Resistance and Resilience: The Education Trajectories of Young Women of Color with Disabilities through the School to Prison Pipeline

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Resistance and Resilience:
The Education Trajectories of Young Women of Color with Disabilities through the School to Prison Pipeline

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Education 2013
This dissertation entitled:
Resistance and Resilience:
The Education Trajectories of Young Women of Color with Disabilities through the School to Prison Pipeline
written by Subini A. Annamma has been approved for the School of Education

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Date___________

The final copy of this dissertation has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

HRC protocol # 11-0485
Title: Resistance and Resilience: The Education Trajectories of Young Women of Color with Disabilities through the School to Prison Pipeline

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Abstract of the Dissertation

Too often, students from communities of color experience the school system where they are routed from the doors of a schoolhouse to the doors of a prison; this phenomenon is known as the School to Prison Pipeline. In this dissertation, I explored how identity markers (e.g. race, gender, and disability) were related to education and incarceration through qualitative analysis and Critical Race Theory (CRT).

Research provided us with statistics about the Pipeline; however, there was still little known about the actual experiences of students. Therefore, this study focused on the trajectories of young women of color with disabilities through the Pipeline. Using a combination of identity mapping, interviews, and observations, I collaborated with females of color with emotional disabilities and their teachers to share what has constrained and enabled the success of these young women.

Much of the literature suggested that special education was tied to the School to Prison Pipeline and that females of color with disabilities had unique experiences. This study utilized historically marginalized students as knowledge generators to address the School to Prison Pipeline in an empirically based fashion in order to determine what those experiences are and what we can learn in order to shut off the Pipeline.
To capture the trajectories of the young women of color with disabilities, results are organized according to respective points in the School to Prison Pipeline:

Public Schools->Juvenile Justice Schooling->The Future.

The themes throughout the dissertation were: the educational institutions throughout the Pipeline punished girls for their behaviors without considering the sociocultural context of their lives, the girls’ identities were erased within the content and the only identity girls were encouraged to embrace was criminal. Though the girls had faced difficult situations outside of school, instead of responding with care or concern, these themes intertwined to propel the girls through the School to Prison Pipeline. Finally, the finding suggest that unless teachers’ are trained to utilize a sociocultural view of learning, ability, and culture that is implemented through critical pedagogy, girls who face difficult situations outside of school will continue to be pushed into the School to Prison Pipeline.
This study is dedicated to

Ashley
Erykah
Imani
Justine
Myosha
Nashawna
Riveara
Sapphire
Tristen
Veronica

And to all of the children whose schools have violently refused to educate them. We owe you better. I will work to leverage my own privilege to improve the system alongside you. Thank you for sharing your Gifts with me.
Acknowledgements

It is with a heart full of gratitude that I am able to write acknowledgements for my PhD journey. This dissertation could only have been written with the guidance of my dissertation committee members who each served a unique purpose. Dr. David Connor, thank you for recognizing my commitments even when I could not articulate them myself, for carving out time when you had so many other responsibilities and for being willing to mentor a doctoral student whose passions were ignited by your ideas. Dr. Elizabeth Dutro, thank you for sharing your wisdom and your personal story. Your mentorship and grace were a lifeboat when I was drowning in sorrow and you continue to be a model I strive to emulate as I make my way through the academy. Dr. Kris Gutiérrez, thank you for exemplifying how to live theoretical and methodical commitments through academic work, and for always expecting the highest standards of me and teaching me how to achieve them. Dr. Reiland Rabaka, your pedagogical passion that you brought to our classroom and our extended discussions provided me a vision for what an engaged scholar could be; your brilliance shines through your work and is truly inspirational. Thank you for your example and willingness to be a part of my journey.

Finally, Dr. Janette Klingner, my advisor, chair, colleague and friend, thank you. You recognized the hunger for ideas and research in me before I knew it existed myself; pushing me to imagine a different future than I thought was possible. You opened doors for me and when they were locked, you pried them open, fighting for me. I have flourished because of your guidance of my work and faith in me, even when I did not have it in myself. I am deeply grateful for the opportunities you have provided me, for the commitment you have given reading each word of this dissertation again and again, always guiding me to nuance and thoughtfulness. I am blessed to have you as my advisor.
I hope that this dissertation, the work I produce in the future and the path I continue walk in the academy makes each of you proud.

Being a first-generation student of color, I survived and thrived in the academy because of colleagues and friends. Thank you to Dr. Darrell Jackson, who always made time to talk, to write, to laugh. You are my academic brother and homie and have paved the way for me to follow as we both make our way in this life. To Amy Boelé, who has been there to discuss and grow every step of the way, thank you. Your presence as a friend and colleague has made me a better person. To Andrea Bien, Liz Mendoza, Bethy Leonardi, Ruth Lopez, Deb Morrison, Christina Paguyo, Makenzie Selland and Sara Staley for being willing to read my work, give me feedback and push me toward growth. Each of you has been willing to stretch and grow perspectives with me, talking out the ideas until we had a better understanding. To Dr. Stephanie Kripa Cooper-Lewter, the other Indian adoptee who was working through a doctoral program and understood the ways our multiple identities were pushed and pulled as figured out how to live this life. Finally to the other mentors who have been gracious enough to share their time with me including Dr. Daniella Cook, Dr. Beth Ferri, Dr. Michelle Fine and Dr. David Stovall. Each of you impacted this dissertation directly or my PhD journey more broadly and I thank you for your time and care. Thank you to all of you above for teaching me about growing in light through a community of support and of course, the academic smack down.

To my friends who have sustained me outside of the academy, thank you for reminding me that I am more than my work. You are the family I have created, that I depend on and I appreciate more than I can express. Particularly, thank you to Dr.
Amanda Bye, who talked through every step of this with me, who was always there, even to go shopping for a suit jacket 12 hours before my first interview. To Erin Livingston, Meghan Fleming, Barb Gajewski and Sarah Vandenbosch, thank you for hours on the phone talking through the details of our lives.

Finally, to my families, both known and unknown, thank you. To three sets of parents: biological and first family, adopted parents Mary Beth and Richard, and in-laws Jim and Maida, thank you for the life you gave me, the opportunities you provided and the lessons you have taught me. To my siblings, Matt and Andy who I grew up with, Adrian and Sonya whose family I became part of and those ones I never knew, thank you. Thank you to Peggy Werner, Kim and Jenny Bunn, wives of the men in my family, who have worked so hard to provide support as they became part of our family. To my nieces and nephews, Tianna, Christopher, Anders and Alena, thank you for inspiration. For all my family members who I have lost to death, most immediately Mary Beth and Andy, adoption and change, I love you all and feel your presence with me. And to my partner, Ryan Eggen, who has stood by me through every step since I was seventeen, thank you, my love. In the last seventeen years, you are the one steady presence in my world, encouraging me to reach high while supporting me through it all.

Each of you named in this acknowledgement, and those unnamed that I have met along the way, has shown faith in me when I did not have it in myself. Your unwavering support of my journey is something I will always remember and for which I am deeply indebted to you. Thank you for providing this Indian adopted girlchild the chance to share my own story. You have shown that though abandoned at birth, I have deep roots and connections that have been grown out of love, community and compassion.
# Table of Contents

Title Page ................................................................................................................. i
Abstract ...................................................................................................................... iii
Dedication .................................................................................................................. v
Acknowledgments ...................................................................................................... vi
Table of Contents ..................................................................................................... ix
List of Charts, Figures & Tables ................................................................................ x

Chapter I: .................................................................................................................... 1
Introduction: The School to Prison Pipeline and Trickle-Up Social Justice

Chapter II: .................................................................................................................. 26
A Conceptual Framework based on Gift Theory

Chapter III: .................................................................................................................. 45
Generativity: Reviewing the School to Prison Pipeline Literature

Chapter IV: .................................................................................................................. 60
Mapping the Margins: Methodological Pluralism

Chapter V: .................................................................................................................. 99
Public Schools & The Weight of Institutional Absence

Chapter VI: ............................................................................................................... 139
Fake it to Make it: Juvenile Justice Schooling

Chapter VII: Lessons & Possibilities-Strategies of Resilience and the Future ............... 179

Chapter VIII: ............................................................................................................ 211
Re-imagining the system: Discussion and Implications

References .................................................................................................................. 250

Appendices ............................................................................................................... 267
List of Charts, Tables & Figures

Figure 1: Public school actions correlated with the School to Prison Pipeline ..........4
Figure 2. Overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary actions nationally .....46
Figure 3. The racial and ethnic breakdown of Western State ..............................68
Figure 4. The racial and ethnic breakdown of Western City ..............................69
Figure 5. The racial and ethnic breakdown of the Juvenile Justice Department .......70
Table 1. The racial and ethnic breakdown of Western State, Western City and JJD ....70
Figure 6: Annamma Education Journey Map example ..................................83
Table 2. Number of interviews with focal students and explanations of variances ....87
Table 3. Teacher participant information ........................................................89
Figure 7. Data collection for Sociocultural, School and Individual Contexts .......92
Figure 8. Code Tree in progress .................................................................96
Figure 9: Tristen’s Education Journey Map ...................................................99
Table 4. Problematic contexts outside of school .............................................105
Figure 10: Sapphire’s Education Journey Map ...............................................112
Table 5. Effective teaching strategies and definitions ....................................128
Figure 11: Imani’s Education Journey Map ..................................................136
Figure 12: Nashawna’s Education Journey Map ...........................................139
Figure 13: Riveara’s Education Journey Map ...............................................152
Figure 14: Ashley’s Education Journey Map ................................................176
Figure 15: Veronica’s Education Journey Map .............................................179
Figure 16: Justine’s Education Journey Map ...............................................185
Table 6. Strategies of Resilience and definitions .........................................189
Figure 17: Erykah’s Education Journey Map

Figure 18: Myosha’s Education Journey Map
Chapter One
The School to Prison Pipeline and Trickle-Up Social Justice

Let me begin with a scenario that is all too common for children with emotional disabilities in schools.

Shadin, a 15-year old African American female student, is handed a paper that has been photocopied in her Literature class. She looks at it and sees that the background is very dark which makes it hard to read. Shadin begins to feel frustrated. She skims it and sees several words she cannot pronounce. Her frustration rises. She hates reading in class and this is something the teacher requires that every student does. Shadin declares, “I can’t do this, I'm not going to read.” The Literature teacher responds, “Then I will have to write you up for not following directions.” Shadin stands up and storms out of the room. The Literature teacher calls the School Security Officer to report that Shadin left without permission. The Security Officer catches up with Shadin in the hall and tells her to stop. She keeps walking. The Security Officer tells her to stop again and by this time she is out the door. When Shadin returns to school the next day, she is told to go to the Principal’s office. Waiting for her are the Principal and the Security Officer with two tickets, for disorderly conduct (for refusing to follow directions) and trespassing (for being in the halls without permission). Shadin swears at them and leaves again. When she returns to school, she will be given another ticket and a suspension.

In high schools across the country, versions of this scenario are taking place. Though this may seem extreme to those unfamiliar with large urban high schools, the vignette above is actually quite common; students are disciplined and ticketed for many small offenses in schools (Advancement Project, 2010). In my own experience as a high school special education teacher I have had several students, almost all whom have been students of color, get ticketed and I have watched helplessly as another student of color with disabilities was routed into the School to Prison Pipeline.

Statement of the Problem

Too often, students from communities of color experience the school system as a funnel where they are routed from the schoolhouse doors to the doors of a prison; this
phenomenon is the School to Prison Pipeline. At the heart of this dissertation is an exploration of how particular identity markers (e.g. race, disability, gender) are related to education and incarceration through qualitative analysis and Gift Theory (DuBois, 1903; Rabaka, 2010).

The 'school-to-prison pipeline' refers to the policies and practices that push our nation’s schoolchildren, especially our most at-risk children, out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. This pipeline reflects the prioritization of incarceration over education. (American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU, 2008).

The School to Prison Pipeline, also referred to as The Pipeline, disproportionately impacts students of color through excessive disciplinary actions and increased police presence in the schools (Advancement Project, 2010; Kim, Losen & Hewitt, 2010). These students of color experienced being “racially criminalized—that is, hypercriminalized on the basis of one’s race, or rather, the combined process(es) and/or predicament(s) of being simultaneously racialized and criminalized and the ongoing effects of simultaneous racialization and criminalization” (Rabaka, 2010, p. 295). Rabaka tied incarceration to race, as did W.E.B. DuBois (1903) and Frederick Douglas before him. In his speech The Color Line in America, Douglas (1883) condemned the American habit to “impute crime to color”. This connection between crime and color does not have an age restriction and juveniles of color are often associated with crime, similar to the adults in their communities (Rios, 2010). DuBois was once caught and punished for stealing grapes with some white friends and the disproportionate sentencing he received disturbed him (Gabbidon, 2007; Rabaka, 2007). While the other white children were let off with a warning, the judge sentenced DuBois to a juvenile reform school. Had a white principal not stepped in to “provide supervision”, DuBois’ future could have easily become one of
incarceration (DuBois, 1968). DuBois experienced the ways children of color were punished more severely than their white counterparts and how easily a child of color could be incarcerated.

Today, students of color are increasingly experiencing criminalization in urban schools. Through measures such as criminalizing small offenses, excessive disciplinary actions, harsh Zero Tolerance policies, increased police presence in schools and "securing environments", using methods such as metal detectors, fencing and even police dogs, large, urban schools have created environments which reflect prisons. These actions have made it increasingly likely that the students housed within these schools will be funneled into the criminal justice system (ACLU, 2008; Advancement Project, 2005; 2010).

These connections between race, education and crime have been essential to understanding how children of color become incarcerated. However there are several other points of social location in addition to race, that make it more likely that a student will be relegated to juvenile justice through additional school actions. In this chapter, I present the major argument of this dissertation: perceptions of ability, disability and labeling are directly related to young women’s interactions with the Pipeline. Though much has been written on the School to Prison Pipeline, the literature often leaves unexamined the intersections between special education status and other identity markers (Kim et al., 2010). However, an average of 33-37% of students in juvenile systems have been identified with a disability, with some detention centers housing over 70% of juvenile inmates with a disability label (Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher & Poirier, 2005). In contrast, public schools have a national average of around 12-14% of students
labeled with disabilities\(^1\) (National Education Association, NEA, 2007; Young, Phillips & Nasir, 2010). Moreover, being labeled with particular types of disabilities is correlated with being incarcerated; students with an emotional disability label make up almost fifty percent of the population of students with disabilities in juvenile justice whereas they are less than 1% of the public school population (Osher, Woodruff & Simms, 2002).

Therefore I argue that, along with disciplinary actions and policing in the schools, the school action of assigning particular students to special education has a relationship with who is eventually incarcerated. Figure 1 illustrates three public school actions that make it more likely students are steered into the School to Prison Pipeline\(^2\).

---

1 Due to overrepresentation of students from non-dominant communities in high-incidence disability categories, also known as judgment categories, in special education, I say “have been identified” or “labeled with a disability” since being identified does not guarantee the student actually has a disability. As Harry and Klingner (2006) note, “many have questioned the accuracy of the professional judgments made in diagnosing” these disabilities. Overrepresentation of students with specific identity markers in high-incidence disability categories will be addressed later in the chapter.

2 Note that there is substantial overlap between these actions, which will be explored later in the chapter.
Disciplinary actions and over-policing in schools have been the focus of the majority of articles written on the School to Prison Pipeline (Florida ACLU, 2011). However, education researchers have argued for the need to examine what it means to be assigned to special education for particular groups of students and how this relates to incarceration (Kim et al., 2010; Meiners, 2007). This study heeds that call and focuses on the assignment to special education and its relationship to the School to Prison Pipeline.

Much of the research on disciplinary actions, special education and the School to Prison Pipeline focuses on African American boys (Arcia, 2006; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). However, middle school African American young women are being suspended and expelled at higher rates than White, Hispanic and Native American males in many districts across the country (Losen & Skiba, 2010; Mendez & Knoff; 2003). Additionally, suspensions and expulsions for females of color are growing nationally, while they are decreasing for all males (Losen & Skiba, 2010). Wald and Losen (2003) illustrated the direct link between school failure and juvenile justice system when they noted that, "The 'single largest predictor' of later arrest among adolescent females is having been suspended, expelled or held back during the middle school years” (p. 4). This upward trend of female offenses continues into incarceration, "...between 1991 and 2000, the number of juvenile females arrested increased more (or decreased less) than male arrests in most offense categories" (Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, OJJDP, 2010, Girl's Delinquency, para. 2). Specifically, "Girls now account for nearly a third (29.1%) of juvenile arrests (FBI, 2007). This is a remarkable shift from decades earlier when girls accounted for only about one in five juvenile arrests." (Chesney-Lind, 2010, Chapter 3, Section 2, para. 1).
Moreover, not only is justice gendered, but it is also raced. Though there is no proof that African American, Native American, and Latina girls commit more crimes, they were incarcerated at two-three times the rate of white girls (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2007). Additionally, females of color are overrepresented within the special education category of emotional disabilities, which is linked to incarceration (Oswald, Coutinho & Best, 2002). Davis (2003) notes, “Although men constitute the vast majority of prisoners in the world, important aspects of the operation of state punishment are missed if it is assumed that women are marginal and thus undeserving of attention” (p. 65). Though she was addressing the adult population, Davis’ comments have relevance when considering the School to Prison Pipeline for juveniles as well. The focus on inequities that boys of color and white females face has detracted from the fact that we still have a dearth of information about young women of color, especially those labeled with disabilities (Brown, 2009; Jones, 2010; Winn, 2010). Many groups have called for increased research focusing on females of color in order to better understand their interactions with both the education and justice systems (American Bar Association, ABA, & National Bar Associations, NBA, 2001; National Council on Crime & Delinquency, 2008; OJJDP, 2010).

Though the statistics of the School to Prison Pipeline are becoming available, there is limited information regarding the lived experiences in the Pipeline. DuBois’ (1968) experiences with the criminal justice system provided him with an understanding of the ways embodiment of race and crime were connected and gave him insight into ways the legal system could be improved (Gabbidon, 2007; Rabaka, 2007). Blanchett, (2008) notes, "While educators, researchers, and the larger education community are
aware of...educational inequities, little has been done to document and publish the experiences of the marginalized students and young adults who carry these labels” (p. xv). It is in these intersections of race, gender, disability and lived experiences that I see potential for disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline.

Educators, researchers and the media often focus on the individual deficiencies that they claim lead to particular types of children becoming entangled in the School to Prison Pipeline. However, I believe these failures “are attributable not to the children themselves but rather to deficiencies in the institutions charged with caring for them” (Kim, et al, 2010, p. 1). Meiners (2007) names these institutional deficiencies as structural violence. Ladson-Billings (2006) considers these to be components of the educational debt we owe to children of color who have historically attended under resourced schools. Instead of focusing on perceived deficiencies in individual girls, I sought to leverage the experiences girls of color with disabilities to intervene in structures; to provide weapons to fight the structural violence they experience.

**The Rationale**

When connecting the often disparate research in disciplinary actions, special education, and law, there are several studies that lead to concern. Youth of color are: more likely to be suspended and expelled (Mendez & Knopf, 2003; Wald & Losen, 2003; Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson, 2000), more likely to drop out, less likely to graduate (Orfield et al., 2004) and more likely to be labeled with particular types of disabilities (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Harry & Klingner, 2006). Particularly, females of color experienced more punitive disciplinary removal than some males and their rates of suspensions and expulsions are increasing (Losen & Skiba; Mendez & Knoff; 2003)
Students in special education have traditionally been seen as a protected class in schools but, in fact, have rarely been protected from the deleterious effects of disproportionate disciplinary actions and poor curriculum (Kim et al., 2010). In fact, students with a disability label are more likely to be referred for disciplinary actions and their chances of being suspended or expelled are more than double their general education peers, though students with disabilities were not more likely to cause injuries (Cooley, 1995; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Skiba et al., 2000). Over ninety percent of the offenses for which students labeled with disabilities got suspended or expelled were acts such as altercations, disrespect and disobedience-similar reasons given as their non-disabled peers (Cooley, 1995). Students of color with emotional disabilities are less likely than their white peers to attend schools with a comprehensive curriculum and are most likely to receive an education that neither prepares them for college nor provides vocational skills. This is most evident when viewing concerning statistics such as graduation rates: for white youth with emotional disabilities, 48%, whereas African Americans with emotional disabilities graduate at a rate of only 27.5%; 66% of African Americans labeled with emotional disabilities received failing grades versus only 38% of white students; 58% of African Americans with emotional disabilities dropped out of school and 73% of all students with emotional disabilities who dropout are arrested within three to five years of leaving school, respectively (Osher et al., 2002). In other words, students with emotional disabilities are more likely to have lower grades, higher dropout rates, less educational and employment attainment and increased criminal adjudication-and all of these characteristics are tied to lower literacy rates (Drakeford & Staples, 2006). Considering that females of color are overrepresented in the emotional disability category, we must
assume that many have experienced these negative life outcomes associated with disability. Finally, a major factor in girls becoming incarcerated was school failure in the form of disciplinary actions, grade retention or special education assignment (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Wald & Losen, 2003).

**Purpose**

The purpose of my study was to capture the education trajectories of young women of color through the School to Prison Pipeline. Girls were asked to represent their education trajectories through space and time in order to understand both the commonalities in their experiences as well as their individual histories. Much of the literature suggested that special education is tied to the School to Prison Pipeline and that young women of color with disabilities have unique experiences in that pipeline. What remains an empirical question is: What are the education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline? This study’s goal was to utilize historically marginalized students and teachers as knowledge generators who can find solutions to the inequities they face and to place their voices into conversation with the social and institutional contexts in which they are located (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Kirshner, 2005; Nygreen, 2006). "Rather than framing girls and their behaviors as 'the problem', the…focus (is) on how social settings shape girls' responses to potential threats of violence and victimization and the often punitive institutional response to girls' actions" (Chesney-Lind & Jones, 2010, Introduction, Section 1, para. 3). The voices of these girls can then be set in juxtaposition with other knowledge generators (e.g. educators, police, criminologists) whose opinions on behavior, crime and incarceration have been traditionally represented (Rios, 2011).
Ultimately, this study utilized trickle-up social justice, which ethically begins “with those who are facing the worst conditions, those who are most losing their lives, those people in prison and immigration facilities and experiencing poverty and homelessness” (Spade, December 21, 2012).

**Research Questions**

The main research questions were in direct relation to the purpose of my study.

1. What are the education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline?

2. How do school personnel in the Pipeline position these incarcerated young women of color with disabilities?

3. What are the institutional and sociocultural contexts in which these students and teachers are located?

**Conceptualization of Terms**

This dissertation combined literature and concepts from special education, criminology, sociology, Women’s, Girls and Gender studies and therefore I took up the language of these fields. However specialized terminology can limit understanding when communicating across disciplines (Rabaka, 2010). In order to achieve clarity, I share how I conceptualized specialized terms that I am using in this dissertation.

**School to Prison Pipeline.** The School to Prison Pipeline metaphor can be thought of as "the intersection of major American institutions that wield enormous power over the life chances of the young, namely education and the criminal justice system" (Raible & Irizarry, 2010, p. 1197). In this dissertation, actions that directly impact the School to Prison Pipeline are disciplinary removal, policing in schools and special
education assignment. As discussed above, I have included special education because in the juvenile justice population, disability rates ranged as high as 77% and those with an emotional disturbance made up the largest disability category and learning disabilities followed, together making up over 85% of the incarcerated juveniles with disabilities population (Quinn et al., 2005; Rutherford, Bullis, Anderson, & Griller-Clark, 2002).

When schools participate in criminalizing actions of students, they make it more likely that students will end up eventually incarcerated in adult prisons (Mann, 1994). However, the actions involved in the School to Prison Pipeline listed above make it likely students will find themselves in juvenile justice institutions first (though it is very likely that they may be arrested later as adults) (ACLU, 2008). Therefore, in this study the School to Prison Pipeline contains three steps: Public Schools, Juvenile Justice and Release. In Education and activist groups, the Pipeline is often conceptualized by only considering the first two steps, actions in public schools making it more likely a child will end up in juvenile justice (ACLU, 2008; Advancement Project, 2013). However, we do not relegate children to juvenile justice indefinitely. As a teacher in the juvenile justice system, I watched many of my students get released back into their public high schools or into the community (possibly with a diploma or GED but sometimes without either) with varying levels of support. Students face many barriers to re-entry back into public schools (ACLU, 2008). Criminologists, lawyers and some educators recognize that any discussion of the School to Prison Pipeline must include discussions of release and re-entry into society as the last step of the Pipeline (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004; Kim et al.; 2010; Osher, Quinn, Poirier & Rutherford, 2003).
Understanding ways release and return to juvenile justice are impacted by gender are also essential.

Girls comprised only 14% of the total detention population, however 30% of them returned to detention within one year. Among those, 53% of the girls as compared with 41% of the boys who returned to detention within one year did so for probation…violations. Sixty-six percent of the girls as compared with 47% of the boys who returned to detention twice within one year did so for probation…And 72% of girls as compared with 49% of boys who returned to detention three times within one year did so for probation violations or failure to meet program expectations. (ABA & NBA, 2001, p. 20).

What this illustrates is that girls are affected differently by release at the end of the School to Prison Pipeline. Girls feel the impacts of the original arrest more often than boys do, being punished for not following terms of probation or parole and being retained in the system longer though they have not committed new crimes.

**Special education definitions.** Special education is a field with its own particular language and jargon. Considering that much of what I address is within this field, I share some particular definitions and conceptualizations.

**Emotional disabilities.** The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004, the federal law that regulates education services for students with disabilities, defined an emotional disability as,

A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance: (A) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors, (B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers, (C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances, (D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, (E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (ii) Emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance under paragraph (c)(4)(i) of this section (United States Department of Education, 2011).
Though this definition is complex, it essentially lays out the requirements one must meet to be diagnosed with an emotional disability. Students in this study are all considered to have an emotional disability and this definition will be explored further in the chapters four and eight.

**Disproportionality in special education.** The definition of disproportionality is simple; it is when a particular group of students has a smaller or larger population in particular actions or settings than would be expected given their total numbers in the general population (Harry & Klingner, 2006). This study focuses on racial and gender overrepresentation in special education\(^3\). For example, black males are 5.5 times more likely to be identified as with an emotional disability than white females (Oswald et al., 2002). Most students of color have had larger populations than expected, or have been overrepresented, in disciplinary actions, special education and juvenile justice nationally for decades and this trend continues (Artiles, 1998; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Drakeford, 2004; Leone, Rutherford & Nelson, 1991; Patton, 1998; Skiba et al., 2000; Townsend, 2000). One example of this national pattern is in special education where students of color are overrepresented in the subjective categories of learning, intellectual and emotional disabilities, which rely on the judgment of school professionals (Townsend, 2000). However, *this overrepresentation of students of color does not occur in disability categories that are medically defined* (e.g., blind, deaf) (Donovan & Cross, 2002). In

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\(^3\) In this dissertation, I use the terms disproportionality and overrepresentation interchangeably. Though I recognize that disproportionality can refer to both over and underrepresentation in the literature, I focus on overrepresentation of particular populations. I recognize that Asian students often experience underrepresentation nationally (Donovan & Cross, 2002) and English Language Learners also do in particular regions (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar & Higareda, 2005), which is also a form of racial marginalization (e.g. students miss additional services they deserve because of the particular racial or linguistic group they belong to). However due to space constraints, I have limited this discussion to racial disproportionality and marginalization through overrepresentation.
other words, disability labels that require the subjective judgment of school personnel show overrepresentation of students of color whereas disability categories that are determined by verifiable, biological data have proportional representation of students of color (Harry & Klinger, 2006). This should immediately alert society to a problem that exists within the field of special education when categories that rely on subjective judgments find students of color to be disabled more than those that are medically defined. The NEA (2007) listed several deleterious effects of disproportionate representation in special education such as: limited access to instructional strategies, curriculum, academically able peers and high expectations. Special education also becomes difficult to exit and students labeled with a disability often experienced social stigmatization (Hart, Cramer, Harry, Klingner & Sturges, 2009). In other words, though there are benefits of special education such as individualized support and smaller classes, students of color with an emotional disability label are more likely to be segregated and lose access to a number of resources such as limited access to instructional strategies, curriculum, academically able peers and high expectations (NEA, 2007). Also, identifications of intellectual and emotional disabilities followed different patterns for white and black students. White males and females had a consistent pattern of representation, meaning the community they lived in and its racial demographics did not impact whether or not they were identified with a disability. Conversely, black males and females both experienced the same trend; as the communities in which they attended school had more whites and fewer students of color, black students were more likely to be labeled with intellectual and emotional disabilities (Oswald et al., 2002). Finally, students with emotional disabilities are more likely to be incarcerated with a national
average of 47% so though the benefits of special education are not to be ignored; there is a clear failure when almost half of a population of students ends up in prisons (Osher et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2005).

**Legal terminology.** Rutherford et al. (2002) shared some basic information that helps the public understand some jargon used within the correctional systems: a status offense is an offense that is only illegal for someone under 18 (e.g., alcohol or tobacco possession/consumption, truancy, curfew violations, running away) and an index crime is a crime that is illegal no matter the person's age (e.g. theft, murder, burglary). This is essential to understand, as many of the crimes discussed by the girls in this dissertation are status offenses, not index offenses.

The term “girls” is also a legal term (Chesney-Lind, personal communication, September 4, 2012). Using the term girls resists the attempts to prosecute girls as adults. This term “girls” seeks to protect young women, to respect their status as minors. It also encourages audiences to see all girls as young people, not just particular types of girls; in other words, the term girls is used to resist racialization of girlhood (Brown, 2009). Also, as Girl’s studies programs have emerged, we see an effort to reclaim this term from connotations of meekness and femininity to power and strength (Kearney, 2009). In this study, the terms young women and girls will be used interchangeably.

Trickle-up social justice is also a legal concept based on solving legal inequities by starting with the most severe situations. That is instead of focusing on anti-discrimination and hate crimes laws, trickle-up social justice addresses conditions our most oppressed citizens face (Spade, 2012a). The benefits of inclusion-focused law reform never trickle down because such reform fundamentally misconceives how
inequity operates (Quiñones, 2012). By focusing on populations who are closest to hegemonic norms (e.g. white, middle class males who are also gay), equal rights movements actually can further disenfranchise and oppress marginalized populations (e.g. females and trans people of color who are in poverty). In other words, Spade (2012a) agrees with Critical Race theorists that incremental changes will never address the inequities oppressed populations confront daily (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) Therefore we must focus on trickle-up social justice starting with our most vulnerable citizens (Spade, 2011).

Though a full analysis must include class, it was not something I took up in this dissertation. My goal was to focus on the intersections of race and ability, as these connections are largely under-explored (Connor & Ferri, 2010). Historically, race has been confused with class and an analysis of the way class interacted was beyond the scope of this dissertation (hooks, 1998). Additionally, I had limited access to the class status of the girls as neither the JJD nor the juvenile justice settings they were confined to collected the data. Though there were certainly hints in the girls’ stories, I could neither confirm nor disconfirm their class status as many of them were not sure themselves. Class will be discussed but will not be the focus of analysis.

The Larger Sociocultural Context

Students experience a number of routes that steer them from schools to prison. Students in special education are more likely to be of color, experience disciplinary removal from schools and become incarcerated (Cooley, 1995; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Quinn et al., 2005). Therefore it is clear how special education plays a direct route in the School to Prison Pipeline along with disciplinary actions and policing in schools. Before
discussing the School to Prison Pipeline specifically, I first examine the sociocultural
context in which the study took place. I begin by sharing the sociocultural context of
personal responsibility as it quickly became evident in my findings how this rhetoric
seeped from politicians sparring for the highest office in America all the way down to the
juvenile justice settings and impacted the girls and their teachers. Next I address the
narratives of “girls gone wild” and punishment and finally the rhetoric around the School
to Prison Pipeline.

The sociocultural context of personal responsibility. This study took place
from 2011-2012 and outside the walls of the juvenile justice centers a presidential
primary was raging. Barack Obama, the first African American president in the history of
the United States, was the incumbent and several GOP politicians had lined up in hopes
of replacing him. The rhetoric regarding personal responsibility was extensive within the
media during the time this study occurred. The New York Times reported that Newt
Gingrich, once a leader in the primary, called for more personal responsibility when he said,

You say to somebody, you shouldn’t go to work before you’re what, 14, 16 years
of age, fine. You’re totally poor. You’re in a school that is failing with a teacher
that is failing. I’ve tried for years to have a very simple model. Most of these
schools ought to get rid of the unionized janitors, have one master janitor and pay
local students to take care of the school. The kids would actually do work, they
would have cash, they would have pride in the schools, they’d begin the process
of rising. (Gabriel, 2011).

Gingrich saw employment, not education, for young children as a way to increase
personal responsibility to combat the “culture of poverty”. He stated, “You’re going to
see from me extraordinarily radical proposals to fundamentally change the culture of
poverty in America and give people a chance to rise very rapidly” (Haberman, 2011). The
social context of this comment surrounded a myth of a culture of poverty in which people do not want to work, even though poor working adults spend more hours working each week than their wealthier counterparts (Gorki, 2008). Gingrich’s remedy to an imagined resistance to work was not increased access to education, but instead to give poor children janitorial jobs to provide them with personal responsibility and pride, which would then lift them up out of the culture of poverty.

Other candidates in the GOP primary indicated that this culture of poverty was classed but also raced. Rick Santorum, another front runner, stated "I don't want to make black people's lives better by giving them somebody else's money; I want to give them the opportunity to go out and earn the money” (Madison, 2012). Despite the data, Santorum believed that many poor people of color would be better off if they got off welfare, took personal responsibility and earned their own money (Gorski, 2008). Santorum also suggested that personal responsibility was gendered, "What we have is moms raising children in single-parent households simply breeding more criminals" (Doll, 2012). Echoing the Moynihan report, the candidate claimed that it is not just women, but single mothers creating criminals via their lack of family values (Moynihan, 1965). Santorum and Gingrich seemed to feel that in order to fix the country’s biggest problem, which they stated was lack of personal responsibility, was by instilling personal responsibility through increased work for poor, women and children of color.

Of course, neither of these candidates became the GOP presidential choice in the end. Instead, Mitt Romney took that distinction. Romney spoke explicitly about personal responsibility at a private fundraiser that was caught on tape,

There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon
government, who believe that they are victims, who believe that government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it. That, that’s an entitlement. And the government should give it to them. And they will vote for this president no matter what...Our message of low taxes doesn’t connect...so my job is is not to worry about those people. I’ll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives. What I have to do is convince the five to 10 percent in the center that are independents, that are thoughtful...” (Corn, 2012).

When this video came to light, Romney did not disavow his comments. Instead he stood by them for weeks before finally disavowing them as “completely wrong” (Robillard & Cirilli, 2012; Rucker, 2012). Romney went further than Santorum or Gingrich, claiming that this 47 percent he refers to will never be convinced to take personal responsibility for their lives. This personal responsibility rhetoric espoused by potential leaders of the United States has been repeated all the way down to the girls in this study, as I will show later in the findings.

Social context of “girls gone wild” and punishment. In the mid-nineties amid a rising tide of girls’ arrests (OJJDP, 2010), the media spoke of Girls Gone Wild and Mean Girls (Males, 2007). Though there was not an increase in actual crimes committed by girls, there was an increase in arrests of girls (ABA, & NBA, 2001; OJJDP, 2010).

However, this fact was lost on the media and researchers who began to publish work supporting the concept of an increase of bad girls, those girls who were more dangerous and duplicitous than the girls of the past (Males, 2007).

When the rhetoric of bad girls is employed, it looks different for different types of girls. Books like Reviving Ophelia (Pipher, 1995) and Queen Bees and Wannabes (Wiseman, 2002) viewed girls as mean and cruel but they also could be rehabilitated from their “relational aggression,” a concept focused on girls bullying each other via their relationships with one another (Chesney-Lind, Morash & Irwin, 2010). Though the two
books above never mention the girls as white, it can be assumed that they were discussing white girls. As Rabaka (2009) writes, "The appeal of purportedly gender and race neutral terms-such as, worker, consumer, citizen-is that they often silently signify white males without actually overtly saying so" (p. 292). Here we see whiteness employed by authors when focusing on the rise of the “mean girl”. While much energy was spent trying to save “mean girls” from themselves and each other, there was an increasing acknowledgement of the large numbers of females of color arrested and incarcerated, though there was little outcry to change these numbers.

We see a split in the popular treatment of girls violence: we care deeply about saving middle-class 'mean' girls from themselves and their peers while shrugging off the consequences of harshly punitive juvenile and criminal justice policies that target poor girls of color and their families. (Chesney-Lind & Jones, 2010, Introduction, Section 2, para. 3).

This social context meant that some claimed they were focusing on girls while emphasizing relational aggression or indirect aggression. Relational aggression, a concept that girls bully in indirect ways, has created increased social surveillance and punishment of girls. Relational aggression became targeted by Zero Tolerance policies and in some cases, was even classified as assault (Chesney-Lind et al., 2007). Moreover, relational aggression was a concept that was really just re-hashing gender roles with a new name: “In essence, this research is arguing that girls and women are manipulative, sneaky, mean spirited, and backstabbing. These ideas are hardly new, which may, in fact, be one reason that the public and the media embraced them so quickly” (Chesney-Lind et al., 2007, Chapter 5, Section 3, para. 4). However, this focus allowed researchers and the media to reify gender roles for particular types of girls (white and middle class) while leaving other girls (poor girls of color) to be victimized by the structural violence committed by
public schools and the legal system (Anzaldúa, 1987; hooks, 2000; Hull, Scott & Smith 1982).

A dawning recognition has come regarding the raced and gendered dimensions of the School to Prison Pipeline as it begins in schools with criminalization for actions that used to be handled by the schools. Media has begun to question the most glaring statistics as research has brought them to light. However the focus on African American boys continues to leave other victims of the School to Prison Pipeline to fend for themselves. Issues of ability and dis/ability have been largely left out of discussions on girls’ arrests and incarceration trends. Though much has been published on criminalization and mental health issues, much less seems to be researched on disability diagnosis and criminalization. The National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ) was a unique institution that tried to address these issues but it was last modified April 30, 2007 (edjj.org). The Girls Study Group published Causes and Correlates of Girls’ Delinquency (Zahn et al., 2010), wherein they reviewed over 1600 articles and book chapters to determine these causes and correlates. They found that girls were frequently arrested on minor offenses more often than boys and that these offenses often related to girls fleeing from unsafe situations in the home (Zahn et al., 2010). Though Zahn et al. (2010) did address factors related to school, including school failure, attachment and commitment, they did not mention disability and how that may be related to juvenile justice interactions. This may be because historically, disability has not been addressed in the literature they reviewed.

**Social context of the School to Prison Pipeline.** The School to Prison Pipeline continues to receive attention from media and researchers. In December of 2012, the
The Senate had its first hearing to address the increasing incarceration from school actions in the United States. Mississippi was the first to be sued over direct and explicit links between the schools and the juvenile justice systems resulting in being coined the first School to Prison Pipeline lawsuit (Hing, 2012; United Stated Department of Justice, 2012). The rhetoric surrounding the Pipeline varied from commentators declaring, “You do the crime, you do the time” reflecting a lack of empathy and understanding of why and how children are being incarcerated while other activist groups were very much focused on shutting down the School to Prison Pipeline (ACLU, 2008; Florida ACLU, 2010; NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2010). Reports from these groups provide statistics on the expansion of Zero Tolerance policies in public schools and how they have contributed to increased police presence, which disproportionately affected students of color. They often featured stories of particularly disturbing ways in which Zero Tolerance policies have been applied, such as the story of an elementary school student who brought scissors to school in her backpack for a project and was subsequently arrested or another who was brought home in a police car for wearing the wrong color socks (Advancement Project, 2005; Hing, 2012). The reports also stressed the fact that school districts, with the assistance of the federal government, are spending large amounts of money (estimates are around 80 million dollars) to enhance security and hire police in schools in an era of significant budget cuts. They considered the problems with increasing security and police presence in schools: officers are often not trained to work with students, especially those with disabilities, and racial profiling may be used in schools (Advancement Project, 2005).
The School to Prison Pipeline is often defined as criminalizing unwanted behaviors in schools and even legally mandating disciplinary actions for particular behaviors (Florida ACLU, 2010; NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2010). These behaviors can range from temper tantrums to truancy to schoolyard fights and often used to be handled by the schools but recently have become addressed via punitive policy or school liaison officers (Florida ACLU, 2010). Additionally, politicians have passed legislation that allows and even requires school personnel to remove students from schools. For example, in Colorado there are laws that allow teachers to remove students from their classes if they are disruptive more than three times in a year as well as a legal mandate expelling a student if that student has been suspended three times for causing a substantial disruption (Advancement Project, 2010; Annamma et al, under review).

Though this criminalization of behaviors exhibited by children, many of which used to be addressed in schools, is certainly concerning, many recognize that the School to Prison Pipeline does more than just criminalize behavior deemed inappropriate (Kim et al., 2010; Osher et al., 2002). This attention to other reasons students are funneled into prisons is why, in this study, the School to Prison Pipeline refers to the removal children from general education through a number of routes. These various routes of removal from general education can detrimentally affect the relationships children have with school and can lead to a greater likelihood that these students will end up in the prison system (Advancement Project, 2010; Losen & Skiba, 2010).

Each of the rhetorical tools of personal responsibility, girls gone wild and the School to Prison Pipeline combines to create the sociocultural rhetoric in which this study takes place and I conceptualized this study with this rhetoric in mind. In Chapters 2-4,
explores my own commitment to critical theories, literature and methodological pluralism. Chapter 5 shares the first step in the School to Prison Pipeline, public schools and what affected the girls’ experiences both in and outside of school. Chapter 6 discusses juvenile justice education, both the ways the teachers imagined that education and what the girls experienced, along with the disconnect between the two. In Chapter 7, I present the views of and preparation of the future from both the teachers and the girls. Finally, Chapter 8 links the chapters with the literature and tries to understand what the findings indicate our own commitments should be in education.

**Conclusion**

The literature related to the School to Prison Pipeline has focused mainly on overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary actions and problematic Zero Tolerance policies (Advancement Project, 2010). Rarely has the role of special education in the School to Prison Pipeline been addressed through empirical studies. Even more rarely has the student perspective been captured using trickle-up social justice in order to determine out how to disrupt this pipeline. However, I agree with Kim et al., (2010)

“The School-to-Prison-Pipeline thus refers to the confluence of the education policies in underresourced public schools and a predominantly punitive juvenile justice system that fails to provide education and mental health services for our most at-risk students and drastically increases the likelihood that these children will end up with a criminal record rather than a high school diploma. Given the devastating impact on not only the children themselves but also the communities in which they live, challenging the limiting impact of the pipeline presents one of the most urgent challenges in civil rights today. (p. 4).

As a society, we must continue to ask ourselves why we have incarceration rates that are between six and ten times that of other industrial countries and why that incarceration trend now begins in our schools and targets our most marginalized students (Alexander, 2010; Kim et al., 2010). By expanding the discussion surrounding this topic to include a
rigorous qualitative analysis of empirical data, I hoped to enhance the discussion of the School to Prison Pipeline. I sought to invite the complex subjectivities of young women assaulted by ableism, racism, poverty, and violence against women—and surviving. The experiences of students of color with disabilities and their teachers motivate a commitment to trickle-up social justice which is an examination of the conditions facing the most marginalized people (Spade, 2011). It is only by challenging ourselves that this civil rights atrocity can begin to be addressed. It is my hope that this study can contribute to that aim.
Chapter 2
A Conceptual Framework based on Gift Theory

Your country? How came it yours? Before the Pilgrims landed we were here. Here we have brought our three gifts and mingled them with yours: a gift of story and song-soft, stirring melody in an ill-harmonized and unmelodious land; the gift of sweat and brawn to beat back the wilderness, conquer the soil, and lay the foundations of this vast economic empire two hundred years earlier than your weak hands could have done it; the third, a gift of the Spirit. Around us the history of the land has centered for thrice hundred years; out of the nation’s heart we have called all that was best to throttle and subdue all that was worst...

