Hayes is thus an important one to consider, because even as the central hub of her educational system offers increasing guidance and support for instruction, it maintains a status quo approach to respect.¹⁹ When educational systems support increased respect for

children by attaching new initiatives to their margins — thereby letting teachers determine how, exactly, to integrate such initiatives into their daily work — this leaves a system open to teacher-by-teacher differences in how respect is taught and fostered in classrooms. This, in turn, risks incoherence in students’ experiences of respect throughout the school day.

From the Literature: Distinguishing Between Respect and Mutual Respect

As mentioned above, Mrs. Hayes and the educational system in which she is situated were part of the pilot study preceding this dissertation. From that pilot study, I selected two systems to continue to examine the relationship between system designs and classroom practice. In early phases of data collection and analysis, I observed a pattern, which then prompted a review of the literature discussing respect, and respecting children in educational settings.

In putting early empirical data in conversation with this literature, I was able to more clearly draw distinctions between: 1) respect versus mutual respect, and 2) respect layered onto classroom life versus respect embedded into classroom life. I elaborate upon these distinctions below, as they brought the central aim of this dissertation into sharper focus.

I found I could organize the reviewed literature into two different categories: one that explicitly attended to respect, and one that implicitly attended to mutual respect.²⁰ Each category of literature had its own framing of respect. The framing in the literature that explicitly discussed respect resembled what I found at Fair Oaks Elementary. The framing in the other body of literature — literature that implicitly discussed mutual respect while explicitly discussing instructional improvement — provided me with language to describe those patterns emerging from early analysis of the dissertation data.

In the literature explicitly discussing respect in schools, I found many different ways of both defining and enacting respect. Rather than enumerating its many possible meanings, I

summarize here three underlying themes I observed in the discussions around respect and children:

1. Respect is a means for solving problems in educational environments.
2. Relatedly, the onus of respecting is often on the children. It is the children who should respect adults or their peers more.
3. Respect is something that can be layered onto existing educational practices and environments.

For example, some schools seeking a ‘respect solution’ are doing so because they wish to ameliorate bullying, increase tolerance, combat student disengagement, or generally work toward school turnaround.²¹ By bringing in explicit teaching around respect, these schools are hoping students will improve; that they will become better behaved, more engaged, more....respectful. Finally, many of these respect solutions are programs, much like *Leader in Me*, which can be added on to an existing way of schooling, combined with a whole array of other initiatives and/or academic standards.²² These character education programs, or social-emotional learning models, are not holistic ways of schooling themselves.

In revisiting the Fair Oaks case, I observed a framing nearly identical to what I found in the literature explicitly discussing respect. First, Mrs. Hayes and her school leader implied that *7 Habits* was initiated at Fair Oaks to solve a problem: student behavior. Second, in discussions with those at Fair Oaks, *Leader in Me* was framed as a way to intentionally teach children how to be better students. So while these teachers and leaders certainly aim to treat students respectfully, their focus was on the children; it was they, versus the adults, who needed to improve. Finally, Mrs. Hayes and the school sought out a character education program, which they institutionalized outside of core instructional time. Less frequently even than art or music class,

this character education takes place every other week. So though the common language and mindset pervade the school day, *Leader in Me* is perceived as something that predominantly addresses school culture alongside, and not integral to, the academic initiatives at Fair Oaks.

Thus, much like the framing I found in the respect literature, *Leader in Me* at Fair Oaks was brought in to solve a problem, the onus was on the students to behave better after receiving the solution, and the design was to attach *Leader in Me* to existing instruction.

In addition to the above literature, however, there was literature that was useful when considering possibilities to more fully integrate respect into classrooms. Generally put, this other category of literature was concerned with instructional improvement. Though much if not all of the educational practices described in this literature could be described as respectful, these studies focused on matters like relational equity, ambitious teaching, authentic instruction, and culturally relevant *or* humanizing *or* emancipatory pedagogy.²³ In this literature, I observed a different set of themes:

1. *Mutual* respect is an *assumed right* for all those in the classroom.
2. Relatedly, the onus of respecting is *on everyone, and it is adults* who should think carefully about how to give and model mutual respect to children.
3. Respect is something to be *infused into* educational practices and environments.

From this instructional improvement literature, I began to distinguish between respect, and mutual respect. To respect could mean any of the following, and more: 1) to have due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others; 2) to avoid harming or interfering with; 3) to deeply admire someone or something; or 4) to agree to abide by (i.e., respect-as-*deference*). In reviewing the above definitions, one observes that respecting someone does not require one to

intervene on longstanding power asymmetries. In fact, respecting someone may reinforce such asymmetries, particularly between two parties who are vastly different in age or ability.

Mutual respect, on the other hand, is the work of creating more symmetry in unlikely places, like classrooms.²⁴ To mutually respect is to appreciate and ensure increased equality, autonomy, and equity, even for those much younger, with much less context than you.²⁵

Mutual respect, and how it might be supported systemically and at scale, is a central interest in this study.²⁶

The instructional improvement literature offered examples of how teachers and schools embed mutual respect into instructional practice and organization, as opposed to thinking about respect solely in terms of social relations, and as something to layer onto the instructional core.

Based on this literature, I consider the work of mutual respect to involve disrupting commonplace beliefs, structures, resources, practices, and interactions in schools, in efforts to intervene on power asymmetries between teachers and students, and among students. Table 1.1 offers examples of such work from the literature.

Table 1.1

Embedding Mutual Respect

A Mutually Respectful...	Example of How Mutual Respect Is Embedded into Instruction and Organization
Belief	Instead of viewing the questions and opinions of historically marginalized children as a disruption to be disciplined, and instead of viewing their vernacular language as something to combat, educators might take as axiomatic the brilliance of these children, perceiving their questions and language to be resources key to the classroom’s work. ²⁷
Structure	Employing heterogeneous grouping, to ensure all students - regardless of ability - have a role and see themselves as responsible for their peers’ learning. ²⁸
Resource	Folding students’ stories and experiences into the curriculum, which not only highlights and values their multilingual and multimodal capabilities, but also educates their peers and teacher more about the diversity of human experience. ²⁹

Practice	Open forum discussions, where inclusive participation is the aim, and where students help to create the rules. ³⁰
Interaction	Teachers responding to students' questions with a question, or encouraging students to look to one another for answers and assistance, thus forsaking their role as the arbiter of right and wrong answers, and endowing students with the authority to reason and revise their way to conclusions. ³¹

In sum, the instructional improvement literature demonstrated some ways in which teachers can treat and teach students with more mutual respect within their instructional core. Such ideas are what some Fair Oaks teachers reported wanting, so as to better infuse *Leader in Me* into the teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Designing Mutual Respect Into the Center of Systems and Classrooms

The literature and pilot data both offered ideas around how teachers might move respect from the sidelines of teaching and learning to its core. And yet, I found little to no discussion of how *educational systems* might attempt to embed *mutual* respect into classroom instruction and organization. In the literature and pilot data, both, one finds the onus is often on teachers to determine how to respect in a deep and lasting way, just as the onus is often on students to be more respectful. What appears to be needed, then, is a more detailed understanding of *systemic* supports for teachers as they work to respect children *in more mutual ways*. And so I take the following question forward:

How might educational systems support mutual respect by locating it in, and making it central to, their core ideas for instruction and schooling?

Now, more than ever, is an appropriate time to ask such a question, and to wonder at the possibility of educational systems designed for mutual respect. At this time, leaders at the highest level are sowing discord and normalizing intolerance more and more with every passing day. What is more, some people are falling in step with these leaders, while many others are simply

becoming numb to this new standard of disrespect, and complacent with those power asymmetries baked into our society's bones.

At this time, the ability to respect across difference is ever more urgent; the work of symmetry is ever more pressing.

And so, by asking the above question, and seeking an answer to it, I find a path forward, hopeful that mutual respect can be cultivated in and for children, positioning them to someday mend our increasingly torn social fabric.

¹ See, for example: Peurach, Cohen, Yurkofsky, and Spillane (2019).

² See, for example: Childress, Doyle, and Thomas (2009); Duke (2005); Peurach, Cohen, Yurkofsky, and Spillane (2019).

³ In this cross-system comparative pilot study, I examined how individuals and schools interact with their surrounding educational system around matters of teaching and learning. I conducted interviews and observations across four systems (Aspire Charter Management Organization (CMO), high-functioning public, International Baccalaureate, and Montessori) and three states (Western, Eastern, and Midwestern United States). I also collected documents for analysis.

⁴ See, for example: Boaler (2006); Cothran and Ennis (2000); Jones (2002); Pierce (1994); Theron, Liebenberg, and Malindi (2014).

⁵ See Burgh and Yorshansky (2011).

⁶ In Chapter Two, I will discuss and define mutual respect in greater detail, offering definitions for its three dimensions (i.e., equality, autonomy, and equity), as well as explanations for why these dimensions are included in the term. Two scholars were especially helpful when defining mutual respect in this study (Goodman, 2009; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000).

⁷ See, for example, discussions of treating students as sense-makers (Hintz and Tyson, 2015; Lampert, 1986) and discussions of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). I offer more examples of increased mutual respect for students in later parts of this chapter.

⁸ See, for example: Boaler, (2006); Gutierrez, (2001).

⁹ In the findings chapters, I will explain what I mean, exactly, by design (Chapter Four), practical logic (Chapter Five), and social context (Chapter Six).

¹⁰ Discussions of Mrs. Hayes and her school are informed by interviews and observations conducted in one of the pilot educational systems (i.e., high-functioning public), which I did not select for further study in the dissertation. Though talk of mutual respect and systems is my own framing, specifics about Mrs. Hayes, her school, and their adoption of the *Leader in Me* program are all reported in this chapter as they were to me. I rarely use quotation marks, even when reporting direct quotations from participants, so as to avoid disrupting narrative flow. I use pseudonyms.

¹¹ From the US Department of Education: "The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Every year the U. S. Department of Education seeks out and celebrates great American schools, schools demonstrating that all students can achieve to high levels."

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html>

¹² I distinguish between respect and mutual respect later on in this chapter, and again in Chapter Two.

¹³ The 7 Habits discussed in this book are: Be proactive; Begin with the end in mind; Put first things first; Think win-win; Seek first to understand, then to be understood; Synergize; and Sharpen the saw.

¹⁴ The idea behind this was, again, to provide children routine access to another adult with whom they can connect, who knows them well and across time.

¹⁵ There is, of course, variability regarding whether Fair Oaks teachers feel able to infuse *Leader in Me* into their teaching and learning. For example, at the time of fieldwork, Mrs. Hayes incorporated this type of education into the school day, having her students respond to a quote in their leadership notebooks each morning.

¹⁶ As described by Cohen and Ball (1999), the instructional core is a set of interactions between teachers, students, and content in the classroom.

¹⁷ In recent years, such aims have been appearing more frequently in educational policies, standards, curricula and conversations across the U.S. and Canada. (e.g.,

https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/docs/A%20Vision%20for%20Learning_DRAFT-240819.pdf ;

<https://www.nsta.org/about/positions/ngss.aspx> ; <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/40537/seeing-struggling-math-learners-as-sense-makers-not-mistake-makers> ; <http://www.aera.net/Events-Meetings/Annual-Meeting/Previous-Annual-Meetings/2015-Annual-Meeting/2015-Annual-Meeting-Details/Annual-Meeting-Theme> ;

<http://www.unitsofstudy.com/introduction>; <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/31/our-schools-have-an-equity-problem-what.html>

<http://www.makerspaceforeducation.com/why-makerspace.html>; <https://nationalequityproject.org/about/equity>)

¹⁸ See: Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, and Easton (1999); Cohen and Spillane (1992); Cuban (1984); Peurach, Yurkofsky, and Sutherland (2020); and Powell, Farrar, and Cohen, (1985).

¹⁹ It is important to note that Mrs. Hayes' school district values teacher leadership. There are arguments to be made for bottom-up instructional change and improvement. However, this study focuses on how teachers might receive more support from their systems, to ensure more stable and integrated mutual respect for students. Additionally, while this chapter does not address the role that schools and school leaders may play in assisting teachers with integrating mutual respect into their practice and organization, this study will include consideration of schools.

²⁰ During the first stage of my literature review, I searched for sources containing both 'respect' and 'children' in the abstract using the ERIC Proquest database. I selected peer reviewed, scholarly journals published in the year 2000 or later, which generated 1,818 results. After briefly scanning these results, I further limited my search to those sources containing 'respect' in the title (vs. the abstract), for two reasons. 1) I wanted to filter out the many sources containing 'with respect to' in the abstract. 2) Given respect is a central construct in this study, limiting a search to those articles that make it their central focus (i.e., that have 'respect' in the title) seemed a reasonable way to narrow. This left me with 47 results, 37 of which were relevant to this review and study, which I then reviewed.

I then attempted a different search strategy, again using the ERIC Proquest database. I searched peer reviewed, scholarly journals for the terms 'respect' and 'teaching' in the abstract. After limiting my search to articles published in the year 2000 or later, I was left with 1,778 results. I then decided to cull only those articles that had 'respect' in the title, versus the abstract, for the aforementioned reasons. Of the 42 results, I determined 23 articles were relevant to this review, and had not already been culled in the previous search.

Based on my observations about the themes underlying this first category of literature, I then returned for a second search. Rather than leading with 'respect,' or even 'mutual respect,' I sought out scholars who discuss instructional improvement in depth, and considered how salient respect is to their discussions. I encountered numerous terms in this literature, such as relational equity, ambitious teaching, authentic instruction, and culturally responsive *or* humanizing *or* emancipatory pedagogy. Though this approach was more indirect, it was purposive, and helped me to develop this study's analytic framework, which I describe in Chapter Two.

²¹ Refer to the following literature for discussions of respect: as a means to ameliorate bullying (e.g., Langdon and Preble, 2008), or to engage students (e.g., Cothran and Ennis, 2000; Keiler, 2011); respect as being key to school reform or turnaround (e.g., Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Lewis and Schaps, 1999; Dean and Galloway, 2008; Willie, 2000); and respect as being necessary for increasingly diverse classrooms (e.g., Burns, Lyons, and Niens, 2017; Donnelly, 2004).

²² See, for example: Dean and Galloway (2008).

²³ Refer to the following literature for discussions of: relational equity (Boaler, 2006); ambitious teaching (e.g., Lampert, 2001); authentic instruction (Newmann, Marks, and Gamoran, 1996); and culturally relevant *or* humanizing *or* emancipatory pedagogy (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1995; Franquiz and Salazar, 2004; Haddix and Sealey-Ruiz, 2012).

²⁴ See Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000), who differentiates between more traditional forms of respect, and then proposes a new view of respect, which "*creates symmetry, empathy, and connection in all kinds of relationships, even those, such as teacher and student, doctor and patient, commonly seen as unequal*" (p. 9-10).

²⁵ See Goodman (2009). Scholars such as Goodman, who discuss mutual respect in educational settings, recognize certain relationships (e.g., that between teachers and students) cannot be fully mutual, as this can conflict with the aims of education, and it goes against longstanding hierarchies in schools and society. Thus, I encourage one to perceive the work of mutual respect as more of an approximation; working toward symmetry, even when total symmetry may be impossible or undesirable. Again, I discuss all of this further in Chapter Two.

²⁶ When discussing scale, I have in mind Coburn's (2003) re-conceptualization of the term. For example, I am not only concerned with the *spread* of mutual respect across classrooms and schools, but also the *depth* of mutual respect, the degree to which it has taken root in teachers' beliefs, their interactions with students, and their ways of enacting their curricula.

²⁷ See Alim (2007); Ball (2018); Ghiso (2016); and Lee (2006).

²⁸ See Boaler (2006).

²⁹ See, for example: Baskerville (2011); Campano (2007); Ghiso (2016); Wilson, Hanna, and Li (2019).

³⁰ See Hess and McAvoy (2015) and Smyth (2005).

³¹ See Lampert (2001).

CHAPTER 2: Analytic Framework

A Framework for Examining Interactions Between Educational Systems and Mutual Respect in Classrooms

In this chapter, I consider the potential relationship between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. In doing so, I begin to frame ways for exploring whether or not such a relationship could diminish some of the problems highlighted in Chapter One, where respect is attached to the margins of a system, and thus risks showing up in classrooms in variable ways, if at all. As I develop this frame, and consider this potential relationship, a series of questions come to mind.

In imagining a system where mutual respect is integral to and created through classroom life, I begin to wonder the following: How might other educational systems, or this same system situated in a different environment, interact with mutual respect in classrooms? Educational systems may design for mutual respect differently; what might these differences in design imply for whether and how mutual respect unfolds in practice? When an educational system supports one dimension of mutual respect (e.g., autonomy) in concerted ways, what happens to those other dimensions (e.g., equality)? And what might the implications be for teachers' managing, and students' experiencing, of mutual respect?³²

The analytic framework described in this chapter is a tool that both prompts these questions, and that functions as a potential resource for exploring them. As mentioned in Chapter One, the pilot study informed my focus on educational systems, whereas mutual respect was a salient theme in the early phases of data collection and analysis for this dissertation. After putting

early empirical data in conversation with the literature, I developed the analytic framework discussed below, which I will use and further refine when analyzing different ways educational systems might interact with mutual respect in classrooms.

In the following sections, I develop a provisional frame to guide analysis of the relationship between educational systems and other parts of a teacher's practice context (e.g., individual teacher, school). I then delve into further detail around how this study's framework emphasizes the multidimensional and interactive nature of mutual respect. Finally, I consider interactions across this study's framework: the diverse ways educational systems may interact with mutual respect in classrooms, which may then have implications for teachers' managing and students' experiencing of respect. I end the chapter with the research questions driving this study.

Systems as Part of, and in Interaction with, a Teacher's Practice Context

Figure 2.1 depicts educational systems as one part of a teacher's practice context. In this study, I outline four parts of a teacher's practice context: the individual teacher, the school, the educational system, and the broader social and political environment.

Rather than a simple or direct relationship between systems and classrooms, this framework locates mutual respect at the center of a three-way relationship among systems, schools, and individual teachers. This three-way relationship is, in turn, situated in the broader social and political environment.

In the paragraphs below, I offer initial ideas for how different parts of a teacher's practice context may interact to perpetuate or challenge more traditional forms of respect in classrooms (e.g., respect-as-deference).³³ Educational systems are of particular interest in this study because they may be able to direct mutually respectful teaching and learning on a broader scale than individual teachers or schools.³⁴

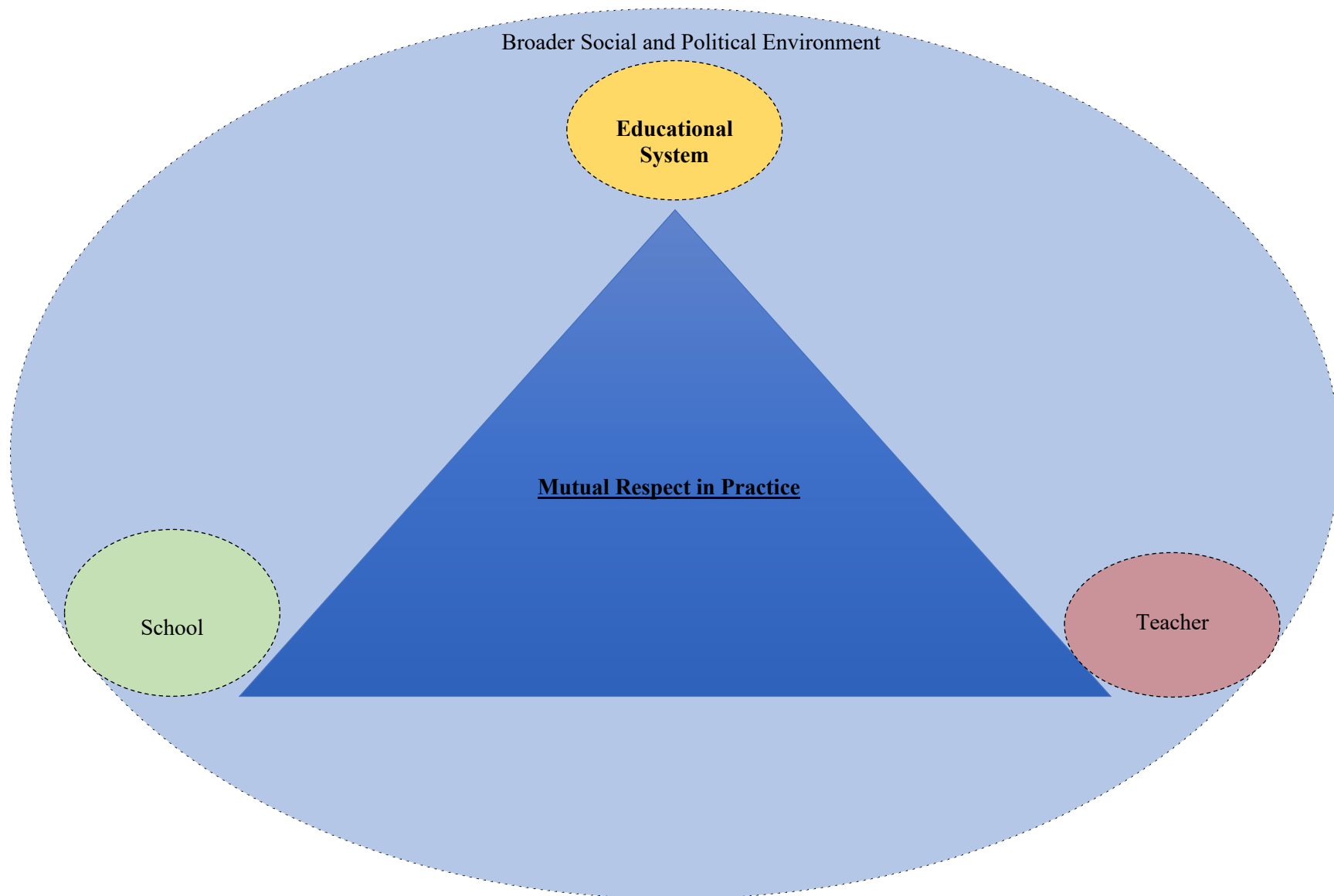


Figure. 2.1. Systems as part of, and in interaction with, a teacher's practice context.

Educational System

Teachers and schools operate within an *educational system*, which previous scholars have demonstrated can matter for teaching and learning, and which this study suggests may matter for mutually respectful teaching and learning.³⁵ Educational systems have potential to help teachers integrate respect into their instructional core. For example, through its instructional frameworks, an educational system can embed mutual respect into its core designs for teaching and learning. An educational system may then facilitate professional development for teachers around its frameworks, to support their implementation of the system's designs for mutually respectful instruction. These designs could support one or more dimension(s) of mutual respect the system aims to prioritize, and could explicitly guide teachers and schools toward more mutually respectful practice.

In addition to – or perhaps as part of – their designs for mutual respect, educational systems have different ways of engaging with teachers, schools, and broader environments, which may influence the degree of consistency around the observed respect in classrooms. Depending on whether a system encourages a relatively open or closed relationship with the broader environment, it can help teachers respect in new ways, which run counter to normative notions around how children should be treated and taught. Again, the reason educational systems are of particular interest in this study is they could direct new guidelines for respect, thus challenging the more normative respect found in the broader environment, on a broader scale than individual classrooms or schools.³⁶

Teacher

When contemplating other factors that may interact with respect in classrooms, it is helpful to consider an individual *teacher* and the agency she brings to her work. This teacher

brings her own values, skills, disposition, and experiences into her classroom, and each of these might inform how she respects students in her daily work with them. Implicit norms from the broader environment can work their way into her classroom and methods of respect, for example by way of apprenticeship of observation, or how this teacher was herself respected when she was a student.³⁷ On the other hand, a teacher may be inspired to seek out and fold different methods of respecting students into her classroom, perhaps with the help of a new curriculum or classroom management technique she learned at a conference or training.

In sum, an individual teacher, perhaps in response to her specific learners, may seek out explicit guidance around how to treat and teach students with more mutual respect. She may then incorporate this guidance into her ever-evolving practice. *Or*, said teacher may rely on more normative ideas and practices of respecting children when teaching and learning with them, some of which date back to when she herself was a student. It is likely individual teachers rely on a combination of explicit guidance and implicit norms around respecting children. Such a combination is, in turn, likely related to whether a teacher's school or system encourages her open or closed relationship with the broader environment, and its more normative ways of respecting children in the classroom.

School

Schools, and school leaders, respond to pressures from their educational system or environment, often with schoolwide instructional and organizational decisions. In this way, schools play a role in whether and how mutual respect gets embedded into an individual classroom. A teacher's definition and managing of respect may be informed by the training or acculturation she receives at her school. School leaders may — or may not — structure time and expectations for planning, professional development, and collaboration, all of which could

inform the respect observed in a teacher's classroom, *and* the degree of consistency or variability in how respect is managed across the school's classrooms. Additionally, school leaders may — or may not — enforce boundaries, which could protect individual or school versions of respect from outside, competing versions of respect, stemming from families, state standards, or elsewhere.

Like teachers, schools can thus exert influence over the respect that permeates a classroom, and whether it is more normative or more mutual. The decisions school leaders make around instruction and organization have potential to influence both the degree of consistency in how respect is managed across classrooms, *and* the degree to which respect may be embedded into the instructional core. Further, schools may encourage teachers' relatively open or closed relationship with a broader system or environment, which may relate to whether more normative notions of respect trickle into a classroom, or whether explicit guidelines direct more mutual forms of respect. In this study, I include both teachers and school leaders in my definition of 'practitioners,' given individuals in either role can be consequential practitioners of respect.³⁸

Broader Social and Political Environment

In Figure 2.1, the *broader social and political environment* encompasses the other parts of a teacher's practice context. This is because the broader environment is unique in that its normative ideas and practices around respecting children can permeate *all* the other parts of a teacher's practice context. While there are certainly exceptions, this study begins with the premise that those implicit norms from the environment often perpetuate more traditional forms of respect, whereas more explicit guidance – be it from the broader environment or from a system or school – is more likely to direct more mutual forms of respect.³⁹

While the *broader social and political environment* can explicitly guide individual, school, and system ways of respecting children (e.g., with state and federal regulations and standards), what is perhaps of greater interest here is how the broader environment may perpetuate notions of respecting children that are so taken for granted they go unchallenged.⁴⁰ For example, it is commonly assumed across North American schools that children learn best with other children their same age, and that smaller class sizes, which afford children more of their teacher's attention, are more respectful than larger class sizes.⁴¹ One must travel to an entirely different social and political environment, like Japan, to find a different norm. In Japan, large class sizes are preferable, even in preschools, because they afford young children opportunities to develop independence.⁴² Such implicit assumptions and normative practices can seep into classrooms, schools, and systems by way of parental pressures, the actions of competing or partner schools, tradition, and countless other variables in the broader environment.

The *broader social and political environment* can thus infiltrate an individual classroom by both implicitly and explicitly interacting with how respect is defined and managed throughout the school day. Further, teachers, schools, and educational systems all may vary in the degree they permit these environmental influences to enter into a classroom and interact with the respect being managed there, versus following explicit guidance from a different source, which may direct a different way of respecting children.

Summary

In the preceding paragraphs, I have offered ideas for how a teacher's practice context can interact in ways that perpetuate implicit norms for how children are respected in school. I have also offered ideas for how different parts of a teacher's practice context can interact to challenge such norms, instead offering teachers explicit guidance around treating children with increased

mutual respect. Realistically, a teacher's interactive practice context does both: it perpetuates and challenges normative ways of respecting children when teaching and learning with them.

The Interactive Nature of Mutual Respect

The previous section highlights the importance of attending to practice context interactions when considering how implicit norms and explicit guidance around respect may seep into classrooms. In this section, I attend to the interactive nature of mutual respect.

As discussed in Chapter One, I define mutual respect as the work of intervening on those power asymmetries typically found in classrooms — both between teachers and students, and among students — by way of according children increased equality, autonomy, and equity. Further, I emphasize three characteristics of mutual respect as it is framed in this study, characteristics which help to illuminate the potential complexity and diversity of mutually respectful teaching and learning: 1) mutual respect can be enacted and experienced across three aspects of classroom life (i.e., instruction, organization, and social relations); 2) mutual respect is comprised of three dimensions (i.e., equality, autonomy, and equity); and 3) rather than thinking of any one of these dimensions in isolation, I specify it is especially useful to think about mutual respect as a series of interactions between these dimensions.

Figure 2.2 depicts this study's analytic framework in its entirety, as it illustrates this more complex understanding of mutual respect.

Mutual Respect Across Three Aspects of Classroom Life

Guided by the literature reviewed in Chapter One, this framework acknowledges treating someone with mutual respect is possible by way of instructional and organizational moves, as well as with more straightforward social interactions.

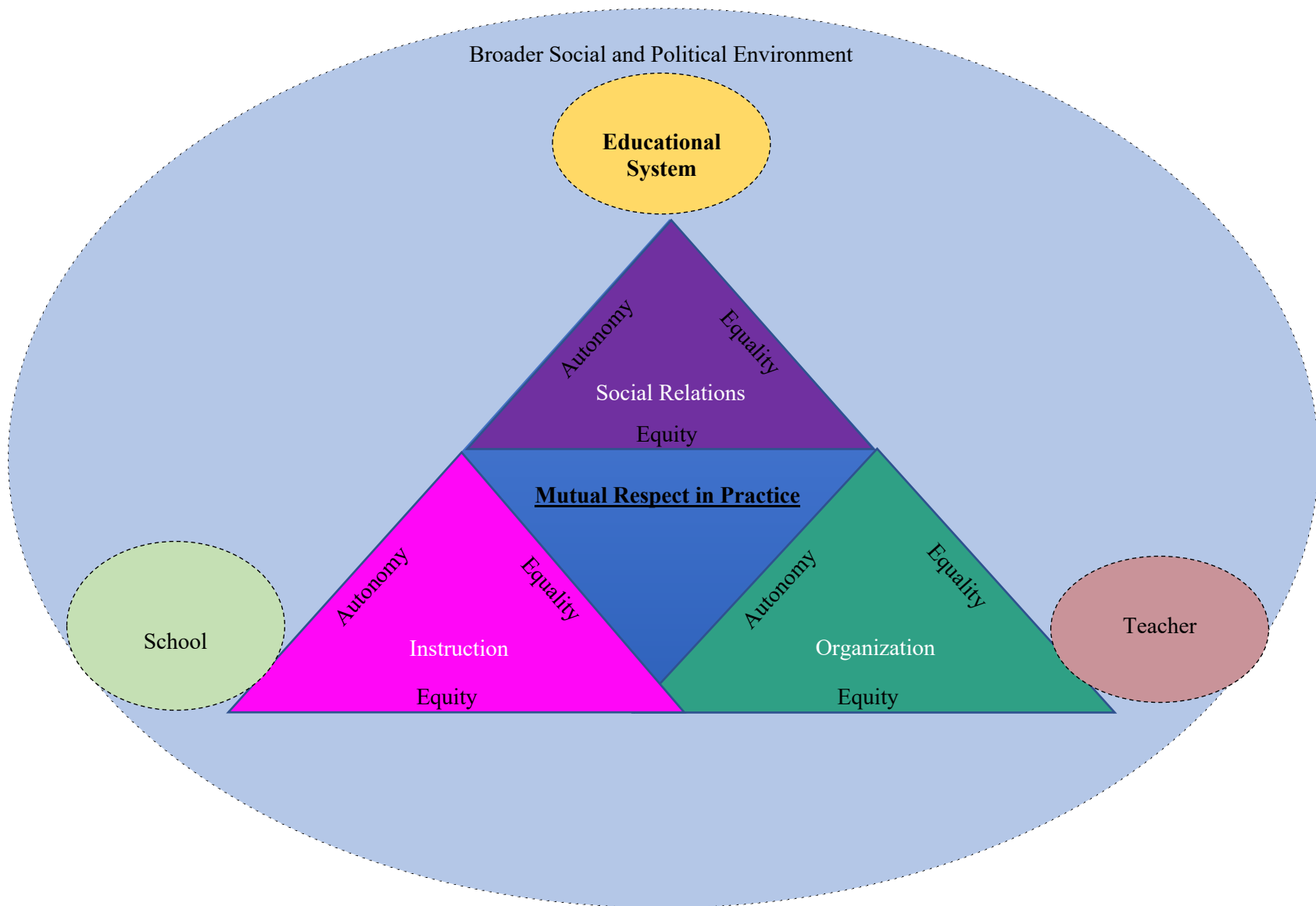


Figure. 2.2. A framework for examining interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms.

When thinking about mutual respect in instruction, I am referring to efforts to embed mutual respect into interactions between teachers and students, and among students, around content. A teacher may, for example, make open forum discussions an integral part of classroom instruction, where students help to create the rules and to direct the discourse.

When discussing mutual respect in organization, I am referring to efforts to infuse mutual respect into how students are organized to relate to teachers, peers, and content throughout their school day. A teacher may, for example, organize for heterogenous grouping, and then ensure all students see themselves as responsible for their peers' learning.

Finally, when thinking about mutually respectful social relations, I am referring to efforts to ensure mutual respect in interactions between teachers and students, and among students, both regarding and irrespective of academic content. For example, a teacher may accord students more mutual respect by asking them to address her by her first name. Or, teachers might place students in charge of mediating conflicts between their peers.

I discuss below the multidimensional nature of mutual respect, and the complex interactions between these dimensions. When one considers these interactions alongside the fact that mutual respect plays out across three aspects of classroom life (i.e., instruction, organization, and social relations), one can imagine a range of possibilities when it comes to managing mutual respect in practice.

Mutual Respect as Multidimensional

In Chapter One, I began to differentiate between respect, and mutual respect. In this section, I elaborate upon what makes respect 'mutual' by defining and discussing the three dimensions I include in the concept: equality, autonomy, and equity. In Table 2.1, I offer definitions and examples of each dimension as it may be observed in practice.⁴³

Table 2.1***Definitions and Examples of Mutual Respect in Practice***

Dimension	Definitions and Synonyms	Instructional Example	Organizational Example	Social Example
Equality	To intervene on power asymmetries typically found in classrooms by ensuring <i>all</i> students receive: equal exposure to learning experiences, content, and/or resources; equal expectations; equal treatment.	All students are expected to facilitate a classroom discussion once during the school year	All students get an equal amount of time in specials and with specialist teachers (e.g., art, music)	Every student gets an opportunity to eat lunch with his/her teacher twice during the school year
Autonomy	To intervene on power asymmetries typically found in classrooms by permitting students increased self-direction. Synonyms: independence; agency; choice and voice	Students select a topic they want to research, and/or determine the final product they will produce to demonstrate what they have learned	Students determine how long they work on a given activity/in a given subject area, before moving on to the next one	If there is a conflict, students help to come up with a solution, ensuring everyone moves forward peacefully
Equity	To intervene on power asymmetries typically found in classrooms by: providing differentiated supports; ensuring <i>all</i> students - regardless of background - are prepared for later life and school; including and amplifying minority voices and perspectives; ensuring <i>all</i> students - regardless of background - see themselves represented in the curriculum.	During lessons, students have frequent and easy access to resources that will provide them with extra support and/or enrichment as needed	Students frequently work in groups where other group members are different from them, to learn the value of diverse experiences, skills, and perspectives	In class meetings, teachers and/or students work to solicit and include those voices that are less represented in the room

While numerous scholars discuss the many possible meanings of respect and mutual respect, Goodman (2009) informs two of the three dimensions of mutual respect that I include in this study, which were also salient in early phases of data analysis: equality and autonomy.⁴⁴

In her writing, Goodman (2009) focused on how the different meanings of respect can conflict, particularly in the context of adult-child relationships and when endeavoring to accord children more mutual respect. She identified three strands of respect: dignity, equality, and autonomy. Goodman offered an example of dignity when stating, “A teacher tells a child not to interrupt, exclude, bully, tease, speak harshly to another student; instead, to treat him with respect. Here respect emphasizes *human dignity*” (p. 4). She characterized dignity as relatively non-controversial in the sense that the many philosophers who have discussed respect for children agree children should be accorded respect-as-dignity, as this does not conflict with children showing deference to authority figures. However, offering children more mutual respect — by way of granting them more equality and autonomy — *can* be controversial, particularly in a teacher-student relationship, because a teacher is trying to cultivate in her students independence and reasoning capabilities they do not currently possess.⁴⁵

Given this study is concerned with mutual respect, I exclude dignity, and take forward equality and autonomy; those strands of respect that Goodman (2009) described as controversial. That is, I include those dimensions that can be difficult to accord children, in light of the power asymmetries typically found in classrooms, and in broader society.

Additionally, I include a third dimension, equity. Similar to the other two dimensions of mutual respect, there has recently been a sustained press in society for educational equity, and so it is perhaps unsurprising that equity was a recurring theme in both the literature reviewed and in my early analysis of empirical data.⁴⁶ Though equality and equity are often used interchangeably,

I argue the distinctions between respect-as-equality (e.g., giving students equal voice in a class discussion) and respect-as-equity (e.g., ensuring minority voices, which have been historically sidelined both in and out of classrooms, are protected and amplified in a class discussion) are as important as any intentions they may hold in common. It may be difficult, or even undesirable, to respect children by offering them equal educational experiences when their needs and wants are anything but equal. And so, in this study, I frame mutual respect as multidimensional, and I enumerate its three dimensions of equality, autonomy, and equity.

Mutual Respect as a Series of Interactions

This framework conceptualizes the work of mutual respect as managing many interacting dimensions simultaneously, versus enacting any single dimension in isolation, because such an understanding helps illuminate the dilemmas teachers may face when doing this work. A teacher not only respects by ensuring students have equal access to a lesson preparing them for a later unit. Rather, she may ensure this equal exposure even as she respects students by offering them autonomy around the groups they work in, or the final product they produce.

Management across the dimensions of mutual respect may initially seem straightforward; its complexity is only appreciated when considering what would happen if any one dimension were maximized. For example, if a teacher granted total autonomy to students over what they learn, wouldn't she then be compromising her ability to equitably prepare them for their next steps? If a teacher ensured equity for students by always allowing them to work at their own pace, wouldn't she then be compromising her ability to equally expose students to varied learning experiences across all content areas?

