"As a Teacher, As a Person": The Dimensions of Classroom Legitimacy in Two Classrooms in an Urban High School Setting

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importance of this work.

Abstract

The interactions between students and teachers that take place in an individual classroom is crucial and can shape a student's perception of his or her educational experience. This study looks at these interactions through three dimensions and depicts how students perceive them to contribute to or deter from their feelings of classroom legitimacy – that they are cared for, understood, and learning in the classroom world.

The idea of connectedness is used as a tool to understand the nuanced ways that students interpret the actions and intentions of their teachers. Connectedness between teachers and students has implications on all populations. This exploratory project seeks to understand, through qualitative methods of observation and conversational interviews with students, how they depict the ways in which they are understood by their teachers, and begins to investigate the dimensions of connectedness that operate between students and teachers in an urban high school setting.

This study analyzes three dimensions of connectedness – discipline versus management styles, identity sharing, and communication – in the context of the emerging notion of classroom legitimacy. This project is important because it exceeds beyond the confines of the classroom walls and calls to further research on the centrality of a student's perception of classroom legitimacy as a major determinant of a successful learning environment, where a student's experience can shape the trajectory of his or her life course.

I. Introduction

At any given moment in a classroom across the nation, teachers are interacting with students. Perhaps these classrooms look diverse in size and shape; perhaps the teachers look different as well, coming from distinct backgrounds. The students certainly look different; they are mixed ethno-racially, socioeconomically, and all come to the classroom with their own story. It is no wonder that as a result, interactions between these actors differ, and no two moments in any classroom is the same. How can we surmise what these interactions look like? How do we ask what these interactions feel like to students?

This project is an ethnographic study that looks at the relational dynamics between students and teachers in a diverse, urban high school setting. It takes on these elusive questions by looking at the interactions between teacher and student as an expression of connectedness between the two, seeking to answer, how can a teacher connect to his or her students? What can this connectedness mean for students?

The fieldwork in this research points to three dimensions of connectedness and is followed by a discussion of how they work together to create a complex notion of classroom legitimacy through the eyes of the student. Classroom legitimacy is the framework for determining a successful classroom environment; it encompasses student measures of feelings that they are cared for, understood, and learning. The amount legitimacy that a student feels in the classroom determines to what degree a student embraces the classroom as a place they believe in and therefore a place from where they ultimately can learn. Furthermore, levels of classroom legitimacy felt through student-teacher connectedness reflect differing employments of disciplinary action versus classroom management, that is, when a teacher addresses trouble moments by utilizing outside resources versus handling the trouble moment on his or her own.

The importance of this work lies in the uncovered truths about the uniqueness and delicateness of defining and maneuvering within the scope of teacher connectedness and the consequences when classroom legitimacy is undermined.

II. Literature Review

I.   Background

The project began as an exploration into notions of discipline and looked specifically at the literature of African-American male students' experiences in the punitive realm in public schools. However, during my fieldwork, the project took on a new form, albeit rooted in and stemming from the original notions. My research questions changed from ones looking at a specific group of students through a racialized and gendered lens to ones that treated the youth population in an urban high school setting as a whole and addressed questions of how students and teachers connect in this uniquely diverse environment, as well as what student perceptions are of their experiences in the classroom. The review of literature that follows thus mirrors and tracks the changes and reformations that took place during my research to further ground the subsequent ethnography and analysis.

A litany of prior research directs attention to the simple fact that African- American students in middle school and high school nationally are focused on for disciplinary actions in the greatest numbers (Johnston, 2000). According to the Children's Defense Fund, higher rates of black students are suspended than their white counterparts – they are two to five times more likely to be suspended (Irvine, 1990). Research also shows that some teachers direct their reprimands and punitive consequences to black children in school even though students of other races are participating in the same behavior (McCadden 1998). Further, it is seen since the 1970's that

black males are disciplined more often and more severely than their peers: "The criminalization of black males appears to provide a powerful context for the discipline gap" (Monroe, 2005, p. 45).

Through looking at the data surrounding black male youths and discipline, I came to discover that the discourse of discipline itself in schools warrants attention and excavation. The discipline of all students regardless of race, class, or gender often begins in the classroom, within the teacher's realm of control, where some level of discretionary action is taken as a result of some type of conflict. In a school setting, the actor at the forefront of the decision-making processes is the teacher. According to Noguera (1995), it is teachers who are making the initial decisions in the discipline process and who thus have major influence on who receives discipline and why. Teachers front-load the disciplinary process with the amount of discretion that is given to them in a classroom setting. This is to say that teachers in their classrooms are the first ones who begin the disciplinary action; the action often starts and finishes in their "jurisdiction" as well. With the establishment of particular policies, such as the zero-tolerance policy, which as of 2011 has been adopted by 94% of U.S. public schools (Johnson, Boydon, and Pittz, 2001), the discretionary role of the teacher in the classroom is both buttressed as well as impeded by the stern nature of the school setting. On the one hand, the disciplinary power of the teacher is supported and structured in part by the disciplinary rules established in a given school or school district. This can be a good thing, because it aims for an even application of disciplinary action taken against students whose conduct falls into similar categories. On the other hand, a teacher who is held under the strict guidelines of his or her school or district for taking punitive measures might feel pressured to discipline in a harsher way than he or she would have personally felt necessary, given the discrete circumstances of the situation, to which the teacher is the only

authoritative player involved in the classroom setting. In other words, while such policies might support teachers by creating a more uniform practice of discipline, the policy of zero tolerance itself has ramifications on the population it is effecting most, that is, urban minority students, by creating a stringent set of disciplinary actions that often result in student suspension and expulsion. Such disciplinary actions are often life altering for students.

This research will essentially take a few steps back to understand more fully the student and teacher interactions and potential conflicts that take place prior to or in lieu of actual disciplinary action.

II.   Uniqueness of the Classroom as a Space

My research takes place inside the walls of two classrooms. The classroom as a space where students and teachers spend most of their school days serves as a petri dish for interactions on multiple levels to occur. One must take into account the uniqueness, impact, and importance of the classroom setting, even within the larger environment of a school setting. It is vital to engage with the implications of the classroom as a space in which student-teacher interactions occur. Regardless of how the classroom is designed, that is, with the desks all facing the front, the desks in clusters, or in a large circle, the significance of the physical ordering of space is essential. The significance lies in the idea that there is an element of physical, presumed, and perhaps internalized authority that is held with the teacher.

Researchers Astor, Meyer, and Behre (1999) focus on the physical space of a school setting in relationship to school violence. They explore the notion of "unowned spaces" in a high school structure – the hallways, staircases, and cafeterias to name a few, and say that these places are undefined and not considered to be in the professional sphere of a teacher who most likely

considers his or her own classroom to be their primary professional workspace. Further, the researchers suggest that students themselves see the classroom primarily as a "workspace" and thus relegate the hallways and other nonacademic places to be undefined. It is important not to overlook that while most violent acts are committed outside of the classroom, there is still capacity for conflict in the actual classroom space. Moments of trouble are common in the classroom and usually occur between students and teachers, even if they do not typically involve violence. A teacher's dealings with a student during a non-teaching moment within the classroom walls has a determinative effect on that student's perceptions of justness, and, as a result, on their willingness to participate and actively try to learn. Thus, the classroom space as a place of conflict is just as crucial to understand as conflict in other areas of a school environment, because the effects of these interactions can mean the difference between a successful student and an unsuccessful one.