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B DuBois (1903) shared what Reiland Rabaka (2010) calls DuBois’ “Gift Theory”. Rabaka posited because of “blacks’ ability, even in the face of adversity…to see both Africa (the black world) and America’s (white world) strengths and weaknesses” that Blacks have been blessed with a gift. This Gift Theory motivated to seek out the wisdom of historically oppressed people as they have unique gifts to share with the privileged (Matsuda, 1987). DuBois’ ideas laid the groundwork for Critical Race Theory: listening to those who had been traditionally marginalized, centering race in discussions of inequities and analyzing those inequities intersectionally (Ladson Billings, 2005; Lynn, 1999; Rabaka, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

In this study, I utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) and two of its branches, FemCrit and DisCrit, to inform my inquiry and analysis of the education trajectories of young women of color with disabilities through the School to Prison Pipeline. These theories, rooted in a deep and lengthily tradition of examining gender, women, patriarchy, and ability, enabled an intersectional analysis in order to make visible the ways in which these girls are positioned and educated in the School to Prison Pipeline exposing individual bias (Goodwin, 2003). Moreover, CRT exposed how laws, policies and pedagogy, that are considered neutral, are actually reinforcing normative standards of
white and able-bodied and marking those that differ from the norms, which is macro or institutional racism. Dominant discourse surrounding these girls often highlights the rise of the "bad girl", a modern American girl who is more violent than in the past yet there is little evidence for this claim (Chesney-Lind, 2010). CRT demanded a focus on counter-narratives and counter-herstories, contrasted by the master narrative. These counter-stories provided me an opportunity to see these girls not as inherently bad or violent as the majoritarian story views them, but instead as thoughtful young women maneuvering complex lives.

The perspectives of CRT scholars on the systemic inequities perpetuated through law, policies and people, and the lines of research CRT have inspired have major implications for theoretically informed avenues to address the School to Prison Pipeline. When I began this study, my hunch, driven by the literature, my own teaching experiences and students’ narratives, was that the education institutions enacted institutional racism, which allowed them to socially construct young women of color as problematic and disabled. However, examining systems and institutions can disregard the individual roles people play in enacting and resisting institutional racism and therefore I had to ground myself in a theory that could address both the institutional and interpersonal interactions. CRT has informed my inquiry and analysis of the perspectives of females of color with disabilities in and on the School to Prison Pipeline, as CRT required connecting individual experiences with institutional inequities. I was able to leverage all of the information about the girls’ experiences from a variety of data sources to help me consider ways to intervene in both pedagogical interactions as well as structures.
Though CRT provided the central lens through of this study, the intersectional focus required a discussion on gender, ability and disability along with race in order to address the role of special education in the School to Prison Pipeline (Losen & Skiba, 2010, OJJDP, 2010; Wald & Losen, 2003). Therefore, I incorporated two branches of CRT, FemCrit and DisCrit. First, I review the origins of CRT, FemCrit’s and then DisCrit’s origins and tenets. This is because CRT and FemCrit are older and therefore more mature branches of CRT than DisCrit, which is a younger, more tender and recent offshoot. After the review, I combine common fundamental principles of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Feminist Critical Race Theory (FemCrit) and Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) to examine the School to Prison Pipeline and the trajectories of young women of color with disabilities. Finally, I explore traditional theoretical stances of special education, disciplinary and juvenile justice research and differentiate my own.

**Critical Race Theory**

CRT was borne out of the Critical Legal Studies Movement (CLS) when scholars of color recognized that CLS was engaging in legal critiques based on class, but ignoring racialized aspects of the law (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995). Derrick Bell (1980) questioned strategies of integration and converging interests as incomplete liberal solutions to racial inequities while Mari Matsuda (1987) fought to center voices of non-dominant communities in discussions. Along with Bell and Matsuda, other scholars of color and allies such as Neil Gotanda and Kimberlé Crenshaw pushed CLS to include race in its analysis of ways the legal system perpetuates inequities. As CRT in the law grew, scholars in education took up CRT to challenge the racialization of schooling and focused on how CRT helped untangle the institutional and interpersonal racialized
aspects of education and connect them (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Scholars from across disciplines began to expand on CRT in ways that stretched the theory to encompass how racialized experiences were complicated by gender, immigration status and language to name a few; these branches of CRT later came to be known as FemCrit and LatCrit (Berry, 2010; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). Several other offshoots have since developed stretching the boundaries of Critical Race Theory (Akoi, 1997; Brayboy, 2006).

FemCrit

FemCrit originated with legal scholars such as Angela Harris, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Adrienne Wing and many others who were concerned about the uni-dimensionality of CRT and its focus wholly on race. FemCrit emerged to “emphasize the legal concerns of a significant group of people—those who are both women and members of today’s racial/ethnic minorities, as well as disproportionately poor” (Wing, 2003, p. I). It called on men of color to “surrender all misogynous practices, sexist assumptions, and patriarchal notions” (Bell, 2003, p. xviii) while calling on white women to surrender their own racial privileges so both groups could advance the cause of women of color who had been rendered invisible by the subscription to the belief in race and gender neutral law.

Harris (1991) called for the “abandonment of the quest for the unitary self” (p. 610). This abandonment became a central tenet of feminist and postcolonial scholars across disciplines grounded in critical and poststructuralist theories and applied in legal studies. For example, feminists of color theorized that feminist writings often privileged white women’s experiences (Johnson, 1998; Mihn-ha, 1989; Mohanty, 1988). Crenshaw (1993) built on these scholars and developed the tenet of intersectionality wherein she
called attention to the fact that identity is made up of many salient parts and the intersections of those parts is important to view in their totality. In order to illustrate how black women experience domestic violence, Crenshaw argued that an intersectional analysis must be taken up in order to combat the “conceptualization, identification and remediation of race and sex discrimination by limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise privileged members of the group” (p. 140). Patricia Hill Collins (2000) further popularized intersectionality in *Black Feminist Thought* while addressing both the macro and micro levels of oppression. Belonging to more than one subordinate group located an individual at the intersection of conflicting agendas (such as being a woman and a person of color) and singular dimension approaches to oppression can never fully address it because they miss the ways oppressions interact. Brown (2009) declared what must be examined is, “the ways in which those in a body marked as Black, female and young experience marginalizing process of racialization, gender, class and sexualization in collective construction” (p. 30).

**DisCrit**

DisCrit grew from the need to academically bridge the Disability Studies (DS) movement with CRT (Annamma, Connor & Ferri, 2013). DS sought to reject the fact that systems of education have a tendency to view individuals without context; that is, failure to achieve academically or behaviorally is often constructed as the responsibility of the individual student alone (Artiles, 1998; Collins, 2003; Gutiérrez & Stone, 1997). DS scholars argue that an individual cannot become labeled without considering context, culture and history. Collins (2003) voices this concern, "The result of such inattention to sociocultural factors in shaping identification practices is that an inherently social
process, the display and recognition of successful participation in classroom learning has been largely portrayed as an objective means of identifying 'deficits' within individual learners” (p. 2). However, historically DS has employed whiteness to ignore or superficially address ways that perceptions of race and ability were intertwined (Bell, 2006; Blanchett, Klingner, & Harry, 2009; Connor, 2008b). CRT is a useful theory that can be used to directly question and expose the relation of marginalized identity markers to overrepresentation in the Pipeline. CRT uncovered the way most special education and juvenile justice literature ignores race and theory and instead CRT encouraged keeping the history of attempts to prove racial inferiority at the front of our minds (Artiles, 1998; Patton, 1998). However, CRT often did not address issues of perceptions of ability and ignored issues of special education (Erevelles & Minnear, 2010; Ferri, 2010).

DisCrit attempted to bridge these chasms by exploring the socially constructed and interrelated nature of both race and ability and how perceptions of both are based on unmarked norms. In order to understand how students of color with disabilities embodiment and positioning reveal ways in which racism and ableism inform and rely upon each other, DisCrit examined ways “race, racism, dis/ability and ableism are built into the interactions, procedures, discourses, and institutions of education, which affect students of color with dis/abilities qualitatively differently than White students with dis/abilities” (Annamma et al., 2013).

DisCrit included seven tenets that were useful for examining the collusive nature of racism and ableism in larger society as well as specifically for this study:
1. DisCrit focuses on ways that the forces of racism and ableism circulate interdependently, often in neutralized and invisible ways, to uphold notions of normalcy.

2. DisCrit values multidimensional identities and troubles singular notions of identity such as race or dis/ability or class or gender or sexuality, and so on.

3. DisCrit emphasizes the social constructions of race and ability and yet recognizes the material and psychological impacts of being labeled as raced or dis/abled, which sets one outside of the western cultural norms.

4. DisCrit privileges voices of marginalized populations, traditionally not acknowledged within research.

5. DisCrit considers legal and historical aspects of dis/ability and race and how both have been used separately and together to deny the rights of some citizens.

6. DisCrit recognizes Whiteness and Ability as Property and that gains for people labeled with dis/abilities have largely been made as the result of interest convergence of White, middle-class citizens.

7. DisCrit requires activism and supports all forms of resistance.

Tenet one explores the concepts that racism and ableism are normal, not an aberration and that they work in tandem. Annamma et al. (2013) state, “Neither institutional racism alone nor institutional ableism on its own can explain why students of color are more likely to be labeled with dis/abilities and segregated than their white peers with and without dis/abilities” (p. 11). Instead, through normalizing practices that are mutually constitutive, such as labeling a student ‘at-risk’ for simply being a person of
color, unmarked norms of whiteness are equated with ability and differences become viewed as biological deficits.

The second tenet troubles uni-dimensional views of identity because stigma and segregation are compounded by multiple identities. Being viewed as different from unmarked norms encourages educators to mark a child as disabled and to be a person of color with disability impacts the ways students experience education. Singular notions of identity miss the intersections of oppression. For example a middle class, white child who can afford the expensive diagnostic can be labeled with dyslexia and may benefit from her label (e.g. increased time on standardized tests, increased efforts at inclusion into the mainstream setting and curriculum and additional time with a paraprofessional; each of which mean more access to college) while a Latina with a more general learning disability label may endure a very different fate (e.g., segregated classrooms with less access to the general education curriculum, low expectations and lack of services, all which make it more difficult to access college) (Reid & Knight, 2006).

Tenet three exposes the social construction of race and disability as responses to differences from unmarked cultural normative standards. Those differences are then viewed as biological deficits. Once viewed as biological, these deficits are seen as something inherent in the child, something that can be accommodated for, but never shed. In other words, the label becomes reified and expectations for students are often lowered (Harry & Klingner, 2006).

The fourth tenet focuses on counter-narratives from students as essential to understanding any inequities that exist in education. These counter-stories must not stand alone but must be compared to the master-narrative. This moves us from a place of
sympathy to instead focusing on what can be done to eradicate the master-narrative. It does not purport to give voice as oppressed people have a voice and as DuBois recognized a century ago, have a Gift. Instead, this tenets demands we honor that Gift by centering these stories.

Tenet five recognizes that historically, these labels of racially different and/or disabled have been utilized to deny rights to particular people that the system has long since found unworthy of full citizenship. Annamma et al. (2013) note, “Without racialized notions of ability, racial difference would simply be racial difference. Because racial difference has been explicitly linked with an intellectual hierarchy, however, racial differences take on additional weight” (p. 15). Pseudo-sciences have been used historically to establish whiteness as superiority in both intellectual and moral realms (Menchaca, 1997; Valencia, 1997). This racism then became normalized through laws, policies and programs designed to codify white superiority by focusing on the inherent deficits of people of color and those with disabilities.

The sixth tenet examines ways that race and ability have become property and that those considered white and able experience economic benefits (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Erevelles et al. 2006). In order to participate in those benefits, racialized and disabled communities have had to either work to pass as white and/or able, which reifies a binary of normal and abnormal, or they have had to leverage interest convergence. Interest convergence is when rights or economic benefits for oppressed citizens can occur only when they benefit the dominant group (Bell, 1980).

Finally, tenet seven requires a commitment to activism. All activism forms are respected, from marching and protests to theorizing about inequities and each are
welcome. Each of the tenets put forth rejects “forces, practices, and institutions that attempt to construct dis/ability based on differences from normative cultural standards” (Annamma et al, 2013).

Currently, young women of color face classrooms that ignore their knowledge and cultural practices, promote deficit views of students and assess them reductively by overreliance on standardized tests (Erevelles, 2011; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Leonardo & Broderick 2011). Below I provided the theoretical tenets of all three theories and the research that inform this study. These tenets allowed me to view historically marginalized girls within sociocultural context instead of as individuals solely responsible for their plights. In other words, I was able to explore both the institutional and individual for racism, ableism, sexism and heteronormativism.

**Conceptual framework affordances.** The conceptual framework I put forward recognizes institutional as well as individual bias. To understand how these biases function, the affordances of this conceptual framework are listed below. First, racism, sexism and ableism are normal and ordinary in our society (Annamma et al., 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Goodwin, 2003; Watts & Erevelles, 2004; Wing, 2003) in the sense that normal is the unmarked white, able bodied and male; and bodies that are brown and black, disabled and female are automatically considered abnormal and problematic (Berry, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Watts & Erevelles, 2004). Institutional and interpersonal enforcement of these hegemonic norms happens in ways that create and strengthen inequities (e.g. race, class, gender, ability). Ignoring these realities undermines the fight for equity. These mutually constitutive processes are enacted through purportedly race, ability, sexual and gender neutral practices and policies, which actually
reinforce the unmarked norms of white, male, heterosexual and able (Ferri, 2008; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This is evidenced in the fact that most juvenile justice centers are created with white males in mind though the majority of people relegated to them are not. As we will see in the findings, girls’ prisons were an afterthought and therefore, many of girls’ basic needs were originally ignored (see chapter 7 for more details). Additionally, race, gender, sexuality and ability were not considered or addressed in many juvenile justice settings (see chapter 8 for discussion). These unmarked norms contribute to the overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary actions, often via punitive Zero Tolerance policies.

Zero Tolerance policies were largely adopted after the infamous Columbine shootings wherein students were automatically suspended or expelled for a range of behaviors (Monroe, 2005; Osher & Quinn, 2003; Wallace, Jr., Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Though they had been in place before, the incident at Columbine increased the hyper vigilance of finding and excluding any child who could be considered a threat in order to prevent another tragedy like Columbine (Drakeford & Staples, 2006). However, these punitive disciplinary policies left much room for subjective applications and school personnel used them to rid schools of unwanted children via removal and relegation to the juvenile justice system. For example, in Florida, 67% (over 12,000) of school referrals to the Department of Juvenile Justice for misdemeanor offenses such as minor theft and trespassing (Florida ACLU, 2011). In an age of increasing calls for education reform that are research based, Zero Tolerance policies are not empirically proven to make schools safer or curb unwanted behaviors (Drakeford & Staples, 2006). Instead, exclusionary disciplinary policies have been shown to reduce time in which
students receive instruction, reducing opportunity to learn and potentially damaging the relationship these students have with school (Arcia, 2006; Drakeford, 2004; Losen & Skiba, 2010). This increase in suspensions and expulsions that has occurred partially due to Zero Tolerance policies has impacted particular students disproportionately, specifically students of color and those with disabilities.

Of great concern are that these ordinary and normalizing processes of ableism, racism and sexism lead to seeing differences from the unmarked norm as inherent deficits (Ferri & Connor, 2009). Therefore as overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary actions began to garner attention (Education Week, 2011), explanations such increased behavioral disruptions by students of color or correlations between poverty and an inability to behave were immediately put forth. However, neither reason adequately explains disproportionality (Brantlinger, 1991; Gregory, 1997; Skiba, Peterson & Williams, 1997). Instead, African Americans in particular experienced more severe school punishments for less severe behavior (McFadden et al., 1992). Males of color were more likely to be referred and punished for subjective and less serious infractions (loitering, excessive noise and perceived threat) whereas White students were punished for more serious, objective infractions (obscene language, smoking, leaving without permission, vandalism) (Skiba et al., 2000). Students with a disability are often left out of research focused on discipline because they have particular rights afforded and their disciplinary rates are reported in ways that are rarely compatible with the rest of the general education population (Losen & Skiba, 2010). However, when included in the research, students with disabilities have shown to be overrepresented and treated inequitably in disciplinary actions (Cooley, 1995; Losen, 2011; Skiba et al., 1997).
Additionally, students labeled with an emotional disability were more likely to be referred and suspended than any other students in general or special education (Cooley, 1995; Skiba et al., 1997).

Instead of viewing differences as deficits in this study, I sought to understand how systems frame differences via institutions’ and teachers’ pedagogical philosophies and practices. Teachers are just one component that make up the larger sociocultural context and are not the most powerful actors in schools, often having to follow policies and practices that they do not support. However, as they work with students daily, their pedagogical practices and philosophies have large impact on students’ interactions with schools (Hart et al., 2009). One of the aims of the observations in this study is to determine what is being done to support students with emotional disabilities in juvenile justice and how conceptions of them affect their experiences. This enabled me to examine how the teachers’ perceptions of girls’ differences in race, class, sexual orientation and ability were being addressed in the classroom and how those perceptions mediated the educational trajectories of the young women of color with disabilities.

Second, these ordinary and normalizing processes that encourage seeing differences as deficits contributed to viewing race and disability as biological facts (Reid & Knight, 2006; Watts & Erevelles, 2004). Therefore, these theories problematize these processes and recognized the social construction of race and disability as society’s response to differences from the norm. This response is enacted in the vast overrepresentation of students of color in special education, which has been identified as an issue since the inception of special education (Dunn, 1968; Heller, Holtzman & Messick, 1982). There has been a consistent pattern of African American students being
overrepresented in intellectual and emotional disabilities nationally and other students of color being overrepresented in particular judgment categories by state (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar & Higareda, 2005; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Harry & Klingner, 2006; Losen & Orfield, 2002). Critical educators and researchers recognized the problems of labeling large numbers of minority students as deficient based on professional judgment of school personnel that did not share the background or culture of their students and called for a deeper examination of potential causal factors (Artiles, 1998; Brantlinger, 1997; Harry & Klingner, 2006; Losen & Orfield, 2002; Patton, 1998; Reid & Valle, 2004; Sleeter, 1986). Even after taking into account socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of school districts, gender and ethnicity continued to be a determining factor in being identified with a disability (Oswald et al., 2002; Parrish, 2002). This pattern of overrepresentation made me question how disabilities were diagnosed and then supported and I explored the ways that both the girls as well as the teachers in juvenile justice settings understood and addressed disability.

Third, "No person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 9). Historically, issues viewed through one lens, such as race, limit the understanding of ways gender and ability interacted with race (Wing, 2003). Each of these theories emphasized multidimensional identities and troubles singular notions of identity such as race or ability or gender (Annamma et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1993). Understanding how gender intersects with race and ability to construct particular stereotypes such as the Asian Dragon Lady or the Black Mammy was particularly useful since constructions are created in ways that allow for the status quo of racism, sexism and ableism to continue (Ikemoto, 2000; Mullings, 1994). This research examined ways in
which the girls' experiences are impacted by ways others construct their race, gender and ability particularly, as girls of color are constructed as more violent and dangerous. This was embodied in facts about the overrepresentation of girls of color in special education, disciplinary actions and incarceration (Justice Center, 2011; Mendez & Knoff; 2003; Oswald et al., 2002).

Fourth, John Powell's words resonated through these theories, "I feel like I've been spoken for and I feel like I've been spoken about, but rarely do I feel like I've been spoken to" (Dalton, 1987, p. 81). Gift Theory, CRT, FemCrit and DSE disrupted this trend of ignoring the voices of traditionally marginalized populations and instead privileged those that have experienced oppression as they have unique experiences and knowledge (Matsuda, 1987). These counter-narratives both shared experiences for the oppressed and contrasted the master narrative to educate the privileged as well. Zenkov and Dutro (2008) stated, "...the onus is on educators to challenge the notion that youth should be positioned only as recipients of adult-centered policies, rather than as active participants in crafting educational experiences that meet their needs and support them toward their aspirations" (p. 167). The master-narrative was that these girls deserve to be incarcerated because of their violent nature. It whispered that girls of color are also often poor and poor people commit more crimes. However, these girls do not commit more crimes, that their crimes are not more violent and instead that they get disproportionately sentenced (ABA & NBA, 2001). Therefore, my study is centered in the voices of the historically marginalized, young women of color with disabilities and their teachers, to learn of their experiences and ways to support them in an education system that has historically ignored or even discouraged them from participating.
Fifth, CRT, FemCrit and DSE all explicitly expressed a commitment toward activism. Though the academy eschewed the term for a variety of reasons, many within these critical theories embraced activism as social change. CRT “not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it; it sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better” (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001, p. 3). As I spent time with the girls, we talked consistently about what they needed and I worked to help them whenever I could. I spent extra time helping a student pass the math portion of her GED, assisted another student with filling out applications for a local community college and helped plan the graduation logistics for one of the girls. When the teachers struggled to support the girls academically, they often came to me for answers and I worked to provide them with ideas whenever I could. I have worked with local and national groups to change sentencing laws and disciplinary actions along with, working to reduce the disproportionate representation of children of color with disabilities in all steps of the School to Prison Pipeline. Some days, activism was simply walking into a prison and listening to the girls. This is not to cast me as any type of hero but to say as a former teacher in these institutions, I knew how little people understood about the girls behind the barbed wire fences. Centering my study in a place where children were incarcerated was academic activism. “If theory can be violent, that is if theory can erase large portions of the population by ignoring their needs and realities, we also believe that theory can be emancipatory, offering oppressed groups a language of critique and resistance” (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 18). To me, activism looked different each day and all forms of activism should be welcomed.
Using these core principles as the guiding structure of my conceptual framework, my study is centered in the voices of the historically marginalized, young women of color whose race, gender and ability have been constructed as deficient. Gift Theory and CRT provided me with an opportunity to create a theoretically informed study that resisted the master-narratives of these girls as more violent and deserving of incarceration. Instead of imagining the girls and their behavior as the problem, I sought to understand how institutions through individuals reinforced and perpetuated systemic inequities. The literature related to the School to Prison Pipeline has focused mainly on overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary actions and problematic Zero Tolerance policies (Advancement Project, 2010). Rarely has the role of special education in the School to Prison Pipeline been addressed through empirical studies. Even more rare is capturing the student perspective in order to determine how to disrupt this pipeline. By expanding the discussion surrounding this topic to include a rigorous qualitative analysis of empirical data, I hoped to enhance the discussion of the School to Prison Pipeline.

**Conclusion**

Traditionally, special education literature lacked "a coherent breakdown of the beliefs and values that undergird…education preferences" (Brantlinger, 1997, p. 433). In other words, research that traditionally examined ability and disability has been largely without explicitly stated theoretical commitments (Patton, 1998; Reid & Valle, 2004). However, much special education research was being driven by the medical model of disability which searched for, diagnosed and treated disabilities with remediation, or focuses on fixing the deficit within the student (Connor, 2008a; Erevelles, Kanga &
Middleton, 1997; Nocella, 2008; Reid & Valle, 2004). In other words, the medical model treated all disabilities as diseases that can be diagnosed objectively and assumed that underlying biases do not influence the judgment of professionals. Once a disability has been “diagnosed” or “discovered”, schools endorsed “treatment” with remediation of the student, which often focuses on teaching discreet skills in isolated contexts (Gutiérrez & Stone, 1997; McDermot, Goldman & Varenne, 2006).

Traditional research on disciplinary actions, special education and juvenile justice often viewed learning and behavior as caused by a deficit within the student (Drakeford, 2004; Erevelles, 2000; Losen & Skiba, 2010). This focus on the individual ignored context and focused solely on the student. However, critical theories argued that perceptions of ability must be understood within context of race, class and gender (Artiles, 1998, Collins, 2003; Connor, 2008b; Gutiérrez & Stone, 1997). Schools should not allow "a single person to bear the undue burden of being targeted, accused, labeled, explained, worried about, remediated, or even rehabilitated without an account of the conditions in which he or she lives" (McDermott et al., 2006, p. 13). In other words, no one person can be viewed as acting without context. This traditional research was often a-historical in that it ignored the ways perceptions of achievement, disability, behavior and criminalization have been used as a tool to legitimize inequitable treatment of people and the intersections with other identity markers, especially race, to further marginalize particular populations (Connor, 2008a). What makes someone outside the range of typical in learning and behavior? Critical theories required examination of conceptions of normal and what then fall outside the norm (Annamma, Boelé, Moore & Klingner, in press; Artiles, 1998; Baynton, 2001). "In a stratified society, differences are never just
 differences; they are always understood, defined, and ranked according to dominant
cultural norms, values, and practices" (Gutiérrez, Morales and Martinez, 2009, p. 218).

This conceptual framework illustrated how theory informed my understanding of
the Pipeline and allowed me to create a study that was unique and needed. By embracing
a conceptual framework centered in Critical Race Theory and its intellectual ancestor,
Gift Theory, I rejected deficit views of students and specifically resisted imagining the
girls as damaged individuals in need of fixing. This study was carried out with the
knowledge that a child must not be labeled, criminalized or incarcerated without
considering context and history and therefore it was designed to understand education
trajectories. This critical conceptual framework also informed my commitment to
methodological pluralism and critical phenomenology in order to highlight a re-
interpretation of the School to Prison Pipeline from the voices of those most deeply
impacted by it, incarcerated girls of color with disabilities (see Chapter 4 for more
details). Gift Theory and Critical Race Theory supported trickle up social justice (Spade,
2011). Furthermore, this conceptual framework allowed me to directly question and
expose the relationship of marginalized identity markers to overrepresentation in the
Pipeline and widen the lens to understand the product of deeply entrenched racism
embedded within educational and societal structures.
Chapter Three
Generativity: Reviewing the School to Prison Pipeline Literature

A growing body of literature from activist groups and academics has examined the School to Prison Pipeline (ACLU, 2008; Advancement Project 2010; Kim et al., 2010; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2007; Wald & Losen, 2003). Though this is an encouraging development that has received national press and even attention from the Obama administration (Department of Justice, 2012), there is still much work to be done. The School to Prison Pipeline coverage in activist groups mostly focused on the first step of the Pipeline, public school actions such as punitive discipline and policing in schools. Furthermore, these activist groups focused on males of color, as their overrepresentation is the most severe (ACLU, Advancement Project, NAACP, SPLC). Research has provided a more comprehensive picture of who is subject to school actions, which punish and segregate along with who gets incarcerated, though much of it does not use the term School to Prison Pipeline. It is here I focus my attention, on the ways that race, gender and disability intersected and how they contributed to students becoming prisoners in the United States.

To understand the School to Prison Pipeline, instead of looking at one step such as public schools, I began by imagining it in a broader sense in order to capture the entire Pipeline. Therefore, like the School to Prison Pipeline itself, this literature review consists of three major sections: Public Schools, Juvenile Justice and Release. In each step of the Pipeline, I focus on overrepresentation of populations represented in this study. Therefore I utilize research that is for the most specific population (females of color) but at times, it was more general (students of color or students with disabilities). Historically, the majority of Pipeline research has been quantitative studies illustrating
that overrepresentation of particular populations indeed exists in the Pipeline (ACLU, 2008; Advancement Project, 2010; Losen & Skiba, 2010). However, there also have been intensive qualitative studies that act as a methodological guide for my own research from disciplines such as criminology as well as sociology along with education.

**Public Schools and Student’s Lives**

The first set of studies explores research conducted during the first step of the School to Prison Pipeline, public schools. In public schools, both disciplinary actions and special education assignment have shown a relationship with future incarceration. Figure 2 illustrates the overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary actions nationally.

![Figure 2: Overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary actions nationally](image)

Figure 2 shares that in 2006, the average suspension rate was slightly over 11% nationally (the blue line with arrows). Over 18% of Black females were suspended in 2006, meaning they experienced more suspensions than White (10%) and Hispanic (16.3%) males (Losen & Skiba, 2010). The national average for females was 7.5% and
along with Black females (18%), both Native American (9.6%) and Hispanic females (8.5%) were overrepresented. In contrast, only 4% of White females were suspended in 2006 (Losen & Skiba, 2010). Furthermore from 2002-2006, Black females experienced a 5.3 percentage point increase in suspensions, whereas Black males experienced a 1.6 increase, White females a .44 increase, Hispanic females a .33 increase and Hispanic while White males experienced a decrease in suspensions (Losen & Skiba, 2010). African American females were over two times as likely to leave school for disciplinary reasons compared to White females (Stearns & Glennie, 2006). Females of color therefore experienced increasing punitive disciplinary actions. Furthermore, females of color are overrepresented in special education. Compared to white females, Black females were 1.3 times more likely to be labeled with an emotional disability (Oswald et al., 2002).

Next, I explore qualitative studies that examined the overrepresentation of students of color and those with disabilities in disciplinary actions. I then review research that shared what students feel it means to be disciplined and labeled with a disability. Finally, I discuss research that focused on students’ lives outside of public schools, which affected their experiences in public schools. In those final studies in this section, the focus was less on one particular setting and more on the overall sociocultural context in which children of color lived.

**Disciplinary Actions.** Sheets (2002) observed and interviewed four students, two who had the least disciplinary events and two who had the highest number of disciplinary events in an urban high school, along with four of the teachers who were self selected by the students as teachers they particularly liked. All students believed teachers were unfair and discriminatory and acted accordingly while teachers focused on "surface displays of
misbehavior" and often missed the meaning and nuances of situations (Sheets, 2002, p. 109). Students experienced feelings of alienation, witnessed perceived injustices, and recognized poor classroom management and instruction, and lack of cohesion between misbehavior and severity of consequence. This lack of cohesion led to a perception of discrimination (Sheets, 2002). The perceptual differences between teachers and students were significant and even teachers who students liked often made assumptions about why students did things that were not aligned with reasons students gave.

Trust impacted the discipline gap according to Gregory and Ripinsky (2008). Thirty-two students, the majority of them Black, who had been referred for disciplinary actions were surveyed and interviewed. Additionally, 32 teachers that either referred students for the disciplinary action or were nominated by students as teachers they particularly trusted were also surveyed and interviewed. If a teacher took a relational approach to discipline, one characterized by teacher’s philosophy of discipline that included care and attention to student’s needs, there was less student defiance (Gregory and Ripinsky, 2008). Though it was not certain why this correlation existed, the authors theorized that a relational approach fostered trust between the student and teacher, making it more likely that the student would follow the rules and expectations set by the teacher.

**Special Education.** As previously addressed, the overrepresentation of students of color in special education has long been a concern for special education (Dunn, 1968; Heller et al., 1982). As this pattern began, critical educators and researchers began to recognize the problems of labeling large numbers of minority students as deficient based on professional judgment and called for a deeper examination of the causal factors and
this continues today (Artiles, 1998; Brantlinger, 1997; Losen & Orfield, 2002; Patton, 1998; Reid & Valle, 2004; Sleeter, 1986).

Harry and Klingner (2006) heeded this call and conducted a three-year study of the special education identification and referral process. Utilizing ethnographic methods at 12 elementary schools and then focused on 12 students within those schools, the authors gathered data from a variety of sources including interviews with educators and family members, observations of classrooms and conferences and artifact examination of student documents. The placement process was found to have several problem areas such as: lack of appropriate instruction and behavior management in the general education classroom prior to referral, arbitrary referrals, unclear policies, inconsistent use of said policies and problematic assessment decisions as well as questionable quality of special education programs once students were identified (Harry & Klingner, 2006). These inequitable factors were more likely to be found in schools serving predominantly Black and low-income children (Harry & Klingner, 2006). Overall, each of these issues contributed to disproportionate representation of students from non-dominant communities, particularly Black and Hispanic students (Harry & Klingner, 2006). Harry and Klingner (2006) noted,

We argue that the process of determining children's eligibility for special education is anything but a science. Rather, it is the result of societal forces that intertwine to construct an identity of 'disability' for children whom the regular education system finds too difficult to serve (p. 9).

Once children were identified, their label became reified; that is, the label became a thing that constrained what teachers felt children were capable of and became an explanation for school failure.
Hart et al. (2009) also studied the special education referral process, focusing on a subset of the Harry and Klingner (2006) data. Purposefully sampling, the authors focused on four case study students with emotional disabilities. These students were observed in classrooms, their parent/guardians and school personnel were interviewed, a document analysis of school records along with meeting observations were also completed. Once a child had been recommended for evaluation for special education, the referral process became a self-fulfilling process in which ecological circumstances were ignored in favor of school personnel's beliefs. These actions of ignoring sociocultural context and focusing on school personnel beliefs disproportionately affect students from non-dominant communities. The general education contexts of instruction, behavior management and peer interactions were often ignored and all behavior problems were attributed solely to the individual child (Hart et al., 2009). Often school personnel attributed problems in school to dysfunctional family life which, upon further investigation through home visits did not exist but, was subscribed to so completely that this belief even spilled over into action in the form of disrespectful treatment of some of the parents. Even the assessment process, which is supposed to be free from bias, allowed school personnel's beliefs to influence or even trump assessment results (Hart et al., 2009). The subscription to a medical model paradigm where a disability must be located within an individual, diagnosed and treated was clear and the sociocultural factors that can contributed to students' behavior were often ignored.

Connor (2008a) explored not how the special education process occurred but instead how students labeled with a disability then experienced their education. He recognized that the few collections of voices from students with disabilities often focus,
intentionally or not, on those who are white, suburban and middle class so Connor purposefully sought out students of color from urban environments who were labeled with a learning disability. Using Collective Memory Work in interactive workshops, eight, ages 18-3, students wrote prose, rap, did individual interviews as well as focus groups reflecting on their education and Connor (2008a) thoroughly traced their experiences with special education in and out of school. A unique characteristic of Connor's work is that he and the students discussed salient identity markers such as race, class, gender, disability status and the intersections between them (Connor, 2008a). Students provided not only their own recollections and perceptions but also provided recommendations for teachers (Connor, 2008a). All participants were aware of the binary of normal and disabled and felt marginalized compared to peers perceived as able-bodied. Many students felt shame because of their disability status. Additionally, participants were aware of racial and class hierarchies, how schools relegate them as non-dominant students with disabilities to the margins, and how they are subjected to discriminatory practices and discourse based on their intersectional identities (Connor, 2008a).

Ferri and Connor (2009) further intersectionalized their analysis by appraising how gender complicated the experience of females of color in special education. They investigated a subset of Connor’s (2008a) data and focused on the five female participants from that group. The girls were skilled at negotiating their intersectional identities and resisted passive acceptance of the positioning others attempted to do. Instead, the girls actively claimed and resisted the label of disability when it was advantageous to do so in their eyes. Girls of color with disabilities, who are traditionally
left out of educational research and even girl’s studies, were found to have a voice and important information to share when given the chance.

**The Sociocultural Context of the Lives of Students of Color.** Jones (2010) explored the way the interpersonal and structural violence young women of color faced in their daily lives. In a three-year intensive ethnographic study, Jones began her study by working with students who were part of Violence Reduction Program, where she interviewed program staff and they identified students who were at risk for becoming victims of violence. From those recommendations, Jones interviewed 24 adolescents, 15 African American girls and 9 boys and then spent a final year observing and doing in-depth, open-ended interviews with three young women. All of the girls had to confront and negotiate conflict and violence daily in order to survive. Most of the girls had to fight as one strategy of many in their survival skills but some embraced the identity of girl fighter while others strove to be seen as good girls, ones that did not fight without attempts to avoid conflict. The girls faced a continuum between traditional conceptions of femininity (good) and girls who embraced and those who fight (ghetto) and though each identified with particular points on the line, how all learned to utilize spaces on the spectrum at different times.

Rios (2011) observed and interviewed forty Black and Latino boys between the ages of 14-17. Using methods from critical criminology and urban ethnography in this three year study, he also conducted focus groups and shadowed them going about their daily lives. Rios’ (2011) goal was “to make young people’s perspectives central to my understanding of crime, punishment, and justice in their community” (p. 8). The system of social control had not abandoned the poor, but re-organized itself in order to surveil,
punish and criminalize the boys. School played a large part in this criminalization, ignoring the boys as victims of violence and instead viewing them as only perpetrators.

Each of these studies has direct impact on the study I conceived and carried out for this dissertation. Sheets (2002) provided lessons on disciplinary actions and emphasized the importance of gathering both teacher and student data to provide a sense of how each party perceives disciplinary events differently. Gregory and Ripinsky’s (2008) study supplied a sense of how relational discipline could positively affect disciplinary overrepresentation and became something that I watched for during observations and interviews. Hart et al. (2009) and Harry and Klingner (2006) acted as methodological guides for an in-depth qualitative analysis that provides a larger sociocultural context than an interview study could provide alone. Connor (2008a) and Ferri and Connor (2010) furnished a sense of how to explore intersectional identities and conduct an intersectional analysis, which accounted for perceptions of race, gender, ability and class. Jones (2010) and Rios (2011) contributed guides on ways to explore the larger sociocultural context in which the girls’ lived. Each completed multi-sited ethnographies that explored the sociocultural context of students’ lives that impacted the ways they interacted with particular institutions.

**Juvenile Justice**

The second step in the School to prison Pipeline was incarceration in a juvenile justice setting. African Americans girls were more likely to be arrested for drug violations though there is no proof they use drugs more and are more often committed to juvenile detention even when charged with the same offenses as their White peers (ABA & NBA, 2001; Males, 2007). Additionally, African American girls accounted for nearly
half of the population in secure detention whereas white girls, though they comprise 65% of the at-risk girl population, only make up 34% of the secure detention population (ABA & NBA, 2001). Even more concerning was the statistic that white females’ cases are dismissed every seven out of ten times whereas black females’ cases are dismissed only three of ten times (ABA & NBA, 2001). Additionally, as discussed previously, children with disabilities are vastly overrepresented in juvenile justice nationally. However, what type of disability a child is diagnosed with is significant. Youth with emotional disabilities are less than 1% of the general population but 16.8% of the juvenile corrections population (Rutherford et al., 2002). Recall that females of color are overrepresented in the category of emotional disabilities (Oswald et al., 2002). In order to get a better sense of how incarcerated children are impacted by juvenile justice settings, I next share qualitative studies.

Young et al. (2010) examined education inside the juvenile justice system and note, "Youth prison schools face additional challenges since the goals of the prison can conflict with the intended educational processes and goals" (p. 3). The authors observed and interviewed 40 youth in a juvenile detention center and found that there was an emphasis on safety and control that, at times, trumped education. Also, they found teachers who did not have appropriate certifications or space in which to teach in, disciplinary staff whose role often bled into the classroom and whose authority often superseded that of teachers, restriction of resources such as pencils and paperclips and technology such as computers, and stigmatization of students through constant monitoring, restrictions of students and interactions between teachers, detention staff and youth (Young et al., 2010). Each of these impacted how students felt about the ways the
teachers and juvenile justice system viewed them, as criminals instead of young people with potential to grow.

Over three years, Winn (2010) gathered data as incarcerated girls participated in a play writing and performance program known as Girl Time in transitional detention centers. These girls often embraced an "incarceration discourse" where they tear themselves down searching for the reason for their incarceration by looking inward to problems in their own moral fabric (Winn, 2010, p. 317). Breakdowns of education, health care and society resulted in lack of protection of these girls but these facts are rarely present in the discourse of these girls. This is not a ignorance on their part, but instead a lack of recognition from the institutions themselves of what these girls face (Winn, 2010). Focusing on individual failures misses many of the themes that these girls' stories included, such as problems that occur around the middle school years, being detained for status crimes such as running away and experiencing abuse prior to being detained, which is often referred to as the gateway to the pipeline for girls (Winn, 2010). Winn (2010) noted that art, though powerful, alone cannot solve the problems and inequities they face, and additionally they need adults to be allies and advocates.

These intensive qualitative studies also provided methodological guides for my own study. Young et al (2010) shared a need for both observations and interviews to better understand the sociocultural context of juvenile justice. Winn (2010) conceptualized a study to capture the School to Prison Pipeline thought interviews, observations and participation. Most importantly, all of the studies presented thus far in the literature review emphasized the need to begin with the assumption that young people involved in the School to Prison Pipeline are not inherently flawed. Instead these young
people are working to survive in worlds that are enacting systemic oppression and therefore limiting their opportunities.

**Release**

The final step in the School to Prison Pipeline was release back into society. Recidivism is said to be less of a problem for girls but when violations of probation are considered (called technical violations), girls are actually more affected than originally thought (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004). Though girls commit less new crimes, holding them in contempt of court along with parole and probation violations increase girls’ return to detention (ABA & NBA, 2001). However it was difficult to find qualitative studies that focused on just girls and in fact, most focused on boys or were quantitative co-ed studies. This is because historically, like adult incarceration, juvenile justice has often assumed that “criminal” is equated with males (Fields & Abrams, 2010). Therefore to get a better sense of the methodologically guiding studies, lastly I explore two qualitative studies.

Abrams (2006) worked with 19 boys to identify components of treatment centers that made it more likely they would stay out of jail after release. The young men were often confused by their therapeutic work and did not always understand the purpose of therapy. Also, incarcerated males became used to living in institutions and so lock down settings did not deter future crime. Most concerning is that that the boys were not confident that they could apply their skills learned at the treatment centers outside of incarceration.

Mincey, Madonado, Lacey and Thompson (2008) found that male juveniles identified support from families, schools and community as encouraging less recidivism.
The nine male students they interviewed had benefitted from incarceration settings that were positive and school environments in those settings where teachers took non-traditional approaches such as hands on learning. They suffered when they attended incarceration settings that utilized verbal, emotional and/or physical abuse. Transition services back into the community had great impacts on the recidivism of the young men. “Young offenders, upon successful discharge from their programs, returned to similar conditions that had existed before they began treatment. Many youths were from environments that consisted of dilapidated housing structures, drugs, and impoverished conditions. These environmental conditions negatively increased the potential for re-offending” (Mincey et al., p. 25).

**Conclusion**

Ultimately each of these studies provides context in addressing particular points in the pipeline but more importantly, provided examples of research that views marginalized youth and their teachers as knowledge generators, capable of authoring their own experiences as well as their futures. Shulman (1999) described the purpose of a Review of the Literature to create generativity, allowing an author to situate the study within a body of research by making critical meaning of research that came previously. Reviewing this body of literature required me to critically interrogate how discussions of overrepresentation of both males and people of color in the School to Prison Pipeline did not address the needs of females of color who are also overrepresented in disciplinary actions, special education assignment and incarceration (ABA & NBA, 2001; Clark, Petras & Sheppard, 2000; Oswald et al., 2001). Also, much of the Women’s, Girl’s and Gender studies tended to address white females (Brown, 2009; Males 2007). Students
with disabilities have been largely ignored in the School to Pipeline literature (Kim et al., 2010). The solutions coming out of these studies then, could not resolve the disproportionate representation of young women of color with disabilities as they were created with abled males of color and white females in mind. Females of color were largely ignored in the literature due to hegemonic norms of ableism, patriarchy and racism; therefore their experiences must be studied empirically. A serious lacuna exists in the School to Prison Pipeline literature to address the needs of racially gendered and dis/abled youth (Mears & Aron, 2003). Therefore this Review of the Literature not only allowed me to utilize generativity through understanding the literature but also to inform my own study theoretically and methodologically (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012).

In each step of the Pipeline, race and gender have been addressed but rarely has disability been included in a substantive way. Though some do address race and disability (Hart et al., 2009; Harry & Klingner, 2006) or gender and race (Winn, 2010), most do not take on intersections throughout the Pipeline resulting in a weakness in the literature for supporting racially gendered and abled youth. Overall, a number of studies that I have reviewed have researched part of what I have proposed to study but none have put them together in the same way. The unique contribution of this study is that it seeks to qualitatively understand the trajectories of girls of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline in order to find points of intervention in that Pipeline.

Due to my own experience as a teacher working in different steps of the pipeline, I was motivated to continue work with these students because I knew they have knowledge to offer and a perspective that should be garnered. I share the passion that Raible and Irizarry (2010) name when they state, "Our interest as researchers in the
school-to-prison pipeline arises from our drive to understand our own complicity, as teachers and teacher educators, in positioning certain students on previously unexamined trajectories" (p. 1199). I recognize my own culpability in ushering some children through the School to Prison Pipeline by writing disciplinary referrals, Individualized Education Plans and working with the School Officer to allow children tickets for behaviors in schools. I hope that by informing society about the students we relegate to the School to Prison Pipeline and what their education experiences are in different steps of that Pipeline, I can encourage deep questions about "who these girls were and why they had been herded from schools to jails" as well as what kind of society relegates the most disadvantaged to its prisons (Winn, 2010, p. 319).
Chapter 4
Mapping the Margins: Methodological Pluralism

The methods we choose convey how we view the world and imagine ourselves in it. Our methods also influence and are influenced by the theories in which we situate ourselves, the studies we undertake, the interactions that we have with and the ways we represent the communities in which we work. A theoretical commitment to intersectionality and voice “directs feminist scholars in the area of girls’ studies to rely on methods that showcase and capture, in girls’ own words and to the greatest degree possible, perspectives on issues of violence, relationships, victimization, and resistance” (Chesney-Lind and Jones, 2010, Introduction, Section 1, para. 4).