The above scenarios, where one dimension of mutual respect is so maximal that it compromises another dimension, are unlikely. They are unlikely *because* mutual respect is

interactive work. This framework specifies that to mutually respect is to continually manage its multiple, interactive dimensions, across different moments in time and diverse learners, so students are treated and taught in the varied ways they deserve.

Summary

By conceptualizing and situating mutual respect in the ways discussed above, this framework positions one to examine the potentially difficult and diverse work of managing mutual respect in practice. Equality, autonomy, and equity may push and pull on one another in one aspect of classroom life (e.g., instruction), and, they may push and pull on one another in less obvious ways when enacted across the three aspects of classroom life. For example, one might argue that respecting students organizationally — with different class periods that ensure students have equal access to different teachers, subject matters, and resources throughout the day — might constrain teachers' ability to respect students instructionally, by giving them ample time during a lesson to autonomously pursue their own questions, or equitably move at their own pace, before rushing on to the next teacher or lesson.

What is more, the interactions among the three dimensions of mutual respect might be unpredictable; more of one dimension may not necessarily imply more or less of another dimension. Some dimensions, when liberally defined, could overlap with one another in mutually reinforcing ways (e.g., offering children equal voice to that of their teacher can be synonymous to respecting their autonomy over what or how they learn). At other times, or in other ways, these same dimensions could run into direct conflict with each other (e.g., ensuring an equal learning experience for all of one's students is impossible when according them autonomy over what or how they learn). Further, there could even be conflict within a given dimension (e.g., if students are equitably prepared for their next steps by being offered diverse

learning experiences across content areas each day, this may constrain the time necessary for equitably supporting students with a wide range of abilities and learning styles).

Interactions Across the Framework

Thus far, I have explored some ways a teacher's practice context may interact to perpetuate or challenge more normative practices of respecting students. Further, I have emphasized the multidimensional and interactive nature of mutual respect itself: how equality, autonomy, and equity may work in synergistic or competing ways with one another across classroom instruction, organization, and social relations. The purpose of this section, then, is to consider interactions across the layers of the analytic framework; specifically, between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms.

In the paragraphs below, I offer initial ideas for the potential role educational systems may play in supporting mutual respect at scale. I then highlight the diverse possibilities and implications of such a relationship between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms, which motivates the research questions enumerated at the end of this chapter.

The Potential Role of Educational Systems

When considering the role educational systems may play in supporting teachers as they treat and teach children with mutual respect, it is important to keep in mind the following: Teachers rarely, if ever, have control over all of the organizational and instructional decisions in their school. Either directly (i.e., system to teacher) or indirectly (e.g., system to school to teacher), then, educational systems may help to embed mutual respect into instruction and organization in ways that can be sustained across classrooms and schools.

I offer here a brief illustration of how an educational system might bolster respect-as-equity in classroom instruction and organization.⁴⁷ A system may provide teachers with

curricular content or frameworks, which guide them toward folding diverse perspectives and narratives into each of their units. In this way, teachers provide diverse students with learning material in which they see themselves represented. Further, an educational system may train teachers, initially and/or continually, on methods for differentiating instruction. In this way, teachers receive guidance for how to support students with a wide range of abilities. Finally, this system may have standards for schools directing how much time students spend each week on subjects preparing them for today's globalized society (e.g., media literacy, language learning). In these ways and more, a system can design for respect-as-equity. Through such designs, the daily work of ensuring equity for students is not overly reliant on individual teachers and their variable efforts.

Varied Forms, and Implications, of Systemic Support

To grasp the wide-ranging implications of systemic support of mutual respect in classrooms, it is again important to keep in mind the following: Teachers rarely, if ever, have control over all of the organizational and instructional decisions in their school.

If a teacher's educational system designs to emphasize one dimension of mutual respect in classroom organization or instruction, what, then, is a teacher able to do to uphold those other dimensions that may become constrained in her classroom?⁴⁸ For example, if an educational system evaluates teachers based on their ability to equally expose students to the same number of learning standards in one year's time, how might these teachers ensure students also have some genuine autonomy when determining how or what they learn? Indeed, how might these teachers ensure they respect students by equitably supporting them as they move through a curriculum that may be difficult for some, and a breeze for others?

This framework is predicated on the assumption that many teachers would not allow one dimension of mutual respect to be so prioritized that it delimits other dimensions in their classrooms. Nor would these teachers permit any dimension of mutual respect to be so constrained that it is entirely absent in her practice. Thus, there are myriad possibilities for how teachers might manage these dimensions of mutual respect, if they endeavor to uphold all of them even when some may be systemically supported — and others, not — by instructional and organizational designs that are at least partially outside teachers' control.

Summary

In relating educational systems to mutual respect in classrooms, all while recognizing these systems are in constant interaction with the rest of a teacher's practice context, and the dimensions of mutual respect are in continual interaction with one another (across varied aspects of classroom life, no less), this framework opens up several pathways to examine. First, different educational systems may prioritize different dimensions of mutual respect, with some taking up only one or two of its dimensions in a concerted way. Whether and how educational systems interact with mutual respect in classrooms may vary in accordance with the different priorities of systems, as well as their different designs for supporting those priorities. From such differences stem a variety of ways equality, autonomy, and equity may interact with one another; a variety of ways these dimensions may reinforce or conflict with one another in classroom instruction, organization, and social relations. These interactions may then be managed and experienced in innumerable ways by teachers and students situated across different practice contexts.

Examining such a range of pathways can be daunting, and one may wonder whether and how to begin an inquiry into the relationship between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. However, in reflecting on the case of Mrs. Hayes, and how her efforts were rendered

tenuous by a system that locates respect on its margins, I am motivated to engage in such an inquiry. To do so is to take a first step toward understanding how to support more widespread mutually respectful practice in schools.

Questions Emerging from this Framework

An important understanding to be gleaned thus far is this: To manage classrooms for mutual respect is not straightforward, and though teachers may benefit from systemic support as they engage in mutually respectful teaching and learning, designing and receiving such support may not be straightforward, either. This is why this framework exists, to position us to ask questions about, and begin to explore, the complex and diverse ways educational systems may interact with mutual respect in classrooms.

Let us take a moment to dwell on what, rather who, is at stake. What might these interactions, and the ways in which they vary, mean for students? This framework allows us to imagine the vastly different experiences of schooling students may have, based on the dimensions of mutual respect that are privileged in their classroom. For example, students may be situated in a classroom where almost everything is student-determined, and where children spend the majority of their time independently directing their academic and social development. *Or*, students may learn in a classroom where their teacher continually exposes them to diverse and underrepresented perspectives. These students may have less autonomy over their learning, but each day they discover more about the range of human experience, and come to understand that to be different is not to be better, or worse.

As with everything discussed thus far, students' experiences of schooling are likely a mixture, in this case of equality, autonomy, and equity, rather than being reflective of one extremely robust dimension. Indeed, this framework was specifically designed to help one

inquire about the nuanced possibilities across each of its layers: the myriad ways a teacher's practice context can interact to perpetuate *and* challenge norms for respecting children in the classroom; the potential of an educational system to support *and* complicate practitioners' efforts to mutually respect students; and the countless ways a teacher may manage the dimensions of mutual respect in practice as they reinforce *and* conflict with one another across time, learners, and different aspects of classroom life.

And so, in seeking to explore this range of possibilities, I offer four research questions pertaining to those educational systems attending to mutual respect in classrooms:

1. In what ways do system designs advance the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect, and why?
2. How do teachers understand and manage the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect in practice, and why?
3. How do teachers and leaders experience the relationship between mutual respect by design and mutual respect in practice?
4. In what ways, if any, do the answers to the preceding research questions vary within and between educational systems, and why?

In the next chapter, I discuss the design and methodology of this study, which assisted my examination of the relationship between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. From there, I will address this study's research questions using the framework discussed in this chapter. Beyond assisting me with answering the research questions, this framework generally has potential to: 1) illuminate, so as to support, the many ways system designs may interact with teachers' efforts to manage classrooms for mutual respect; 2) illuminate, so as to support, the complex and varied efforts of teachers when managing

classrooms for mutual respect;⁴⁹ and 3) this framework provides us with language for comparing different ways of schooling, different ways to pursue mutual respect, across a variety of contexts.

³² Later in this chapter, it will become clearer why I use the term ‘managing,’ versus ‘enacting’ the dimensions of mutual respect. I am informed by Lampert’s (1985) discussion of managing various teaching dilemmas, which have no straightforward or fixed resolution. I apply this ‘managing’ concept to mutual respect because of its multidimensional nature, and thus the need for teachers to simultaneously prioritize its many, interactive dimensions, which may push and pull on one another in unexpected ways throughout the school day.

³³ Though mutual respect is the focus of this dissertation, Chapter One contains some discussion of more normative forms of respect in the context of schools and education, as informed by my review of the literature.

³⁴ Though mutual respect is increasingly attempted by teachers and schools, as discussed in Chapter One, this study assumes the practice of mutual respect is still largely the exception in schools, with more traditional forms of respect prevailing (e.g., Boaler, 2006; Goodman, 2009; Gutierrez, 2001), hence the interest here regarding whether systems might scale and sustain mutual respect.

³⁵ See, for example: Cohen, Peurach, Glazer, Gates, and Goldin (2013); Cohen, Spillane, and Peurach (2018). These scholars assume, as I do, that teaching and learning is not simply a teacher’s domain. Rather, schools and educational systems can function in ways that deeply interact with the instructional core.

³⁶ As mentioned in a later section, while there are certainly exceptions, this study begins with the premise that implicit norms from the environment often perpetuate more traditional forms of respect, whereas more explicit guidance – be it from the broader environment or from a system or school – is more likely to direct more mutual forms of respect.

³⁷ See Lortie (1975). It is difficult to know whether to attribute the knowledge gained from a teacher’s own schooling to her as an *individual teacher*, or to her *broader social and political environment*. One must keep in mind, as stated at the start of this section, that all of these parts of a teacher’s practice context are interlinked, and thinking of any of them as operating in isolation is artificial. This is why, though educational systems are the focus of this study, I include other parts of a teacher’s practice context in Figure 2.1 and in subsequent writing.

³⁸ I draw from Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000) when using the term ‘practitioners of respect.’

³⁹ Though these provisional premises are useful for framing this study, I endeavor to refine these assertions around practice context relationships. Indeed, practices around respecting children that stem from the broader environment are not always implicit, nor are they always traditional. Further, educational systems and schools may not solely offer explicit guidance to their practitioners, nor may they always push for more mutual forms of respect.

⁴⁰ I am informed by the anthropological and sociological disciplines when asserting one’s broader environment may shape us, and our ways of schooling, in ways that go unnoticed (e.g., Benedict, 1934; Bourdieu, 1977; Geertz, 1973; Goodenough, 2003; McDermott, 1999; Nader, 1997; Ortner, 1984; Swidler, 1986; Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009).

⁴¹ It is important to clarify that implicit or normative practices around respecting children are not inherently “bad”, nor is explicit guidance around respecting children universally “good.” However, implicit norms *are* more perilous in the sense that they often go unnoticed, and thus whether and how they may accord children mutual respect goes unchallenged. For example, small class sizes can inhibit autonomy for children, and grouping children of the same age may deny them opportunities to work at their own pace (i.e., respect-as-equity), but neither of these practices are routinely questioned in North American schools. This is why, at least for now, this study assumes that implicit norms often perpetuate more traditional forms of respect (e.g., respect-as-deference), whereas explicit guidance has potential to guide teachers toward offering students more equality, autonomy, and equity.

⁴² Tobin, Hsueh, and Karasawa (2009).

⁴³ These definitions and examples of each dimension of mutual respect are informed by both my review of the literature, which I discussed in Chapter One, as well as by early empirical data, and the analysis thereof.

⁴⁴ See also: Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000); Giesinger (2012); Dillon (2014).

⁴⁵ Equality is likely more controversial when defined as giving children equal consideration or voice as their teachers, as opposed to treating all students equally, or giving them equal access to resources, for example.

⁴⁶ In drawing a distinction between respect-as-equality and respect-as-equity, I am informed by those scholars who discuss more equitable and just instructional practices (e.g., Alim, 2007; Bang and Marin, 2015; Boaler, 2006; Campano, 2007; Ghiso, 2016; Gholson and Martin, 2014; Glynn, Cowie, Otrell-Cass and MacFarlane, 2010; Gutierrez, 2001; Haddix and Sealey-Ruiz, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 2006).

⁴⁷ This example is informed by dissertation data and time spent in the field. I will offer further details after the cases are introduced.

⁴⁸ This is not to imply that educational systems, or any other part of a teacher's practice context, actively wishes or intends to compromise a given dimension of mutual respect. Instead, the focus may be on making one or two dimensions of mutual respect more robust in classrooms, without necessarily realizing that this then can create tensions when maintaining those other dimensions of mutual respect.

⁴⁹ Illuminating complexity so as to support practitioners was also a stated goal for Lampert (2001).

CHAPTER 3: Methods

Methodology for Examining Interactions Between Educational Systems and Mutual Respect in Classrooms

In Chapter Two, I proposed an analytic framework, which is a tool for building theory around the interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. From that framework, I raised a set of research questions.

In this chapter, I describe the methods used to address those research questions. I first discuss the overall research design for this ethnographic and comparative study, which was situated across two educational systems and two national contexts. I then provide detail around sampling, particularly for the two focal educational systems in this study: International Baccalaureate (IB) and Montessori. After reviewing methods for data collection and analysis, I present this study's limitations, and then briefly sketch how I organize the findings chapters.

Research Design

I drew from the work of Tobin, Hsueh, and Karasawa (2009) when designing this study, as well as when using the data collection method of video-cued multivocal ethnography, which I discuss further in a later section.

In 1989 and again in 2009, Tobin, Hsueh, and Karasawa (2009) videotaped a typical day in preschools in the U.S., China, and Japan. In focus groups, practitioners responded to the videos of other countries' preschools. These focus groups illuminated taken-for-granted practices that reflect underlying cultural logic around what and how teachers should teach and students

should learn. One example of this latent logic surfaced when Japanese teachers worried over the American preschool's small class size. In the U.S., small class size is often assumed to be a means of ensuring better instruction. Japanese teachers in this study, however, viewed small class size as prohibitive to the important outcome of children solving their own dilemmas.

Like Tobin et al. (2009), I selected classrooms and schools across different national contexts to surface those culturally-situated assumptions and practices that often go unmarked and thus unquestioned. Unlike Tobin et al. and other international and comparative researchers, I *also* selected classrooms and schools across different educational systems.⁵⁰ Such a design helped me to discern whether and how these systems challenge their surrounding cultural logics, potentially offering new ways of according children mutual respect in the classroom.

In facilitating cross-case comparisons for both myself and the participants in this study, at times focusing on same-system but different-context comparisons, and at times focusing on different-system but same-context comparisons, I was better able to disentangle how different parts of a teacher's practice context interact with mutual respect in her classroom.⁵¹

Sampling and Case Selection

I detail below my strategy for sampling and case selection, all while providing pertinent details regarding the complex practice contexts in which this study took place. I selected the classrooms focal to this study in four steps, through sampling: 1) educational systems; 2) broader social and political environments; 3) schools; and then 4) classrooms.

Sampling Educational Systems

The first step in sampling for this study was to select two educational systems: IB and Montessori. This dissertation was informed by a pilot study, during which I examined relations between system designs and classroom practice in these and two other systems (i.e., traditional

public, Aspire charter management organization). The pilot research – comprised of classroom observations, review of system-level documents, and semi-structured interviews with teachers and school and system leaders – informed the selection of IB and Montessori, given: 1) I observed the designs of these systems to be apparent in classroom practice; and 2) though I did not have this framing at the time, I would now describe the two systems as ones that, since their inception, have made mutual respect integral to their core designs for teaching and learning.

International Baccalaureate

Though they were founded at different times, and initially geared toward different students, the IB and Montessori systems are similar in their aims to create a more peaceful world through education, and by way of increased respect for children.⁵² IB began as an educational alcove for a select and elite group of students. This approach to teaching and learning emerged in the 1960s, and catered specifically to diplomats' children, or other families living internationally, who needed a diploma that would grant students admission to universities in their home country.⁵³ A key tenet of IB is challenging instruction, which initially fueled the assumption that IB was one of the primary educational options for gifted and motivated students in the United States.⁵⁴ Eventually, however, IB evolved to become a widely agreed upon and recognizable pathway to college for all students.⁵⁵ The IB mission statement is as follows:

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.⁵⁶

Though the IB and Montessori systems both designed approaches to education that are intended to prepare students to thrive in the world as they work to improve it, the IB system's

approach is relatively more outward-facing. That is, the IB system cultivates internationally-minded students by encouraging teachers to continually and authentically bring the outside world into the classroom. Through an inquiry-based, transdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning, IB students learn to draw connections across different subjects, and to act on local and global issues of significance to them. Through IB's emphasis on language learning and exposing students to diverse perspectives, it aims to prepare children for a globalized world, and to instill in them an appreciation for experiences and perspectives different from their own.⁵⁷

While many think of high school students when they think of IB, the system is inclusive of elementary and middle school, as well. In this study I focus on the Primary Years Programme (PYP), which was designed for students aged 3-12.

Because IB endeavors to connect classroom learning to the broader world, and because it has schools across the globe, the system works to adapt to its broader environment. The IB system understands there exist different regulations within and across countries, both around learning standards and the timing of when such standards should be learned. Thus, rather than prescribing content, the IB system offers PYP teachers a framework, which is guided by six transdisciplinary themes of global significance, and under which teachers and schools may organize the standards they are obligated to teach. Further, IB teachers are encouraged to pull from a range of different curricula to suit the needs of their classroom.⁵⁸ The IB system also guides teachers through its desired outcomes; for example, its learner profile consists of ten characteristics the system aims to develop in students.⁵⁹

Despite its initial reputation of catering to an elite group of students, the IB system has steadily grown and worked to become more accessible. There are currently 1,839 IB World Schools in the United States, with 578 of those schools offering the PYP.⁶⁰ In Canada, there are

386 IB World Schools, with 95 of those schools offering the PYP.⁶¹ During the 2010-11 school year, 69% of public high schools in the United States reported student enrollment in either AP or IB courses.⁶² Further, federal legislation and incentives have signaled IB is a viable option for raising standards and providing rigorous curricula for all public school students.⁶³ The PYP was introduced in 1997, in part as a response to critiques that not all students are adequately and equitably prepared for the IB Diploma Programme.⁶⁴

Even as IB can be adapted to different contexts and cultures, one may notice the following features upon walking into a PYP classroom. First, upon the classroom walls, one may find unit of inquiry boards, which often display the central idea and lines of inquiry students are working on in their current unit. This unit, in turn, addresses one of the PYP's six transdisciplinary themes: Who we are, Where we are in place and time, How we express ourselves, How the world works, How we organize ourselves, and Sharing the planet. One may also observe wonder walls, where students can pose questions — related to their unit or otherwise — they hope to address. Finally, one may notice displays of student action taken around a current unit, or student reflections regarding how they exhibited aspects of the IB learner profile during a recent learning experience. Upon inquiring about student timetables in a PYP school, one will find they are arranged in a way to permit students balance across different subject areas, as well as allowing time for teachers' collaborative planning within and across the PYP grades.⁶⁵

Analytic Description. The IB system was designed to adapt to, rather than replace, existing school systems. In this sense, it is a hybrid educational system.⁶⁶ IB functions primarily as a support to teachers and schools, offering professional development, frameworks, and a common language to support instruction. In addition to this support, however, IB does have

jurisdiction over schools in that, to remain authorized, schools must meet, or demonstrate their path to meeting, a set of IB standards. However, regardless of where a school is on their path toward IB authorization, they must continue to meet local educational regulations and standards for whatever is their school type (e.g., public, private). Schools or their districts must pay for IB support and authorization, as well as to send teachers to IB professional development.

While much of this will be further described in the findings chapters, the IB system's chief instruments of support for PYP practitioners include: ongoing opportunities for teacher and administrator professional development; a curricular framework, with corresponding unit planners to help guide and organize teachers' instruction; IB standards to which schools must adhere; re-authorization at least once every five years, a process which includes the school engaging in a self-study to assess their continual improvement; myriad resources in IB's digital toolkit, and; each school must have an appointed PYP coordinator, with release time devoted to ensuring smooth implementation of the PYP.

Montessori

Similar to IB, Dr. Maria Montessori held the view that peace was the work of education, and respecting children in the ways outlined by her educational method would help ensure broader societal order.⁶⁷ Rather than being geared toward elite students, however, Dr. Montessori opened her first school, Casa dei Bambini, in a tenement in Rome in 1907.⁶⁸ She was trained as a medical doctor, and had worked with special needs students prior to the school's opening, when she decided her methods could benefit any child. Casa dei Bambini was part of an urban reconstruction effort designed to serve the working poor. In addition to running the school, Dr. Montessori developed and disseminated her educational philosophy and comprehensive guidelines for teaching and learning. The Montessori method is highly structured, even as its

underlying philosophy is in league with broader progressive and constructivist movements. Dr. Montessori believed, *“If we are among the men of good will who yearn for peace, we must lay the foundation for peace ourselves, by working for the social world of the child.”*⁶⁹

Even as the Montessori system — like IB — aims to prepare children for the world beyond school walls, its approach is comparatively inward-facing. That is, the system begins by altering teachers’ premises around children and their capabilities: *“Montessori education is based on the premise that children have an innate ability to learn and that when supported by an appropriate environment and educator, they are guided through their developmental needs to reach their full potential.”*⁷⁰ Dr. Montessori viewed normative educational practices to be harmful to children, limiting their potential.⁷¹ Rather than relying on traditional teaching and teachers, Dr. Montessori developed classroom environments and an educational method that cater to children’s interests and needs at their given stage of development. In this prepared environment, and with an adult who is trained to protect children’s concentration and to honor their natural drive to work, Dr. Montessori observed children could then develop and perfect their own personalities.⁷²

While many think of preschool-aged children when they think of Montessori, the system is inclusive of a broader age range, from birth through high school. In this study, I focus on the Upper Elementary class (ages 9-12), with some observations in both Primary (ages 3-6) and Lower Elementary (ages 6-9) classes.⁷³

Like IB, there are Montessori schools worldwide. However, given the Montessori method runs counter to more normative educational practices, and given it is based on the human stages of development, which remain fairly constant across space and time, the Montessori system does comparatively less adapting to its broader environment.⁷⁴ To enable consistent implementation of

the Montessori method across diverse contexts, the Montessori system offers detailed, comprehensive resources around what and how to teach and treat children. Montessori teachers thus have the curriculum and materials they need to assist children in the ways envisioned by Dr. Montessori, and without having to draw from their surrounding — and variable — environments.

Even though the IB and Montessori systems have different ways of engaging with their broader environments, the Montessori system is similar to IB in its efforts to grow and to infiltrate the public educational sector. In the United States, more than 5,000 Montessori schools are affiliated with Montessori organizations. The Montessori Census currently reports having information for 557 public Montessori programs, and over 2,140 private Montessori schools in the country.⁷⁵ Such growth is notable on at least two accounts: 1) Montessori standards for teaching and learning can run counter to many regulations and standards public schools must meet, making Montessori in the public sector relatively complex; and 2) Montessori teacher training is a long process (i.e., one year), and the process to become a Montessori trainer is even more lengthy (i.e., five years of classroom experience in addition to three more years of training), both of which constrain schools' ready access to Montessori-trained teachers.⁷⁶

Regardless of the children's ages, one may notice a few common, albeit striking, features upon walking into a Montessori classroom. First, the language used by teachers and students is a bit different than what one usually hears in schools, and in society: Students' activities are described as "work," and students are typically referred to as "children" rather than "students." Montessorians strive to make their classrooms a "prepared environment," which involves being aesthetically pleasing, orderly, and containing learning materials that are developmentally appropriate and entirely accessible and fitted to the children. Within this environment, one finds children of varying ages, and children who are engaging in work different from one another.

Children are granted much liberty in Montessori classrooms, but this freedom is contained within a highly structured set of expectations for the learning they will attain.⁷⁷ In lieu of whole-group instruction, Montessori Elementary teacher offers brief, small-group “presentations” to children, after which these children direct their own follow-up work.⁷⁸

Analytic description. “Montessori” is not trademarked, and thus any school can advertise a Montessori-style approach to education without necessarily adhering to Dr. Montessori’s method. While this can breed uncertainty, there are various forms of accreditation schools can seek to signal their fidelity of implementation. Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) is largely considered to be the purest form of Montessori, in that AMI schools rely on the training and materials as they were originally designed by Dr. Montessori and her son. When discussing the Montessori system, and system supports, I imply the AMI system, specifically. I do so even as one of the two Montessori schools in this study is not AMI Recognized, because this is the system as it was originally designed, and AMI guidelines are what many teachers and schools (including the school that is not AMI Recognized) aim to adhere to.

Unlike the IB system, which is more of a hybrid educational system, the Montessori system is, in many senses, designed to replace existing school systems. Though Montessori schools must meet local educational regulations and standards for whatever is their school type (e.g., public, private), the Montessori system endeavors to provide teachers and schools with all they need to implement the Montessori method. To be AMI Recognized, a school must comply with all AMI standards for classrooms. Schools must pay for AMI support and accreditation, and schools or teachers must pay for teacher training.

While much of this will be further described in the findings chapters, the Montessori system’s chief instruments of support include: intensive teacher training, during which teachers

create albums that comprehensively detail both the content and method for their instruction; specified classroom materials, of which classrooms need a complete set; a set of standards to which schools must adhere; visits from an AMI consultant every three years, and; schools must apply annually to be AMI Recognized, demonstrating each time they are in compliance with all standards for AMI Montessori classrooms.

Sampling Broader Social and Political Environments

After selecting two systems, I then selected two cities embedded in different national contexts: Washington, D.C. (DC) and Toronto. I selected these cities for their demographic diversity and for the presence of system hubs and/or a network of IB and Montessori schools.

Washington, D.C.

I conducted fieldwork in DC from January to June, 2017, moving there during the transition from the Obama to the Trump administration. The progressive city appeared to be in mourning. Despite this turbulent political backdrop, much of DC's educational landscape remained largely the same during fieldwork. The city remained diverse; in 2016-17, for example, 68 percent of DC's public school students were African American, 18 percent Latino, and 10 percent white.⁷⁹ There continued to be a range of charter school options, with public charter schools comprising 46 percent of DC's schools.⁸⁰ Broader initiatives, ranging from the Common Core State Standards to Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* campaign, seeped into both DC schools, even as one was public charter and one private.

Participants described the DC context as progressive, diverse, and one that offers a wide range of competitive options in education. Hubs for both the IB and AMI systems are located just outside DC, and there are multiple IB and Montessori schools in and around the district.

Toronto

I conducted fieldwork in Toronto from October, 2017 to March, 2018. While DC teachers and students grieved the recent election of Trump, the Toronto teachers and students celebrated Canada amending its national anthem to be more gender neutral.⁸¹ Similar to the United States, Canada is a highly federated nation, and so in this study I focus on the contexts of the Ontario province and the city of Toronto.

Toronto is also diverse, though its diversity looks different from that of DC. In 2011-2012, 29 percent of Toronto District School Board (TDSB) students were white, 24 percent South Asian, 15 percent East Asian, 12 percent Black, and 9 percent mixed.⁸² Participants and other locals framed Canada's diversity as a mosaic to signal difference across people should be celebrated and acknowledged rather than assimilated into one monolithic nationality.

Unlike DC, with its strong charter school presence and ethos of school choice, in the years leading up to fieldwork, Toronto and Ontario had been steadily working to enhance the public's confidence in public education. This was one of Ontario's four goals for its education system; the other three involved equity, excellence, and promoting well-being.⁸³ Similar to DC, participants perceived the Toronto context to be progressive and diverse. There were multiple IB and Montessori schools in and around Toronto, as well as an AMI Montessori training center.

Case Selection: Schools and Focal Classrooms

Within each city, I selected one elementary school per system, four schools in total. I selected schools authorized by their respective system and amenable to extended partnership. I aimed for symmetry in grade levels, partnering with willing 4th-6th grade teachers. Instead of using pseudonyms for each school, I refer to them by their system and context, to help readers

track the analytical differences along which this study is focused. I use pseudonyms for all participants, and worked with focal teachers and students to help them select their pseudonyms.⁸⁴

DC IB School

The DC IB school is a pre-K – grade 5 public charter school, located just a five-minute walk from the DC Montessori school. On its website, the school emphasizes its dual-immersion English/Mandarin program and its inquiry-based approach to instruction. One finds various accolades, as well, such as the school being ranked Tier 1 as a high-performing DC public charter, and it being one of the most diverse schools in the country.⁸⁵ The school prides itself on being a high-fidelity IB school with much in-house expertise; five teachers and the PYP coordinator are IB workshop leaders, working with the IB system to train teachers new to IB.

The DC IB school was founded with the intention of becoming an IB school approximately ten years prior to fieldwork. The school was authorized by IB about five years prior to fieldwork. At its founding, DC IB was one of the few PYP schools in the area, and the only school doing English/Mandarin dual-immersion.⁸⁶ Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 students are fully immersed in Mandarin; from kindergarten onward students alternate days with an English and Chinese teacher, who collaborate closely to teach all content areas to their shared students. The PYP Coordinator, who is the school's Director of Teaching and Learning, was one of the school founders, and originally worked as a pre-K teacher at the school. The Head of School has been such since the school's second year.

As the only public school in this study, it is perhaps unsurprising that the DC IB school is the largest, with approximately 500 students. The school also had a much more robust staff, such as full-time school counselors and a special education coordinator. The DC IB school is in high demand; students are admitted via lottery, and teachers report families will send their child

regardless of its Mandarin program, as they view half of the instructional time in English to be more valuable than what their neighborhood school could offer full-time. Many DC IB students go on to attend a nearby IB MYP school, which also offers Mandarin language learning. The focal teachers reported children enter their classroom already aware of many social justice and political issues; parents are politically aware and often highly educated.

I was a teaching assistant two days each week at the DC IB school; one day in Ann Lǎoshī's 4th grade classroom, and the other in Johnson Lǎoshī's 5th grade classroom.⁸⁷ "Lǎoshī" means "teacher" in Mandarin; all DC IB teachers used the term, regardless of their language of instruction. As their assistant, I helped Ann Lǎoshī and Johnson Lǎoshī with a range of instructional tasks.⁸⁸ I frequently provided extra support to small groups of students who were struggling with a given subject. Over time, I became increasingly involved; I chaperoned an overnight trip and subbed for small portions of the day when the focal teachers had to step out of their classroom for meetings. The DC IB school prides itself on its small class size; there were 19 students in Ann Lǎoshī's class, and 15 with Johnson Lǎoshī.

Ann Lǎoshī is a white woman from the region. She received an MA degree in both general and special education with a program she reported as being very aligned to IB. She taught for three years at an IB candidate school before being hired at the DC IB school, and had been at DC IB for a few years at the time of fieldwork. Johnson Lǎoshī is a white woman from the Northeast United States. She taught in France and China, and became IB trained after being hired at the DC IB school. At the time of fieldwork, she had been a teacher at the DC IB school for nearly a decade, starting off in first grade and then moving up to fifth. DC IB school leaders encouraged her to get her MA degree during the summers from a nearby university, which offers a degree with an IB focus. Johnson Lǎoshī was also an IB workshop leader.

DC Montessori School

The DC Montessori school is a pre-K - grade 6 private, AMI Recognized, Christian school, which teaches children the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd alongside its academic curriculum. Leaders at the school describe it as mission-driven, emphasizing its values of a diverse community, providing affordable Montessori education, and helping children grow in a loving relationship with God. The DC Montessori school works hard to recruit diverse families and make tuition affordable; roughly 1/3 of families receive financial assistance.

The DC Montessori school was founded in the 1980s as both a religious and a Montessori school, though it wasn't AMI Recognized until approximately five years prior to fieldwork. The Head of School had been the school's leader for over a decade, while the Director of Education had been in her current role only a couple years, but prior to that had been a Primary teacher at the school for over a decade. The school is small- with roughly 100 children enrolled at the time of fieldwork. It has a strong partnership with a nearby AMI training center, welcoming student teachers each year and frequently hiring from that pool of graduates. Teachers at the school view the administration to be very supportive of their implementing a "pure" Montessori method, and administration views the parent population to be supportive, especially given there are many second-generation Montessori families attending the school.

I was an assistant for two days each week in Ms. Laura's Upper Elementary classroom. Ms. Laura was worried about having a second adult in her classroom, given she perceived her class size of 22 students to be too small. However, she felt comfortable with me having a non-teaching role only two days each week. I primarily made classroom materials, though over time I was given greater responsibility (e.g., chaperoning the 6th year graduation retreat, subbing for Ms. Laura on one or two occasions). The class was fairly well-balanced across children's ages,

with slightly fewer 6th years than the other two grade levels. Practitioners reported it was a coincidence there were only four boys in the class that year.

Ms. Laura is a white woman from the region. She taught at a Montessori school in the Caribbean for two years after her training, and had been at this school approximately five years at the time of fieldwork. I observed her in her second year as the Upper Elementary teacher. Ms. Laura frequently discussed how she dropped out of high school, and one reason she is drawn to Montessori is it is a method entirely different from the one that did not serve her as a student.

Toronto IB School

The Toronto IB school is a private school that is distinct from the other cases in four notable ways: 1) it is pre-K through high school; 2) it is not in the urban center, but located about 30 minutes away in a densely populated town in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA); 3) Toronto IB is the only school that was not founded with the intent of being part of its educational system; and 4) because the school does neither the Montessori multi-age grouping nor dual-immersion, new students are admitted in later grades, and even mid-year, much more readily.

The Toronto IB school's motto is "*Where tradition and vision meet.*" The school was founded about 40 years prior to fieldwork, but it has only offered the PYP in the last decade. The middle and high school grades do not offer IB programmes; the high school instead offers AP classes. The PYP Coordinator and Deputy Head of School was a former middle and high school teacher at the school, and is now actively involved in the network of IB schools in southern Ontario. The school's Executive Director is the daughter of the school's founders, and had been in her current position for about a decade at the time of fieldwork.

Approximately 350 students attend the Toronto IB school. Twenty percent of these students are international, and the school offers both ESL and homestay programs.⁸⁹ While the

school attracts families from diverse countries, it charges the most expensive tuition of the cases, and thus caters to more socioeconomically advantaged families. As with the other schools in this study, the Toronto IB school has a good reputation, even as it is situated in a context with many private school options. Teachers and school leaders described the school as a collaborative and enjoyable place to work, further evidenced by relatively little teacher and administrator turnover.

I was a teaching assistant for two days each week in Ms. Forbes' 4th grade classroom. This was the only school where students were instructed to call me by my last name. Ms. Forbes was the only teacher who utilized me for marking, as relatively more homework was given in this school. In addition to marking math or spelling homework, I would sometimes float and assist students as they worked on an assignment independently or in groups. Like the DC IB school, this school advertised its small class sizes. Ms. Forbes had 15 students, and she described her class as being bigger, more international (about 2/3 of the students were born in a different country), and with a wider range of abilities than her previous class.

Ms. Forbes is a white woman who grew up in Canada's rural snowbelt. She was trained at Teacher's College in general and special education. At the time of fieldwork, she had taught multiple elementary grades at the Toronto IB school for approximately 15 years. Prior to this school, she taught for a couple of years in Finland and at another private school in Ontario.

Toronto Montessori School

The Toronto Montessori school is a pre-K – grade 6 private school, which is one of three Montessori schools founded by the same owners approximately 40 years prior to fieldwork. Rather than being AMI Recognized, the school is accredited by the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators (CCMA), which aims to establish consistent practices to preserve authentic Montessori education. The school recently had a change in administration, so both the

Head of School and Primary Supervisor are relatively new to their roles, despite the latter being a Primary teacher at the school for many years prior to becoming an administrator.⁹⁰

The Toronto Montessori school is small – with roughly 100 children enrolled at the time of fieldwork. There is no AMI training center for Elementary teachers in the area, so Elementary teachers who were trained locally were trained at the Toronto Montessori Institute, whereas Primary teachers had the option of a nearby AMI training center. The school experienced much change in the years prior to fieldwork. When the current Head of School assumed his position, he reported many systems (e.g., for teacher evaluation) had not been in place, so he began creating those systems. Despite changes in enrollment and administration, many of the school’s teachers were longstanding. Administrators reported families are drawn to this school’s authentic Montessori program, as well as its location within the heart of downtown Toronto.

I was an assistant in Ms. Emily’s Upper Elementary classroom for 1.5 – 2 days each week, depending on the week. This school, similar to the DC Montessori school, is mindful of how many adults are in the classrooms, so Ms. Emily had me come on days when the children weren’t doing specials with additional teachers (e.g., art, music). I primarily made classroom materials, though I would occasionally help by conferencing with students around their writing. As with the other cases, I assumed more responsibility with time and participants’ trust (e.g., chaperoning trips to the nearby retirement home). Ms. Emily’s class was small by Montessori standards – 13 students – and it was less well-balanced, with approximately twice the amount of 4th years as there were 6th years.

Ms. Emily is a white woman from a town situated a few hours east of Toronto. At the time of fieldwork, she had taught at the Toronto Montessori school for roughly a decade. Prior to that, she briefly taught at a Montessori school in the Cayman Islands. Ms. Emily had originally

planned to apply to Teachers College to become a traditional teacher. However, upon observing and volunteering at the Toronto Montessori school, in preparation of her application to Teachers College, she became interested in Montessori, and instead pursued that training.