III. Interactions between students and teachers within the classroom space

The potential conflicts between students and teachers in the classroom setting arise from differing beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and values of teachers and students. According to one study, students often perceive the dynamics in their own classroom to be centered on teacher expectations and rules. It is the teacher who starts the disciplinary process by referring them, the teacher whose classroom is disrupted, and so forth. The students in the study surmised that the teachers had power and that the classroom was their space of control (Sheets, 1996). On one end of the spectrum, a classroom space can prove to be a hostile environment when interpersonal conflicts get in the way of learning. On the other end, a school space that fosters mutual respect and cooperation can have pleasant effects on the learning environment. Noguera notes that some

classrooms exist that have a strong sense of collective responsibility and community, and that they, "are seen by students as sacred territory, too special to be spoiled by crime and violence, and too important to risk one's being excluded" (1995, p. 207).

It is thus seen that interactions between students and teachers act as a catalyst for opposing classroom environments – one that is positive and can foster learning and trust, and one that is negative and can generate conflict, discipline, and perhaps violence. Upon seeing this, I looked to possible theories or explanations that further examine the repercussions of differing student-teacher relational dynamics.

IV. Student-teacher cultural connectedness and conflict through a racialized lens

One possible theory that responds to issues of student-teacher interactions in the classroom, and one that both grounds my fieldwork as well as propels me in a more nuanced way, is cultural connectedness. Cultural connectedness is the ability to effectively interact with individuals or groups of people from cultures other than one's own. In the classroom, it is the ability of a teacher to understand and relate to his or her student who is of a different background or culture. It looks at the relationships of teachers and students and essentially puts the burden of understanding on the teacher, that is to say, the capacity of a teacher in a given situation to understand and successfully communicate and have an effect on his or her student. Freeman (1992) surmises that classroom conflict between a student and a teacher might in fact be a result of perceptual differences when either or each group thinks that its values or needs are being threatened. These perceptions are guided by how individuals view their social structure and are acutely affected by ethnic, cultural, and social affiliations, which lead to social and cultural incompatibilities in these interpersonal conflicts.

The literature focuses on race when looking at cultural conflict. Researchers cite opposing forms of expression between black and white communities as a contributing factor to cultural conflict in the school setting, posing it as a problem because white and middle class individuals are often in positions of power (Monroe, 2005). Further, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, sixty-eight percent of students in the nation's one hundred largest school districts are students of color, while around eighty-seven percent of teachers are white (1997, 2001). These findings indeed hold weight and can have implications on the populations it effects - Prudence Carter elucidates the idea of black students developing alternative cultural responses in a school setting, saying that black students will often reject dominant forms of cultural capital in schools when they feel that school officials are demeaning their own cultural resources (2003). However, the nature of the school that I conducted my fieldwork in prompted me to look at student-teacher interactions in an innovative way. The unique diversity that the school itself presented me with, being a complexly urban, multi-ethnic and multi-racial environment, created an opportunity to see cultural connectedness in a new light.

V. Student teacher connectedness through a new lens

In order to formulate a new lens derived from ideas of cultural conflict versus synchronization, I first had to acknowledge the emergence of youth culture that is apparent in the classrooms I did my fieldwork in. I looked at youth in this urban school setting – no matter their race, ethnicity, or culture, as a distinct population in and of itself. This distinct population has its own practices, ways of communicating, and ideologies, in essence likening its own culture. Prolific author James Coleman writes on this in his classic work, *The Adolescent Society* (1961). Although written over half a century ago, Coleman's description of adolescent culture connects

to withstanding attributes of youth today – such as little interest in academics and more interest in being accepted in social groups. In addition, he cites that the students respond to the demands put on them by teachers and administrators collectively. I establish that youth culture both exists and operates in the two classroom worlds that I examined. Connectedness between the students and teachers within these classrooms thus goes beyond being culturally specific and takes on a new meaning to encompass this notion of this diverse and urban youth culture.

The highly diverse nature of the school in question is manifested through both the multi-racial and ethno-racially mixed student population as well as the two teachers who I examined, who differed in gender and background. Although to date, research has had a binary view on urban classroom relations – teachers as white and middle class and students as minority black or Latino, the modern classroom no longer looks like this. These changing dynamics demand a further look into the relational dynamics between teachers and students. The idea of connectedness can and should be applied to students in an urban, diverse school setting. That is what this project seeks to do.

III. Study Contexts

A. Regional and School Context

The observed school is located in a city in Northern California with a population of 113,000. Around ninety-five percent of the population is high school educated or higher. The median household income level is around $61,000, with a homeownership rate of about forty percent. Demographically, the city is estimated to be sixty percent white, nineteen percent Asian, ten percent black, and ten percent Hispanic or Latino. Six percent reported to be two or more races[1].

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[1] http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0606000.html

The city has a history of housing discrimination that had effected the distribution of wealth and resources in the public schools until the implementation of a fair housing act, which prompted the school district to start a zoning plan, using, "socio-economic status and parent education levels to identify and redistribute students around their zones to create equitable schools and classrooms that represent [the city] as a whole, and not just the neighborhood in which the school is located" (Coffey, 2013). As a result, the school district's new statistics reflect a highly diverse population, with up to forty-six languages spoken throughout the primary and secondary schools as well as forty percent of students qualifying for free or reduced lunches.

The demographic enrollment of the school reflects the diverse community of the city itself. As of 2011, thirty-nine percent of enrolled students are white, twenty-six percent are African-American, thirteen percent are Hispanic, and nine percent are Asian American [2].

B. Classroom Context – The Small School

The small school-within-a-school that I observed is called the school of Communication Arts and Sciences, abbreviated as CAS. The CAS student cohort consists of two hundred and forty enrolled students within the larger school. Each grade has around sixty students, who have many of the same sixteen teachers from= their freshman through senior years. The community goals of CAS emphasize media literacy in the context of social justice, with a goal of developing a community of students, teachers, and parents to work towards social justice. The small school operates on mainly one floor of one building within the larger school.

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[2] www.berkeleyschools.net/wp.../112BHSSchoolProfilePress.pdf

C. Classroom Context – The Players

The observed are the eleventh grade cohort, made up of fifty-six students in CAS. The two teachers who are examined are a white male named Mr. Harris and an Armenian female named Ms. Moore. Mr. Harris is the cohort's American Literature teacher who also teaches the Advanced Placement supplement class after school. Ms. Moore is the eleventh grade U.S. History teacher. The select students who took part in the interview process are John, a white male, Adriana, a Latina, Froggy, a black male, Lotus, a Latina, Hayley, a mixed race female, and Jacob, a black male. All students were aged sixteen or seventeen at the time of the interviews.