The goal of my study was to conceptualize the trajectories of young women of color with disabilities in the juvenile justice system in order to make visible the ways in which these girls were positioned and educated in the School to Prison Pipeline. In order to capture the counter-herstories of these young women, my methodological approach, or how I engaged in answering the research questions, is explained in this chapter. My goal for this chapter is to articulate the research process and the methodological decision-making and negotiations I made to address my research questions as my thinking evolved. It is more than a list of data collection procedures, but is, instead, explains and links my conceptual framework, research questions and data collection methods along with how the corpus of information was explored and data was found via analysis (Erikson, 2004).

“Statistics about school trouble and punishment provide a map that delineates a raced and gendered pattern of who gets punished in school and present the big picture of a disturbing phenomenon, but they can tell us very little about the actual processes that
give rise to this configuration” (Ferguson, 2000, p. 7). In mapping out the actual processes that gave rise to the phenomenon of the School to Prison Pipeline, I utilized methodological pluralism to better understand the education trajectories of the young women of color with disabilities. Katsiaficas, Futch, Fine and Sirin (2011) embraced "methodological pluralism as a strategy of data collection and analysis to document how change and discontinuity, braided with a desire for narrative coherence and consistency, shape the stories young people tell about themselves, over time and space" (p. 120). In order to access the rich trajectories of the girls’ lives, methodological pluralism in my study combined qualitative methods of Education Journey Mapping, interviewing, observations, elicitation techniques, and focus group analysis, which I describe more fully below.

Methods also signify the relationships we strive to have, and what actually occurs, with our participants and others at the sites where we do research. Erickson (2006) noted we can study down, up, or side-by-side and each of these choices signifies our deeper commitments. Studying down often leaves those who have privilege and power unexplored. While studying up alleviates this problem, it can still ignore asymmetrical power relations between the researcher and subject. Studying side-by-side attempts to transform the subject to a participant, if not a partner. Though studying side-by-side did not alleviate asymmetries in power in this study, it altered them to some extent by making them more transparent.

I attempted to make my research side-by-side, or participatory, in extremely restrictive settings (e.g. restrictive in multiple ways: surveillance of physical movement, content of speech and thoughts monitored, limited access to simple tools such as pencils
and paper clips). I was also socially located in points of power that, for many reasons, were far out of the participants’ grasp: PhD candidate, teacher, an adult woman, a person not incarcerated who could go home every day. However, I made every effort to include them in steps of data collection and analysis when I could arrange it with their teachers, therapists, school administrators, security guards, nurses and other daily visitors. However, the limitations of my study are built into the sites in which I chose to work; juvenile jails and therapeutic treatment settings are rooted in surveillance. There was simply rarely a time I could be “alone” with the girls; even when we were in a separate room, there was most often someone monitoring us visually. In future work, I intend to actively pursue what shape Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) might take in these settings as it may alleviate some of the institutional limitations.

**Methodological Tools**

**Critical phenomenological research and methodological pluralism.** Critical phenomenological research was the mode of inquiry to investigate the lived experiences of young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline. Phenomenological research "identifies the 'essence' of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by the participants in that study" (Creswell, 2003, p. 15). This mode of inquiry was especially useful for studying the phenomenon of the School to Prison Pipeline, which has been minimally researched, especially at the secondary level. Phenomenology recognized the socially constructed nature of categories like race, gender and ability (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, Book 1). Merleau-Ponty (1962) stated that the fundamental generator of meaning is the act of experiencing the world and others through our bodies and positioning. Since I was interested in the ways bodies were raced,
gendered and abled intersectionally, this study was racially gendered and abled phenomenological work.

Crotty (1988) noted that traditional phenomenology is inherently critical.

In agreeing that culture is liberating, phenomenologists remain very aware that it is also limiting. It sets us free but at the same time, it sets boundaries. In imposing these meanings, it is excluding others. And we should never lose sight of the fact that the particular set of meanings it imposes has come into being to serve particular interests and will harbour its own forms of oppression, manipulation and other forms of injustice. (p. 81).

How the School to Prison Pipeline perpetuated injustice by serving particular interests through punishing others was addressed in my study. However, though Crotty (1988) views phenomenology as inherently critical, it has been taken up in ways that are less critical recently. Therefore I employed phenomenology with explicitly critical commitments.

Critical phenomenology had particular obligations that were useful to both my participants and myself.

A critical phenomenological approach demands attention to two interrelated dimensions of social life: first, to the conditions of structural inequality and structural violence that shape (participants’) position and status…and second, to the impact of these contextual factors on (participants’) individual and collective experiences of being-in-the-world. (Willen, 2007, p. 13).

I executed a critical phenomenological approach in order to attend to these two dimensions of the School to Prison Pipeline, both structural and experiential, in the lives of incarcerated girls of color with disabilities (Willen, 2007). Therefore, critical phenomenology as a mode of inquiry served the theoretical commitments and purposes of my study.

However, phenomenology can be problematic for other reasons and as I moved throughout this study, I kept these issues at the forefront of my mind. Phenomenology on
its own can look for objective truths about the topic under study and therefore I explicitly resisted using it this way. Reid (1977) rejected the idea of objectivity in phenomenology, “The modern ideal of total objectivity – of knowledge as completely impersonal, explicit and permanent - is the salient case of myth turning into enlightenment, and nature into mere objectivity” (p. 108). In this study, an objective description of the School to Prison Pipeline was not the goal. Engaging in phenomenology, “…we end, not with a presuppositionless description of phenomena, but with a reinterpretation” (Crotty, 1988, p. 82). Traditionally, the voices of policy makers tell stories about personal responsibility and juvenile justice (See chapter 1 for more details). However rarely have the voices of those most impacted by the School to Prison Pipeline been highlighted in media or research. The goal is illumination and reinterpretation of the School to Prison Pipeline from those most impacted by it, incarcerated females of color with disabilities.

Additionally, phenomenology’s attempts to “bracket” researcher experiences in order to understand participants can be problematic (Carspecken, 1996). Researcher experiences can never truly be set aside or bracketed, they must be taken into account, addressed head on and considered at all times. Alternatively, Caelli, Ray and Mill (2003) noted,

By comparison, in critical phenomenology one would, of necessity go back to participants and ask them to critique their own accounts to see if, on reflection, they considered all the elements described in the interviews to be essential to the experience of the phenomenon. (p. 8).

Instead of trying to bracket my own beliefs, I relied on methodological pluralism to foreground the girls’ experiences in the School to Prison Pipeline. Mapping centered the girls’ perspectives and allowed them to critique their own accounts as well as my representation (Caelli et al., 2003). In this study, mapping acted as “an explicit invitation
for respondents to represent their identity(ies) in space, as well as a creative way of asking participants to make visible their selves across place, relations and time” (Katsiaficas et al., 2011, p. 123). Interviews, observations and focus groups analysis were routes to return to my participants and ask them to critique their stories and my ideas, reducing my own voice and highlighting my participants. These attempts to study side-by-side with my participants were not always successful but they did address one of the problematic assumptions within phenomenology (Erikson, 2006).

Finally what critical phenomenology provided was a way to see how bodies take on identities within the School to Prison Pipeline. Butler (1988) stated,

> In the first place, the phenomenological focus on the various acts by which cultural identity is constituted and assumed provides a felicitous starting point for the feminist effort to understand the mundane manner in which bodies get crafted into genders. (p. 525).

Phenomenological work illuminated the ways bodies became gendered within the Pipeline. This work also elucidated understanding in the ways these same bodies were simultaneously raced and abled along with gendered.

Methodological pluralism also searched for what McDermott (2010) described in Zora Neale Hurston's novel, Their Eyes Were Watching God. He stated "New kinds of learning become possible, but against a more invidious range of constraints" (p. 152). I believed young women who become incarcerated faced a new range of constraints but also new possibilities for learning. Like Lawrence Lightfoot and Davis (1997), I sought out “what is good here?” instead of just documenting failure and oppression. I did not set out to create an account that idealized and celebrated but recognized that "goodness will always be laced with imperfections" (Lawrence Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 9).
Therefore, I used critical phenomenology to find production of knowledge that captured the ways these young women of color with disabilities navigated their worlds.

**Research Design**

This qualitative research, guided by CRT and critical phenomenology, allowed the students to be units of analysis while simultaneously acknowledging the context and sociocultural factors that co-constructed their paths through the School to Prison Pipeline. Additionally, the weight was never put on the student alone but the student acting with the mediational tool (Collins, 2003). Therefore, discourse was viewed as a mediational tool students used to make sense of their own trajectories through the School to Prison Pipeline. This study also considered discourse, philosophies and practices of the educators who interact with the students as well as the larger social context in which they are situated (Collins, 2003; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). This unit of analysis allowed for complexity and nuance by understanding that no student should alone bear the responsibility of being labeled and incarcerated (McDermott et al., 2006).

My research questions drew from my critical theoretical orientations, as well as prior research and teaching experiences. CRT and its offshoots (in this case, DisCrit and FemCrit), along with critical phenomenology, encouraged connecting the individual (micro) with institutional inequities (macro). Therefore, I asked the following central question, which oriented toward the voice and experiences of the young women: RQ1-What are the education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline? Related questions addressed the ways the students are positioned by the other, more powerful social actors in the system: RQ2-How do school personnel position these incarcerated young women of color with ED?
and the larger context: RQ3-What are the institutional and sociocultural contexts in which these students and teachers are located? Ultimately, these research questions demonstrated my efforts to seek evidence through critical thematic analysis that is both frequent in the corpus of information as well as deeply mined. Therefore I designed modes of inquiry, methods of data collection and data analysis that searched for confirming and disconfirming evidence. Additionally, I worked to continually acknowledge that particular absences in the data, for whatever reasons, continued to limit my understanding of the School to Prison Pipeline phenomenon.

**The Sites, The Participants & The Researcher**

The two sites in this study, MLK and Hull, were both part of the Juvenile Justice Department of the Western State and are described in more detail below. MLK is classified as a community placement, while The Hull House is considered a secure placement (MMR, 2010). A secure placement is one that has “A facility with physical security features such as locked doors, sallyports, and correctional fencing” (MMR, glossary of terms, p. iv). In contrast, a community placement provides “community-based programs to youth presenting the lowest risk of re-offending and youth transitioning from more secure programs” (MMR, glossary of terms, p. ii). Therefore, Hull can be considered the most restrictive while MLK can be viewed as a “step down” program where juveniles are still supervised but in much different ways. Private contractors run both sites, meaning the state oversees and audits but contracts out the administration of the sites. Both sites and the Juvenile Justice Department as a whole have been experiencing a decreasing capacity over the last five years (MMR, 2010). The Juvenile Justice Department cited a better funneling system where only the most dangerous and
violent children end up committed (MMR, 2010). However, several personnel from both sites told me this was because of massive budget cuts due to a flailing economy wherein the state could not afford to keep children committed in placements and therefore was placing them back in the community.

Both of these Juvenile Justice Department sites are located in Western City, a large urban center population in Western State. The population of youth incarcerated did not accurately reflect the state or urban center statistics. In other words, there was vast overrepresentation of the poor and students of color in juvenile justice that was not predicted by either the state or city demographics. For example, population of youth incarcerated in JJD was majority low SES. Specifically over 80% of the youth committed in 2010-2011 came from families that made less than $50,000 per year (JJD information) whereas the state average income was about $56,000 per year (US Census Bureau, 2012).

The racial and ethnic make up of the JJD varied greatly from the state, presenting some of the most glaring numbers on overrepresentation of students of color. Figure 3 shared the racial and ethnic breakdown of Western State.

![Figure 3. The racial and ethnic breakdown of Western State.](image)
Western State in which JJD was located had a population of 4% African Americans, 1.1% Native American, 2.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 20.7% Latino and 70% White, while the other 1.3% claim two or more ethnicities, respectively (US Census Bureau, 2012).

The metropolitan area in which the study took place, considered a large urban area by the National Center for Education Statistics, was more diverse than the state overall (NCES, 2006). Figure 4 has the racial and ethnic breakdown of the Western City.

![Figure 4](image-url)

Figure 4. The racial and ethnic breakdown of Western City.

The statistics of Western City are 10.2% African Americans, 1.4% Native American, 3.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 31.8% Latino and 52.2% White, other 0.8% claim two or more ethnicities respectively. This urban Western City was more comparable to the statistics of the Juvenile Justice Department than the state but the overrepresentation of juveniles of color in Juvenile Justice Department is still apparent. Figure 5 has the racial and ethnic breakdown of the Juvenile Justice Department.
The Juvenile Justice Department has a population of 18.6% African Americans, 1.3% Native American, .6% Asian/Pacific Islander and Other, 36.2% Latino and 43.3% White, respectively. The Juvenile Justice Department has extreme overrepresentation compared to the city and the state. Table 1 contains comparisons of the racial and ethnic breakdown of Western State, Western City and Juvenile Justice Department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Latino/Latina</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western State</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western City</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDD</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.6%*</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The racial and ethnic breakdown of Western State, Western City and Juvenile Justice Department. *Note: This contains students from the Asian/Pacific Islander and Other category.

When examining Table 1, it is clear that the White population shrinks from Western State to Western City to the Juvenile Justice Department meaning Whites are underrepresented in Juvenile Justice. Asian populations are also vastly underrepresented in Juvenile Justice Department. Meanwhile the African American and Latino populations are larger in the Juvenile Justice Department than they are in either the state or city resulting in
overrepresentation. Native Americans have close to proportionate representation in the Juvenile Justice Department compared to the city and slightly overrepresented in comparison to the state.

The Juvenile Justice Department provided additional information regarding the average length of stay. The average length of stay was 18.9 months in 2009-10, a slight decrease (MMR, 2010) but overall this has held steady since about 2003. However, the average length of stay disaggregated by ethnicity was more telling. Though the figures have not varied much, juveniles of color received longer stays in Western State. In 2009-2010, White juveniles average length of stay was 18.4 months whereas Latino/as had an average of 19 months, African Americans had an average of 19.7 months, and Native Americans had an average of 20.0 months commitment, respectively. Asian Americans had the most drastic range in sentencing growing from an average of 12.9 months in 2007 to 21.8 months average commitment in 2009-2010.

Adding an intersectional analysis, yielded nuance and texture to the understanding of the juvenile justice population. For example, the percent of new commitments had been shrinking in the last few fiscal years overall, particularly for females who were 12% of new commitments in 2009-10, down 2% from 2008-2009. At first glance, this figure was cause for celebration. However, African American girls represented 15.2% of the population of newly committed students, Latinas were 26.1% and Native American females were 4.1% whereas Whites were 43.3% and Asian females were .3%. Though males of color had more overrepresentation (except for Native American males which were actually only 0.9% of new commits) and the female population overall is shrinking, females of color continued to be overrepresented compared to state numbers.
In the next section, I narrow the focus from the larger Juvenile Justice Department to the sites in which the study occurred. Both sites are part of the Juvenile Justice Department of the Western Mountain State. All children at these sites are adjudicated, meaning they are sentenced to be there and cannot leave until either their mandatory sentence is up or if they get probation or parole early. Though the sites varied in significant ways, they were each a part of Juvenile Justice Department and therefore were a part of the School to Prison Pipeline.

**Site 1-Martin Luther King Jr. Education Center.**

The particular neighborhood that housed The Martin Luther King Jr. Education Center, more commonly referred to by staff and students as MLK, was significant for its demographics but also the gentrification that has taken hold in the last decade. In 2003, the demographics of the neighborhood were 53.6% White, 39.7% Hispanic, 2.9% Black, and 2.2% other (Western City, 2012). This neighborhood was more heavily Latino/a than the city as a whole and I remember when I worked at MLK as a teacher, the heavy influence of the Latina/o families as evidenced by hearing Spanish spoken in the streets, at the city recreation center where signs were in English and Spanish and where support services for families were prevalent. Students from MLK often commented on their experiences with bilingualism and biculturalism within the neighborhood and discussed feeling part of the community. However, in the last decade, the population has changed. Between 2000-2010, this neighborhood has lost almost 1500 Hispanic and Black residents and gained about 550 white ones. The average home price went from $115,000 in 2000 to $245,000 in 2012. These demographic shifts changed the feel of the neighborhood and while I was at MLK as a researcher, multiple students mentioned a
feeling of surveillance from neighbors when they were out in the community. This was particularly significant because the students spent much time in this neighborhood, going to the local recreation center, parks and even just walking around the neighborhood.

MLK was a co-ed school for the students at the residential treatment center called Helping Hand which was comprised of multiple small houses where students, ages 13-21, live under the supervision of social workers around the clock. Helping Hand, which MLK served, was mainly used as a step down program from more restrictive facilities and therefore emphasized its open-door approach. Open door means doors are unlocked; kids went out into the community and worked with permission, took the bus to school and had free time out of the house once they have gained the privileges. The students could technically leave at any time but since they are adjudicated, wherein “the court determines that it has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt that a juvenile has committed a delinquent act, or that a juvenile has pled guilty to committing a delinquent act”, if they left without permission or stay out past their curfew, they would be arrested and punished through adding additional time to their sentence (MMR glossary of terms, p. i). There was a maximum of about 60 students at MLK, and though in years past this school and RTC have often been at capacity with a waiting list, this particular year it was never near capacity (interview, principal, Yalla, 2012). MLK often got students from Hull after they had served most of their commitment and need to be integrated back into the community but were not ready for full release. Also, if a student struggles at MLK, she may find herself back at Hull, which is what happened to one participant, Riveara.

Site 2-The Hull House.
The Jane Adams Hull House for Girls, often called Hull, was repeatedly described as “the end of the line” for young women in the Juvenile Justice Department by several staff and was a long-term facility for young women. It was a maximum-security center “for highest risk and highest needs girls” (Hull website, 2012). Maximum-security means that there is a chain link fence with barbed wire at the top surrounding the entire campus and even separating some of the buildings within the campus, there are security guards, an intercom system to enter every building (also called a sally-port), locked doors, and badges that are required. It was a state owned, but privately run facility that normally had a waiting list of young women. At the time that the study was conducted, over half of the 40 girls were females of color (26) and just under half (19) had a disability label (principal interview). Of those girls with a disability, 16 of the 19 had an emotional disability label. The school inside Hull was called Jane Adams High School and “integrates academics with a learning environment that nurtures and reinforces social and emotional skills” (brochure). Both Hull itself and the school prided themselves on being female responsive. What that looks like in practice will be discussed in the findings chapters but the brochure declared that both utilize, “research-based, female responsive principles, which allow young women an opportunity to make positive changes” and include cognitive-behavioral model, fitness and health education, medical services, culturally competent recreation, family treatment services and mental health and steering committees that are “female compromised” (Hull brochure).

The neighborhood in which this site is located had little bearing on the experiences of the girls, since a chain link fence topped with barbed wire separated them from the people in the neighborhood. When the girls left the facility, they were often in
handcuffs and escorted by security staff; they could not interact with the people from the neighborhood. However, I found it significant that particular windows offered stunning views of the outdoors and scenery, which many of the girls had never set foot in, even though they were within an hour’s drive.

The Participants

Participants were chosen if they met a particular set of requirements: they must identify as a person of color, and must either currently have, have had or could be considered for a disability label of Emotional Disability. Ultimately, I had ten participants, six who identified as African American, three who identified as Latina and one who identified as Native American. Because this study used a broader definition of disability, a student who was currently labeled, had been previously labeled or could be considered for a label (as nominated by staff), all qualified. To be more specific, six had a current disability label, two had been exited in middle school and no longer had a label and 2 had never had a label but staff believed they should have been labeled. One demographic I had not planned on but that ended up taking on significance that will be discussed in the findings is that of the ten participants, five identified their sexual orientation as straight, meaning they had only ever dated males. Two identified as lesbians, meaning they may have dated males in the past but at a certain point in their lives, dated females exclusively. Three of the participants, however, identified with a sexually fluid orientation meaning they were open to dating either males or females (Diamond, 1998; 2003). In other words, half of the girls did not identify as solely heterosexual. Finally, the age range of students in the study was between 14-20. Participants will be discussed later in the findings in more detail but in order to protect
the anonymity of these doubly vulnerable populations (those under 18 who are incarcerated), no more individual specific data will be provided here.

The Researcher

My role shifted both between sites and within. Before I returned to school to pursue my doctorate in education, I worked at MLK as a teacher and I continued to substitute teach and teach summer school for the first three years of the doctoral program. Though I had not substitute taught there in over a year, there were still students with whom I had worked at MLK when I arrived as a researcher. I had worked with the majority of the staff and had even recommended the current art teacher for the position at MLK when the principal informed me of their search. This former position offered both affordances and constraints when I returned as a researcher. It allowed me an insider’s access since I knew many of the teachers and the administrators along with the house staff where the students live as well as the RTC directors. Teachers and staff were open with me, treated me like a teacher and provided access to the physical location as well as formal meetings and informal discussions as I had training that qualified me as a staff member. I had keys to the entire institution, enforced rules, substituted in classrooms and even participated in administering assessments when the staff needed an extra hand. When teachers struggled to support students academically or behaviorally, I was consulted and my suggestions were taken seriously as teachers knew of my extensive background working with students with emotional disabilities and those in juvenile justice. Ultimately, my history with MLK provided a sense of how the school operated including local interpretations of education policy, factors that affected ways students traveled through the School to Prison Pipeline and the Juvenile Justice Department
decisions at the state level that affected student education in this residential treatment center. As the study progressed throughout the year, I found that the participants and other students in the school worked hard to position me as an adult different than a teacher. Students called me by my first name (which I allowed) but the staff still referred to me as Ms. Annamma. Participants and students shared private information with me and as long as it was not required reporting (such as abuse or threat to self or others), I would not share it, as a staff member would normally do. My role with the students became one of respected adult, not teacher or school staff; they told me often that they were more open with me than their teachers because they did not have to fear punishment. I told the teachers and staff ahead of time this was my plan and they respected this. I explicitly and consistently talked to the students about what was appropriate to share with me and what I was required to report. When a participant got angry with me and told me she was quitting the project, other students vouched for me and eventually she relented and came to talk to me. It was a tenuous line I walked: to support students and make them feel heard but also to support staff. As a researcher, I negotiated these roles while trying to keep in mind how I wanted to support both the teachers and the students. I was both an advocate for the students but still an adult who recognized the value of consistency of rules for students who are incarcerated and so my role was flexible and yet clear.

My role at Hull was much more of participant-observer. I was allowed to go to classes with students and I participated with students in activities. When I first got to Hull, teachers mainly ignored me until I spoke to them. Outside of class, it was clear I was not a staff member. I did not have a key to any place in the building, meaning I was
locked out until a staff member let me in any door. Sometimes the girls would see me outside a door and work to get the attention of the staff. When I had private meetings with the participants, security staff stayed either in the same room or right outside the room where they could visually monitor us. This was unlike the way security staff treated Hull teachers who had additional required training that I did not. At one point, a principal even locked me in her office saying, “Just in case a girl comes in and wants to beat you up”. However, as the year wore on, teachers, school staff and even administrators began to consult me about particular views of education, teaching and discipline strategies as well. I tried to advocate for students while recognizing that I was not an official staff member and did not know all of the rules. Though I read the school’s handbook, I found many unwritten rules enforced in ways that made it difficult to keep them clear, which I will discuss this more in the findings chapter. I eventually got to know the teachers, school staff and some of the security very well. Some school staff consulted me, but overall, I remained a participant observer. This was especially true because the two staff members I got to know the most, left right at the end of my study. This meant when I returned for a follow up, I had to reintroduce myself in order to get access.

My role shifted between sites but also within sites. As a teacher, I had always been focused on getting to the root of and changing behavior. This impulse remained with me as a researcher at first. For example, in my behavioral analysis training, I had been taught to examine the Antecedent, the Behavior and the Consequence (A-B-C). This widened the view as many teachers only focused on problematic behaviors. By examining what came before and what came after, I was able to better understand the behavior in context. When I observed girls acting out, I often noted what school
consequences were applied. However, through interviews and observations, I began to recognize that beyond the narrow consequences the teacher or school applied to behaviors, girls were getting their immediate needs met. I began to see that my view of the girls’ actions was still limited and that in order to understand them, I had to follow up and ask better questions about their behaviors and the results the girls experienced. This led me to recognize the Strategies of Resilience the girls employed (see chapter 7 for more information). Overall I became a better researcher, which provided a deeper understanding of the phenomena of the School to Prison Pipeline.

Data Collection

I spent much time organizing the primary source of data for each research question. In order to answer RQ1 (What are the education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline?), I created an adaptation of Identity Mapping called Education Journey Mapping as the primary source of data (described below in more detail). Secondary sources included in-depth, phenomenological interviewing and tertiary sources were ethnographic observations. For RQ 2 (How do school personnel position these incarcerated young women of color with ED?), teacher interviews were the primary source of data along with ethnographic observations, Education Journey Maps and student interviews as secondary sources. Additionally, student records were analyzed as a tertiary source of data. Finally for RQ3 (What are the institutional and sociocultural contexts in which these students and teachers are located?), data such as institutional documents and artifacts was the primary data. All other data sources, those mentioned above, were secondary data sources. Below I outline each data collection method in more detail. It is important to note that I did not shift from
data collection to analysis and writing in a linear fashion where I finished data collection first then started data analysis and finished before starting writing. Rather, I have been engaged in a continuous, iterative process of analysis where I would gather information, analyze in different ways and then return to ask my participants about my hunches and ideas. Additionally, each participant analyzed her own and her peers’ trajectories which will be discussed in detail below.

**Education Journey Mapping**

**Creating the maps.** The primary source of data for RQ1 (What are the education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline?) were the Education Journey Maps the girls created based on a prompt; both the concept of identity mapping and the prompt itself had been adapted from Sirin and Fine (2007). I had recognized that girls who had significant gaps in their schooling and a disability label might be hesitant to convey their stories textually. One goal for this data collection method was to access the content (the girls' trajectory through the School to Prison Pipeline or what I am currently calling their education journey) without relying on the verbal and written expression of the girls. However, the maps were able to do much more than provide “a sense of the physical spaces that we traverse through, maps can shed light on the ways in which we traverse, encounter, and construct racial, ethnic, gendered, and political boundaries” (Powell, 2010, p. 553). For young women of color with disabilities in the juvenile justice system, maps offered a way to trace their journeys through inequities, to consider how they found themselves incarcerated. Maps added texture and content to the interview and observation data as they provided a visual data source to what had only been textual sources. Maps allowed for interrogating the space
between individuals and social structures. Mapping was also DuBoisian in that the activity required an exploration between external environments and internal spaces, just as the color line represented the internal spaces that were affected by the external environments African Americans could not access (DuBois, 1903). Finally, maps furnished an opportunity to access selves across time without reifying developmental stages as well (Futch & Fine, 2012). Therefore the prompt was written in an effort to capture shifts over time and space,

Map your education journey from when you started school to now. Include people, places, obstacles, and opportunities on the way. Draw your relationship with school. You can include what works for you and/or what doesn't. You can use different colors to show different feelings, use symbols like lines and arrows or words. These are just suggestions. Be as creative as you like and, if you don't want to draw you can make more of a flow-chart. Afterwards, you will get a chance to explain it to me.

This prompt stayed up on an iPad screen for the girls to refer back to whenever they wanted and I read it to them as many times as they requested after the initial reading. Maps were created under a variety of conditions based on what worked for the girls’ school schedule so most were done individually but two were done in a pair situation, time spent varied from about 12 minutes for a girl who was sick to about 90 minutes for a girl who really enjoyed drawing and talking, with the average being about 40 minutes. I provided colored pencils, crayons, markers and paper and in Hull, each of these had to be meticulously counted before and after every meeting with the girls. The girls did all the counting of materials themselves and were kind enough to help me keep track of things. In an environment where pencils were considered weapons I had to be very diligent that I had what staff considered to be a bag of ammunition with me at all times.
Each time a girl created her education journey map, I created my own education journey map and shared mine first. This accomplished different things. First, Futch and Fine (2012) remind those that use maps that we must resist “the notion that the picture is the person (and thus directly open to our gaze/interpretation)” (p.11) and instead ask those who create them to privilege us with their narrative. I wanted the girls to see that I also had a narrative to share that was not to be interpreted by someone else, but to be discussed. Participants were allowed to ask questions about my education journey map just as I would about theirs and together, we would have a conversation about our trajectories. Second, because many of these girls have been in therapy since becoming incarcerated, I worked to assure them that I was not going to spend all my time interpreting their pictures. Multiple girls asked if I would tell them what their maps meant even after I had given them the prompt. By keeping myself busy creating my own map, I attempted to limit my gaze on their process to reassure them that I was not there to monitor them in any way. Finally, creating my own education journey map and sharing was an attempt to be as open and honest with the young women as I had asked them to be with me. My education journey has not been traditional and therefore I thought they would appreciate me sharing with them. Many of them specifically thanked me for that during the process and did mention in follow ups that it helped them be open with me as well as allowing them to see they could still accomplish many things. Figure 6 provides an example of one of the Education Journey Maps I created which included significant life events like my struggles in school, my high school graduation, the death of my mother, becoming a teacher, the death of my brother and becoming a researcher. In the map, I was able to capture the shifts in my own education roles from student to teacher to
researcher. In the end, I had Education Journey Maps from all 10 of the participants, along with about 15 hours of audio-recorded discussion surrounding the maps.

Figure 6. Annamma Education Journey Map example

The Cartographer’s Clinic. The Cartographer’s Clinic was adapted from Sirin and Fine’s (2008) work where Muslim students shared their own identity maps with a group, viewed each other’s identity maps and discussed. After contacting Dr. Fine, and explaining that I wanted another way to answer RQ1 (What are the education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline?) and include the girls in data collection and analysis, she suggested we do a gallery walk and I created the Cartographer’s Clinic based on this suggestion (Dr. Michelle Fine, personal communication, July 2, 2012). I viewed this both as data collection and as data analysis as the students took notes and gave them to me at the end of the clinic along with a 75 minute audio-recording. It was analysis as well because the students worked to share their own stories but then also find themes and outliers in the corpus of information that were the maps.
The Cartographer’s Clinic only occurred at Hull because MLK was out of school at that point. Additionally, 2 (Erykah and Ashley) of my 4 students at MLK had already been released by July. Before we conducted the Clinic, I met with every girl at Hull (5 of the 6 were left; Riveara had been released) and had a follow up interview where we discussed their progress in the program, their maps and if they would be willing to share in a group. Each agreed to participate and seemed excited to share her own story and hear more about her peers. The Clinic had to happen on one of the units since one of the girls was on punishment, and not allowed to come to school. However, the security staff knew I wanted to meet with the girls as a group and so made every effort to allow me to do so without breaking the rules. This meant that we had to be supervised by a security staff so Ms. M. was with us during the clinic. Though I should have asked her to wait outside where she could see us, I knew this would not be allowed because of the student who was on privilege restriction on the unit. Though I found some of Ms. M’s comments judgmental, I knew that this was the price for doing research in an incarceration setting focused on surveillance. Completing the Cartographer’s Clinic on the unit also meant that we were even more restricted in materials (such as tape to hang the maps on the walls) since educational materials were less available than in the school. Regardless of the restrictions, we moved forward and were able to collect and analyze data while connecting as a group.

Appendix A contains both my script, and the hand out I created for the girls. Using information from the Cartographic and Geographic Information Society as well as the Canadian Cartographic Association, I created a handout on what Cartography was and how maps are created. We began by discussing this cartography information and then
discussed what themes and outliers were in relation to mapmaking and research. Taking
Dr. Fine’s advice, I stressed that outliers were as important as themes, using this prompt,

Ask yourself, What stands out? What is different? Remember to be an outlier
takes courage to say something. It may be something we are all thinking but many
of us were too scared to say.

Additional prompts on the handout included,

Start with a silent walk through. Note what you see throughout the Education
Journey Maps. Just write them down or make a mental note quietly for now.
*Themes* between maps: What are the similarities you see? What do you love?
What questions do you have? What does it make you think about your own life?
What would you like to be in the map five years/next year? What part of these
maps would benefit younger girls?

Positioning the girls as expert mapmakers, we started by doing a silent viewing of all the
maps. They had a place to take notes, which included the prompts and questions above,
but were not required to if they did not find that useful. Afterwards, we sat down and
each girl shared her map while the other participants listened and some continued to take
notes. Girls discussed outliers, themes and asked each other questions about their
individual maps. After about 75 minutes, we were required to conclude the Clinic since
the girls had classes to attend and Ms. M had to get back to the school.

**In-depth, Phenomenological Interviewing**

Seidman (2006) suggested that interviewing is a necessary step if the researcher's
aim "is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their
experience" (p. 11). Interviews were secondary data sources for RQ1 (What are the
education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the
School to Prison Pipeline?) and primary for RQ2 (How do school personnel in the StPP
position these incarcerated young women of color with disabilities?). Since my goal was
to capture the educational trajectories young women of color with disabilities in the StPP
as well as what meaning they make of those experiences, interviewing made sense as one avenue of inquiry and I conducted both formal and informal interviews. For teacher participants, interviewing allowed me to situate their instructional and disciplinary choices for the focal participants in conversation with the larger social and institutional contexts. Siedman (2006) suggested a structure for interviews that may be modified "as long as a structure is maintained that allows participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their experience within the context of their lives" (p. 21).

Seidman (2006) described a three-step interview process where the first interview focuses on contextualizing the participant's experiences. The author argued that there is no need for an interview protocol with pre-determined questions since in-depth interviewing "is not designed to test hypotheses, gather answers to questions or corroborate opinions. Rather, it is designed to ask participants to reconstruct their experience and explore their meaning" (Seidman, 2006, p. 92). Instead of having an interview protocol with preset questions, I had interview guide with topics to address (see Appendix B).

During the first student interview, I usually asked participants to reconstruct past experiences in schools and in learning starting from their earliest memories of school (usually preschool or kindergarten). Some students struggled to do this so we started from where they were right before their current placement and moved back in time. If they struggled with this, I asked them to tell me a significant education memory and we worked from that starting point. In the second interview, we focused on the details of the current experience in juvenile justice such as the relationship with teachers, school personnel, administrators and peers as well as the ways they experience different
classroom environments and subjects. The third interview consisted of reflection on the meaning of experiences, their overall trajectory and the experience with the interview process itself. For many students, there were additional conversations born out of extra time or a particular circumstance they wanted to tell me about because of its impact.

Finally, for five of the girls at Hull, as I mentioned in the Cartographer’s Clinic section, we did an additional follow up interview a month after weekly data collection had ended. Overall the average number of interviews for the young women at MLK was three and at THH was four. Table 2 shares each student participant, the number of interviews and if it is more or less than expected, there is a reason listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th># of interviews</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riveara</td>
<td>MLK/Hull</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>On the run for 2+ months during the study, in jail and then released end of July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erykah</td>
<td>MLK</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>One week before her release, Erykah had a drug relapse. Our fourth interview discussed that issue and how it affected her release.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>MLK</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ashley and I spent the most time together and she frequently wanted to talk more about her own life. When her probation date got pulled, she especially wanted to talk with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapphire</td>
<td>MLK</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justine</td>
<td>MLK</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashawna</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myosha</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tristen</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tristen spent much of the time being excluded as punishment for her behaviors. This left me with limited access to her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imani</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Number of interviews with focal students and explanations of variances.
Interviews with the girls ranged in length between 15 minutes and 90 minutes depending on many factors such as the girls’ mood, schedule and availability. The earliest interviews occurred in November and final ones occurred in July.

Teachers were interviewed whenever they could be but this turned out to be much harder than I had originally planned. Teachers at small schools like MLK and Hull are often asked to cover other classes for colleagues who may be absent or at meetings (e.g. annual IEPs, monthly meetings at the residential component to meet with students, guardians, social workers) during their planning periods, supervise and tutor the students during lunch and therefore were difficult to access. At MLK, I was only able to interview four of the ten teachers one time each, though I had multiple informal conversations where I took field notes. At Hull, I was able to interview every school staff member, as there were only five. Two of the teachers I only interviewed once and I was able to interview three of the teachers 3 times. Interviews for teachers focused on their own teaching history and background, their teaching philosophy, their teaching practices regarding how they addressed diversity (including ethnic, gender, and ability) in their classrooms and what they knew about the focal participants. Interviews with the teachers ranged in length between 10 minutes and 90 minutes. The earliest interviews occurred in November and the final ones occurred in July.

In order to capture richer trajectories of young women with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline, I used in-depth phenomenological interviewing. Overall, I collected about eight hours of audio-recorded teacher interview data. These interviews provided textual information to compare and contrast with other data sources such as Education Journey Maps and ethnographic observations. Table 3 describes the teacher
participants including site, number of years teaching and number of interviews and discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
<th>Special Education Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sara Yalla</td>
<td>MLK</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Enders</td>
<td>MLK</td>
<td>Science Teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robb Neighbors</td>
<td>MLK</td>
<td>Physical Ed Teacher</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise Rastin</td>
<td>MLK</td>
<td>Language Arts &amp; History Teacher</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nellie Hand</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>Vice Principal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>License</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha Cralder</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>Literature, History &amp; Horticulture Teacher</td>
<td>10 months</td>
<td>2 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne Roberts</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>Science, Math Teacher &amp; GED coordinator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Ebbons</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>Technology teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella Bryson</td>
<td>THH</td>
<td>Special Education teacher</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>License</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Teacher participant information.

One major challenge I faced in this study was that I could not control what happened in juvenile justice schools and settings (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). In the case of student interviews, I had to accept that many times when I came, students had appointments during the school day (e.g. dental, medical, therapeutic) along with privilege restrictions. Additionally, I lost some of my participants as they ran away or were funneled through the School to Prison Pipeline. I did my best to follow the students as they moved through this Pipeline and into other settings but from Table 2, it is evident that there were constraints on my capability to do this. This was also true of the teachers as constraints above limited my formal opportunities to interview them.

**Ethnographic Observations**

Observations were a secondary data source for RQ2 (How do school personnel position these incarcerated young women of color with ED?) and a tertiary data source
for RQ1 (What are the education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline?). Like interviews, the number of observations varied widely from student to student depending on student availability. The minimum amount of observations I conducted was six and the maximum was 27 with an average of 10 per participant. Each day that I visited, I observed a particular focal student in all of her classes to get a sense of her education experiences, including her own learning and behaviors, modifications made for her learning and behaviors, socializing practices that positioned students as well as teaching and discipline strategies that were utilized. Overall, I observed 105 class periods with my focal students. During observations, I documented materials used, how learning was organized, patterns of participation for my focal student and discourse. In addition, I recorded features such as physical positioning, movement and activities of the focal student. These observations also provided a sense of teacher beliefs about discipline, students’ abilities and commitment to the program’s goals for students in juvenile justice. Observing provided me a chance to contextualize what I was hearing in interviews, what I was seeing in the Education Journey Maps and align that with what I was experiencing participating in the school environment. I gained a better sense of what the teachers and girls navigated on a daily basis. I was able to attend to language and actions in the classroom to see if they aligned with views stated since language is a force for moving ideologies (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989).

For example, Ms. Cradler often talked about the ways she “treated the girls with respect” whenever she could and mentioned this in all four of the interviews we did together. I often observed her acting with respect and care to the girls. However, on five
different occasions, she used the word retarded to describe someone’s actions (either in the text they were reading or in the context of a student’s behavior). Considering that almost half the girls at Hull had a disability, this was surprising to hear. Ms. Cradler regularly went out of her way to support the girls in learning by spending her lunch and free time giving extra help to the young women and those actions not be discounted. However, when she used the word retard, she was expressing a devaluing of people with disabilities and it resulted in one student storming out of her class the last time she used the word in an observation (Field Notes, May 2013). This is an example of how observations provided additional information on how perceptions of ability were indexed in classroom discourse.

**Qualitative Methods of Data Collection**

In addition to Education Journey Mapping, the Cartographer’s Clinic, Interviewing and Ethnographic Observations, I utilized other qualitative data collection methods in order to immerse myself in the school context. I attended staff meetings at MLK (15), collected guiding institutional documents such as student handbooks, student IEPs and brochures from both sites to get a sense of how students were positioned and the larger sociocultural context regarding student discipline and special education. I examined documents and websites from the Juvenile Justice Department as well as the sites to better understand the programs offered as well as local interpretations of state policy. I also recorded informal teacher discussions (5) at Hull, student morning meetings (5) and graduation discussions with the seniors at MLK, lunch conversations at both sites (5). Collecting information from the state regulation agency (Juvenile Justice Department) all the way down to student and teacher interactions reflects a commitment
to understand the different layers of activity that affect each other. Figure 7 represents the data collected at each level of activity in an attempt to situate the school, teachers and students into a broader context.

As the study occurred, the state policies did not change but enforcement and application of policies shifted. Several school personnel, administrators and teachers mentioned the budget cuts and therefore the cuts to their programs. These sites, usually with a waiting list, were often not filled and these cuts directly affected the girls. For example, Rivereas’s “bed was closed” (meaning she lost her spot at MLK) within 1 hour of her coming in late from curfew one night and a warrant was issued for her arrest. Teachers felt this was because the administration felt she would not be successful and therefore wanted to move her to adult jail so as not to “spend the money” (Teacher Meeting, 2012). In the past, beds would stay open for days when students ran away, communicating a second chance.

**Data Analysis as Ongoing and Iterative**
Analysis is the process of finding qualitative data and codes in the corpus of information, which the researcher must mine deeply (Erikson, 1996). In order to answer my three research questions, I sifted through my data during the collection process and included the participants in analysis whenever I could.

For example, in the video data I noticed that Veronica, a particularly quiet participant in class (in this video she did not utter one word in 45 minutes), kept her feet apart, however the rest of her body language seemed to indicate attending to the conversation (e.g. eyes on teacher, recording notes when directed). Even after she was directed to put her feet together by a security staff, Veronica would often change her foot position back to open. I immediately assumed that Veronica was doing this in order to reject the regulation of her body and was reminded by Dr. Gutiérrez that this assumption needed to be examined further. She reminded me to ask what other reasons there could be for Veronica not complying with expectations (personal communication, February 2012). It was a good question and so I explored some other possibilities.

Veronica is also an emerging bilingual and this teacher talks very fast, using high-level vocabulary with very little additional input to enhance understanding. In other words, Ms. Roberts used very few linguistic supports for Veronica (Echevarría, Vogt & Short, 2010). She also seemed to have a hard time sitting still, as she mentioned in interviews and was evidenced by continual foot tapping in multiple observations. So there were a few possibilities the literature suggested that could explain Veronica's foot movement, which went against the socializing practices of Hull:

1. Veronica was focusing on the linguistic input coming her way, which limited her attention to other things, including her own body movement.
2. Veronica was paying attention and just had difficulty sitting with her feet together for 8 hours a day. She often tapped her foot so maybe it was just difficulty sitting still.

3. Veronica was purposely keeping her feet apart and therefore intentionally breaking an institution-wide expectation.

Of course, there are more possibilities than those listed here but these three capture a range of variability. The first two possibilities indicated that Veronica is willing to comply with the regulation of her body whereas the third illustrated an intentional way to reject the expectation. Dr. Gutiérrez suggested I create a landscape of Veronica’s foot movements wherein I tracked her movement throughout a class period while displaying other classroom shifts to see if they were related (e.g. Did Veronica only move her feet when the activity in the classroom changed? What other things were happening that could affect Veronica shifting her foot position?). After creating the landscape and determining that her foot movement was not related to other classroom shifts I recorded, I brought the chart to Veronica and asked her to analyze it with me. First off, she thought it was hilarious that I was spending my time graphing her foot movement. She asked, "This is research, Ms.?" and laughed. However, when I asked why she continually moved her feet into a position not endorsed by the institution, Veronica gave me an answer I did not expect that later became a focus of my qualitative analysis (this is explored more in Chapter 6). This example reveals the ongoing and iterative nature of qualitative data collection and analysis wherein the researcher collected data, analyzed the data, considered a range of possibilities, collected more data, and then discussed the data with the student so she could author her own story.
Side-by-side research, including data collection and analysis continued with the Cartographer’s Clinic as described above, including having the girls identify both themes and outliers of their own maps as well as their peers. This resulted in several discoveries within the data (discussed in later chapters). For example, Myosha noticed that many of the girls discussed abuse and running away from abuse. Imani talked about the strengths that many of the young women shared. Tristen found that she was not alone in feeling less intelligent than her peers. Nashawna recognized that fighting had become a survival skill and Veronica discussed how many of the girls wanted to go into helping professions. All of this mining of the data took place by the girls, with my support, and the girls made connections I had not.