Data Collection Methods

In this study, I employed four data collection techniques: 1) participant observation, 2) video-cued multivocal ethnography, 3) semi-structured interviews, and 4) a review of school and system documents. These methods, my analysis and member check conversations with focal teachers, and constant comparison across system and context all helped me to address this study's research questions. In Table 3.1, I summarize the data collected in both DC and Toronto.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was particularly useful in addressing *RQ2: How do teachers understand and manage the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect in practice, and why?*

I acted as a participant observer, volunteering as a classroom assistant two days per week for five months at each school.⁹¹ Over the course of ten months, I engaged deeply with five classrooms across four schools, while observing other classrooms and school events when possible. In any given week, I spent roughly equal amounts of time in the IB and Montessori school in that context, which facilitated constant comparison between the two systems. My role varied across the classrooms in accordance with what was most useful to the focal teachers. Across all classrooms, my involvement deepened with time, as trust grew between teachers, students, and myself.⁹²

Table 3.1***Data Collection Methods***

	International Baccalaureate	Montessori
Washington, D.C.		
Observations	32 days in focal classrooms (~240 hours) (fieldnotes, coded)	39 days in focal classrooms (~273 hours) (fieldnotes, coded)
	10 additional observations (~35 hours) (fieldnotes, coded)	9 additional observations (~16 hours) (fieldnotes, coded)
Video-cued focus groups	4 focus groups in 2017 (recorded, transcribed, coded)	4 focus groups in 2017 (recorded, transcribed, coded)
	3 focus groups in 2018 (recorded, transcribed, coded)	2 focus groups in 2018 (recorded, transcribed, coded)
Interviews	5 interviews (recorded, transcribed, coded)	4 interviews (recorded, transcribed, coded)
Document review	Teacher and student evaluation rubrics; curriculum binders; employee manuals; school websites; system standards for classrooms and schools; system guides to authorization (coded)	Teacher and student evaluation rubrics; curriculum binders; employee manuals; school websites; system standards for classrooms and schools; system guides to authorization (coded)

Toronto		
Observations	34 days in focal classrooms (~255 hours) (fieldnotes, coded)	33 days in focal classrooms (~216 hours) (fieldnotes, coded)
	7 additional observations (~18 hours) (fieldnotes, coded)	5 additional observations (~9 hours) (fieldnotes, coded)
Video-cued focus groups	4 focus groups (recorded, transcribed, coded)	4 focus groups (recorded, transcribed, coded)
Interviews	3 interviews (recorded, transcribed, coded)	3 interviews (recorded, transcribed, coded)
Document review	Teacher and student evaluation rubrics; curriculum binders; employee manuals; school websites; school timetables; system standards for classrooms and schools; system guides to authorization (coded)	Teacher and student evaluation rubrics; curriculum binders; employee manuals; school websites; system standards for classrooms and schools; system guides to authorization; system re-accreditation application (coded)

Video-cued Multivocal Ethnography

In addition to addressing *RQ2*, video-cued multivocal ethnography was especially helpful when addressing *RQ1*: *In what ways do system designs advance the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect, and why?*

Similar to Tobin et al. (2009), I employed the method of video-cued multivocal ethnography. I videotaped a typical day in one classroom per school, and then showed these 20-minute videos during focus groups with students, teachers, and school leaders at each school, as well as during focus groups with IB and Montessori system leaders.⁹³ With the exception of

system leaders, all other focus group participants watched and discussed three videos: 1) the video from their school; 2) the video from a school in the same system, but different context; 3) the video from a school in a different system, but the same context.⁹⁴

When participants watched the video from their own school or system, I asked questions to get a sense of what is *not atypical* (Tobin et al., 2009), to begin to differentiate between school or system patterns, versus something particular to the focal teacher or her classroom.

When participants watched videos of schools from different systems and/or countries, I asked questions regarding what is surprising or confusing about the video's contents. Rather than attending to the details of what participants said about other contexts or systems – comments imperfectly informed by a 20-minute video – I instead attended to what their commentary revealed about themselves, and their own assumptions around what teaching, learning, and respecting children *should* look like. I then probed where these assumptions stem from (e.g., school or system training, one's past experiences of schooling).

Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews I conducted during fieldwork, along with member check conversations after fieldwork, were particularly useful when addressing *RQ3: How do teachers and leaders experience the relationship between mutual respect by design and mutual respect in practice?*

I interviewed the focal teachers as well as the Director of Education and Head of School at each of the four cases (15 interviews total).⁹⁵ During these interviews, I inquired about participants' history with their school and system, the sources informing the content and method for teachers' instruction, what informs participants' expectations of students, etc.⁹⁶

Document Review

I reviewed system and school documents to further assist me in addressing *RQ1: In what ways do system designs advance the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect, and why?* These documents ranged from pedagogical standards to mission statements to evaluation rubrics for teachers and students. From these documents, I began to discern whether connections existed between system writings on/standards for respect, and practitioners' understandings or practices around mutual respect in classrooms.

Methods of Analysis

I analyzed the data in three phases using both inductive and deductive approaches. In Phase 1, I used an open coding strategy to identify emerging themes while in the field, and while completing the transcription and processing of the data.⁹⁷ This strategy enabled me to attend to participants' framing in interviews and focus groups, minimally interpreting their perceptions of the designs of their system (*RQ1*), for example, or the experiences of practitioners when managing these designs in practice (*RQ3*).

The Phase 1 analysis that occurred in DC resulted in my focus on, and framing of, mutual respect. This shift in framing altered my probes when collecting data in Toronto.⁹⁸ This shift in framing also informed subsequent phases of analysis and member check conversations.

In Phase 2, I employed axial coding to identify relationships between codes *within* each case.⁹⁹ For example, I analyzed across varied data sources to determine the salience of teacher training when considering the relationship between a system's designs for mutual respect (*RQ1*), and how teachers understand and manage the dimensions of mutual respect in practice (*RQ2*).

After Phase 2, I outlined emerging findings, and reviewed them with the five focal teachers of this study during member check conversations. I member checked my framing of

mutual respect, the dimension(s) of mutual respect I found to be most privileged in a given school, and whether and how the designs of a system interacted with the observed mutual respect in classrooms. During these conversations, I had the opportunity to probe more around teachers' experiences as they managed their system's designs for mutual respect in practice (*RQ3*).

During Phase 3 of analysis, I used NVivo's classification and query functions to conduct a theoretical and comparative coding pass.¹⁰⁰ I compared data *across* the cases, for example, to build theory around how different system designs may have implications for the different experiences of managing classrooms for mutual respect. I did the same when looking across different practice contexts. It was at this point in the analysis that I could begin to formally address *RQ4: In what ways, if any, do the answers to the preceding questions vary within and between educational systems, and why?*

Taken together, these three phases of analysis enabled me to build theory around interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms.

Validation

Several techniques helped me to evaluate the validity of this study's findings. First, I used different phases of analysis to move between "inductive data collection and analysis and deductive cycles of testing and analysis," which ensured I provided warrants for the assertions I made.¹⁰¹ Second, I employed both data triangulation (i.e., speaking with people in different roles, contexts, and at different points in time) and methodological triangulation (i.e., using different methods to gather data).¹⁰² Third, I used formal member checking so focal participants could correct or expand upon my preliminary interpretations.¹⁰³ Finally, throughout writing, I engaged in auditing (tracing analysis from data sources through to conclusions), and continually sought out negative or deviant perspectives, to ensure my assertions were grounded in the data.¹⁰⁴

Limitations

Despite the attention and care given to this study's design, there are three limitations to note pertaining to: 1) uneven data collection in public schools; 2) sample size; and 3) race.

Though I attempted to partner with public IB and Montessori schools, only one of the four schools was public, and even then the DC IB case was public charter.¹⁰⁵ Practitioners across the two systems acknowledged the differences between implementing IB or Montessori in a public school setting versus a private school setting. Public schools must generally meet more requirements, and they generally have more diverse student populations. So, when considering how these educational systems interact with mutual respect in classrooms – particularly the Montessori system, given both of those schools are private – it is important to acknowledge the potential for different findings had I been in public school settings. Thus, in addition to conducting this research across a range of educational systems and contexts, I encourage future research to, whenever possible, sample from public as well as private schools.

A second limitation of this study concerns its small, purposive sample. Findings are based on data from four schools, two schools per system and per context. I should therefore exercise caution when generalizing about interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms, and even interactions between the IB and Montessori systems and mutual respect in IB and Montessori classrooms. However, I address this limitation in a few key ways: 1) by collecting data across two different systems and two different contexts, I am better positioned to isolate system or context effects with regards to the mutual respect observed in classrooms; 2) in addition to the four dissertation schools, I collected data in other schools, systems, and contexts for the pilot study preceding this one; and 3) I designed focus group protocols to get a sense of what was typical, or not, from teachers in the same school as the focal

teacher, teachers in the same system but different context, and from system leaders. In these ways, I mitigate some limitations stemming from a small, qualitative sample.

A third limitation of this study is related to race; all focal teachers and myself – the researcher – are white. Because race was not an explicit part of the initial sampling procedures, this account, and its consideration of the potential disadvantages and perils of mutual respect in classrooms, is incomplete. Mutual respect – forsaking some of one’s power in the classroom - may not be a viable option for minority teachers, for whom job security or relations with students and families may be tenuous. Further, there are students who come from families that discourage children behaving in mutually respectful ways toward authority figures.¹⁰⁶ More diversity in the focal participants would facilitate, among other things, better understanding of how neither mutual respect, nor the systemic pursuit of it, are neutral. As I discuss in Chapter Eight, this limitation informs my future research agenda.

Overview of Findings Chapters

In the next three chapters, I present results of this study. Each chapter addresses one of the first three research questions, in addition to addressing the fourth research question in the chapter discussion. All findings chapters incorporate data from across the four schools.

In the discussion chapter, I will review how this theory-building study – and the analytic framework it elaborates – permits a finer-grained analysis of interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. What is more, I will consider how a system’s relationship with its environment – whether it understands the environment to be relative ally or adversary - can shape the trajectory of mutual respect within: 1) a system’s designs; 2) the practical logics of teachers; and 3) the social contexts of classrooms, as they are co-created by students, teachers, and school leaders.

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- ⁵⁰ See, for example: Anderson-Levitt (2002).
- ⁵¹ In doing so, I followed the advice of George and Bennett (2005: 83) “Cases should also be selected to provide the kind of control and variation required by the research problem.”
- ⁵² See, for example: Duckworth (2006); <https://www.ibo.org/about-the-ib/mission/>
- ⁵³ See Nugent and Karnes (2002); Tarc (2009).
- ⁵⁴ See Hertberg-Davis and Callahan (2008).
- ⁵⁵ See Kyburg, Hertberg-Davis, and Callahan (2007).
- ⁵⁶ See International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO] (2013).
- ⁵⁷ See, for example: IBO (2013); IBO (2014).
- ⁵⁸ <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/>
- ⁵⁹ IB wants to cultivate students who are: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective.
- ⁶⁰ <https://www.ibo.org/about-the-ib/the-ib-by-country/u/united-states/>
- ⁶¹ <https://www.ibo.org/about-the-ib/the-ib-by-country/c/canada/>
- ⁶² See Thomas, Marken, Gray, and Lewis (2013) and <http://www.ibo.org/country/US/>
- ⁶³ See Kyburg, Hertberg-Davis, and Callahan (2007).
- ⁶⁴ Tarc (2009: 86-87, 123) contends the main reason for the expansion of IB’s Primary Years Programme and Middle Years Programme was to promote IB’s ideals around progressive education. Progressive education was too constrained in the Diploma Programme because of standards, exams, and student selection into courses that weren’t necessarily innovative, but that would get them into university. Expansion of these programs would also help IB with addressing issues around access and equity (Ibid: 90-91). See also: Callahan (2003); Kyburg, Hertberg-Davis, and Callahan (2007); Hertberg-Davis and Callahan (2008).
- ⁶⁵ When compared to similar students who are not in an IB programme, researchers have found American IB students: 1) have more knowledge of United States government structure, functioning and history (Saavedra, 2014), 2) have increased likelihood of enrolling in college, enrolling in selective colleges, and better college persistence and performance (this study’s sample comprised mostly low-income, racial/ethnic minority, and first-generation college students (Coca, Johnson, and Kelley-Kemple, 2011)), and 3) are better able to manage their time efficiently, study for culminating exams, and cope with the heavy workload required in college honors courses (Conley, McGaughy, Davis-Molin, Farkas, and Fukuda, 2014). Research specifically on the PYP, for students ages 3-12, suggests improved: 1) school climate (Boal and Nakamoto, 2020); 2) international-mindedness and critical thinking skills (Medwell, Cooker, Bailey, and Winchip, 2017); 3) student agency (Kushner, Cochise, Courtney, Sinnema, and Brown, 2016), and 4) academic achievement (Gough, Sharpley, Vander Pal, and Griffiths, 2014).
- ⁶⁶ See, for example: Cohen, Peurach, Glazer, Gates, and Goldin (2013); Peurach and Neumerski (2015).
- ⁶⁷ See Montessori (1972: 27); Montessori (1992); Montessori (1995).
- ⁶⁸ See Whitescarver and Cossentino (2008).
- ⁶⁹ See Montessori (1937).
- ⁷⁰ See <https://www.montessori-ami.org/about-montessori/montessori-educators>
- ⁷¹ See Duckworth (2006).
- ⁷² See Cossentino (2006) and Montessori (2008).
- ⁷³ In some Montessori schools, there are Elementary classes with children ages 6-12. Though the case study schools had different classes for Lower and Upper Elementary, the Montessori school that was part of my pilot study had such an Elementary class.
- ⁷⁴ See Rambusch (1962).
- ⁷⁵ See Dohrmann, Nishida, Gartner, Lipsky, and Grimm (2007) and <https://www.montessoricensus.org/about-the-census-project>
- ⁷⁶ Focus group with AMI Montessori trainers, 8/16/17.
- ⁷⁷ See Beatty (2011).
- ⁷⁸ When compared to their traditionally-schooled peers, researchers have determined Montessori students have significantly higher levels of: 1) flexible, conceptual thinking (Reed, 2008), 2) self-regulation (Ervin, Wash, and Mecca, 2010), 3) intrinsic motivation (Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi, 2005), 4) executive control (Lillard and Else-Quest, 2006), and 5) high quality adjustment to university (Shankland, Genolini, França, Guelfi, and Ionescu, 2010). Previous research also demonstrates Montessori students perceive their classrooms to be less competitive and more innovative than do traditional students (Ryniker and Shoho, 2001). Further, researchers have demonstrated Montessori preschool programs not only elevate academic and social outcomes for Montessori students as compared to their traditionally-schooled peers, these Montessori programs also equalize outcomes among subgroups of

students (e.g., academic achievement for students from different socioeconomic groups) (Lillard, Heise, Richey, Tong, Hart and Bray, 2017). Finally, research comparing outcomes for urban minority youth in public Montessori programs versus more traditional programs evidences similarly promising academic and social outcomes cited above (e.g., Lillard and Else-Quest, 2006).

⁷⁹ <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/landscape-of-diversity-in-dc-public-schools/>

⁸⁰ <https://dcpcsb.egnyte.com/dl/0BR9yldipC/>

⁸¹ The Canadian Senate passed a bill in early 2018 to change the second line of “O Canada” from “in all thy sons” to “in all of us.”

⁸² https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/research/docs/reports/Portrait_Census2011-12_SoutheastAsian_FINAL_report.pdf

⁸³ See Francella and Irwin (2017).

⁸⁴ The guidance I gave when participants selected their pseudonym was to choose either a name they were almost named, a middle name, or a name in one’s family. In addition to using pseudonyms, I edited all quotations for clarity, and to preserve anonymity.

⁸⁵ In her interview, the Head of School clarified that, while the student population is diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, most attending families are middle class, so there is less socioeconomic diversity. The DC IB school was working on recruiting more socioeconomically diverse families (e.g., by changing their lottery design) before, during, and after fieldwork.

⁸⁶ At the time of fieldwork, school leaders reported that only three percent of the DC IB student population was comprised of heritage Mandarin speakers. The school offers extensive support in Mandarin, because (as explained by the focal teachers) the expectation cannot be that families pay for a Mandarin tutor, and most families cannot support learning in Mandarin at home.

⁸⁷ DC IB teachers could choose whether to go by their first or last name.

⁸⁸ Johnson Lǎoshī had two classes, so I worked with her only on the days when she was with her Tiger class, while her other class was with her Chinese teaching partner. Ann Lǎoshī had only one class of 4th grade students; on days when they were with their Chinese teacher, she acted as a resource teacher, offering push-in support for a 5th grade class.

⁸⁹ I use the term ‘ESL’ because this is how the school refers to the program.

⁹⁰ The Toronto Montessori school referred to its Primary classes as “Casa.”

⁹¹ I was a participant observer from February to June, 2017 in the two DC schools, and from October, 2017 to February, 2018 in the two Toronto schools

⁹² With time, I moved from moderate participation to more active participation (Spradley, 2016).

⁹³ I was mindful of the time, size, and setting of focus groups at each case study school (Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 1996).

⁹⁴ Focus groups varied in a few key ways. First, whereas Toronto participants were able to watch three videos at once (i.e., video from one’s own school; video from same system but different context; video from same context but different system), I returned to DC in 2018 to show participants the relevant Toronto video. Thus, Toronto participants could draw comparisons across all videos at once, whereas DC participants focused on cross-system comparisons in 2017, and cross-context comparisons in 2018. Second, I only conducted focus groups with system leaders in DC, as there were stronger system hubs in that area. Third, in the DC Montessori school, school leaders and teachers chose to do their focus group together, given the trust teachers felt in their leaders. Finally, student focus groups varied across all the schools. Some teachers chose to involve their entire class (e.g., the Toronto IB school and both Montessori schools), whereas the DC IB school teachers worked with me to select 5 students from each of their classrooms to participate. Sometimes students watched the videos consecutively (e.g., the Montessori cases), whereas some students watched different videos a day, or even multiple days apart (e.g., the IB cases).

⁹⁵ While different titles were used across the cases, I consistently interviewed two school leaders at each case. One leader was more involved in tasks like school vision, parent relations, and/or administrative duties, whereas the other was more involved in tasks like curriculum and supporting instruction. Notice there were more interviews (15) than there were participants interviewed (13); I conducted follow-up interviews with both a DC Montessori and a DC IB school leader.

⁹⁶ I relied on resources like Weiss (1994) when designing interview protocols.

⁹⁷ See Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011).

⁹⁸ I did not drastically change interview or focus group questions in Toronto, even as my framing of mutual respect became more explicit. I added 1-2 questions with explicit talk of respect at the end of my interview protocols for the two focal teachers in Toronto. From this, I realized that any explicit mention of respect from me lead to jargon and platitudes more than anything else. Respect was everywhere in the data, regardless of whether I explicitly asked about it. So, I maintained most of the questions I had in DC, asking more targeted probes when appropriate. In my

member check conversations with the DC teachers, which took place after all fieldwork was over, I was able to ask any residual questions regarding respect as needed. I also had the opportunity to do this when returning to DC for focus groups in 2018.

⁹⁹ See Corbin and Strauss (2007).

¹⁰⁰ See Charmaz (2014).

¹⁰¹ See Miles and Huberman (1994: 438).

¹⁰² See Denzin (2006).

¹⁰³ See Creswell (1998).

¹⁰⁴ See Miles and Huberman (1994); Patton (2001).

¹⁰⁵ I have, however, conducted research in both public IB and Montessori schools, either as part of the pilot study preceding this dissertation, or for other projects.

¹⁰⁶ Families may encourage children to act in deference toward adults for many reasons, ranging from cultural tradition to the view that more symmetrical interactions could endanger children – particularly minority children - in broader society (e.g., in interactions with police officers). See, for example: Bankston and Hidalgo (2006).

CHAPTER 4: Findings

Designing for Mutual Respect: Examining Differences Across Systems

Let us take a moment to review where we have come from, and where we are going. Our established focus is on educational systems; specifically those educational systems that locate mutual respect centrally by embedding it into their core designs for teaching and learning. To learn more about how such educational systems might interact with mutual respect in classrooms, we examine data from four elementary schools, which are situated across two educational systems — Montessori and International Baccalaureate (IB) — and two national contexts — Washington, D.C. (DC) and Toronto. And so, with this analytical focus and sample in mind, our inquiry begins with the following question: *In what ways do system designs advance the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect, and why?*¹⁰⁷

In analyzing the ways in which the Montessori and IB systems design for mutual respect, and considering why these systems design as they do, I observed a structure, which held constant across the two systems: Both systems have a logic for how to accord children increased mutual respect. So, too, does each system have an intentional way of relating to their environments. Taken together, these logics and dispositions toward the environment provide context for how the Montessori and IB systems design to advance equality, autonomy, and equity.

The similarities appear to end there. That is, while both the Montessori and IB systems design for mutual respect, their designs differ, given these designs were guided by different logics, and by different dispositions toward the environment.

One may remember from Chapter Three that, for the Montessori system, a first step toward treating children with increased mutual respect is to elevate teachers' understandings of children and their capabilities.¹⁰⁸ In order to change understandings so teachers come to believe children are more capable than society typically assumes them to be, the Montessori system sets itself apart from the broader environment, and the normative educational practices and understandings therein. For the IB system, a first step toward treating students with increased mutual respect is to support teachers in continually and authentically connecting students to the broader world.¹⁰⁹ To facilitate this ongoing relationship between students and society, the IB system is relatively open to its environment, and encourages IB teachers to be, as well.

With these logics and dispositions in mind, in this chapter, I discuss how the Montessori and IB systems design for mutual respect. I describe their instructional designs as well as their operational designs. By instructional design, I mean the ways these systems make mutual respect integral to their core designs for teaching and learning. By operational design, I mean the ways these systems support the implementation of those instructional designs — and the mutual respect therein — in classrooms. I discuss each system in turn below, detailing how their designs advance the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect. In the chapter discussion, I return to and elaborate this study's analytic framework, which is depicted in Figure 2.2. With the help of this framework, I present a more detailed understanding of, and comparison between, designs for mutual respect from the Montessori and IB systems.

Montessori

When reviewing the designs for mutual respect in the Montessori system, considering both instructional and operational designs, I found Montessori to: 1) focus on advancing one dimension of mutual respect, and 2) to operate as a relatively closed system.

In the below sections, I present system documents and commentary from Montessori teachers and leaders to evidence how the designs of the Montessori system are focused on autonomy, and are relatively closed off to the broader environment.

Instructional Designs for Mutual Respect

The data suggest the Montessori system focuses its instructional designs on respecting and fostering children’s autonomy, first and foremost.

This does not mean the system or Montessori teachers and leaders — practitioners of mutual respect — are unconcerned with ensuring equality and equity for children.¹¹⁰ At both the system and case levels, participants described the Montessori method as one that entails treating children as social equals (i.e., respect-as-equality), and that recognizes some children need a longer time, and/or different supports, to succeed within and beyond Montessori classrooms (i.e., respect-as-equity). Further, in Chapter Five, it will become evident how, even as the Montessori system designs for autonomy in considerable and explicit ways, such designs also permit ample opportunities to ensure equality and equity for children. Rather, it is to say the Montessori system puts autonomy in the first position, as the central focus of its designs.

The Montessori Method, Generally Speaking

Practitioners emphasized the importance of respecting children’s autonomy when summarizing the Montessori method. At the system level, the Association Montessori International (AMI) website summarizes Montessori learning environments by stating they are “*designed to fit the specific needs of each child’s stage of development. Learning is all about the activity and independence of the child to find out what they need at each particular moment.*” Similarly, in a focus group with system leaders, when stating the number one thing they look for in classrooms is whether children have enough freedom, an AMI Montessori trainer explained:

We support independence from the beginning, and the older the child gets, and the more conscious they get, the more freedom they have. And I would say the responsibility arises naturally, rather than we are directly talking about it. So they naturally assume responsibilities when we give them enough freedom.

Montessorians explained freedom and responsibility are important principles, and viewed to be two sides of the same coin in a Montessori classroom.

At the school level, Montessori teachers discussed the importance of allowing children to discover and construct themselves. In the DC Montessori focus group, a Lower Elementary teacher described what this implies for a Montessori teacher's daily practice:

In Montessori, what I like about it also is that we help with the child's construction of himself, of who he is to become. And so, there's a lot of really letting go first, and then letting them see the result of their initial choice. And then guide them to, 'Ok so what happened now?' And let them decide, is this a good decision or is this not a good decision? Because that's part of helping ... the child discover himself.

In her interview, the DC Montessori focal teacher, Ms. Laura, emphasized children's autonomy when describing the end result Montessori teachers work toward:

You can prepare the environment, you can look at yourself and ask yourself, where are you imposing yourself that you don't need to be? And how can you gracefully step back? Because that's the goal. Again, [Dr.] Montessori says, and I'm not exactly quoting, but that moment when a teacher can step out of the classroom, and know that it will continue to run without her, that is when you know you're doing something correctly.

Teachers and leaders alike summarized the Montessori method, what it entails and what it works toward, as a method that respects and cultivates children's independence.

In digging deeply into the primacy of autonomy in the Montessori system's instructional designs, five components of the Montessori method of instruction stand out: 1) limited and trained adults; 2) brief presentations; 3) off-the-shelf supports (i.e., conferences, work logs, and benchmarks); 4) Montessori materials; and 5) going-outs.¹¹¹

Autonomy via Limited and Trained Adults

Both a Montessori teacher's training and her limited presence in the classroom are designs allowing children to autonomously direct their own learning.

In AMI's standards for Montessori classrooms, the criterion listed first is there should be one AMI trained teacher per class who is trained at the appropriate age level.¹¹² The standards then specify that, should local regulations make it necessary to have more adults in the room, those adults are to function as non-teaching aides. Both a teacher's training, and the fact that there is only one of her, are important components in the instructional designs of the Montessori system.

By limiting the number of adults in the classroom (along with organizing class sizes to be large, as will be discussed in later sections of this chapter), the Montessori system takes strong measures to ensure those adults are restrained in their ability to interfere with children's activities. Though his statement was made in jest, a Toronto Montessori school leader explained, "*adults ruin everything.*" By this he meant that when children see their teacher is unavailable, they increasingly learn to solve their own problems and direct their own learning. Limiting the number of adults in the room, then, is one way of ensuring Montessori teachers follow Dr. Montessori's credo, "*never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed.*"¹¹³

Limiting the number of adults in the classroom is one way of fostering children's autonomy, making sure the adults who remain are AMI trained is another. This is because during their training, Montessori teachers learn the risks of overly directing a child's learning, and how to entice children to learn, rather than to demand it of them. In her interview, for example, DC Montessori Ms. Laura explained:

You can so easily create an aversion to something in a child if you feel like you need to force them to do it. And if you say, 'Ok, you want to paint? You need to do your math

work first, ' that is a slippery slope, because they're going to start to resent math. They're going to start to feel, 'well why do I have to do my math work? Am I bad at math?' And on and on and on. So the teacher, in moments that feel completely reasonable, can have a huge effect that you're not aware of, which is why I'm so careful. Which is why I try to observe, and try to mostly entice rather than to prescribe.

Autonomy via Brief Presentations

Brief lessons, uninterrupted work cycles, and the ability for children to determine the details of their follow-up work are all designed to work together, affording children ample time for exercising their autonomy during the school day.

During their training, Montessori Elementary teachers learn to invite small groups of children to brief presentations, as opposed to offering whole-group instruction. Additionally, system standards require Elementary classrooms to be organized to permit children 2-3 hours of uninterrupted time each morning and afternoon for their work cycles. Thus, another key tenet of instruction is that lessons between teachers and children comprise a small portion of the day.

Because children only spend a small portion of their day receiving presentations, they quickly learn how to direct the rest of their time and learning. This is because once the presentation is over, children are meant to exercise autonomy over their follow-up work: when, where, with whom, how, for how long, and even whether they do it. In her theory album, which DC Montessori Ms. Laura compiled during training, she wrote the following guidance:

Lessons must be accompanied by the child's freedom to work as long and as hard as she wishes. This is another point of the pedagogy; we must allow the child the freedom to act upon that lesson. This is the stage you set; an atmosphere of freedom. The child should know that after a lesson that they can go off and do something with this new information, or not.

Autonomy via Conferences, Work Logs, and Benchmarks

In addition to presentations, which often involve Montessori materials, Montessori teachers use three instructional tools that are “*not on the shelf.*”¹⁴ DC Montessori Ms. Laura

reviewed these tools in her interview: 1) conferences with each child, 2) the child's work record, and 3) benchmarks reviewing what society will expect of these children upon leaving elementary school. In broad strokes, these instructional tools help to track what a child has learned thus far, and what needs to be learned before leaving the Elementary classroom.

Each of these instructional tools are designed to encourage Montessori students to manage and advocate for their own learning. During conferences, the teacher and child review the child's work record, which Ms. Laura explained is *"their recording of the lessons they receive, what they want to practice, what they practice, etc. And that allows them to manage themselves."* For the benchmarks, Ms. Laura described how she simply makes them available to children. The children are then the ones who decide when to *"take ownership"* by reviewing the benchmarks, determining what lessons they still need, and requesting those lessons during their conference. Thus, even as these instructional tools help the teacher to track what a child is learning, they are designed in a way where it is the child who records and reflects on their learning, and then advocates for what they need in order to be prepared for their next steps.

Autonomy via Accessible, Limited Montessori Materials

AMI standards state each AMI Montessori classroom must be equipped with a complete set of Montessori materials. These materials are integral to teachers' presentations and to children's independent work, and are thus important components of the Montessori method.

The Montessori materials are designed to accord children autonomy in at least two ways. First, they are displayed on classroom shelves, completely accessible to children throughout the school day. In her interview, DC Montessori Ms. Laura stated how the first step of any presentation is to orient children to where the material is in the classroom, ensuring they can

“independently get this work out themselves later.” Thus, children in a prepared Montessori classroom need not rely on an adult to begin their work.

A second way Montessori materials respect children’s independence is these materials are designed so children can correct their own mistakes and make their own discoveries. In her interview, the Toronto Montessori focal teacher, Ms. Emily, stated:

You talk a lot about it in your training. The materials are designed with a control of error in them, so that way, if the child makes a mistake, [the materials] can help them to correct it without you having to correct it.

She went on to explain how, through observing the children’s work with the materials, teachers can determine when they are ready for the next presentation, and for increasingly abstract work.

In addition to the Montessori materials, during training, Montessori teachers learn to intentionally limit resources in their classrooms. Such limiting is, in part, a design to help children learn to share, and to respect their classmates’ equal rights to classroom materials. Additionally, limiting classroom resources is a design to encourage children to investigate, leaving the classroom to go on excursions I describe below.

Autonomy via Going-Outs

While recruiting a Montessori school in Toronto, I spoke with a few school leaders, who similarly stated that a trademark of a high-fidelity Montessori classroom is one where children frequently go on “going-outs.” Going-outs, in turn, encapsulate how Montessori instruction is designed to respect children’s autonomy: It is the children who initiate a going-out based on their own learning wants and needs, and it is the children who independently facilitate the excursion. Autonomy is apparent throughout the DC Montessori school’s guidance for adults chaperoning a going-out:

We intentionally limit the resources available in the classroom and school to encourage students to go out to find the information they need. It could be a trip to the

grocery store to buy groceries for a project or class meal, or to the pet store to buy food and supplies for our pets. Dr. Montessori was very clear that the children should plan and execute these trips to build real-life skills and self-reliance.

The role of the adult chaperone is to attend to the children's physical and emotional safety without usurping the responsibilities of making the trip a success. The children are completely responsible for planning and executing almost all aspects of the trip. They do extensive planning and preparation beforehand; finding maps and planning routes, calculating fares, determining when to leave the location in order to be able to return to school by dismissal, etc. Resist the urge to smooth the way and solve the problems that arise—these are precisely the skills that belong to the children to practice. For instance, as the children navigate to their destination, they might say turn right when the adult knows they should take a left turn. The adult follows the children's directions, even if it leads them down the wrong path.

Operational Designs for Mutual Respect

Operational designs are those designs supporting the implementation of the Montessori method of instruction, and the mutual respect therein. I highlight three features of such designs in the Montessori system, which varied considerably from what I found in the operational designs of the IB system: 1) teacher training; 2) the way the Montessori system engages with the broader educational environment (i.e., norms, practices, resources, and guidance around teaching and learning, present in the environment and intended for schools); and 3) coordination of system guidance for classroom instruction, organization, and social relations.

When reviewing the above features, I found Montessori operates as a closed system. This is because, even as the Montessori method focuses on respecting children's autonomy, Montessorians recognize such a focus — and their corresponding methods — to be counter-cultural, in need of protection and reinforcement.

Teacher Training

The first feature of the Montessori system's operational designs is its teacher training. Through lengthy, intensive, and highly specified training, Montessori teachers have far more

preparation for instruction than is common. Additionally, their understandings around how to teach and treat children change.

AMI Montessori trainers and the two focal teachers described the lengthy training process, and how it gives teachers time to become well-versed in the Montessori method of instruction. To become an AMI trained Montessori teacher at the Elementary level, one must devote an entire academic year to learning six years of Elementary curriculum. First, teacher trainees spend time reading Dr. Montessori's writings directly, reviewing her theories and observations of child development. Then, Elementary trainees spend some time learning the Primary curriculum (ages 3-6), to garner a sense of where children entering their class are coming from. The rest of the academic year is spent learning the entire Elementary curriculum.

As Toronto Montessori Ms. Emily explained:

In Montessori, they teach you every lesson you're going to teach. So every single geometry lesson, every single math lesson, every single history lesson, an adult presents it to you, and then you practice it with your colleagues.

During this year, trainees also observe and practice teach in a Montessori classroom while receiving feedback from their trainers and mentor teachers.

In addition to being lengthy, the Montessori training process is intensive. One requirement making it so is that, during training, teachers compile their albums, which contain both the content and methods necessary for teaching their entire curriculum. When describing what she draws on when deciding what and how to teach, DC Montessori Ms. Laura explained:

The curriculum has been fairly solidly established, especially that surrounding the materials that Maria Montessori designed... So lesson-wise, it's mostly from my albums, this is all prescribed. They, in training, present it to you, you frantically try and capture everything that they're doing and saying, and then you type up the albums yourself, and that's your holy text. That's what you work from, I'm sure you've seen me pull my albums out before a lesson, and be like, 'Ok, I need to do this, and then this, and then this.' And then all of the steps are illustrated, and that's it.

Even though it was an intensive process creating their albums, Montessori teachers explained those albums continually inform both what and how they teach. They make adjustments in terms of following children's interests, and in terms of suggesting follow-up work children might do, but the lessons, and how teachers are to present them, remain unchanging.

Montessori teachers described their training to be highly specified, both in terms of curricular content, as illustrated above, and in terms of how to interact with children. In their focus group, AMI Montessori trainers reported they teach trainees how to cultivate the desired classroom culture, including details around how to speak to children, and what tone of voice and language to use. In a focus group with Toronto Montessori teachers, when remarking on differences between Primary and Elementary classrooms, Primary teachers discussed how they were trained to be less verbal, and more demonstrative, given the age level they teach. One Primary teacher evidenced the specified nature of her training when explaining:

That was definitely in the training. A lot of what we were told was about helping the child to preserve their focus, protect the sanctity of the presentation that you're giving, respect the child's autonomy and drive to work. And one of the best ways to do that, we were told, and I have seen in my experience, is to reduce the distractions around them. So even things like, if you're wearing a lot of loud bracelets, or something like that, that can be very distracting for children of that age. Because their filters aren't in place yet, or they're still developing them. And so they're fascinated by that, even sparkly nail polish can be very exciting and therefore distracting for them, and when what you want them to focus on is the lesson, and they're looking at your nail polish, it's counterproductive.

Montessori teachers cited their training and Dr. Montessori's writings when explaining that praise, or even a smile, could detract from a child's ability to autonomously focus on their work.

Montessori practitioners reported their training, along with their lived experience in Montessori classrooms, helped to transform their understandings of how to treat and teach children. In a focus group with Toronto Montessori leaders, the Head of School, a former Montessori teacher himself, described his training as requiring a leap of faith:

Because Montessori is not so widespread, everyone is making a pretty conscious choice to choose it...even in our training, it takes a big leap. And you can watch people, throughout the course of both trainings — I've done [training] at adolescent level and elementary level — I could feel myself, and you could see the others around you, making that leap at different times, and in different ways.

In conversations with Montessorians, they often described themselves as a cult, or as having drunk the Kool-Aid, unified behind the genius of Dr. Montessori's approach to education. It was through their intensive training that they became inaugurated into this band of believers.

According to Montessori practitioners, an important part of their transformation was learning how to recognize, trust in, and foster children's capabilities. For example, DC Montessori Ms. Laura explained how training changed her views on how to treat children and:

How to help children, too. Because a lot of times people think of helping as stepping in and doing something for a child, and that's not helping. That's hindering, that's preventing them from having the experience of figuring out how to do it for themselves.

In undergoing comprehensive training, which requires of them a leap of faith, teachers become well-informed regarding how — and why — to accord autonomy to children.

Even though the initial training is transformational, Montessori trainers discussed the need for ongoing support, given the counter-cultural nature of teachers' work. During their focus group, after explaining the ways in which teachers need to change themselves to be more humble, a trainer explained why ongoing professional development is necessary, "*this [method] is counter-culture. You do need boosters, you do need support to maintain that, because you can get questioned a lot in this work.*" Through training, be it initial or ongoing, Montessori teachers are supported as they transform to respect children's autonomy in counter-cultural ways.

Engagement with the Environment

The second feature of the Montessori system's operational designs is how the system engages with its environment. From the above discussion of training, one begins to understand

that the Montessori system works to facilitate Montessori teachers' disengagement with their environment. By providing teachers with comprehensive supports for instruction, the Montessori system sets up strong buffers for its counter-cultural efforts to respect children's independence.

The Montessori method was developed in reaction to traditional forms of schooling, and the Montessori system continues to attract those seeking a different way of educating children.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, Dr. Montessori viewed normative educational practices and understandings to be harmful to children. For example, she stated:

How can we speak of Democracy or Freedom when from the very beginning of life we mould the child to undergo tyranny, to obey a dictator? ...Real freedom begins at the beginning of life, not at the adult-stage. These people who have been diminished in their powers...whose wills have been broken by elders who say: 'your will must disappear and mine prevail!' -how can we expect them, when school-life is finished, to accept and use the rights of freedom?¹¹⁵

In DC and Toronto, teachers discussed how they chose to be Montessori teachers because it was different from how they were schooled.¹¹⁶ Toronto Montessori Ms. Emily stated:

That drew me to Montessori, was absolutely respect for the children. I couldn't believe it; I'd never seen anything like it before. I just thought, 'Oh! It's all about what the child needs, but not just do whatever you want' ...and I think that was pleasing to me, and is pleasing to lots of Montessori teachers, because perhaps we didn't have that experience as children.