D. Classroom Context – The classroom space

Ms. Moore's classroom is of average size on the third floor of the CAS building. The student desks are oriented towards the front entrance of the room where Ms. Moore's desk and projector are. There are two rows of desks lining three fourths of the walls. The room is brightly lit by natural light that enters through a wall of windows.

Mr. Harris' room is large and also brightly lit. Mirroring the orientation of Ms. Moore's room, there are rows of desk that line three walls and face the front of the room where the whiteboard is. Mr. Harris' desk is in the far left corner of the room facing a wall.

Ms. Moore's classroom is decorated with pictures of students and of her family, as well as posters with images of famous people in history or of famous quotes. Mr. Harris' classroom is mostly decorated with exemplary student work that he has put up on the walls. Students in both classrooms seem to move about the space freely when entering and exiting the class as well as on occasions during class, such as to use the restroom or speak with each teacher privately.

V. Methodology

I observed classes for a period of six weeks, twice a week. Observation times were determined by when each teacher taught the eleventh grade cohort – which is spread across two class periods for each teacher. Therefore, Ms. Moore's class was observed over the course of her third and fourth periods, and Mr. Harris, over the course of his fifth and sixth periods. I recorded my observations in a notebook, transcribed them onto a Word document, and then color-coded for emerging themes in the data. During the fifth and sixth weeks of observation, I interviewed the six student subjects during their lunch period of forty minutes. Essential to the interview process was the building trust with the students. I built this trust during the preceding weeks by positioning myself in a specific way to the students as a student-researcher, who was not much older than they. I made the conscious effort to not align myself fully with the teachers who I observed and took time before and after classes to engage with the students as friends – I got to know many of the students on a personal level by discussing a range of topics with them as well as being open with them about personal things in my life; many of the students seemed to be interested in the college experience beyond academics and I complied with this by sharing stories about my own experiences. Interview times ranged from twenty-seven minutes to forty-four minutes, either falling short of or running over allotted time for lunch. Subjects were compensated five dollars for their participation. Of the sample size, the six subjects picked to participate had stood out during the observation period. They were selected from a convenience sample size of twenty students who had returned their consent and assent forms within a week of distribution. Interviews were audio recorded with consent of participants and parents as well as documented in a notebook, then typed up and organized by interview question so I could conduct

comparisons and analysis. I then coded them for similarities and differences in subject responses that mapped onto existing emerging themes.

IV. Dimensions

A. Communication

The ways of communication through which these teachers connect or disconnect with their students is operationalized through two means. The first means is through the use of what I call 'youth lingo.' Youth lingo is informal and colloquial words and phrases, and is most often used at times when either teacher addresses the class as a whole. The second means of identified communication is the engagement with and acceptance of a call-and-response, loosely structured form of dialogue between students and teacher as well as among students. This is in direct contrast to the typical and traditional forms of communication in a classroom, which are denoted by hand-raising, turn taking, and written form. Gilbert and Gay note that cooperative and loosely structured environments demarcate black students' learning styles specifically, where spoken word is the primary form of communication[3]. It is precisely in this urban school setting where these alternative forms of communication take place in different ways and have different meanings and implications for the two teachers.

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[3] Gilbert, S. E., & Gay, G. (1985). Improving the success in school of poor black children. *Phi Delta Kappan, 67*, 133-137.

Ms. Moore

Ms. Moore uses this communication framework when conducting her class. A typical day in Ms. Moore's class begins with a warm up – the students each have a journal that is kept in the classroom, and they pick theirs up before taking their seats at the start of each class. The warm up question is in response to a video or audio clip of a news article or a question that references a previous class or lesson. The warm up section takes approximately ten minutes, during which students are settling in, writing in their journals, and often lightly chatting with their neighbors. After this, Ms. Moore calls upon students to read what they have written or to informally give their responses to the question and a class discussion ensues. This is the first point in the class period where the opportunity for call-and-response methods of communication is endorsed. Once class gets under way, the informal style of communication loosely flows, as the atmosphere of Ms. Moore's classroom encourages group engagement. It is only when multiple students are excited to speak that Ms. Moore begins to create an ad hoc ordering of students upon which to call on after each previous student is done speaking. This 'popcorn' discussion allows for ideas to flow freely – students rarely take advantage of this opportunity to share their thoughts by straying off topic. In fact, it is precisely in these informal moments that Ms. Moore keenly listens to students' comments and often illuminates a student's idea that perhaps he or she would have not been confident enough to raise his or her own hand to say.

There is also ample opportunity for call-and-response during the lecture portion of the class period. While Ms. Moore is in fact at the front of the room reading the slides that are on the projector, akin to a more typical and formal note-taking session, the students in her class are intermittently sharing their ideas and making connections to the material. For example, upon a lecture on the Treaty of Versailles, a black male student named Brandon calls out and references

a lecture from the previous year in World History that Ms. Moore had taught as well. Ms. Moore is receptive to this connection and relays the information to the class as a whole. Later after class, Ms. Moore pulls Brandon aside and says; "You know it made my day when you mentioned something that you learned earlier in this class, thank you." Brandon smiles and responds "Thank you for teaching it to me!" It is this type of interaction that is facilitated by the call-and-response method of communication that Ms. Moore employs.

The second dimension of communication that Ms. Moore utilizes on a daily basis is use of informal 'youth lingo.' The employment of this dimension is twofold: Ms. Moore both engages youth lingo with the students herself and is receptive when a student delivers it to her. In terms of engaging with youth lingo herself, several instances are noted throughout the observation period. At the start of class one day, Ms. Moore notices a black male student with his iPod on and his headphones in his ears. Ms. Moore says "*Yo*, that was the bell, turn that off." On another occasion, Ms. Moore asks the class if she had previously displayed a historical image on the projector: "I showed you pictures of the *dudes* already, didn't I?" Later in the semester, Ms. Moore calls upon an Asian male student to share his suggestions for a hypothetical economic dilemma. She further elucidates his thoughts by saying, "Yes, that might be something everyone would be *down for.*" When discussing the involvement of men in the women's rights movements of the late 19th century during a documentary screening in class, Ms. Moore pauses the video to comment, saying, "This was a *pretty cool move* for the 1840's, wasn't it?" and the class nods and laughs in agreement. Later, during the same documentary Ms. Moore pauses the video again after a snide comment from a famous feminist is quoted: " Do you guys get what she said? This is old school roasting! This is how they roasted back in the day!" On yet another occasion, Ms. Moore mentions to the class that they will be taking notes on their own lined

sheets of paper and mentions how the 12th grade teachers have requested that the 11th grade teachers prepare their students more for note taking. Ms. Moore explain this to them and says that they should get out their papers "…to practice *freestylin'"* to which students playfully scoff and smile in response. Lastly, upon overhearing a student talk about drinking an artificial energy drink, Ms. Moore advises him against drinking it and says that it will kill him. The student responds that the energy drink will kill him in the same manner that any other unhealthy food will, to which Ms. Moore, in a serious tone as to convey her intensity on the matter, says "It *ain't* like bacon, bacon kills you slowly… this will literally stop your heart."