In this phase of analysis, I tried to reconstruct for myself the girl’s individual trajectories, tracing their journey through the School to Prison Pipeline across the interviews. To that end, I decided that instead of examining the interviews chronologically (so based on date collected regardless of the individual) that I would instead transcribe the set of interviews for each participant. Starting with their Education Journey Maps and transcribing the entire set of interviews allowed me to better capture the trajectories of the girls and see them as interconnected instead of separate. As I had anticipated, the Education Journey Mapping, Cartographer’s Clinic and sets of interviews were my main sources of data to answer RQ1. During data reduction, I coded 54 interviews from students, teachers and other school staff. Data construction was both top down from the literature and bottom up from the data itself. I looked for patterns that stood out as well as differences, things that directly contrasted with what I was finding. Working from the top down, I continually read, listened to information sources looking
for analytical constructs such as incarceration discourse (Meiners, 2007; Winn, 2010), hypersurveillance (Rios, 2011) and re-mediation (Gutiérrez & Stone, 1997) in the education trajectories of the girls. From the bottom up, I began to sort out the different steps of the Pipeline identified by the girls, the factors that impacted their continued interaction with the legal system as well as the mediational tools available to staff and students to make sense of their interactions with the Pipeline. These patterns helped me to generate conceptual categories and develop a code thesaurus and frequency counts.

Utilizing the constant comparative method, I was able to refine my codes by continually returning to the data (Glaser & Straus, 1967; Erikson, 1998). After settling on my codes, I used Dedoose, a qualitative research program, and transferred all of my student interview files into the program, and began to build my codes. I quickly began to realize that this was an analytic step, as I had to review all my codes as I put them in, made sure they had a clear definition and were not repetitive. Dedoose also allowed me to color code the actual transcriptions that allowed me to see patterns within and overlaps across codes, allowing me to collapse and expand codes as necessary. I created a visual of my code tree and continued to move codes around based on my examination of the data (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Code Tree in progress.
I returned to the analysis the young women did during the Cartographer’s Clinic in order to assure I was addressing the themes they found as well. After all of this movement, I settled on a final set of codes and used them to systematically explore the data for typicality and atypicality. I began to craft vignettes representative of the common experiences in different points of the Pipeline (e.g. struggles outside of school, criminalization and aspirations for the future) as well as outliers that represented the girl’s individual experiences so as to include the nuance of personal stories (e.g. Erykah’s experiences with punishment for becoming pregnant, Myosha’s discipline for political activism and Veronica’s experiences as undocumented). Each story shared was meant to reflect the evidence found in the data for the claims made. Most importantly, I compared each claim with the analysis the young women provided to member check whenever possible.

Finally, the way I represented data reflected decisions I made. Transcriptions were initially extremely detailed, providing signals for breaths, pauses and laughing. However, as I moved further into analysis, I saw some information becoming lost in the detailed transcriptions and therefore went back and transcribed words only without the additional information. At times, I provide data by combining themes from several conversations (denoting breaks in the conversation by…. into one quote. The process of utilizing different levels of transcription detail and analysis led me to focus on the ways student trajectories and teachers’ pedagogical philosophies were presented.

Conclusion

Rarely do studies on the School to Prison Pipeline focus on the actual experiences and trajectories of students in the pipeline to better understand how they ended up in
juvenile justice. In this chapter, I shared how I examined the phenomenon of the School to Prison Pipeline, tying my commitment to methodological pluralism to my theoretical framework and mode of inquiry. Beyond the phenomenon of the Pipeline itself, this chapter presented the ways I grappled with answering questions about the commonalities of trajectories as well as the individual nuance of each girl’s story through my methodological pluralism in order to better understand the individual and social contexts which they navigated. The next three chapters are findings chapters that lay out the 3 steps of the School to Prison Pipeline: Public Schools (chapter 5), Juvenile Justice Schooling (chapter 6) and The Future (chapter 5). Each chapter will seek to answer my three research questions in the various steps of the School to Prison Pipeline.
Chapter 5
Public Schools & The Weight of Institutional Absence

SAA: What does the sun represent?
Tristen: School then, was so sunny. I was an A+ student.
SAA: Then what happened in middle school?
Tristen: I have a C, Cs in all my classes.
SAA: And I see clouds coming over the sun here.
Tristen: Um hmm… I wasn't so happy cuz I couldn't learn things so I started skipping out on school….
SAA: And what is that picture of? (Points to a picture of a truck with flat tires)
Tristen: It's corrupting. So the road is bumpy and my tires are going flat.
SAA: What do you mean by corrupting?
T: Starting to fall apart.

Figure 9. Tristen’s Education Journey Map
Tristen’s Education Journey Map (Figure 9) contained an apt metaphor of her experience with public schools, a truck on a bumpy road with her tires going flat. This was a reflection of many of the girls’ experiences in public schools; they were on a road that became more and more bumpy and their tires were not built for the terrain.

Though public schools were not always the direct cause of the girls becoming part of the juvenile justice system, public schools were the sites where their struggles and criminalization played out. The goals of this chapter were to focus on how the institution of school shaped and responded to girls and their actions and to situate the girls in context instead of ignoring their lives and focusing on them as dangerous or deviant (Chesney-Lind & Jones, 2010; Rios, 2010). In this chapter, I share the social context that informed the young women’s experiences, ways the girls’ lives outside of school were compounded inside of school and their experiences, both negative and positive, inside of school. Finally, this chapter closes with findings regarding the criminalization that the girls experienced, much of which occurred in schools. This chapter captures the first component of Gift Theory, the story and the song (DuBois, 1903). In order to understand the girl’s trajectories through the School to Prison Pipeline we must understand the first step through the girls’ stories.

**Social Context of Personal Responsibility and Incarceration Discourse**

Similar to the politicians presented in the introduction, teachers, parole officers, therapists and staff continued to cite the need for personal responsibility. Samantha Cradler, a teacher in the study, discussed her perception of the girls’ histories.

Because I believe judges give these kids lots of chances…The average kid has broken their probation 4-5 times, they’ve been committed somewhere else at lower security and they ran. So they’ve been given all these opportunities before
they come to us….These girls have had a lot of chances to behave correctly and have not. They deserve to be here….Even if they had hard lives, not every one with hard lives are criminals….They are criminals with criminal minds and criminal thinking. These girls need to take responsibility instead of blaming everyone else.

Even though many of the adults in the girls’ lives sympathized with the circumstances from which they came, like Ms. Cradler, there was a consistent effort to put the personal responsibility on the shoulders of the girls. This overt focus on personal responsibility tended to mute or erase the social/institutional/educational contexts in which the girls were steeped.

Though Ms. Cradler stated this need for personal responsibility, she also struggled with the ways girls were criminalized.

Cuz think about it. These kids get assault charges because they’re in foster care and they get in a fight with one of their foster care siblings and hit them. The foster care parent is required to report it or they could lose their foster care license, right? But in the reality, I can't tell you how many times I hit my brother as a kid...When you think about it in that realm, they live in this world out there that isn't as authentic as life.

Here Samantha Cradler wavered in the personal responsibility aspect, recognizing that the ways the girls become part of the system can be problematic. Yet ultimately, Ms. Cradler reminded me again and again that these children made choices and that is why they were here.

SAA: When you say they’re very criminal, why do you say that?
Samantha Cradler: Why do I say that their behavior is very criminal? I mean they’re looking for exciting ways. I mean it’s not always about the relationship or the person; it’s about the excitement that they feel doing something wrong…When I say it’s criminal, it’s all about how to get around the system to get what they want. And that feeds right back into their criminal mentality. Not that kids aren’t master manipulators. I was a teenager. I manipulated my parents, that’s our job as teenagers, you know? The difference being when you get to the power and control piece, that’s where it’s a little different than what it is on the outs.
Samantha Cradler, a teacher whom the girls loved and respected, illustrated the complex negotiations the teachers go through in order to understand the children with whom they work every day in the context of incarceration.

Samantha was representative of several juvenile justice educators who believed that the criminal label was necessary to interpret all student behaviors. The school social worker at MLK illustrated this in a staff meeting. “Ashley is really criminal minded…she wants to take the easy way out…she wants someone to take care of her but won’t ask.” The social worker’s comments are an example of what Rios (2011) describes as "a complex process by which even well-intentioned adults participated in the criminalization" (p. 75). These juvenile justice educators’ views were typical of all of the teachers in the study I was able to formally interview. All mentioned the girls’ label as criminals and how that impacted the girls’ past, their thinking and actions as well as how teachers treated them. Like Ms. Cradler, teachers reported having empathy for what the girls faced and even recognized that the system set them up for increasing criminalization but ultimately viewed them as manipulative and violent, responsible for their own criminalization.

The young women in this study took up this personal responsibility discourse and blamed themselves for the circumstances they faced in and out of school. Riveara illustrated this,

Riveara: Yeah, I just had like a bad authority problem because I grew up to where my mom and my father they weren’t around to tell me what to do and nobody really told me, Riveara, that’s not ok.

Riveara acknowledged that a contributor to her “authority problem” was the absence of adults in her life. However, she still ultimately blamed herself. Riveara is not the only
student who discussed her own actions as the cause of her incarceration. In fact, all ten of
the girls discussed the feelings of personal responsibility for their plights; the feeling of
personal responsibility that the politicians in Chapter 1 insist that poor women of color
and their children lack. Personal responsibility was coded 48 times in the 54 interviews
with teachers and students and mentioned at least 112 times in the 105 classes I observed.
This 'era of personal responsibility', or incarceration discourse, was a major aspect of the
social context communicated through discourse that surrounds these young women
(Winn, 2010).

Not every teacher took up the mantle of personal responsibility. One outlier was
Isabella Bryson, the special educator at THH. She stated,

Isabella Bryson: I think I come across as accepting the at-risk kids more so than
maybe some people...because they've told me, Ms. Bryson, you don't treat us like
criminals...you treat us like normal people.

This is something so significant in Ms. Bryson’s teaching that the students recognize her
capability to treat them like people, not like criminals. Furthermore, research has shown
the potentially transformative learning that can happen when we position students
positively (Gutiérrez, Hunter & Arzubiaga, 2009).

Ultimately, the problem with incarceration discourse wherein a student blames
herself for her own incarceration, is that even if she does not wholly subscribe to the
story she is telling, she has most likely not been given the tools to challenge the societal
narrative of lack of personal responsibility (Winn, 2010). Incarceration discourse along
with the myth of meritocracy, wherein hard work reaps rewards and the inverse where
laziness and criminality deserve punishment, shifted the weight of society’s
responsibilities to provide basic needs to all members on the shoulders of the girls.
Lives Outside and Inside of School

The girls’ lives outside of school were complex and difficult to navigate. Their responses indexed ways that poverty impacted their lives along with race, perceptions of ability and gender. In this section, I detail how school was a respite from the young women’s home lives for some and an environment that co-constructed the girls’ identity as problematic from their behaviors without context for others. I then discuss the weight of institutional absence.

School as a respite. For seven of the girls, at one point in their lives, school was a respite from a home life or their neighborhood. They associated school with safety and even fun. Myosha mentioned that school was an oasis from her chaotic home life.

SAA: And were you close with (your first grade teacher)?
Myosha: I was, yeah, we were really close like, she would always help me. Like if I would have trouble spelling in the spelling test, she would always help me. Things like that and I really liked that school.
SAA: Do you remember your 2nd grade teacher?
Myosha: She was really like understanding. We had like this thing that was called the star of the week where they cut out this star and put your picture in the middle and all the students wrote something about you and like made a book. It was like her own thing that she made for us and each week they pick someone different for the star of the week. And she had us journal and gave us topics to write about. I liked her class a lot.

Myosha illustrated how school made her feel special when teachers focused on and supported her as an individual. Nashawna told me enthusiastically how school used to be fun for her,

Nashawna: I loved elementary school.
SAA: You did? What did you love about it?
Nashawna: Everything like recess, going, talking, learning, learning experiences were fun, teachers were actually hands on.

What is important here is that these girls did not automatically come to school disenfranchised even though all were poor and of color. Instead the disconnect that
occurred later was created by the ways school constructed their identity from their behaviors. It is often falsely assumed that children are automatically at-risk because they are of color or lower SES, which suggests that because they are located within particular social identities, students will immediately be disconnected from school (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In other words, some assert that these children embody identities that will be naturally problematic in schools. However, this assumption is problematic. Like Tristen, Myosha and Nashawna, many of these children did not come to school with resistance to education or learning and in fact, loved school. When they began to experience struggles outside of school, the school response aggravated their issues and made school less enjoyable.

**Lives Outside of School**

In this study, young women described the issues faced outside of school that affected their experiences in school. Girls cited many reasons for struggle outside of school, which impacted their experiences in school including: Nobody was there, Abuse/Neglect and Removal from family. Table 4 shows the number of girls who maneuvered dangerous contexts outside of school that influenced the ways they experienced school itself. This table illustrates the complexity of the lives these young women navigated; complexities that affected their systems of support, safety, and even the place they called home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Struggle Outside School</th>
<th>Students Impacted by this Struggle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nobody was there</td>
<td>Riveara  Erykah  Ashley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse or Neglect</td>
<td>Justine  Imani  Myosha  Nashawna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal from Family</td>
<td>Justine  Imani  Myosha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Problematic Contexts Outside of School
One of their reasons for struggle was that Nobody was there, when girls experienced periods in their lives when they had no or minimal adult support. These young women of color with disabilities had to be responsible to raise not only themselves but also many had to take care of siblings and/or even parents and act like “grown” adults. Ashley stated:

Ashley: Middle school was crazy. I always missed a lot of school. I always helped out with sisters and brothers
SAA: Do you remember the kind of things you had to do in for your siblings?
Ashley: Like help them with food, showers, brushing teeth, getting ready for school...I would cook and clean up and my mom was on bed rest from a car accident and back surgery. And I missed so many days to help all my brothers and sisters get ready. I had to go grocery shopping, get everyone to school, go to my siblings' teacher's conferences.

Even in elementary school, Ashley was acting grown, supporting her mother by taking care of her siblings. Erykah also discussed this absence of support,

Erykah: No, because I'm going to be there for (my child). My mom wasn't there; nobody was there except for my grandma.
SAA: So you had to raise yourself?
Erykah: Well, my grandma was there but she worked a full time job and had to take care of us so it was like hard for her. Plus she already raised her own kids, plus us. It was like different.

Throughout the time I spent with Erykah, she mentioned multiple times how her grandma also struggled to be consistent in Erykah’s life because of working a lot as well as their own difficult relationship.

Erykah: Because (grandma is) there when I'm doing good and when I'm doing bad, she says oh you're acting like your mom again and this and that. She disowns me. It's so hard. Sometimes I feel like I'm the only one standing there, fighting.

Erykah verbalized how school and survival had become a battle, a fight. She realized the importance of this fight and felt often that limited support by adults in her life in and out of school negatively impacted her. Like Erykah, many of the girls discussed how this
absence of adults directly affected the ways they interacted with school and how school responded to them. Ashley shared in another interview how she often went late to school specifically because she had to help her siblings, particularly her brother with autism, get ready for school and even transport them there via public transportation.

Ashley: So I like regret missing so much school but I had to help out my mom so I just said forget school…I was taking care of my family but then, I would tell my mom I was going to school. Cuz I had to put my sisters and brothers in school so then I would already be late and then they'd be tripping on me because I was late so I would just leave and go with my friends and we'd just go ditch.

When she arrived late to her own school, Ashley would be reprimanded with lectures, detention or even suspension. The school response of punishing Ashley for truancy exacerbated problems, instead of alleviating them. Ashley was punished for breaking a rule without the school considering the context of her life. Therefore, she was punished not just for truancy, but also for taking care of her family.

Struggle outside of school also took the form of Abuse or Neglect. Nashawna shared how she had to flee her house because of the danger she faced nightly with her mother.

Nashawna: And my mom’s kinda, well she's abusive…I ran away. Because like the abuse got out of control. So I ran away.

Nashawna was forced into the streets due to the violence she experienced at home. Here Nashawna explained how the struggles outside of school compounded her experiences in school.

SAA: At school, did they realize (abuse in the home) was happening too? Nashawna: Yeah. I'd steal food because my mom wasn't there to cook us food or anything. Like my sister had to and we were running out of food.

In Nashawna’s case, because she was the youngest, it was her sister who took care of the family but this absence and lack of school support negatively impacted her. Nashawna
elaborated on how this awareness on the school’s part did not actually encourage the
school to respond with compassion but instead, punishment.

Nashawna: Yea, I got suspended a lot cuz of all my fights I got into, stealing, uh
lying, breaking things.

Of course, Nashawna’s behaviors of fighting, stealing, lying and breaking things were
problematic and should not have been ignored. However, when the school responded
with suspensions and other forms of punishment, it did not improve Nashawna’s
behaviors, nor did they cease. Considering her life context, she was living in a house with
minimal food and daily abuse, her behaviors of fighting, stealing, lying and breaking
things actually made quite a bit of sense. She had to run away from home just to maintain
personal safety from violence and therefore lost access to even minimal food and
comforts. The school response punished her behavior without considering the
sociocultural or individual context, one of violence and victimization along with agency,
of her life.

Six of the girls cited being removed from their families and into institutions as a
direct contributor to their struggle in school. Myosha exemplified this,

Myosha: It was more being taken away from my mom. Like I couldn't even go to
school half the time. I was always meeting with some stupid therapist half the
time and I didn't want to meet with her. I wanted to be in school. I wanted to take
my mind off things...I always had good grades but I couldn't do it, being put back
in my mom's home and taken out.

Myosha indicated ways being removed from her home affected her experiences. She was
required to miss school to meet with counselors and resented this because she loved
school. Like Myosha, Imani cited a similar stress when being removed from her mother’s
care.
SAA: Yeah, besides the behavior problems you had with other students, you weren't truant. You consistently went to school.
Imani: Yeah. I always had good grades but I couldn't do it being put back in my mom's home and taken out. So, a couple, a month of being at the school, I was like I can't take this anymore, I haven't seen my mom yet, I need to go see my mom. So I bolted. I was out. I went to go see my mom and she didn't know I was on the run.

Though being removed may have been necessary to protect their safety, the girls discussed these actions as factors that made school more difficult. Taking children out of school in order to address traumatic situations results in missed opportunities; missed opportunities to foster relationships with teachers, to experience instruction and to allow these girls to develop identities that are not solely as victims of abuse and neglect.

Also outside of school, both the girls and their families experienced the weight of institutional absence, wherein they did not have access to societal institutions. The young women experienced a lack of health care, childcare, and even police; all institutions that exist in the lives of the majority of Americans. Justine detailed the lack of health care that affected her brother with cognitive disabilities.

SAA: So what did you do instead of go to school?
Justine: Take care of my brother and my sisters.
SAA: And how many brothers and sisters do you have?
Justine: I have one brother and two sisters…My brother was barely 19…He was mentally retarded.
SAA: So your dad kept you out of school to have you help take care of your brothers and sisters?
Justine: Um hmm.

Justine shared how there were no services to support her family with the complex medical needs of her brother and therefore, she had to do this instead of attend school.

Her brother eventually died at the age of 19 and Justine was also not given counseling or any other support. Ashley, Imani, Nashawna and Justine all discussed taking care of family members who were ill. Each had the weight of increased illness and disabilities, as
many people of color in poverty experience (Erevelles, 2000), compounded by the fact that traditional societal institutions were not there to support their families or these girls.

Lack of health care also impacted parents’ ability to take care of other children, which then also fell on the shoulders of these young women. Imani told how she and her siblings were taken away from her mother after her mother was deemed mentally unstable because she could not reliably get medication or therapeutic support for her mental health issues. Her mother’s lack of health care meant Imani was responsible for the childcare of her siblings.

Imani: I was like 6 or 7 years old and I was taking care of my little sister who was either 5 or 6 at the time and my little brother who was only 3. No, he was like 2 at the time. And we were put in the same group home together. And every morning I would get up way early and I would cook. At the age of 7, I already knew how to cook.

Imani recognized that to be able to cook for herself and her siblings by the age of 7 was unusual and remarkable. The absence of these services created a child who was resilient and responsible for her family.

Erykah also mentioned her mother’s medical problems as creating additional problems and responsibilities in her own life. Her mother, at one point, became a drug addict because she could not get prescription drugs for her medical condition. Here, I asked Erykah if her mom was still on drugs.

Erykah: No, she like, like 5 years she hasn't been on heroin.
SAA: Does she use anything?
Erykah: No she doesn't do any drugs. She has severe rheumatoid arthritis and her bones are deformed so she just does narcotics and that's it. And they're prescribed to her and stuff.
SAA: What does she do?
Erykah: She can't do anything because she's on disability and can't work.
Erykah described living with her grandma because her mother was a drug addict due to her lack of health care. The lack of childcare and healthcare were made more problematic by safety concerns.

Girls mentioned multiple times that they could not rely on police to keep them safe. Riveara depicted why she joined a gang.

Riveara: But I went, I ran, I put myself into, I went and I got jumped into a gang which um, I just started doing a lot of bad things. I only did it, like joined the gang because my sisters, they kept getting raped and stuff. So I felt like, in order to protect my family, that's what I had to do.

With no protection offered by adults, Riveara had to seek out another way to keep herself and her siblings safe from physical and sexual attacks. These girls had problems outside of school and therefore the weight of the absence of these institutions sat on the shoulders of these young women of color with disabilities.

A lack of an adult support system either due to parental absences or removal from the family caused many of the girls to feel grown, like adults in young bodies (Jones, 2010). This feeling of being grown was not imagined; the responsibility put on these girls to provide safety, basic necessities and even care for their family members was very real and eight of the girls mentioned it in the interviews. However, public schools often did not respond to these girls in ways that respected or even took into account their lived experiences and instead provided a punitive institutional response.

**Lived Experiences Inside of School**

Sapphire expounded on how her experiences in school affected her feelings about school when we discuss creating her Education Journey Map (Figure 10).

SAA: Do you want to go to college?  
Sapphire: Yeah.  
SAA: What do you want to do in college?
Sapphire: Criminal justice. I just hate school though so I don't know how I'm going to get to it (laughing). Cuz I hate school.
SAA: What is it about school that you hate? Like honestly, what do you hate about school?
Sapphire: Teachers (laughing).
SAA: Is there any teacher in this school you like?
Sapphire: No.
SAA: Not one?
S: No, I like you.
SAA: I'm not even a teacher (laughing).
SAA: Draw a picture about hating school.
Sapphire: Oh god.
SAA: Come on, I want to see hate in school. It's ok. You can draw whatever you want….Can you remember ever having a teacher you liked?
Sapphire: Nope, never.
SAA: What is it about teachers you don't like in general?
Sapphire: I don't know.
SAA: Ok, tell me what your picture is now.
Sapphire: Ok she says come to school, Sapphire and I say, no thanks, not today.
SAA: (hhhh) So is this a teacher?
Sapphire: Yeah.
SAA: And this is Sapphire?
Sapphire: Yeah.
SAA: (hhhh) I love it. That is amazing.

Figure 10: Sapphire’s Education Journey Map

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4 Black x’s are inserted over identifying information in all Education Journey Maps.
Sapphire struggled creating her Education Journey Map and kept saying she did not know what to draw. During this conversation, it became evident to me that though she could admit it to me, she did not know how to convey how much she disliked school. Once I gave her permission to do that, Sapphire drew a picture that provided a sense of the embodied experiences with school that left her wanting to escape. Her Education Journey Map conveyed a sense of isolation born from complete frustration and anger at the institution of school where she found her experiences heavily policed. This section shifts from the experiences outside the school doors that affected the girls’ schooling to what their schooling actually looked like.

**Labeling in schools.** Students had a variety of experiences with disability labeling, discipline and teaching strategies. Here I chronicled how schools eventually targeted all participants for increased surveillance and punishment in school because of the issues the girls faced outside of school that were beyond their control through disability labeling and discipline. The chapter concluded with girls’ descriptions of both problematic and successful teaching strategies and how experiences with both impacted their journey though the School to Prison Pipeline.

The girls had a variety of experiences with disability labels including perceptions of intelligence, the mutability of labels that led to apathy or rejection of those labels and different feelings about those labels. Many of the young women expressed that they did not feel smart. Though none was diagnosed with a learning disability, all felt that they were in special education because they could not intellectually contend with their peers. All held deeply felt beliefs about their lack of intelligence, which impacted the ways they acted in schools. Erykah expressed it this way
Erykah: And then, now that (my cousin’s) older, he's an alcoholic and he's so smart, he's so smart. He's really smart. And I'm like fuck. Why can't I have your brain and you can have mine and I can be smart and you can drink with mine?

Erykah laughed when she said this but this was not the first time she mentioned that she felt intellectually inferior to others. Nashawna described the reaction of her classmates as an indicator that she was not smart.

Nashawna: Yeah, they're all really smart.
SAA: I get the impression you don't think you’re smart.
Nashawna: Yea.
SAA: I've heard you say I'm stupid and I'm surprised cuz I think you're a smart person.
Nashawna: Really?
SAA: Yes, I do. Why do you think you're dumb?
Nashawna: Because sometimes I don't get the answer or when I answer the question, the teacher tells me no and everybody looks at me like, you're supposed to know that.

This theme of lack of intelligence or feeling dumb came up so often that I began asking the girls directly if they felt they were smart and why or why not. Nine of girls cited that they did not feel smart. Myosha described not feeling smart because of her own lack of self-confidence.

Myosha: And there were a couple of teachers that really help me that helped me learn things that I didn't think I could, learn things that helped me believe in myself.
SAA: Did you think before you came to school here that you really couldn't do well in school?
Myosha: Yeah, I didn't think I was smart and yeah.
SAA: Was there any reason why like did someone tell you you weren't smart?
Myosha: No, I just didn't feel, I'm not very confident.

Myosha’s description of not being smart is something she attributed to herself, lacking self-confidence. However, as stated above, Myosha used to love school and felt valued. She did not describe lacking self-confidence when she first arrived at school. Instead,
there was an unnamed process that changed Myosha, wherein she too began to view herself as not smart. Tristen rendered this process of becoming “less smart”.

Tristen: I used to be very smart.
SAA: What do you mean used to be? You still are.
Tristen: Not as smart as I used to be.
SAA: What do you think changed?
Tristen: I don't know, skipping out on school.
SAA: Skipping out on school?
Tristen: And not understanding what they were telling me, so kind of got held back.

The girls believed themselves to be the cause of their own lack of intelligence (e.g. I’m not confident, skipping school). However, students do not construct their intelligence on their own and peers, teachers and schools as institutions affect the ways girls felt about their intelligence (Erikson, 1996). Disability labeling impacted the ways the girls saw themselves. Interestingly, though the girls in this study with disabilities were labeled with emotional disabilities, only two (Imani and Myosha) mentioned emotional issues even when directly asked why they were in special education. Imani discussed her behavior as the source of her IEP label.

SAA: Do you remember getting diagnosed with a disability?
Imani: Um, I was told that it's just like, my behavior that got me that IEP and stuff. But I got that in first grade because like, I, like in first grade I was bad. Essentially cuz of the things I had to go through at an early age, I was really really bad.

Imani cited the things she had to go through at an early age which were dealing with a mentally unstable parent, being removed from her mother’s home, living in foster care and taking care of her siblings. She felt those things had a direct impact on her behavior in school.

This confusion around their special education label may have been due to the mutability of labels within the School to Prison Pipeline. Three of the girls mentioned...
having their disability labels changed from one to another while 3 discussed being labeled and then found later to no longer have a disability. This claim was substantiated by documents such as old IEPs wherein girls were found to have a disability and later had it changed or were exited from special education altogether. A change of label or being exited from special education is supposed to mean that the disability no longer impacts their education, not that they no longer have a disability. However most girls attributed the change and/or exit to the latter. A conversation between Sapphire and her therapist, Mary, illustrated this.

Mary: But you are bipolar. You know that, right?
Sapphire: I know...but Tammy (psychiatrist) said I'm not bipolar.
Mary: Whatever, she's the one who said you were.

Both Mary and Sapphire laughed at this but Sapphire talked later about how she feels she not only does not have bipolar, the mental health diagnosis, but also does not have an emotional disability at all.

Sapphire: It wasn't special ed. I didn't have an IEP.
SAA: You didn't have an IEP?
Sapphire: Well I already had an IEP then but I got staffed out.
SAA: Oh that's right you got staffed out in 8th grade.
Sapphire: Right. By them, they staffed me out.
SAA: Do you remember why?
Sapphire: I had to do the test every three years and I passed all them tests I guess. So they staffed me out. So I don’t have a disability. I told them that and they said ok.

Sapphire admitted to being labeled and yet pushes back on this label, a strategy that some young women of color in special education use to maneuver the stigma of the label (Ferri & Connor, 2009). While the previous section discussed the shifts that occurred around the mutability of labels, this next section focused on how the label itself is an artifact that
mediates how teachers treated the girls. Erykah shares how she believed her disability label functioned as a tool for the teacher.

Erykah: When they would do stuff with the class and stuff she would like send me to the special ed place so I couldn't do the stuff that they were doing.

Erykah specifically thought the special education label was a mechanism for exclusion and increased surveillance. She believed that it allowed her teachers to watch her closely and send her away whenever they did not want her presence. When girls are already being surveilled because they are of color and because they experience the weight of institutional absence, when they receive a disability label the lens of surveillance continues to zoom into their lives. Increasing surveillance means an increased risk of discipline in the form of punishment.

Riveara felt that this increased surveillance still did not get her the academic support she needed.

SAA: Were you in special ed classes growing up?
Riveara: Yeah I was.
SAA: And did you think being in special ed classes was better than being in regular classes?
Riveara: No, because you would think that being in special ed classes you'd get more one on one help but it didn't. At 19, I'm barely getting my high school diploma because I didn't have enough credits, English credits at that.

Riveara recognized that in special education is supposed to provide individual help in theory but she did not receive that academic support in practice. Therefore the acceptance of more monitoring in her life did not foster the skills she needed.

Some of the girls talked about special education as a mixed blessing meaning they saw both the benefits and problems with special education labeling. Erykah and her teachers reported that she was exited from special education in elementary school though I could not find any records that verified this. She then received a new label of emotional
disability about 6 months before we met. Even through Erykah thought her old label was
meant for exclusion, she believed that her new label afforded her new opportunities.

SAA: Do you remember when you got labeled?
Erykah: It was a long time ago. And then they just gave me- What are you talking
about? Are you talking about getting an IEP?
SAA: Umm hmm
Erykah: It was a long time ago and then just recently, last April, they just got me
another. They just got me an IEP.
SAA: You just got it?
Erykah: Last April, they weren't even going to give it to me, they had to fight.
SAA: How has it helped?
Erykah: Yeah cuz if I wouldn't have got it, I wouldn't have graduated in like 4
weeks. Cuz I got this book-
SAA: The portfolio you are working on?
Erykah: Yeah, this is the last year they're doing this. So I really got lucky.
SAA: Because you were really short on credits, right?
Erykah: Yeah, I would have graduated in December.
SAA: And do you think you could've stayed til December?
Erykah: No

Erykah recognized that this disability label allowed her to create a portfolio instead of
trying to meet the minimum number of credits for graduation. This was important for her
because when she had run away and was no longer attending school regularly, she missed
the opportunity to gain credits. Therefore she was very behind in credits. She also felt
lucky since the graduation standards have now changed and even in juvenile justice
where many children are behind on credits (Young et al., 2010), there will not be any
more portfolios allowed in this state, even for children with disabilities.

Other girls remembered special education as a place of positive, individual
connections with teachers. Imani described it this way,

SAA: So what classes did you like in high school?
Imani: I liked my IEP teacher….She was actually pretty cool. I was in her class
for most of the day…I was in her class for most of the day but I ended up like,
staying after school and helping her out and stuff. The only times I was out of her
classroom was for science, math and history. I had two periods where I had no
classes, plus my lunch. So I had three periods where I had no classes but yet, I
was in her room on the computer, or listening to music or cleaning up from the
class and stuff. And I wasn't even there for a week and I was already doing this.
Me and her connected the first day that I was there.

Imani valued the connection with this teacher. Being in special education for Imani meant
being with the same adult for most of the day and because they had a connection, she
enjoyed this interaction.

Tristen also felt positive about special education and her connection with the
special education teacher.

SAA: Are you in special education?
Tristen: Yeah.
SAA: Who do you work with?
Tristen: Ms. Bryson.
SAA: What for?
Tristen: I don’t know.
SAA: Does it help?
Tristen: It helps a lot.

Though Tristen admitted she does not know why she is in special education, she truly
appreciated the support Ms. Bryson, the special education teacher, provides. Disability
labeling clearly impacted the ways the girls experienced school as it affected the
perceptions of their own intelligence. For some of the young women of color, it led to
some confusion and rejection of the label due to the mutability while others felt very
positive about their experience with special education teachers.

**School punishment.** Next, I explore how when school responded to the behaviors
of the girls, they rarely acted with compassion and instead more often with increased
surveillance and punitive discipline without taking into account the context of the girls’
lives. Ashley’s need to support her family, taking the place of her mother at times, caused
her to miss long stretches of school. Eventually, Ashley noted she was withdrawn from
the school she attended without anyone ever checking up on why she was missing school.
SAA: Do you remember any of your teachers at that school?
Ashley: Um, I don't remember anybody. I wasn't even there enough. That's why I ended up in trouble, they just withdraw me after so many days, they just withdraw me.
SAA: That's why you ended up leaving that school?
Ashley: Um hm.
SAA: So where did you go after that?
Ashley: I didn't go to school. Then in 9th I restarted and didn't go to school.
SAA: So do you feel like when you began getting suspended a lot more in 8th grade, did that have an effect on whether you wanted to go back to that school?
Ashley: Yeah, like I was unwanted and I didn't want to go to school...because I had tried. In middle school, I was like, they done gave up on me, that's the way I felt, like how are you going to kick me out of school? If you guys had any idea what I go through at home, you wouldn't kick me out of school...especially when I'm trying to go to school.

Though some may not see Ashley’s removal as punitive discipline, it caused her to lose access to school. She had to wait for her mother to get strong enough to take her to a new school, enroll her and then figure out new transportation for both herself and her siblings. During this additional time out of school, Ashley lost learning opportunities along with a chance to build a positive relationship with school.

Disciplinary removal was a significant factor in all of the young women’s lives and was significant not only for race, but also for sexuality. Over the course of the study, I learned that three of the 10 girls identified their sexuality as fluid, meaning they did not identify as simply heterosexual or homosexual but instead dated both sexes when and where it felt appropriate (Diamond, 1998; 2003). Two of the girls identified as lesbian, meaning they had at one time dated males but now dated females exclusively. Considering that half of the incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in this study did not identify as heterosexual was something that I found significant.

Himmelstein and Brückner (2010) examined longitudinal data and determined non-heterosexual adolescents were expelled at higher rates and that, "particularly girls, suffer
punishments by school and criminal-justice authorities that are disproportionate to their rates of transgressional behavior" (p. 54). Though none of the girls reported being punished for explicitly not identifying as heterosexual, there was a pattern of all of these girls experiencing punitive discipline at high rates. Considering also that the girls had often taken on the identity of girl fighters (Jones, 2010) and therefore broke norms of femininity, many experienced punitive discipline and sexuality and gender norms could have clearly been tied to that.

Punitive discipline was also used in response to the fighting that the girls did, even when the fighting was in response to harassment. Imani described this issue,

Imani: And then she put the first hit on me, you know? So I defended myself and fought her back. And then one of my teachers came in and she was like, ‘she hit me first’ and I was like ‘yeah, but there's a camera right there’, you know?

Imani acknowledged that not only was she harassed into fighting (“she put the hit on me”, meaning she hit me first) but then punished without taking the context of the situation into account. Myosha also described her first fight as one of self-defense,

Myosha: And I started getting bullied by some of the girls and I didn't let them bully me so, I just didn't want to go to school anymore. They were like are you trying to step up to us and I was like yeah, cuz you are not going to push me around and think you can have my lunch and things. Uh uh. You crazy.

SAA: So they started bullying you and you stood up for yourself?

Myosha: Yeah, they didn't get away with it cuz I fought back and I got suspended for like a week.

Myosha conveyed a similar experience to Imani and 5 other girls in the study. She fought to protect herself but in the process, lost access to her education.

Not all fighting was for self-defense. Some of these young women detailed engaging in fighting for other reasons. Justine knew one of the reasons she was punished in school was because of her continual fighting.
Justine: I wasn't in a gang but I did fight.
SAA: A lot or sometimes or not much?
Justine: A lot…
SAA: And what would you get in fights over? Like with who?
Justine: It would just be like people who would like start crap with me or mess with my family. So yeah.
Justine: (My brother with special needs) got teased a lot.
SAA: And so would you get in fights over that?
Justine: (Nods) Cuz you don't mess with my friends or my family. My family comes first, then my friends.

Justine admitted that fighting was an issue that rarely got her out of problems and often resulted in more problems. However, like Riveara, Imani and Myosha she felt that in order to maintain her own safety and the reputation of ones she loved, she had to fight.

Myosha’s story, an outlier in the data, represented punitive discipline for her cultural beliefs and activism. Myosha furnished this story of wearing a shirt that said “No Columbus Day” as a significant one as it came up multiple times in our interviews and mapping,

SAA: Tell me about third grade.
Myosha: Third grade was difficult because like I'm Native American and my family, they don't agree with Christopher Columbus having like a holiday and so we had a protest. And we have shirts that say things and my third grade teacher didn't agree with this. So one day she called me over to her desk and she pulled my shirt and said you can't wear this. Na na na na. And then I got sent to the principal's office…And I said, well you're not the principal so you can't tell me what I can and can't do cuz I stand up for what I believe is right. I remember the whole conversation cuz I wrote a paper on it and I went and spoke to a bunch of people and had to read it and I was only in third grade and I had to read it. And it was really powerful. I just remembered it because after that the teacher gave me really bad grades.

Myosha’s story revealed a direct impact of race, ethnicity and activism on schooling. By wearing a shirt that said “No Columbus Day”, Myosha felt she was then singled out and punished for her cultural beliefs. However, she resisted this punishment by writing a paper describing the interaction with her teacher that was she read at a rally. She later
describes this incident as part of the reason she was labeled with a disability. Here, she saw punishment and labeling as clearly linked.

Regardless of what they were disciplined for, one thing became evident over the course of this exploration of the School to Prison Pipeline; by the time we discussed these experiences, all of the girls had been suspended and expelled so often that they no longer remembered many of the details (e.g. what they were suspended for, how long, what types of things they did when not in school). The continuation of Myosha’s story illustrated this issue,

SAA: So when you had this conflict with your teacher in third grade, afterwards did you get suspended or expelled from school?
Myosha: I got suspended a few times.
SAA: Do you remember what it was for? With peers or teacher?
Myosha: It was with my teacher, mostly with my teacher.
SAA: Any specific incident.
Myosha: Uh uh. I just remember like she was making me write papers, writing one sentence over and over and over and over and over and it was just really frustrating

Recalling that Myosha loved first and second grade, it is especially disheartening to see this punitive discipline cause serious frustration in third grade. She felt this punitive institutional response was directly related to why she began to disconnect in school. All ten of the girls struggled to remember the incidents that surrounded their disciplinary removals from school before they came to juvenile justice. Sapphire also illustrated this,

SAA: Ok. Did you ever get suspended or expelled in elementary school?
S: Um hmm, suspended.
SAA: Suspended, do you remember for what?
S: Uhhhhhh, no.
SAA: Um, so did you get suspended a lot…in elementary school?
S: Yes, a lot.

According to the state’s “School Violence Prevention And Student Discipline Manual” put out by the Attorney General in 2009, school districts “should also state clearly that
the purpose of the restriction is to maintain the educational mission of the school by eliminating substantial distractions and ensuring the security of the students and staff” (p. 20). Considering that disciplinary actions are supposed to be used sparingly and only in the most extreme situations, the point is to show the student that the behavior is so problematic that it will not be tolerated in school (Losen & Skiba, 2010). It is a message that should resonate with the student, deterring future behavior by sticking with them. However, this was not the case with the participants in this study. What this suggests is that punitive disciplinary actions were leveraged against these girls so often that they became ineffective.

Finally, the type of punishment must be considered. Myosha’s story above stated that she had to write one sentence over and over and how frustrating she found this. Punishment can be effective when utilized sparingly and with concern and moreover to be effective, punishment needs to be directly related to the behavior (Klingner & Haager, 2004). However, many of the girls share stories of punishment that left them confused or frustrated. What does writing one sentence over and over teach students? Teaching organizations such as National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) have rejected using writing as punishment since 1984 (NCTE Position Statement, 1984).

Additionally, disciplinary removal, and other punitive actions are not effective without processing and discussion (Haager & Klingner, 2004). Veronica shared this story,

Veronica: I would go to school and they'd send me to detention or I'd get myself in detention.  
SAA: What do you mean by that?  
Veronica: Like I'd tell the teacher you're stupid or something. Then, me (and my friends)…we would all go to detention and we'd have heavy jackets and we'd sit there and smoke because there was no teacher.
SAA: There was no teacher? And you would just like hang out and get high?
Veronica: Yeah in the school.

Veronica’s story exemplified the most concerning type of punishment in public schools, the kind that is utilized to contain but not to teach. Veronica did not learn anything by her disciplinary removal except how to avoid class. The girls rarely cited understanding how their punishment was an appropriate response to their behaviors.

**Identifying pedagogical practices.** The next section of this chapter explored girls’ descriptions of both problematic and successful teaching strategies and how experiences with both impacted their journey though the School to Prison Pipeline. Ineffective teaching strategies included teachers who ignored students’ lives when responding to behavior, who tried to physically intimidate or became physically aggressive, and who utilized curriculum that was not responsive to the cultural practices of the girls. Ashley struggled with a teacher complaining about her behavior without understanding her circumstances.

Ashley: Yeah, I had this math teacher and I missed like 3 months straight and she's like, if you're going to come here, you need to start coming more often because I don't appreciate you missing this much of class and then you just want to drop in. And then I never went back to her class anymore.

Recalling that Ashley missed a lot of school in order to support her ill mother and to care for her siblings, this teacher’s frustration was misplaced. When the teacher suggested Ashley just wanted to drop in, the implication was that Ashley does not take school seriously. However, from her descriptions above, it was clear that Ashley did take school seriously but that the basic needs of her family overruled her opportunity for an education. All ten of the girls mentioned that during at least one point in their education trajectories (and sometimes much more than that), teachers did not take their
personal lives into account. As Ashley’s quote above illustrated, this lack of concern for what the girls faced outside of school had a direct impact on their physical and emotional connection with school.

Erykah and three other students detailed teachers who tried to physically intimidate them or violated their personal space.

Erykah: He's rude. And when he like, the other day when I was in school last week, I had my (behavior report) in my hand and he just snatched it out of my hand and I'm like what the fuck. Don't do that shit to me…You're not fucking scary. You don't scare me.

Erykah felt that this rudeness portrayed by the teacher was an attempt to scare her into following rules. However, she did not respond with improved behavior and instead would become verbally and physically aggressive in return. As a result, she would be punished for this behavior, whereas the staff was not held accountable. These inequitable punitive consequences meted out to Erykah were something she noticed and cited multiple times as reasons to not trust the education system.

Four of the students also mentioned teachers or staff members becoming physically aggressive with them or with friends. Veronica told this story.

V: It was crazy though. I just got, like one time, I was going with this person and the teacher, the principal, he hit her. Like he pushed her.
SAA: He pushed a student?
V: Yeah and I was going out with that person at that time so then I got really mad and I started pushing him and then I got suspended for like, two weeks.
SAA: Yeah, for pushing a teacher?
V: But he pushed a student though.

Veronica’s story illustrated her frustration with the situation wherein she got punished when an adult pushed a student first. All of the girls in this study were labeled with emotional disabilities and some had issues with physical violence. To have a staff
member or teacher model physical violence would be problematic for any child and was even worse for girls who needed role models for appropriate ways to deal with anger.

Another ineffective teaching tool that nine of girls brought up was curriculum that was irrelevant in the students’ lives. Ashley provided this example,

Ashley: And then I went in there and it's a math class and we're learning about baseball...we were learning about baseball, like pitching and everything and I don't understand why we were learning about baseball in math.