In her focus group, a system leader explained Dr. Montessori preferred people without teaching backgrounds to become Montessori teachers “*because she didn't want anyone thinking they already knew what to do. And so then it was a lot of on-the-job training of how to speak to the children, and treat them with respect.*”

As previously discussed, a chief way the Montessori system enables teachers to close themselves off from the broader environment is through comprehensive training, which informs teachers' discomfort with more traditional approaches to schooling. When watching the DC IB video, for example, teachers and administrators at the DC Montessori school acknowledged the

talents of the IB teacher, and the seemingly progressive educational experience of her students. However, there were many aspects of the video that made them uncomfortable, such as timing the students, or the fact that the teacher's voice was heard much more frequently than the students' voices. When probed around this discomfort, these Montessori teachers explained:

Primary teacher S: I would say the majority of my discomfort is informed by Montessori training.

Primary teacher A: [The DC IB video] was hard to watch at times because I think it's fair to say that we all chose this pedagogy not because we were brought up in it, I don't think anyone was, but because there was something about Montessori that called to us, and necessarily that means that there was something about traditional schooling that we disliked, that made us uncomfortable.

Primary teacher S: I don't even think that I would have given myself permission to be uncomfortable with that, because it's so familiar to me, and obviously many others...if I hadn't gone through training.¹¹⁷

In addition to informing their discomfort with more traditional forms of schooling, training details a new way of educating for Montessori teachers. Montessori teachers consistently reported their training, albums, and Dr. Montessori's writings as providing them with all they need to know regarding what and how to teach, and how to interact with children. In her focus group, a Primary trainer corroborated this as she described the work of Montessori teachers:

It's highly technical work. It doesn't look like it, when you look at that [DC Montessori] video, the teacher looks very casual, but it takes a lot of observation, a lot of knowledge about human development... So it's not easy, it goes against the culture, goes against most of our own backgrounds. So the seeds of it are in the long, intensive training, and then continual professional development.

Thus, even as certain people may select into Montessori, the data also suggest the system helps teachers transform their practice and understandings around how to teach and treat children.¹¹⁸

In addition to initial and ongoing professional development, Montessori teachers discussed how guidance and other supports from the Montessori system help them implement the Montessori method, and its counter-cultural respect for children's autonomy. In a DC Montessori

focus group, after teachers continually traced their understandings and practices back to Dr. Montessori's writings or their training, a school leader explained, "*if you walked into nearly any AMI Montessori school, it would look a lot like us.*" The data also suggest the Montessori system continues to work to either replace a teacher's environment, or translate it so it better aligns to the Montessori method. One example of this is evident in DC Montessori Ms. Laura's description of the Common Core State Standards in her classroom:

A teacher in, I think it was Oregon, actually made this [resource]. And they have the Common Core Standard, and then the lessons in the Montessori classroom that align with that standard. .. So that every standard from Common Core, [the resource] talks about, 'Ok this is the standard, and then this is the lesson that meets that' -

Researcher: So Montessori teachers did that aligning? (Laura: Yes) And how'd they spread it to everyone?

It's available on the AMI website as a PDF file. So it's pretty amazing, and so someone took that, and then made a truncated list for children, and it's really great. I've been using it pretty much just like they made it, but I'd like to tweak it a little bit for next year, but it's been really awesome. [The children] really have latched onto that as a tool.

Montessori teachers and the Montessori system worked together to translate standards from the broader environment into a tool children could use to autonomously prepare themselves.

In ways big and small, then, the Montessori system supports teachers as they disengage with practices and perceptions typically found in schools.

Coordinating System Guidance

The third feature of the Montessori system's operational designs is how the system guides teachers and schools. Guidance from the Montessori system is highly specified and coordinated. Further, Montessori practitioners described how adhering to such guidance helped to reinforce their understandings and practices around respecting children's autonomy, which had been transformed during their training.

A review of AMI Montessori's seven standards for Elementary classrooms suggests the system designs few standards, but these standards are highly specified. Nearly every standard can be quantified: there should be only one AMI trained teacher per classroom; there should be 24-35 children per class; these children should have three hours of an uninterrupted work cycle each morning, and 2-3 hours four afternoons per week. Further, to be AMI Recognized, a school must comply with all standards, every year.

With such specified standards, there is little room for interpretation, and thus variation, when a school adheres to guidance from the Montessori system. This was corroborated in an observation of a parent education event at the DC Montessori school, when a school leader explained to parents that, regardless of a teacher's trainer, and regardless of the school they are in, Montessori adults remain largely the same, permitting the children to vary.

In addition to being specified, the Montessori system coordinates its guidance for classroom instruction, organization, and social relations in ways that reinforce respect for children's autonomy in Montessori classrooms. I offer an example of such coordination here.

AMI Montessori standards require Elementary classes to be large: 24-35 children. Additionally, system standards require classrooms to "*include a well-balanced division of ages as well as an appropriate number of children to ensure social development.*" So, for an Upper Elementary class, there should be roughly equal amounts of children across the 9-12 age range. Finally, system guidance states each classroom should have only one AMI trained teacher.

In both DC and Toronto, Montessori practitioners explained how system guidance around classroom organization serves to support the implementation of the Montessori method, and thus respect for children's autonomy. For example, when recounting her experience as a Primary teacher at a different school, a Toronto Montessori school leader explained:

Mrs. Montessori would always say 'a larger class is better than a smaller class.' It sounds crazy, 32 kids, but a larger class is better than a smaller class because you have those older kids who will absolutely set the tone. 'cause they knew, of course, I couldn't do it by myself. So the third years, they just figured it out, and when they figured it out, everybody else figured it out-

Researcher: And we're talking about 5 year olds, right?

Yeah...my third-year kids relished the role of being a leader in the classroom. And so that taught me so much about having faith in the Montessori [method]. That if you have the work present, if you're ready with your presentations, if you have the confidence, the faith that your class- yes, absolutely they can clean up their own spills. They can challenge themselves with the math chains, they can do all these things, they can find a friend to help them. [The teacher] is really just there to teach [the] new ones, and really just the occasional, 'can you check, is this how you spell this word?' kind of thing. That's all they saw me as, was that touch point every once in a while ...And then I came to [this school] and it's still been a process. Parents are like '32 kids, is that even legal?' ...And so I see now, what happens when you've got too many adults in the room. And I see now, when you have a teacher who doesn't have the confidence, the faith in the work, or the faith in her third-years. You have to have faith in your third-years. 'You can do this, you don't need me, you already have the answer' ... I think someone called it beneficent neglect.

With large, multi-age classes where there is only one teacher (who only offers small-group presentations, versus whole-group instruction), the teacher is restrained in her ability to help children. In this way, the children learn to help themselves and their peers, and the teacher, in turn, continually observes how capable they are.

After viewing the Montessori videos, teachers, leaders, and children in both DC and Toronto were quick to notice first, that the Toronto Montessori teacher seemed more involved than did the DC Montessori teacher, and second, that this was likely related to the Toronto Montessori class size being small. One such conversation took place during a focus group with DC Montessori practitioners:

Upper Elementary teacher: When there are 24 children, and there's a healthy balance of kids at each age level that have been here and know the ropes, they run the class like you saw in the [DC Montessori] video. There was some nice peer teaching going on in the [Toronto Montessori] video as well, but in general, when there's a healthy group at each age level, they can be more self-directed and they monitor more easily (Researcher:

Monitor each other?) each other, exactly (Teachers agree). When there's just a few of one age... it gets much more difficult [for the teacher] to let go, and let them be and manage....

Head of School: Well that's one of the reasons that the AMI standards require a big class size (Teachers: Exactly). Because they know...we as human beings are going to tend to be like 'I have to be busy and doing something, so why don't I muck with what you're doing?'

In neither case was the Toronto Montessori teacher blamed for being more involved with the children in her class. Instead, practitioners understood Montessori guidance around classroom organization to be necessary for reinforcing the Montessori method of instruction, and the autonomy designed within. With this organizational set up, teachers have no choice but to be restrained in their instruction, and children thus have no choice but to learn how to direct their own and their peers' learning more independently.

Summary

Thus, for every component of Montessori instruction, I found explicit mention of how said component is designed to respect and cultivate children's autonomy. Even as the designs of the Montessori system also support equity and equality, and even as Montessori practitioners demonstrated concern for those other dimensions of mutual respect, the focus was, first and foremost, on children's independence.

Additionally, I found the Montessori system to operate as a relatively closed system, which supports teachers' implementation of the Montessori method, and the counter-cultural respect for children's independence designed within. Through comprehensive training, teachers learn a new way of educating children. This training, paired with other supports from the Montessori system, mitigates teachers' reliance on resources or practices in their broader environment, thereby protecting their newfound understandings of how to treat and teach children. Further, guidance from the Montessori system is highly specified and coordinated,

which serves to reinforce teachers' practices, and faith, around respecting children's autonomy in considerable ways in the classroom.

In her interview, a DC Montessori school leader summarized what many Montessori practitioners reported when she said, "*[Maria Montessori's] writing and work, but also just my lived experience in Montessori [classrooms], has all proven her depth of understanding of children, and how capable they are.*" Thus, Montessori training initiates teachers into why and how they should respect children's autonomy with their instruction. Then, time spent in classrooms situated within this closed system serves to deepen teachers' faith in the Montessori method, and in children's abilities to be independent.

International Baccalaureate

When reviewing the instructional and operational designs for mutual respect in the IB system, I found a stark contrast between Montessori and IB: 1) Where Montessori places autonomy in the first position, IB designs have a multifaceted focus on the three dimensions of mutual respect; and 2) where Montessori is fairly closed off from its environment, IB operates as a relatively open system.

In the below sections, I present system-level documents, along with commentary from IB teachers and leaders, to evidence the ways in which the IB system designs for mutual respect.

Instructional Designs for Mutual Respect

The instructional designs of the IB system pay relatively balanced attention to ensuring equality, autonomy, and equity for students.

IB's PYP Framework, Generally Speaking

Taken together, system documents and practitioners' summaries of IB suggest the IB system designed various dimensions of mutual respect into its instructional framework. System

standards for IB schools attend to all three dimensions of mutual respect. Some examples of these standards include: “*Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students’ learning needs and styles*” (i.e., respect-as-equity); “*The written curriculum provides opportunities for reflection on human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives*” (i.e., respect-as-equality), and; “*Teaching and learning supports students to become actively responsible for their own learning*” (i.e., respect-as-autonomy).¹¹⁹

IB teachers summarized IB’s approach to instruction in slightly different ways, emphasizing different dimensions of mutual respect as they did. In a focus group with Toronto IB teachers, for example, a 6th grade teacher offered a general summary of IB:

That was one of the things that I loved when I first learned about IB, is that they recognize in today’s society, where you’ve got access to computers and Google and everything else, you don’t need to know the facts. So IB teaches you, ok, how can you find that information if you need it at some point in your life? But recognizes that you’ll learn something one day and you won’t remember it the next year, but if you can teach [students] how to find that information, and how to work with others, and how to be a valued member of the community, that’s so much more important. You need those skills throughout your entire life.

Her colleagues agreed with this summary, which emphasizes many dimensions of mutual respect in that the IB approach cultivates children’s agency as independent researchers, while also ensuring they become equally valued members of their communities, and that they are equitably prepared with academic and social skills necessary for life.

IB practitioners in both contexts also summarized IB by emphasizing its inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning, which is designed to respect children’s autonomy. In her interview, the Toronto IB focal teacher, Ms. Forbes, stated:

The IB program is one that really put it into place for me, gave me all of those frameworks, where we want it to be inquiry-based learning...I’ve always been one where I want the kids to come up with topics, I want them to direct some of their learning and get questions that they want to answer. So IB has helped me with that because it gave me a framework and backed up some of what I believed was important.

Similarly, the DC IB school discussed inquiry alongside student agency when summarizing the Primary Years Programme (PYP) on its school website:

The PYP prepares students to become active, caring, lifelong learners who demonstrate respect for themselves and others and have the capacity to participate in the world around them. It focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both within and beyond the classroom.

In addition to inquiry, some IB practitioners emphasized how IB's approach to instruction is transdisciplinary and concept-based, which helps to equitably prepare children for life. For example, when commenting on the DC IB video, discussing how it was similar to her own classroom, a 5th grade teacher at the DC IB school stated, "*especially the integration, I think that's the really obvious [similarity]. The expectation is that our program is transdisciplinary, and so as much as possible, throughout the day we're making really good authentic links with the children.*" Teachers polled in this focus group all raised their hands to indicate they, too, applied IB's approach to transdisciplinary and concept-based teaching and learning to their classrooms. By focusing on conceptual versus skill-based instruction, and making connections across different content areas, these teachers viewed IB's approach to instruction as helping children learn in conditions similar to those they will encounter in life.

In digging deeply into the multifaceted focus of the IB system's instructional designs, five components of IB's approach to instruction stand out: 1) transdisciplinary, concept-based instruction; 2) inquiry-based teaching and learning; 3) international-mindedness; 4) student action and reflection; and 5) the PYP Exhibition.¹²⁰

Equity via Transdisciplinary, Concept-Based Instruction

The IB system's transdisciplinary themes and key concepts are designs to encourage students' deeper thinking, and to ensure they learn how to apply what is learned in school to life.

Documents from the IB system state transdisciplinary instruction is a distinctive feature of the PYP. The PYP framework is guided by six transdisciplinary themes, which permit students “to ‘step up’ beyond the confines of learning within subject areas.”¹²¹ PYP students revisit each of these themes as they learn new content every year. Within each of their units, students also continually revisit IB’s key concepts (e.g., Form-What is it like?; Causation-Why is it like this?; Connection-How is it connected to other things?). These concepts help to drive students’ inquiry and engage them in higher order thinking.

IB practitioners across both contexts discussed how transdisciplinary, concept-based instruction helps children to cultivate the critical thinking and application skills needed for later school and life, thereby equitably preparing them for their next steps. In her interview, focal teacher Johnson Lǎoshī (all teachers go by “Lǎoshī” at the DC IB school) described how she and her 5th grade teaching team adjusted their instruction to be more aligned to IB’s approach:

We used to study three major wars, we used to do the Civil War, World War I, and World War II, and we realized that the kids were overwhelmed with information, and it was too hard. And so we chose one that the kids were really passionate about, and we were passionate about, so now we focus more on just World War II, but we teach them the concept of what causes wars? And why do people go to war? And how does it affect people? And then we’ll bring examples from other wars out, and they can see how they align.

Autonomy via Inquiry-Based Teaching and Learning

Through inquiry-based instruction, the IB system designs to respect students’ autonomy in that they can direct some of their own research and learning.

Developing students to be inquirers, both in and out of the classroom, is a key feature of IB’s approach to instruction. In IB’s standards for PYP schools, it is stated, “*The school is committed to a constructivist, inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning that promotes inquiry and the development of critical-thinking skills.*”

IB teachers reported inquiry to be integral to IB's approach to instruction, and demonstrated how student autonomy is, in turn, integral to inquiry in their classrooms. When describing similarities between the two IB videos, a 5th grade teacher at the DC IB school stated:

There was a moment [in the Toronto IB video], there was that one very inquisitive boy who kept asking all those questions. And [the teacher] asked him to write it down on a sticky note, and park that question, and come back to it later. And that's very much a hallmark of the IB (Teachers: Mmhm), of what we would do as well. So I think there are those similarities of encouraging that kind of questioning and inviting that.

IB practitioners explained how inquiry-based instruction engages students because it permits them agency over asking and answering their own questions related to their units.

Equality and Equity via International-Mindedness

By emphasizing language instruction, the IB system designs to respect students by opening more doors for them (i.e., equity) as these students, in turn, learn to respect those who are different from them (i.e., equality).

System documents describe IB's instructional approach to be a form of international education. The IB system requires IB schools to promote international-mindedness, and to emphasize through instruction that different languages, cultures, and perspectives are all equally valuable and worthy of respect. One way the system designs for this learning goal is through standards around language learning: *"The school makes provision for students to learn a language, in addition to the language of instruction, at least from the age of seven...The school supports mother tongue and host country language learning."*

Practitioners at the DC IB school discussed how IB's emphasis on language learning not only respects equality across difference, but also equitably prepares children by giving them the language skills necessary for today's globalized society. When asked why DC IB places such an

emphasis on English/Mandarin dual-immersion, even as it requires much additional effort on the part of teachers and students alike, DC IB Johnson Lǎoshī explained:

[IB] requires you to offer another language because it's part of the philosophy of being internationally-minded, that you are knowledgeable about other cultures and open to other cultures, and I think learning a language is a great way to do that...For me...this idea that if you can speak one language, you can only reach this amount of people, if you can speak more than one language, look at all the doors that open for you.

Autonomy via Student Action and Reflection

By emphasizing action, the IB system designs to encourage students to exercise initiative and work on real-world problems that matter to them. Through an emphasis on reflection, IB designs for students to autonomously assess their own abilities, and set goals based on such an assessment.

System documents and standards for IB schools suggest student action and reflection to be instructional priorities.¹²² IB students are to continually engage in cycles of inquiry, action, and reflection. By inquiring into issues that matter to them, taking action where possible in remedying those issues, and then reflecting on how the process went, and how they could do better in the future, IB students learn initiative both within and beyond the classroom.

Through an instructional emphasis on student action, the IB system conveys to students they are able to address society's complex, multi-disciplinary problems. In Ann Lǎoshī's classroom, the DC IB 4th grade focal teacher, I found she often communicated this message to students. In a focus group with DC IB teachers, she explained why action is emphasized in IB:

We did the [IB] self-study this year... [and from that recognized] there is a lack of action at our school, which is a huge component of IB. Because a lot of that is our units have been historical, and it's like, how do you take action on the Industrial Revolution? Well you don't, because it's over, right? You learn about it, and it's a thing that happened. And so, bringing in modern examples of that helps [students] see how they can do things that are related to what the overall concept is.

Action is often paired with reflection, which respects students' ability to independently assess their strengths, challenges, and next steps. In both IB schools, I observed students were regularly asked to reflect. Reflections were recorded in journals, displayed on classroom walls, and were an important part of student-led conferences with parents in the spring.

Autonomy and Equity via the PYP Exhibition

IB system documents and IB teachers both suggested Exhibition to be the culmination of the PYP, which, in turn, encapsulates how the IB system is designed to respect many dimensions of mutual respect. In a system brochure on the PYP, Exhibition is described as follows:

*The Exhibition is an important part of the PYP for all students. In the final year of the programme, students undertake a collaborative, transdisciplinary inquiry process that involves them in identifying, investigating and offering solutions to real-life issues or problems. As the culminating experience of the PYP, the Exhibition offers students an exciting opportunity to demonstrate independence and responsibility for their own learning.*¹²³

Through Exhibition, IB students are permitted more independence when researching real-life issues of interest to them, and then offering their own ideas for how to address such issues.

Through Exhibition, students are also developing skills (e.g., research, collaboration, presentation) that will equitably prepare them for later school and life.

Operational Designs for Mutual Respect

When reviewing the operational designs of the IB system, I found that, because IB schools are situated across diverse cultures and contexts, and because the system aims to connect IB students to their broader world, IB operates as a relatively open system, and designs for teachers and students to be in continual conversation with their surrounding environments.¹²⁴

I discuss below the same three features of IB's operational designs as I did for Montessori (i.e., teacher training, the way the IB system engages with the broader educational environment, and coordination of system guidance), this time evidencing a more open system.

Teacher Training

The first feature of the IB system's operational designs is its teacher training. Relative to their Montessori counterparts, IB teachers described a shorter training process, providing them with an overview of the IB system's philosophy and instructional approach. Before a school can become IB authorized, it is expected both administrators and all those who work with PYP students receive IB Category 1 training. However, these workshops are only three days long, in comparison to the full academic year required of Montessori trainees. DC IB Ann Lǎoshī described this training as follows: "*when you're new to IB, you go to 'Making the PYP Happen,' or some Category 1 training that's very basic. How do things work? How are you a teacher in this system?*" Both in terms of time and content, IB teachers initially receive more of an orientation to IB's approach to instruction, versus a comprehensive account.

The IB system designs its professional development to be ongoing and gradual, as opposed to an initial, intensive experience.¹²⁵ It offers two other categories of training: Category 2 focuses on the delivery of the PYP, whereas Category 3 is "*for educators to build on and enhance their professional development portfolios.*"¹²⁶ On its website, the IB system makes clear that continuous professional development is required of IB teachers; teacher training should not end once a school is IB authorized.¹²⁷ Ann Lǎoshī described her ongoing journey with IB training:

Instead of sending people to PD, somebody came to us and trained our whole staff at our summer PD. And then two summers ago, I actually got to go to a Category 3 about multi-lingual and bilingual education...

Researcher: Did [the DC IB school] pay for that?

Yeah, [DC IB's] policy, well, depending on the budget, is you're supposed to go to an IB training every two years. New staff take precedent, because IB says that everybody has to be Category 1 trained, so our report at the end of the year has to say that we did all of

that. So new staff takes precedent, but then if there's money left in the budget, everybody goes every two years.

Even considering the expectation of continuous professional development, IB training is not designed to be as lengthy or comprehensive as what was described by Montessori teachers.

In reflecting on how training informed their practice, IB teachers in DC and Toronto presented slightly different views. Despite these different views, both sets of perspectives suggest IB training is designed to work in conjunction with resources and guidance in teachers' practice contexts, meaning respect as it is designed for in the broader environment works alongside mutual respect as it is designed for by the IB system.¹²⁸

When discussing IB training, Toronto IB teachers emphasized its familiarity. In their view, IB training — and the PYP framework introduced during the training — gave structure to their existing ideas around good instruction, which they gleaned from previous teacher training. This view was perhaps best illustrated in their focus group:

4th grade teacher: Well, and IB, it is good teaching practice. We were all taught in Teachers College that students learn best through inquiry, and engaging actively (Teachers: real world) with the curriculum, taking action. And so IB just gives you a framework, they give you the language and the framework, the learner profile attributes, they give you a structure for it.

6th grade teacher: That goes beyond the curriculum, right?

4th grade teacher: But it's not new, it is all based on the same good teaching practice that every one of us learned in Teachers College.

Teachers at the DC IB school, however, reported using many resources in addition to their IB training to better understand how to teach in the inquiry-based way desired by the IB system. Both teachers and administrators at the DC IB school acknowledged inquiry-based instruction to be a journey, and discussed how, even after IB training, they needed additional

guidance around how to teach in inquiry-based ways. For example, when describing what she draws on when deciding how to teach, DC IB Johnson Lǎoshī stated:

So that is really aligned with the IB's inquiry methodology. But it is challenging because, even as an IB teacher, and now as an IB workshop leader, where I'm actually teaching people how to do this stuff, there are not always a lot of examples about what inquiry really looks like. And so, that was also a learning curve for me, too, was that I did a lot of reading about inquiry practices, we were so lucky to have [our PYP coordinator] here, who is a very experienced IB teacher, and [IB] workshop leader now, too. So she's done a lot of PD on helping us to figure out what it means to be an inquiry teacher and how to ask more open questions, and how to release some of that feeling that you need to control everything... So there was a lot of coaching through that.

Whether IB training was perceived as presenting teachers with teaching practices they already knew, or whether it was perceived as leaving them with some unanswered questions, data across both contexts suggest IB teachers relied on both IB training and resources from their environment to inform what and how they teach, and respect, students.

Engagement with the Environment

The second feature of the IB system's operational designs is how the system engages with its environment. From the above discussion of training, one begins to understand that the IB system designs its supports to work in concert with the broader environment. Rather than giving teachers detailed guidance on what and how to teach, IB training orients teachers to IB's approach to instruction while leaving room for other trainings and resources to also inform their practice. This was apparent in a focus group with Toronto IB teachers, when they discussed what informed their decision to move away from letter grades and toward written commentary:

Health/ESL teacher: We use a lot of [government] resources to support, as well as the IB resources. I find that, especially because if we're trained in Ontario, we're trained with the Ontario government documents and resources. So we have all of that training, and then now with our IB training, most of us merge a lot of the two things together.

1st grade teacher: They're both really cohesive documents, they go really well together.

A chief way the IB system encourages teachers to engage with the environment is through the PYP instructional framework. This framework is meant to organize and guide teachers as they implement IB's designs for instruction. However, this framework also allows instruction to be informed by the environment, in that IB teachers are to draw on their environments when determining specific content, resources, and learning standards.¹²⁹ In her member check, DC IB Johnson Lǎoshī explained:

I think that is part of [IB] philosophy, as well, is that it's a framework that's consistent across schools, but that the local culture and the local context should be allowed within that school. So they don't have as many restrictions on the curriculum and whatnot because of that, because it's designed to be a program that can be here, it can be in China, it can be in France, wherever.

IB data revealed myriad other ways the system's resources were used in conjunction with resources from the other parts of teachers' practice contexts. In their focus group, for example, DC IB teachers discussed how IB encourages them to pull from several different curricula and best practices, as opposed to relying on any one in particular. Similarly, when explaining why their classrooms were similar to Johnson Lǎoshī's, as depicted in her video, DC IB teachers cited many resources, some from IB and some from the broader environment, as informing their practice. In discussing schoolwide efforts to offer students more current and global examples in their curriculum, DC IB teachers discussed IB's influence (e.g., training, self-study, PYP Exhibition), alongside resources from the broader environment (e.g., Harvard's Project Zero professional development, the PBS website, News ELA articles). I also observed Toronto IB teachers to frequently engage with their environment when deciding what and how to teach.¹³⁰

Overall, I found IB teachers to seamlessly engage with both system and environmental resources when working to connect students to their broader world.

Coordinating System Guidance

The third feature of the IB system’s operational designs is how the system guides teachers and schools. Relative to guidance from the Montessori system, IB guidance is not coordinated around a given dimension of mutual respect. Further, IB practitioners described how such guidance permits some degree of freedom when interpreting and enacting IB’s designs for instruction, even as the system works to ensure practitioners adhere to its key tenets.

A review of IB’s 73 standards for IB schools suggests the system designs many standards — compared to the Montessori system’s seven standards — but these standards are relatively vague, permitting room for interpretation when adhering to them. An example of this is how the two IB schools differed in their implementation of system guidance around language learning, “*The school makes provision for students to learn a language, in addition to the language of instruction, at least from the age of seven*”: the DC IB school adhered to this standard by creating an English/Mandarin dual-immersion learning environment for its students, whereas the Toronto IB school scheduled three roughly 40-minute periods of French for students within a six-day cycle. From this standard alone, which both schools adhered to, one understands how IB’s relatively imprecise standards can result in marked differences across IB schools.

Compared to Montessori, there is more room for interpretation, and variation, when practitioners across different practice contexts decide to adhere to guidance from the IB system. This was corroborated during a DC IB teacher focus group, when a 2nd grade teacher stated:

As far as what varies [across DC IB classrooms], there is a little bit of an allowance for personal style, both of students and of teachers. Again, as we’ve said before, the content needs to be the same, the expectations need to be the same, there are some things that are handed down by the school or by IB that we need to do. But we also take into account personal style, and the kids you have in your classroom, and we have a lot of freedom, I think, to do what we feel is best for the kids in our class as far as how we lead lessons, and how we structure our classroom, and how we do discipline, and things like that.

IB teachers in both contexts stated similar views.¹³¹ Based on these views, and the variance observed across the two IB schools, I found guidance from the IB system to permit relatively more discretion for practitioners implementing IB's designs for instruction.

In addition to relatively inexplicit guidance, as mentioned in previous sections, there are multiple dimensions of mutual respect designed into IB instruction. Given this multifaceted focus, and given the IB system permits some leeway around adhering to its guidance, data from both IB schools suggest there are instances where, in adhering to one piece of IB guidance, which supports one dimension of mutual respect, teachers then feel constrained when respecting their students along other dimensions. I offer an example of such conflict here.

One priority in IB's designs for instruction, which has implications for students' instructional and organizational experiences, is balance. Balance is part of the IB learner profile, and is desired for all IB students. In addition to the core academic subjects, IB guides teachers and schools to fold in other subjects, and to cater to students' physical and emotional needs, as well as academic. By providing students with a balanced school day, the IB system designs to respect students by equally exposing them to a wide array of subjects and learning experiences, thus ensuring their preparedness for later school and life.¹³²

In both IB schools, I observed how organizing for balance (i.e., respect-as-equality) constrained time for teachers' inquiry-based instruction (i.e., respect-as-autonomy). Both schools offered students specials (e.g., art, music) each day: DC IB students had approximately 45 minutes of specials daily, as well as 20 minutes of weekly library time, while Toronto IB students had anywhere between 80 and 160 minutes a day, comprising two to three different specials. Both schools prioritized language learning, whether it was Mandarin every other day in DC, or French for three periods within a six-day cycle in Toronto. Finally, in the name of

movement breaks and students' physical health, Toronto IB students had two 20-minute recesses and one longer lunch recess, whereas DC IB students had a 15-minute movement break each morning, along with one hour of lunch and recess mid-day. In organizing for balance, each school created an elaborate timetable, and thus a situation over which classroom teachers had limited flexibility, as each special or recess was coordinated with other adults and classes.

Especially when juxtaposed to Montessori students' three-hour uninterrupted work periods, as prescribed by Montessori standards, I repeatedly observed how such a balanced, structured schedule limited time for inquiry-based instruction, and thus opportunities for IB teachers to respect students' autonomy. I was not alone in observing such a conflict. In watching the DC IB video, for example, one 4th grade teacher at the Toronto IB school commented on how the school's dual-language organization seemed to compromise student inquiry:

IB is supposed to be a freer flowing block of time where you can follow the direction of the student interest and inquiry (Teacher: [The DC IB video] was very teacher directed). Yeah, it felt very 'the teacher says we do this, and then we do this, and then we do this.' And as much as I think it is so incredibly fantastic to have the English/Mandarin ... that takes away a little, maybe, from the IB, the flow of it.

While the Toronto IB school did not have this same dual-language model, they had more specials and recesses in a given day, and thus their organizing for balance also constrained time for IB instruction. I observed many instances where the organic inquiry and conversations of Toronto IB students had to be suspended so they could move on to French, library, or art class.

Summary

In its varied designs for instruction, I observed the IB system to attend to all three dimensions of mutual respect. Additionally, I found IB to operate as a relatively open system, which encourages IB teachers to rely on system supports *and* supports from the environment when determining specifics around what and how to teach. During training, IB teachers learn to

use the PYP framework to organize their instruction, while also drawing on resources from their environment (e.g., curricula, classroom management techniques) to inform their practice, and their ways of respecting students. Compared to Montessori, guidance from the IB system is not highly specified or coordinated, which permits a degree of freedom when interpreting and enacting IB's designs for instruction in accordance with one's context.

Discussion

In Chapter Two, I suggested the potential role of educational systems in embedding mutual respect into the core of classroom instruction, thus scaling mutual respect across classrooms and schools. I offered an analytic framework, which is illustrated in Figure 2.2, and which can be used to examine interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. And, I posed the following research question: *In what ways do system designs advance the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect, and why?*

The findings presented in this chapter suggest there are, in fact, educational systems that make mutual respect integral to their core designs for teaching and learning. There are systems that work to spread their designs for mutual respect across classrooms and schools.

What is more, the findings discussed in this chapter provide additional clarity around *how* educational systems might design for mutual respect, and *why* they might make the design decisions they do. Based on these findings, I offer a structure for better understanding, and comparing, the ways in which systems design for equality, autonomy, and equity in classrooms. This structure involves several considerations. The first level of analysis is to examine whether a system has instructional and operational designs for mutual respect and, if so, what exactly those designs are. Then, to the extent that a system does have such designs, the second level of analysis

is to examine whether and how those designs align to the system's logic for increasing mutual respect for students, and its related disposition toward the environment.

While both the Montessori and IB systems embed mutual respect into their designs for instruction, and, then, aim to support such designs with their operations, their designs for mutual respect differ. Even as they also support equity and equality, Montessori's designs for instruction are most explicitly focused on autonomy. Further, Montessori operates as a relatively closed system by way of: comprehensive teacher training; providing teachers with detailed resources so they can disengage with the broader environment; and through guidance that is highly specified and coordinated across the different aspects of classroom life. By contrast, IB's designs for instruction have a multifaceted focus. Further, IB operates as a relatively open system by way of: comparatively brief teacher training; an instructional framework designed to be filled in with specifics from the environment; and through guidance that permits practitioners some variation when enacting IB's designs for instruction.

These design differences, in turn, are rooted in the different logics and environmental dispositions of the two systems. The Montessori method is based on the premise that, to mutually respect children, one must begin by acknowledging that children can develop themselves with far less adult direction than what is typically found in classrooms. What is more, Dr. Montessori believed traditional forms of education to be detrimental to children reaching their full potential. This counter-cultural starting point provides context for the designs of the Montessori system; how they focus explicitly on supporting children's autonomy, and operate to change understandings of children's abilities. When looking to change understandings as well as practices, it would not make sense to have a multifaceted focus in one's designs. Such a split focus risks more variation when determining how to accord children mutual respect. Nor would

it make sense to be open to an environment where normative understandings of children run counter to the very understandings and practices a system endeavors to establish.

On the other hand, IB's approach to instruction is based on the premise that, to mutually respect children, one must begin by helping students to authentically and continually connect to the world beyond their classroom. This starting point provides context for the designs of the IB system; the seemingly split focus across all dimensions of mutual respect, and how IB operates in a way that permits, indeed encourages, a teacher's environment to enter into her classroom. When aiming to relate students to society, it would be illogical for a system's designs to focus on a single dimension of mutual respect, as this does not reflect the diverse priorities and foci in the environment. Nor would it be productive to close teachers and classrooms off from the society for which students are being prepared to thrive in, and to act upon.

Thus, the preceding is a story of differences: in designs, in logics, and in dispositions toward the environment. These differences, in turn, motivate additions to the analytic framework; additions which support a finer-grained analysis of the ways in which systems might interact with mutual respect in classrooms. Yet, regardless of these differences, both the Montessori and IB systems run up against the same reality: Their designs for mutual respect must inevitably be translated into practice. This begs the following question: How do system designs for mutual respect unfold across diverse and complex contexts?

Given the Montessori system has a concerted focus on autonomy, and given it is closed, one might expect the system's designs to be translated fairly directly to classroom practice, with minimal interference from competing priorities or pressures in other parts of a teacher's practice context. Given the IB system has a multifaceted focus, and is comparatively open, one's conjectures are less certain regarding the mutual respect to be found in IB classrooms. In fact,

one might expect that, despite IB's relatively balanced designs for mutual respect, because it is an open system, priorities from other parts of a teacher's practice context may tilt the scales to emphasize one dimension of mutual respect over the others in her classroom.

In the next chapter, we shift our focus to practice. In the next chapter, we will determine whether the above conjectures ring true, as I present findings for the mutual respect observed in classrooms situated across two systems and two contexts.

¹⁰⁷ As discussed further in Chapter Three, I triangulated system and case-level data to respond to this research question. I reviewed system-level documents and conducted focus groups with system leaders to learn of such designs. Given my analytic focus on the interaction between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms, I also relied on case-level data to learn about system designs. I garnered practitioners' perspectives of system designs via observations, interviews, and focus groups.

¹⁰⁸ I often describe Montessori students as "children," even as I generally refer to IB students as "students." This difference reflects the modal term used by teachers and leaders in either system.

¹⁰⁹ This is not to say IB is unconcerned with changing teachers' understandings of children, nor is it to say Montessori is unconcerned with connecting children to their outside world. The data suggest both systems to be concerned with both aims; where they differ is their logic around where to begin, in order to systemically support increased mutual respect across classrooms and schools.

¹¹⁰ As mentioned in Chapter Two, I include both teachers and school leaders in my definition of 'practitioners,' given individuals in either role can be - as Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000) terms it - practitioners of respect.

¹¹¹ There are many components to Montessori instruction and operations. I cannot address all of them here. I focus instead on those parts of instruction and system operations that were repeatedly emphasized in case-level data, as well as being described as integral in system-level documents.

¹¹² See Association Montessori International (AMI)/USA (2020).

¹¹³ See Safire and Safir (1990: 58).

¹¹⁴ Ms. Laura (2017, April 6). Personal Interview.

¹¹⁵ See Montessori (1946).

¹¹⁶ One exception to this was the Toronto Montessori Head of School, who was schooled in many, progressive ways as a child. He reported that his experiences as a summer camp counselor made him open to the Montessori approach to trusting in children's capabilities.

¹¹⁷ In this same conversation, Ms. Laura stated that, even without training, she was uncomfortable with traditional forms of schooling. Despite this discrepancy, the teachers agreed that their training gave structure and language to their discomfort, and provided them with a new method for treating and teaching children.

¹¹⁸ I make this assertion based on two other observations: 1) regardless of whether a participant was administrator or teacher, Primary or Elementary, from DC or from Toronto, there was remarkable consistency in the Montessori data regarding how to teach and treat children; and 2) when asked about the source of their views on children and education, Montessori participants uniformly and consistently cited Montessori writings and training, as opposed to something else in their environment (e.g., personal values, the way they were schooled, current educational trends).

¹¹⁹ See International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO] (2014, January).

¹²⁰ There are many components to IB instruction. For example, PYP teachers design "provocations" to drive the inquiries within a given unit. In each unit, students work toward a "summative assessment," which teachers carefully plan out in IB unit planners. While such instructional components are also important, I focus instead on those

overarching components of IB instruction (and system operations) that were repeatedly referenced in the data, and linked to how IB practitioners treat and teach students with mutual respect.

¹²¹ Again, these themes are: Who we are; Where we are in place and time; How we express ourselves; How the world works; How we organize ourselves, and; Sharing the planet. See <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/digital-toolkit/brochures/pyp-programme-brochure-en.pdf>

¹²² IBO's (2014) standards for schools states, "*Teaching and learning supports students to become actively responsible for their own learning*"; and "*The written curriculum allows for meaningful student action in response to students' own needs and the needs of others.*" See also <https://www.ibo.org/benefits/the-ib-teaching-style/>

¹²³ See <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/digital-toolkit/brochures/pyp-programme-brochure-en.pdf>

¹²⁴ As mentioned in Chapter Three, like IB, the Montessori system has schools worldwide. However, given the Montessori method runs counter to more normative educational practices, and given it is based on the human stages of development, which remain fairly constant across space and time, the Montessori system does comparatively less adapting to its broader environment.