In terms of her reception to her students' use of youth lingo, many instances are cited as well. During a discussion of the reparations that Germany was ordered to pay after World War One, an Asian male student shouts out, "That was why Hitler was *hella* mad for World War Two, huh?" Ms. Moore responds to this comment by confirming his idea and begins to discuss the implications of the reparations plan. On another occasion, an inquisitive Froggy asks during a discussion of conflict in Japan and China, "Why are they *trippin'*?" Ms. Moore responds: "That is an excellent question" and explains her thoughts to the class.

Several students noted the uniqueness of Ms. Moore's methods of communication, specifically regarding her use of informal, often call-and-response dialogue techniques. However, these students emphasized Ms. Moore's ability to keep the class on track and not let them stray very far off topic:

> **Lotus:** I think she knows how to keep us under control so we are not all just talking like all the time and the class is pretty under control.

Hayley: I cant remember exactly what we were talking about, but I remember sitting in class it was maybe during a warm up discussion when it really took on it's own sort of… it became its own entity and we started really getting into a discussion it was just something that happened to be a tangent but the entire class had a lot to say about it and she facilitated the discussion without hindering it or holding it back, and she would gently steer it by proposing a few viewpoints or questions that she had us discuss and it really showed that she wont get in the way of other peoples views but she'll provide her own and let people discuss it and let it take its own direction in the class.

<div align="center">Mr. Harris</div>

Mr. Harris' employment of the examined communicational styles is perhaps more prevalent and nuanced in some ways and fairly lacking in others. In regards to his use of youth lingo, there are only a handful of occasions that he spoke in a manner less than professional and scholarly – he once refers to the whole of the class directly "*People,* here is what I need you to do." Another time, when joking about a student's vulgar and humorous micro fiction, he says; "That is really *messed up*." At times he corrects students' speech when they address him, only once answering a student when the student colloquially referred to Mr. Harris as *bro: "* Where you reading from *bro*?" On one occasion, Froggy raises his hand and asks in an exaggerated professional tone, "Mr. Harris, may I please be excused to use the restroom?" The students around Froggy laugh at his apparent mocking of the way he perceives Mr. Harris to speak. In terms of Mr. Harris' use of call-and-response, this informal, dialogue based way of interacting with his students is the basis of his class construct.

Each day in Mr. Harris' class begins with a warm up writing exercise – there is a prompt on the board and Mr. Harris takes time to explain the assignment, which is usually writing some sort of micro fiction to which the theme relates to a one that the students are learning about in the

novel that they are reading as a class. Before the class is able to settle down to write, there is often back and forth 'popcorn' discussion that relates to the topic at hand equally as often as it is about something that the students feel is pertinent at the time, whether it be related to academics, an occurrence at lunch period, or pop culture. After approximately ten minutes of writing, Mr. Harris facilitates students who want to share their work with the class. Students will loosely call out to share their work or to nominate other students to read. Mr. Harris is receptive to the calling out and rarely tells a student to raise their hand. The 'main event' of the class begins typically halfway into the class period itself and is often centered on discussion of the chapters that the students were required to read the previous night. This is the point in the class where tangents take off and the class discussion is often taken to areas that are somewhat unrelated to the original intended topic of the day. The call-and-response between students and teacher as well as among students thus appears to be the exact element that facilitates this straying off topic, whether it is endorsed and encouraged by Mr. Harris or not on any given day. Many days the bell rings, indicating the end of class, and the class as a whole has attended to a fraction of the agenda for the day. In these instances Mr. Harris typically advises the students to finish the daily assignment for homework.

Many students expressed frustration over the amount of tangent based discussion that takes place in Mr. Harris' class.

> **John:** I really like Harris as a male figure in my life, he is really smart and he… it's kind of confusing with Harris though, he is a really nice guy too in general its just, sometimes in the classroom we will have too much discussion and that's why it will lead to so much talking in the classroom in general because the discussion topics become normal in the class, just to talk …Yeah, its kind of like an effect where once one person wants to get off topic with what they're talking about they will talk to

someone else and it is like popcorn… sometimes he can be involved in this and sometimes not.. but he is able to run the classroom like that, and when the topic hasn't been so changed, but when it goes back to like shoes or sports, then he totally has just lost the class…

Adriana: ... and a lot of the time we don't get any work done in the class, a lot of the time it's the whole period just telling us a story of like this happened, then this, etc.

Froggy: … but to be honest, we can only do the warm up for the whole entire class and we wont even get through the whole criteria the whole agenda, so to be honest I fee like, even though we learn a lot, and even though I love class discussions… you get to learn and hear about everyone's ideas, and things going on within society and the world but I feel as if that's all we do, and I'm not saying there's nothing wrong with that, but that can only go for so long…

… Yeah I think some kids kind of enjoy it because some kids don't even want to do work so they keep talking keep talking some kids want them to raise your hand again 'cause when we talk, the class go by like that – all of a sudden there's 15 minutes left and he is trying to compact 3 activities into 15 minutes and it doesn't work, so he's like, so you know we are going to do this tomorrow, and then with Harris, he's like, 'oh you know we have homework,' and the next day he wont collect it or stamp it, and like, he like, what's the point of me doing it if he is not going to collect it?

Hayley expresses that the students are aware of the ease to which this loosely structured dialogue style can stray off topic:

Hayley: Yeah no, we have a lot of sort of distractions in the class especially because we can get off on a lot of tangents easily… we know Harris so well already that we sort of know what we can and can't get away with, so we will push what we can get away with to the very edge, and it will just get out of control sometimes, we wont get a lot done and we can see the frustration on his face when we don't get

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through like half of the agenda and completely disregard most of his lesson plan just to hang out.

Well Harris is sort of the universal tangent master, where any and all tangents go, pretty much all the time…

John creates a simile to explain his feelings:

John: I enjoy it (the warm up writing) a lot it's a great way to get the class started, it's just like a rocket, it just shoots up and then it starts to fall because the warm up totally put you on path but once we get into the whole discussion it just kind of falls apart. Once we start to discuss a topic it totally loses, it just gets off track, like, 'man you had it going, keep it going.'

I think he spends a lot of time having to tell people to keep it down or settle down or trying to get the class' attention, because the students inside the class have gotten so used to just talking about whatever it might be it might be the warm up it might be the prompt on the board it might be "hey go ahead and talk about what you did this weekend " and they are like "Oh awesome I can't wait to talk about how I went to go get these shoes" and that's how it starts.