Ashley shared what was a continued concern throughout the participants in the study. School was not responsive or inclusive of their individual social identities; it was often irrelevant in relation to their race, culture, gender, class or ability. The girls felt that the majority of the time, the content did not describe individuals who were different than the normative and unmarked nor did it take up the cultural practices that these communities utilized outside of school. Furthermore, girls remembered that the schools did not respond to the girls’ intersectional identities. For example, as a self-identified lesbian female of color, Veronica “never saw” people like her in the curriculum. Nor did she see the practices exercised by this historically oppressed community taken up in schools. Finally, even when girls spoke of the traditional curriculum, which can be viewed in more critical ways (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008), they did not find it was utilized for anything but traditional teaching. The girls cited that the canonical curriculum was taught traditionally; they were asked to show what they know and compete with one another instead of examining the content critically (McDermott et al; 2006). For example, the girls at Hull were reading *To Kill A Mockingbird* but had not in any of the observations discussed race. Each of these examples of curriculum as non-responsive to students’ lives is problematic for any child but particularly for children who face such
immense obstacles in their lives outside of school. Facing irrelevant education in school was another barrier. These examples represented missed opportunities to connect these young women of color with disabilities to school.

The girls discussed many more effective teaching strategies than ineffective. Helpful was an adjective that was used by the girls 23 times in this study when discussing productive teaching strategies. Table 5 provides the teaching strategies the girls found most effective and corresponding definitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Teaching Strategy</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes the workload to meet student’s needs</td>
<td>Responds to student emotional and/or academic needs by adjusting workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers questions</td>
<td>Reacts to student queries by providing further explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explains clearly</td>
<td>Provides explicit instruction and is willing to repeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens</td>
<td>Hears what student is saying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides hands on</td>
<td>Utilizes kinesthetic movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaks down</td>
<td>Explains steps in process of solving problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizes Restorative Justice</td>
<td>Provides chance for student to address or support victims/community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes learning fun</td>
<td>Leads games and other activities that are entertaining as well as informative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates success</td>
<td>Heads study groups and other activities that help students feel confident she will pass tests/succeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks in</td>
<td>Inquires about student's emotional and academic status, may notice a change from usual demeanor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbalizes belief in potential</td>
<td>Expresses that young woman is smart and has a future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushes me</td>
<td>Challenges student with hard work, encourages to take on new adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides advice with respect</td>
<td>Suggests a path but does not command/order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives Extra time/effort</td>
<td>Spending additional time or effort with student foster success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches replacement behaviors</td>
<td>Provides alternatives to student's behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builds on student’s strengths</td>
<td>Uses student’s interests and skills as a jumping off point for teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors student’s culture</td>
<td>Welcomes and builds on student’s cultural knowledge in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates personal connections</td>
<td>Shares personal information that allows student to feel like she knows the teacher</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 5. Effective teaching strategies and definitions
Erykah gave an example of an effective teaching strategy, explaining clearly,

Erykah: Because Mr. Enders explains his work and when I need help, he'll like start all over again and help me. If I don't get something, then I can ask as many questions as I want and he doesn't get frustrated. He answers them really nice. And he tries to explain in a better way since he didn't explain it the first time very well.

Erykah’s answer implied that some teachers got frustrated when she did not understand something or would not explain the topic differently. Instead, Mr. Enders explained things, answers questions and clarifies.

Justine appreciated teachers who created personal connections.

SAA: So what do you think are the qualities that make a good teacher?
Justine: I like teachers that explain themselves and the assignment. And can be honest about what they do and everything. And like just like, I want to get to know a teacher like they want to know me.
SAA: So like personal connections help? (nods).

Justine’s answer indicated that she needed to feel close with a teacher to learn from the person. She did not feel comfortable taking risks, and for her coming to school and learning counted as taking risks, without the teacher also sharing with her.

Tristen preferred classes that utilized kinesthetic movement. She had a difficult time sitting through classes that were lecture based. During class observations, she would often tap her feet, get up and walk around the classroom or leave.

SAA: Are there any subjects in school you really like?
Tristen: Horticulture?
SAA: Why?
Tristen: We get to use power tools and my favorite teacher. We get to pick weeds and we work with fish. We get to eat fish. We're getting new fish and we get to eat them.

Tristen preferred classes that were hands-on wherein she could move and be active.

During class observations, if she did not have access to movement, she either fell asleep or, become restless (indicated by behaviors listed above and her comments in interviews).
What is notable is that while none of these strategies are new, they do comprise much of what is described as critical pedagogy (Duncan-Andrade & Morell, 2008; Freire, 2002). Encouraging connection with school can be accomplished through creating success, verbalizing belief in potential and making learning fun, among others. Though these strategies are not the only components of critical urban pedagogy, they certainly describe some essential pieces.

**The Transition to Criminalization**

In this study, criminalization captures the transition from when behaviors are simply punished to when they begin to have legal ramifications. This process of criminalization included the responses of institutions such as public schools, families and the legal system to the complex issues that the girls faced described above. Veronica described criminalization this way “It was just like a piece of gum, you know when you step on it and it follows you? It followed me.” Her expression captured the ways criminalization became a permanent part of her life because she was subject to increased surveillance and punishment partially due to her class, race, gender, class and perceived ability which are addressed in this section along with: family struggles, conflict in public schools, and the convoluted legal system.

The girls dealt with multifarious family issues that were compounded by their experiences in schools. Outside of schools, the young women responded to family violence by running away, which led to criminalization. Nine of the ten girls ran away from their families at some point. Seven of the ten participants in this study were part of the Department of Family Support before they were part of the Department of Juvenile Justice. In order to be a part of the Department of Family Support, their families were
among the “most vulnerable populations” in the state (Department of Family Support website, 2012). This status meant the entire family, including the girls, was under increased surveillance from the state and often the public schools they attended. Running away was the only way many girls had to escape turbulent lives of victimization and violence along with that surveillance. Justine shared her story of being a part of the Department of Family Support when I asked her about her past.

SAA: So you never have had any issues with the criminal justice system? Have you even gotten a ticket?
Justine: One.
SAA: For what?
Justine: Parking wrong.
SAA: So you've only got one ticket, so you haven't even been in the justice system, except-is it more like (department of family services) stuff?
Justine: Yeah. Because of school.
SAA: Because you've been skipping so much (nods). And did they just say your parents weren't like, weren't helping out getting you to school? (Nods).
Justine: So I got taken away from my family.

Here, Justine illustrated her family came under increased surveillance from the Department of Family Support because of their struggles. Justine’s behaviors of missing school led her to being removed from her family and becoming institutionalized because of that surveillance. Though truancy is concerning, the response from the Department of Family Support to remove her from her family led Justice to run away from her out of home placements, resulting in her arrest and subsequent criminalization. Nine of the 10 girls stated that running away created their first encounters with criminalization. Riveara detailed her first experience with running away.

SAA: Were you first (the Department of Family Support)?
Riveara: Umm hmm. Then I kept messing up. I kept running and getting more charges. SAA: When you were (in the Department of Family Support) did you get taken away from your mom?
Riveara: Yeah.
SAA: Why?
Riveara: From my behaviors, not going to school.
SAA: Your mom wasn't neglecting you?
Riveara: No.
SAA: So then you got (in the Department of Family Support) and they started sending you away and you kept running away and got committed?
Riveara: Yeah.
SAA: Did you have a particular thing that you got committed for?
Riveara: No, just violation of probation. Just kept violating it.

Justine and Riveara’s stories illustrated the ways the surveillance in school and criminalization became inextricably linked. Removing them from their parents’ homes did not solve their truancy and instead, this action created criminalization. Fleeing from unsafe situations like Nashawna or from residential centers in order to see their families like Imani, Myosha (described above) and Riveara resulted in these girls being criminalized. Their need to protect themselves from situations beyond their own control or connect with their families triggered an institutional response of criminalization.

All 10 of the girls experienced criminalization inside of school. Myosha and I were discussing some of her first charges while she was in the custody of a group home.

SAA: Disorderly conduct, was that for fighting or disrespecting staff?
Myosha: Fighting in school
SAA: Were all of your tickets for in-school stuff?
Myosha: Um hmm.

Myosha illustrated what many of the girls experienced, that the process of criminalization occurred inside of school. School then not only punitively disciplined students for the situations they faced outside and inside of school but eventually participated in the criminalization process. Sapphire and I discussed her criminalization and how it affected her feelings about teachers,

SAA: Were there teachers or anyone who asked what was going on with you?
Sapphire: No. Cuz that's none of y'all's business. I would be like what the fuck you mean? Stay out of my business because teachers, they're cop callers. But then when you need cops, they're nowhere to be found.
In this statement, Sapphire first shared that when struggles began, no one in the public schools asked her why she was exhibiting problematic behaviors. Furthermore, she elucidated how students who may need help begin to distrust teachers and public schools along with the police. When school becomes a site for criminalization, students become suspicious of authority figures who punitively discipline them without considering the context of their lives. This does not mean that all teachers were purposely targeting these young women of color with disabilities. Instead, teachers were often required to monitor and report on their students in public schools and even at times, contact probation officers or police officers (Meiners, 2007). Children who need support to cope with their lives are then often not provided it, learning instead to mistrust the system and its agents.

One outlier was Erykah’s experience, who became pregnant while in public school. Though she had been part of CDHS as well, her criminalization was because of her pregnancy.

SAA: Where did you go to school in the foster home?
Erykah: It's an alternative school for pregnant girls and people that were bad, I guess. And you could have your kids there as long as they weren't walking, I mean crawling.

Erykah experienced punitive disciplinary removal because she broke standards of what good young women do; she became pregnant. Teen mothers are often punished through push out or drop out due to unwelcoming school climates (Brigeland, Dilulio, & Morrison, 2006). What this means is that at times, schools responded to girls who get pregnant by placing them with students who have been removed from school due to behavior problems. Additionally, Erykah’s label of disability did not protect her from the removal and placement and may have even facilitated the process.
Criminalization also played out through the legal system. Though this may seem like an obvious statement, the legal system worked in ways that compounded the criminalization of the girls. Multiple girls stated their confusion over their initial charges, how they pled and what the consequences were supposed to be from the charges. Erykah gave an example of this confusion,

Erykah: They told me that I had to, they said that if I plead to a DNN that I would stay in foster care and wouldn't come to (residential placement). But as soon as I pleaded to the DNN, they sent me here.
SAA: What's DNN?
Erykah: Neglecting your kid but I was never neglecting my daughter so I don't know….They just fucked me over.

Erykah was not the only person who struggled to understand the potential consequences of her legal proceedings. Ashley also tells a story of taking her case to trial on advice from her counsel.

Ashley: While I was in jail, they seen that I really, I had nowhere to go…so she tricked me and said I needed to do emancipation. They were like, why don't you go to MLK and then you can get emancipated and then you can go off on your own? And by then I was like, yeah I can do that. So that's still…on my papers what I should do if I do get committed and they looked at that and it said placement. So I went to court and they committed me and they put me in placement. And I was pissed, it was a confusing situation.

Ashley’s story, like Erykah’s, reflected this trend of confusion about the inner workings of the American judicial system. What is relevant is that three of the girls mentioned not fully understanding the legal system in which they were now entangled. Specifically, both Ashley and Erykah were adjudicated for over 1 year for their misunderstandings of the system. Both had public defenders and struggled to understand what these decisions meant. This is how class also affects their experiences in the School to Prison Pipeline, which is concerning because these charges have a massive impact on their lives. Girls of color often receive inequitable sentencing compared to their white peers (ABA & NBA,
Here race and class intersected in ways that negatively impacted the girls’ experiences with the legal system. There were no additional protections for students with disabilities built in to the legal system (Kim et al, 2010). Considering that these girls also had a disability, it is evident how their identity markers affected them in tandem. The legal system was not something that was accessible to all of the girls and often the court processes were not clear. Once girls became criminalized, they were placed under additional surveillance through probation or being removed from the home. This led to increased criminalization when girls broke rules such as not attending school (Justine, Riveara) or ran away (Riveara, Justine, Myosha, Imani). This section illustrated how the increased surveillance and punishment that these young women of color with disabilities faced was continued via criminalization outside and inside of public schools. As the surveillance increased so did criminalization, which eventually led to incarceration.

**Conclusion**

Imani’s Education Journey Map (Figure 11) contains many of the themes found in Chapters 5.

Imani: The color that is connected to the hazel part of the eye. For high school because throughout my high school years, I've been needing to watch, you know like, like the ways things are….But I have that good, hazel to me is a good thing so I have that good perspective on things. The blue is this is for elementary because like in my elementary years, I had to move a lot that's why it's two different shades. I had to move and get used to things. And I had to do like a lot, that's why I made all of these eyelashes, they are all the things that I went through and the way I had to grow up. The background was shaded dark black but I don't have that.

SAA: What would the black background stand for?

Imani: All the pain and the suffering that I had to go through without my family and that me and my family had to go through. This is somewhat like a tree and somewhat like a flower cuz it has thorns on it. To me, it's like the needles I had to get pricked with to come to this tree and this tree means life for my daughter.

SAA: Thorns?
Imani: They're fighting, they're struggling. They're maintaining. I don't know how to explain it. It's like you want to hold on to so much but it's your past that's bringing you down and stuff. So I try to put it to the side for my child. The mouth part means that I love my lyrics and my poetry and I love writing. And with all of those put together, it means like power. A power to keep going through school, a power to keep holding on. A power to know that I will struggle and try to move on from several things.

SAA: Poetry. Tell me why you added that.
Imani: Because it's like, I love my poetry, it's going to have music and writing and it's because I love my personal work. And it's pretty personal.

Figure 11: Imani’s Education Journey Map

Imani’s Education Journey Map captured her story and song. These stories reflected her struggles outside of public schools (“in my elementary years, I had to move a lot that's
why it's two different shades… All the pain and the suffering that I had to go through without my family and that me and my family had to go through”) and ways that affected her life inside of school (“It's like you want to hold on to so much but it's your past that's bringing you down and stuff”). Imani viewed her experiences with punitive discipline, labeling and criminalization as informing her struggles (“A power to keep going through school, a power to keep holding on. A power to know that I will struggle and try to move on from several things”). Ultimately the songs she sings reflected knowledge that the weight of institutional absence impacted her trajectory through the School to Prison Pipeline.

In this chapter, the first step in the School to Prison Pipeline concerned life both outside and inside of public schools, how public schools shaped participants’ responses to assault on their emotional and physical safety, and the disciplinary removal as an institutional response. The sociocultural context in which schooling occurred, lived experiences outside of school and life inside of school and criminalization were all interrelated in ways that affected the girls journey through the School to Prison Pipeline. For the girls in this study, punitive discipline occurred in response to issues outside of school as well as inside. From the weight of institutional absence, we see how “Girls come to believe that they cannot naively expect anyone else to act on their behalf. Like many inner-city residents, girls come to see many people as out for themselves and acknowledge that they too must not expect anyone else to make them safe” (Jones, 2010, p. 35). Punishment, used in response to the girls’ lives outside and inside of school, was part of the everyday landscape of their school experiences. It became the norm instead of the exception. What is more is that punishment led to increased surveillance which then
led to more punishment and eventually, criminalization. Criminalization often began from fleeing violence and victimization at home or from responses to that violence at school. In this chapter, I shared my participants’ experiences in Public Schooling, the first step in the School to Prison Pipeline. In Chapter 6, I will explore the second step, the lives of young women of color with disabilities within Juvenile Justice Schooling.
Chapter 6
Fake it to Make it: Juvenile Justice Schooling

SAA: Nashawna, would you like to share? {N nods} Ok, please do.
Nashawna: In Kindergarten… I liked school cuz it gave me a chance to escape all the abuse and all the hurt and all the bad things that were going on in my life. And what I like about school is you get an education…. Then I started going to treatment facilities. I started insulting like my peers and staff and cussing out them and doing really bad things. Like running away from treatment facilities and having them chase after me. And now I'm here… and I see this change in me. Like I, well a couple of days or weeks or months ago if someone were to tell me… to be quiet, I'd be like um, who do you think you're talking to? No you ain't talking to me, you better check yourself. You know, I'd be quick to give them attitude and I just learned how to obey. I just listen cuz arguing with staff is not going to get me anywhere. It's just going to make my stay here longer. Like they get to go home at night, they get to sleep in their bed, they get to eat their own food.
Myosha: Finally you listen!

Figure 12: Nashawna’s Education Journey Map
During our Cartographer’s Clinic, Nashawna discussed the shifting significance of education from public schools to juvenile justice in her Education Journey Map (Figure 12). She shared how school was a respite from a violent home, and then it became a place to flee from and act out when she was frustrated. Finally juvenile justice became a place where she could both receive an education but also learn submission. Nashawna’s education journey captured the complex role education has played throughout her life and lessons from juvenile justice education specifically.

Chapter 5 contained stories from the first step of the School to Prison Pipeline, public schools and the institutional response to the challenges the girls face outside of school, the behaviors they displayed inside of school and the criminalization they experienced. In this chapter I present findings from the second step of the School to Prison Pipeline, juvenile justice education. I begin with teacher views of educating girls with disabilities in this context as well and then address the girls’ experiences in juvenile justice schooling.

**Social Context of Ability, Gender and Race in Juvenile Justice Education**

Teachers who worked in juvenile justice settings had mixed feelings and experience regarding meeting the various needs of their young women of color with disabilities. This section explores the ways teachers’ pedagogical philosophies regarding ability, gender, race and sexuality affected their pedagogical practices in juvenile justice.

**Ability in juvenile justice.** One conflict for some was how to support the many students with disabilities as some teachers had minimal experience and training in special education. Kyle Enders, a teacher at MLK, struggled since he had gone through an
alternative teaching certification program that included limited content in supporting
students with special needs.

SAA: Do you have training in affective education (supporting students with emotional disabilities?)
KE: Just in the (alternative licensure program).
SAA: Did they touch on it?
KE: Yeah. A little bit. Most of my affective ed training comes from meetings at the school.
SAA: Can you expand on that?
KE: Weekly meetings with (the special education director) where we just discuss what we are doing, what the purpose is, what we are trying to teach in there. That and from asking other teachers what works. I didn’t have much formal training in my program. So I just have to learn as I go through trial and error. And sometimes MLK gives us more training, though it’s usually around mental health issues. It’s something I struggle with.

Kyle discussed an issue that is common for many content teachers in public schools and juvenile justice schools, that they do not have the training to support children with disabilities. However this problem may be magnified since over one-third of the population in juvenile justice is labeled with a disability (Quinn et al, 2005).

Other teachers felt more prepared to support students with disabilities as MLK had worked to hire special education teachers whenever possible. Denise Rastin, a certified special education teacher, felt much more prepared due to her training.

Denise Rastin: I am a certified special education teacher. And I taught for about five years before coming to MLK as a special education teacher in the (Western City) public schools. So I have an understanding of how to support student’s learning and emotional needs, especially the ones with disabilities. I try to provide that knowledge to our newer teachers and those with less education.

Denise was an exception to the rule overall, as far as official training in special education and overall confidence that she had the knowledge to support students with disabilities. Out of the 11 teachers in both MLK and Hull, 3 had one class or less and 5 had only two classes in special education in their formal training. Some teachers, like Mr. Enders, felt
that the lack of special education training was problematic. Others, like Ms. Roberts at Hull, felt that this lack of training was not a major issue.

SAA: Do you have direct training in working with kids with disabilities?
Yvonne Roberts: I don't know if I have anything special as far as this particular group. I mean...for part of my degree, I did have to do some special ed stuff; I just don't have an endorsement in it. So I definitely took classes in special ed and all that, it was required for my degree. So I have that part of it but I don't know if people get training on how to work with particular populations...I don't know...I don't know if it's really that different...The instruction is instruction and no matter who you're teaching towards, you always have to adjust. It's one of those things, reflection is part of teaching. And reflection's part of life...anything you do, you're going to look at it and go, 'how well did I do that?'....

Ms. Roberts’ attitude reflected a tension within juvenile justice, where teachers know they have more children with disabilities than public schools and are supposed to meet their needs but at times, overgeneralized what good teaching meant (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). When I asked how many felt properly prepared to support students in special education only three out of 11 felt they were prepared. Nellie Hand, the vice principal at THH, felt that support for students with emotional disabilities in particular looked similar to all struggling girls in juvenile justice,

Nellie Hand: I think that every time a kid starts to act out and we de-escalate them, we're helping them deal with emotional disability.... ...And I guess, there again there is some misunderstanding about what it means to work with special ed kids and what that label means. And what services are provided as a result of that....de-escalation techniques, the time outs, all of that is part of dealing with their emotional disability

Ms. Hand’s views were similar to Ms. Roberts, that meeting the children’s needs were less about disabilities and more about what many of the girls in Hull needed, de-escalation and support. This tension is something that must be further explored, the fact that many girls labeled with an emotional disability displayed the same problematic behaviors as the girls without disability labels who are incarcerated. Additionally, if there
is nothing additional being done for children with disabilities, how do the label and the restrictive setting in incarceration meet their education needs?

Unlike MLK, where administrators sought to hire special education teachers whenever they could, Hull House handled special education differently. The content teachers at Hull had some training but most of the special education accommodations and modifications were completed through the special education teacher. Or at least these services were supposed to be delivered via the special education teacher, Isabella Bryson. However, given the realities of juvenile justice settings, Isabella found herself doing many other jobs. For example, Isabella discussed other duties that got in the way of her providing services.

Isabella Bryson: When I got here, in October, it took us probably 2 months to catch up on all the IEPs, the transfers, the...overdue things. At first I wasn't even in the classroom...until that...got taken care of, after I took care of all the paper work and stuff...And I subbed in health for probably a month...so I wasn't giving them the service...they needed.

Here Isabella illustrated some of the difficulties of working in a small setting where substitutes, especially long term ones are hard to find. This meant that students with disabilities, who had limited access to services partially due to Isabella’s part time work hours, were being further restricted from the content due to the ways Isabella’s time was being used. Additionally, Ms. Bryson felt that the children with emotional disabilities (16 of the 19 with a disability label in Hull at the time of this study) received services outside of the classroom.

SAA: How are their emotional disabilities accommodated in class?
Isabella Bryson: Well, just my being there, just as support...their emotional, they do see the therapist every day or whatever. So as far as my service goes as far as an emotional support, it's pretty much just being in the classroom with them and if they have questions. And helping them, to stay calm.
Isabella felt that because students see a therapist, she had less to do to support students with emotional disabilities. This was particularly interesting because students reported seeing their therapists much less than once per day, sometimes once per week and sometimes even less than that. The confusion about who provided particular services made access to those services difficult.

One content teacher at Hull did not see the benefit of special education services and questioned the legitimacy of special education services overall. Samantha Cradler and Isabella Bryson had a disagreement over the services Isabella was providing and the capabilities of their students. After their conflict, Samantha Cradler sat down to talk with me about it.

Samantha Cradler: Of course these kids need extra help and I will give it to them but they are also manipulative and will do anything to get out of work. So they run to Isabella and she coddles them. And you know what, there’s no special education in real life. You aren’t getting any accommodations or modifications. You just have to try harder.

Samantha expressed a view that children with special needs just have to work more diligently. In other words, Samantha felt these students were simply not putting forth the effort. However, considering that Samantha has a much higher ratio of children with disabilities in her classes than many content teachers in public high schools (almost half of the total population), this view of girls with disabilities as lazy and manipulative further limited access to the services to which the girls are legally entitled. Isabella expanded on this,

Isabella Bryson: They don't like it when I pull kids out here, because they think since I'm part time, my time is better in the whole class so that I can...write that I saw them. That I was in the classroom with them rather than 30 minutes by themselves...they don't feel that's a good use of my time. Where, this morning, I took Carin and read this thing with her because she didn't understand any of it….But it was...frustrating for her because she couldn't read the words...looking
at the paper, I couldn't read it either because it was so dark. She just said, I can't do this; I'm not going to read. She couldn't read the words, she couldn't see it. So then she got frustrated and asked for a time out. Well then I go and talk to the teacher about it and they feel like she's manipulating…. I feel like I'm their advocate and when they are having a hard time with something, I feel like I can talk to the teacher maybe about what accommodations…. So I'm trying to advocate for the kids but yet the teachers are saying the kids need to advocate more for themselves.

Isabella captured another common tension in special education in juvenile justice that sometimes the monitoring and surveillance of the girls for manipulative behavior meant that their needs were not always being met.

Finally, teachers viewed their attempts to build relationships with their students as part of supporting their emotional disabilities. Samantha Cradler described the many attempts she makes to build relationships,

Samantha Cradler: I think as long as you're building relationships with your kids...and it's important to get out there and eat lunch with your kids...let them know that you want to spend some time with them...a kid who is doing really well, you should go sit by them because you don't talk to them much in class. Or the kid in the middle who isn't a superstar but who gets done what they need to. You need to spend time with those kids. Cuz I spend a lot of time with my IEP kids...and then keeping your word, if you tell a kid you're going to meet with them, meet with them. Even if it's only for five minutes to say hey I didn't have enough time today but I didn't forget.

Samantha discussed spending lots of extra time with students building relationships and it was something I observed her doing repeatedly. She came in early, worked through her lunches and stayed late to support students academically and emotionally. Yvonne Roberts also noted this as one of the most important things she can do to support students with disabilities who are incarcerated.

Yvonne Roberts: Right and it's all about relationships as far as this setting goes...if I have a strong relationship with the student, they're more likely to do what I want them to do. Not just for me but they know at this point in time that what I want for them is the best...so if that's what I want for them, maybe if they don't like it, maybe they think it's better for me anyway....
Yvonne expressed what many adults in juvenile justice recognized and all interviewed for this study discussed, if an adult builds a relationship with a student then the student is more likely to be compliant. Kyle Enders viewed the entire MLK structure based on relationships

Kyle Enders: I think what MLK does best is relationships. Everyone here tries to get to know the kid on an individual level. When I was in high school, most of the teachers didn’t know my name and for me that was ok. And I can’t imagine some of these kids surviving in schools like that.

As a new teacher, Kyle recognized that his skills were still developing and therefore followed the lead of his colleagues with more experience. This led him to focusing on developing relationships with his students. Teachers in juvenile justice were observed working extremely long hours (9-11 hour days), working through their lunches and meeting with families and other people involved in students’ lives. They clearly knew their students well and cared about them. Again and again, teachers discussed and were observed building relationships as one way to support students in special education and in juvenile justice more broadly.

Overall, it seemed that special education support for students with disabilities was provided in mixed forms. Some teachers felt prepared while others did not. Furthermore, for multiple reasons, including staff beliefs, allocation of time and services as well as staff preparedness, special education services were not delivered regularly. This is essential to note as many students’ individualized education plans (IEPs) specified that students needed the restricted setting that juvenile justice provided because of the additional emotional and academic support it would provide. Additionally, special education services are supposed to provide emotional support as a tool in order to
improve schooling outcomes. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that therapists and other residential staff have the skills to support the education of students with disabilities. Instead teachers, both content and special education, are supposed to provide those skills in school. Teachers cared very much about their students as evidenced in interviews and observations. However, their care did not mean that students got the supports they needed and were legally required to receive.

**Gender in juvenile justice.** Ability was not the only social identity marker for which the teachers provided mixed amounts of support in juvenile justice. For example, when I asked Mr. Enders how he supported girls differently than boys, he said there was no difference in how he treated them.

Kyle Enders: Um I guess I don’t put much thought into it. Kids are kids. What I do is I protect myself in those terms. If I have one student by myself…I make sure that that’s known…make sure that boundary lines are never broken and that we communicate in the open.

Here, Kyle Enders provided a view that all children are the same and so no changes in curriculum are necessary based on whom he is teaching so gender responsiveness was not a goal for him. Instead, he felt that his major adaptation would be to make clear the physical and emotional boundaries between his female students and himself.

Teachers at Hull House felt differently. As a female only institution, Hull employees continually gave examples of how gender responsive Hull was. Yvonne Roberts explained some features that made Hull female responsive.

Yvonne Roberts: Well, like, the way things are designed are very much that way...for instance, even the way our dining hall is set up, it's right next to the nurse's station. That's done on purpose; it's not an accident. It's because girls tend to have more problems with eating disorders than males statistically. So the nurse can watch their eating habits…We're also set up to have individual rooms, although they might be small, but they're not bunked with other girls.
Here Ms. Roberts shared different surveillance methods that are gender specific. Every Hull staff interviewed mentioned the nurse’s station next to the cafeteria as a way gender was being addressed. This is not to say these efforts are not useful. In fact, considering how incarceration settings have been created for men and boys, it took some very small steps to begin to become gender responsive. Administrator Nellie Hand provided some other basics.

Nellie Hand: Well, it's my understanding that when my boss took over this sight, the girls were having to wear boxer shorts which makes it very difficult when it's your time of the month. So she has done some very basic things for the girls because corrections historically have been set up for men. So just getting them panties (hhh), I mean that's a first step....getting them sports bras cuz they run everyday so they need to have support.

Gender responsiveness then, was defined by meeting some very basic needs such as providing the girls appropriate undergarments and surveilling their eating and relationships. However, one Hull teacher attempted to include gender responsiveness into the curriculum when she could. Samantha Cradler discussed attempts to include women more prominently into the content of her courses such as including more books with female lead characters as well as studying women’s poetry. Here she discussed students using types of literary criticism to analyze the Hunger Games.

Samantha Cradler: So there's lots of good stuff in there for feminists. And lots of good stuff in there for anti-feminists too.
SAA: What is the anti-feminist component?
Samantha Cradler: A feminist looks at the role in which a woman is, she's made to play the woman character...the anti-feminist is how has she stepped out of that woman character and become a strong individual.

Sam Cradler’s attempts to include gender in her content were minimal but growing as she saw the value of providing models of strong women for the girls. She found other issues more difficult to address.
**Race in juvenile justice.** Race and culture were not issues that were taken up by any teacher participant in the classroom in this study. Both in interviews and observations it was noted that teachers rarely mentioned race and culture. Here, in a conversation between Yvonne Roberts, Samantha Cradler and myself, we discussed the absence of culture and race in the curriculum.

SAA: In the brochure, it mentions that culture is addressed in education, do either of you do much cultural education in your classes? Or do you address race?

Samantha Cradler: I covered some stuff on Cinco de Mayo because so many of them think it’s Mexican Independence Day.

Yvonne Roberts: Yeah...I covered that it wasn’t. But I mean it’s a little harder to integrate culture into science and math. Just because biology, or science and math aren’t really culturally based. I mean math is pretty much the same anywhere you are. It’s actually more like the universal language....

Samantha Cradler: I think it’s easier to integrate into the world history stuff than it was into my literature...I did, we read some different people in literature.

Both teachers expressed a difficulty integrating culture or race into the content of their courses. Though Samantha Cradler mentioned reading “different” authors in literature, she did not explicitly address issues of culture or race except to teach her students the accurate history of Cinco de Mayo. Kyle Enders felt similarly, he just did not cover issues of race or cultural differences.

Kyle Enders: I address it by not addressing it. I don’t have really; I don’t even know the right word. They are all just my students. I try to respect everyone’s different cultural identity. I even talk to them about it, if that’s the conversation...talk to them about different things they like to do or foods they like to eat, whatever it may be. But it’s not a big part of the curriculum.

Kyle Enders expressed similar beliefs as Yvonne Roberts and Samantha Cradler, racial and cultural diversity were not something they addressed in the classroom. Considering that about 50% of the students in Hull and 56% students in the Juvenile Justice Department came identified racially as other than white, it seemed a large portion of their lives are not being addressed in class.
Sexuality in juvenile justice. After discovering that 3 of the girls of color with disabilities in this study identified as sexually fluid and 2 others identified as lesbians, I also asked how the GLBTQ community was represented in the content. Yvonne Roberts and Samantha Cradler discussed some tensions with providing a GLBTQ presence in the content and juvenile justice education.

Samantha Cradler: I would say, as far as the GLBT stuff, I don’t think we are in a position here to do something without getting some sort of recoil from it.
SAA: Can you talk a little bit more about that? What does that mean?
Samantha Cradler: I just don’t think that it’s something our program wants us to be discussing with the kids because of the nature of their intimacy issue problems.
SAA: Ok, because it’s all girls here…those issues are going to come up.
Samantha Cradler: The kids are in the middle of an identity crisis and having a gay pride thing here at school would not be, a good thing from them…I just think it’s that they want that handled at the therapist level.
Yvonne Roberts: There tends to be this interesting thing as far as this, besides culture with the girls, as far as them identifying more with the LBTQ community even if it’s real or not. It just seems to be, because they are all girls and that’s what their options are they feel like they should be, even if that’s not really who they’re are. You know?
Samantha Cradler: …so what we see is that a lot of them leave and that’s not the identity that they keep, I mean. So it’s kind of a touchy subject here, I would say, it’s somewhat touchy.
SAA: …Have you either wanted to take on or do you feel like, I don’t even want to touch that?
Samantha Cradler: I don’t feel like it’s I don’t want to touch that type of attitude…the deal is that I don’t want to add to the confusion, either.

The teachers vocalized several concerns during this conversation. First, they discussed an unspoken understanding that sexuality is not to be addressed in school but only in therapy (“I just don’t think that it’s something our program wants us to be discussing with the kids because of the nature of their intimacy issue problems” and “I just think it’s that they want that handled at the therapist level”). Second, there appeared to be conflation of discussing the GLBTQ community in terms of the content with gay pride (“The kids are in the middle of an identity crisis and having a gay pride thing here at school would not
be, a good thing from them”). Third, there was a concern with whether it is experimentation or a “real” category of gayness. In other words, if the girls participated in intimate relationships with other girls, they had to be really gay (“There tends to be this interesting thing as far as this, besides culture with the girls, as far as them identifying more with the LBTQ community even if it’s real or not”). Finally, the teachers feared that talking about the GLBTQ community could encourage confusion about whether or not individual girls were gay (“I don’t feel like it’s, I don’t want to touch that type of attitude…the deal is that I don’t want to add to the confusion, either”). Each of these reasons for leaving the GLBTQ community out of the curriculum has been utilized by teachers before (Friend, 1993). However, again, when we consider the large number of students in this study who do not identify as heterosexual, students’ lives were clearly being left out of the curriculum.

The sociocultural context of juvenile justice schooling that emerged from teacher interviews was one where content was traditional. Some teachers saw the importance of addressing some of the social locations a student identified with such as disability or gender but mostly, the everyday experiences of children in this study were largely left out of the classroom.

**Juvenile Justice Schooling**

Once these young women of color with disabilities became criminalized outside and inside of public schools, the increased surveillance often resulted in incarceration. Riveara informed me how her education history impacted her incarceration in her Education Journey Map (Figure 13),

SAA: Ok, tell me what I'm looking at.
Riveara: I graduated in 2012, went (on the run and then came back to Hull) in 2012. This is me going to (community college) afterwards and then graduating in 2013 from my barbering class.
SAA: Ok, so you don't have anything about your history on here. And you don't need to. But can you tell me why you left that out?
Riveara: I don't know, I didn't really have a good education history. I got expelled from a lot of schools. I got switched to a lot of schools cuz a lot of schools didn't have special education back then.
SAA: So do you feel like you didn't get the help you needed?
Riveara: Yeah. I feel like I failed a lot of my classes due to not getting the one on one help and just sitting there and not asking for help because being too embarrassed to ask for help in front of everybody.
SAA: Instead of somebody just coming over and offering to help you which is probably what you needed.
Riveara: Yeah. And now I’m here because of all that.

Figure 13: Riveara’s Education Journey Map

Riveara both recognized that both disciplinary exclusion as well as struggles accessing special education services both affected her becoming incarcerated.

Once adjudicated, detention and commitment created different sets of places and challenges for girls. Incarcerated children of both sexes face the continual efforts at regulation and control of their bodies. However, girls were policed differently. There were three major themes found in the juvenile justice schooling discussion: 1) socializing practices 2) increasing criminalization 3) addressing culture and culturally responsive teaching/programs.
**Socializing practices.** Socializing practices, defined for the purposes of this study, were the rituals and routines of the institution, including the school and the individual teacher, that were meant to teach its inhabitants about the philosophy of the program. Socializing practices were meant to “teach both to and through” the practices (Gutiérrez & Larson, 1994). This is true of the socializing practices that young women of color with disabilities experienced at Hull as evidenced by the amount of time committed to these practices. In one 45-minute class I observed, 26 total minutes of class time were taken up implementing these routines.

At Hull, most of my participants were in The Beginner’s Bunch, a group within the institution made up of a combination of girls who are in their first months of the program and girls whose behavior has gotten them kicked out of the "whole population". These girls were most restricted in dress and actions and must earn their way out of the cohort through institutionally valued and sanctioned behaviors. They were subjected to socializing practices such as running from one place to another (they may not walk), sitting in silence during lunch and entering the classroom silently, taking their seats, sitting up straight with their feet together and hands in a triangle shape (thumb and index fingers touching, fingers together) on their desk in total silence for five minutes. After the first five minutes, girls were expected to sit up straight with their feet together for the entirety of the class. Both teachers and security staff enforced these rules. There were multiple times during every observation when a security staff would open the classroom door, interrupt teachers or students while talking and direct a student in order to follow these rules. This emphasis on control and regulation was a common occurrence in many juvenile justice settings and often takes precedence over education (Young, Phillips &
Nasir, 2010). In one 45-minute class I observed, class was interrupted for enforcing these socializing practices 18 times.

Some participants followed these expectations and others did not. For example, Myosha almost always followed these expectations without reminders when she was in the Beginner’s Bunch. She mentioned that she did not mind the expectations and saw the point of these rituals.

SAA: Why do you think they have you run to each place?
M: Because it teaches you self-discipline and you like, cuz you're like at the beginning of the program and you're progressing into being able to walk again (hhhhhh).
SAA: Tell me about having to sit for the first five minutes.
M: It kind of got my mind ready for class. I just focus better when I'm doing something for some reason like I always like organize or write or draw or something. Otherwise, I don't pay attention, it's weird. Like I could just sit there and look and have eye contact with those and not get it through my head. It's strange.

Though Myosha acknowledged the purpose of running (“it teaches you self-discipline”), she also acknowledges the punishment aspect of this ritual (“you’re progressing into being able to walk again”). When I asked her about the expectation of sitting up silently for the first five minutes of class, Myosha stated the she liked it (“Kind of got my mind ready for class”) but then mentioned that for her, it did not always work (“I just focus better when I'm doing something for some reason like I always like organize or write or draw or something”). The majority of the time though, Myosha did not object to these practices and instead submitted to the regulation of her body.

However, there were times when even the students most likely to follow the rules would break them, but in less noticeable ways. Once when I was observing the silent five-minute routine at the beginning of a Computer Class, one girl yawned loudly. Afterwards, six others girls joined in, including Myosha, yawning loudly and then
smiling at each other in the reflections of their computer screens. The staff eventually noticed and after the seventh girl yawned, scolded all of the girls saying, “Knock it off, ladies”. This small act could have been just a coincidence, but the smiling by the girls and the admonishment by the staff suggests that they were, as a group, rejecting this socializing practice and communicating their boredom. This was a creative way to reject the socializing practices without incurring punishment.

Sitting in silence for five minutes at the beginning of every class is a practice that made sense to teachers and staff who all endorsed the practice when I inquired about it similar to Ms. Akers’ response below.

Ms. Akers: It helps them get focused. These girls need to learn how to sit still and focus when they need to. They’ve been out of school so long, they forget how to behave.

Though I understood her point, the routine made less sense to me as a special educator. Five minutes is a long time to sit straight and quiet for all children and for girls with disabilities who have had significant gaps in their schooling, very difficult. I tried to do this a few times and found it difficult myself. Often I thought they could use the time more productively by encouraging the girls to meditate, do some stretching or even drawing.

Other young women were not as likely to follow the socializing practices. In the video data, I noticed that Veronica kept her feet apart; however the rest of her body language seemed to indicate attending to the conversation (e.g. eyes on teacher, recording notes when directed). Even after she was directed to put her feet together by a security staff, Veronica would often change her foot position back to open. When I asked why she
continually moved her feet into a position not endorsed by the institution (see chapter 4 for more detail on this), she became serious.

Veronica: I knew like I could get away with it. And I felt like, I get comfortable in the places I am. I don't care who says no or what, if I'm comfortable with it, I'm going to sit the way I want. And I'll just do what I do and I never got in trouble for it. And when I did, I would just close them back and spread (my feet) again.

Though Veronica mentioned there were minimal consequences applied, she was still risking a lot. She could have lost days of visits with her family, personal time to herself and put on privilege restriction for insubordination. Veronica was breaking rules of normative femininity already as a person who did not fit typical gender norms. This additional requirement of how to sit properly (e.g. feet and knees together) seemed at times forcing normative femininity upon her. Teachers and staff did not take these socializing practices lightly, as noted above, interrupted class to enforce these expectations to make sure these routines were being followed. One teacher I interviewed responded this way when I asked her about the purpose of these socializing practices,

Ms. Akers: It's not that hard to follow the rules here. You follow them and you get more privileges, just like life.

Ms. Akers’ attitude reflected many adults in the juvenile justice system, who cared deeply about the children. She thought the small instances of rule breaking were irrational and was irritated by what she saw as refusal to follow simple rules.

However, from a youth perspective these small gestures have a different meaning; breaking rules became a resource in a place where the girls have little else. Incarcerated girls are being continually monitored for compliance and their bodies are not under their own control. Every part of the girls’ bodies was dictated by rules from how they could wear their hair (in the Beginner’s Bunch, it had to be up and students had to ask for
permission to even touch it) to what color clothes they wore (different colors meant different levels of privilege) to getting a sanitary napkin (had to go see the nurse). For some young women, breaking the rules seemed to become a response to the large number of rules the girls experienced because they are incarcerated, rules that they would not have in "real life". Nashawna talked about how real life rules were not followed at Hull.

    Nashawna: This place is so stupid sometimes. These rules don’t make no sense. Why can’t I touch my hair when it’s in my face? Why I got to run everywhere? When does that happen in real life? They just like to tell us what to do.

Nashawna’s feeling of rules manufactured to exert control, not to teach anything, was common. Eight of the girls mentioned that being incarcerated was not teaching them useful skills they could apply in the real world. This will be discussed more in chapter seven.

Other young women of color with disabilities refused to comply with the socializing practices on principle; Veronica went on to say that she is not willing to fake it to make it. I asked her to explain what fake it to make it means. Veronica constructed a definition for me,

    Veronica: Fake it to make it to me means that you put up a front. That everybody likes, like you're the golden nickel or whatever. That everybody likes and everybody wants. And I feel like I don't have to be that person. I don't want to be that person...I feel like if I'm going to get there, I'll get there the way I am. I'm not gonna change. I'm not willing to change for anyone.

Veronica shared how she struggles to comply with rules without changing her character. Rios (2011) uses the term "striving for dignity" to describe the struggle in which students are "demanding the right to be seen 'as normal', to be treated as fellow human beings, to have a sense of positive rites and not to feel criminalized" in the community (p. 115).
When girls are already incarcerated, they still fight to be treated with dignity and this came in direct contrast with the tight regulation and control of their bodies.

The girls at MLK had much less regulation of their bodies but still faced a different set of socializing practices that the girls at times, accepted or rejected. They were still regulated in dress (uniforms required) and often fought with teachers about the uniforms but this was still much less than what the girls at Hull faced. At MLK, during every homeroom at the beginning of the day there was something called morning chat wherein all students had to share about their night the night before and how it affected their mood in the morning. Some girls participated in this ritual willingly while others did not. Ashley did not mind morning chats. She stated,

Ashley: I know you all care about me and that’s why you are asking. I appreciate that even though it can be a little annoying. And I’m a talker, of course I’m going to tell you how I’m doing.

Others, like Justine, felt that the morning chat was problematic. When we were talking about morning chat, Justice noted,

Justine: I don't like Ms. Rastin.
SAA: Why?
Justine: She gets on my nerves.
SAA: Why?
Justine: She just gets on my nerves, it's not what she does, it's what she says. And then like, she tries getting all up in my business and I'm like just leave me alone, you know.
SAA: And you don't think of that as an indication that she just wants to get to know you? Cuz didn't you just say that's what a good teacher does?
Justine: Yeah. But I don't know anything about her so…
SAA: Have you ever told her that?
J: She's probably just going to be like oh, well I'm married. I don't know if she has kids or not.

Justine felt that this was an unfair structure, the fact that the girls were expected to share so much of themselves while teachers could share only what they wanted (Dutro &
Kantor, 2011). Though this may feel fair to adults, putting oneself in Justine’s shoes where she is forced to go to therapy, where she is under surveillance day and night and where the notes of her nights are communicated to her teachers who then ask her about those issues in front of her peers, one may see how Justine felt hesitant about sharing more. Again, though this communication may be necessary for adults to support Justine, she rarely had a chance to craft her own personality at school. Those notes and morning chats already constructed her personality as abuse survivor and victimized girl, leaving limited room for Justine to maneuver.