¹²⁵ It is worth thinking through the implications of these different training processes. Should a school wish to become IB, it is feasible to train all of their teachers, given training is just three days. Committing an entire year to training, as is done in Montessori, is costly. In fact, Montessorian participants have discussed the bottleneck effect of such long training processes for teachers and trainers: this makes it difficult to open high-fidelity Montessori schools quickly, and make them accessible to many students.

¹²⁶ See <https://www.ibo.org/professional-development/workshop-categories-and-types/>

¹²⁷ See <https://www.ibo.org/become-an-ib-school/professional-development-requirements/>

¹²⁸ Respect or mutual respect may not always be explicitly designed for in the broader environment. As discussed in Chapter Two, the broader environment likely contains implicit and explicit notions of how to treat and teach children with respect.

¹²⁹ I make this assertion based on two other observations: 1) in focus groups and interviews with IB teachers, they cited both IB and other resources in their broader environment as informing their practices and attitudes around how to teach and teach children; and 2) throughout fieldwork in the two IB schools, I observed and heard about many other resources, stemming from the broader educational environment, as informing IB teachers' practice.

¹³⁰ Observation data from both IB schools suggest the broader environment not only informed IB teachers' pedagogy, but also many other facets of school life. Both schools relied on resources from the broader environment to promote students' well-being, whether it was daily mindfulness in the Toronto IB case, or Go Noodle movement breaks in the DC IB case. Resources from the broader environment also informed both schools' approaches to discipline. The DC IB school adopted a restorative justice approach in the year following fieldwork, whereas Toronto IB focal teacher, Ms. Forbes, relied on a classroom management tactic her educator father uses in his classroom, Preferred Activity Time (PAT), which incentivizes her students to make smooth transitions. The DC IB school brought in many after-school activities for students, ranging from *Girls on the Run* to *Odyssey of the Mind* to an animation club. In addition to folding *Makerspace* experiences into lessons at the Toronto IB school, students also had the option of participating in activities ranging from debate club to *Destination Imagination*. Thus, in all aspects of the school day, ranging from instruction to enrichment to discipline, IB practitioners engaged with the broader educational environment when determining how to interact with students.

¹³¹ One qualification to this statement, based on DC IB data, is there is much consistency across the English/Chinese teaching team for a given class of students. DC IB participants discussed their close collaboration and consistent expectations, to ensure students' transitions in and out of each language every other day is smooth.

¹³² Underlying practitioners' efforts at balance are equity-minded concerns, which I discuss further in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5: Findings

Mutual Respect in Practice: Comparing Classrooms in Different Systems

Where the last chapter focused on designs, or the in-principle efforts of educational systems to increase equality, autonomy, and equity for students in classrooms, this chapter focuses on whether and how these designs for mutual respect unfold in practice.

More specifically, this chapter details whether and how a system's intentions come to life in the practical logics of teachers. In using the term practical logic, I include both a teacher's actions and her understandings of the daily work of according students mutual respect. Even as a teacher continually moves between the three dimensions of mutual respect — emphasizing different dimensions at different moments or with different learners — she possesses a logic regarding which dimension to drive her practice with, overall, to ensure the other dimensions are also upheld. Included in this logic is a teacher's understanding of mutual respect; whether she perceives relatively competitive or synergistic interactions between equality, autonomy, and equity. Our consideration of teachers' practical logics – and the potential relationship between these logics and a system's designs for mutual respect – stemmed from addressing the following research question: *How do teachers understand and manage the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect in practice, and why?*¹³³

In examining mutual respect in practice, I again observed a structure, which held constant across International Baccalaureate (IB) and Montessori classrooms: Teachers in a given system

share a practical logic for how to manage mutual respect, and the designs of their educational system are one key driver in shaping those practical logics.

Despite this consistent structure, the details again differ. That is, IB and Montessori teachers had different practical logics; they privileged different dimensions of mutual respect in their practice, which corresponded to their different understandings of how the dimensions of mutual respect relate to one another in the classroom. What is more, the different designs of the IB and Montessori systems varied in the extent to which they shaped teachers' practical logics.

I discuss each system in turn below, detailing the mutual respect I observed across three aspects of classroom life: instruction, organization, and social relations. In the chapter discussion, I return to and elaborate this study's analytic framework, which is depicted in Figure 2.2. With the help of this framework, I present a more detailed understanding of, and comparison between, the practice of mutual respect in IB and Montessori classrooms.

International Baccalaureate

In the last chapter, the analysis of mutual respect in principle began with Montessori; in this chapter, the analysis of mutual respect in practice begins with IB. When examining mutual respect in IB classrooms, I found IB teachers situated in two different schools across two national contexts to have a consistent practical logic. Though they varied in terms of whether they were relatively balanced in their efforts to uphold equality, autonomy, and equity, or whether they were more focused on a given dimension of mutual respect, IB teachers were similar in their overall privileging of equality, which was, in turn, related to the shared understanding that the dimensions of mutual respect are often in competition with one another.

One may recall from Chapter Four that the designs of the IB system are multifaceted in focus, and the system operates in a way that is relatively open to its environment. The emphasis

on equality in IB classrooms, which is a slight shift from the multifaceted designs of the IB system, thus continues to suggest the IB system works *with* other parts of a teacher's practice context to shape her practical logic of mutual respect.

In the below sections, I discuss mutual respect in practice across three aspects of life in IB classrooms: instruction, organization, and social relations. I present a snapshot of classroom life, along with IB teachers' discussion of their practice, to evidence how teachers understand and manage mutual respect within and across the DC and Toronto IB schools.

Mutual Respect in Instruction

Of the three aspects of classroom life (i.e., instruction, organization, social relations), I found the designs of the IB system to shape mutual respect in instruction the most. This is to say that, within instruction, IB teachers regularly advanced the three dimensions of mutual respect: equality, autonomy, and equity.

However, even as I repeatedly observed all dimensions of mutual respect in instruction, I found IB teachers drove with equality. By this I mean IB students had regular opportunities to experience autonomy and equity, but neither to the point where these dimensions of mutual respect would compromise all students being able to go through roughly the same learning experience at roughly the same time. This privileging of equality corresponded to how IB teachers understood the dimensions of mutual respect to compete with one another in the classroom: Too much autonomy for students could compromise a teacher's ability to accord them equality and equity in instruction.

Snapshot of Mutual Respect in Practice

One method of discerning mutual respect in practice is through examining a snapshot of classroom life. In the below vignette, I describe the Primary Years Programme (PYP) Exhibition

and the instruction leading up to it at the DC IB school. In doing so, I illustrate how the designs of the IB system are apparent in instruction, in that DC IB teachers were multifaceted in their focus, aiming to accord students equality, autonomy, and equity.

However, in preparing students for their Exhibition, DC IB teachers privileged equality slightly more than the other dimensions of mutual respect in that they determined the learning activities, groups, and goals, to ensure all students underwent roughly the same learning process (i.e., equality). Within this overall emphasis on equality, 5th grade students had some choice around the questions they asked, how they accomplished tasks with their group, and the final products they presented (i.e., autonomy). Further, they regularly received differentiated supports as they learned skills and attitudes that would prepare them for life beyond school (i.e., equity).

DC IB – Preparing for the PYP Exhibition

One evening in mid-June, a crowd of people filed into the DC IB school's multi-purpose room. Families and friends of the school came to see what 5th grade students had been directly working toward for months, and indirectly working toward their entire PYP careers: PYP Exhibition.

A handful of 5th grade students began the hour-long Exhibition with a speech, alternating between English and Mandarin to explain what Exhibition is, their learning process as they prepared for it, and some of what inspired them about the topics they are presenting tonight.

*After this speech, the crowd dispersed to wander from group to group, learning more about the research students did. Each small group of students presented on a topic related to justice, ranging from racial profiling to the Dakota Access Pipeline. Much of what they presented revolved around their learning process; for example, each group discussed the lines of inquiry they developed to guide their research. Students also presented their personal expression pieces — their current PYP transdisciplinary theme is *How We Express Ourselves* — which included art and websites they made relating to their topic. They explained how their presentations — both to DC IB's younger grades and to the audience tonight — was them taking action in the sense that they were spreading awareness around their topic, and offering ideas for what people can do to address these matters of injustice.*

*The Exhibition lasted for one hour, interrupted only once by the students' flash dance to Beyoncé's song, *Freedom*. The audience played games or took quizzes created by each group. Through these activities and presentations, the DC IB students were increasing their own and other's understandings around some of the most complex problems in contemporary society.*

What instruction occurred in the 5th grade classrooms in the months prior, in preparation for Exhibition?

Along with her 5th grade teaching team, Johnson Lǎoshī followed IB guidelines for Exhibition, but more specifically relied on the framework of the United Nations goals as a starting point. These goals informed the topics students would research. Again, a theme running through these topics was justice (e.g., access to education, religious discrimination, fair pay).

In addition to setting parameters around the research topics, the DC IB teachers also selected the groups students would work in, relying on student input. All 5th grade students listed four topics of interest to them, and their teachers arranged groups (mixing students in different classes) based on those preferences and other interpersonal considerations.

Once groups and topics were settled, preparations began. Every Friday from March to early May, teachers gave each group an article related to their topic. Students were to read, discuss, and take notes on how the article related to IB's key concepts (e.g., Function-How does it work?; Causation-Why is it like this?). From early May onward, groups met every day to work on Exhibition in one of the 5th grade English or Chinese classrooms. As students researched their topics, the school arranged an Experts Fair, inviting prominent and relevant specialists (e.g., a Department of Justice representative) to the school for each group to interview.

Overall, DC IB students exercised some autonomy within activities, groups, and goals set by their teachers. As they collaborated with peers to research and present their learnings to a broader audience, these 5th grade students learned the skills of asking and answering research questions, and thus beginning to take action around multifaceted, real-world problems.

Throughout observations at the DC IB school, I found that, consistent with the designs of the IB system, DC IB teachers had a multifaceted focus when managing mutual respect in instruction; they regularly ensured equality, autonomy, and equity for students. However, these teachers privileged equality most in that all students went through approximately the same learning experience at approximately the same time. What is more, I observed even more of an emphasis on equality in instruction at the Toronto IB school: While the focal teacher, Ms. Forbes, was fairly balanced in her efforts to accord students equality, autonomy, and equity during inquiry instruction, she primarily engaged in whole-group instruction (i.e., equality) for the other subject areas, such as math or writing. I now turn to discussions with IB practitioners, and their reports of how they understand and manage mutual respect in instruction.

Teachers' Discussions of Mutual Respect in Practice

A second method of discerning mutual respect in practice is through conversations with practitioners. As IB practitioners described their approach to instruction in their interviews and focus groups, they were fairly balanced in their discussion of equality, autonomy, and equity, which is consistent with the designs of the IB system.

However, as IB teachers compared their approach to the instruction seen in the Montessori videos, a consistent practical logic emerged, in which IB teachers emphasized the importance of students receiving fairly equal learning experiences. Though the degree to which equality was privileged varied within and across IB schools, I found this privileging to correspond to IB teachers' understandings of a competitive relationship between autonomy and the other two dimensions of mutual respect. IB teachers reported both the IB system and other parts of their practice context as informing their instruction, and the mutual respect therein.

Similar to IB system designs, IB practitioners evidenced a multifaceted focus as they described their inquiry-based approach to instruction. IB teachers and leaders in both contexts discussed how, by permitting children some autonomy over the questions that get asked and answered in class, students will be more engaged in their learning. Additionally, a PYP Coordinator at the DC IB school described how inquiry also ensures equality and equity when stating, *"I think when you see inquiry humming along, it's truly inclusive, and by its nature, differentiated ... It's participatory, it's diverse, it's eye-opening...because we learn that everybody learns differently, everybody has something to contribute, and everyone should be valued."* In discussing inquiry-based instruction, IB practitioners attended to all three dimensions of mutual respect.

However, as seen in the above vignette, IB teachers managed the three dimensions of mutual respect in instruction by driving with equality, which is perhaps related to how IB teachers understood the relationship between these dimensions. First, IB teachers reported autonomy to be in competition with equity and equality. Second, IB teachers reasoned that, by setting and facilitating instructional experiences intended for the entire class (i.e., driving with equality), they could better ensure all students are equitably included and supported (i.e., equity), while also offering regular opportunities for student choice and voice (i.e., autonomy).

As they compared student experiences in the IB and Montessori videos, IB teachers framed instruction as a balancing act, stating the view that while students should be offered opportunities for independence, too much autonomy threatens teachers' ability to equitably support and equally expose students to varied learning experiences. In her member check, the DC IB 5th grade focal teacher, Johnson Lǎoshī, discussed how she used to have all students write an essay each week, because writing skills are key to their future success (i.e., equality and equity). However, this year, along with the rest of her school, she has permitted more time for student choice over what and how they write (i.e., autonomy). She framed this instructional move as a balancing act when stating:

It's hard because there's value in writing a lot, but there's also so much value in giving choice. And so, I think it takes time to try both ways... to have one, you have to give up a little of the other.

Johnson Lǎoshī then explained the risk of too much autonomy for students:

In our world, choice is definitely a big part of being an adult, and being a functional adult, but the ability to take direction is something that is really important. And I think sometimes, if we give too much choice, then kids stop understanding what it means to compromise.

IB practitioners in both contexts shared the view that offering students too much autonomy could constrain equality and equity in the sense that students may not be prepared for their next steps.

Another understanding IB teachers communicated was that driving with equality best ensures equity among diverse learners. IB teachers repeatedly voiced equity-minded concerns when explaining why they instructed as they did. For example, when the 4th grade focal teacher at the DC IB school, Ann Lǎoshī, discussed her approach to instruction, she stated:

We really do want [students] to be prepared for life, and looking at life, you need to know how to work with other people, you need to know how to work with people that you don't like. You need to learn how to be productive in a setting that isn't necessarily productive for you. I like to play a lot of music in class and then offer noise cancelling headphones, or have it soft in the front, so it's not really bothersome if you're in the back of the room, differentiated seating so that you can figure out what works for you. So that, even if you're stuck in a meeting where you're at a round table, and that's not how you work best, you can recognize, 'this is not how I work best, how do I help myself right now?'

By facilitating learning activities and experiences intended for the entire class (i.e., equality), IB teachers reasoned they could teach students to compromise, follow directions, and learn how to help themselves when conditions are less than ideal. Such skills, in their view, prepare students for life (i.e., equity).

IB teachers often cited the IB system as informing their instruction, and the mutual respect therein. However, when asked who or what contributed to the pressures they felt regarding striking a balancing act between autonomy on the one hand, and equity and equality on the other, teachers cited both the IB system and other parts of their practice contexts.

Mutual Respect in Organization

Whereas the designs of the IB system are multifaceted in focus, in practice, IB teachers privileged equality in classroom organization.¹³⁴ IB students were organized to have fairly equal exposure to different subject areas, and fairly equal learning experiences as that of their peers.

This privileging of equality, yet again, corresponded to how IB teachers understood the dimensions of mutual respect to relate to one another in the classroom: Organizing for equality

could ensure equity for students, but if students had too much autonomy when directing their school day, this could compromise both equality and equity.

Snapshot of Mutual Respect in Practice

Dax and Lina are two 4th grade students in Ms. Forbes' class at the Toronto IB school. Perhaps like any two students, they are quite different. Dax has been a student at the Toronto IB school for many years. Ms. Forbes often spends extra time with him, given his ADHD diagnosis. Lina is newer to the school. She does not struggle academically in her mother tongue, but she is new to the English language, and her parents remain in Korea while she stays with a host family to learn English in Canada during 3rd and 4th grade.

Despite their differences, Table 5.1 demonstrates Dax and Lina are organized to have relatively equal school days. In reviewing the timetables of these two students, one understands that the only appreciable differences in their days were when Lina went to ESL while the rest of the class went to music, and when Dax went to speech therapy while the rest of the class went to lunch recess.¹³⁵ Apart from these differences, which occurred outside of their core instructional time with Ms. Forbes, these two students predominantly moved through same learning experience at the same time, in concert with the rest of their 4th grade class.

Table 5.1***Student Schedules in the Toronto IB School***

Dax	Lina
8:35-8:40	8:35-8:40
Bellwork	Bellwork
8:40-10:00	8:40-10:00
Math	Math
10:00-10:15	10:00-10:15
Recess	Recess
10:20-11:00	10:20-11:00
Music	ESL
11:02-11:40	11:02-11:40
Inquiry	Inquiry
11:40-12:35	11:40-12:35
Lunch & Speech Therapy	Lunch and Recess
12:40-2:00	12:40-2:00
Art	Art
2:00-2:15	2:00-2:15
Recess	Recess
2:15-3:25	2:15-3:25
Inquiry	Inquiry
3:25-3:35	3:25-3:35
Sharing	Sharing

Throughout observations in both IB schools, I found that IB students were organized in a way that privileges equality. However, I found this privileging to be more pronounced in the Toronto IB school, whereas there was more balance across the three dimensions of mutual respect in terms of how DC IB students were organized. DC IB students were organized to

receive dual-language immersion, to better prepare them for today's globalized society (i.e., equity). Further, though I observed these students to move from subject to subject as a whole class (i.e., equality), DC IB students regularly exercised some degree of autonomy in what they worked on during math, or what book they read during read-to-self time, for example. I now turn to discussions with IB practitioners, and their reports of how they understand and manage mutual respect in organization.

Teachers' Discussions of Mutual Respect in Practice

As they discussed how their students were organized, especially as compared to the organization in the Montessori videos, IB teachers emphasized equality in classroom organization. This practical logic was consistent with my observations of their practice.

Though the degree to which equality was privileged varied within and across IB schools, I found, yet again, that this privileging corresponded to IB teachers' understandings of how the dimensions of mutual respect interact in the classroom: By driving with equality in classroom organization, teachers could also ensure equity for their diverse learners, whereas too much autonomy for students could compromise both equality and equity. IB teachers reported both the IB system and other parts of their practice context inform their organization, and the mutual respect therein.

IB teachers in both DC and Toronto evidenced their understanding that, by organizing students to receive equal exposure to varied subjects, teachers could better track what all students are learning, and thus ensure students are equitably supported as they acquire a balanced skill set necessary for life. In response to the Montessori videos, in which Montessori students directed much of their own school day, IB teachers emphasized the importance of organizing for balance. Underlying this emphasis on organizing for balance were equity-minded concerns: IB teachers

wanted students to get equal exposure to a balanced array of subject areas to ensure all students become well-rounded people who are prepared for later school and life. For example, in a DC IB focus group, teachers stated:

Johnson Lǎoshī: You don't know what you should focus on in high school and then college- if you choose to go to college- unless you've tried it all out (Teachers: Right). And so, that's the other thing, is giving [students] that strong foundation in everything, so that when they decide what they're truly passionate about, they have that foundation, and they can go directly into it. It's not like all of a sudden in high school I'm like, 'I want to be an astrophysicist. Oh no, I never really focused on math.' That would be a bummer, so if you give a kid a strong foundation in everything, then if they're balanced, they can be-

2nd grade teacher: -they have so many more opportunities in life, and so many places they can go.

In the view of IB teachers, their organization – which privileges students' equal exposure to an array of subject areas – permits them to manage both equality and equity in the classroom.

In addition to prioritizing students' equal exposure to different subject areas, IB teachers and schools organized students to receive fairly equal learning experiences as that of their peers. In Toronto and DC both, IB teachers reported pressures from school administration or parents to ensure students in different classes were getting equal exposure to varied activities and teachers.

In the teacher focus group, Toronto IB Ms. Forbes stated:

We've been told that if we share a grade, they should have similar programs, we don't want the parents going, 'oh they're doing this in that class and they're not doing it in the other class'... especially the IB program, being presented in the same way, the same types of activities.

In both IB schools, then, organizing for equality was a priority.

When organizing for equality, IB teachers were informed by personal values and school and environmental pressures as much as they were informed by the IB system. When asked why they organized to ensure students' equal exposure to different subject areas, DC IB Johnson Lǎoshī referenced the designs of the IB system, stating, “*balance is part of our learner profile in*

the IB, so the idea of being a balanced person is integral to our program.” However, especially after watching the Montessori videos, and worrying those students were not being adequately prepared because they had too much autonomy over directing their day, IB teachers cited other factors as informing their emphasis on organizing students to be equally prepared for tests, and equally working through standards. A 2nd grade teacher at the DC IB school summarized:

There is something to be held accountable to, like the tests, and IB, and all of that, but the reason that we are here is because we think that [multiple skill sets] are important, and we want to make sure that the kids have them.

According to IB practitioners in both contexts, it was not solely the designs of the IB system that shaped their emphasis on equality in classroom organization.

Mutual Respect in Social Relations

Observations and discussions with IB practitioners illuminate, yet again, a privileging of equality in classroom social relations, even as the designs of the IB system are relatively multifaceted in focus. In both IB schools, students worked on social relations primarily during instruction, to which all students were equally exposed.

This privileging of equality in practice was, again, related to the understandings of IB teachers: If they managed social relations by driving with equality, this would ensure the other dimensions of mutual respect are also upheld, whereas too much autonomy for students could compromise equality and equity.

Snapshot of Mutual Respect in Practice

In the below vignette, I briefly describe an instance of conflict resolution in the DC IB school. When Johnson Lǎoshī’s 5th grade class went out for recess each day, there were reliably a group of students who played basketball. There were usually one or two girls, the rest boys. The

racial makeup of the students playing basketball was diverse; the racial makeup of the DC IB school – students, teachers, and staff alike – was diverse.

With this vignette, I illustrate how equality is privileged in the social relations of the IB students in that, though not all students were part of the conflict, all were part of the conflict resolution, given this conflict resolution was built into students' current academic unit.

DC IB – Conflict Resolution Regarding Racial Slurs

One mid-morning in early May, Johnson Lǎoshī's 5th grade students gathered around her for a discussion on the classroom's meeting rug. Johnson Lǎoshī exuded calm, yet she had reported to me earlier that morning that she was nervous about this upcoming discussion. As she prepared for it, I saw her refer to a Teaching Tolerance resource on having difficult conversations.

The reason for Johnson Lǎoshī's nerves was this: in recent days, she had repeatedly overheard the racial slur "boy" being used during basketball at recess. The DC IB school is on Public School Review's list of "Most Diverse Schools in the U.S.;" a diverse group of children were hearing this slur as they played.

On this occasion as well as many others, Johnson Lǎoshī had faith in the intentions of her students. In her view, they didn't understand the harm and historical context behind the term "boy," and it was her job to provide them with resources that would aid their understanding.

*As Johnson Lǎoshī introduced the unit on Civil Rights, she announced all students would read the same book, *Walking to the Bus Rider Blues*, by Harriette Gillem Robinet. She said one reason the 5th grade teachers chose this book was because the main character is close in age to these students, permitting them entrance into a story set in a different time and place.*

Johnson Lǎoshī proceeded to tell her class they would find some upsetting language in this book. She reminded them, however, that -similar to when they learned about the Holocaust – just because something is upsetting, does not mean we do not discuss it. Students will find the "n" word is used, and while the teachers think students are mature enough to read this language, she wants to be clear that she will never say this word, and she never wants to hear it from them.

Johnson Lǎoshī then briefly brought up the racial slur "boy," and explains it was used to make African American men feel small. Without naming names or appearing upset, she says she has heard this word used at this school. While this may be a joke, and acceptable to a student and his or her friends, Johnson Lǎoshī tells her class that hearing "boy" makes her uncomfortable, and it may make others feel uncomfortable, too. She asks them to be mindful of that. Johnson Lǎoshī then explains why authors use such language, in order to show how bad things were. Teachers rely on these authors, in turn, to ensure we do not forget.

While Johnson Lǎoshī had been the primary person talking up to this point, about five students raised their hand to contribute to the discussion, recommending similar books and discussing how words can harm. One student shared how her mother only lets her play with African American dolls, so that she accepts herself. This diverse group of children appeared to be comfortable talking about matters of race and other forms of in/justice. It was clear to me that such conversations and learnings had come up in the past, and for some, it continued on at home.

After answering a few questions about the book, Johnson Lǎoshī transitioned students to watching a video about Rosa Parks. Before she did, however, she reminded her class of something stated in a video they had previously watched: laws can't change people's minds. To this she added, "changing people's minds is our job."

In total, this discussion lasted approximately 12 minutes. Johnson Lǎoshī directed it; the whole class was present for it. In this discussion, she connected the racial slur she had overheard on the playground to students' upcoming Civil Rights unit, which they would work through as they prepared for their PYP Exhibition, for which they researched all matters of injustice.

Observations in both IB schools suggest IB teachers manage mutual respect in social relations by privileging equality. In both schools, I observed social conflicts were predominantly resolved on the playground, and students predominantly worked on respectful social relations during instruction, to which the whole class was equally exposed. I now turn to discussions with IB practitioners, to better understand why they drive with equality in classroom social relations.

Teachers' Discussions of Mutual Respect in Practice

As they discussed how they managed social relations in their classrooms, especially after viewing children's social experiences in the Montessori videos, IB teachers again emphasized equality. This practical logic was consistent with my observations of their practice.

This privileging of equality, again, related to how IB teachers understood the dimensions of mutual respect to interact with one another in the classroom: driving with equality can ensure the other dimensions are upheld, whereas too much autonomy for students risks compromising those other dimensions. Again, IB teachers reported both the IB system and other parts of their practice context as informing how they managed social relations in practice.

IB teachers in both contexts described how, through equal exposure to the IB approach to instruction, during which teachers frequently group and regroup students, respectful social relations can be fostered and can, in turn, enhance students' academic work. The IB system encourages teachers to facilitate many student groupings, and to expose students to diverse perspectives within the curriculum, so students can become increasingly tolerant of those who are different from them (i.e., equality). In their view, then, by adhering to instructional guidance from the IB system, IB teachers also facilitate respectful social relations for students.

Upon observing that children in the DC Montessori video spend large chunks of their school day on social, versus academic, learning, DC IB teachers demonstrated the understanding that, by keeping social learning within the jurisdiction of academic instruction (i.e., driving with equality), they could ensure the voices of minority students are included, and that the whole class works through the academic learning required for their next steps (i.e., equity).¹³⁶

DC IB teachers thought it too risky to permit students much autonomy over their social experiences. One reason for using teacher-guided instruction to facilitate social experiences for students (i.e., driving with equality) is this helps ensure minority students are equitably represented in classroom discussions. For example, when watching the DC Montessori video, DC IB practitioners observed white girls were directing a lengthy class meeting, while the few boys and minority students remained largely silent. One DC IB kindergarten teacher stated:

And when you are the minority... you tend not to speak out unless you feel like people are going to bring you into the fold. So, I wonder if, at their school, they've done things for those boys and the girls or other children who are not as vocal, possibly due to that, the fact that there's not a lot of them.

DC IB teachers and administrators alike discussed the teacher's role in ensuring minority voices are equitably protected and amplified in classroom discussions. If students are left to autonomously handle their own social conflicts, minority students may not be sufficiently heard.

Another reason IB teachers managed social relations by driving with equality was related to their understanding that, if students spent too much time autonomously directing their social relations, there would not be enough time for students to learn the requisite academic content, thus preparing them for their next steps (i.e., equity).¹³⁷ After watching an extended conversation regarding dirty tea dishes during a classroom meeting at the DC Montessori school, a DC IB 2nd grade teacher said:

I was very uncomfortable with how much [the DC Montessori children] were talking about tea (Teachers: Yeah! Me too). I kept going back and forth, because on the one hand, it's important to have these conversations about how are we going to work together, and how are we going to be respectful of each other...and it was fantastic, the teacher didn't have to say anything, and the actual discourse and everything was phenomenal and wonderful. But I was just like, oh my gosh, I would be out of my skin, we're spending a lot of time talking about tea. Did anybody want to talk about what you learned today?

Even as IB practitioners in both contexts admired the social autonomy of the Montessori children, they felt spending such time on social relations would not be possible in their school.

Overall, IB teachers reasoned social learning could, indeed should, happen primarily during instructional time, through students' equal exposure to academic experiences. Yet again, these teachers cited both the IB system and other parts of their practice context as informing their emphasis on equality when managing students' social experiences.

Summary

In examining mutual respect in practice in IB classrooms situated across two schools and two different national contexts, I observed a consistent pattern. Even as IB teachers varied as to whether they were relatively balanced in their efforts to accord students equality, autonomy, and equity, or whether they were more focused on a given dimension of mutual respect, these teachers similarly managed mutual respect in practice by driving with equality. And, these IB teachers similarly understood the dimensions of mutual respect to compete with one another in

the classroom; too much autonomy for students could compete with teachers' efforts to uphold equality and equity.

One way to interpret this consistent pattern in the data is that IB teachers share a practical logic for how to manage mutual respect in their classrooms. Further, given their emphasis on equality is slightly different from the multifaceted designs of the IB system, and given IB teachers reported that both the IB system and other parts of their practice context inform their practice, one could understand the IB system to work *with* other parts of a teacher's practice context to shape her practical logic of mutual respect. This is perhaps particularly true for mutual respect in classroom organization and social relations, whereas the multifaceted designs of the IB system were more apparent in classroom instruction.

Montessori

Similar to their IB counterparts, I found Montessori teachers situated across two schools and two national contexts to share a practical logic. However, where IB teachers privileged equality, Montessori teachers managed mutual respect in practice by driving with autonomy. And, where IB teachers understood a competitive relationship between the dimensions of mutual respect, Montessori teachers understood these dimensions to interact synergistically.

From Chapter Four, one may recall that the designs of the Montessori system are focused on respecting and fostering children's autonomy, and the system operates in a way that is relatively closed to its environment. The consistent emphasis on autonomy in Montessori classrooms thus continues to suggest the Montessori system works to change teachers' practice *and* understandings, in part by extending its designs to all aspects of classroom life (i.e., instruction, organization, social relations), thereby providing a buffer between teachers and more normative educational practices and understandings in the environment.

In the below sections, I discuss mutual respect in practice across three aspects of life in Montessori classrooms. I present a snapshot of classroom life, along with Montessori teachers' discussion of their practice, to evidence how teachers understand and manage mutual respect within and across the DC and Toronto Montessori schools.

Mutual Respect in Instruction

The designs of the Montessori system were apparent in classroom instruction. I observed Montessori teachers to drive with autonomy in that children were hardly instructed in the traditional sense. This privileging of autonomy was, in turn, related to how Montessori teachers understood the different dimensions of mutual respect to work together in the classroom: Considerable autonomy for children could also assure equality and equity in instruction.

Snapshot of Mutual Respect in Practice

I describe below the class play at the DC Montessori school, and some of the instruction leading up to it for children in the Upper Elementary class. In doing so, I demonstrate how the designs of the Montessori system are apparent in instruction, in that the DC Montessori teacher continually privileged and fostered children's autonomy: Not only did the children facilitate every task in preparation for their play, the student directors determined for themselves the learning goal of writing and producing a class play.

DC Montessori – Preparing for the Play

*One evening at the end of May, families and friends of the DC Montessori school filed into the adjacent church to watch the Upper Elementary class play, *The Stolen Hope*, which was written and directed by one 5th year and two 6th year girls.*

Earlier that day, the Upper Elementary children created an assembly line to set up chairs in preparation. That evening, a few children passed out programs they had made as the audience found their seats. The three young directors opened and closed the play with some remarks and thanks to those who had supported their efforts.

Throughout the play, which was based on Greek mythology, the children on stage improvised to help one another through forgotten lines and prop failures. The directors sat in the back, accompanied by a classmate who created and executed sound effects and lighting. The few children who did not want an acting role were behind scenes, helping with the costumes and sets that the children had designed and assembled themselves.

After the play was over, the children took everything down, to more thoroughly clean and organize the following day. The 6th year child who had been in charge of makeup and costumes gathered the outfits she had passed out, and the makeup she had helped to apply, hours before.

What instruction occurred in the Upper Elementary classroom in the months prior, in preparation for this play?

It was the aforementioned three young girls who set this task for themselves, and began writing the script long before I arrived at the DC Montessori school. Not every 6th year took a leadership role in this culminating project; in fact, one 5th year did alongside two 6th years.

The plot these three directors wrote was an original one, but one that incorporated much of what they had learned and researched about Greek mythology. The DC Montessori focal teacher, Ms. Laura, reported that though she assisted the children with their ending — reminding them of the hero's journey concept, and discussing what might be satisfying in light of the plot they had sketched — these children had done everything else. They wrote the script, held auditions, casted, and directed. They recruited their classmates to handle music, costumes, and set design. Further, they organized and ran class bake sales to raise money for the requisite supplies, ever mindful of the budget they themselves had set. Finally, to gather what was needed for the play, they arranged their own 'going-outs,' the characteristic Montessori excursions where the only role of the adult chaperone is to keep children safe.

In sum, it was three children who initiated their own culminating project, working with the rest of the class as the other children decided how/much they wanted to be involved. Their teacher assumed more of an advisory role, supporting the children as needed with anything ranging from time management to set painting. It was the children who set the task and accomplished it in the ways they saw fit. Through this multi-step project, the children learned to choose a complex project of interest to them, break it down into manageable pieces, and then see it through to completion. At the end, and all throughout, it was their own high standards they were striving to meet.

Throughout observations at the DC Montessori school, I found that, consistent with the designs of the Montessori system, DC Montessori teachers focused, first and foremost, on respecting children's autonomy. Though the Toronto Montessori school and focal teacher also privileged autonomy, I observed relatively more balanced efforts at equality, autonomy, and equity in instruction at the Toronto Montessori school. For example, instead of a student-initiated

class play, the Toronto Montessori school has an annual Culture Fair. Though Toronto Montessori students determine their own topics for this Culture Fair (i.e., autonomy), they are all equally expected to undergo this learning experience (i.e., equality). I now turn to discussions with Montessori practitioners, and their reports of how they understand and manage mutual respect in instruction.

Teachers' Discussions of Mutual Respect in Practice

As Montessori teachers described their approach to instruction, a consistent practical logic emerged, in which these teachers emphasized the importance of continually respecting and fostering children's autonomy. Though the degree to which autonomy was privileged varied within and across Montessori schools, I found this privileging to correspond to teachers' understandings of a synergistic relationship between autonomy and the other two dimensions of mutual respect. Montessori teachers consistently reported that the Montessori system informed their instruction, and the mutual respect therein.

Similar to Montessori system designs, Montessori practitioners evidenced a focus on autonomy as they described their approach to instruction. What is more, in discussing student and teacher roles, they demonstrated fundamentally changed understandings: A teacher's role is to prepare the environment and then step out of children's way, allowing children to independently teach themselves. This understanding that children are capable of autonomously instructing themselves is apparent in the below statements:

Montessori Trainer: [Dr.] Montessori writes about it...the learning happens when we aren't there. So, it's when the child is making the decisions and interacting with the material and with the other people they're working with, that's where the learning occurs. So, we just kind of initiate them, and give them some ideas, show them how to handle something. But the learning does not happen from us directly, we're just facilitating it by the environment, it's the child who teaches themself.

.....

DC Montessori Director of Education: I try to emphasize [to prospective families] that the learning doesn't happen with the teacher, it doesn't happen in the lesson. It happens when the child leaves the lesson and works with a material itself. Because I think a lot of times people equate 'my child is only learning things when the teacher is right there.'

Whether their role was as a leader or teacher, all Montessori practitioners reported this same understanding, and all cited the Montessori system as informing this understanding.¹³⁸

The way in which Montessori teachers managed mutual respect in instruction is perhaps related to how they understood the relationship between the three dimensions of mutual respect: Where IB teachers framed autonomy as being in competition with the other two dimensions of mutual respect, Montessori teachers described autonomy as enabling them. After preparing the environment and exposing all children to Montessori presentations and materials (i.e., equality), Montessori teachers then trusted in children's abilities to direct their own learning (i.e., autonomy), and the fact that the children would naturally work in ways preparing them for later school and life (i.e., equity).

In the view of Montessori teachers, when autonomy for children is respected and fostered, equity and equality are also then assured. In her focus group, the Toronto Montessori focal teacher, Ms. Emily, stated the importance of privileging autonomy in instruction:

It was like what we said from the beginning, if you have autonomy, you will do your best work. So autonomy doesn't mean being alone, and it doesn't mean being unsupported, but it means I am trusted to do my best work... I'm not going to let myself down, I'm not going to let you down, because I'm not doing it for you.

Ms. Emily later discussed how, in permitting children choice over what they learn (i.e., autonomy), they will naturally acquire the skills needed for later school and life (i.e., equity):

Emily: But I wasn't teaching her, because why would I pick what she's interested in? It just wouldn't even occur to me to pick what she's interested in.

Researcher: But where did you get that reflex?

Emily: Oh, probably my training. So I would say initially from just observing in Montessori schools, before I even was trained... I remember saying to [one child]... I was like, 'Do you mind if I ask you what you're working on?' And he was like, 'I'm studying Nigeria.' And I was like, 'Why? Who assigned that?' And he started telling me about how this happened, and then this happened, and he decided he wanted to study it. And he was like, 'Now I'm going to learn about this, and I'm going to cook, and'- He was so engrossed in a room that was really busy, and he was all by himself, and he was coloring a map, and he had all these pages in front of him, and he was five years old. And I thought, 'oh, he really likes it. So he really doesn't even think he's working, he doesn't even know that he's learning all these skills.' And then I was like, 'that's it!' I was hooked. And so I guess now I'm like, why would I tell a child what to work on, if what they want to work on is an option? ... But I didn't invent that, Montessori invented that.

Time and again, Montessori teachers revealed their perception of a synergistic relationship between the dimensions of mutual respect.

As is evidenced by the above data, Montessori teachers in both DC and Toronto consistently, and exclusively, cited the Montessori system as informing their instruction.

Montessori training, Dr. Montessori's writings, and teachers' lived experience in Montessori classrooms were repeatedly referenced as informing the practice of, and understanding behind, according children autonomy during instruction.

Mutual Respect in Organization

As with instruction, Montessori practitioners privileged autonomy in organization: Children in both Montessori schools largely directed their school days.

This privileging of autonomy was, again, related to how Montessori teachers understood the dimensions of mutual respect to relate to one another: Organizing for autonomy could ensure equity for students even better than if students were organized for equality.