Analysis

Several important facets come through this data regarding the fine line between specific communication techniques as a buttress or a hindrance to a teacher's perceived abilities in the classroom by his or her students. While the aforementioned instances of youth lingo might appear to be trivial, the implications of a teacher's way of speaking can greatly increase or decrease his or her connectedness with their students. Mr. Harris exhibits a more traditional 'teacherly' way of speaking, shying away from both using and sanctioning youth lingo in his classroom. It appears that the some students outwardly recognize this; hence Froggy's mocking tone and diction when addressing Mr. Harris.

In contrast, Ms. Moore exhibits ease when switching from a more traditional and scholarly way of speaking to her selective use of youth lingo. The students as a whole seem to react either positively or neutrally to her diction – that is, it seems as though Ms. Moore's use of youth lingo is at any given time normalized in the classroom or is met with a jovial response from students who find it amusing.

In terms of the use of call-and-response method of dialogue and, more generally, loosely based informal discussion, the two teachers diverge once again. Whereas Ms. Moore uses this informal discussion method to her advantage, Mr. Harris is inhibited by it at times. This is not to say that the informal discussion method is not a positive one. If students know they have the safe space to say something when they want to, they are perhaps likely to get out their ideas more often and not be discouraged by the hoops that they might otherwise have to jump through – such as waiting for the lecture to be over, where in that time period an insightful thought or inquisitive comment might be forgotten. The students are constantly engaged with the material, and by communicating their ideas via spoken word, which most students have the greatest ease with, little is left unsaid.

B. Sharing of Identity

The second element of teacher connectedness is the sharing of identity. For the purposes of this paper, identity is defined as an individual's self-concept from perceived membership in a social group (Tajfel et. al., 1986). In these specific classroom settings, the sharing of identity and the self manifested mostly though anecdotal stories as well as with the levels comfort that

students felt to engage with and respond to the unique identities of each teacher. In general, the sharing of teacher identities breeds comfort in the classroom[4].

Ms. Moore

Ms. Moore is a self-described open person with her students, citing that many of them have her cell phone number: "It's not a secret." Daily occurrences and discussions in class often lead Ms. Moore to reference something about her own life and experiences that she would promptly share with the class. Ms. Moore speaks about her young son in regards to both the trivial, such as how much his preschool education costs per year, as well as more serious matters, such as the trauma that he experienced when their house was broken into in an armed robbery. Ms. Moore also often references stories from her past such as her high school experiences as well as her family's story of immigration to the United States. There are other ways that Ms. Moore shares her identity to her students. The students in the class after the lunch period often come to class with their meals. Ms. Moore has a host of condiments in addition to cleaning supplies (paper towels, baby wipes, hand sanitizer) on her desk, and each student moves easily about the classroom to get what they need from her stock. In another way, both the male and female students have on many occasions publicly commented on Ms. Moore's style of dress and hair.

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[4] It is noted that each teacher has taught this cohort of students in some capacity since the students were in ninth grade; this comfort is thought to have been built from many years of experience with one another.

Each student described many of the same elements of Ms. Moore's identity that were observed:

John: She's gay; she particularly goes with the democratic, liberal, protests, more than one son.

Adriana: I know that she has a son, and she talks about events that happen in her life with him and recently she was telling us about someone was trying to break into her house and telling us about how she has to take (her son) to therapy classes and things like that, we know that her and her ex-wife, they're not together, I know that she's dating someone now…

Froggy: (Ms. Moore) wasn't born here, from Armenia, lived with father who was a real intellect into politics, stern father, she loves history,

Lotus: I know that she has a son and she loves her son very very much, I know she has stepchildren form a previous marriage, I know she was married and divorced to a teacher that teaches here, currently has a girlfriend that she is in a relationship with, lesbian… oh and she lost her father… um I think when she was in college.

Hayley: She's very open, yeah, about her cultural history, her family history, um a lot of views about her family and her experiences growing up and her sexuality and her home life, so she doesn't keep anything a secret from us if she feels like it's something we should know, if its relevant, to whatever we're talking about, she'll let us know she is not afraid to share her personal experiences. And it's nice to have something to hear something from a teacher…

Mr. Harris

Mr. Harris also displays openness when it comes to sharing of the self with his students. In a private conversation between class periods, he said that he truly feels that the students know

him and care about him, making note how he spends most of his time with the students than anyone else in his life. Mr. Harris readily tells anecdotes of his life, including but not limited to stories of vacations that he and his family take as well as his experiences and attitudes during his 30's. A few of the students express comfort around his identity as well: one student publically addressed Mr. Harris as a dinosaur, to which he laughed. On other occasions, the joking manner in which Mr. Harris approaches students can signify his own comfort – he approached Lotus with her boyfriend's graded essay, citing that it was "awkward" but nonetheless asked if she could do him the favor of giving the work to her boyfriend. Lotus jokingly refused to do it while simultaneously accepting the essay and telling Mr. Harris he is a "weirdo."

Many of the students also expressed that they knew a lot about Mr. Harris.

John: Ohhhh, Like I think I know a lot more about Harris (than I do about Ms. Moore) because me and him will talk about sports when the class hasn't started, he talks to me about how he likes to go cycling, or he went on a marathon run with his wife… he has two kids or three, he has a son that goes here, so he will um, talk to me about what him and his son did or something, it's cool.

Adriana: He shares a lot, I know he has a son that goes here, I know he is married, I know how he injured his foot, he has told us stories about who he runs these marathons, we know like, just like Ms. Moore we know about his high school life, like "oh this is what happened to me in high school", or "I looked like this", he just has a lot of stories.

Froggy: Him and his wife are both teachers, 4 kids, one of them goes here, um he loves to bike, always has a bike story for us everyday, biking up a hill, taking a bike ride for 20 miles, he doesn't hold that back, and um what else, uhh, he just

shares about his parents sometimes, his marriage, things like that… all our teachers are very open with that, they don't hold too much back.

Lotus: 3 kids, bike, he is Jewish, mmm, Oh I know how he met his wife!

Hayley further describes how she personally feels comfortable with him enough to share her own stories:

Hayley: I see Mr. Harris as a personal, like… instead of like a mentor he is like my "ventor" because I can come to him with anything and outside of school I am super comfortable with telling him anything I need to get off my chest I have come to him with very, very, very personal stuff, with like, relationship problems, family problems, home problems, um, or just academic stuff that I feel comfortable enough confessing to him.

It is apparent that the mutual sharing of identities between Mr. Harris and some of his students allows for a greater range of personal relationships to develop and for playful teasing and jest to occur. However, it is apparent that the boundaries of this are tenuous at best, as made clear by Adriana's experiences:

Adriana: Essentially he called me an asshole – he said "you make an ass out of you" and I was like "I'm sorry I just don't think I'm an asshole." Like things like that that he does I feel like he gets too comfortable or he says things like that that really could be misconstrued. Yeah and sometimes it's like he doesn't think before he speaks. As a teacher I feel like you just shouldn't say that…

Analysis

The meaning of identity sharing seems to parallel one another for Mr. Harris and Ms. Moore. Where they diverge, however, lies in the manifestation of the comfort that comes from the sharing of the self. The students were asked to describe both teachers in five words. Common characterizations of Ms. Moore were "open," "caring," "honest," "opinionated," "accepting," "loving," and "nurturing." It is evident that Ms. Moore shares herself in a particular way with a particular effect – appearing to be approachable and "real" to her students. Ms. Moore's sharing of her identity allows for students to feel like they know her as more than just a person and thus are able to connect with her beyond an academic level. Once this level is achieved, there is room for humor and compassion.

