Crossing Cultural Divides:
Building Strong Teacher-Student Relationships
Through Culturally Responsive Teaching

Final Report on Year 2 of
Growth Through Connections

Executive Summary

Growth Through Connections (GTC) is a professional development program that addresses issues of race and demographic mismatch in urban classrooms. The GTC program teaches educators how to build strong relationships with their students and provide them with engaging, culturally relevant learning experiences aligned to Colorado's academic standards. This year-long pilot study of 15 teachers in 5 schools found benefits to both teachers and students. Teachers developed a stronger "culture of thinking" in their classrooms, adopted one or more culturally-relevant educational practice, and reported experiencing better and stronger relationships with their students. Teachers also reported increased engagement, improved academic work, and fewer disruptive behaviors. Students reported enjoying relationships with their teachers and experiencing a feeling that their GTC teachers cared about them. School leaders affirmed the value of the program, citing the powerful impact of the program supports, especially the expert coaching, the overall positive impact of the school's participation on school culture, and the organic nature of the program (in comparison with more traditional "turnkey" professional development offerings). Suggestions for improvement include ensuring that GTC is aligned to a school's overall improvement strategy, ensuring that the school leader has the capacity to support the teachers participating in the program, and finding ways to select teachers who have the experience and "bandwidth" to commit to the work required by the program.

Introduction

In Denver Public Schools, as in many other urban school districts in the United States, disparities persist between the academic achievement of Black and Latino students and that of their white classmates. While recognizing the need for long-term solutions to closing the achievement gap, such as recruiting and retaining more teachers of color, in 2016 Dr. Sharon Bailey[1] also proposed several short-term solutions. These included increasing teachers' and school leaders' cultural competence, changing discipline practices that disproportionately target students of color, and raising expectations for these same students. With funding from Janus-Henderson Corporation and support from the Public Education Business Coalition (PEBC), the Growth Through Connections program was designed to help teachers develop a culturally responsive approach to instruction and classroom management in order to build stronger relationships with their students. A pilot program was launched with 9 teachers in 4 schools in February 2017 (Cohort 1) and expanded in the 2017-18 school year to include an additional 6 teachers in 5 schools[2] (continuing Cohort 1 and adding Cohort 2). This report addresses learning from the second year of the program.

Program Overview

The Growth Through Connections (GTC) program was developed based on the work of Dr. Christopher Emdin[3], which specifically addresses issues of race and demographic mismatch in urban classrooms. Emdin proposes an approach to education--reality pedagogy--that focuses on engaging students of color. The GTC program teaches educators how to build strong relationships with their students and provide them with engaging, culturally relevant learning experiences aligned to Colorado's academic standards. Participating teachers identify, unpack and address their biases and other barriers that may prevent them from connecting with each student. Teachers then develop strategies to create rigorous, culturally relevant learning experiences that foster a love for learning. School leaders are also involved to ensure sustainability of practices. Details about the strategies identified by Emdin and promoted by the GTC program can be found in Appendix A.

The GTC curriculum consisted of monthly group training sessions, a book study, learning trips (visits to exemplary classrooms where teachers are practising culturally relevant

---

[1] See Bailey, S. (2016). The Bailey Report. Retrieved from http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/cms/lib/CO01900837/Centricity/Domain/43/Dr.-BaileyReport-FULL.pdf. Retrieved on August 1, 2018.

[2] Beach Court, McMeen, and Smith elementary schools; DCIS Montbello Middle and High School, and PREP Academy.

[3] See Emdin, C. (2016). *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Y'All Too.* Beacon Press: Boston, MA.

instructional activities), and 2-3 coaching sessions with an expert in culturally relevant education (CRE). School leaders were encouraged to attend training sessions.

Imaginarium Approach to Impact Evaluation

In order to guide our study of the impact of the GTC program, we developed the following research questions:

1. **Impact on Teachers:** When teachers participate in the GTC program, do they develop skills in building strong, cross-cultural relationships with their students?
2. **Value of Program Elements:** What supports are most valuable to teachers as they engage in CRE?
3. **Impact on Students:** What is the impact on students' academic engagement and performance?
4. **School Context:** What are the school-level benefits and challenges of the GTC program?

Our approach to answering these questions was both qualitative (interviews and observations) and quantitative (surveys and school attendance and behavior data).

Research Question #1: Impact on Teachers

When teachers participate in the GTC program, do they develop skills in building strong, cross-cultural relationships with their students?

Summary of findings:

All teachers began intentionally using one or more culturally relevant instructional practices and attributed those shifts in practice to their participation in the GTC program. In addition, by January, teachers reported an increase in the use of higher-level thinking strategies during the course of the year, thus potentially increasing the rigour of classroom activities. Teachers associated the benefits of participation in the GTC program not with receiving training in specific strategies, but rather with being equipped with an approach to instruction and a general set of culturally responsive tools to support it.