Snapshot of Mutual Respect in Practice

Rosaline and Gabriel are both in Ms. Emily's Upper Elementary class at the Toronto Montessori school. They are quite different. Rosaline is a 5th year and has been at the Toronto Montessori school for some time. Academics are a struggle for her; she frequently receives extra

and more individualized support from both Ms. Emily and a resource teacher, given her diagnoses of autism and ADHD. Gabriel is a 4th year for whom school comes easily. He does well at this school, and did well at the traditional school he attended when he was younger.

In Table 5.2, I demonstrate how Rosaline and Gabriel are organized in a way that permits them different days, which they autonomously direct. In reviewing the timetables of these two children, one observes that Gabriel spent nearly five hours doing something different from Rosaline. He worked with different classmates, on different work, and received brief presentations from Ms. Emily at different times.¹³⁹

Table 5.2

Student Schedules in the Toronto Montessori School

Rosaline	Gabriel
8:00-8:30 Fill out planners, timed math sheet	8:00-8:30 Fill out planners, timed math sheet
8:30-11:15 Morning Work Cycle Rosaline works 1:1 with the resource teacher on reading comprehension. She then works with a peer on math. With a small group, she later receives a presentation from the art teacher.	8:30-11:15 Morning Work Cycle Gabriel receives a presentation from Ms. Emily on transitive and intransitive verbs with a few 4 th and 5 th year students. He spends the rest of the morning working with peers on science models.
11:15-12:45 Recess & Community Lunch	11:15-12:45 Recess & Community Lunch
12:45-1:15 Silent Reading	12:45-1:15 Silent Reading
1:15-3:15 Afternoon Work Cycle Rosaline works with Ms. Emily and a 4 th and 6 th year student on writing compositions. She spends the remainder of the afternoon working independently on art.	1:15-3:15 Afternoon Work Cycle With a small group, Gabriel receives a presentation from the art teacher. He does follow-up art work with peers, and then follow-up language and math work independently.

3:15-3:30

Classroom responsibilities

(Clean art shelves and whiteboard)

3:15-3:30

Classroom responsibilities

(Re-stocking classroom central supplies)

Throughout observations in both Montessori schools, I found that Montessori students were organized in a way that privileges autonomy. However, this privileging was more pronounced at the DC Montessori school, whereas there was more balance across the three dimensions of mutual respect in organization at the Toronto Montessori school. Toronto Montessori students were organized to receive more equal exposure to specials and specialist teachers. Each week, children met with art, gym, music, and French specialist teachers. At the DC Montessori school, children's time to autonomously direct their own day was disrupted only twice each week: once for religion class with a specialist teacher, and once for physical education with the whole class and Ms. Laura. I now turn to discussions with Montessori practitioners, and their reports of how they understand and manage mutual respect in organization.

Teachers' Discussions of Mutual Respect in Practice

As they discussed how their students were organized, especially as compared to the organization in the IB videos, Montessori teachers emphasized autonomy. This practical logic for managing mutual respect in organization was consistent with my observations of their practice.

Though the degree to which autonomy was privileged varied within and across Montessori schools, I found, yet again, that this privileging corresponded to Montessori teachers' understandings of how the dimensions of mutual respect interact in the classroom: By driving with autonomy in classroom organization, this also creates space for diverse learners to work in ways, and at a pace, conducive to their needs (i.e., equity). Montessori teachers again reported that the Montessori system shapes their organization, and the mutual respect therein.

As they discussed classroom organization, Montessori teachers demonstrated faith that children are capable of autonomously directing their school day. In adhering to standards from the Montessori system, both DC and Toronto schools organized to provide children with long blocks of uninterrupted time to work each morning and afternoon. Additionally, children remained in the same class, with the same teacher, for three years. Montessori teachers viewed such organization as permitting children the time and space needed to become independent learners, increasingly self-aware about their interests and abilities. In a focus group with Toronto Montessori teachers, a Primary teacher stated:

When the kids come in, I like them to find their way, as opposed to me directing them, saying 'you need to take this out, you need to take that out' ... that's a false environment. So, I think if you give the children the opportunity, and you put your faith in them, that they can come in and...naturally they'll find [work] that is calling to them for whatever reason. There are certain children that need a little bit more direction, of course, because it's a process...

Researcher: Why should it be their choice over yours? For such young children?

Well because basically that's essentially what we're trying to help the children with, is to be independent learners and thinkers. And so, the more opportunity you can create for that, again it's a process... and if you have a child with you for three years, this is how we build it up. Yes, because we're hoping to make them independent and set them up for life.

In the view of Montessori teachers, their classroom organization – which respects children's autonomy – reinforces the autonomy they are trying to foster and respect in instruction.

Though autonomy was often their explicit focus, upon viewing the IB videos and noticing time to be a driving force within them, Montessori teachers discussed how their organization also permits time to equitably support children. When discussing the benefits of a Montessori program, a resource teacher at the Toronto Montessori school stated, “*We have them for three years...It's a really large period of time that we get to know these children and fill in all the framework, as [Dr.] Montessori says.*” Similarly, when comparing students' schedules in the DC

IB video to her own classroom, DC Montessori Ms. Laura discussed the space her students have; if there are 22 children, there can be 22 different days. She then stated, with respect to the IB video, “*I feel like anyone that needs a little extra space isn’t really served.*” Her colleague stated:

Primary teacher: I keep harkening back to the timer [in the DC IB video], but it was so anxiety-inducing. I was thinking about a dyslexia workshop I went to at the [Montessori] refresher course this year, and they asked us to do some exercise, I think it was copying a passage backwards in cursive. And it was timed, and the lecturer was walking through our seats, counting down, saying ‘oh, time’s almost up, keep going,’ mimicking a certain [teaching] style. And then when it was over, she said ‘that’s what a dyslexic student feels like in such a circumstance, just an impossible task.’ So, especially anyone with learning differences would be incredibly disserved when [the classroom organization] just assumes that everyone’s working at the same pace, and can glean the necessary concepts through the same [teaching] style.

Montessori teachers reasoned that organizing for autonomy was an even better way to ensure equity than if children were organized for equality.

Teachers again reported that Montessori trainings and standards shaped their emphasis on autonomy in organization.

Mutual Respect in Social Relations

Observations and discussions with Montessori practitioners illuminate, yet again, a privileging of autonomy in classroom social relations, in keeping with the designs of the Montessori system. In both Montessori schools, significant time and space were permitted for children to work on their social relations rather independently.

This privileging of autonomy was, again, related to how Montessori teachers understood the dimensions of mutual respect to interact synergistically: By offering all children explicit teachings around social respect and significant time in which to direct their social relations (i.e., equality and autonomy), these teachers reasoned children would become increasingly capable at handling social conflicts and would come to value diverse perspectives (i.e., autonomy and equality). Further, this would in no way detract from their academic preparation (i.e., equity).

Snapshot of Mutual Respect in Practice

In the below vignette, I briefly describe an instance of conflict resolution in the DC Montessori school. Eugene and Emma were two children in Ms. Laura's Upper Elementary class. During recess each day, 5th year Emma would usually socialize with multiple girl friends of varying ages. Fourth year Eugene kept to himself more. During recess, he would usually interact with one of the few other boys in the class, 5th year Anthony.

With this vignette, I illustrate how autonomy is privileged in the social relations of the Montessori students in that the children involved in the conflict took as much time as they needed to work on social relations, with minimal adult interference.

DC Montessori – Conflict Resolution Regarding Gay Marriage

One Wednesday morning in May, Emma ran into Ms. Laura's empty classroom during recess. She was sobbing, with a few supportive friends at her flanks as she approached Ms. Laura. She reported that Eugene had said gay marriage should be illegal. Emma's parents are gay.

I was not privy to the subsequent conflict resolution, but Ms. Laura and the Head of School both processed what had occurred with me the following day. Ms. Laura reported Emma had done a nice job articulating to Eugene how she thought school was a safe space where she didn't have to defend herself. She had been trying to be kind to Eugene recently, but when he says things like that, those words don't simply go away.

As she relayed the children's conversation, Ms. Laura confessed to me that the classroom feels like a microcosm of the broader world. These discussions feel very weighty. Throughout the conflict resolution, Ms. Laura worked to protect both Emma and Eugene, but she wondered if she should have told Eugene his position was wrong? She thought it was time for the school to take a stance on the matter.

In my discussions with the Head of School, she explained how, because the school is Christian, with Catholic roots, it sometimes attracts families with conservative views, even as the school's mission statement emphasizes diversity and inclusion. She and Ms. Laura both recognized that these children are parroting what is said at their family dinner tables, testing out their life experiences against those of their peers.

So how, exactly, did the conflict get resolved between the two students? From a distance, I observed Ms. Laura and an administrator spend the entire afternoon in the courtyard with Emma and Eugene. They acted primarily as silent observers while the two children talked through the disagreement. The adults then relayed what happened to both sets of parents at dismissal.

In total, the conversation lasted 2.5 hours. The children directed it, with two adults standing by to observe and assist if/as needed. The conversation was private; it took place in the school courtyard as the rest of the children carried on with their work indoors.¹⁴⁰ In this conversation, the children drew on social skills they honed during daily class meetings; social skills practitioners at their school viewed to be an integral part of their classroom learning.

Observations in both Montessori schools suggest Montessori teachers manage mutual respect in social relations by privileging autonomy. However, I found both autonomy and equality to be more pronounced in social relations in the DC Montessori focal classroom. The DC Montessori children devoted more classroom time to independently working on social relations and conflicts (i.e., autonomy), but they also had meetings twice each day to work on such things as a class (i.e., equality). By comparison, in the focal classroom in the Toronto Montessori school, classroom meetings occurred once a week. I now turn to discussion with Montessori practitioners, to better understand why they privilege autonomy in social relations.

Teachers' Discussions of Mutual Respect in Practice

Montessori teachers emphasized autonomy in their discussion of social relations. This practical logic was consistent with my observations of their practice.

This privileging of autonomy was, again, related to how Montessori teachers understood the dimensions of mutual respect to interact in the classroom: autonomy enables equality and equity. Montessori teachers consistently and exclusively reported the Montessori system as informing how they managed social relations in practice.

Within the Montessori curriculum, there is explicit teaching around respectful social relations, to which all children are equally exposed. In her interview, a DC Montessori school leader discussed Grace and Courtesy lessons, which begin in Primary (i.e., ages 3-6), and which “*underpin the environment of mutual respect in the classroom.*” As with the way academic subjects are taught in Montessori, these Grace and Courtesy lessons are broken down into

multiple steps, offering children concrete examples of how to give and receive respect from others (e.g., how to walk around, versus on, someone else's work mat). Montessori practitioners in both contexts viewed this social learning to be as important as academic learning, if not more.

Because of their view that social learning is more complex than academic, and because of their faith that children will learn the necessary academic skills in a Montessori prepared environment, Montessori teachers stated that children should spend significant time autonomously working on social relations at school. Teachers across all four schools noticed that, in the Montessori videos, children took time to socialize and work through conflicts without a teacher trying to redirect them. A Lower Elementary teacher at the Toronto Montessori school explained how, in permitting students social autonomy, they become increasingly capable of maintaining a community of social equals:

We spent a lot of time with conflict management and helping the kids to resolve issues, and there's so much of a social aspect to it. And perhaps, to an outsider, it might seem like 'oh my goodness, this teacher just took 20 minutes out of everybody else's day so that she could address this issue with these two children in the class who are fighting.' But yet, I think about [an 8 year old child in my class]...after so many years of practicing with others and working through conflicts with others, as a third year, you should see, when he sees other children who are fighting, he will be the one to be like, 'What happened? How can we help solve this problem? ... What do you need to move on from this peacefully?' And right there, those hours of our lives where we helped, it's more than worth it, because that is a strong individual who will get his math, who will get his language when he's ready for it, but knows how to help people, and knows how to see a situation and do what he can to alleviate the problem.

The above comment also illustrates the shared understanding of Montessori teachers that driving with autonomy and permitting ample time for social learning enhances — rather than detracts from — students' academic preparation (i.e., equity).

Montessori teachers in both contexts discussed how they collaborate across the grades to work toward a mutually reinforcing situation, in which they respect and foster children's autonomy over their social experiences, which permits children to become more capable, which

then enables teachers to further respect children’s autonomy. For example, after Primary and Lower Elementary teachers at the DC Montessori school described how they scaffold children being able to navigate social issues independently, Ms. Laura stated that she is constantly asking herself how she can turn the situation over to the children in her Upper Elementary class. She explained how, because her class takes the time to resolve issues during class meetings, children can then draw on “*that communal context for authority.*” In these ways, the children develop impressive social skills, as summarized by Ms. Laura’s colleague:

I like your [class'] ten minute conversation about sticky notes and tea. You could have summarized that in a second and just made a rule, and that would have been easier for you. But you didn't, and you never do, and you let them figure it out. Which is why I happened to be in here one day when I overheard my favorite conversation that I've ever heard in the classroom... They ended up having a conversation, like six of them, about race. And it was heated, and it was emotional, and it was intense, and they were so respectful of each other. And they listened to each other, and they had a conversation about race and society and privilege, and respecting one another's boundaries, and understanding one another's backgrounds, that honest to god, I don't think your average college senior could have had without devolving into screaming.

As these teachers observe children’s increased social capabilities, and that their autonomous social relations do not compromise equality or equity, they offer more autonomy.

Yet again, when discussing who or what informed their emphasis on autonomy, Montessori practitioners uniformly cited Montessori training, philosophy, and curriculum. Teachers discussed how Dr. Montessori’s writings review the characteristics of the elementary-aged child — such as their social instinct, gregario — and discuss the importance of working with versus against these characteristics. Further, in their focus group, a DC Montessori leader agreed with Laura, confirming all DC Montessori teachers approach social situations — indeed, any situation — by asking the question, ‘how can I remove myself?’ When asked who/what informed this reflexive question privileging children’s autonomy, the answer was, again, Montessori.

Summary

As with my examination of mutual respect in practice in IB classrooms, I observed a consistent pattern in Montessori classrooms situated across two schools and two different national contexts. Even as Montessori teachers varied in terms of whether they were relatively balanced in their efforts to accord students equality, autonomy, and equity, or whether they were more focused on a given dimension of mutual respect, these teachers similarly managed mutual respect in practice by driving with autonomy. And, these Montessori teachers similarly understood the dimensions of mutual respect to work synergistically in the classroom; autonomy for students could enable both equality and equity.

One way to interpret this consistent pattern in the data is that Montessori teachers share a practical logic for how to manage mutual respect in their classrooms. Further, given this emphasis on autonomy in practice is consistent with the designs of the Montessori system, and given Montessori teachers consistently reported that the Montessori system informs their practice, one could interpret the designs of the Montessori system as shaping teachers' practical logic in robust ways, changing their understandings as well as their practice around according children mutual respect. By extending and coordinating its designs for mutual respect across three aspects of classroom life, the Montessori system provides a buffer between Montessori teachers and more normative educational understandings and practices in the environment.

Discussion

Findings from the previous chapter suggest it is possible for educational systems to design for mutual respect. Such news begs a follow-up question regarding whether and how such designs unfold in practice. In this study's analytic framework, which is depicted in Figure 2.2, I suggested one might look for mutual respect across three aspects of classroom life: instruction,

organization, and social relations. After locating the practice of mutual respect in this way, I posed a second research question: *How do teachers understand and manage the possibly competing/possibly synergistic dimensions of mutual respect in practice, and why?*

The findings presented in this chapter suggest it is possible for system designs to shape mutual respect in practice. These system effects have potential to be quite powerful, shaping not only teachers' practice, but also their understandings of how best to accord children increased equality, autonomy, and equity in the classroom.

What is more, these findings provide additional clarity around *how* to manage mutual respect in practice, and *why* teachers might manage as they do. Based on the findings discussed in this chapter, I offer a structure for better understanding, and comparing, mutual respect in practice across diverse classrooms. This structure involves several considerations. The first level of analysis is to examine whether a teacher has a practical logic for how to manage mutual respect and, if so, what exactly that logic is. Then, to the extent that a teacher does have a practical logic, the second level of analysis is to examine whether and how that logic aligns to her system's designs for mutual respect.

While both IB and Montessori teachers had a practical logic for how to manage classrooms for mutual respect, the details again differed. In the IB classrooms, teachers drove with equality, particularly when managing mutual respect in organization and social relations. Montessori teachers, on the other hand, consistently privileged autonomy across the three aspects of classroom life. These differences in drivers corresponded to differences in how the IB and Montessori teachers understood the relationship between the dimensions of mutual respect: IB teachers largely viewed the dimensions to be in competition with one another, whereas Montessori teachers perceived an overall synergy between equality, autonomy, and equity. In

comparing these understandings, autonomy was chief point of difference: IB teachers viewed too much autonomy as compromising the other dimensions of mutual respect, whereas Montessori teachers viewed robust autonomy for children as enabling them.

In Chapter Four, I elaborated the frame for examining mutual respect in principle (i.e., considering a system's underlying logics and dispositions, and its instructional and operational designs for mutual respect). From this, we can begin to understand why the practice of mutual respect looked as it did in IB and Montessori classrooms. More specifically, we can begin to understand why mutual respect in IB classrooms was slightly different from the designs of the IB system, whereas the practice of mutual respect in Montessori classrooms was largely consistent with the designs of the system.

From what has been learned about the IB system and its designs for mutual respect, it is perhaps unsurprising that mutual respect in IB classrooms was a slight shift from mutual respect as designed. IB operates as a relatively open system; by permitting the environment to enter into classrooms, any balance in the system's designs can readily tilt toward a dimension of mutual respect that is prioritized there, particularly a dimension like equality, which is comparatively normative and easy to enact. So, too, is it unsurprising that mutual respect in instruction was more consistent with the IB system's designs. In encouraging teachers and students to continually connect to their broader world, it would not make sense for the IB system to offer specific and coordinated guidance for all aspects of classroom life.¹⁴¹ Instead, by focusing on supports like its instructional framework, the IB system can guide classrooms toward mutually respectful instruction while also permitting teachers and schools discretion in other aspects of classroom life, as they reconcile IB designs to their local cultures and contexts.

From what has been learned about the Montessori system, it might be expected that mutual respect in Montessori classrooms was largely consistent with system designs. Montessori operates as a comparatively closed system, making it easier to protect and reinforce its counter-cultural designs for mutual respect. So, too, might it be expected that a focus on autonomy would extend to all aspects of classroom life. In aiming to transform understandings around children's abilities, it would not make sense for the Montessori system to permit normative organizational and social practices to enter into classrooms, as such practices often assume a power differential between adults and children. By extending and coordinating guidance across all aspects of classroom life, the designs of the Montessori system can work in mutually reinforcing ways to accord children autonomy, and to increase faith in children's ability to be autonomous.

Thus, the preceding is, again, a story of differences: in practical logics, and in the extent to which those practical logics are shaped by the designs of a teacher's educational system. These differences, in turn, motivate additions to the analytic framework; additions which support a finer-grained analysis of the ways in which systems might interact with mutual respect in classrooms. Yet even as some of these differences make sense in light of the system in which a teacher is situated, others do not. Even as IB teachers consistently privileged equality, and Montessori teachers regularly privileged autonomy, there was variation *within* both systems regarding proportions. In both systems, I observed teachers who were more balanced in their efforts to manage across equality, autonomy, and equity, and I observed teachers with a more concerted focus.¹⁴² Such variation, which was not understood by revisiting system designs, motivates further elaboration of another piece of this study's analytic framework: teachers.

What is more, as discussed in Chapter Two, teachers are only partially in control of the practices one might observe in their classroom; for example, the ways in which students are

organized. Though I focused in this chapter on how teachers manage mutual respect in practice, to better understand these efforts, I seek to further elaborate the remaining pieces of the framework: schools, and the broader social and political environment.

There are many questions one might pose when observing that teachers' practice of mutual respect varied, even as their understandings of system designs and of mutual respect largely held constant. The question I pose is this: How do teachers experience the relationship between system designs and mutual respect in practice? What does it feel like to navigate the complexities of mutual respect in practice, especially when a system's designs for mutual respect are clearly understood?

In the next chapter, I focus on the experiences of teachers and leaders as they engage in the complex work of managing classrooms for mutual respect.

¹³³ As discussed further in Chapter Three, I triangulated my own perspective, as recorded throughout participant observation, with the perspectives of case study participants. Video-cued focus group conversations were particularly helpful; as practitioners commented on students' experiences as depicted in videos from the other system, they revealed the dimension(s) of mutual respect they emphasize for their own students.

¹³⁴ An important qualification to the statement that IB teachers privileged equality is this: As explained in Chapter Two, teachers rarely, if ever, have control over all organizational decisions at their school. In this way and others, then, other parts of teacher's practice context (e.g., school priorities and mandates) inform the dimension of mutual respect that is most privileged in her classroom organization. I take this up further in the chapter discussion.

¹³⁵ The Toronto IB school refers to these classes/this form of support as ESL, or English as a Second Language, which is why I use this terminology here.

¹³⁶ Practitioners at the Toronto IB school did not see a similar scene in the Montessori video they viewed. In general, however, Toronto IB practitioners noticed the time allowed for social learning, or life skills, in the Toronto Montessori classroom, and had similar views as their DC IB counterparts, particularly regarding the need for all students to get through academic learning.

¹³⁷ In their focus group, Toronto IB teachers didn't draw a distinction between academic versus social learning as much as their DC counterparts. Instead they framed the distinction as being between learning academic versus life skills. Their concerns around spending too much time on life skills, and the sources informing those concerns, were largely the same as that of the DC IB practitioner.

¹³⁸ It should be noted that at least one IB participant agreed with the notion that children primarily learn outside of lessons with their teacher. This participant was the PYP coordinator at the DC IB school in 2017 (also the school's Director of Education), who was cited as an instrumental support to teachers as they worked toward more inquiry-based teaching and learning.

¹³⁹ Though I present data here for children in different grades, I observed children in the same grade to have similarly varied school days across the two Montessori classrooms. Children in the same year may have slightly more overlap in the lessons their teacher presents, but they still get to decide where, when, with whom, and on what to work each day. Further, Montessori children remain in the same class for three years, which permits them extra time to spend on a lesson that gives them trouble, and it permits them the ability to study content from a grade or two ahead of their own.

¹⁴⁰ It is worth highlighting here that such social autonomy is enabled by the organizational autonomy discussed in the previous section: these children can take the time they need to independently resolve conflicts because the rest of the children are directing their own school days, as opposed to moving in unison as a class.

¹⁴¹ It is important to note the IB system certainly offers some guidance related to organization and social relations. For example, system standards require an organization that permits teachers to collaborate, and that permits students time for transdisciplinary learning. Similarly, system standards guide schools toward grouping and regrouping students. However, compared to guidance from the IB system around instruction, organizational and social guidance are less extensive and specific (and are often in the service of IB's approach to instruction). For the Montessori system, on the other hand, teachers and schools received significant and/or specific guidance around how to organize and foster respectful social relations among children. Further, rather than this guidance being in the service of the Montessori method of instruction, I found all forms of Montessori guidance (instructional, organizational, and social) to be in the service of respecting and fostering children's autonomy.

¹⁴² Where DC IB and Toronto Montessori practitioners were more balanced in their efforts across equality, autonomy, and equity, I observed more of a focus on equality for Toronto IB practitioners, and more focus on autonomy for DC Montessori practitioners. It is important to note here that, because I was in one focal classroom in three out of the four schools, I am better able to report variation between, versus within, schools. However, brief observations of other classrooms and teachers' reports in focus groups suggest proportions can vary within schools, as well as systems.

CHAPTER 6: Findings

The Experiences of Practitioners of Mutual Respect, Within and Across Systems

In the previous chapter, I focused on practice. In this chapter, I focus on the experiences of teachers and leaders, considering how they perceive and feel about the work of managing classrooms for mutual respect, given they are reconciling system designs to diverse learners, school settings, and social and political environments.

More specifically, in this chapter, I detail how both practice contexts and social contexts can have implications for practitioners' experiences, and the ways in which they vary within and across systems. When discussing a teacher's practice context, as I did when first developing this study's analytic framework in Chapter Two, I refer primarily to interactions beyond classroom walls (i.e., between teacher, school, system, and environment), which may then have implications for mutual respect in classrooms. When discussing social context, however, I am referring to relations *within* the classroom community, which can also matter for the mutual respect observed there. Our consideration of the social contexts of classrooms, and the practice contexts surrounding them, stemmed from addressing the following research question: *How do teachers and leaders experience the relationship between mutual respect by design and mutual respect in practice?*¹⁴³

While there are many ways to experience one's work, the chief difference I observed concerned whether or not practitioners experienced their work as *tension-fraught*. I found the experiences of practitioners *within* a given system varied with the quality of implementation at

their school. However, the experiences of teachers *across* systems varied inversely; higher levels of implementation corresponded to fewer tensions experienced by Montessori teachers, whereas higher levels of implementation corresponded to more tensions experienced by IB teachers.¹⁴⁴

This inverse relationship did not apply to the experiences of school leaders.

And so, two lenses prove helpful for understanding the varying experiences of Montessori and IB practitioners as they manage designs for mutual respect in practice. A consideration of practice contexts — and the degree to which they support a practitioner’s implementation of system designs — can offer clarity around different experiences *within* a given system. Further, a consideration of social contexts — and the extent to which either system designs for a social context in classrooms, which then requires ongoing protection and reinforcement from students, teachers, and school leaders — can provide clarity around the different experiences *across* the two systems.

I discuss each system in turn below, describing the experiences of practitioners as they manage the relationship between mutual respect by design and mutual respect in practice. In the chapter discussion, I return to and elaborate this study’s analytic framework, illustrated in Figure 2.2. With the help of this framework, I present a more detailed understanding of, and comparison between, the experiences of Montessori and IB practitioners.

Montessori

When analyzing how Montessori practitioners experienced the relationship between mutual respect by design and mutual respect in practice, I found the more a school was able to implement system designs, the less likely a teacher was to experience tensions. One way to understand this finding is to consider the social context of Montessori classrooms: The Montessori system designs for a social context within classrooms, in which children are

socialized to reinforce the system's counter-cultural designs for mutual respect. And so, the more time spent in a high-implementing Montessori environment, the more capable children become of upholding equality and equity in a classroom designed to foster their autonomy, *and* the more faith a teacher then has in children's abilities to be fellow stewards of mutual respect.

However, for the very same reasons Montessori teachers often do not experience tensions in their work, Montessori school leaders often do. This is because leaders must continually protect the designs of the Montessori system — and preserve the social contexts of classrooms — as they often run counter to norms in the environment surrounding a school.

I discuss below how high-level implementation of system designs can mitigate tensions experienced by Montessori teachers, though not for their school leaders. Then, as evidenced by the Toronto Montessori data, I discuss how Montessori teachers can experience more tensions when system designs — and the social context they aim to create — cannot be fully realized.

Classroom-Level Experiences

As they navigated designs for mutual respect in practice, Montessori teachers often did not experience their work to be tension-fraught. I found this to be related, at least in part, to their understanding of a synergistic relationship between the dimensions of mutual respect, which I discussed in Chapter Five: By continually respecting and fostering children's autonomy, Montessori teachers reasoned this would also ensure equality and equity among children.

This is not to say Montessori teachers need not continually manage the relationship between mutual respect by design and mutual respect in practice: Because the Montessori system designs for substantial autonomy for children, Montessori teachers continually worked to uphold equality and equity in the classroom, particularly for children who were young and newer to the Montessori method. In her interview, a leader at the DC Montessori school offered an example

from when she was a Primary teacher at the school, and had to withhold some autonomy in order to equitably support a young child with severe ADHD. In addition to describing how she managed system designs in practice, this school leader evidenced the groundwork that is laid in Primary classes (i.e., ages 3-6), which fosters the considerable autonomy I observed for Upper Elementary children:

With the child who had ADHD, I had to do a lot of - Montessori has a lot of you choose your own space and you choose your work, and he just couldn't do that. So he had his own table, I made this little poster board to go in front of him, so he didn't have visual distractions, too. And I put him in a more corner spot. So at first, he really didn't have a lot of freedom in the classroom, and we talked about why, that a lot of people need this. If I'm doing a work, if I really want to concentrate on it, I need a place that's quiet and to myself. So it was always in the context of 'this is a normal thing that some people need.'

She went on to explain how, as this child grew up within the school, he came to have the autonomy that is typical of, and designed for, children in Montessori classrooms.

Taken together, the findings in this and previous chapters suggest another reason Montessori teachers often do not experience their work to be tension-fraught: The designs of the Montessori system both respect and foster children's abilities, which then increases teachers' faith in those abilities. Put differently, in a fully functioning Montessori classroom environment, teachers come to perceive children as fellow stewards of mutual respect. Just as children are capable of teaching themselves, so too are they believed to be capable of helping teachers to uphold equality and equity in a classroom environment designed for their autonomy.

According to Montessori teachers, children can help ensure equity in the classroom because they naturally want to learn, to challenge themselves, and to prepare for their next steps.¹⁴⁵ Teachers across both contexts reported their trust in the fact that, if they enticed children with presentations, and did not impose a curriculum on children before they were ready or willing, the children would equitably prepare themselves because, as DC Montessori Ms. Laura

and others reported, “*Elementary students, by nature, are focused on the big picture, they want to know more, they want to understand the universe.*”

In the pilot study preceding this one, an Elementary teacher in a midwestern Montessori school illustrated how teachers and children work together to ensure children are equitably prepared.¹⁴⁶ Similar to many Montessori practitioners in this study, this teacher described how, the more time she (and children) spent in Montessori classrooms, implementing the Montessori method, the more faith she (and children) had in children’s abilities. Such faith minimized any tensions she experienced when implementing the designs of the Montessori system:

A child moved up from the Primary room and ... very quickly he realized that he could read...within a couple months of being in first grade, he exploded into reading. So all he wanted to do was read. So I would pull him into presentations, and he would be so polite. He would sit there, he would listen, and then I’d say, ‘and you can do the follow-up work.’ And he would say, ‘I’ll do it later, I’m going to go back and read.’ And so, I had this struggle where, do I force him to put his book away? And do these math things? I can see that he’s not practicing, so he’s not moving ahead.’ But I was like, I’m just going to bite my tongue, I’m going to keep inviting him to presentations, exposing him to things, but we’ll see what happens. So, he read and read and read and read.

Second grade he came back, and in the first couple of days he said [to me], ‘last year I did a lot of reading, and I realized that I don’t know all the math that my friends know, so what shall we do?’ And I said, ‘well let’s start with this.’ And so then he himself got himself on track...

...which goes to show why, one reason our program is a three year program- because had he left our school - and this is one thing I had to trust that his parents were going to bring him back - had he left our school after first grade, he would not have known how to do complex addition problems. But my faith was in the fact that children want to know, if there’s not imposition put on them, their natural instinct is to want to know as much about everything that they can know. And so I was banking on the fact that, at some point, he’s gonna want to know how to add without the materials. He’s going to want to know how to divide, he’s going to want to know how to do fractions like his buddies are doing, and so he came back as a second grader and, in fact, that is exactly what happened.

In the above account, the teacher described a brief moment of internal struggle, when she wondered whether she should withhold some designed-for autonomy for a child, in the name of

equitably preparing him in math. However, this teacher decided to have faith in the Montessori method and in the child's autonomy, and when she observed that the child eventually got himself back on track — that he took charge of equitably preparing himself — her faith only deepened.¹⁴⁷

School-Level Experiences

The above section, which builds off of previous chapters, illustrates that the designs of the Montessori system can increase teachers' faith in children. This faith, in turn, can diminish the tensions teachers experience as they navigate their system's designs in practice, because they believe children capable of collaborating with them to manage classrooms for mutual respect.

However, unlike many Montessori teachers, I found Montessori school leaders in both contexts did experience tensions when managing system designs for mutual respect in practice. As school leaders implemented the designs of the Montessori system, they continually encountered disconnects between these counter-cultural designs and the more normative forms of respect in the broader environment. This is because, even as Montessori operates as a closed system, largely buffering its teachers from outside practices and pressures, school leaders must necessarily engage with the environment surrounding their schools as they implement and protect the designs of the Montessori system.

I offer below an example of a school-level tension in DC.

Upholding Equity with DC Montessori Admissions

Interviews with leaders at the DC Montessori school revealed they experienced tensions around admissions. The school's admission policy, which supports the Montessori system's designs for autonomy, was in direct conflict with an opportunity in the broader environment, which would facilitate more equitable admissions.

DC Montessori teachers repeatedly discussed how their school leaders protected their ability to implement the Montessori method with fidelity. One way school leaders did this was through admissions. In her interview, the Director of Education at the DC Montessori school explained how the school aims to only admit children at the beginning of a three-year cycle (i.e., at approximately 3, 6, and 9 years old).¹⁴⁸ By limiting admissions in this way, school leaders protect the designs for autonomy from the Montessori system. If, for example, a 5 year-old was admitted to a Primary class (i.e., ages 3-5), they would not have had the previous two years of experience to learn how to function rather independently in their classroom. What is more, this child would compromise the delicate balance in a Montessori classroom, where older children function as leaders who help the teacher to teach and set the tone for the younger children, making the large class size characteristic of Montessori feasible.

In conversations with these leaders, they described the tensions they experienced as they adjusted their admissions process in a way that would bolster equity, but would compromise some of the autonomy the Montessori system designs for via multi-age classrooms. In recent years, the DC Montessori school had been working to attract and retain more diverse families. This proved to be complex, particularly in terms of striving for socioeconomic diversity, because the school is private and charges tuition.¹⁴⁹ A scholarship in the broader environment facilitated low-income children's access to the school, thus helping with leaders' goal of increased diversity and accessibility. The Director of Education explained how they managed this opportunity:

There's an Opportunity Scholarship Program, which gives free tuition to people who qualify, and they start at five years old. So, we do take those children occasionally, because we want those children to be with us. So, one thing we've started doing is, if there's a way to get a [three-year-old] sibling of an OSP child in for those first two years, we've been trying to figure out ways to do that, until that child can qualify for OSP.

DC Montessori leaders experienced tensions as they compromised some system designs for autonomy by way of admitting five-year-old children on scholarship, which would bolster more equitable admissions. However, they managed such tensions, and reconciled system designs to respect in the broader environment, by also enrolling three-year-old siblings until they could qualify for the same scholarship.

Though their situations were different, and though they managed in different ways, leaders in the two Montessori schools similarly experienced tensions when designs for autonomy from the Montessori system were at odds with respect in their broader environment.

Experiences Contingent on Context

In Chapter Five, I highlighted variation between the Montessori schools in terms of proportions; that is, I observed more balanced efforts at equality, autonomy, and equity in the Toronto Montessori school, and a more pronounced focus on autonomy at the DC Montessori school. When analyzing the experiences of Montessori teachers, I found another within-system difference: The focal teacher at the Toronto Montessori school, Ms. Emily, experienced more tensions in her daily work than her DC counterpart, Ms. Laura. I offer below an example of the ongoing tensions Ms. Emily experienced between autonomy, as designed, and upholding equity and equality for her students.

Infusing Equity and Equality into the Toronto Montessori Classroom

I observed Ms. Emily to delimit some of the Montessori system's designs for autonomy in the name of bolstering the other two dimensions of mutual respect in her classroom. For example, she gave children tests, and deadlines by which to complete their work. This was not in order to grade the children, but rather so they would be equitably prepared, and feel capable when they encountered these experiences upon leaving the school. Similar to children in the

Lower Elementary class, all children in Ms. Emily's class were equally expected to begin their day with a timed math sheet. Though she wished this was not the case, she reported the children's lack of fluency with math facts was inhibiting their ability to get to more complex, exciting math work. Finally, Ms. Emily gave her class communal writing prompts, to which everyone had to respond. She did this in part to build community, which was a schoolwide effort at the time of fieldwork. She said not only did such prompts help her equitably prepare students with strong writing skills, they also gave the children shared work to discuss.

In addition to her relatively balanced way of managing the three dimensions of mutual respect, Ms. Emily experienced more tensions in her daily practice than was reported by the other Montessori teachers.¹⁵⁰ From the below quote, in which Ms. Emily explains why she encourages her students to do work balanced across the subject areas, even as this runs counter to guidance from the Montessori system, one discerns comparatively less confidence that, through respecting children's autonomy, they will seek to equitably prepare themselves:

When the kids ask me, I'll say 'you should spend 1/3 of your day on math and 1/3 of your day in language and 1/3 in the cultural studies, or 1/3 of your week.' But maybe for some, they need to think about it in a day, or a morning, and for some, they need to think about it in the week. And for some, they're working on a project and they do that every day for three days. And then I'm like 'oh hey, I noticed you haven't worked in mathematics this week.' 'Oh no I haven't.' 'Ok, should you take out some math work?' And so it's a matter of saying I see you, and it's ok, but we do need to make sure that we're practicing those things, because it's all part of who we are as an intellect. And as a student, you deserve to know math just as well as you know language.

In my conversations with Ms. Emily, her desire to equitably prepare and challenge her students was evident, as was her aim to rebuild a sense of community that had been lost in the year preceding fieldwork. Ms. Emily experienced tensions as she reconciled these aims with some of the Montessori system's designs for children's autonomy.

Considering the Social Context of Montessori Classrooms

One way to understand the different experiences of Montessori teachers is in terms of social context: The designs of the Montessori system do more than change the understandings and practice of individual teachers, they help to foster a social context in Montessori classrooms. The more time children spend in such a context, the more capable they become at reifying and strengthening that context, which then deepens teachers' counter-cultural faith in the Montessori method, and in children's abilities.

However, the flip side of this is that Montessori school leaders may experience tensions, as evidenced in previous sections, given they are tasked with protecting all of the counter-cultural designs of the Montessori system to ensure such a social context is realized in classrooms. Further, when a school cannot fully realize the system's designs, a Montessori teacher may then experience more tensions, because the social context in her classroom is not continually reinforcing her faith in children's abilities to be stewards of mutual respect.