The socializing practices that initiated girls to and through surveillance in both settings may have had unintended impacts, as Nashawna discussed above when she stated that she was not learning skills that applied to real life. Institution-wide rituals (e.g. Beginner’s Bunch having to run everywhere) are focused on physical control and punishment for any resistance to that physical management without teaching behaviors that will be useful in their everyday lives. These socializing practices, which some staff members label "militaristic" (Ms. Hand, Ms. Cradler, Ms. Roberts, Mr. Owens, personal communication, 2012), taught these young women of color with emotional disabilities who "need to learn proper affect" (Imani's IEP, 2/4/12) about control. This focus on control distracted from the girls’ needs as it reduced the chance to teach sociocultural practices that are valued outside of incarceration settings. For example, running from place to place limited the students' opportunity to greet adults and others in culturally accepted ways. Morning chat framed addressing the girls’ therapeutic issues as the primary reason for school. Moreover, these socializing practices did not reinforce Foucault’s (1979) concept of the panopticon, where prisoners are on the periphery with
the disciplinary authority in the center. Instead, the girls were at the center of the socializing practices, constantly being surveilled and regulated in order to socialize them to and through institutional expectations (Rios, 2011).

Others, like Erykah, felt that these socializing practices actually taught them to be more secretive and drove some of their behaviors underground.

S: So what has been, you've been in MLK for a long time and are about to leave, what has being here taught you—both good and bad?
E: Ok, bad is to sneak around, bad is that they don't let you. There's a lot of bad actually.

During her Education Journey Map discussion, Erykah discussed what these socializing practices taught her; she learned how to lie more effectively. In another discussion, she expanded on this phenomenon after she divulged to the staff at MLK the prescription drug habit she had been hiding.

E: I know, like I want to tell them that earlier but I was just like scared and didn't want to say anything… I was just sick of getting away with it, you know? It was like; I didn't want to do it anymore. You know?
SAA: Like you proved you could trick the system,
E: I could do it…I got away with it forever. If I didn't tell them, nobody would have knew.

Erykah revealed the way punitive socializing practices actually drove problem behaviors underground where they were not be dealt with properly. For Erykah, this and other actions led to increasing criminalization.

**Increasing criminalization.** All 10 of the girls in the study experienced increasing criminalization, meaning that they received additional charges while in the custody of juvenile justice, which further entangled them within the legal system. All of the girls who ran away had additional charges and time added to their sentences.
Erykah gave another example of increasing criminalization when I asked her how much police contact she had before she came to MLK,

SAA: What were your interactions with cops before MLK? I mean, were you committing crimes or skipping school?
Erykah: No, just skipping school. To be honest, I've probably had more police contact since I've been in MLK than out.
SAA: What kinds?
Erykah: I've got destruction of property and assault charges.
SAA: Property?
Erykah: It was like stupid, this girl I had bought clothes from her and then I was letting this other girl wear them and then she got mad because the other girl was wearing them so I just ripped them.
SAA: While she was wearing them?
Erykah: No! When she gave them back to me. I mean, I thought I could cuz like I bought them, they were mine, whatever but yeah and I got that. And, I'm trying to think. And then the assault charge.
SAA: Staff or student?
Erykah: Uh uh, on staff.
SAA: Were you just frustrated?
Erykah: No, it's like they had my stuff in the room because they bagged my room and they wouldn't let me in. And so I was waiting right there in someone else's room and she just like opened the door and I wasn't even thinking about what was going to happen, I just wanted to get my stuff. And I, when she opened the door and I hurried up and opened the door. I pushed the door and she scraped her arm.
SAA: So you didn't like go after her?
Erykah: No, they would've taken me to jail (laughing).

Erykah’s first story, of how she got destruction of property charges for ripping her own clothes shows how being in the system, under surveillance makes it likely for her to get a ticket for something for which she would otherwise have not received one if she was not in the system. If she had torn her own clothes or even a friend’s, she most likely would have been reprimanded but not given a ticket. Her second story provided a glimpse of how an impulse action where she pushed a door open led to an assault charge because it scraped the arm of the staff. Traditionally the phrase “assault charge” may conjure images of brutal fights and attacks. However, Erykah’s story illustrates a trend of
charging girls with assaults for what would have not been traditionally considered assault (Males, 2010).

Many of the girls had stories like this, where they originally began contact with the system for running away or truancy (called a status offense, those that are only offenses for someone under 18). In fact, only three students actually committed an offense that was illegal (not just for those under 18) such as burglary (Veronica, Sapphire) or assault (Ashley), as their first contact in the system. To criminalize girls of color with disabilities for status offenses criminalizes family problems, which are often the result of structural inequities for people of color in poverty (Jones, 2010; Winn, 2010).

When the magnifying glass of surveillance focused in on the lives of these girls, we see that institutions often respond to their non-compliance or attempts to reject the regulation of their bodies with increasing criminalization. In detention, females were watched closely for legal and illegal behaviors like boys, but unlike boys are closely monitored for relationships with other males and females (much closer than the boys are watched for relationships with other boys), eating habits, and responses to rules and other socializing practices.

Many of the young women of color with disabilities were subjected to increasing criminalization because of their relationships with other students, which staff worked hard to disrupt. Students in the juvenile justice system formed a community as many had been in previous placements with each other and knew students in various settings. As they have been removed from their own families and communities, these young women have grown their own community of practice with specialized knowledge and rules of
how to navigate the juvenile justice system including probation officers, legal proceedings and the institutions in which they resided (Lave & Wenger, 1991). They were classmates, friends, roommates, babysat each other's children; they even called each other family members and romantic partners. Additionally, they attended therapeutic groups together and so knew intimate details about each other’s past. However, many of the well-intentioned adults in this system discouraged these relationships and actively worked to sever bonds. This socializing practice of disrupting relationships through punishment and criminalization was common across all corrections settings I have worked in and researched. Ashley tells a story of her probation being revoked because she was planning on moving in with someone else on probation and lied about it.

Ashley: I was planning on moving in with someone on probation and I knew they wouldn’t let me, so I lied. SAA: Why wouldn’t they let you? Ashley: I don’t know. That’s the stupid thing. They don’t want me to move in with my mom and neither do I. I can’t move in with my grandma cuz I’m 19. But I don’t wanna live by myself. Who else do I know?

Once Ashley’s probation officer found out she was lying, her probation officer pushed her release date back 3 months. Ashley has spent the last 1+ years living with incarcerated juveniles and right before she leaves, her probation officer expected her to have other connections, other people in her life. Yet, who else do we know in high school to whom we could suddenly have access to besides the kids with whom we went to high school? For incarcerated females of color this question becomes even more relevant because these young women do not have access to anyone else in sports, music, church or other institutions. The majority of other children they know are incarcerated. When I followed up and asked Ashley how she was feeling about the current predicament she stated,
Ashley: Where I'm at, I'm pissed off because of my parole date and I have to stay here until my mandatory. I really just feel like leaving.
SAA: You feel like running?
Ashley: Yeah, I do. But I don't. It's not going to get me nowhere. So I'm just going to do what I'm supposed to.

This is another situation where Ashley's problems become compounded as these harsh punishments are meted out to her for relatively minor infractions. She lied to her probation officer, her probation officer retaliated by pulling her parole date by three months and so she felt like running. Luckily, Ashley had a "cooler head than most" (Mr. Neighbors, interview, 2012) and realized that running away would not do her any good. However we can quickly see how this snowball effect takes place.

Veronica also mentioned several times that she was learning that it was the type of people she hung around that were problematic. She tells a story of a teacher from another placement that told her to watch out who she called a friend.

Veronica: No, like one time, (a teacher in juvenile justice) told me that if I wanted to be a…soccer player, I needed to start hanging around soccer players. If I wanted to be a gangbanger, that I was going to hang out with those people. I guess he was trying to tell me that the environment that I am, that's kind of like what I'm going to do.

At this point, the teacher was talking about Veronica’s old friends from the neighborhood, as well as the people in the juvenile justice center. How does it affect children when we label their peers as bad and insist they do not spend time with them anymore? This seems especially confusing for someone like Veronica who cared deeply about her friends, friends she stayed with when she was on the run for months at a time, friends she described who “were like family”. However, incarceration was teaching her to see her friends as problems. Here, we talk about what she would do if she ran into her old friends.
Veronica: I had friends….But it was bad friends. It takes a while to learn those things.
SAA: So if you were to get out and go back to your own community…what would you do?
Veronica: I feel like I wouldn't even look at them. I feel like, it's just not going to be the same…To go find them, to go over to their place and not get in trouble like I used to. Cuz now that I've been locked up for so long, I feel like I'm in control. I guess he was trying to tell me that the environment that I am, that's kind of like what I'm going to do.
SAA: And do you believe that?
V: Yeah, kind of.

Veronica expressed confidence that she would not get back into contact with her old friends and that she subscribed to the belief that juvenile justice educators had told her; her friends were just bad. However, there is a contradiction in her statement when she stated, “I feel like I wouldn't even look at them” and then “To go find them, to go over to their place and not get in trouble like I used to.” Her discourse supported the line that juvenile justice was instilling in her but wrestling with how she will reconcile returning to her community with those old friends. Even in that conversation, she called them bad and said she would not even look at them but then shifts to hanging out with them without getting into trouble. Veronica knows that when she is released, she will go back to those friends, that community, and so any advice to stay away from them will be difficult to follow. If Veronica goes back to spending time with her old friends, who she is currently being conditioned to view as “bad”, how will that affect the way she feels about herself? This seems especially problematic for girls who will return to their friends, families and communities, where crime is exacerbated by inequitable social conditions.

The social aspects of the juvenile justice system continued to teach control and punishment to and through socializing practices and responses to behavior. Furthermore,
increasing criminalization occurs through the legal system and even due to maintaining relationships.

**Culture and culturally responsive teaching in Juvenile Justice Schooling.**

Young women of color with disabilities found their juvenile justice education met some needs like forming close bonds with peers and teachers, while neglecting others such as culture. This section addresses different aspects of culture and identity that juvenile justice schooling both addressed and ignored. For the purposes of this section, I’m imagining culture as knowing the history and valued practices of cultural communities (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003).

When I asked Myosha about school in Hull, she was very positive. She stated,

Myosha: The teachers actually took time out of their day to help me and teach me and show me where they are. There were a couple of teachers that really help me that helped me learn things that I didn't think I could, learn things that helped me believe in myself....

Myosha’s experiences reflected the research; many girls of color feel closer to their teachers in juvenile justice schooling than they did in public schools (Artz & Nicholson, 2010). While being incarcerated, Myosha was experiencing education whereby teachers care about her and take the time to support her in ways that have improved her confidence, which she had not experienced since elementary school. Myosha found those bonds she made at Hull important to her.

Many students discussed the ways they felt juvenile justice schooling addressed or lacked responsiveness to sexual orientation, race and culture. Above we witnessed how teachers left out points of social identity by excluding these issues from the curriculum. Next we see how juvenile justice also limited access to cultural practices that validated these identities.
These young women mentioned cultural events that they have had taken away.

Here Riveara talked about her own identification as a lesbian.

Riveara: I think about it is, I see it this way, to me it doesn't really matter. Like yeah it sucks when gay pride comes to have all those idiots talking down to you and stuff. Like it sucks to get talked about and labeled as, sinning or something you know but I just see it as life. I love going to Pride anyway. I get to be around people like me.
SAA: Do you get to go to Gay Pride? Like have you gone in the last few years?
Riveara: No, I've been in here.
SAA: So you're not allowed to go?
Riveara: Yeah, no. I was going to go this year but I don't know if I'm going to make it.

Riveara shared the ways Pride allowed her to have a community ("I love going to Pride anyway. I get to be around people like me") even though it also exposed her to some homophobic slurs ("Like yeah it sucks when gay pride comes to have all those idiots talking down to you and stuff"). Considering that she had no access to GLBTQ issues or community in juvenile justice education, it’s important to note that she is also limited outside of education. Overall seven students mentioned missing cultural activities that they no longer had access to including Gay Pride, Cinco de Mayo, black church services and pow wows.

Considering race, culture and sexual orientation are steered away from in these juvenile justice institutions, including in school (discussed above), the importance of cultural events was often downplayed. Some teachers viewed these cultural events as "nothing more than an excuse to party and get wasted" (Ms. Rastin, May 3rd). However, in a place where so many of the teachers and therapists are white and the majority of students are of color and where several students also identified as sexually fluid (Young et al, 2010), it seems that the lack of access to cultural practices and community created emptiness in a place where there was previously connection. When the institutions
themselves do not fill these spaces and the young women cannot seek these connections with their cultures and communities outside of the institutions, the young women are left anchorless. Myosha discussed the interactions she had with her cultural community when she was "on the outs", meaning not incarcerated.

Myosha: There's like a community. Like I go to the Indian Community Place, when I'm out, for Youth Night. And then there's powwows, Native American ceremonies.

I then followed up asking what she had access to when she was in juvenile justice.

SAA: Are you allowed to go to powwows now?
Myosha: I was supposed to go to the City-Wide Powwow but something happened where my client manager had an emergency so I couldn't go. But most likely next year. And there's other things I can go. Like we're looking into see if I can go to ceremonies and things like that so it can help me heal too.

Myosha's story at first glance seemed to suggest that the young women can have access to these cultural events but when examined more closely, it is clear how difficult gaining this access was and how easily they could lose this access.

SAA: Did you have a favorite ceremony or anything?
Myosha: Yeah, right now I'm getting approved to go off site to have a ceremony, it's like a sweat lodge and a sun dance ceremony. Those are the most that stick with me.
SAA: And when did you do those?
Myosha: All through my life. Like right now, I'm writing a proposal to (Department of Juvenile Justice) to go off site.
SAA: Do they usually let people go off site for things like that?
Myosha: Well, its cuz it's religious based and they'll most likely approve it as long as I wrote a proposal and say why it's important.

Though some teachers felt that some of these events were frivolous, students felt differently. Like Riveara, Myosha talked about the value of these cultural practices when she says, "So it can help me heal too." This quote illustrated the profound impact these cultural events have for her.
Due to the long process of proposal writing along with the missed opportunities due to circumstances beyond her control, Myosha had not been to any cultural event with tribal members in 3 years. However, she could still be considered lucky because her cultural events are often called religious and so the Department of Juvenile Justice must consider her request. For the young women who wanted to go to cultural events based on race or sexual orientation, neither the young women or the teachers knew of any recourse for the Department to consider those requests.

Finally, an outlier in this discussion was Veronica who told me that she was undocumented and discussed in length how that status impacted her juvenile justice education. Over the course of several interviews she told me how it was discovered that she was undocumented, how it was addressed (or not addressed) in juvenile justice, what the potential ramifications were and how it all affected her.

**SAA:** How did they figure out your immigration status?

**Veronica:** They did because I got arrested by the (Western City) Police. And they're, they took my fingerprints and they ask me if I have a security number and I was like no. And then they're like, you're Mexican, huh? And I was like, yeah. And they're like well you're undocumented right? And I was like yeah. And then they filed it and everything.

This was the first concerning part of Veronica’s story; the police questioned her without a lawyer or an adult present. As a juvenile, she had no representation and was not aware that she did not have to answer the questions of police. Veronica believed she was required to tell the police the truth and admitted her undocumented status. The ramifications were long lasting. She explained to me the potential consequences that she faced after incarceration.

**SAA:** What do you want to do after school?

**Veronica:** I don’t know. I have this like immigration thing coming up. So before I parole, they come, well somebody has to call them, ya know? And then they'll
come….then I have to go like get detained but we're fighting, because there more chances they'll send me out of the country.
SAA: So they're threatening to call?
Veronica: No, they're not threatening. They just have to call. So then they make the decision if they want to come or not. They got 24 hours to pick me up. But for that time, I have to have like a packet so like show them that I did good and that I need one more chance, you know?

When I asked about her future, it was difficult for Veronica to imagine a life after incarceration because of the looming immigration hearing. The uncertainty she faced about her future was compounded by the potential consequences. She reported feeling ashamed that she had told anyone and was now terrified of being sent back to Mexico, a place in which she had not lived since she was a small child.

SAA: Do you know how old you were when you came over?
Veronica: Yeah, I was 7.
SAA: And do you remember what it was like?
Veronica: Well we came here with our passports and stuff, our visas and stuff. So we came here legal and then I don't know, we only had it for like 2010 or 2011. Then we lost it because we never went back and like, go through the same process again. We were leaving there, my dad had a business and it was too dangerous to go back. So we just didn't go.

SAA: So you said your mom and your stepdad are in the process of trying to get their stuff?
Veronica: Yeah.
SAA: So is part of the stress around that is like, even if you get sent back, would they go back too?
Veronica: No, they wouldn't go back. My family would stay here.
SAA: So you'd have to go live with relatives or something?
Veronica: Well that's the problem; I don't have no one in Mexico.

Veronica identified a major stressor that she was facing after parole; the immigration hearing that could potentially deport her without any family or friends to return to in Mexico. This was not some small teenage problem; she faced losing access to her family and the country she had known since she was seven. I asked her who she talked to about this in juvenile justice,
SAA: Have you talked about your immigration status with (your therapist)? Does she know for sure?
Veronica: Yeah.
SAA: I don't think any of your teachers know.
Veronica: Why do you say that?
SAA: Cuz I asked them the general question, are any of your students undocumented and they all answered, no one.
Veronica: (laughs)
SAA: The reason I bring this is up is because, I feel like this might be a big stress point in your life and I'm just not sure who you are getting to talk to about it.
Veronica: I don't really talk to no one. I just kind of keep it to myself.
SAA: That seems to be a big part of what your therapy should be about. That's a scary thing to have hanging over your head.
Veronica: I know. I go to sleep over it and I'm like, what the fuck? My life depends on what the immigration judge is going to say and I'm like, damn that sucks....Yeah, and there's a lot of things that I haven't told (my therapist) yet. And she's like, I don't know, I tell my therapist but it doesn't feel right. I feel like, like I should have never told no one, it was a long time ago when I was young. I thought that if I ever told someone, they better die (laughing). Or I'll be dead or something. Like I was going to take that secret with me to the grave. But I let it out and I was like what the fuck, that was a big mistake. Blah blah blah….And then I'm just like, oh I should have never done that.

As I worked to understand how immigration issues were addressed in juvenile justice, I faced a precarious position. I did not want to share Veronica’s undocumented status with anyone but wanted to probe if anyone knew and was addressing it. Originally, Veronica had told me that all the staff knew including her teachers. However when I probed, neither the principal nor the teachers knew of any students they had that were undocumented. Of course, teachers could have known and just not wanted to expose the legal status of their students.

Veronica faced the consequences for a choice that was not hers, the choice to come to stay in the United States after she was legally allowed to be here. She was clearly suffering from the shame of telling this major secret (“Like I was going to take that secret with me to the grave. But I let it out and I was like what the fuck, that was a big mistake”) and recognized that her ability to stay in the United States hinged on a packet.
she had to fill out and an immigration judge she had never met (“I go to sleep over it and I'm like, what the fuck? My life depends on what the immigration judge is going to say and I'm like, damn that sucks”). I wondered how this impacted her behavior and she told me a story about cheeking her meds, which means to save them and ingest more of them at once, allowing the person to feel high.

Veronica: I was cheeking my meds and cheeking other people's meds. Everybody was like, what is wrong with you and I was like, nothing and my eyes, like my eyes get so red and I'm like wow. And I was just not paying attention in class and anything. I was blowing everything off. And then they're like, oh you're cheeking your meds. Cuz one of the other kids said that we were passing meds....And they're like, wow you're just wired in the brain to do criminal things. And I was like I know. It's like that criminal thinking is always on my mind. But I got an (punishment) for five days and...then I got back in school and I was like that's enough.

SAA: What do you mean by criminal thinking? Where does that language come from?

Veronica: It comes for T4C, Thinking for Change. And it was like, you have to like, criminal thinking is like you always want to do the wrong thing to get away with something or hide something. And what I was doing was like, getting high to hide my feelings because the immigration thing had me all upset because she was coming in like 2 weeks and I was like oh my god, this is going to happen. But I was just assuming the worst. And that's just another thing that I learned in T4C, like I learned a lot. If it happens, it happens. I'm not going to get overwhelmed about things that are out of my power.

Veronica started “cheeking her meds” directly in relation to her fear of the upcoming immigration hearing she was facing wherein she had the potential to be deported to Mexico without friends or family. When staff then described her actions as criminal thinking (“And they're like, wow you're just wired in the brain to do criminal things”), it grossly oversimplified the situation. I downloaded a copy of Thinking for Change (Bush, Glick & Tymans, 2002) and found that it never used the term “criminal thinking” but did discuss “self-centered thinking that leads to criminality” (p. 144). This may indicate that
Hull staff and teachers are using this term incorrectly as findings in Chapter 5 showed teachers using this term as well with similar definitions.

As I examined the Thinking for Change curriculum, I also found that it did not address other social identities or labels. I searched for the terms: culture, cultural, ethnicity, race, gender, sex, sexuality, orientation, gay, lesbian, bisexual, LGBTQ, ability and disability. As I examined the curriculum, it had no specialized instructions for students with emotional or learning abilities or English Language Learners. I discussed this with a child psychologist who also has experience working within the juvenile justice system and she stated, “Cognitive behavioral therapy does not have those identity markers included. However the therapist should be trained in multicultural issues and should integrate them” (Amanda Bye, personal communication, November 5, 2012).

Though Dr. Bye is noting best practice, the Thinking for Change does not require best practice. It states,

> The curriculum has been designed so that any staff person may facilitate groups and teach its content. No special credential or level of education is required. Trainers should be caring, like to teach, understand group processes and interpersonal interactions, and be able to control an offender group. p. 4

The authors stated that it was recommended that the facilitator be trained in the content or process but not required and end with “Minimally, as a trainer you must be familiar with the contents of this manual” (p. 6). The focus on “the goal is clear: to effect change in thinking so that behavior is positively impacted” and this focus ignored all ways that race, gender, ability, class, immigration status and language may affect the actions of people and instead labels “offenders” criminals with thinking that is about self-centeredness. The authors were missing major components of people’s lives and allowing juvenile’s actions to define them without context.
In the overview of Thinking for Change, Bush et al. (2002) state that Thinking for Change has built upon “strategies and curricula to teach skills to skill deficit individuals” and so the cognitive behavior therapy in Thinking for Change takes a deficit based approach to the “offender”. It is clear, in this instance how imagining Veronica’s behavior, which was certainly problematic (taking prescription medication without a prescription), as self-centered or criminal ignores the context in which it was happening. To simply describe Veronica’s actions as an urge to “always want to do the wrong thing to get away with something or hide something” implies that Veronica has no reason to take prescription drugs except for the thrill of doing something wrong. Instead, Veronica was facing the possibility of being deported to a country she had not been to in years without friends or family to protect or support her. This idea that she was taking drugs because she was self-centered or trying to get away with something seems naïve and simplistic in light of what she was facing. Veronica herself recognized that this behavior was directly linked to the immigration hearing she faced (“And what I was doing was like, getting high to hide my feelings because the immigration thing had me all upset because she was coming in like 2 weeks and I was like oh my god, this is going to happen”). The juvenile justice system perpetuated the trend Veronica had experienced throughout the School to Prison Pipeline, addressing behaviors punitively and without context. Moreover, at times, she stated that she acted out because the pressure was so serious and the stakes were so high that she became hopeless.

V: Like sometimes I feel like that's the pressure on me. That's why I get so irritated. Cuz like whenever staff is doing something to me or like I have a different opinion, I can't argue with them because they have some kind of power. And I'm like, sometimes I take it out on them….Like I was just mad cuz one time (my teacher) told me to go do something. And I was like I already did it and he was like well it doesn't matter, do it again. And I was like, I hate when people talk
to me like that. Like, I feel like I'm a dog and like I just get weird feelings and I act on it cuz I don't know how to handle it.
SAA: Does it make you feel disrespected?
V: Yeah and when that happens, you have this whole other thing going on like if I argue right now, how is that going to help or hurt me? In this whole like, I hear myself thinking, if you do this, you're going to get into this kind of trouble. This and that. And my head just doesn't care.

Veronica’s story of sweat and brawn is one of lack of support and representation in every step of the School to Prison Pipeline (DuBois, 1903). We see her doing the work of both trying to hold the fact that she may get deported in her hands while still taking up the language of criminality, a kind of incarceration discourse based in personal responsibility, that is so prevalent within the juvenile justice system. She must work at every moment to consider not only the immediate consequences her behavior will have in an institution that continually criminalizes her but also she must weigh how it will affect her chance to stay in the country. Her statuses as an undocumented student, an English Language Learner, a student with an emotional disability and a lesbian have all been ignored in the School to Prison Pipeline. At times, the juvenile justice system has even attempted to eradicate those identities. Instead, the only label the teachers and staff addressed and embraced for Veronica was criminal. This limited the support Veronica received and the impact the program could have on her.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, the second step of the girls’ trajectories through the School to Prison Pipeline was explored, juvenile justice education. Ashley’s Education Journey Map (Figure 14) contains many of the themes found in Chapters 5 and 6.

SAA: Ashley can you explain to me? What am I looking at here?
Ashley: Well, you want me to talk about school, Close to 2009 I dropped out. This is my timeline. And then this is where I want to be and this is where I am now.
SAA: Ok, so what do these marks mean? 
Ashley: Stuff I went through and those times and all that. And then 2011, me coming here and this is 2012, how far I moved from here to here and where I want to be. Does that make sense? I've learned, 
SAA: Learned where you want to be? 
Ashley: Yes, a lot. 
SAA: Oh, so what you've learned over the years, ok. 
Ashley: Um hm. And then I should've been, if I want to be here, I should have been thinking about myself instead of taking care of everybody else. And I would be here already, above and beyond…. 
SAA: And is this you and these are like your brothers and sisters? 
Ashley: Yeah. 
SAA: Ok, keep going. 
Ashley: And then the good things are I have a roof over my head and a good support system…So that's the good things in school. So that's what I did. 
SAA: So you've got your good things, your struggles, how you got here, so this is like how you got here and what got in your way and this is like where you are now. The left side is where you are now and the struggles and the good things. 
Ashley: Exactly. 
SAA: Ok, keep going. 
Ashley: And then my struggle in life is this math and it's really making me mad cuz it's so hard to me and I don't get it. And then, that's my struggle in school now. Cuz I want to move to this. But I can't move to this if I can't do this. 
SAA: So this is almost like getting in your way right now and limiting what you can do? 
Ashley: Yes, it is, it's almost like getting on my nerves. 
SAA: So you've got your good things, your struggles, how you got here, so this is like how you got here and what got in your way and this is like where you are now. The left side is where you are now and the struggles and the good things. 
Ashley: Exactly.
Ashley’s Education Journey Map describes both the barriers to her success in public schools. When she stated “And then I should've been, if I want to be here, I should have been thinking about myself instead of taking care of everybody else. And I would be here already, above and beyond”, she recognized that what kept her from success in public schools was taking care of her family, a theme in Chapter 5. She then shifted to her juvenile justice education where she recognized the positive connections she had (“And then the good things are I have a roof over my head and a good support system…So that's the good things in school”) as well as her struggles to pass the Math portion of the GED test before she was released (“And then my struggle in life is this math and it's really making me mad cuz it's so hard to me and I don't get it”). As a student with an emotional disability in juvenile justice, Ashley was not always getting her education needs addressed and was suffering the consequences as she continued to fail her attempts to pass the GED Math test.

Ultimately all of the girls experienced increasing levels of criminalization during their juvenile justice education. That is, instead of making it less likely that girls would receive additional charges, incarceration resulted in increased surveillance, which resulted in more charges. Juvenile justice education met some important needs like connecting girls to schools and building relationships with teachers. However, socializing practices that were part of juvenile justice often socialized girls to and through issues of control and therefore gender responsiveness was defined by surveillance and meeting very basic needs like providing appropriate undergarments. Furthermore, juvenile justice education made attempts to support children with emotional disabilities but did not address GLBTQ communities, race or cultural practices of non-dominant populations. In
this chapter, I shared my participants’ experiences in juvenile justice, the second step in the School to Prison Pipeline. In Chapter 7, I explore the final step, exiting the Pipeline via release.
Chapter 7
Lessons & Possibilities: Strategies of Resilience and the Future

SAA: So when you write “more money”, what does that mean now?
Veronica: It just means saving for college.
SAA: Oh so having more money but getting it and saving it for something important…So explain to me these last two parts.
Veronica: Um, this one represents THH, different colors cuz it's lighting my future or gave me a future to look up to. And like this one in a cloud because it was just a storm like old friends, gangs, drugs blowing up my family. My family was over there but I wasn't with them. So that's why I put it there.
SAA: So that's like the cloud that kept you from seeing the sun?
Veronica: Yeah. And it's just brightened up.
SAA: So you sound like you're hopeful.
Veronica: Oh yeah, a little bit.

Veronica’s discussion of her Education Journey Map (Figure 15) illustrated the complicated future that she faced, one that included getting a job and saving money for college, but also one that meant disconnecting herself from her old community. She
viewed juvenile justice education as lighting up her future and the old friends blocking that light. Veronica imagined a bright future but her optimism was tempered. She wanted to stay out of trouble but recognized that going back to her community, staying away from her old friends and using the tools she learned in juvenile justice would be difficult. Veronica’s story of hopeful caution regarding her future was common among the girls.

Chapter 5 explored the beginning of the girls’ trajectories through the School to Prison Pipeline, public schools and their institutional response to the girls’ lives along with criminalization. Chapter 6 discussed the second step of the School to Prison Pipeline, juvenile justice schooling. This findings chapter examines the last step in the School to Prison Pipeline, which the excerpt of Veronica’s Education Journey Map discusses: release and the future. Those who are not involved with the juvenile justice system often imagine adult incarceration as the last step of the Pipeline, however release is a significant step. Students may return to public schools or they may earn a diploma or GED or and/or leave school altogether. However the last step of the Pipeline must be understood as release because we do not leave children incarcerated forever. Even if children move directly into the adult prison system from juvenile justice, they are released from juvenile justice and moved into a different situation. Incarcerated juveniles grow up and their transition must be considered as part of the School to Prison Pipeline.

In this chapter, I begin with the sociocultural context of the rhetoric of release, which the teachers identify as a major concern. Next I review the Strategies of Resilience, which I defined as the ways girls navigate their lives in and outside of incarceration with savvy and ingenuity. Finally, I address the girls’ futures, both their goals of helping others as well as their preparation to meet those goals.
The Sociocultural Context of Criminal Thinking and Release

As discussed in previous chapters, teachers often mentioned the criminal thinking and behavior the girls exhibited and how this impacted the ways they treated the girls.

Samantha Cradler: And so they come in here and just repeating the same behavior with somebody new. And that’s also where it comes back to the criminal behavior; it has to do with this authority issue where they don’t want to do what authority says. I mean this is exciting, this is fun and…it gets very messy. It’s just a repeated behavior.

Here Samantha Cradler expressed her belief that disobeying authority is a criminal behavior. This discussion of criminal thinking and behavior illustrated how labels became reified. Though the issues that teachers discussed throughout the chapters are common for the vast majority of teenagers (e.g. manipulation, friendships that turn into intimate relationships, defying authority), all asserted that the behaviors of the young women of color with disabilities in this study were something more extreme than normal teenage trouble. The teachers viewed them as behaviors of criminals with a more serious impact and negative intention than those of “normal” high school students.

Though teachers claimed these girls exhibited criminal behavior and thinking, they also posited that juvenile justice could provide them with appropriate behaviors. Yvonne Roberts explained this.

Yvonne Roberts: I don’t know, the point of when our girls get here is that they’ve tried other settings before they got here and they haven’t worked. This is the last resort. It’s when the other stuff has failed that they come here so that they can be separated from the negative peers. And they get more structure and they have to spend more time looking at themselves.

Yvonne described the benefits of juvenile justice at reforming criminal behavior and thinking, which she felt THH uniquely offered.
Faculty at MLK also saw their programs providing specific benefits, which young women of color with emotional disabilities desperately needed. Kyle Enders identified the relationship building as one of the most important aspects of MLK.

SAA: What’s different about MLK. Capability to modify? Smaller classes? Kyle Enders: We know the kids really well. We read their intakes, we know a lot about them, we have their IEPs, we usually end up doing their IEPs…and then the small class sizes….

SAA: Is there anything else you want people to know about MLK? Kyle Enders: I think that you know as much about teaching here as I do…I think what MLK does best is relationships. Everyone here tries to get to know the kid on an individual level.

Kyle explained the importance of particular components of the MLK program that he believed the girls needed, specifically building relationships. Kyle believed that all behavior management and support were based on these relationships. Robb Neighbors, another teacher at MLK, expanded on the theme of relationships adding that for him, building relationships was about empathy.

Robb Neighbors: There are so many kids here that don’t have a father figure, I didn’t have a father figure…I kind of related to some of these kids’ issues…I relate to them better than some folks.

Robb felt that his own struggles in his education trajectory, along with being a man of color, allowed him to empathize and connect with the students in a unique way. Sara Yalla, the principal at MLK, also listed benefits of being in a step-down, open-door program when I asked her what makes MLK unique.

SAA: What makes MLK unique? Sara Yalla: I think the experiential piece is huge…I think the kids should be able to see the world with an educated staff and have some hands on experience. It’s huge. 2 trips a year is huge. The affective education piece makes us effective too. It’s a big component that doesn’t happen anywhere else.

Sara detailed some of the benefits of MLK as being the experiential and affective education components of MLK’s educational philosophy. Overall, all teachers were able
to account for great things that juvenile justice education does including teaching appropriate behaviors through affective education, creating relationships and providing unique experiences. However, many teachers expressed concern over the ability of the program to adequately prepare the girls for release.

Robb Neighbors characterized what MLK did not provide compared to other programs for which he had worked,

Robb Neighbors: One thing {the other program} does well is provide vocational trades. The kids leave with some kind of certificate of completion. Vocation is on the outside here. That would make this program better, to take some money…and invest in vocations for the kids.

The concern of lack of skills for community re-integration, such as vocational skills, provided by juvenile justice was not only Robb’s concern. Samantha Cradler discussed the gap between the services provided in a maximum security setting such as Hull and sending girls to their home communities.

Samantha Cradler: The real problem is when they leave here. I mean all of our transition funds have been cut severely which makes it very difficult…I mean, we send them, we create this great structured environment where they’re very successful and then we send them to an environment which isn’t structured at all…I mean, this is the problem with THH, right? Let’s talk about products, we have a great product here but we don’t finish it. That’s the problem. We put it together, we get it ready to go and then we don’t have a finishing touch here…If we wanted to improve the system, we’d have another THH school out there…. I think what THH has to look at is that we’re just doing them a disservice without…THH needs some sort of minimum security…group home with other kids, get some independent living skills.

Several teachers in this study recognized that the lack of transition funds and support left girls without the tools to accomplish their goals. Many expressed apprehension about sending students back to their communities with limited employment prospects.

Additionally, teachers were uneasy about the tension of creating success in an extremely
structured setting like Hull and then sending the girls to settings without those same structures in place.

This sociocultural context of both reification of the label of criminal along with subscription to the rehabilitative powers of juvenile justice created spaces where young women of color with disabilities experienced a shaming of who they were, where they came from and who they connected with outside of these settings. Simultaneously, teachers talked about the capability of the girls to reform themselves if they abandoned their loved ones and accepted their increased surveillance and control of their bodies. If students submitted to this, teachers believed the students could change. However, teachers also recognized that they were sending the kids from a setting that focused on socializing students to and through practices to environments that did not offer the same kinds of support. The girls were also concerned about their futures (which will be discussed more in the third section of this chapter). Yet the girls were not passively accepting of the label of criminal; instead they developed Strategies of Resilience.

**Strategies of Resilience**

In chapter one, some statistics surrounding girls’ release were shared illustrating how they are being punished longer for their original crime by continually being sent back to juvenile justice for probation and parole violations. Therefore once girls become a part of the School to Prison Pipeline, they were more likely than boys to remain entangled in the system. What I began to realize is that the girls developed skills in response to the continued experiences they had with structural violence in the School to Prison Pipeline.

SAA: Ok, tell me about this.
Justine: Yeah, I'm going to graduate, get my diploma and go to college.
SAA: So these are your goals. So you are going to graduate, I like your little cap here. When are you supposed to graduate?
Justine: Next year. But in this case, many years from now.
SAA: What do you mean?
Justine: I ain't got no credits.
SAA: Is that cuz you missed so much school?
Justine: No, that's just cuz I ain't got no credits (smiles).
SAA: And this is your what?
Justine: My diploma.
SAA: Is it your high school or college diploma or both?
Justine: Both.
SAA: So what do you want to go to college for?
Justine: Pediatric nursing
SAA: How does this relate to what you've already done in school? Like I noticed you didn't do anything about your past education, how come?
Justine: I don't know. It's my past, not my future.
The conversation Justine and I had about her Education Journey Map spoke to the ways that others in juvenile justice viewed Justine regarding why she was incarcerated. In her education records, it was stated that Justine’s focus on her future had been interpreted as a refusal to accept her past behavior as her own responsibility. However, I recognized Justine’s focus on her future as a capability to remain hopeful in a place where futures were hard to imagine. Juvenile justice settings limited the goals some girls thought they could achieve but Justine envisioned herself being a pediatric nurse, believing she had the strength, drive and intelligence to accomplish her goals once she was released. Gift Theory (Rabaka, 2010) allowed me to recognize Justine, not as someone who was deficient because of her race, gender, disability or status as an incarcerated juvenile but instead, as someone who navigated her world with self-confidence and skills. Of course, Justine met several constraints to attaining these goals that were structural in nature (e.g. lack of transition planning to achieve these goals as stated above).

What I found when I examined Education Journey Maps like Justine’s, along with interviewing and observations, was that these young women of color with disabilities were masters at navigating lives that were often difficult and dangerous. When their behavior is viewed on its own, it becomes pathologized with labels like criminal thinking and actions. However, this study allowed me to place the behavior of the girls in context and provided a perspective of their behavior in response to their environments. Utilizing this wider lens presented an opportunity to see how the girls developed Strategies of Resilience, which I define as the ways girls navigate their lives in and outside of incarceration with savvy and ingenuity.
I did not go looking for these Strategies, but found them inductively, from the girls’ analysis and my own explorations of the data. During our Cartographer’s Clinic, Nashawna identified a common theme as we discussed the maps we had created,

SAA: Do you remember what we drew maps about?
Tristen: Schooling.
Imani: And how we see our lives.
SAA: Exactly, schooling, how we see our lives, and relationships with teachers. So, with that in mind, I’m going to have you all look through these and we’re going to talk about this. But I want you to look through it with a specific thing in your brain. I want you to be thinking about ‘if I was going to draw a map for a girl whose about 14/15 years old and is kind of the same place you were in school, and started having some problems, what would I want her to know?’ What are the themes of how you got into a place like this and how to stay out of a place like this?...Does anyone know what themes are?
Imani: The plot of the story.
SAA: Yeah, it’s like a plot of the story. So we’re going to think about what themes are similar and what things are doing.... Nashawna: “I see self-awareness, like that sticks out.”

Nashawna identified self-awareness as a skill that many of the girls had and I realized it was a skill that drove many of the Strategies they employed.

Nashawna gave an example of this self-awareness:

Nashawna: It took a long time; sitting in my room for five days was like a rude awakening to me.
Veronica: I know.
Nashawna: I realized, oh no, I am not going to sit there and be disrespectful. Because the little things I do, any little thing I do is like a mess up, I (get a punishment). Isn’t that right?
Veronica: Yeah.
Nashawna: I have to realize that there's no point in arguing with staff, like they're going to win. It's like, it's pointless.
SAA: What’s (the punishment) like?
Nashawna: This time it was five days for me. It's where you got to stay in your room and –
Imani: Nashawna does not like to be in a locked room.
Myosha: That whole (punishment), Nash came out every five seconds (laughing)
Nashawna: I popped out- Yeah-like is she here? I need to come off, I need to process, is the food here? I'm hungry.
Myosha: Yeah she was like is the food here, and then five seconds later, can I come out and do my hair? Can I go to the bathroom? Can I get a drink? (laughing).
Nashawna: Yeah, I hate being in my room. I hate being in a locked room. Cuz when I was little, my mom used to lock me in the basement and not feed me. It reminds of being in that room-and yes, I have stuff in there. But eventually it gets boring so I'm like let me out.
Myosha: I support that.
Nashawna: So eventually, I said what they wanted to hear. It was my fault and I am the only one responsible for my behavior.

Here Nashawna discussed compliance and incarceration discourse not as internalization but as a savvy way to avoid or discontinue punishment. She was aware that the need to end the punishment was directly related to her experiences with abuse and neglect in her life before incarceration. Though it is a concern that she may internalize this incarceration discourse, it is possible that she also had to paint a picture of herself as responsible for her behavior in order to keep herself safe. As I explored the data, I realized that many of the girls were able to take up this language when it suited them without wholly internalizing the message of blame.

In observations, I would watch what the girls did, what the results were of their actions and what they gained or lost, which was based on my behavioral training in special education where I was taught to look for the antecedent of a behavior (what happened previously), the behavior itself and the consequence (the result of the behavior which could be positive or negative). However, as I began to talk to the girls after situations occurred, I realized that there were consequences beyond the narrow ones the school provided. What I found was that the girls were aware of how they felt and knew how to access what they needed. These strategies went beyond coping skills, which signify a reaction to a situation (to cope with something that is presented to you), but
instead I viewed them as a mediational tool. The girls knew how to create a situation that
was more conducive to getting their needs met.

Once I realized this, I looked through the literature and found that the ability to
utilize incarceration discourse (Winn, 2010), which was about self-blame and personal
responsibility, also reflected the ingenuity of the girls in the study. Meiners (2007) noted,
“survival…is dependent on the ability to represent oneself very carefully to the social
service organizations that poor and institutionalized people navigate” (p. 139). These
Strategies of Resilience that the girls employed allowed them to re-create independence
in a setting that encouraged only socially sanctioned behaviors, which were reinforced
through socializing practices. Table 6 provides the type of Strategy of Resilience the girls
utilized and the definition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Definition of Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessing coping skills</td>
<td>Even when it's against the rules, accessing something that makes her feel comforted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting the message</td>
<td>YW* cites a message from the program or teacher and how she changed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>YW's frustration can turn to rage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculation</td>
<td>The YW determines when it is beneficial for her to follow the rules and when it is beneficial to break them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontation</td>
<td>YW engages in direct conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination</td>
<td>YW believes she can beat the odds to achieve her dreams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evasiveness</td>
<td>YW refuses to directly answer questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploiting exclusion</td>
<td>The YW would utilize efforts to exclude. The purposes of utilizing exclusion vary (e.g. to isolate self, to be alone with a peer, to break rules).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake it to make it</td>
<td>When student pretends to follow the rules but consciously disavows these rules or lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>YW purposely leaves the situation for a reason, whether or not it’s against the rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>YW shares that she has consciously chosen to have empathy or sympathy for somebody she feels has wronged her. YW may also provide this same lens for her own behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>YW shares that she sees jokes or tries to instigate laughing or sarcasm in order to address her situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagining</td>
<td>YW discusses imaginative possibilities about what she did/will do.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Incarceration discourse  Blaming self for behavior without discussing the context, either social or historical.

Positivity  When the YW focuses on the good things in her life in order to avoid hopelessness.

Self awareness  YW shows ability to know her strengths and weaknesses.

Suspicion  YW shares distrust of the system.

Taking control  YW states she feels like she has control of particular dimension of her life.

Table 6. Strategies of Resilience and definitions.

*YW means young woman

I have shared some of these Strategies of Resilience in some of this manuscript already, such as Veronica explaining Fake it to make it (chapter 6), Sapphire sharing her Suspicion of teachers (Chapter 5) and Riveara utilizing Incarceration discourse (Chapter 5). Justine shared another Strategy of Resilience, which she developed, Accessing coping skills.