All teachers described placing more emphasis on building relationships with their students. For some teachers, this was represented a mindset shift from a belief that teacher-student relationships were peripheral to instruction. For others, participation in the program allowed them to act on their existing beliefs about the importance of relationships.

Regardless of their initial beliefs, teachers experienced a tension between spending time on relationships and focusing on academics, and this was the most common implementation challenge.

Changes in Practice

Teachers completed the *Developing a Culture of Thinking In My Classroom[4]* survey at the beginning of the year (September/October), mid-year (January), and end of year (May). Because response rates fell in the spring, only the changes from the beginning to the mid-year were analyzed.

The use of higher-level thinking strategies reflects an attention to rigor in classroom instructional activities. Overall, teachers reported using higher-level thinking strategies to enrich classroom culture more frequently from the fall to the winter (see Figure 1). In all categories, teachers' mean self-ratings increased from fall to winter. The largest increases were in the Physical Environment (how space is arranged to facilitate thoughtful interactions) and Modeling (teachers sharing their thinking thinking in order to make it visible to students). In both these areas, on average, teachers showed greater than one point growth on a five-point scale from "*I doubt anyone would notice*" to "*Hard to miss it.*"

At each coaching session, educators completed a reflection log to capture which CRE strategies they had used, specific challenges in relationship-building and how they had tried to address them, and their greatest success in building relationships during the previous month.

The most frequently reported CRE strategies in general were Co-teaching (student as expert), Personalizing classroom aesthetics, Cosmopolitanism, and visiting students' communities (reported by 9 or more teachers). Moderately used strategies (reported by 5 to 7 teachers) were Cogenerative dialogues, Competition, Call and response, and Code-switching. Least frequently used strategies (reported by fewer than 5 teachers) were Discourse wall, Using pictures of students in lessons, Student-created handshakes, Classroom name, and Classroom twitter. (Refer to Appendix A for descriptions of the strategies.)

---

[4] Brooks, S. & Richhart, R. (2012). The development of a culture of thinking in my classroom: Self-assessment. Retrieved from: http://www.pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Self%20Assessing%20CoT.pdf. Retrieved on July 16, 2018.

We conducted mid-year and end of year interviews with teachers and coded their responses in order to understand in more depth the impact of the program on participants' teaching practices. When asked what they are doing differently in their classroom as a result of participating in GTC, more than half the teachers reported that they give more time to social-emotional processing in their classrooms and/or that they now solicit feedback from students when designing their classroom and lessons (an informal version of cogens). Fewer (less than 5) teachers reported personalizing classroom aesthetics, co-teaching, cosmopolitanism or code-switching.

Rather than the specific strategy or strategies adopted, what seems to have been most important for teachers about their participation in the program was building a set of general tools. According to one educator,"I think what it's done [GTC] is allowed them [teachers] to accumulate tangible tools and strategies to help them facilitate learning in a way that matches the mindsets they've always brought. I think these teachers always believed in the core tenets of GTC, but maybe didn't have the technical training to be able to act on it. I definitely see not a shift in their attitudes, but in their ability to actually practice what they believe."
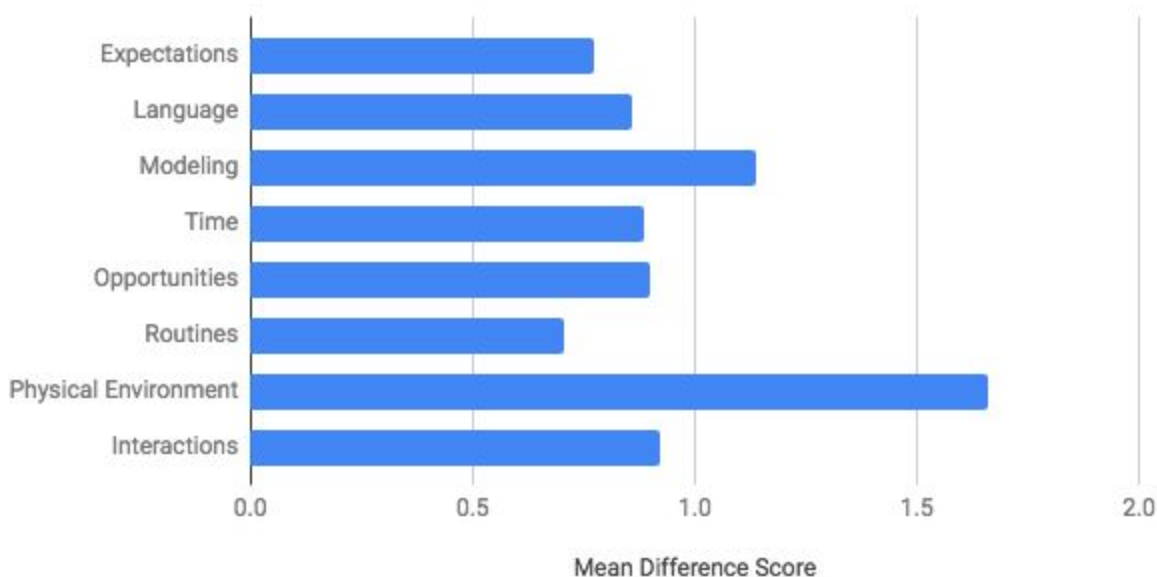