Montessori practitioners across both contexts suggested the importance of time spent in well-functioning Montessori classrooms, for children and teachers and parents alike. In Chapter Four, for example, Montessori practitioners discussed how time spent in a Montessori classroom with the appropriate number of children helped to socialize teachers (and children) into having faith in children's ability to be independent. In a previous section in this chapter, a pilot study teacher discussed how she needed to trust parents would not pull their child out of her class mid-cycle, so that he would have time to get himself on track with math. Finally, in a focus group with system leaders, an Elementary trainer discussed the need for children to grow up in Montessori classrooms, to be able to exercise the autonomy expected of them:

By fifth grade, for a child that hasn't had a Montessori experience, all of that natural independence and ability to handle freedom and responsibility has been squashed,

because that's the last thing you want in [a traditional school] environment. Even though that teacher[in the IB video] gave them some free time...they had a specific task and they weren't to do anything else. And if, children at that age, if they were to come to a Montessori environment, they couldn't function independently... by 5th grade that's almost too late, it's almost impossible, which I hate to say, because this makes it seem like you missed the boat if you haven't started young, but to a certain extent, earlier in a child's Elementary experience, you could come in without Montessori, but it's hard.

For children to be independent, and for teachers and parents to trust in their independence, it is necessary to spend time in a school that fully implements the designs of the Montessori system.

Because fieldwork was conducted in Upper Elementary classrooms, I was primarily exposed to people who had long since been socialized to the Montessori method of education, and of respecting children. In both schools, most families had selected into — and decided to remain at — the school since their children had been in Primary.¹⁵¹

Despite the fact that I was observing at a level where almost everyone had been socialized into the Montessori method, I did find differences between the schools in terms of their ability to fully implement the designs of the Montessori system. Two such differences pertained to class size and uninterrupted work cycles: The DC Montessori classroom was able to adhere to the relevant standards set by the Montessori system, whereas the class size was smaller in the Toronto Montessori classroom, and children's work cycles were more frequently interrupted by specials and specialist teachers. Montessori practitioners in both contexts reported the above differences as mattering for children's opportunities to be autonomous.

Using the frame of social context, one better understands how the level of implementation at Ms. Emily's school may relate to her experiencing more tensions than her DC counterpart. The Toronto Montessori school did not fully adhere to system designs, thus weakening the social context of its classrooms: Given the class size was small and their work cycles were more frequently interrupted, Toronto Montessori students had fewer opportunities to

be autonomous, and thus were less able to develop the capabilities that would reinforce Ms. Emily's faith in these children being able to manage classrooms for mutual respect.

Comparing the Practice Contexts Surrounding Montessori Classrooms

Even as Montessori practitioners remarked that both the DC and Toronto focal classrooms fit within the Montessori framework, Ms. Emily experienced more tensions as she managed system designs for autonomy in practice. As discussed above, one way to interpret the different experiences of Ms. Emily and her DC counterpart is in terms of social context.

A second way to understand these differences is by comparing the practice contexts surrounding these two focal classrooms, to determine whether and how these practice contexts may support the designs of the Montessori system, and thus the social context such designs aim to foster in classrooms. I now compare the two cases along each part of a teacher's practice context, as outlined in this study's analytic framework.

Teacher. Participants across both contexts suggested teacher personalities as relevant to how much autonomy children are afforded within a Montessori classroom. As discussed in Chapter Four, Montessori teachers described their training as requiring a leap of faith, or personal transformation. Teachers' personalities may play a role in how much they embrace autonomy in the expanded way it is designed for by the Montessori system, and how much they retain more normative ideas and practices around respect.

Throughout my time in Ms. Emily's classroom at the Toronto Montessori school, a recurring theme I noticed in terms of how she respected students was by challenging them, and helping them to understand and reach their potential. One of Ms. Emily's 4th year students, Madeline, corroborated this when comparing the Montessori videos in her focus group, "*The [DC Montessori] teacher teaches differently. She lets them do more things than what we do,*

'cause she lets them do arts and crafts during the day, when we have to do something challenging first." Emily's desire to challenge her students contributed to her experiencing tensions between autonomy, as designed for by the Montessori system, and ensuring equity and equality among children. In her member check, when discussing why she guides children toward doing balanced work across the subject areas, Ms. Emily explained:

*Some Montessorians would argue you never would put parameters on [children spending all day working on one subject] ...they're Puritans, and there's a huge spectrum of Montessori teachers, so there are some people that are like, 'I would never ever tell my student they had to work on math, I would never do that.'*¹⁵² *I fundamentally disagree with that, and that's been part of my journey as a teacher the whole time.*

Given these personal priorities and values, Ms. Emily experienced tensions as she infused more equity and equality into an environment designed to advance autonomy for children.

In my time spent with DC Montessori Ms. Laura, a recurring theme I noticed for how she respected her students was through her own humility, paired with a deep trust in children's capabilities. I was not the only one to observe Ms. Laura's humility and faith in her students; below are representative comments from her colleagues and students in their focus groups:

Primary teacher: I loved watching Laura teach. It's not like I got to spend a ton of time in here with her, I didn't, but I just loved it because she talked to her students as equals.

6th year student: Ms. Laura was the definition, like you could get the dictionary, write down, 'concept of Montessori,' and put Ms. Laura's name right there. 'cause she would always leave it up to the kids to figure out.

In emphasizing autonomy in her classroom, Ms. Laura had faith that she and the children would work together to uphold the other dimensions of mutual respect, too.

In addition to differences in teacher personality, at the time of fieldwork, Ms. Emily's class was, as she framed it, in a year of repair. There were many times she had to prioritize the needs of the community over its individuals because interpersonal trust and relations had eroded the year prior. Conversations with Montessori leaders revealed another complexity stemming

from system guidance around multi-age classrooms; there is institutional memory from one year to the next. Toronto Montessori Emily and DC IB Johnson Lǎoshī were similar in that, the year prior to fieldwork, both had difficult classes containing many students with learning and/or behavioral challenges. However, because Ms. Emily's students remained with her for three years, she had to work to rebuild what had been lost the year prior, while Johnson Lǎoshī got a fresh start. In this way, Montessori teachers have to do more managing of mutual respect across time than their IB counterparts; Ms. Emily had to rebuild autonomy, and trust, in her class.

School. When comparing the two Montessori schools, and considering their abilities to fully implement designs for autonomy from the Montessori system, I observed the importance of time, and timing. While both schools boasted long histories, I conducted fieldwork during a particularly stable period for the DC Montessori school, whereas I conducted fieldwork during a more transitional period for the Toronto Montessori school. In a stable period, administrators can perhaps be more assertive when setting boundaries to protect system designs, which often run counter to norms in the broader environment. In a transitional period, however, a school leader may feel more vulnerable, and perhaps invite into their school more normative forms of respect, which are at odds with system designs for autonomy.

As it experienced big transitions, I found the Toronto Montessori school to be comparatively susceptible to pressures from the broader environment, and the respect therein. In the years prior to fieldwork, there had been both a change in administration as well as changes in enrollment when some families left the small school. Thus, even as school leaders reported the Toronto Montessori school to be one of the more authentic Montessori options in the area, I conducted fieldwork when there were heightened concerns around family recruitment and retention. Additionally, similar to Ms. Emily's classroom, the entire school was working on

re/building community, both within and across classrooms. Any one of these factors – new administrators needing to prove themselves, the small school needing to retain families, and a community in need of repair – could potentially compromise system designs for autonomy.

Many DC Montessori practitioners discussed both the stability of the school, and the ways in which the school and its leaders set boundaries to protect teachers’ abilities to implement, as Ms. Laura termed it, “*pure Montessori*.” A school leader explained the school (and she) had been around long enough where she sees how children have fared upon leaving the school, and thus trusts that the Montessori method works. DC Montessori teachers discussed the wait lists to get into their classrooms, and the generational buy-in, given some of the current parents had attended the school as children. For these reasons and more, the DC Montessori school was, at least for the time being, relatively impervious to pressures from the broader environment, which may provide context for the finding that the school’s teachers did not experience tensions between mutual respect by design and mutual respect in practice.

Educational System. When system guidance is tightly coordinated, any leniency when adhering to such guidance may compromise such ambitious designs as changing understandings around children’s ability to be autonomous. Further, when a key support to implementing a system’s instructional designs is teacher training, it helps to have easy access to that training.

The system hub to which the Toronto Montessori school was connected was relatively more lenient than the hub in DC. The Toronto Montessori school was accredited by the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators (CCMA), as opposed to being authorized by Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). While CCMA encourages many of the same guidelines for Montessori classrooms as does AMI, one key difference is CCMA does not specify class size.¹⁵³ Thus, even as the Toronto Montessori school was in accordance with many AMI standards, the

Upper Elementary class was little more than half the size of the DC Montessori class. As discussed in Chapter Four, data from both Montessori schools suggested class size to be consequential for teachers respecting, and having faith in, children's autonomy.

Additionally, there was no nearby AMI training center for Montessori Elementary teachers in Toronto. While Ms. Emily reported her training to be largely similar to AMI training, and while her Head of School reported the training center to be a reputable one, there were of course differences, which may have had implications for Ms. Emily's experiences as she managed system designs for autonomy in practice.¹⁵⁴

The DC Montessori school had easy access and a close connection to a nearby AMI Montessori system hub. AMI Montessori training was available for both Primary and Elementary prospective teachers. Additionally, the DC Montessori school was AMI Recognized, welcomed AMI teacher trainees into their classrooms each year (hiring them as needed), and scheduled visits with AMI consultants at the appropriate intervals. As such, the school followed all AMI standards for Montessori classrooms, which may have strengthened system designs for autonomy, as well as system designs to transform understandings around children's abilities.

Broader Social and Political Environment. Regulations in the broader environment have potential to constrain an alternative educational system, and the schools therein, as these schools work to implement designs of the system.

In Toronto, practitioners reported that recent government regulations constrained their implementation of the Montessori system's designs for autonomy. Though these regulations only applied to Primary classrooms, they ran counter to Montessori standards regarding large class sizes and limited adults. Because of these regulations, the Toronto Montessori school had to

adhere to small adult-to-child ratios, and could at no point leave the Primary children unattended, which hindered teachers' opportunities to foster children's independence from an early age.

It is worth noting that, in conversations with a Head of School for a nearby AMI Montessori school, he reported many Montessori schools in the area were succumbing to parental pressures around class size and specialists, irrespective of government regulations. Whether it was due to increased government regulations or something else, practitioners in the Toronto Montessori school reported feeling pressure when working to implement system designs for autonomy via large class sizes.

In DC, on the other hand, school leaders reported government exemptions both helped and incentivized them to adhere to AMI Montessori standards, and the designs for autonomy therein. In a follow-up conversation with the DC Montessori Head of School, who had recently transitioned to the leadership team for the Montessori Public Policy Initiative, she evidenced ways the surrounding environment supported Montessori schools. If a school was AMI authorized in DC, they were exempt from normal regulations around class size and adult-to-child ratios. Thus, Montessori schools in the area were not only permitted to implement system standards with fidelity, they were also incentivized to be authorized by the Montessori system. This was reported to be one of the many supports for the DC Montessori school, all of which perhaps contributed to Ms. Laura's implementation of designs from the Montessori system, and her assuredness that autonomy worked in synergy with equity and equality in the classroom.

Summary

When the designs of the Montessori system can be fully implemented, Montessori teachers are less likely to experience tensions when reconciling mutual respect by design to mutual respect in practice. This is because the Montessori system designs for a social context in

classrooms, in which children strengthen and deepen teachers' faith in them, and in their capabilities. These children have been socialized, organized, and instructed in ways that make them more autonomous, and thus more able — among other things — to ensure equality and equity in the classroom. In the social context of Montessori classrooms, then, children reify those counter-cultural understandings teachers were initiated to during their training around according children considerable autonomy.

In this way, the designs of the Montessori system help to mitigate tensions for teachers even as they provoke tensions for school leaders, who must protect these designs and social contexts that run counter to normative practices in the environment. What is more, when leaders cannot fully adhere to system designs, perhaps due to features in the surrounding practice context, this can weaken the social context of Montessori classrooms and increase the tensions experienced by teachers as they navigate system designs for autonomy in practice.

International Baccalaureate

Unlike many Montessori teachers, IB teachers regularly experienced tensions when managing designs for mutual respect in practice. And, where I found higher levels of implementation to correspond with fewer tensions experienced for Montessori teachers, as evidenced by the DC IB data, I observed higher levels of implementation to correspond with *more* tensions experienced by IB practitioners.

To understand these findings, which are the inverse of what I found in the Montessori schools, it is again helpful to consider social context: Unlike the Montessori system, which designs a social context in classrooms that functions best when those classrooms are protected from their environment, IB classrooms are, by design, continually informed by the broader environment. Instead of an insulated social context, classrooms in high-implementing IB schools

are, in many ways, designed to mirror broader society. And so, IB teachers and leaders alike may experience ongoing tensions, given they are continually reconciling the respect found in their environment with the designs of the IB system.

In the below sections, I first discuss how IB teachers frequently experience tensions as they manage the relationship between mutual respect by design and mutual respect in their classrooms. Then, as evidenced by the DC IB data, I discuss how both IB teachers and leaders can experience more tensions when system designs are fully realized.

Classroom-Level Experiences

IB teachers frequently experienced tensions when navigating designs for mutual respect in practice. One reason for this could be that IB teachers perceived a more competitive relationship between the three dimensions of mutual respect than did their Montessori counterparts, as discussed in Chapter Five. Even as IB teachers regularly offered students opportunities to be autonomous, which is in keeping with the designs of the IB system, they worried that too much autonomy for students would compromise their efforts to also uphold equality and equity in the classroom.

Findings in this and previous chapters suggest yet another reason IB teachers experience their work as tension-fraught: IB operates as a relatively open system, and so there can often be disconnects between mutual respect as designed by the system, and respect in the environment. I offer below a brief example of such a disconnect.

As IB teachers in DC and Toronto discussed the resources they use for teaching and learning, they revealed the ongoing tensions they experience as they reconcile disconnects between designs for mutual respect from the IB system, and respect in a resource gleaned from the environment. While IB school leaders can also encounter such disconnects, teachers are

positioned to continually manage these disconnects — and perhaps experience tensions when doing so — throughout their daily work.

The IB system encourages teachers to engage with their environment when determining what and how to teach. The *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum — which both IB schools adopted, albeit at different times — is an example of a resource that was, at least in part, disconnected to the designs for mutual respect in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) instructional framework. As such, IB teachers reported experiencing tensions when implementing it.

In both IB schools, teachers relied on curricula, professional development, and myriad other resources from their environments. During a teacher focus group at the DC IB school, some of the teachers, who were also trained IB workshop leaders, discussed guidance from the IB system, which encourages pulling resources from the environment. One of the DC IB focal teachers, Johnson Lǎoshī, explained:

Oftentimes with IB, it's emphasized that you should not, even if math is a standalone, as it often is, it should not necessarily be one curriculum. The idea is that you're pulling from several different curriculums and best practices and using them with your students.

This was one of the reasons the DC IB school abandoned the *Everyday Math* curriculum, which they had adopted because it was commonly used in IB schools at the time. At the time of fieldwork, DC IB teachers had shifted to pulling from varied math curricula, *Everyday Math* included, to create their math lessons.

The Toronto IB school used *Everyday Math* at the time of fieldwork, and Toronto IB teachers discussed how this curriculum conflicted with IB's instructional approach. In their focus group, two Toronto IB teachers discussed the tensions they experienced between *Everyday Math*

and the integrative and inquiry-based designs for instruction put forth by the IB system. The ESL and physical education teacher, who formerly taught 4th grade at the school, stated:

Our IB math program needs work, and needs help. We do the Everyday Math program, it's not that inquiry-based, we could make it more inquiry-based, more problem solving, more real life. I think that's one area, for me personally, and I've heard other teachers say the same thing, that in a perfect IB school, math would be so intertwined into all of the units, but because we do Everyday Math, it's very separate. It's very rare that it naturally fits [into our units of inquiry].

When discussing why the school persists with the math curriculum, even though it conflicts with teachers' implementation of IB, these teachers explained parents liked the program, it was easy for teachers to implement, and it addressed some of their concerns related to equal exposure for students. As one 2nd grade teacher put it, *"there is consistency, too. You take [Everyday Math] out and somebody could do a fantastic job integrating math into the [IB] program, somebody else doesn't, and then are you getting enough math?"* For these reasons, the school persisted with a resource from the environment that created ongoing tensions for teachers.

Whether a school was fully adhering to guidance from the IB system by pulling from varied curricula, or whether it was relying on just one curriculum, all IB teachers were reconciling the respect within these resources to mutual respect as designed by the IB system. In this and other ways, I found these IB teachers to experience daily tensions in their work.

Experiences Contingent on Context

In Chapter Five, I highlighted variation between the IB schools in terms of proportions; I observed more balanced efforts at equality, autonomy, and equity in the DC IB school, and a more pronounced focus on equality at the Toronto IB school. When analyzing the experiences of IB teachers, I found another within-system difference: Johnson Lăoshī and Ann Lăoshī at the DC IB school experienced more tensions than their Toronto IB counterpart, Ms. Forbes, as they implemented the IB system's designs for mutual respect.

Previous chapters have illustrated some of the tensions DC IB teachers experienced in their daily work. I offer below an example of the ongoing tensions experienced at the school level, as well, as the DC IB school maintained its efforts to ensure equity for students while also continually working to offer students increased autonomy over their learning. As they respected students in increasingly robust and varied ways, simultaneously adhering to priorities in the IB system and from their broader environment, DC IB teachers and leaders encountered ongoing tensions in their daily practice. The more one dimension of mutual respect was maximized, the more it ran up against another, or against mutual respect in another aspect of classroom life.

Infusing Autonomy into Equitable Supports at the DC IB School

I found equity to be apparent in everything at the DC IB school. First, the school organized an English/Mandarin dual-immersion program for its diverse students, which DC IB practitioners frequently described as being an equity move, because knowing two languages opens more doors in today’s globalized society. When describing the appeal of the school’s English/Mandarin program, the Head of School alluded to such equitable preparation in stating, *“brown boys speaking Chinese, you can write your ticket.”*

In addition to the school’s equity-minded approach to language learning, there were many other ways DC IB practitioners worked to equitably support, represent, and include their diverse students, all while preparing them for their next steps.

Across the classrooms, DC IB students who needed it received daily push-in supports. Teachers — Mandarin teachers especially — often ate lunch with students to support their progress and ease with the language. I observed the two focal teachers to differentiate instruction and resources for their students across all content areas, offering extra support and enrichment where appropriate. This differentiation was reported to be a schoolwide practice. Further, the DC

IB school was unique among the cases in that teachers included many examples of women, people of color, and children in their lessons. In doing so, they hoped to make their diverse students feel represented, and like they could connect to what they were learning, whether it was a unit on chemistry or on modern-day explorers. Finally, staff at the DC IB school was the most diverse of the cases; the school recruited role models with similar backgrounds as their students. In these ways and others, respect-as-equity was a clear priority at the DC IB school.

Alongside the school's efforts to ensure equity for students, I also observed and heard about schoolwide efforts to accord DC IB students increased autonomy. For example, during her member check, Johnson Lǎoshī reported a few changes since the time of fieldwork. The IB system had released new expectations for PYP, which involved folding in more opportunities for student agency. In light of this, Johnson Lǎoshī reported that the DC IB school was pushing itself to find even more ways for students to exercise their independence. She offered an example of how the school had changed its after-school clubs (e.g., math club) so students could now elect into these equitable supports:

To go along with the idea of giving kids more choice... we also offer a morning club, which we call ATL. So it's like IB's Approaches to Learning, and so originally it was going to be for kids that we felt needed extra executive functioning help. And [then] we realized that even though Johnny might need executive functioning help, if Johnny doesn't want to be there getting that help, it's not going to be useful, so we also give it to the students as a choice... it was interesting, too, because some parents contacted us and were like 'why isn't my child getting organization help?' and [we explained] 'it's because your child didn't choose it.' ... It's helping the parents to see that we want the kids to learn to be their own advocates.

Despite parent resistance, the school engaged with this tension as they implemented guidance from the IB system, according increased autonomy for students over their equitable supports.

Considering the Social Context of IB Classrooms

When discussing how high-level implementation corresponded to fewer tensions experienced by Montessori teachers, I offered social context as a lens through which to interpret the finding. Thinking in terms of social context may also provide additional clarity around the inverse relationship found in my analysis of the IB data; that is, how high levels of implementation corresponded to *more* tensions experienced by IB teachers and leaders.

Like Montessori classrooms, there are social contexts within IB classrooms. Unlike the Montessori system, however, the IB system does not design for a social context that is insulated and markedly different from the broader environment. As previous chapters have illustrated, a trademark of a high-implementing IB classroom is it is one in which teachers and students make continual and authentic links to the broader society surrounding schools.

And so, rather than perceiving the social context of IB classrooms to be something like a bubble, as one might for Montessori, it may be helpful to perceive the social context of IB classrooms to be more like a sieve. When thinking of IB social contexts in this way, one better understands how the high level of implementation at the DC IB school may relate to DC IB practitioners experiencing more tensions than their Toronto counterparts. In continually adhering to the multifaceted guidance of the IB system, which itself involves authentically connecting students to an ever-changing society, DC IB practitioners frequently encountered disconnects between design and practice, and experienced more tensions as they managed those disconnects.

Comparing the Practice Contexts Surrounding IB Classrooms

As discussed in the above section, one way to interpret the different experiences of the IB teachers in DC and Toronto is in terms of social context.¹⁵⁵ A second way to understand these

differences is by comparing the practice contexts surrounding the focal IB classrooms, to determine whether and how these practice contexts may support the designs of the IB system.

Before further discussing the DC IB practice context — how I observed it to support a high level of implementation of IB’s designs — it is important to mention data contradicting this assertion. Upon viewing the DC IB video, a teacher at the Toronto IB school wondered whether the school’s dual-language model constrained the free-flowing time needed to implement system designs for inquiry. The dual-immersion model did constrain time for inquiry, as reported by DC IB teachers themselves. However, based on my observations, as well as DC IB practitioners’ comparisons of their video and the Toronto IB video, I found the DC IB practice context to be relatively more conducive to implementing designs for mutual respect from the IB system.

I now present key differences between the practice contexts in DC and Toronto, which may help explain why DC IB practitioners experienced more tensions, at both classroom and school levels, when managing for mutual respect.

Teacher. Participants reported teacher training and years of exposure to IB – as compared to more traditional teaching – as having implications for implementation of system designs. More training may facilitate deeper understanding of the IB system’s approach to instruction, and more time spent as an IB teacher may increase one’s comfort with implementing said approach. Conversely, with more time spent as a traditional teacher, one perhaps experiences more difficulty in shedding those norms and practices from the broader environment that may run counter to the IB system’s designs for mutual respect.

In the DC IB school, both focal teachers had comparatively more IB or IB-aligned training than their Toronto counterpart. During their interviews, both 4th grade Ann Lăoshī and 5th grade Johnson Lăoshī discussed the graduate programs they attended. Ann Lăoshī attended a

program she reported to be very aligned to IB's concept- and inquiry-based approach to instruction, while Johnson Lǎoshī attended an MA program that had an explicit IB focus as part of the degree. Additionally, Johnson Lǎoshī was a trained IB workshop leader. Thus, both teachers had relatively more exposure to IB's approach to teaching, learning, and respecting.

The Toronto IB focal teacher, Ms. Forbes, had relatively less IB training. Additionally, she had several more years of teaching experience prior to receiving IB training. Though the DC IB teachers spent a couple of years teaching before they were IB trained, the majority of their teaching experience was as IB teachers situated in IB schools. For Ms. Forbes, on the other hand, it was a more even split between her years of experience as a non-IB and then IB teacher.

School. When comparing the two IB schools, and considering their abilities to fully implement the designs of the IB system, I observed the importance of whether a school is founded within a system, or transitions over to it. As with individual teachers, the longer a school has operated in a non-IB way, the more difficult it may be to shed normative practices and understandings, which may run counter to the IB system's designs for mutual respect.

In a focus group, Johnson Lǎoshī described how DC IB was founded as a blank slate:

DC IB was opened with the intention of being a very innovative IB school. I think that has always been part of [the school's] mission, is to be something different, and to be something new, and to challenge the idea of school in a lot of different ways.

Even as DC IB is the only public school in this study, and thus encounters relatively more regulations and caters to more diverse families, it prides itself on being a high-fidelity IB school, as summarized by Johnson Lǎoshī during her member check:

We're always pushing the boundaries of what is thought to be school. So, in the beginning, it was figuring out how to be dual-immersion in Mandarin, and then I think we've shifted more into really figuring out how to be an IB school, and to be really transdisciplinary as well as inquiry-based. So that's part of the IB philosophy, but I feel like [DC IB] is always trying to do it with such fidelity that you don't always see at a lot of IB schools. They're doing some things in the inquiry-based way, and they're trying to

be transdisciplinary, but especially in the US, where we have so many standards and things that we have to do for public schools, sometimes that gets diluted. But [DC IB] has always been trying to figure out, 'ok, we have these expectations, but we don't want to take away from this IB mission, so how can we make them both work?'

Additionally, in my discussions with DC IB teachers, they repeatedly stated their PYP coordinator had deep expertise with IB and inquiry-based teaching and learning, and was thus very supportive in their journey toward teaching in ways consistent with system designs.

The Toronto IB school, on the other hand, is the only school in this study that was not founded as part of its respective system. The school boasts a 40-year history, but only in the past decade has it offered the PYP to its students; its motto is “*Where Tradition and Vision Meet.*” Further, though the school is pre-K to grade 12, it does not offer IB’s programs for middle and high school students. IB is but one of its myriad offerings to families, and a relatively recent one.

Educational System. Practitioners across both contexts discussed how being connected to the system hub and/or a surrounding network of IB schools was conducive to implementing the designs of the IB system. They reported how these connections provided them with ongoing opportunities and incentives to deepen their practice, and thus the mutual respect therein.

I found the DC IB school to be well-connected to the system hub and network. Within the school, there was much IB expertise.¹⁵⁶ As previously mentioned, at the time of fieldwork, five teachers and the PYP coordinator were trained as IB workshop leaders. Additionally, the school most DC IB students feed into is IB authorized, incentivizing DC IB teachers to prepare students for next steps as outlined by the IB system. Finally, both leaders and teachers described how DC IB teachers have ample opportunity for cross-fertilization, which helps to deepen their practice. In a teacher focus group, a 5th grade teacher, who is also an IB workshop leader, explained:

I think one of the biggest things that I noticed in these [IB site] visits is when schools have not been able to send a whole lot of people out to do workshops, but also to visit other IB schools. When they're not, on a regular basis, interacting with other IB

educators in whatever way... that makes a huge difference because [teachers] do get stuck. So they go into something like an [IB] evaluation visit, and they even come out of it sometimes thinking 'oh it's all great!' But there's been no cross-fertilization of ideas.

Teachers at the DC IB school reported they had many occasions to reflect on and deepen their practice, in light of their ties to the IB system and its broader network.

Compared to the DC IB school, there was less frequent and critical feedback from the IB system around the Toronto IB school's implementation of system designs. Toronto IB practitioners reported the IB system as supporting their practice, and they appreciated their network of surrounding IB schools. However, compared to the DC IB school, the system was less present. For example, Ms. Forbes reported that, for one of IB's evaluation visits to the school, they came one year later than anticipated due to an insufficient number of evaluators. Additionally, once the visit did occur, Ms. Forbes and a school leader discussed how the Toronto IB teachers critiqued themselves more severely than did the evaluators from the IB system.

Broader Social and Political Environment. When considering whether schools are incentivized to set themselves apart by implementing alternative educational approaches with fidelity, it helps to consider values in the environment. If the general public values alternative approaches to education, a school may work harder to distinguish itself in this way, and to set itself apart from normative educational practices. The reverse may also be true.

The data suggest values in the broader environment incentivized the DC IB school to set itself apart, at least in part, with high-fidelity implementation of the PYP. In Chapter Three, I observed the DC context to value school choice and educational specialization more than the Toronto context. When the DC IB school was founded, there were not many neighboring PYP schools, and it was the only school doing English/Chinese dual-immersion in the area. Thus, DC IB practitioners reported the school to be filling a niche. Since its founding, the school has

garnered many accolades, making it ever more popular in the area, where parents can choose from many public, private, and public charter school options.

The Toronto IB school leaders reported that they felt the need to do all that public schools were doing, and then some. The Toronto IB school is situated in a context where the government has been working for the past few years to enhance the public's trust in public education. What is more, in visits to neighboring IB schools, I learned of a travel ban restricting Ontario teachers from receiving professional development if it necessitated air travel or hotel expenses, which is often the case for IB training. Any of these factors may contribute to my observation that the environment surrounding the Toronto IB school was more supportive of normative ways of teaching and respecting children than it was of specialized designs like what can be found in IB.

Summary

When the designs of the IB system can be fully implemented, IB teachers are more likely to experience tensions when reconciling mutual respect by design to mutual respect in practice. This is because the IB system designs for classrooms to, in many ways, mirror society, so as to offer students experiences that will prepare them to someday thrive in and improve upon that society. And so, as they worked to implement the system's multifaceted designs in accordance with the myriad priorities present in their own culture and context, IB practitioners — particularly those in DC — frequently experienced tensions.

Discussion

Even as findings in the last chapter suggest it is possible for system designs to shape mutual respect in practice, I found variation within either system, which prompted a closer examination of the remaining parts of a teacher's practice context (i.e., teacher, school, environment) as it is depicted in Figure 2.2. This variation in practice also motivated the

following research question: *How do teachers and leaders experience the relationship between mutual respect by design and mutual respect in practice?*

When analyzing experiences within and across two systems, I found the experiences of practitioners to vary with the quality of implementation at their school. However, where higher levels of implementation corresponded to fewer tensions experienced by Montessori teachers, higher levels of implementation corresponded to more tension-fraught experiences for IB teachers. I did not find this same inverse relationship for school leaders.

These findings help elaborate this study's analytic framework, thereby supporting a finer-grained analysis of the ways in which systems might interact with mutual respect in classrooms. What is more, these findings underscore a consideration that has proved to be important across the three findings chapters: the relationship between an educational system and its environment.

For both the Montessori and IB systems, I found the practice contexts in DC to be more conducive to the implementation of either system's designs, which then had implications for the experiences of teachers and leaders. And so, even as this study has focused on differences between systems, there were differences between the practice contexts in DC and Toronto that merit further examination. At the teacher level, I found a teacher's priorities, training, and time spent teaching within *versus* outside of a system to be of import to her ability to fully implement system designs. At the school level, the school's stability, and its time spent as a school within *versus* outside of a system had implications for implementation. Finally, in terms of the social and political environment, practitioners reported government regulations and exemptions, as well as broader societal values, to matter for the implementation of a system's designs for mutual respect. These considerations are just a beginning, to be expanded upon as I examine interactions between systems and mutual respect in classrooms across diverse practice contexts.

The above considerations provide a structure for better understanding practice contexts, and why they may or may not be supportive of a system's designs for mutual respect. However, there was another finding in this chapter, which directs our attention back to differences between the Montessori and IB systems. As mentioned above, I found differences between the systems in terms of the implications for practitioners' experiences when they were able to fully implement a system's designs for mutual respect: higher levels of implementation corresponded to fewer tensions experienced by Montessori teachers, and to more tensions experienced by IB teachers.

One way to understand these differences between Montessori and IB is to consider the extent to which either system designs for a social context within classrooms. In looking across the findings chapters, one is reminded that the Montessori system has coordinated and focused designs for mutual respect, which extend across three aspects of classroom life (i.e., instruction, organization, social relations). Such designs help foster a social context in which children continually reinforce a teacher's faith in the Montessori method, and in children's capabilities, thus minimizing any tensions teachers may experience in their work. However, these designs and this social context are counter-cultural, and require the ongoing protection of school leaders, as it takes time for children, parents, and teachers to be socialized to this approach. Such work can be tension-fraught for Montessori school leaders, and – if the social context of Montessori classrooms cannot be fully realized – such tensions can then trickle into Montessori classrooms, to be experienced by teachers.

In looking across these same findings chapters, one discerns an entirely different situation for IB practitioners. The designs of the IB system are multifaceted in focus, and permit teachers relatively more discretion in their practice, especially when managing mutual respect outside of instruction. Rather than fostering a social context in IB classrooms that is distinct and protected

from society, the IB system designs for classrooms to connect to, and in many ways mirror, society. By opening classrooms up in this way, the work of IB practitioners becomes increasingly tension-fraught, as they must continually reconcile multifaceted priorities within and beyond IB system designs when aiming to accord students mutual respect.

Thus, the preceding is, yet again, a story of differences; in practice contexts as well as in social contexts. When considering these differences alongside those found in previous chapters, there is an overarching consideration, a relationship, which proves time and again to be important for understanding and comparing mutual respect across different systems. This relationship is between a system and its broader environment; whether the environment is considered and engaged with as a relative ally, or a relative adversary, in a system's efforts to accord students increased equality, autonomy, and equity in classrooms.

In the next chapter, I consider in more detail the relationship between a system and its environment, and the implications of such a relationship for the mutual respect found in system designs, in the practical logics of teachers, and in the social contexts of classrooms. At this point, we are ready to reflect upon the following question: From four schools, situated across two systems and two contexts, what can be learned about the interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms?

¹⁴³ To respond to this question, I relied on interview data and conversations with practitioners throughout fieldwork. Member check conversations with focal teachers also proved to be useful in understanding their experiences as they navigated designs from the Montessori or IB system in practice.

¹⁴⁴ I find it necessary to clarify that I do not consider a practitioner to be better or worse by virtue of their experiencing tensions when managing designs for mutual respect in practice. Instead of labelling this work of managing mutual respect as good or bad, I wish to emphasize this work, and the experience of it, as complex. There is no simple or static solution when aiming to uphold all dimensions of mutual respect - across learners, time, and different aspects of classroom life - even as these dimensions can at times conflict with one another. Thus, in this chapter, I considered how designs of the Montessori and IB systems may contribute to problems of mutually

respectful practice, and how they are experienced. I also considered whether and how practice contexts enhance or detract from apparent system effects.

¹⁴⁵ We began to see this faith in Chapter Four, when DC Montessori teacher Ms. Laura made learning benchmarks available to her students, and trusted they would become interested in them as the time drew near for them to leave the classroom.

¹⁴⁶ The Elementary class in the pilot Montessori school was comprised of children ages 6 through 12. Montessori standards require Elementary classes to be composed of *either* children ages 6-9 (Lower Elementary) and 9-12 (Upper Elementary) *or* children ages 6-12 (Elementary).

¹⁴⁷ Montessori teachers also reported faith in children's abilities to ensure everyone in the class is treated as social equals. For example, in a member check conversation with Ms. Laura, I shared the rationale IB teachers gave for sometimes determining student groups: If students are always permitted to autonomously select their own groups, this could compromise equality if students self-segregate, and thus do not come to appreciate differences in others. Instead of sharing this view, Ms. Laura discussed how children could help to avoid such a problem without Laura needing to circumscribe their autonomy. When she noticed any sort of cliques forming in her class, Ms. Laura involved the children in a conversation to determine what was going on. Her reasoning for this was children have many intersecting identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, ability, sexual orientation, gender), so her controlling student groups to avoid segregation by any one of those identities was less helpful than working *with* children to ensure everyone was treated and included equally.

¹⁴⁸ The school also preferred to admit younger versus older children, or older children who had previous Montessori experience.

¹⁴⁹ As part of its efforts to be accessible, the DC Montessori school offered affordable tuition and financial aid: Roughly 1/3 of the school's families received financial aid, and tuition was less than 1/3 of the tuition of the nearest private Montessori school. This meant relatively low salaries for staff and teachers.

¹⁵⁰ I am not only referring to DC Montessori Ms. Laura, but also data from the Montessori teacher in the pilot study, and from the teacher focus groups in both DC and Toronto.

¹⁵¹ I did observe, however, that the Toronto Montessori school was relatively more willing to admit children in the older grades (though less willing than a traditional school, to be sure). This is perhaps one of the reasons contributing to the observed differences between the DC and Toronto Montessori schools, which I discuss further in future sections.

¹⁵² It is my understanding that, while "Puritan" Montessorians would permit children to work exclusively on a given subject matter, they would still invite that child to presentations across the subject areas. So, children are getting equal exposure to subject areas in their presentations, even if they are not balanced in terms of the follow-up work they choose. In Chapter Four, a DC Montessori school leader stated, "*if you walked into nearly any AMI Montessori school, it would look a lot like us.*" While this somewhat contradicts Ms. Emily's statement regarding the spectrum of Montessori teachers, note the specification of AMI Montessori, which I will discuss further shortly.

¹⁵³ See, for example: <https://www.ccma.ca/administrators/#who-is-eligible-for-accreditation>

¹⁵⁴ One key difference, as cited by Ms. Emily, was where AMI trainees are to write up every lesson themselves when compiling their albums, Ms. Emily was given an outline by her trainer, and it was then up to her to flesh out that outline for every lesson she would teach.

¹⁵⁵ Social context is also a lens through which to interpret differences between the Montessori and IB systems. I discuss differences between the two systems in the chapter discussion.

¹⁵⁶ As I stated in Chapter Two, there is, of course, overlap between the different parts of a teacher's practice context. One could argue in-school IB expertise to be a school-level practice context feature, versus system-level. I encourage such interdependent thinking and categorizing.

CHAPTER 7: Discussion

Revisiting the Framework: Interactions Between Educational Systems and Mutual Respect in Classrooms

This study was motivated by the following question: How might educational systems support mutual respect by locating it in, and making it central to, their core ideas for instruction and schooling? With this question came the observation that, though systems have potential to embed mutual respect into their designs for teaching and learning — thereby scaling equality, autonomy, and equity for students across classrooms and schools — there is little that is presently known about this work. Further, there is little that is presently known about the ways in which this pursuit of mutual respect may vary across different systems, and across different contexts.

And so, I set out to build theory around the interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. From the literature and early empirical data, I developed an analytic framework, which is represented in Figure 2.2. I posed research questions that stemmed from this framework. I collected and analyzed data from four schools situated across two systems and two national contexts. And, as I iterated between the cases and the analytic framework to answer the research questions, I then further elaborated the framework, thus supporting a finer-grained analysis of interactions between systems, mutual respect in practice, and the remaining parts of a teacher's practice context (i.e., teacher, school, environment). From all of this, what did I find?

In addition to the findings presented over the past few chapters, I found that, in its elaborated form, this study's analytic framework permits better understanding of the pursuit of mutual respect in any one educational system, and it facilitates more nuanced comparisons of such pursuits between systems. With this elaborated framework, I offer a tool for seeing, and a language for describing, the work of educational systems in intervening on power asymmetries between teachers and students, and among diverse groups of students.