The common words to describe Mr. Harris were "funny," "intelligent," "composed," "cool," "nice" and, once, "rude" and "clueless." It is apparent that Mr. Harris shares himself in a way that reaps both benefits and consequences. While some students, such as Hayley, find comfort in her own knowledge of Mr. Harris' persona and are able to reciprocate the gestures, others, such as Adriana, feel that he oversteps boundaries at time due to his position of being "comfortable" with the students. In this way, there seems to be a sort of "Goldilocks" standard of self-sharing – that is, not too little, not too much, but just the right amount to engender sincerity between student and teacher without running the risk of offending one another.

C. Discipline and Management Styles

Perhaps the most ubiquitous and complex element yet, the discipline and classroom management styles of Mr. Harris and Ms. Moore provide insight to a range of issues that envelop the preceding examined dimensions. Both classroom management and discipline fall into the

larger category and occur during what is deemed "non-teaching moments." Non-teaching moments refer to any non-academic occurrence in the classroom setting where Mr. Harris and Ms. Moore interact with one or more students. Classroom management is distinguished from discipline in multiple and changing ways in any given classroom; in the classroom worlds of Mr. Harris and Ms. Moore, it is anything from calling a student out and speaking with them directly to a non-verbal gesture to indicate a direction or command. In the context and for the purpose of this study, classroom management usually does not involve any consequences or ramifications for the student in question beyond the moment of interaction. Discipline is denoted as the employment of outside resources, that is, the use of On-Campus Intervention, shorthanded as OCI, which is the school-wide resource center in moments of trouble, serving beyond detention purposes to include counseling as well as a student court. Discipline can also include any interaction that has ramifications beyond the moment of interaction, be it detention or a student getting sent out of the classroom.

Discipline and classroom management, while often employed at different times under distinctive circumstances, are intrinsically related to one another and both operate within the classroom world – even though discipline typically utilizes outside resources, it is important to note that disciplinary practices are not excluded from the confines of the classroom walls. Rather, it is up to the tendencies, attitudes, and momentary discretion of each teacher to utilize management versus discipline techniques at any given non-teaching moment. Furthermore, to distinguish between classroom management and discipline is to acknowledge that the two are not in stark contrast with one another, but rather on a continuum. The quick, efficient, and present-focused techniques of classroom management can eventually slide into the drawn-out process of discipline in a classroom. This is evidenced in the observations.

The students themselves are keenly aware of classroom management versus discipline techniques in Ms. Moore and Mr. Harris' classrooms respectively. They indicate their awareness through verbal cues that they used to describe both classroom environments. Throughout the interviews, students referenced a teacher "keeping us on track," "staying on task," and mentioned notions of "authority" to denote instances that they perceived to be classroom management. Conversely, students referenced times when they were sent to OCI or "kicked out of the class" to denote instances of discipline. These constructions of discipline and classroom management that the students created mapped on to the same constructions that I noted during my observation period.

Ms. Moore

Ms. Moore deals with non-teaching moments in a fashion likening classroom management more than discipline. In one instance she described her classroom as never being an issue of discipline but only of classroom management, making the distinction between the two on her own. She says that classroom management is comprised of two elements: firstly, having a lesson plan that students respect and believe in and giving the students ownership in the classroom. Secondly, Ms. Moore cites relationship building, or "meeting them where they're at" as a key element to classroom management.

During class, Ms. Moore is in a constant state of alertness and attention to the students to make sure that they are focusing on the academic lesson of that day. When the bell rings each day to start the class, Ms. Moore will call to the class to "have a seat, have a seat." If, during a lecture or during a warm up writing assignment, a student seems to stray and begins to talk or whisper to their neighbor, Ms. Moore will call them out by saying their names, usually to the

effect of a muttered apology from the student in question, followed by the student quickly refocusing to their task. Often Ms. Moore will indicate her awareness of a disruptive student with a nonverbal gesture, such as a nod in their direction, to signal to a student to pay attention. Only rarely will Ms. Moore physically move through the classroom space to attend to a trouble moment with a student; most often, the management is loud, public, and quick. During lectures, Ms. Moore will notice when students stray as a group and will incorporate "quieting" phrases into her lecture such as "shhh" and "please listen." Alternatively, she might make an announcement regarding the class disruptions: "This isn't working for me, the side conversation, so stop talking, even if you're talking to yourself, just stop it now" or "I'm not ok with this talking." Let it be noted that her tone is serious, yet fleeting – she does not seem to hold a grudge against the students after a particular non-teaching moment, rather moves past it quickly and returns to a friendly tone as she returns to the lesson at hand. Towards the end of each class, if Ms. Moore senses the class getting antsy, she will say things such as "stay will me please" or "Fifteen more seconds guys" in an attempt to hold the class' attention until the official end of the class period. There are moments when she does not seem concerned with classroom management, as evidenced by her bodily positioning in the classroom space, such as being by her desk in the corner with her back turned from the class to focus on her computer screen. In these moments, chatter might ensue, but it is usually eradicated by the time Ms. Moore turns back towards the classroom.

Many students had opinions regarding Ms. Moore's dealings with non-teaching moments.

John: Never any bad interactions with her… I don't think so.
She is really good at… um… shutting things down when they start to get too rowdy noisy, she has definitely control of the classroom, she establishes leadership as a teacher, very strongly, but she is not mean or harsh about it,

she just wants to get stuff done and when people need to be quiet and the class needs to get going she's like "ay be quiet"… I don't think I've seen her send someone OCI – the way she runs the classroom it doesn't have to be that way 'cause she is a teacher that students like to work with personally.

… generally the way she likes to establish order in the classroom is she just shouts it out the room because she wants everybody to know like, hold up here, be quiet, she doesn't want to be so attentive to one person because it is a pretty big classroom and she wants everybody to know its time to be quiet.

Adriana: There's something about Ms. Moore that she just gives off this… strict… vibe, not strict, but she gives us an authority vibe I guess and people know to keep their place but there are times when people act up in class and they'll say something silly or dumb and she'll just be sarcastic but at the same time she'll let them know "alright lets get back on topic" but she doesn't like, I've rarely seen Ms. Moore send somebody out for acting up, there is never really any trouble in her class besides people just being late. I've never seen her have to break up a fight or never… never…I think its just how she opens up her class, how she handles her class, how she handles herself, she knows what she's doing… there is something, I don't know what it is.