SAA: So how, since you are in a bad headspace, how are you staying in school and not (running away)? What's helping you right now?
Justine: (Holds up her iPod)
SAA: Music?
Justine: (Nods) That's such a big deal right now…
SAA: So what if you're in class and someone says, you can't listen to music? I mean, it’s a rule here at MLK.
Justine: I just don’t pay attention. But lately I've been listening to music without them knowing because I have my hair down.
SAA: Yeah, that's the benefit of having long hair.
Justine: I just kind of like, hide it. It's easy.
SAA: And you seem like one of those people in class because you're so quiet, they can't tell. Like if you were more talkative and listened to music, it'd be easier to tell. But because you're so quiet anyway.
Justine: Yeah. All day yesterday I was listening to music. No one even noticed. Like it was literally hidden in both layers of my shirts. And then I whipped them to the back and pulled this down and put it in my back pocket and I had it in my ear.

Here Justine shared her ability to ignore rules that she did not find beneficial in order to access, what she considered, an essential coping skill. Though listening to music in class was banned at MLK, Justine was able to utilize a strategy she knew would help her remain calm even in the face of emotional upheaval.
Myosha described the Strategy of Resilience called Taking control that allowed her to focus on school.

SAA: So what do you think changed?
Myosha: Well cuz I apologized for what I did and then like, I try my best now. Before I was like I'm not going to do this and I'm not good at this subject. I would like make excuses and procrastinate. Now I want to…have those privileges. My schooling is like the only thing I have control over in any of this, in my predicament…

Myosha navigated a situation that many girls faced in juvenile justice where they had very little control over their own lives. When faced with the situation of having limited ways to express herself, Myosha felt making choices about school provided her with agency. In the face of restrictions of personal choice, some may feel hopeless or give up, but Myosha saw a situation in which she could exercise agency through attending and committing to school. She was aware of her limited control and capitalized on what she did have control over, her schooling.

Erykah also practiced agency when she utilized Calculation, another Strategy of Resilience. In observations, it was noted that Erykah could be openly hostile and confrontational at times when she was angry and Erykah confirmed these observations during interviews. On the surface, Erykah’s behaviors of refusal and direct confrontation with those who offended her seemed to be impulsive but Erykah saw these behaviors differently. She described the way she behaved at MLK versus other situations like her volunteer job.

Erykah: I mean, I can work with people. I'm like the fucking client (at MLK). Of course I'm gonna like be mean, I'm not the type that's going to sit here and let you do something to me. I will do something back to you. You know? SAA: What about where you volunteer, why don’t you go off on them? Erykah: I just have to get along with people. At…where I work, I go volunteer and the lady is always telling me what to do like you need to do this or do that.
just do it. I still don't want to like, I'm thinking in my head like, just, all this stuff in my head.
SAA: But you're like able to keep it in your head
Erykah: Yeah, I do but when I'm (at MLK), I don't have to keep my mouth shut. What are you guys going to do? You know, you can’t fire me, maybe you’ll kick me out….So I don't really care.
SAA: So you see work and school as two different situations?
Erykah: Yeah. And they always throw that in your face, like you can't do that at work. Yeah, I could. When you go into Subway, people are rude to you and they still have their job. I'm not like that but I can keep my mouth shut if I really have to. But I don't (at MLK), I just don't feel like I have to. I don't like, I'm not scared- I don't know.
SAA: So it’s not like employment?
Erykah: Yeah, I'm not getting paid

On the surface, Erykah’s difficult behaviors created the perception that she could not control her anger, her emotions and her behaviors (IEP dated March 2012). However, Erykah tells a different story. She was careful and calculating about when she needs to keep her behaviors, attitudes and opinions in check and when she could be confrontational. This revealed Calculation, wherein a student determines when it is safe for her and even productive to be outwardly hostile towards others and when it can be detrimental, as a Strategy of Resilience.

Sapphire used a Strategy of Resilience, Forgiveness when viewing her own behaviors. Here she had a discussion with a MLK staff whom she had not seen since returning from being “on the run”.

Staff: I heard you have a tattoo.
Sapphire: (laughing) I have a tattoo.
Staff: I heard you have a big tattoo.
Sapphire: I have two big tattoos. One on my back and one on my chest. Do you want to see them?
Staff: No.
Sapphire: (laughing)
Staff: Don't you feel dumb having that tattoo now?
Sapphire: No I don't even need to cover it up. I don't feel dumb because it's a decision. You make them in your life
In this excerpt, the staff was attempting to shame Sapphire for her behavior (“Don't you feel dumb having that tattoo now?”). However, Sapphire resisted this attempt at shaming by utilizing a Strategy of Resilience, Forgiveness, where she viewed her own behavior with empathy (“I don't feel dumb because it's a decision. You make them in your life”). Sapphire re-positioned herself, refusing to passively accept the shaming that staff attempted to do.

A final example of utilizing Strategies of Resilience was Imani’s description of Determination, in this case, to get an education.

Imani: I knew that I missed out on my education, it would be something stupid. But there's times that I would get into fights and I would get suspended but when I came back to school, I made all of that up. All the work that I missed, I made it all up. If I knew I was going to get suspended, I would get work from teachers….then, I went on the run. Um, I stayed with one of my best friends... SAA: Did you quit going back to school then? Imani: Yeah but I tutored myself. I was well adjusted and would go to the library and pick out some health and math books. SAA: You knew if you went back to school you'd be in trouble? Imani: Yeah. So that's what I always done each time I was on the run because I knew I wasn't going to be able to go back to school. So that's, it became my habit of teaching myself so technically I was home schooling myself at the library…then I went to my brother's house and I end up getting a job um I had a personal tutor who like made me a deal for 30 bucks. SAA: Is this because you can't go to school because you have a job? Imani: Yeah. I was working full time during the day and then at night, she would come.

Imani chronicled a Determination to get her education during several points in her life despite not being in school. She recognized that she faced many obstacles such as disciplinary exclusion from fighting, being on the run and having a full time job, all of which prevented her going to school, however she recognized the importance of her education. Imani’s determination to get an education meant coming up with creative
ways to achieve her goals including educating herself and paying someone else to tutor her.

Strategies of Resilience do not automatically mean that when the girls utilized one of the strategies, that they had an outcome that was conducive to them being released from incarceration or even that the strategy was able to minimize the surveillance and punishment they faced. In fact, some of these Strategies of Resilience led directly to more surveillance and punishment for breaking rules (e.g. flight, confrontation, evasiveness). Some Strategies of Resilience also contributed to the girls being continually viewed as criminal and reinforced the belief of teachers that the girls needed to be in juvenile justice. Instead, these Strategies of Resilience often led to getting their immediate needs met. However, these immediate needs could, and often did, come into direct contrast with the juvenile justice system’s long term goals of achieving socially sanctioned behavior. These Strategies of Resilience illustrated the capability of navigating difficult situations but did not always allow the girls to leave their incarceration sooner. However, these skills will be useful to them as they leave juvenile justice. Strategies of Resistance are the girls’ mediational tools to access what they need and many will be useful outside of juvenile justice as they continue to face lives that are often ruled by other institutions that are rooted in racism, sexism, ableism and heteronormativity.

Lessons Learned

Ultimately, girls felt that the lessons they learned from juvenile justice education were mixed. For example, the institutional long-term goal of achieving institutionally sanctioned behavior was, at times, in question by the girls. Many did not see these socially sanctioned behaviors as something that would instill them with tools to survive
outside of education and some even saw the attempts at teaching these behaviors as something that drove their problems underground. Erykah described some of the issues that arose at MLK.

SAA: So what has been, you've been in MLK for a long time and are about to leave, what has being here taught you—both good and bad?
Erykah: Ok, bad is to sneak around, bad is that they don't let you. There's a lot of bad actually. Bad is that, they don't like let you like go out and make your own doctor's appointments. I am about to leave and I never, I have not even made my own doctor's appointments or even went out on my own with (my child) or anything.

First, Erykah noticed that the surveillance at MLK did not eliminate her problematic behaviors but instead drove them underground (“bad is to sneak around”). She also expressed frustration that the continual surveillance and limited independence that students experience in juvenile justice actually left her unprepared to complete some basic skills for her life such as making her own doctor’s appointments or even taking her child out in public.

Other students were able to articulate positive lessons from juvenile justice education. Tristen shared what she felt she learned.

SAA: What do you think being at THH has taught you?
Tristen: Patience.
SAA: Tell me why.
Tristen: Because I can't get what I want whenever I want it.
SAA: So you've had to learn how to wait? Has that been hard?
Tristen: Yeah...Because I just want to get out of here super fast and go back to what I was doing.
SAA: So it's taught you patience...anything else
Tristen: How to be good. I used to be really bad. I used to be really bad.

Patience is something Tristen had to learn because she was not allowed to get her needs met immediately in juvenile justice education. This can be seen as positive since she
cannot get her needs met immediately in life and will have to wait to attain some wants and needs in her life.

Erykah described learning lessons that were mostly negative while Tristen focused on the positive. Other girls shared that the lessons were mixed in terms of usefulness. Veronica discussed that she gained a sense of control over her life from being incarcerated.

SAA: Veronica, do you think that what you've learned here will help you stay out of trouble when you get out?
Veronica: Like stay away from my old friends and stuff. Uh, yeah. Cuz I feel like now, I can make the choice going. I feel like I can do it, I learned that I'm in control of how things go

Veronica expressed this feeling many times, that she just needed to stay away from negative peers (this is expanded on in chapter 6). What was interesting here was the final statement, “I learned that I’m in control of how things go”. This lesson, that the girls are ultimately in control of their own lives provided both positive and negative messages. Providing the girls with a sense of agency was positive, as this provided them with a sense of control (see Strategies of Resilience for more discussion). However, this also completely ignored the sociocultural contexts of victimization and violence, both by individuals and institutions, that all of the girls experienced. By focusing on their own ability to control, teachers and juvenile justice staff seemed to forget that as a teenage girl, very little was actually under their control. They could not control whether they experienced violence in their homes and if they did escape violent conditions by running away, it was automatically a criminal offense by virtue of their age. The girls could not control what family, neighborhood or community they belonged to nor could they control the school responses to their home lives as illustrated in Chapter 5.
What the girls learned in juvenile justice was both positive and negative. Many believed they had an understanding of socially sanctioned behaviors whether or not they believed those practices were useful. Ultimately though, the Strategies of Resilience the girls employed continued to illustrate their intelligence, creativity and agency in the face of structural inequities.

**The Future**

The girls imagined their futures very differently but all agreed on one thing, they envision a future as one that does not include prison. The girls were aware of that possibility and wanted to do everything they could do avoid it. However some of them did not know how.

**Realities of release.** Erykah described the struggles with envisioning her future during our discussion of her Education Journey Map.

SAA: You want me to read it or do you want to read it to me?
Erykah: No, you can read it.
SAA: 2012. I'm going to school now I'm about to graduate and go back to (my hometown) get housing and start all brand new. 4 more weeks then I'm out.
SAA: How does that feel? Does it feel like it's going to happen or is it far enough away that like I'm nervous?
Erykah: It feels like it's there and I know that it's coming.
SAA: Yeah, but like, are you at the point where I'm definitely graduating in 4 weeks or I most likely, I might?
Erykah: No, I'm gonna.
SAA: When you first were in MLK, did you feel like the teachers were helping you or did you want to give any of them a chance?
Erykah: No, not really. I can't remember, it was a long time ago.
SAA: When did you feel like you were coming more?
Erykah: Just recently.
SAA: What changed for you?
Erykah: Cuz I was put in here to graduate first and they said if I don't graduate, I have to leave anyway. I'm about to leave and they said either I leave with a diploma or without a diploma. And they said if I don't start coming to school and stuff, they'll take (my child) away.
Figure 17: Erykah’s Education Journey Map

Erykah’s Education Journey Map illustrated a future that was complicated. On the one hand she wanted to graduate and had a month to reach her goals. On the other, her child was being used as a threat; if Erykah did not graduate she faced losing custody of her child. Her future was uncertain and everything hinged on her obtaining a degree from a school that she felt did not have her best interests in mind.

In juvenile justice education, the future was constantly being discussed. When students were taught institutionally sanctioned behaviors, they were often told they were being prepared for their future. Teachers explicitly related classroom work to job skills and students did also. However, as illustrated at the beginning of the chapter, teachers also recognized that the girls’ future was concerning, as transition skills were not focused on enough. Girls also felt this way. In this section, I explored both the skills the girls received in preparation for their release as well as the girls’ hopes for their futures.
When I last met with Riveara in May, she knew she was being released in June, as it was her mandatory release date. I asked her what her plans for the future were and, she replied,

Riveara: Just to go to (a local community college), I don't know what I'm going for yet. Just going to (a local community college), and getting a job."

I immediately became concerned because Riveara had not had any opportunity to apply since she had been on the run for the last few months. When I followed up, asking questions about filling out applications, Riveara expressed doubt about the steps that needed to be taken.

Riveara: Yeah, it's just going to be hard because then I'm going to have to, basically I'll be walking out to nothing. Like, I'm not walking out to college, I have to wait, I'm walking to my girlfriend basically.

Riveara recognized that she had no job lined up nor had she taken any steps to get into school. Instead, she recognized that being in her early twenties, she was walking out into a future that was largely undetermined.

Erykah had a similar lack of clarity in her own future, especially after her revelation that she had an addiction. Being in her late teens, she was about to "age out of the system".

Erykah: I can stay here until the 24th and then after the 24th, I'm trying to go to rehab and they don't like take Medicaid. And I don't have any money. It's like thousands of dollars to go to rehab. And I have no more, I don't know what to do.

Erykah explained again how the absence of health care in her life continues to put the weight of institutional absence on her shoulders. She does not have the money to go to rehabilitation for her addiction but knew she needed to go. The staff at MLK had been scrambling to find transition services for Erykah but they experienced "just how difficult it was to find resources for girls who were essentially homeless and no longer eligible for
foster care" (Winn, 2010, p. 115). Both Riveara and Erykah were old enough that they were walking out of a system that had hyper-surveilled and micro-managed each part of their lives from how they wore their hair to scheduling every personal appointment and now they were walking into a future that was wide open and unknown. This over-policing contributed to a lack of life skills that Erykah identified. Erykah and Riveara were some of my oldest participants and their future prospects seemed especially bleak. Without institutional permission and support, planning for the future felt near impossible for many of the young women of color with disabilities in the study.

Ashley was the only other student who left incarceration during the study. When I asked her what she wanted to do after she left MLK with her GED, she announced she wanted to be in the military.

Ashley: I want to go to school and get my diploma and go to the military. I was going to get my GED but you can't go to the military with a GED.
SAA: Tell me why a girl like you, a girl who says no one's going to run my show for me, I'm going to run my own show, what appeals to you about the military?
Ashley: I need discipline. I've never had discipline and I need it.
SAA: Oh so you realize that even though you don't want it, you need it?
Ashley: Yeah. I do. And that's, I think that the military would be a good thing for me
SAA: So you have a self-awareness that others don't have.
Ashley: Yeah. I don't know, I think I need that discipline….
SAA: Would it be different than in here because of the voluntary aspect?
Ashley: Yeah. Because I put myself in it. I didn't have no choice over this BS of coming to this place....A lot of people say I should go to the air force. I think I do need discipline. But I don't know. I'm just trying to get out of the system. I've wasted a whole year of my life.

Ashley was not the first student I had encountered who wanted to be in the military while simultaneously struggling with the rules of juvenile justice centers. At first, I was surprised by this career goal as Ashley routinely said that she did not like to be told what to do. However, after thinking about it and reading more, I realized that these students
were seeking the discipline, structure and predictability of the military; characteristics that had been previously absent in their lives before juvenile justice (Rios, 2010). Once students get used to this surveillance structure, sending them back to unstructured communities can make them nervous and even fearful for their safety. When Ashley stated, “I need discipline” it could be inferred that she did not trust herself, but I realized that Ashley did not trust her surroundings to ensure her safety and felt that the being part of the military could keep her safe (Winn, 2010). When I last saw Ashley, she was still working on passing her GED and had not taken any concrete steps to find a job or enlist in the air force even though she was a week away from her mandatory release date.

**Helping professions.** The previous component of this section addressed the realities the girls faced upon release. The final component in this section will describe the girls’ *hopes* for their future professions. As we discussed how they imagined their lives after incarceration, I was struck that nine out of 10 of the girls imagined themselves in a helping profession, which I define as a profession that nurtures the growth of another person. In the following excerpts, I share each girl’s future career goals and then discuss the significance of these goals at the end of the chapter.

Nashawna was the only student who was not interested in a helping profession. She was also the youngest in the study and this made any discussion of the future much more abstract compared to her peers who were in their late teens and early twenties. At the Cartographer’s Clinic, she described her prospective careers.

*Nashawna: Ok, I see myself in the army being a marksmen but I also see myself wanting to become a famous singer, dancer and actor.*

Nashawna was not yet in high school and already incarcerated. At such a young age, Nashawna had a really difficult time articulating what she wanted to do and why. When
she told me she wanted to be a marksman in the military, she expressed a lot of doubt over whether or not she could handle the structure of the military. When she imagined herself as famous singer, dance and actor, she was expressing a desire that many of us may have had in our early teens. That is not to say she did not mean it or will not achieve these goals, it is just recognition that conceptualizing a future can be difficult for someone so young.

Erykah, whom teachers regularly described as “difficult”, “combative” and “argumentative”, wanted a career in a helping profession.

SAA: So your current education goal is to graduate?
Erykah: Yeah.
SAA: What do you want to do after?
Erykah: Probably go to college first. A community college.
SAA: For what?
Erykah: Nurse, An LPN.
SAA: What makes you want to be a nurse?
Erykah: I don't know. Cuz I like to help people.

Erykah revealed a goal that was often difficult to recognize for the adults who worked with her, the desire to help others. Though she was aggressive with both adults and peers who upset her, I also observed Erykah being caring and supportive of the adults and peers in her life. Additionally, Erykah’s volunteer job was at a retirement home for the elderly where she cared for people daily. Her desire to help people was not about emulating someone else but instead because of her deep empathy for those who were suffering.

Justine also hoped to be a nurse, and this desire was deeply rooted in her life experiences.

SAA: When you were little, 6 or 7, do you remember what you wanted to be when you grew up?
Justine: Pediatric nurse.
SAA: A Pediatric nurse. Why did you want to be a pediatric nurse?
Justine: Cuz I love kids.
SAA: Do you still love kids?
Justine: Yeah.
SAA: Is that still what you want to do?
Justine: Yes.

Later in an observation, Justine discussed wanting to be a nurse because she had cared for her siblings, including a brother who was intellectually and physically disabled before he died. Like Erykah, Justine wanted to be a nurse because of her love of helping others.

Veronica shared Justine’s passion for working with children and therefore also sought to be in a helping profession.

SAA: Here now, if you do graduate…what do you see yourself doing after this?
Veronica: I don't know like, I'd like really being a dentist
SAA: A dentist?
Veronica: Yeah, like only for kids like, I get along with kids and I like kids.
SAA: What makes you want to be a dentist though? Like if you like kids, you could be a teacher.
Veronica: Because it has to do with, like I see everything has something to do with math. Because you have to know age and all this stuff to prescribe medication, you know? So I'm really interested in that.

Veronica imagined pediatric dentistry as a way to combine her enthusiasm for working with children with her math skills.

When I interviewed Tristen, she stated she wanted to work at a fast food place because that was the only job she could imagine herself doing. However, during the Cartographer’s Clinic, the other girls helped her identify some skills she had which led to Tristen admitting that she had bigger dreams.

Veronica: Well, you're going to have to start using your memory otherwise-
Tristen: I already know the dictionary of medical stuff…. I got this big medical dictionary that they have on the unit and… and plus I kind of had to look at it because you know I had (an intestinal disease)
SAA: You studied the medical dictionary?
Tristen: Yeah, I was reading it at like 5 o'clock in the morning.
Veronica: Good job, Tristen. You're starting to progress.
Tristen: I think if I were to be successful at anything. If I could get my GED or finish school or whatever. I think that I would possibly go into the military. But I
wouldn't go just to sign up to go to war or anything. I want to be a nurse in the military. 
Veronica: That's good, Tristen. 
SAA: That's a great goal. 
Tristen: Cuz I ain't about to go kill anyone. That's not on my priority list. I want to help people. 

Tristen’s original goal of working at a fast food place was something that she could imagine herself doing. Yet by contemplating it with her peers, she was able to identify other skills she had which allowed her to imagine a future where she could help others. 

Many of the girls wanted to become part of the juvenile justice system in order to utilize their experiences in order to support students who were struggling. Myosha hoped to help others because she felt she was not provided some of that same assistance. 

SAA: So tell me about law school. What's law school about? 
Myosha: Uh, cuz I want to be a lawyer cuz I want to help out the people who didn't get a second chance. I didn't get a second chance, I want to be like a public defender and be there to defend people, like those who can't afford lawyers. 
SAA: And you have a public defender now. Do you like your public defender? 
Myosha: Yeah. She's really helpful. 
SAA: Is that why you wanted to do it? 
Myosha: No, it's just like my family's like lawyers and stuff. So I want to be really up there, if I can't go to a good school, I at least want to have a good job or if I can't get a good job, I can go to a good school. 

Myosha’s trajectory through the School to Prison Pipeline shaped her understanding of the legal system. Her family background contributed to her ambition to be a lawyer, as did her belief in social justice. Both were exacerbated by her experiences with the legal system. Ashley had a similar perspective and viewed the military as a way to obtain an education in criminal justice. 

SAA: What do you want to do in the military? 
Ashley: Schooling for criminal justice. I used to want to be a nurse but now I think criminal justice is for me. Being in the system I would be good at that, like a youth parole officer. 
SAA: Why do you want to be a youth parole officer?
Ashley: I would be able to feel what they are going through but at the same time be strict, I wouldn't let them run over on me or get away with anything. Like I'd be able to help them out because I've been through the same thing. SAA: So do you think you’d be good because you could show care while still being strict, the same as teachers you've liked? Ashley: Exactly, just like the people who've been in my life, like my grandmother who is a strong businesswoman.

Ashley elaborated on her goals to use the military to pay for her education. She knew she could leverage a military enlistment for an education, something that was not attainable due to the prohibitive cost outside of the military. She also felt that her trajectory through the School to Prison Pipeline would provide her with credibility and empathy while remaining strict and supportive for students in the juvenile justice system.

Imani wanted to get out of Hull, graduate and then return to work there eventually. Imani felt that the perspective of someone who had been incarcerated was essential to support the girls that were adjudicated at Hull.

SAA: What makes you want to come back here and work, like why is that your goal? Imani: Because just seeing like, some of the things that like staff is able to help out with and knowing that some girls want a staff that has been in a facility exactly like this, you know, to be able to go to when they need help. To figure out another way, a different way for another game plan. You know? SAA: You would have empathy having walked in those shoes. Imani: Yeah and then that way, the girls can't say, well how about you put yourself in my shoes and then tell me how it feels. And I could be like you know what? I was in your shoes before. I was here at THH and I did have to (go) through (Beginner’s Bunch), I was in (punishment), I got a stack of (negative behavior reports), I didn't like my client manager on certain days, at certain points. I had to be in my room when I was in (punishment) or (Beginner’s Bunch), I was always upset when we got an early bedtime, you know, just like running down the list. Like yeah, I've been in your shoes.

Imani shared how the system could be improved by hiring others who had once been incarcerated. She was not the only one to feel this way. Sapphire also discussed her own
experiences when I asked her if her vocational goals had changed since she was a child when she wanted to be a model,

SAA: What do you want to do now?  
Sapphire: A youth corrections officer.  
SAA: Why?  
Sapphire: I don't know. So I could tell people about my life story. And tell them what I would do, how it affected me and how they should change. What kind of change they should do....You work inside a jail and I'm going to be the one that helps kids. And, I'm going to let them use the phone and I'm going to be a nice one. Because I know how it is to be in jail and need to call my family. And you ask someone, can I call my family for five minutes. No. That pisses me off. I mean, you going home. And you're not paying the phone bill. The state pays for the phone bill and you're telling me no? So I know how it feels to be told no to use the phone for five minutes, maybe you need to talk to your mom for a few minutes that day. And so I'm going to be that one to help people out.

Sapphire felt that the lack of empathy that some in the juvenile justice system displayed could be countered by people who had been in the system. She believed empathy was necessary in a place that committed structural violence against young women of color with disabilities.

Riveara discussed a career in the helping professions because she observed a need while she was in the system.

Riveara: And in 2014, I want to work at (a Residential Treatment Center) with special ed.  
SAA: What do you mean, with special ed?  
Riveara: Like a counselor. Kind of like works that one on one with the students, like helps them with their work one-on-one.  
SAA: Oh, like a paraprofessional?  
Riveara: Yeah, a para.  
SAA: So tell me why you want to do that? Like where did you get that idea?  
Riveara: I don't know. I just thought about it about 3 months ago maybe. I got a lot of help like, I got a lot of help when I was going…with this stuff. Not many schools have them or they end up leaving and kids don't get one-on-one help. So I would want to.  
SAA: Yeah, what makes you feel that that's a good place for you?  
Riveara: Cuz over there they don't have that much, they have one person for like so many of the kids. So I want to go there because I've seen how they struggle there with that one-on-one help.
Riveara also showed the capability of leveraging her own experiences in order to improve the system for other students. She knew that many students needed one-on-one help that teachers in juvenile justice struggled to provide, so she wanted to help fill a gap.

In sum, nine of the ten girls imagined themselves in a helping profession and much of it was because of the empathy they had gained from their own struggles. The direct interaction the girls had with the juvenile justice system could cause them to lose patience with their peers and adults in the system but also provided a unique understanding that most of us do not possess. The girls had rare insights that allowed them to creatively think how the system could be improved and this is essential to consider. These young women of color with disabilities, who had experienced the weight of institutional absence, struggles that are difficult to imagine and educational trajectories that ended with them incarcerated, still exercised compassion for others. This was in complete contrast of the criminal thinking described by the teachers above and instead was a sign that these girls thought about others with empathy and caring.

**Conclusion**

Myosha: Mine's long.
SAA: I want to hear it all, tell me it all.
Myosha: Ok, um, well my elementary school I started fighting when I was really young….I was getting abused at home…And then I put like a stop sign cuz I didn't stop when I needed to and then it was too late….And this is the middle school and… I got in a lot of trouble (in middle school) and that's when I started drinking. And then high school hit and that sign is a danger one and it says trouble at home like there's just like sexual abuse from my stepdad and my mom like doing drugs and stuff….And these are the four places I'd been in like, a year.
SAA: Why were you moving around so much?
Myosha: Yeah, I got kicked out of here, and then I went here and then they changed the school and then yeah. And then I went to (a treatment center) and then I ran away cuz my grandpa passed away. And between here, I got committed...And that one has a caution sign.
SAA: What’s the caution sign for?
Myosha: Like I should have not ran, I should have, I didn’t realize before it was too late.
SAA: So you got committed because you ran?
Myosha: Yeah. And then I got really like angry here when I first got here. And now like a regular high school, I'm scared. I'm afraid, like I have fear. And then college and law school. And that's, like I'm afraid to be successful.

Myosha’s Education Journey Map (Figure 18) illustrated several important themes that arose in this study as well as her own historical nuances that made her experiences unique. She shared her struggles outside of school (“I was getting abused at home”, “sexual abuse from my step dad and my mom like doing drugs and stuff”), which exacerbated her behaviors inside of school (“my elementary school I started fighting when I was really young”), increasing criminalization (“And then I went to (a treatment
center) and then I ran away cuz my grandpa passed away. And between here, I got committed”), as well as issues in juvenile justice education (“And then I got really like angry here when I first got here” along with concerns about the future (“And now like a regular high school, I'm scared. I'm afraid, like I have fear. And then college and law school. And that's, like I'm afraid to be successful”). Throughout her Education Journey Map, Myosha emphasized the rhetoric of her own personal responsibility by employing incarceration discourse (“And then I put like a stop sign cuz I didn't stop when I needed to and then it was too late”, “SAA: What’s the caution sign for? Myosha: Like I should have not ran, I should have, I didn’t realize before it was too late”).

Chapter 7 focused on the final step of the School to Prison Pipeline, release and the future. The girls faced many constraints regarding release and their futures including the absence of sociocultural rhetoric of release that the teachers recognized, the problematic socializing practices that limited the time they spent behaviors that would be useful in their own communities as well as the micromanagement of their lives which left them without specific skills that would be useful in their lives. Girls and teachers recognized that there was not proper funding or support from the transition from extremely structured juvenile justice settings to release into home communities. Most concerning was that the three girls who left incarceration during the study were the least prepared to achieve their goals and instead were walking into a future without support. However the girls were not passive consumers of juvenile justice labels of criminal and messages of the rehabilitative powers of incarceration. Instead, the girls maneuvered the difficult circumstances they faced in and outside of juvenile justice with creativity and resistance. These young women of color with disabilities utilized Strategies of Resilience
in order to strive for dignity and freedom in places where they had already been stripped of both through structural violence (Meiners, 2007; Rios, 2011). Yet they remained cautiously hopeful and empathetic. This empathy was on display when they imagined their future professions that focused on nurturing and supporting others. Their compassion was inspiring.

This dissertation has been organized to reflect the educational trajectories of young women of color through the School to Prison Pipeline so Chapter 5 addressed Public Schools, the weight of institutional absence and criminalization. Chapter 6 explored juvenile justice schooling including the social context of ability, gender, race and sexuality and the girls’ educational experiences getting their needs met. Finally, chapter 7 discussed release. Chapter 8 links the findings to the literature, discusses implications and suggests future research.
Chapter 8  
Re-imagining the system: Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this dissertation was to capture the educational trajectories of young women of color in the School to Prison Pipeline in order to learn from them what might be improved and how we could potentially avert others from entering the Pipeline. These histories are traditionally not invited or listened to in research because marginalization prevents understanding students as knowledge generators (Delgado, 1989). However, Gift Theory motivated me to honor a commitment to recognize the gifts of historically marginalized people (Rabaka, 2010). I listened for the story and song, of sweat and brawn, and of spirit (DuBois, 1903). Conceptualizing this project through Gift Theory and utilizing methodological pluralism allowed me to seek themes in order to understand what the girls’ stories had in common, as well as discontinuity and outliers in order to provide individual nuance (Sirin & Fine, 2008). Furthermore, returning to the concept of trickle up social justice, I sought to understand the stories of some of the most marginalized people in society and in education, young women of color with disabilities, and their trajectories through an intersectional analysis.

To capture the trajectories of the young women of color with disabilities, I organized results according to respective points in the School to Prison Pipeline: Public Schools (Chapter 5), Juvenile Justice Schooling (Chapter 6) and The Future (Chapter 7). Each chapter addressed the three research questions: What are the education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline? How do school personnel in the Pipeline position these incarcerated young women of color with disabilities? What are the institutional and sociocultural contexts in which these students and teachers are located? In this chapter, I summarize my findings, connect
those findings to the literature and discuss implications as well as limitations of my research.

**The Findings & The Literature**

**Public schools and the weight of institutional absence.** The first findings chapter addressed public schools as the first step in the School to Prison Pipeline. This chapter captured the first component of Gift Theory, the story and the song (DuBois, 1903). The participants’ education stories through the School to Prison Pipeline began with the sociocultural rhetoric of personal responsibility, holding the girls accountable for circumstances that were beyond their control. Recognizing the sociocultural rhetoric supported by the first tenet of DisCrit which “focuses on ways that the forces of racism and ableism circulate interdependently, often in neutralized and invisible ways, to uphold notions of normalcy” (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 11). Rhetoric is used to maintain and strengthen notions of what is normal by marking what different as deviant. This rhetoric, reinforced by politicians, the media, teachers and other adults, impacted the ways the girls viewed themselves and their lives.

In an era of ’personal responsibility' when schools, police, and community members could not guarantee…success, nurturing, or security, the one thing that these agencies of social control could do was to inculcate…a sense of self-blame. (They) were taught that poverty, victimization, criminalization, and neglect were products of their own actions. They…internalized these messages, and in turn they all reported feeling personally responsible for their plight. (Rios, 2011, p. 71).

Here, we witnessed the process of convincing students that all the problems they face are their own creation. The girls were trained in and eventually participated in incarceration discourse wherein they blame themselves for the problems they face (Winn, 2010).

Unfortunately, this discourse ignored the fact that many of the barriers to success the girls
faced were not under their own control (e.g., violence and lack of safety, victimization through sexual, emotional and physical abuse, interdependence of racism and ableism in schools).

The sociocultural context of personal responsibility and incarceration discourse became meditational tools for teachers and school staff justifying why children fail within an inequitable education system. Instead of protecting young women of color with disabilities, these institutional narratives reinforced their marginalization. “The role of teaching (and social work) was to execute class-based surveillance and monitoring….Built into the foundation of these ‘semi-professions’ is the work of surveillance designed to identify ‘outlaw’ behaviors and emotions” (Meiners, 2007, p. 47). Students facing complex lives outside of school, including violence and victimization, were more likely to display these outlaw behaviors and emotions, ones that are incompatible with school expectations. In this study, each behavior displayed and emotion exhibited by the girls was viewed through this lens of surveillance and interpreted through the label of criminal. When girls exhibited outlaw emotions, instead of being cared for or even listened to, they were punished. In other words, schools ignored the context of their lives in favor of punishment. Therefore this sociocultural context of personal responsibility and punishment made it harder for girls to survive and stay out of the School to Prison Pipeline.

Moreover, these tropes of meritocracy, personal responsibility and incarceration discourse did not provide young women with disabilities with the tools to challenge either their own subordinated positions in society and schools or the adults who employ these narratives. Additionally, these narratives limited the adults’ reflection about the
inequities their students face and instead reinforced stereotypes and reified labels that are applied to the students in their care. "Every older generation recycles the same panics about girls-perpetually shocking sexual precocity, drinking, muggings, insanity-decade after decade" (Males, 2010, Chapter 1, Section 1, para. 3). Personal responsibility, incarceration discourse and meritocracy therefore were gendered in the sociocultural rhetoric about incarcerated girls’ lives. Teachers viewed these girls as master manipulators who were criminals; but they were seen as a different type of criminal than their male counterparts. The girls were seen as less physically violent but more emotionally damaging, which teachers believed was actually more dangerous. This fear of the emotional destruction the girls could instill resulted in increasing surveillance and regulation of incarcerated young women’s bodies.

Teachers worked to understand the girls as normal children but often relied on reification of labels like criminal in order to interpret their students’ histories and behaviors. The teacher rhetoric reflects this when the majority of girls they dealt with were girls of color and they consistently labeled them as dangerous criminals even though many of them were originally criminalized due to fleeing from violent situations. Audre Lourde (1984) noted, “One tool of the Great-American-Double-Think is to blame the victim for the victimization” (p. 61). Incarceration discourse utilized by the girls, their teachers and larger society is the Great-American-Double-Think employed. We not only blame the victim for their victimization but also for trying to ameliorate their victimization. Society responds to this victimization and resistance by surveilling and punishing the girls.
Chapter 5 captured not only the sociocultural rhetoric that encompasses the lives of young women of color with disabilities but also their experiences outside and inside of school. The fifth tenet of DisCrit “considers legal and historical aspects of dis/ability and race and how both have been used separately and together to deny the rights of some citizens” (Annamma et al., 2013). When looking to the young women’s lives, an understanding of the historical ways women of color with disabilities have been disabled and criminalized provides a sense of how these young women are part of larger historical patterns of marginalization. Goodwin (2003) shared how the combination of problematic statuses such as black, gay, intellectually disabled and poor allowed Wanda Jean Allen to be convicted and put to death for killing her girlfriend despite minimal evidence, a problematic defense, her low IQ and several other legal challenges. Furthermore, many oppressed groups which she belonged to did not protect her and this abandonment further emphasizes how even subordinated groups want to avoid a disability label.

Considering her case requires bringing close those social markers that our inherited social instinct indicate are bad, dangerous, embarrassing, shameful, and immoral. Her retardation, lack of femininity, and lesbianism are markers that even women of color have at times distanced themselves from. p. 232

Allen’s case is one of being labeled with too many negative constructs; too oppressed. She was unwanted because she was seen as inferior and therefore not worth defending, “forced out of the discourse” and into the margins of society. These patterns of abandonment continue to the present.

Outside of school, the girls navigated hazardous circumstances of violence and victimization. Although it may be tempting to blame parents for the girls’ experiences and struggles, putting the sole responsibility for their children’s safety squarely on the shoulders of the parents ignores realities. Jones (2010) stated,
Parenting styles also reflect a personal set of resources and experiences—emotional, psychological, economic, and social. These resources are not spread out equally among mothers or caretakers, and parents who live in distressed urban areas must account for potential threats of violence that are unique to inner-city life. (p. 30).

Parents face the lack of resources including lack of childcare due to the need to work multiple low-income jobs, lack of health care and lack of policing in their neighborhoods. The ways in which inequitable resources were spread out among families then directly impacted the girls. This lack of access and vulnerability were affected by a combination of particular social identities including being of color, female, in poverty and with a disability.

A focus on parenting styles also ignores the lack of institutional support that was identified in chapter 5. The girls experienced the weight of institutional absence meaning that systems such as health care, childcare and policing were not readily available to them and so girls had to bear those additional burdens on their own shoulders. These institutional absences made it more difficult for girls to attend school and to stay out of the criminal justice system as they worked hard to protect themselves and their family members and yet were punished for the caretaking via school disciplinary actions.

Simultaneously, the girls found themselves heavily surveilled and yet felt unsafe when interacting with police and teachers. The girls felt that the increased surveillance was not for their own benefit but because societal institutions viewed them as a threat. Chesney-Lind (2010) found, "Not only do other measures of girls' criminality...fail to show an increase in girls violence, there's ample evidence that girls are more heavily policed, particularly at home and in school" (Chapter 3, Section 3, para. 4). The girls found their struggles outside of school compounded by the additional surveillance and punishment in
school. Additionally, as the girls worked to protect themselves and their families by providing health care, childcare and policing, they lost access to school via punishment. Therefore the girls’ personal need to be recognized as humans striving for dignity was ignored and instead the girls were punished without taking into consideration the context of their lives (Rios, 2011).

When in schools, girls experienced both positive and negative interactions. Disability labeling was something some girls found useful while others did not. While not all girls saw disability labeling as negative and many were able to articulate positive relationships and support that developed from their labels, labels did not protect the girls from suspensions, expulsions and incarceration. Goodwin (2003) states, "Labeling provided the vehicle to move the undesirable from common view and public space" (p. 231). The labels often functioned as a method of social control, which further stigmatized them and justified putting them in more and more restrictive settings moving them further into the School to Prison Pipeline (Brantligner, 1996). The appropriateness of the process of disability labeling and was hard to determine since many of them did not remember the process or even understand their own disability category, believing it was for lack of intelligence instead of emotional control. The mutability of their labels, the impermanence of their disability category, further exacerbated confusion among the young women about how and why they were labeled. Considering that girls were navigating complex situations outside of school and displaying outlaw emotions in school, it is clear that part of what they were labeled for was their behaviors. Whether the context of their lives was taken into account at the time of initial diagnosis is hard to determine. Referring back to The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004
definition of an emotional disturbance from chapter one, when we take components of the
definition along with the girls’ stories, we begin to see how the definition can fit the
description of the girls but may ignore their lived experiences.

Component A (An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual,
sensory, or health factors) was hard to determine in this study since the girls had
difficulty remembering the time and circumstances under which they were labeled.
However, the girls discussed having a lack of access to health care and therefore we
cannot rule out that being a contributing factor in their learning difficulties. Moreover,
Harry and Klingner (2006) found that the identification process often ignored other
factors that impacted learning difficulties and instead focused on disability as an
explanation. Components B (An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal
relationships with peers and teachers) and C (Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings
under normal circumstances) combined with the stories of abuse, responsibility, and
absence of adults and institutions that would keep the girls safe, provide a clearer
understanding of their behaviors. It may have been difficult to build and maintain
relationships with adults when the girls experienced so much violence and victimization
from the adults charged with caring for them at both home and school. Though I am not
arguing they should have been allowed to keep fighting, stealing or running away, these
behaviors seem an understandable response under abnormal circumstances. The stress
these girls faced outside of school along with the increased levels of punishment and
surveillance could have built up and reactions to “normal circumstances” would seem
inappropriate without taking into account the context of their lives. Components D and E
(A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression and A tendency to develop
physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems) again must be considered in context. Recalling the young women’s experiences in and out of public schools, a pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression seems an appropriate response. Also, since girls experienced punishment of their lives without context inside of school, it should not be surprising that they may develop physical aversions or psychological fears associated with school. Considering that the girls experienced punishment without taking account of the context of their lives, it must raise the question of whether disability labeling happened with the same lack of acknowledgement or understanding of context.

As Collins (2003) noted,

> The result of such inattention to sociocultural factors in shaping identification practices is that an inherently social process, the display and recognition of successful participation in classroom learning has been largely portrayed as an objective means of identifying 'deficits' within individual learners (p. 2).

Disabilities were imagined as biological deficits in the girls when instead they were often created based on a combination of factors, which may have been ignored or unexamined. This potential ignoring of the girls’ lives in punishment suggests that something similar may have happened during the disability labeling process. Therefore, the young women’s disability labels must be understood in context, as individuals struggling through an education system that historically had been and currently seemed to be non-responsive to their needs.

Ultimately, the way that public schools funneled children into juvenile detention without addressing the context of their lives turned the juvenile justice into a de facto mental health system. Girls finally began to receive consistent therapy for the violence and victimization that so many of them experienced both inside and outside of schools throughout their lives. However, this trauma was only addressed as girls were being
imagined as criminals, not victims. They were imagined as perpetrators and were only allowed to access mental health services as criminals. Mental health was a place of pathologization, where the girls were told they were skills-deficit individuals instead of victims worthy of justice.

Girls were able to identify both ineffective and effective teaching strategies. This is especially important to note because often students’ voices are ignored in education reform. Adults may assume that students do not value education or that they will not contribute significantly to discussions on education reform (Dutro & Zenkov, 2009). However, girls were able to tell their stories and sing their songs (DuBois, 1903). They identified what did and did not work for them as well as what were successful pedagogical strategies. This reinforces the fact that young women of color with disabilities are indeed knowledge generators who can illuminate the inequities they face and create solutions to those inequities.

Finally, the girls experienced a process of criminalization when their struggles in schools went from being punished to becoming criminalized. This shift occurred through family struggles, conflict in public schools, and the convoluted legal system. The first two of these three paths to criminalization fall under the legal definition of status offenses, offenses that are only illegal if the person is under 18 (e.g., consuming alcohol or tobacco, running away, truancy) (Belknap, 2007). The enforcement of status offenses reflects societal concerns with criminality and moral conduct of girls (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004). Young women are caught in offenses that reflect their expected role in society; they should not be on the streets, drinking or using drugs. This is more of a concern with females than males and this may be one reason why females are much more
likely to be arrested and charged for status offenses than boys (Males, 2010). Additionally, females of color are more likely to be arrested than their white counterparts (Buzsawa & Hirschel, 2010). Therefore we can see how criminalization through status offenses are both gendered and raced. Though the offenses themselves are race-neutral, they are implemented in ways that target girls of color more often. The girls’ trajectories reinforce this finding as seven of 10 girls’ first interaction with the law was due to running away. Therefore, actions such as fleeing danger or wanting to connect with families were criminalized for young women of color with disabilities.

DisCrit tenet six “recognizes whiteness and Ability as Property and that gains for people labeled with dis/abilities have largely been made as the result of interest convergence of white, middle-class citizens” (Annamma et al., p. 11). Not only is ability a property that is reserved almost exclusively for whites, so is innocence. Angela Davis (2003) discussed Black Codes, which were used as weapons against the Black Population after slavery that "proscribed a range of actions-such as vagrancy, absence from work, breach of job contracts, the possession of firearms and insulting gestures or acts-that were criminalized only when the person charged was black" (p. 28). Though Black Codes were written specifically for criminalizing black people, laws that explicitly target racial groups have lost popularity in favor of “race-neutral” laws and policies. Like Davis, we must consider ways that particular offenses are being applied particularly to girls of color and explore the ways girls with disabilities are also affected. Questions must be asked such as, are status offenses being used as a mediational weapon against girls of color with disabilities?
Fake it to make it: Juvenile justice schooling. Chapter six addressed the second step in the School to Prison Pipeline: Juvenile Justice Education where the second component of Gift Theory, the sweat and brawn, was exhibited. Here we experience how the School to Prison Pipeline impacted girls’ educational trajectories and how they worked to position themselves in settings where their freedom and humanity were restricted.