This chapter, then, is comprised of four parts. I first summarize the elaborated analytic framework and review its use for understanding, and comparing, mutual respect in the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Montessori systems. I then offer some general reflections regarding the interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms along with perhaps my most fundamental observation: that a system's relationship with its environment can shape the trajectory of mutual respect within the designs of a system, the practical logics of teachers, and the social contexts of classrooms. Finally, after revisiting the design decisions made in this study, I consider whether and how this study's framework may be used to examine other systems, which similarly endeavor to support mutual respect at scale.

Reprise

Across the findings chapters, the framework depicted in Figure 2.2 guided an inquiry into mutual respect in principle, mutual respect in practice, and the experience of managing designs for mutual respect in practice. Addressing each research question, in turn, served to further animate the framework.

In its elaborated form, this framework provides language and structure for examining something that can be difficult to describe, and to compare across myriad approaches to education: how to systemically treat children with more symmetry as we teach and learn with

them. In the below sections, I summarize the elaborated framework while using it to review efforts to support mutual respect in the IB and Montessori systems.

An Elaborated Framework

Figure 7.1 summarizes the elaborated analytic framework. I discuss these elaborations as they emerged from the findings presented in Chapters Four through Six. First, in Chapter Four, when examining the ways in which systems design for mutual respect, I elaborated the piece of the framework depicting educational systems. Then, in Chapter Five, when analyzing how teachers understand and manage mutual respect, I animated the center of the framework, which represents mutual respect in practice. Finally, in Chapter Six, when examining how teachers and leaders experience the relationship between designs for mutual respect and mutual respect in practice, I elaborated the remaining pieces of the framework, which are the remaining parts of a teacher's practice context.

And so, this reprise begins in earnest with systems.

Educational Systems

In Chapter Two, when I initially developed this study's analytic framework, I discussed the potential of educational systems to design for mutual respect in ways that embed it into the instructional core, and that scale mutual respect for students across classrooms and schools.

After iterating between the framework and the cases, I can now offer more detailed questions, or considerations, regarding how educational systems may design for mutual respect, and why they might make the design decisions they do. The elaborated analytic framework includes several considerations for thinking through the how, and why, of system designs: The first level of analysis is to discern whether a system has instructional and operational designs for mutual respect and, if so, to determine what those designs are. The second level of analysis

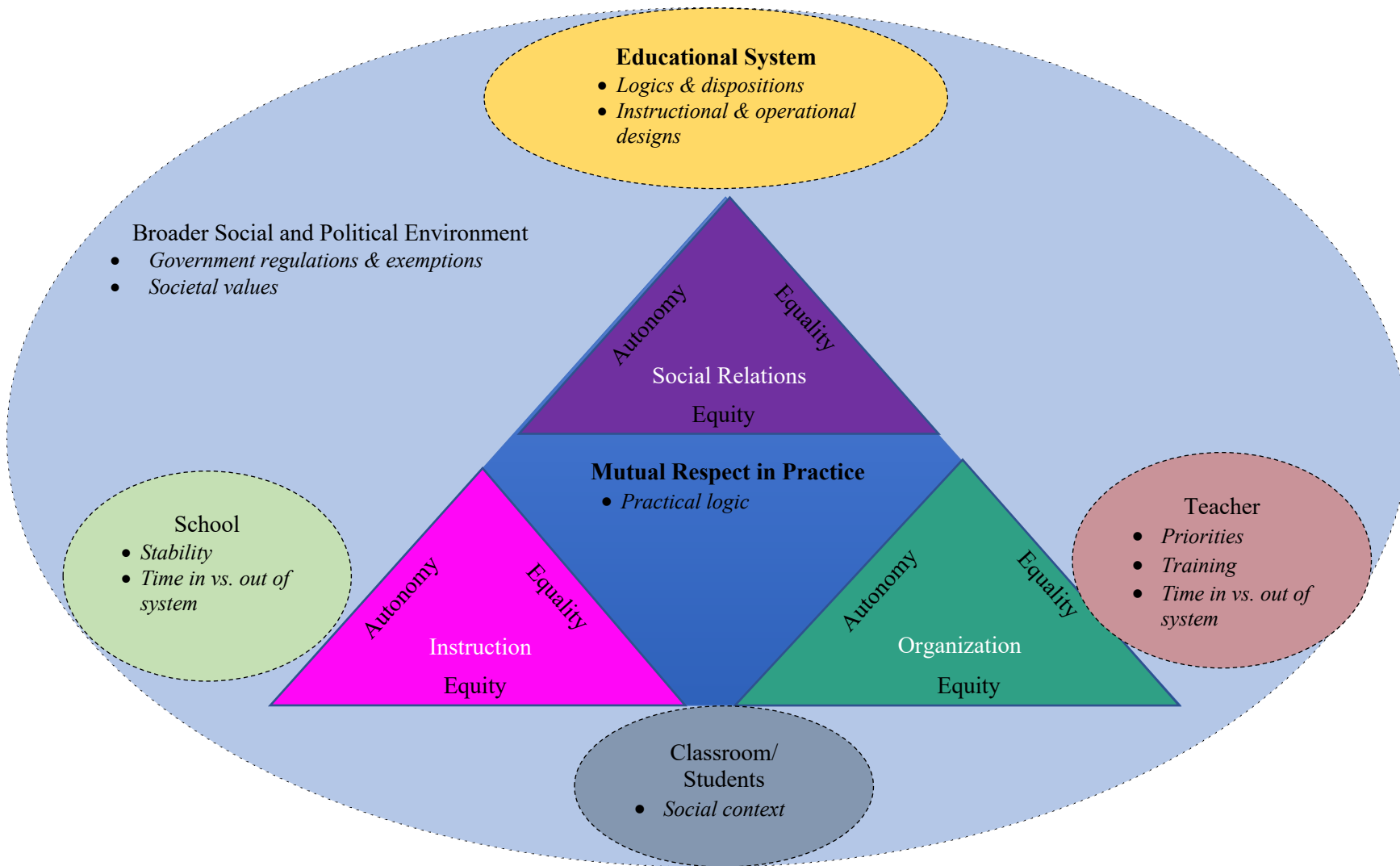


Figure 7.1. Elaborated framework for examining interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms.

involves discerning whether and how those designs are informed by a system's logic for how to treat students with increased mutual respect, and its related disposition toward the surrounding environment.

The IB and Montessori systems demonstrate two different ways in which a system might design for mutual respect. Their instructional and operational designs differ in many ways, namely, in terms of the degree of focus on any one dimension of mutual respect, and in terms of the degree of receptivity to the broader environment. The instructional designs of the IB system have a multifaceted focus, attending in relatively balanced ways to equality, autonomy, and equity. Further, the IB system operates in a way that is relatively open; its supports for teachers and schools permit, indeed encourage, their continual interaction with their environment. By contrast, the Montessori system has an explicit focus on autonomy throughout its designs for instruction. Recognizing this focus on autonomy – and the corresponding methods of instruction – to be counter-cultural, the Montessori system operates as closed. Rather than encouraging teachers to interact with their environments, the Montessori system dissuades them, at least in part, by providing teachers with much more guidance for instruction than is common.

To understand why the IB and Montessori systems make the design choices they do — why their designs differ in degrees of focus and receptivity — it is helpful to examine their underlying logics and dispositions. For the IB system, increasing mutual respect for students involves connecting them in authentic ways to the world for which they are being prepared. Relatedly, the IB system perceives the environment to be a collaborator in its efforts to mutually respect students. Such a logic and disposition provide context for the IB system's multifaceted focus, and its receptivity toward the environment. By having varied priorities around respect in its designs for instruction, the IB system better reflects the variety that exists beyond classroom

walls. Further, in encouraging IB teachers to continuously engage with the environment, the system facilitates these teachers being able to, in turn, connect their students to society.

While the design choices of the IB system are aligned to its logic and disposition, these same choices would be illogical in the Montessori system. This is because, for the Montessori system, increasing mutual respect for children entails changing teachers' fundamental understandings of children and their capabilities. The system is thus wary of the broader environment, as its normative understandings and practices concerning children threaten the very transformation the Montessori system is trying to effect in teachers. And so, rather than having a multifaceted focus, the designs of the Montessori system bear down hard on autonomy, leaving little room for variation or interpretation around how to treat and teach children in Montessori classrooms. And, rather than a receptive approach, the Montessori system works to create buffers between its teachers and the environment, so as to protect and reinforce teachers' counter-cultural understandings.

With this clearer understanding of how and why systems might design for mutual respect, and how and why approaches might differ across systems, we now turn our attention to IB and Montessori classrooms, and the center of the revised framework: mutual respect in practice.

Mutual Respect in Practice

When I initially developed this study's analytic framework, I highlighted the potential complexity of managing mutual respect in practice given: 1) mutual respect can be enacted and experienced across three aspects of classroom life (i.e., instruction, organization, and social relations); 2) mutual respect is comprised of three dimensions (i.e., equality, autonomy, and equity); and 3) these dimensions may interact in unpredictable ways in classrooms.

After iterating between the framework and the cases, I can now offer more detailed questions, or considerations, regarding how teachers may manage mutual respect in classrooms, and why they might practice as they do. The elaborated analytic framework includes consideration of a teacher's practical logic, which I defined in Chapter Five to include both a teacher's actions and her understandings of the daily work of according students mutual respect. The first level of analysis is to discern whether a teacher has such a logic and, if so, to determine what that practical logic is. The second level of analysis, then, is to determine the extent to which a teacher's practical logic is shaped by the designs of her educational system.

IB and Montessori teachers reveal two different practical logics for how to manage mutual respect in classrooms. Overall, the IB teachers upheld all three dimensions by way of privileging equality in their classrooms, especially when managing how students were organized and their social relations. By contrast, Montessori teachers managed mutual respect in their classrooms by driving with autonomy. These differences in drivers corresponded to differences in how IB and Montessori teachers understood the dimensions of mutual respect to relate to one another: Where IB teachers understood a competitive relationship between the dimensions of mutual respect, Montessori teachers understood a more symbiotic relationship.

To begin to understand why IB and Montessori teachers manage and understand mutual respect as they do – why their practical logics differ – it is helpful to reflect back on the designs of their respective system. Doing so illuminates, among other things, the extent to which the designs of a system shape a teacher's practical logic.

The designs of the IB system provide context for the practice of mutual respect in IB classrooms; how practice differs slightly across the three aspects of classroom life, as well as from the system's designs for mutual respect. IB designs are meant to adapt to diverse contexts.

This is why the system designs supports like its instructional framework, which guides teachers while also encouraging them to determine the specifics of their practice using local resources. Further, guidance from the IB system permits teachers and leaders some discretion in that it is relatively less specified, coordinated, and comprehensive than guidance from the Montessori system. By adapting to diverse cultures and contexts in these ways, the IB system can spread its designs for mutual respect across the globe while furthering its efforts to connect students to their society. However, these design characteristics also permit the system's designs for mutual respect to shift as they unfold across diverse practice contexts, particularly in terms of how students are organized, and how they socially relate in the classroom.

While the designs of the Montessori system might appear overbearing to an IB practitioner, they offer Montessori teachers necessary supports for changing understandings and practices in the classroom. Guidance from the Montessori system is highly specified, coordinated, and comprehensive. Further, the system extends its guidance to the three aspects of classroom life. These design characteristics facilitate consistent practice of mutual respect across instruction, organization, and social relations. Further, they help to shape practical logics that are consistent with the system's designs. Designs with such a reach support Montessori teachers as they treat and teach children in counter-cultural ways in the classroom.

Though much can be understood about why teachers practice mutual respect as they do through examining system designs, some details of practice remain puzzling. Within both systems, I found different proportions across different classrooms; some teachers were relatively balanced in their efforts across the dimensions of mutual respect, and others were more focused on a given dimension. So, even as we have gained additional clarity around how and why teachers might practice mutual respect, and how and why approaches might differ across

systems, we now turn our attention to other parts of a teacher's practice context to better understand why practice might differ *within* a given system. I now elaborate the remaining pieces of the analytic framework.

Other Parts of the Practice Context

When initially developing this study's framework, I discussed potential interactions between educational systems and other parts of a teacher's practice context (i.e., teacher, school, and broader social and political environment), which may challenge, or perpetuate, normative forms of respect in classrooms.

After iterating between the framework and the cases, I can now offer more detailed questions, or considerations, regarding how a teacher's practice context may support her implementation of her system's designs for mutual respect, which may then have implications for her experiences when according students more mutual respect in practice.¹⁵⁷ First, as I will discuss more in later sections, I include classroom/students in the elaborated framework, and consider whether and how a system designs for a social context in classrooms in which students reinforce the system's efforts at mutual respect.¹⁵⁸ Second, the elaborated analytic framework offers a beginning list of considerations for thinking through how the remaining parts of a teacher's practice context might support, or constrain, the implementation of a system's designs.

Irrespective of system, the DC practice contexts were more supportive than those in Toronto. In comparing implementation of a system's designs across these practice contexts, three teacher-level considerations proved helpful for understanding differences. First, the degree to which a teacher's personal priorities are aligned to her system's designs for mutual respect. Second, the quality and quantity of a teacher's training around her system's designs. Third, how much time a teacher has taught within *versus* outside of her system. Any of these considerations

provides context for whether or not a teacher might be able to shed normative practices of respect in favor of her system's designs.

Two school-level considerations help one understand differences in implementation of a system's designs for mutual respect. First, whether a school is in a relatively stable period in terms of leadership, reputation, and enrollment. Second, how much time a school has spent within *versus* outside of its system. When a school is experiencing stability, as both DC schools were, its leaders may feel more able to set boundaries to protect a system's designs, even if those designs run counter to practices or pressures in the broader environment. And, as with teachers, if a school has had more time within *versus* outside of a system, it may be better able to shed normative practices of respect, and work toward mutual respect as outlined by the system.

Finally, in examining the social and political environments of DC and Toronto, two considerations proved useful for understanding differences in implementation of a system's designs for mutual respect: 1) government regulations and exemptions, and 2) societal values. The schools in DC benefitted from government exemptions and incentives to implement their system's designs with fidelity. Further, these schools were in a context that values school choice and specialization. These considerations help to explain why the DC school leaders felt comfortable setting their schools apart as schools that teach, learn, and respect children differently. In Toronto, on the other hand, school leaders felt pressure from their environment to do all that traditional schools do, and more. Such considerations provide context for whether or not a school may be able to wholly commit to a system's designs for mutual respect.

Taken together, this beginning list of considerations for each part of a teacher's practice context permits greater clarity around how a practice context might amplify, or dampen, a system's designs for mutual respect within classrooms.

Summary

This study's elaborated framework provides a common language and structure for examining how different educational systems intervene on power asymmetries typically found in classrooms. In reviewing the cases of IB and Montessori, I demonstrated the power of this framework for describing how an educational system interacts with mutual respect in classrooms, and for thinking through why these interactions look the way they do. What is more, I demonstrated how this framework permits nuanced comparisons between teachers, schools, and systems in the shared pursuit of increased mutual respect for students.

Reflections

In stepping back from the details of both the elaborated framework and the cases, I am now able to offer more general reflections regarding educational systems, mutual respect in classrooms, and the potential relationship between the two.

First, the findings from this study indicate it is possible for educational systems to design for mutual respect. It is possible for systems to embed mutual respect into their core designs for teaching and learning, so that students who are situated across different classrooms and schools might experience increased equality, autonomy, and equity throughout their school day.¹⁵⁹

This study then suggests that a system's designs for mutual respect can shape the practical logics of teachers. They can shape these logics in powerful ways, changing teachers' deeply held understandings as well as their more surface-level actions around treating and teaching students with increased mutual respect.¹⁶⁰

Finally, this study highlights some ways in which systemic support of mutual respect may create ongoing work — and tensions — for practitioners. A system's designs, and the social context these designs aim to foster in classrooms, can have diverse implications for students,

teachers, and school leaders, as all can be implicated in the work of maintaining and strengthening such a context.¹⁶¹

After considering the more general reflections above alongside those details that differed by system, I offer a final, and perhaps the most fundamental observation that stems from this research: A system's relationship with its environment – whether a system is relatively open or closed to engaging with the educational practices, understandings, and resources that can be found in the broader environment – can shape the trajectory of mutual respect within the designs of the system, the practical logics of teachers, and the social contexts of classrooms. I consider this relationship and its potential implications in more detail below, based on what was learned in this study from one system that was relatively open, and one that was relatively closed to the broader environment.

The Designs of a System

A system's relationship with its environment may have implications for the characteristics of the system's designs for mutual respect. More specifically, in considering the system/environment relationship, one may be able to anticipate such characteristics as the focus, reach, or specificity of a system's designs.

When a system is relatively open to its environment, and the educational norms therein, then one might anticipate certain characteristics of the system's designs for mutual respect. First, an open system's designs may focus on those dimension(s) of mutual respect that are prevalent priorities in the broader environment for how to treat and teach children. If a system considers the environment to be an ally when according students increased mutual respect, then its guidance around mutually respectful practice may also permit practitioners relatively more discretion. For example, the system may design for only one aspect of classroom life (e.g.,

instruction), and leave it to teachers and schools to determine how to mutually respect students in other ways (e.g., social relations). Or, a system may offer guidance that is relatively less specified, and open to variation and interpretation. Whatever the system does not design for can be found in the broader environment, which is, again, viewed to be a resource for those educators aiming to mutually respect students.

On the other hand, if a system is relatively closed to the environment — perhaps because it considers many educational norms to run counter to its vision of mutual respect — this may imply very different characteristics for the system’s designs. First, a system closed to its environment may focus on a more controversial or difficult-to-enact dimension of mutual respect. Then, recognizing teachers themselves have been educated in the very environment from which a system wishes to differentiate itself, said system may offer more intensive guidance. The system’s designs may be highly comprehensive or specific, helping teachers to act and think in ways different from their surroundings, and from their pasts. Additionally, a system may coordinate its designs to work in mutually reinforcing ways across time and across the classroom, so that teachers are supported as they transform both actions and understandings around mutually respecting students. Through such designs, a system may have a better chance at supporting mutually respectful schooling that is markedly different from the status quo.

The Practical Logics of Teachers

In addition to designs, a system’s relationship with its environment may also have implications for the practical logics of teachers. Indeed, depending on a system’s relationship with its environment, it may design to shape those practical logics more or less extensively, and it may work to transform deeply held understandings, as well as more surface-level actions. By

considering the system/environment relationship, then, one may better anticipate the degree of consistency in the practical logics of teachers within a given system.

A system open to its environment may be content with being but one influence over a teacher's practical logic as she manages her classroom for mutual respect. There is an understanding – implicit or otherwise – that other parts of a teacher's practice context (e.g., her previous experiences, educational resources in the environment) can shape that teacher's priorities and understandings of mutual respect in beneficial ways. When this is the case, one might expect more variation. The practical logics of teachers within that system may vary, and/or these practical logics may look slightly different from the designs for mutual respect from the system. Even if a system endeavors to guide mutual respect in practice to some degree, this does not necessarily mean that system is aiming to wholly shift a teacher's approach to mutual respect.

Conversely, a system that is closed off to its environment — and the normative educational practices, understandings, and resources therein — may require and support more fundamental transformations of its teachers. For a system that views the environment to be a relative adversary, it may endeavor to shape all, not part, of a teacher's practical logic for how to mutually respect students throughout the school day. When this is the case, one might expect more consistency. The practical logics of teachers situated across diverse contexts may be largely consistent, and/or teachers' practical logics may be largely aligned to the designs of the system. If a system does not trust its environment to shape teachers' practice of mutual respect in beneficial ways, then it may do what it can to prevent those environmental influences from seeping into the understandings and priorities of teachers.

The Social Contexts of Classrooms

The system/environment relationship may also have implications for the social contexts of classrooms. More specifically, this relationship may influence whether or not a system designs for a social context that is distinct from what is typically found in classrooms. By considering a system's relationship with its environment, then, one may better anticipate some of the ongoing work — and potential experiences of that work — of students, teachers, and school leaders, who may be tasked with maintaining and strengthening a social context that reinforces their system's designs for mutual respect.

When a system is open to and allied with its environment, it may not actively design a social context for classrooms. Instead, it may permit those social contexts to develop as they naturally would, largely reflecting the social contexts of broader society. When this is the case, there may not be ongoing work for students, teachers, and leaders in terms of maintaining a distinct social context, which would support the system's designs for mutual respect. (There may, however, be a great deal of ongoing work in terms of reconciling the mutual respect in an open system's designs with respect as it is found in the environment. Such work could fall to both teachers and school leaders.)

On the other hand, for those systems who seek to create buffers between classrooms and the environment, one way to do so is to design and protect a social context that strengthens the system's counter-cultural designs for mutual respect. Such a social context can be a great support, particularly for teachers, as students can reinforce their teacher's efforts at mutual respect in practice. However, such a social context may also imply ongoing work, which has potential to be tension-fraught. School leaders may experience tensions as they work to first create conditions for, and then protect, a social context markedly different from the status quo.

And, if leaders are unsuccessful in their efforts, it may then be more difficult for both teachers and students to maintain and continually reify that social context in classrooms.

Summary

In Chapter Four, I discussed how a system's disposition toward its environment may shape its subsequent designs for mutual respect. Upon further reflection, I now observe that this study is one that begins, proceeds, and ends with a system's relationship with its environment. In considering that relationship, whether it is relatively open or closed — whether the environment is perceived as relative friend or foe in according children increased equality, autonomy, and equity throughout the school day — one can better anticipate and understand the designs of systems, the practical logics of teachers, and the social contexts of classrooms.

At this point, it is important to revisit this study's initial design decisions, given the preceding reflections and findings are based on two rather exceptional educational systems.

Revisiting Design Decisions

Before considering whether and how this study's analytic framework might be used elsewhere, it is important to acknowledge there may be other factors contributing to this study's findings, which I have yet to name. For example, rather than attributing the mutual respect I observed in IB and Montessori classrooms to the designs of either educational system, one could reasonably argue that teachers who select to teach in these systems are already inclined to mutually respect children in ways aligned to their system's designs.

Relatedly, it is important to consider whether the ways in which I elaborated this study's framework may be an artifact of the research design, sample, or the methods for data collection and analysis. As mentioned in Chapter Three, two limitations in this study concern uneven data collection in public schools, and sample size.¹⁶² It is therefore possible this elaborated framework

does not include important considerations pertaining to public school contexts, and how those contexts may support or constrain the implementation of a system's designs for mutual respect. What is more, it is possible this framework is less useful for describing and explaining interactions between systems and mutual respect in classrooms for those systems that do not attend to mutual respect, or that do not relate to their environments, as intentionally as the IB and Montessori systems do.

While there is reason to exercise caution with the assertions stemming from this research, there is also reason to be optimistic about the validity of such assertions. First, as mentioned in Chapter Three, by designing this study to sample from schools in two systems and two contexts, I was better able to disentangle whether and how either interacted with mutual respect in classrooms. Second, with the video-cued focus groups, and probes regarding the source of teachers' ideas and practices around mutual respect, I was able to discern, for example, that teachers did select into IB and Montessori — at least in part — because their ideas for how to treat and teach children were aligned to their system's methods. However, from there, these teachers underwent training, which helped them acquire a shared language, and some shared practices and understandings, which I found to be consistent across two contexts. Finally, this study's analytic framework was continuously revised in ways that helped to surface, versus suppress, variation within and across systems.

In sum, with the research design, the research methods, and the analytic framework, I was able to consider many nuanced factors — within and outside the jurisdiction of educational systems — which may interact with mutual respect in classrooms.

With regards to the study's elaborated framework, and the validity of any assertions pertaining to its use, in the remaining sections I consider whether and how it may be useful for examining mutual respect in other educational systems.

Putting the Framework to (Provisional) Use

Though clearly limited in important ways, the elaborated framework is informed by both previous literature as well as empirical study. As such, it is worth putting this framework to provisional use, to describe and explain the advancement of mutual respect in other educational systems. Indeed, doing so is a primary way to continue to elaborate the framework.

One option would be to return to the case with which we began our journey: How might this framework be used to think through efforts to cultivate mutual respect by Mrs. Hayes and her school district?

Mutual Respect in Mrs. Hayes' System, Specifically

In Chapter One, I asserted that Mrs. Hayes' public school district is a case where, even as the system is increasingly offering coordinated guidance and support around instruction, it maintains a status quo approach to respect: Respect is situated along the sidelines of teaching and learning, and is largely perceived as a means to improve school culture and student behavior.

However, if we were to return to the case of Mrs. Hayes now, this study's elaborated framework may help us to understand the scenario a bit differently. We do see efforts, from both Mrs. Hayes and her district, at system-building. Further, we see efforts from both Mrs. Hayes and her district at mutual respect. Perhaps, then, the case of Mrs. Hayes could be framed as one of transition, or as a case where disruption to the status quo of schooling is emerging from — and existing alongside — legacy.¹⁶³ In being able to see and examine those disruptions amidst the legacy, we may then gain a better sense of how to connect them. That is, we may better

understand how to pursue systemic support for mutual respect within a more modal public school setting.

Mrs. Hayes and her district both worked at system-building. Using the language of this study's framework, one can now interpret the common lessons that Mrs. Hayes created as an instructional design, and one can now view the allocated time for Groves as an operational design. At the same time, Mrs. Hayes' district was setting up an online curriculum warehouse for teachers, and using a common framework to evaluate teachers and work toward more consistently excellent instruction across classrooms and schools. So, even as some system-building came from the bottom-up and some from the top-down, and even as some designs involved the assembly rather than the creation of resources, efforts at building systems abound in Mrs. Hayes' district. If I were to return to this case with this study's framework, not only could I better see these efforts, I could further examine characteristics of the system's designs (e.g., reach, specificity, coordination), and I could probe at whether and how these designs shape the practical logics of teachers, or the social contexts of classrooms.

This framework may also be used to discern and describe efforts at mutual respect throughout Mrs. Hayes' district. I could analyze the various initiatives being piloted and used by the district's teachers (e.g., project-based learning) to determine if there is any overarching focus across those resources, or in teachers' practice, around how to accord students more mutual respect. For example, is equity a shared and central priority within the district, or are efforts at mutual respect more multifaceted in focus? So, though I interpreted the district's adoption of *Leader in Me* to be a fairly status quo approach to respect, with this study's framework, I could better recognize the various efforts at mutual respect that exist alongside *Leader in Me*. Further, I could discern any patterns in how teachers understand and manage mutual respect in practice

(e.g., which dimension(s) they drive with, whether they understand the dimensions to reinforce or conflict with one another).

The above thought exercise is brief, but this much is clear: Mrs. Hayes' system is undeniably different from the Montessori and IB systems around which I have focused this inquiry. However, while this public educational system is unlike Montessori and IB in that it did not, at its inception, integrate mutual respect into its designs for teaching and learning, we *can* see efforts to system-build, and we *do* see efforts to treat and teach students with increased symmetry. Such efforts are impressive, given they co-exist alongside the pervasive legacies of public schooling, and given Mrs. Hayes' system is necessarily open to its environment, and all the noise and norms therein.

Thus, in using this framework to begin to think through mutual respect in Mrs. Hayes' system, we start to appreciate that its value extends beyond the focal systems in this study. By being able to apprehend and examine efforts at system-building *and* at mutual respect within more modal school districts, this framework may then facilitate the pursuit of systemic support *for* mutual respect within those districts.

Mutual Respect in Public Schools, Generally

Throughout this chapter, I have illustrated the power of the analytic framework that this dissertation elaborated. Most recently, I have contended that this framework could be useful when examining mutual respect in other educational systems, systems such as the public school district we began our journey with in Chapter One.

And yet.

Before using this framework to examine mutual respect in more modal educational systems, it is important to consider a premise upon which this framework, and this research, rest.

At this point, it is important to critically examine that premise, as doing so can guide future research and future elaboration of this framework in meaningful ways. The premise is this: that educational systems, and those within, would want to accord more mutual respect to students.

There are many potential reasons why an educational system may not design for increased mutual respect for its learners.¹⁶⁴ And, in reflecting on a key limitation of this study – the lack of racial diversity in its focal teachers – this account is incomplete in its consideration of why more mutual respect in classrooms may be undesirable for either teachers or families. So, too, is this account incomplete in its examination of how a system’s designs –inadvertently or otherwise – may differentially accord equality, autonomy, and equity to its diverse students.

In the concluding chapter, I take up such considerations. The non-neutrality of mutual respect, and of a system’s designs for it, help to guide future inquiries into the relationship between educational systems and increased symmetry in classrooms.

¹⁵⁷ As one may remember from Chapter Six, high-level implementation had different implications for the experiences of IB and Montessori teachers: For IB teachers, the higher the level of implementation, the higher the level of tensions experienced. For Montessori teachers, the higher the level of implementation, the lower the level of tensions experienced.

¹⁵⁸ While social contexts are considered within the classroom/students piece of the framework, school leaders and teachers also play a role in creating and protecting a social context that would reinforce a system’s designs for mutual respect. I discuss this distributed work in greater detail in Chapter Six.

¹⁵⁹ Such findings build on scholarship that more generally evidences a relationship between central office designs and practice in schools (e.g., Johnson, Marietta, Higgins, Mapp, and Grossman, 2014).

¹⁶⁰ Swidler’s (1986) spectrum of cultural models may be useful for considering the potential of educational systems to change common sense – for teachers and students alike - around how to treat and teach children in the classroom. This spectrum includes ideology (i.e., an articulated and self-conscious belief system), tradition (i.e., articulated, but taken for granted), and common sense (derived from Geertz, defined as “a set of assumptions so unselfconscious as to seem a natural, transparent, undeniable part of the structure of the world”). I will take up this consideration in future writing projects, specifically with data from the Montessori system.

¹⁶¹ Such findings build on scholarship that more generally discusses the role social contexts can play in thinking and learning (e.g., Rogoff and Lave, 1984).

¹⁶² I take up this study’s third limitation of note, that regarding race, in Chapter Eight, as this limitation helps to guide my future research agenda.

¹⁶³ The literature also helps me to understand the case of Mrs. Hayes a bit differently. See, for example: Peurach, Cohen, Yurkofsky, and Spillane (2019).

¹⁶⁴ I offer just a few of these potential reasons when discussing this study’s limitations in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion

In Pursuit of Mutual Respect

For some time now, two disruptions to the status quo of schooling have transpired in parallel: the disruption that is system-building, and the disruption that is more mutually respectful teaching and learning. This study has probed at the intersection of these two disruptions, examining the complexity and variation that can ensue when educational systems design for increased equality, autonomy, and equity in classrooms. Let us briefly take stock of the ground gained from this research.

First, this study contributes to the scholarship around educational systems, and to efforts to understand how to build and maintain a stronger center, which would support instructional improvement at scale. From this research with the Montessori and International Baccalaureate (IB) systems, one can better apprehend the instructional and operational designs of a system; whether and how these designs shape the practical logics of teachers, and whether and how they foster a certain social context in classrooms. What is more, one better appreciates that a system's relationship with its environment can shape the trajectory of how that system then supports teachers and schools.

Second, this study adds to the body of literature concerned with mutual respect in schools, and supports efforts to create more symmetry between teachers and students, and among diverse students. It does so by offering concrete examples of increased equality, autonomy, and equity for students in practice. This research describes mutual respect as it is embedded into

classroom instruction, organization, and social relations. And, this research further supports the view of mutual respect as interactive, with its different dimensions reinforcing and conflicting with one another in unexpected ways in the classroom.

Finally, this study builds theory around the relatively unexplored intersection that is educational systems designing for mutual respect. We have learned about efforts to centralize mutual respect by integrating more equality, autonomy, and equity for students into a system's designs for teaching and learning. We have observed patterns — in both an open and closed system — in teachers' practical logics regarding which dimension of mutual respect with which to drive their practice, which related to teachers' shared understandings around how the dimensions of mutual respect interact in the classroom. What is more, we have gained a better sense of the ways in which systemic support for mutual respect may create ongoing work for practitioners: whether this work entails reconciling respect in a system's designs to respect in the broader environment; or whether this ongoing work involves protecting and maintaining a social context designed by the system, and markedly different from what is often found in classrooms.

In these ways and more, we better understand efforts to systemically intervene on longstanding power asymmetries in classrooms. With this increased understanding, I now offer ideas for a future research agenda concerned with mutual respect in systems.

Next Steps in Research on Mutual Respect in Systems

I concluded Chapter Seven by indicating that one of this study's limitations guides my suggestions for next steps in research. Race was not an explicit part of my research agenda when initially examining interactions between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. One consequence of this was that all five focal teachers with whom I was partnered were white.

As mentioned in previous chapters, such homogeneity can hinder a critical and comprehensive examination of the ways in which mutual respect, and its systemic support, are far from neutral.

And so, it is with this limitation in mind that I propose the following question to guide future research on the relationship between systems and mutual respect in classrooms: What would it look like to conduct research with this study's elaborated framework in hand, *but also* with an explicit eye toward race, and the many other intersecting identities of teachers and students?

An immediate next step in this research takes students, and their experiences, as its central focus.¹⁶⁵ With data from this study, I intend to examine whether and how mutual respect is managed differently across the diverse learners in the five focal classrooms. Further, using data such as what I collected during focus groups with students, I will analyze student perspectives on their classroom experiences of equality, autonomy, and equity, with an eye toward whether and how such perspectives may vary with students' intersecting identities. From such research, I could better understand how a diverse group of students may differentially experience, and benefit from, mutual respect.

For future research projects, I would purposively select for a more diverse group of focal teachers and, when possible, school leaders. Doing so could permit more critical examination of this study's underlying premise: that increased mutual respect in classrooms is a desired goal for all families, teachers, and schools. A more diverse group of focal teachers may also add other dimensions to mutual respect, and/or hone the definitions of the existing three dimensions, by way of their priorities and practice. Relatedly, a more diverse group of focal teachers may challenge my current ideas regarding how teachers manage and understand mutual respect in

practice.¹⁶⁶ From such research, I could continue to elaborate this study's framework, even as I more critically examine its underlying premises.

Finally, and importantly, a necessary next step in future research involves questions directed at the system level, which are similar in nature to what I will ask of the student data: How might a system's designs differentially accord mutual respect across a diverse group of students? And, in what ways do a system's designs for mutual respect differentially benefit, or disservice, a diverse group of students? Continued work with the Montessori and IB systems could be productive, given both systems initially designed for mutual respect when they catered to a more homogenous group of learners, and both systems have since expanded across the world, and have endeavored to operate in increasingly diverse public school settings.¹⁶⁷ So, too, would it be important to examine designs for mutual respect in more modal educational systems, which — relative to the systems in this study — are often catering to more diverse students, and have less control over both their designs and their way of relating to the environment.

In previous chapters, I have discussed my intention of strengthening this study's framework by using and refining it across diverse systems and contexts. In the above paragraphs, I offer another suggestion for strengthening this framework, and improving our understanding of the relationship between systems and mutual respect in classrooms: making the intersecting identities of students and teachers an explicit part of the inquiry, along with a more critical examination of both mutual respect, and a system's designs for it.

Personal Aspirations for Advancing Mutual Respect with Systems

I end this chapter, and this dissertation, with a juxtaposition. I conclude in this way because it is this very juxtaposition that motivates my continued research on the relationship

between educational systems and mutual respect in classrooms. The juxtaposition is between the worlds that I — the researcher — witnessed within and beyond the classrooms involved in this study. I offer below a glimpse into those worlds.

Fieldwork for this dissertation began in Washington, D.C. five days after the inauguration of Donald Trump.

The silence of a city in mourning,
it was deafening.

As I conducted focus groups in Toronto, a young man by the name of Nikolas Cruz – a man who had made his racist, homophobic, and anti-immigrant views clear– committed the deadliest high school shooting spree that our country has seen in Parkland, Florida.

The number of innocents killed by gun violence,
it was rising.

With my office window open, I drafted the findings chapters, listening to the beginning of police brutality protests that would overtake the streets of Oakland.

Anger over George Floyd’s death,
it was seething.

I revised those same chapters with the window closed and the air filter on; the orange sky beamed in as our country’s leaders continued to disagree on the reality that is global warming.

The state,
it was burning.

And, as I write this very chapter, violent Trump supporters storm the United States Capitol, seeking to disrupt a peaceful transfer of power. Refusing to believe in, or adhere to, our nation's democratic processes.

I have yet to find words for this.

Put simply, the world swirling around my research did much to overwhelm, and to paralyze. This world would have me believe in a total erosion of respect, and would have me lose faith that our society can interact in more symmetrical ways, despite differences in identities, politics, and worldviews.

And yet.

Inside the world of Montessori and IB classrooms, students were experiencing equality, autonomy, and equity each day. What is more, I witnessed these children embody the mutual respect that was regularly afforded them.

In classroom discussions, be they academic or otherwise, students built off of and learned from one another's points, rather than advancing their own agendas.

These children,
they listened to each other
as equals.

Montessori students organized weekly visits to a senior living center; they taught their elders knitting while listening to their oral histories. IB students interviewed tribal leaders regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline; they sought to understand and act upon complex societal issues.

These children,
they worked toward community and justice
independently.

Inside the world of Montessori and IB classrooms, students collaborated with their peers so often that they could adapt their explanations and communication styles so a struggling friend would understand, and engage. These students worked with their peers so often that every student, at some point, had the opportunity to teach, and to struggle.

These children,
they supported and valued
difference.

Put simply, the world that was my research did much to buoy, and to mobilize. Ms. Laura, the DC Montessori focal teacher, once reflected to me that her classroom feels like a microcosm of the broader world. As much as I appreciate this perspective, it is because these classrooms resembled something entirely different — it is because these students were learning to create and reinforce something different, something symmetrical — that I am propelled forward in this work.

¹⁶⁵ Additionally, an immediate next step in my research agenda is to member check a second time with focal participants. I intend to do this when turning this dissertation into a book, so that participants have the opportunity to challenge and complicate my framing of practical logics and social contexts, for example, given these frames developed since the last member check.

¹⁶⁶ Working with a larger sample of teachers, in general, will also permit more nuanced understanding of these matters.

¹⁶⁷ To be homogeneous does not always mean to be privileged; the Montessori method was first used in the tenements of Rome. This method is now used with increasingly diverse groups of students (e.g., in terms of race, class, nationality).

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