Froggy: There is not too much of a disciplinary problem within the classroom… She kind of makes us feel comfortable while directing us in the correct path…its not a thing to make you feel ashamed or to put you down like you did something wrong, its just to get you back to pay attention to get the full effect of the class and criteria

Hayley: Usually whenever there's a disruption in class, if it's small she will give it some space and let it sort itself out and if it doesn't she'll have to stop

and usually sort of give the people who were doing the disruption the time
that they need and say "are you ready to let everyone else learn because
you're distracting everyone else right now."

… oh yeah, she is very upfront and … I think that's how she pushes people
to say, you know, you're not causing trouble in the background, you're
causing trouble in front of everyone else…

Jacob: When she calls out a person the whole class knows, I mean she does
that so we don't do it again…

Mr. Harris

Mr. Harris deals with non-teaching moments in a variety of ways. Many instances
illuminate this. Upon the start of class, Mr. Harris might give instructions for the warm up
assignment and immediately begin walking towards his desk. The volume of chatter might
increase and Mr. Harris does not seem to engage in management tactics, rather letting the
conversation fade on its own, which it eventually does. Upon beginning the lecture or main
lesson of the day, Mr. Harris sometimes interrupts himself to engage in eye contact with a
specific disruptive student to get them back on track. On one occasion, Mr. Harris gets into a
dialogue with a mixed race male student when the student sits in an unassigned seat: "Can we
skip the part where you try to sit somewhere else and I move you?" The student responds:
"What's the difference between this seat and that one (his assigned seat)?" And Harris retorts:
"Because we didn't talk about it before you moved." The student stays in the unassigned seat for
the remainder of the class, never being told to move again from Mr. Harris. Mr. Harris seems to
begin many of his non-teaching interactions in the same manner, alerting the student in question
that he shouldn't be having to have the conversation with them at all: "Jacob, Jacob, can you sit

up *without me having to ask you*?" Jacob is often involved in the non-teaching moments as well, where Mr. Harris is telling Jacob to sit up and that he cannot sleep in the classroom.

Mr. Harris also employs a method that diverges from Ms. Moore's public form of classroom management. While he often does engage with students publically during non-teaching moments, he also is seen approaching individual students during class and whispering to them, in what is deemed "private moments." Inaudible to the rest of the class, the private moments either end with a student redirecting his attention or being sent out of the classroom to OCI, which happened twice over the course of observation. On one occasion, Mr. Harris has a private moment with a Latina named Joanna, who mouths to him after he has turned his back "F*** you too." It is unclear what the dialogue was between the two during this private moment. Joanna is one of two students who had been sent out of the room to OCI for unclear reasons. The second student, a white male named Connor, was sent out on the same day and told by Mr. Harris to "take your backpack with you… quickly…quickly." Mr. Harris never raises his voice, rather lowering it in moments of trouble. The students who are not directly involved in the particular non-teaching moments vary in their reactions; often a small cluster of students will laugh at the situation or confer with one another about what has just happened.

Students vary in their opinions of how Mr. Harris handles non-teaching moments:

> **John:** Freshman year, I think one time he kicked me out, and I don't even really remember what it was for, I think it was, he gets really upset when you put your head on the table, I just had a really rough night… he was like, "Alright you need to go" and I was like, "Yeah, alright, whatever"… it wasn't even that I was talking too much or I was throwing something, it was just that I had my head on the table… It was kind of negative because I was like, "man I'm listening to your speech I'm not

even talking, we are not even writing" … but I didn't care, next day new day whatever.

Adriana: I don't know I feel like people don't take Mr. Harris seriously just because he is so comfortable with the students and when like a lot of the students, or that group (refers to a group of male students), they'll kind of mock him and it makes the environment and the students not take him seriously…its just the way he handles it, it just makes him look like a dick. It's just his personality when he comes off like that it just makes him look rude… I seriously feel like Harris sometimes… like he just can be really rude.

Froggy: If somebody is doing something funny (Mr. Harris) will say something and everybody will laugh, or then Harris will be like "This is not the time or place" and then everybody will start laughing.
Harris has sent me to OCI plenty of times for falling asleep in his class… I'll be like pissed off a couple of times because I'm like, "what the hell are you sending me to OCI for, for like falling asleep" and its like, that's stupid… yeah its ridiculous.
I think sometimes he can be a little over reactive, um, its just Harris, its just the way he goes about solving things, there is nothing you can do about it, you can't change his mind for sending people out it's just his way to deal with everything.

Hayley: Yeah no, we have a lot of sort of distractions in the class especially because we can get off on a lot of tangents easily… And part of the reason is that we are so comfortable with him I feel like we don't give him the respect that this class deserves… I don't know I personally think he should be doing more, because we are both getting down to business in this class and I don't want to lose that momentum, I feel like a lot of bullshit could be cut out if he had more you know more of an iron hammer…

Regarding the private moments, Hayley says:

> **Hayley:** …he will try to be more personal, take you aside, and figure out what's going on and get the back story … oh my god the rest of the class is chaos, because we know what we can and can't do, we will take that opportunity to do something we can't normally do.

> **Jacob:** I'm in the class and I'm like right in the middle and I have my backpack on and my friend is holding on to my backpack and my backpack rips, so I sit down in my seat and I'm looking in my backpack and I have my headphones in and there is nothing playing. So I'm like sitting trying to look at my back pack and he is like, "device" – like give me the device, I'm like, "I'm not using it, the headphones are in" so I'm like, you can have the head phones, and he was like, device, and I'm like, no. So I walked out… super pissed… I walked straight to OCI so I can tell them that that's not right because he was going to write a deferral that I was defiant for not giving him the device but I wasn't using the device so you can't take it from me.

Analysis

What does classroom management and discipline look like in these two classrooms, and how do they connect or diverge?

It is seen that Ms. Moore uses classroom management techniques to deal with these so-called non-teaching moments. Her methods of management seems to stem from a constant state of awareness of where the class is physically, mentally, and attitude-wise at any given moment. In this way, she is quickly able to eradicate any disruptions that might arise and then return to the

lesson of the day. The fluidity to which Ms. Moore moves from troubled, non-teaching moments back to academic work resonates well with the students; there is no dwelling on issues that detract from the learning experience, and many of them express that they appreciate this. Ms. Moore does not have issues with discipline within her classroom; rather, she deals with naturally occurring everyday disruptions using classroom management techniques.