Once criminalization had occurred and the girls became incarcerated, teachers struggled to meet their needs. Overall, special education support for students with disabilities was provided but to different extents depending on the teacher’s training, pedagogical philosophy and attitude regarding special education. Some teachers felt prepared while others did not. Teachers and school administrators often viewed the incarceration settings as meeting the needs of students labeled with emotional disabilities in general. Components such as access to therapists, school or institution-wide commitments to de-escalation, behavior management and relationship building made many school personnel feel that no additional individual supports were needed for students with emotional disability labels. However, this view that many girls labeled with an emotional disability displayed the same problematic behaviors as the girls without disability labels who are incarcerated causes tension. If they were displaying similar behaviors, why are some girls labeled with a disability while others are not? Additionally, if there is nothing additional being done for children with disabilities, how does the extremely restrictive incarceration setting meet their education needs? Furthermore, for multiple reasons including staff beliefs, allocation of time and services as well as staff preparedness, special education services were not delivered regularly. These points and
questions were especially important to ask because all of the IEPs that I examined specifically stated the student needed a restrictive setting in order to get her individual education needs addressed. Though the settings were generally smaller, 8-10 students in a class with a maximum of 15 instead of 30, the individualization was not present. I was initially heartened by the potential of special services and education that could be provided in a small setting but instead found the individualized service delivery difficult for teachers, students and myself as a researcher to identify, which made utilization of the services by students and teachers more complicated. Students were not getting the individualized education that was federally mandated through their IEPs.

DisCrit tenet three “emphasizes the social constructions of race and ability and yet recognizes the material and psychological impacts of being labeled as raced or dis/abled, which sets one outside of the western cultural norms” (Annamma et al., 2013). Teachers did not acknowledge that their students may have been discriminated against, historically and currently, due to the social construction of their race and ability. Instead, they mostly ignored those differences in favor of focusing on the criminal identity.

The school personnel also participated in and contributed to the sociocultural context of ignoring the incarcerated students’ lives and relied more on imagining their curriculum as neutral on ability, race, culture and sexuality. This was something that was inculcated often from the trainings teachers went to, the language used by more experienced colleagues and the confusion around the therapeutic and educational missions. This needs further exploration in the future.

Some of the teachers occasionally saw a value in including gender in the curriculum, but even that was more often about drawing boundaries, surveillance and
control built into the juvenile justice settings than in the content (e.g., viewing gender responsiveness as monitoring for relationships and eating habits while leaving it out of the curriculum). DisCrit tenet two “values multidimensional identities and troubles singular notions of identity such as race or dis/ability or class or gender or sexuality, and so on” (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 11). So even though teachers made a few attempts at gender responsiveness, they largely ignored the fact that their girls were also non-dominant racially, culturally and even in identification of their sexuality. Teachers felt that the only way these identities could be addressed was in a pride-sense or a shallow sense of culture defined by foods eaten and celebrations (e.g., gay pride, Cinco de Mayo). However they also felt that incorporating pride into the curriculum would confuse the girls who were already struggling with identity issues. This view, that providing any views of queer issues in the curriculum for fear of confusing children is not brought up when children are taught about heterosexual people (Friend, 1983). Heteronormativity, and therefore heterosexual pride, is taught when every person is presented as straight even when they are not, when queer issues are ignored and heterosexual issues are considered the norm (McRuer, 2006). Findings showed that this heteronormativity is unacknowledged and yet reinforced by teachers in juvenile justice who face more young women who identify with sexual fluidity than in public schools (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2010).

The teachers did not see a significant need to incorporate ability, gender, culture, race or sexuality into the content of their curriculum and instead reinforced the cultural hegemony prevalent in many schools where only the dominant views and narratives are presented as facts (Delgado, 1989). This refusal to see content as abled, cultured, raced,
gendered and sexualized resulted in symbolic violence against the girls where dominant standards and content were wielded as weapons against the girls (Bordieu, 1977). The fact that the girls were almost completely cut off from their homes, families and communities, which may have been able to counteract some of these messages, compounded this symbolic violence. Girls had adults in the juvenile justice system consistently reinforcing this message of erasing identities through curricula and standards. Instead, the only label the girls seemed encouraged to embrace was one of recovering criminal.

Juvenile justice education, from the girls’ perspectives, often reinforced their identities as criminals. Rules were enforced through socializing practices, which were the moral authority (Foucault, 1979). Foucault argued that the panopticon, a site where the disciplinary gaze sits at the center with the subject at the periphery created a sense of constant surveillance where the prisoners learn to discipline themselves. However, in his study of boys in the city of Oakland, Rios (2011) found

Foucault’s panopticon had been flipped on its head: it had become inverted, placing the boys at the center of the complex, with forces of punitive social control surrounding them, delivering them constant ubiquitous punishment and criminalization, leading many to resist. p. 88

Within juvenile justice, this study found a similar system. The girls were not on the periphery, they were in the center and their bodies were constantly regulated via socializing practices. These socializing practices, which several staff members and students compared to military boot camp, kept the girls focused on increasing compliance with the regulation and control of their bodies. These expectations and regulations elicited different reactions from the girls. Some participants subscribed to staff opinions
that the militaristic style taught them self control and discipline while others felt the routines were dehumanizing.

Instead of imaging whether the girls were only at the center or the periphery, I viewed the girls as part of the carceral state, which Weaver and Lerman (2010) define as “the totality of this spatially concentrated, more punitive, surveillance and punishment-oriented system of governance” (p.2). Though the authors noted the carceral state existed as outside of jails and in schools, on the streets, in interactions with police, I saw it as existing throughout juvenile justice as well. The carceral state was thriving inside juvenile justice and swirled around the girls, at times placing them at the center and other times at the periphery through socializing practices that focused on surveillance, punishment and control.

This is different than the banking system of education that Friere (2002) described wherein students are treated as a blank slate and filled with knowledge. Instead, juvenile justice education practices are socializing students to and through the idea of re-programming, of actively eradicating all identities except the criminal identity, which was reinforced daily by the need for surveillance and punishment. Juvenile justice education takes the “failures” from public schools, the bottom of the hierarchal student heap, and focuses on fixing them through instilling institutionally sanctioned behaviors (Ferguson, 2000; McDermott et al., 2006). But through these practices, the girls were continually pathologized as criminals in need of rehabilitation. These routines are problematic for a number of reasons. First, some of the socializing practices, such as running from place to place, are not behaviors that will be useful in larger society. These requirements instead missed opportunities to teach the girls socially sanctioned
behaviors, which is what their IEPs state they should be learning. Recall that this is a legally binding federal requirement, that students are taught what is identified in their IEPs. Second, though some of these behaviors were sanctioned in the dominant culture, they were not at all useful in the lives of these young women (Meiners, 2007). Finally, the socially sanctioned behaviors were not ability-less, culture-less, race-less, sex-less or gender-less, they are hegemonic reinforcements of right and wrong as set by the dominant culture.

The girls described being constantly surveilled and punished for relationships with peers inside juvenile justice education as well, which resulted in increasing criminalization. Girls were monitored closely as teachers feared any interaction with their male and female peers could be seen not only as friendships, which were treated as problematic, but potential sexual relationships, which were forbidden. Teachers viewed Hull, the single sex juvenile justice institution, as a place for experimentation in homosexuality since no other options were available. Therefore the girls were heavily policed for gender and sexual nonconformity, similar to in adult institutions (Mogul, Ritchie & Whitlock, 2011). Records utilized and combined terms such as “Gender Identity Disorder,” “masculine features” and “aggressive behavior.” Not only were girls punished for participating in friendships and romantic relationships, they often received additional criminal charges, additional time on sentences and could even be branded as sex offenders. Standards of heteronormativity were set and reinforced consistently with surveillance and punishment. Course content left out GLBTQ issues and people and therefore girls had no access to understanding the sexuality of their peers or themselves.
Moreover, girls were punished for breaking expectations of femininity and heteronormativity (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2010; Jones, 2010).

Finally, Chapter 6 addressed the dual lack of access to cultural practices and community. Girls discussed missing events that were significant to their different identities, spiritual growth and development, and communities. This lack of access created a sense of loss, disappointment and even a sense of isolation. When girls of color with disabilities did not see themselves reflected in the content, have few adults who reinforce or support their cultural practices and they are additionally cut off from those communities, they have little recourse. Instead, girls are taught to deny or ignore parts of themselves that do not align with institutional expectations.

Lessons and Possibilities: Strategies of Resilience and the Future. Chapter seven outlined findings regarding the final step of the School to Prison Pipeline, the girls’ release and future. The last step in the School to Prison Pipeline that many forget about is release back into society and I began the chapter with the absence of that rhetoric according to the teachers. I then identified and shared examples of strategies of resilience, which I defined as the ways girls navigated their lives in and outside of incarceration with savvy and ingenuity. Finally, I addressed their futures, both their preparation for release as well as their long-term goals of helping others. This chapter addressed the last component of Gift Theory, the spirit of the girls in both the ways they imagined what they had learned being part of the School to Prison Pipeline and how they imagined their futures.

Juvenile justice teachers very much subscribed to the label of criminal for their students and therefore reified the label. Though the teachers struggled with their
understanding of this term and at times resisted it, they ultimately believed that all understanding of the girls’ behavior and thinking must be filtered through the lens of criminal. This trope followed that the only way to save the children from themselves was through the rehabilitative powers of juvenile justice. Due to the reification of the criminal label, young women of color with disabilities experienced a shaming of their own choices in friends, their family members and the communities from which they came. At the same time, young women of color with disabilities were told that if they accepted the regulation and control of their bodies, gave up their connections outside and changed their behavior, they would have a better life. However, teachers also recognized that achieving that better life would be difficult without support for the young women when they got out of juvenile justice. All teacher participants interviewed spoke of concerns about a lack of transition services when students went back to their communities. This absence of attention to sociocultural context around release is in part due to fragmented services between juvenile justice and other programs that support students as they age out of the system, if these services exist at all (Leone, Quinn & Osher, 2002). Students and teachers recognized that students had few options as they were released, particularly if they were older (Mincey et al, 2008; Winn, 2010). However, the girls were not simply passive victims before juvenile justice, while incarcerated, or after.

The lack of transition services resulted in some girls getting early release. The second half of DisCrit tenet six declares, “gains for people labeled with dis/abilities have largely been made as the result of interest convergence of white, middle-class citizens” (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 11). Alexander (2011) noted, “In this economic climate, it is impossible to maintain the vast prison state without raising taxes on the (white) middle
class” (p. 1). The early release of children allows prison officials to claim that they are getting children back on the streets sooner when they are leaving out the details that those children are not being provided transition services making it more likely they will end up back in jail.

In his book *Punished*, sociologist Victor Rios (2011) explains his assumptions about the students he worked with, which were similar to those of a colleague, Nikki Jones.

Like Jones, I conducted this study with the assumption that the young people I studied were normal, everyday people persisting in risky environments, striving for dignity, and organizing their social world despite a dearth of resources. p. 14

Similar to Jones (2010) and Rios, I did not begin with the assumption that the girls were inherently flawed and those flaws were the root of their interactions with the criminal justice system. Instead, I assumed that these girls were normal people dealing with complex situations. What I discovered was that the girls were not simply troubled children passively reacting to inequitable structures but instead the girls were navigating complex lives with ingenuity. The young women of color with disabilities developed Strategies of Resilience, which served to meet their needs and therefore were meditational tools. Young women of color with disabilities created situations more conducive to getting their needs met even in the most restrictive environment. However, these acts at times came in direct conflict with the institution’s goal of achieving socially sanctioned behavior and therefore did not always serve the long-term goal of leaving incarceration.

These long-term goals were something all girls had as they each envisioned a life outside of juvenile justice. Nine of the ten girls had aspirations to have careers in the helping professions, where the profession nurtures the growth of another person. Girls
expressed either a goal of helping others more generally or even being directly part of the juvenile justice system. I found this empathy surprising and inspiring. These girls described lives outside of juvenile justice that were full of tumult and violence and inside juvenile justice they were often shamed and punished. However, not despite of these experiences but because of them, these young women of color with disabilities were motivated to help others avoid the same struggles they had endured. The media and past research suggested that juvenile offenders lack empathy but more recent research has shown that those in juvenile justice have similar levels of empathy than those who have not been incarcerated (Bush et al., 2000). The empathy the girls displayed in this study provided a sense of the deep commitment to others from their communities who struggle.

This is particularly important when we consider that who gets incarcerated are often low-income girls of color, who are also portrayed in media and research as more violent and dangerous than their middle class, white peers. But this study did not corroborate that these girls lack empathy or even commit particularly violent crimes. The majority of girls instead ran away, fleeing dangerous lives and that is what began their interaction with the criminal justice system. However, these girls have grown empathy within sites barren of these same qualities and even sites that implemented structural violence toward them; schools and juvenile justice settings (Meiners, 2007). In other words, these girls continued to show empathy even within institutions that displayed limited empathy for their lives and even further violated them by punishing their behaviors without context. If the legal system can be used against these girls as a mediational weapon, then the Strategies of Resilience and empathy they have developed can also be considered mediational tools. Here we see the third component of Gift
Theory, the Spirit. The girls bring a spirit both harmed by the structural violence they faced throughout the School to Prison Pipeline but at the same time, those spirits were resilient, empathetic and strong.

DisCrit tenet seven “privileges voices of marginalized populations, traditionally not acknowledged within research” (Annamma et al., 2013). To me, that meant being invested in supporting the girls whenever I could. I did several small things such as tutoring Ashley to help her pass the math portion of her GED, helping Riveara find an apartment upon release and volunteering to testify at Veronica’s immigration hearing. To thank them, I made them certificates since the Hull staff would not let me buy any food or gifts for the girls. Some of them have asked for copies of their interviews, which I plan on bringing them, but overall, there was very little I could do to change their larger situations. The biggest was reflected in the interview conversations we had where we discussed their goals, their intelligence and their lives. When we discussed their goals and mapped out their trajectories, girls told me they saw increased possibilities in their futures after talking with me. When they reflected on their intelligence or lack of, I insisted they were smart, pointing out dozens of small ways I saw this. They often told me I was the first one to tell them they were smart people. Finally, when the girls shared their lives, I worked very hard to encourage them to share but not to share too much. I had to remind them that some of these stories are ones they would not want strangers knowing about them when they were 25. I wanted to humanize in places that had traditionally dehumanized them and to that aim, I encouraged them to protect themselves and worked hard to protect them also (Winn, 2013).

Implications for Pedagogy, Policy, Research and Theory
Gift Theory along with Critical Race Theory allowed me to view my findings critically, and focus on confirming findings with my participants. Gift Theory provided a space for both finding themes as well as capturing individual nuances of the girls’ stories. My conceptual framework allowed me to listen to the trajectories of young women of color with disabilities through the School to Prison Pipeline in order to intervene in structures. Addressed in this section are implications for practice, policy and research, all of which seek to ameliorate some of the challenges the girls face. Each implication direction for future research is designed to reflect the commitment to trickle up social justice; therefore it is rooted in the experiences of young women of color with disabilities and/or their teachers.

**Labels, resistance & reification-Implications for pedagogical practice.** The girls in this study were all young women of color with an emotional disability label. Yet overall, these girls’ educational needs were not being addressed. This is especially concerning since there was a larger percentage of students with disabilities in juvenile justice settings instead of larger schools (Quinn et al., 2005). An implication that follows these findings is for juvenile justice education settings to rethink how they are meeting the needs of young women of color with disabilities. Teachers clearly needed additional information on how to support students with disabilities, particularly emotional disabilities. Therefore this study suggested that teachers need additional professional development that informs them how to support students with disabilities. However, the ways disabilities are conceptualized are essential to consider. Teachers’ resistance to supporting students with disability labels had a significant impact on the girls’ education.

The findings provided teachers’ views of disability that ranged from individual
deficits to nothing more than manipulation to get out of work. As we saw above, the
girls’ disabilities may have been constructed without consideration of context. Instead,
disability must be understood in a larger sociocultural context and so professional
development should be focused on understanding disability through a sociocultural lens
(Artiles et al., 2000).

Rather than looking for a deficit or impairment within learners, a sociocultural
perspective suggests examining the intersection of environment and individual to
understand how they mutually construct each other. Ability and disability are thus
not constant or perceived as solely located within individuals. Rather, they are
constructed in the relation between individuals and the opportunities provided by
the activity setting in which they are engaged. School success and school failure
are therefore viewed as co-created situated activity. (Collins, 2003, p. 3).

Providing a sociocultural view of ability and disability would not then put the
responsibility on the student for being individually deficient, nor would it place the blame
on the student for being manipulative in asking for educational support (McDermott et
al., 2006). This professional development, situated in a sociocultural view of disability,
would address several points then. First, as stated above, it would focus on understanding
behavior in context. Second, a sociocultural view of disability would focus on re-
mediating the environment in order to provide more students opportunities to participate,
learn and grow (Gallimore, Goldenberg & Weisner, 1993). This is different than re-
mediation of students; wherein students are taught isolated skills without context
(Gutiérrez, Hunter & Arzubiaga, 2009). Third, this sociocultural view of disability would
incorporate the girls’ communities of practice (e.g. funds of knowledge), allowing
teachers to better understand behaviors in context as well as the skills, practices and
knowledge students bring from their home environment (Moll et al., 2001). This
professional development, then, would help the teachers develop appropriate learning
expectations for students with disabilities. It would focus on learning as shifts in participation, addressing perceptions of ability and provide concrete ways to support growth (Rogoff, 1995). Finally, the professional development would focus on positioning students as talented and intelligent which increases the potential for transformative learning (Gutiérrez et al., 2009).

While teachers did not do much additional work to individualize education, relying on institution-wide practices instead, the one thing that several teachers in juvenile justice cited as an individualized component of education was utilizing a relational approach. A relational approach can be especially important for young people of color in reducing behavior issues and keeping students in the classroom in public schools (Gregory & Ripinsky, 2008). All teachers interviewed discussed the importance of building and maintaining a relationship with their students. Additionally, several behavior incidences I observed were handled in class as teachers worked to talk through problems with the girls instead of removing them from class. The care and concern displayed by the teachers was something that the girls and teachers noted as being unique to their settings. On the surface, this is exemplary practice as it allowed students the chance to build trust with their teachers and therefore had the potential to increase institutionally sanctioned behaviors (Gregory & Ripinsky, 2008). However, while relying on a relational approach, the teachers simultaneously filtered all of the girls’ behavior through the label of criminal. This meant that they never fully trusted the girls, which the girls also noticed and discussed in interviews. Teachers believed the girls were out to manipulate and exert power and control, victimizing both adults and peers. Therefore, the relational approach became less effective as the reification of the label of criminal limited
the relationships the teachers could build with the girls. Trust was difficult to establish and all of the girls commented on the lack of trust they felt from the teachers, which made it difficult for the girls to trust the teachers as well. This label of criminal and lack of trust was reinforced by socializing practices. Therefore the reification of the label criminal had a major impact on the education the girls received and limited what could be accomplished.

Findings from this study suggest that teachers must focus less on the label of criminal when interpreting students’ behavior and instead concentrate on how to support the girls who were often criminalized for trying to keep themselves and their families safe. Teachers must be able to learn about their students, to ask questions if they see them struggling. Additionally, mental health services must be readily available so if teachers do have a concern, children’s needs can be addressed without pathologization. Finally, any child with an emotional disability label should be screened for victimization so that she is not being punished for normal reactions under abnormal circumstances.

An additional implication of this study is to rely less on punitive socializing practices, particularly ones that are militaristic and focused on the regulation and control of young women’s bodies. Ultimately, the message communicated by these practices reinforced the identity of criminal and limited what could be accomplished by teachers and staff utilizing a relational approach. In the professional development suggested above, a discussion of reification must be provided. There is a nuance that teachers must hold close, to recognize both what labels afford (additional support with emotional and academic learning) and constrain (reification as a way to filter all behavior). Labels in a
sociocultural context can be used as a guide for what students may be capable of without them becoming the defining feature of students (Harry & Klingner, 2006).

A third implication that comes from the findings is that both public and juvenile justice schools must become more responsive to students in their care. Though juvenile justice education made attempts to support children with emotional disabilities, teachers did not address race or cultural practices of non-dominant populations. The lack of responsiveness to race and cultural practices provided an education that was incomplete. It left the girls feeling that they had little understanding of the history and access to the practices of their own communities, as well as other non-dominant communities, and instead must learn to value the ways of the dominant culture. Though it is important for children to have access to the culture of power (Delpit, 1995), they must also learn a pride and respect for their own. In other words, the goals should not be to eradicate and replace their cultural practices but instead to value and build on them (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Considering the disproportionate representation of culturally and racially diverse students in the School to Prison Pipeline, students experiencing special education assignment, disciplinary actions and in juvenile justice need access to these types of teaching more than ever. Students need teaching that provides access to both sets of cultural histories and practices and this study’s findings was that they did not have that and were therefore undereducated. Instead, the implication is that the professional development that occurs that teaches about labeling and ability must also provide information on culturally responsive teaching that utilizes students’ cultural practices (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Lee, 2007; Moll et al., 2001). Again, this aligns with a sociocultural view of pedagogy, which builds on funds of knowledge and therefore could
more directly include students’ families and community members both in public schools and juvenile justice. Instead of pathologizing these families and communities, teachers must learn about them and learn to value the skills that they have to offer. Families and communities would be viewed as sources of knowledge and strength instead of deficit and dysfunctional (Harry & Klingner, 2006).

The final pedagogical implication that comes directly from the findings of this study is that teachers must be trained to better understand LGBTQ issues, the biases that LGBTQ students face and ways to integrate these issues into their pedagogical philosophies and practices. Half of the girls in this study reported having a sexually fluid identity and therefore were subject to all of the dangers that came with that identity, including increased chance of harassment, overpolicing and additional punishment disproportionate to their behavior (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2010; Jones, 2010; Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010). In other words, the girls experienced their sexuality as consistently ignored in the instruction, policed in the classroom and punished in the halls. Yet teachers remained silent in the face of these issues, ignoring how they impacted the girls (Friend, 1993). Teachers even expressed fear of the repercussions of teaching about LGBTQ issues when asked and conflated pride with any information regarding LGBTQ people or issues in the curriculum. They pathologized the girls who did not practice normative femininity and dismissed those self-expressed identities. Teachers actively ignored or even attacked their students’ lived experiences, allowing heteronormativity to shape the girls’ lives. Therefore a direct implication of this study is that any professional development for teachers in public schools and juvenile justice must educate them on what heteronormativity is and how it is enacted in schools via content
and punishment. It must provide teaching opportunities to include LGBTQ issues, people and experiences into the curricula in order to counter the heteronormativity that regularly shapes school climate. As Macintosh (2007) asks, “How can we begin to help early-career teachers see the deleterious impact of heternormativism in the everyday lives of their student if they cannot yet begin to see its more immediate presence in their curricula and classrooms” (p. 34)? In this case, Macintosh’s question applies not just to early career teachers but to all teachers within the steps of the School to Prison Pipeline since we see a larger amount of LGBTQ youth punished, labeled and incarcerated (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2010; Kosciw et al., 2010).

Re-imagining discipline-Implications for discipline policy. This study also found evidence of the discipline gap, which is the inequitable application of discipline strategies that disproportionately remove children of color from schools, limiting the time they receive instruction as well as their opportunities to develop positive relationships with schools, school personnel and peers (Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010). Losen and Skiba (2010) found that this Discipline Gap applied to young women of color and those with disabilities. Additionally, it has been shown that non-heterosexual girls are often punished disproportionately for their behavior (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2010). This disproportionality in disciplinary actions that affects young women of color with disabilities can actually explain some of the achievement gap in test scores (Annamma, Morrison & Jackson, under review; Gregory et al., 2010). Girls reported that they experience abuse or neglect in the home and acted out in their education settings; issues that arise outside of school can become evident within schools. However, public schools and juvenile justice education did not address the issues they faced and often ignored
them. One major implication from this study was that schools must learn why girls of color with disabilities behave in particular ways. Zero Tolerance policies do not allow for investigation, but instead call for automatic punitive exclusion from schools. This is not to imply that the behavior should have been passively accepted once reasons for the behaviors were identified. Instead, another disciplinary implication from the findings is that discipline needs to be re-conceptualized where the purpose of discipline is to teach the student alternative behaviors. Zero Tolerance policies must be eradicated, as they do not focus on learning and teaching only punishment. Educators must re-imagine discipline policy to foster growth instead of discipline as punishment and exclusion. As we heard from the girls, discipline as punishment and removal was not effective in changing their behavior and actually limited their relationships with teachers and opportunities to learn. Instead, discipline policy must be focused on learning and teaching and must be applied to all children across racial, class, gender and sexual lines. Gregory et al. (2010) suggest several alternatives to punitive suspensions and expulsions, some of which focus the attention on learning,

(a) increasing the awareness of teachers and administrators of the potential for bias when issuing referrals for discipline, (b) utilizing a range of consequences in response to behavior problems, (c) treating exclusion as a last resort rather than the first or only option, (d) making a concerted effort to understand the roots of behavior problems, and (e) finding ways to reconnect students to the educational mission of schools during disciplinary events. P. 65

Each of these suggestions limits an overreliance on punitive disciplinary consequences that the girls describe in chapter five. Component A provides attention to preventing biased referrals by making teachers aware of the potential for bias with particular populations (e.g., females of color, non-gender conforming or non-heterosexually identified girls) and would also allow all discipline referrals to be examined for bias.
Components B and C encourage schools to not rely on punishment or exclusion.

Component D fosters efforts to learn about and address the underlying issues surrounding behaviors. Most importantly, Component E re-imagines discipline, which allows opportunities for the students to re-connect to the school in order to create and build on a positive relationship with school. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) note,

> When we consider the forces that we work against as critical educators, it becomes obvious that we must be forceful and passionate ourselves. It doesn’t necessarily mean that we become authoritarian, but it definitely does not excuse us from playing powerful and explicit roles in the lives of young adults, many of whom have been cheated out of an education long enough. A critical pedagogy can bring love, discipline, self-respect, and academic rigor all at the same time. p. 104.

These disciplinary principles are focused on limiting the authoritarian approach, which often leads to the punitive disciplinary actions the girls mentioned that were ineffective. Instead, discipline must focus on teaching and learning; teaching why a behavior is problematic and providing alternatives after learning why the behavior occurred. Girls of color with disabilities deserve to be supported in schools and re-imagining discipline as learning and teaching instead of punishment aims to do that.

**Providing the context-Implications for juvenile justice policy.** Along with pedagogical implications, such as the professional development described above, the juvenile justice system has implications at the policy level as well. Considering how difficult it was to gather even the most basic descriptive statistics at the state level, reporting must become required and standardized throughout the state and the nation. When demographic information was requested, the Juvenile Justice Department had a difficult time finding how many students they had with disabilities and it took more than a month to locate this information. Though they eventually provided it (see chapter 4), it
was only for some of their committed children and was still only an estimate. Additionally, intersectional data were not available (e.g. females with a disability, students of color with a disability, females of color with an emotional disability). These types of data must be collected and reported in a standardized way so the state has a better understanding of the juveniles in its care. In order to best educate them, we must know who is part of the state juvenile justice system.

The potential of Critical Pedagogy—Implications for future research. There are several questions that remain unanswered and should be explored through future research. Public schools and juvenile justice education settings would benefit from implementing critical pedagogy as a way to invite children’s lives into the classroom while addressing the inequities they face and providing them with the tools to challenge those inequities. Resisting the narrative could largely impact the School to Prison Pipeline that societal inequities are individual personal responsibilities (Meiners, 2007). Gift Theory suggests that these traditionally oppressed populations have a unique perspective that all of society can benefit from (Rabaka, 2010). Therefore it would be beneficial to invite their lives into the classroom and center pedagogy around them.

Gloria Ladson Billings (2006) argued that instead of viewing the achievement gap and school failure as the problem of individual students, we must instead view it as an Education Debt. This Education Debt has been accumulated over centuries and is the result of inequitable education for children of color (ibid). Critical pedagogy, as described by Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008), is one that consists of both teaching children core academic skills that allow them to access postsecondary education and careers while simultaneously striving
to create spaces for students to learn as they also embrace and develop affirmed and empowered identities as intellectuals, as urban youth, and as members of historically marginalized ethnic groups. P. 18

Though to expand on the definition of Critical Pedagogy, I would add that this education must take into account not only their ethnic marginalization, but also their intersectional identities, which make them more vulnerable to marginalization than being in any one group alone. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) list four core principles that should drive Critical Pedagogy. Educators must: 1) Conceptualize a vehicle through which to teach Critical Pedagogy that is interesting enough for student engagement to be high while being important enough to students’ lives that it generates investment. 2) Create a culture in the classroom and schools that resists exploitation and focuses on academic excellence and justice. 3) Provide opportunities for students to utilize what they are learning in their daily lives. 4) Offer chances for students to reflect, build and reflect again on what they have learned and utilize what they learned from that reflection to move forward.

When we review the 18 effective teaching strategies the girls themselves identified, all can be viewed as components of Critical Pedagogy. Seven of the components address the requirement of developing academic skills, while the other eleven relate to creating a space for students that is safe and based on respect. Though “the critical orientation, of empowering intellectual identities…as members of historically marginalized ethnic groups”, that drives the practices was not articulated by the girls, that may be simply that they never had a chance to experience an education that was emancipatory. However the girls did recognize that the education they had received in the School to Prison Pipeline failed to include their lives, cultural practices or
perspectives. Winn (2010) found these components of Critical Pedagogy in Girl Time, a theatre program that supported incarcerated girls, effective and useful for students participating in that program. Additionally, developing the academic skills of students would mean meeting the needs of students with disabilities through Universal Design (Connor & Annamma, in press). It would focus less on the reification of labels and more on meeting students’ needs through individual assessment and building on students’ strengths (Collins, 2003).

Though no one practice such as Critical Pedagogy can shut off the School to Prison Pipeline, an education that is rooted in Critical Pedagogy has been shown to improve scores in the Mexican-American Studies program in Tucson, Arizona (Cabrera, Milam & Marx, 2012) as well as meet state and national standards (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Moreover, Critical Pedagogy provides an equitable education, which subscribes to the concept that “people should receive an education specific to their needs, as defined by their circumstances” (p. 173). The young women of color with disabilities in this study certainly had specific needs that could have been partially addressed through their education. Though this would not have eliminated the problems they faced in their lives, a Critical Pedagogical approach would have attempted to provide them with tools to address the inequities they faced instead of ignoring them, as public schools and juvenile justice settings were found to do.

The most relevant question is whether or not Critical Pedagogy can reduce the education debt and discipline gaps. If we are to have Critical Pedagogical approaches in public schools and juvenile justice, then we must determine that they do indeed help students achieve. Through both quantitative and qualitative research, educational
researchers should examine whether this type of pedagogy provides students more ways to address the inequities they face and prepares them for postsecondary education and careers. It must provide both academic skills and the chance to challenge educational inequities students face. Additionally, it must address issues of ability and disability in order to reduce overrepresentation of students of color in special education by allowing them to become more engaged and invested in education but also to support students with disabilities as well. Future research questions could be: What is the impact of Critical Pedagogy on incarcerated juveniles’ achievement? What is the impact of Critical Pedagogy on students’ behavior in juvenile justice?

Furthermore, juvenile justice education research would benefit from implementing Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) that educational researchers have implemented in public schools (Kirshner, 2005; Nygreen, 2007). This would increase students’ voices not only in the data collection but also allow their voices to identify issues to study more systematically. YPAR can also be paired with Critical Race Theory and Gift Theory, and there are several possibilities for research embedded in the theoretical, ethical and methodological overlaps between the two (Torre, 2009). As we saw in this study, students were knowledge generators, capable of identifying both the challenges and solutions to issues they faced. We need to continue to strive to allow them to present their knowledge in order to understand the social structures of schools, which provide us an understanding of where to intervene. Future research questions could be: What is the impact of YPAR on incarcerated juveniles’ achievement? What is the impact of YPAR on students’ behavior in juvenile justice? Does YPAR increase engagement in schools?
Finally the professional development suggested in implications must be examined to determine if it does indeed improve the lived experiences of young women of color with disabilities. This type of sociocultural-based professional development that addresses labels, disability, culture, race and sexuality could be implemented in both public schools and juvenile justice settings. This professional development could then be studied through mixed methods such as school climate surveys as well as in-depth interviews with both teachers and students. This would provide a better sense of whether a sociocultural perspective would allow teachers to better address the lived experiences of their students. Future research questions could be: What is the impact of professional development on referral to special education? What is the impact of professional development on teacher’s pedagogical philosophies and practices?

**Implications for Theory—the propitiousness of DisCrit.** In order to provide, rich, nuanced accounts that capture the multiple and simultaneous positioning the girls experienced, the combination of Gift Theory, CRT, FemCrit and DisCrit was utilized. This conceptual framework was a metaphor for students’ bodies as well; none are uni-dimensional so the theories that we embrace must be multi-dimensional. Centering race at the heart of my examination of inequities was not enough; it is in the intersections where my girls live and therefore where my theories must exist as well.

Disability Critical Race Theory represented an attempt to use interdisciplinary theoretical bodies of knowledge and was a unique contribution of this study. DisCrit’s seven tenets were useful for understanding the experiences my girls had and can continue to inform ways we view children and the inequities they face. In the future, DisCrit
should be in conversation with Queer Theory, Feminist Theory and Girl’s Studies, among others.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study. Students’ stories and histories were taken at their word. All information gathered from the girls about public schools was anecdotal and there was no way for me to confirm through observation the issues they identified. Verification through records or with school staff was done whenever possible but considering that some of this information is years old, some things could not be substantiated. In these cases, I accepted the girls’ narratives as their own, wholly theirs to tell. Though I viewed this as a strength of this study (allowing students to tell their stories without suspicion or interruption), others may view this as a weakness. Another limitation that collides with the previous one is that in qualitative research, participants may have felt pressure to present socially acceptable responses (Paulhus, 2002). The girls may have simply forgotten or purposely omitted particular facts in order to present themselves as socially acceptable. The teachers may have also felt pressure, particularly when discussing sensitive issues like race, gender, sexuality and ability to provide those same types of responses.

As I discussed in chapter four, students were included whenever possible in data collection and analysis but Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) would be better suited to understand student identified issues as well as a more systematic way to analyze the data. YPAR includes students in identifying issues, creating research questions, collecting information and analyzing data and I was not able to include them in all steps of the research process. Furthermore, though I interviewed education staff as I was
focused on education, there were many staff, family members and others who also contributed to students’ lives in the juvenile justice system who I left out. I could have interviewed more of the staff who were involved in the students’ lives outside of schools (e.g., unit/living staff, therapists, counselors, probation officers and social workers) as well as family members. This would have allowed me to better understand how they contribute to the students’ education trajectories as many incidences, like the issue that resulted in Riveara running away, happened outside of school as well. Documentation of the faculty meetings Kyle Enders, the teacher at MLK, mentions in chapter six would have been useful in order to better answer the research question three (What are the institutional and sociocultural contexts in which these students and teachers are located?). Mr. Enders had mentioned that this is where he has learned the most about issues of disability. Though I was able to attend some faculty meetings, the particular types he mentions were not attended. Finally, work with students in a public school may have given me a better sense of the first step of the School to Prison Pipeline. Though I originally had recruited a public school site, I was not able to collect data in this school due to a range of factors, including the teacher switching positions, the logistics of following students in a large public high school and difficulty with student attrition through the School to Prison Pipeline.

**Conclusion**

This study contributes to the understanding of how children become part of the School to Prison Pipeline and what type of education they get throughout the pipeline. It addresses the ways race, gender, ability and sexuality contribute to young women of color with disabilities becoming criminalized and imprisoned. A commitment to trickle
up social justice and Gift Theory provided me an opportunity to focus on the students most vulnerable and most oppressed, young women of color with disabilities in juvenile justice. I end this dissertation with a critical reflection of my own that led me to deliberately explore the ways perceptions of ability and race interacted with the School to Prison Pipeline. At one point in his life, my brother was part of the School to Prison Pipeline. He was a student with a disability whom the educational system did not serve, who was in and out of jail until he took his own life. Perhaps you have known someone like this, a child with ingenuity and ferocity with a disability who was punitively disciplined repeatedly and ultimately disenfranchised from school. Some of these children end up making it through school, others drop out and others end up becoming part of the School to Prison Pipeline. Research and media spend much time discussing the deficits these children have instead of focusing on ways to fix the education system. Future research must focus on re-mediating education in order to meet the needs of all students.
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I4(4), 471-495.


Appendix A. Cartographer’s Clinic Script and Handout

**SAA Script**

**CARTOGRAPHER’S CLINIC**

Map analysis: compiling themes, outliers

**Before clinic=>**
To avoid violating her privacy: meet with each girl individually. Tell them we are all going to share our journeys in a map-making clinic. The point of the clinic is to determine what part of these maps would benefit younger girls? What should they avoid? What should they try to include? What can they learn from your own journeys?

**During the walk through: Mapping analysis**

Themes: What are the similarities you see?
Outlier: What stands out? What is different? Remember to be an outlier takes courage to say something. It may be something we are all thinking but many of us were too scared to say.

What do you love about these?
What questions do you have?
What does it make you think about your own life?

Who wants to talk to through your map with the whole group?
Participant Handout
Map Making Clinic Information:

What Is Cartography?
The International Cartographic Association defines cartography as the discipline dealing with the **conception, production, dissemination and study of maps**. Cartography is also about representation - the map. This means that cartography is the whole process of mapping.

CARTOGRAPHY? Hasn't the world already been mapped?
For the most part, yes, but professional mapmakers no longer just create maps of places that have never been mapped before. Think of all the different uses of maps that you’ve seen... tourists navigating around a new city, mountain bikers planning their next ride, businesspeople figuring out where to build a new store, scientists identifying all the different types of plants and animals in a region, weather reporters showing the paths of hurricanes... cartographers and geographic information professionals are working behind the scenes to collect up-to-date information and display them on maps and computers to help a diverse range of users do an infinite number of things.

Where do you get the data to put on a map?
Geospatial professionals can collect and evaluate mappable information first-hand through **fieldwork**, or second-hand from **existing maps**, aerial photographs, statistical reports, or computerized data files.

Do you have to start with a blank computer screen every time?
Almost all maps now start with a **base map** that isn’t created specifically for the map that’s being made. In most cases, someone (often the local, state, or federal government) has already compiled detailed digital information, like streets and rivers and boundaries, and that information is available for mapmakers using GIS. Because no map or analysis is any good without accurate data, it is important that databases are developed according to rigorous standards and carefully edited and maintained.

http://www.cartogis.org/docs/cartogis_careers.pdf
Start with a silent walk through. Note what you see throughout the Education Journey Maps. Just write them down or make a mental note quietly for now.

**Themes** between maps: What are the similarities you see?

**Outliers:** Ask yourself, What stands out? What is different? Remember to be an outlier takes courage to say something. It may be something we are all thinking but many of us were too scared to say.

What do you love?

What questions do you have?

What does it make you think about your own life?

What would you like to be in the map five years/next year?

What part of these maps would benefit younger girls?
Appendix B. Interview Guide for Focal Students and Teachers

For Students-

Interview 1: Reconstructing past experiences in schools and in learning

Concrete details about self & formal learning in schools=

- Relationship with past teachers (Did you ever feel that you teachers were scared of you? Have you ever had a black teacher? Latina? Etc)
- Relationship with other school personnel in the past (Did anyone at school asked why? Ask about your home life?)
- Relationship with peers in school in the past
- Past mentors in schools
- Academic history-struggles and successes (Do you remember what you wanted to be when a kid? Did that change when you started getting in trouble?)
- Tracking
- Grades
- Becoming identified and labeled for special education (only for participants who have already been labeled with a disability)
- Past behavioral issues and incidences (What was your first experience with the police?)
- Disciplinary history (Did you get in trouble in elementary school? What kind of punishment? Were you ever suspended or expelled? Do you remember the kinds of things you were getting suspended for? How did your parent react? What kinds of things did you do instead of go to school when you got suspended?)
- Demographics (Age? Grade? Family make up?)
  - earliest memory you have (a memory that is relatively clear to describe).
    - Example probes: What exactly happened? Where did it happen? About how old were you? Who was involved? What did you do? What were you thinking and feeling? What kind of meaning does this earliest memory have for you?

Concrete details about informal learning outside of school=

- Past parental teaching
- Relationship with parents in the past
- Learning from community members in the past
- Past mentors in the community
- Disciplinary history in the home
- Discipline in the community in the past
- Past relationship & learning with extended family
- Relationship & learning history with peers in the community

Interview 2: Current Education Experiences
Concrete details about formal learning in schools=

- Relationship with current teachers
- Relationship with other school personnel currently
- Relationship with peers in current school
- Current mentors in schools
- Current academics—struggles and successes (What is your current education goal? Why? Has that changed?)
- Tracking
- Grades (How do you study for tests? Do you think you tests show what you know?)
- Experiences in special education currently (only for participants who have already been labeled with a disability)
- Becoming identified and labeled for special education (did being labeled with a disability increase or decrease trouble?)
- Current behavioral issues and events (How does your physical appearance reflect your personality?)
- Disciplinary experiences (Current commitment?)

Concrete details about informal learning outside of school=

- Current parental teaching (Name any family member that has been incarcerated: name, age & how close you felt to them)
- Relationship with parents currently
- Learning from community members in the present
- Current mentors in the community
- Disciplinary actions and issues currently in the home (for those living at home or who are allowed home visits)
- Disciplinary actions in the foster home or on the unit (for those in RTC and in the juvenile detention center)
- Discipline in the current community
- Current relationship & learning with extended family
- Current relationship & learning with peers in the community

Interview 3: Connecting past to present through reflection to make meaning

Attitude and opinions about formal learning in schools:

- Relationship with past and present teachers
- Relationship with other school personnel in the past and present (What are qualities that make a good teacher?)
- Relationship with peers in school in the past and currently
- Past and current mentors in schools
• Academic history and experiences in the present-struggles and successes (What has being incarcerated taught you? What do you see as alternatives to incarceration? What are the benefits to being in a program without boys? Do you learn differently in school with only females?)
• Tracking
• Grades
• Becoming identified and labeled for special education (only for participants who have already been labeled with a disability)
• Past and current behavioral issues and incidences
• Disciplinary history-past and present (What have you learned in orientation by running to each place? What do you think they are trying to teach you?)
• What are your goals? What would need to happen for you to accomplish those goals?

Attitude and opinions about informal learning outside of school=

• Past and current parental teaching
• Relationship with parents in the past and present
• Learning from community members in the past and present
• Past and present mentors in the community
• Disciplinary actions now and in your history in the home and current residence
• Discipline in the community in the past and currently
• Past and current relationship & learning with extended family
• Relationship & learning history and present experiences with peers in the community

How was the experience of being interviewed? Is there anything you wanted me to ask that I didn’t? What would you like to ask me?

For Teachers-

Interviews 1 & 2:
Reconstructing past knowledge and current experiences with focal student

History (Do you have enough training to run therapeutic groups? How important are the routines and rituals in your classroom? Are there any specific documents that guide how you teach? address the needs of particular types of students? reflect your teaching philosophy? Support from administration? Background/demographics)

Concrete details about formal learning in schools=

• Student’s relationship with past and present teachers
• Student’s relationship with other school personnel in the past and present
• Student’s relationship with peers in school in the past and currently
• Student’s past and current mentors in schools
Interview 3: Connecting past to present through reflection to make meaning

Attitude and opinions about formal learning in schools:

- Student's relationship with past and present teachers
- Student's relationship with other school personnel in the past and present
- Student's relationship with peers in school in the past and currently
- Student's past and current mentors in schools
- Student's academic history and experiences in the present-struggles and successes
- Student's experiences with Tracking in the past and present
- Student's experiences with grades
- Student's experiences becoming identified and labeled for special education (only for participants who have already been labeled with a disability)
- Student's past and current behavioral issues and incidences
- Student's disciplinary history-past and present
  - Is there anything else you would like to share that you feel would be important to your life story and how you came to be who you are today?

Attitude and opinions about informal learning outside of school:

- Past and current parental teaching
- Relationship with parents in the past and present
- Learning from community members in the past and present
- Past and present mentors in the community
- Disciplinary actions now and in your history in the home and current residence
- Discipline in the community in the past and currently
- Past and current relationship & learning with extended family
- Relationship & learning history and present experiences with peers in the community
• Past and present mentors in the community
• Disciplinary actions now and in your history in the home and current residence
• Discipline in the community in the past and currently
• Past and current relationship & learning with extended family
• Relationship & learning history and present experiences with peers in the community

Socializing practices: Site specific
Why are the girls in the orientation cohort expected to run to each destination? What do you think the girls learning from running between points?

For all teachers: What would you include in an ideal program for girls?