Mr. Harris deals with non-teaching moments in a more unique, complex, and varied way than Ms. Moore. He employs classroom management techniques differently and somewhat less efficiently – instead of calling out a student's name to get their attention, Mr. Harris sometimes engages in a dialogue with the student that does not seem to be lucrative in the sense that the student's attention is not redirected, and thus class time is taken without the benefit of a successful moment of management. These inconsistencies in his non-teaching moments have further implications when he uses discipline as a form of classroom management. In other words, Mr. Harris uses methods that have ramifications for the individual student and the class itself during certain moments where he other times, and where Ms. Moore always, uses methods that do not have ramifications beyond the moment of trouble. By sending out a student for discrepancies such as having his or her backpack on the desk or putting their head down to sleep in class, the classroom mood changes – some students laugh at the student enduring the discipline while others seem to undermine Mr. Harris' authority by muttering or scoffing at the disciplinary action taken. Further, when asked about Mr. Harris' methods of non-teaching moments, many students cited that they do not take him seriously when he disciplines or tries to manage the class. Froggy says of Mr. Harris: "I think he sometimes could be a little uptight, just has his panties in a bunch, certain things he kind of takes too seriously." Lotus adds: "He

definitely gets into it, because he over reacts a lot, so I think like when he over reacts it causes more problems because it gets the students pissed off."

VI. Exploring Classroom Legitimacy

How do communication techniques, sharing of identity, and discipline and management styles come together in the classroom? In what ways do students make sense of these dimensions to construct their perceptions of the classroom world and operate within it?

Classroom Legitimacy

When looked at holistically, the examined dimensions point to a salient and important discovery: classroom legitimacy is a major determinant of a successful learning environment. Classroom legitimacy expresses the amount of trust and confidence that the student has in the classroom world – trust that their teachers understand them, trust that they are cared for, and trust that they are learning.

Communication style and sharing of identity essentially foil into the third dimension, classroom management and discipline. Classroom management strategies utilize and reflect a high degree of legitimacy that is built from certain types of communication styles and sharing of identity, while the use of coercive capacities, such as discipline methods, is a reflection of a lower degree of legitimacy, also built from certain styles of communication and sharing of identity.

Ms. Moore and Mr. Harris exhibit somewhat different communication styles in their classrooms. Ms. Moore utilizes youth lingo as well as call-and-response based discussion in a

way that encourages students feel at ease to share their thoughts in a colloquial, comfortable manner. While Mr. Harris does not typically use or encourage youth lingo, he highly condones call-and-response based discussion as a method of communication, and to interesting effects – students do feel at ease to share their thoughts in a comfortable setting, yet also demonstrate and express that the discussions can often lead astray at the expense of "getting through" the academic lesson of the day.

The degree and types of identity sharing add to the equation of classroom legitimacy. Both Ms. Moore and Mr. Harris share their identities with their students. This is shown to breed comfort between students and teacher, a crucial element to teacher legitimacy. The sharing of identity by these individuals allows for the students to be able to distinguish their teachers' characters as "teacher" and as "person." However, there is an aforementioned "Goldilocks" amount of identity sharing and determines where this type of comfort can take a class. As exhibited, comfort in a classroom can go too far when students begin to undermine the seriousness of a teacher and alternatively when a teacher oversteps a comfort boundary towards a student. Many of Mr. Harris' students admit that they do not take him seriously as a teacher – they undermine his authority. Further, as Adriana noted with her recollection of him calling her an "asshole", Mr. Harris feels comfortable enough to engage in light teasing with his students, however risky that may be.

As a result of these two dimensions operating differently in the two classroom worlds, classroom management and discipline look different and call upon a truth: the sharing of identity and communication styles, mixed with and determining discipline and classroom management techniques, can be both an enabler of classroom legitimacy as well as a barrier to it. In Ms. Moore's classroom, these dimensions come together in such a way to enable feelings of

legitimacy among students – students express feelings that they are cared for, understood, and learning. In Mr. Harris' classroom, the dimensions come together more tenuously and sometimes act as a barrier to classroom legitimacy – the same students express that they are somewhat disregarded, at times misunderstood, and occasionally not actively learning.

VII. Recommendations for future research

The findings presented here point to salient issues regarding youth culture and how a teacher's maneuvers within the classroom space can implicate elements that can add to or detract from classroom legitimacy. High degrees of classroom legitimacy are ideal – it means that students feel they are being cared for, understood, and taught. Alternatively, low degrees of classroom legitimacy can be detrimental. While neither Ms. Moore nor Mr. Harris reflects this exact binary, the examined dimensions operating must be further explored in order to begin to make positive changes for students in the classroom environment. Studies that look to each of the dimensions – communication, sharing of identity, and discipline and management styles, individually will behoove educational scholars in understanding with greater depth the effects of each on classroom legitimacy. In terms of recommendations for educators, awareness of the delicate issues at hand is a good place to start. Each dimension warrants attention from a teacher so that they are able monitor their own behaviors. Lastly, experience is crucial. Connected teachers are those who have spent considerable time around youth populations. Teachers and future teachers must make commitments to spend time in the classroom fostering classroom legitimacy, whichever shape it may take for each distinct teacher and his or her unique classroom world.

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VIII. APPENDIX A

1. What do you want your pseudonym to be?
2. What classes are you taking this year? Which is your favorite?
3. If you could teach a class that you are currently taking, which one would it be and why?
   *** Ok, lets talk about Ms. Moore first:
4. What do you think of Ms. Moore – as a teacher and as a person?

5. If you could describe Ms. Moore in 5 words, what would they be?

6. How much do you know about Ms. Moore as a person, outside of school? (be ready to do follow up questions) What kinds of things do you know?

7. Tell me a story of a time about being in Ms. Moore's class that reveals how you feel about her – this story can be about any interaction that you have had with her. What do you think this story shows about Ms. Moore?

8. What kinds of interactions do you have with Ms. Moore on a daily basis? On a weekly basis? An example of an interaction is anything that happens between you two that isn't about something academic, that is, not what you are learning in class at that moment. (frame this first, describe times when you notice that the class gets a bit disruptive) (For example, not when she calls on you to answer a question about the warm –up).

9. Tell me a story about a time that you were involved in an interaction, good or bad her.
   a) Give an account of what happened with beginning, middle and end, using your own words
      (minimal probes: "Then what happened" "Can you tell me more?")
   b) How did you feel during the beginning middle and end of the conflict?
   c) What do you think caused the interaction to begin in the first place?
   d) What do you think ended the conflict interaction?
      Is there anything that you wish you had done differently to avoid or in dealing with the interaction?
      (minimal probe for behavior, actions, attitudes)
   e) Is there anything that you wish your teacher had done differently?
      (same probes)

10. Talk about a time when there seemed to be any type of trouble in the classroom. How does Ms. Moore handle disruptions in the classroom? What do you think about how she handles and manages the class?
    ** if they don't respond to this, ask a story about someone else

11. When I was in high school there seemed to sometimes be issues or drama between the teacher and the students. Based on your experiences, who gets into issues with Ms. Moore? (probe for examples such as "what types of people? What groups of people?)

12. Based on your experiences, what is going on in the classroom that makes a student get negative attention from Ms. Moore?

13. When there is a student-teacher conflict/trouble/negative attention, what are the typical reactions of other students in the classroom who are not involved? What is your reaction?

    REPEAT FOR MR. HARRIS

14. How do you identify yourself?
    (probe for racial, ethnic, cultural, gender identities)