Figure 1. Teachers' self-assessment about the frequency with which they practiced strategies to elicit higher-level thinking in their students

Changes in Relationships

We conducted two rounds of teacher interviews; 15 teachers participated in the first round and 9 in the second.

In answer to an open-ended question about how the program had affected them, seven teachers described being more intentional about how they build relationships with students as a result of GTC. These educators found that GTC *supported their existing mindset* by providing them with additional tools and ideas for how to build relationships with their students. Four teachers explained that the program trained them to continuously reflect on their beliefs and ensure that their teaching practices align with these beliefs.

In contrast, some participants experienced a *radical shift in their mindset* as a result of the GTC work. For example, one teacher described how the program changed her approach to teaching, "When I first started teaching, [building relationships] was definitely not on my list of things to do ...I was kind of brainwashed to think 'pacing pacing pacing, stay on track, the calendar, and do this, do this' and that was my mindset for several years. Now I'm finding that to really get through the most and do it better is really focusing on the relationships and connections."

In a similar experience, another teacher explained how his previous training had emphasized compliance and academic standards over developing relationships with students. He described the progression of his teaching mindset, "When I started Teach for America, I had this idea that high expectations and strict rules, if you maintained those, then kids learned at at whatever level you set. As I've gone through my teaching, I've learned that you need those high expectations, but when you connect with kids about what's going to work for them and how their day's going...I've become a better teacher by having more individual relationships with kids. Those expectations need to be there, but also to connect with kids about what those expectations mean for each individual."
Video: https://vimeo.com/282851019

Four different teachers explained that they have higher expectations for their students as a result of their work with GTC, with such expressions as "These kids are proving that 5 year olds can do all of these things...they can co-teach and they can be in charge of their classroom and they can be choice-makers about their education and who and where and what they're learning" or "The biggest lesson learned is that the kids can do it. You give them the tools and you model and encourage them, they can do things you didn't necessarily think they could do very well."
Video: https://vimeo.com/282855416

The most commonly experienced challenges to focusing on the relationship-building work that teachers reported were the amount of time it takes and the difficulty being able to devote enough time to the work. Many teachers reported the need for patience as relationships grow slowly. At the same time, teachers reported frustration at what they perceived as competing priorities, for example: "My goal is to inspire my students and to find that thing they are passionate about. But right now my hands are tied a little bit because...I'm in a red school. So there is this strong push to make sure people produce in a certain prescriptive way. Which can be really oppressive for myself and for them."

While this challenge is persistent, GTC provides tools and resources for educators who want to resist the traditional approaches to education. One teacher's advice to new teachers starting this work was, "Be humble, be curious, listen to your students. Ask them…the greatest success I have had is when I have screwed up and I admitted it in front of the class and that's a very humbling moment...but it gains trust and moves the process along faster…The best book out there is talking to your student who has taken your class about what did and didn't work for them."
Video: https://vimeo.com/282849091

Teachers also completed reflection logs at the end of each coaching session. The most frequently reported challenge in relating to individual students recorded in these logs was lack of engagement. Other, far less frequent behavior challenges were disruptive behavior, incomplete work, and inappropriate language (5 or fewer instances). The most commonly used strategies to address behavioral issues were general: Getting to know students' interests outside of class and focusing on positives. Less frequently used strategies (fewer than 5 instances) were co-teaching, cosmopolitanism/student jobs, personalizing classroom aesthetics, and asking students for feedback. All these strategies had been discussed during training, indicating that teachers were applying what they were learning during the GTC program.

When asked "What has been your biggest success in relationship building in the past month?" the majority of responders described a specific student or a class they teach in which they have built strong relationships and they present the relationship as a success in itself. For example, one teacher responded, "Students are welcoming me and are willing to let me into their lives. As opposed to last year, students trust me and do not want to push my buttons." Another teacher described her success as "being a safe person to comfort students when they are upset." Many of these teachers appear to find inherent satisfaction in their relationships with students and GTC provided them with tools and ideas of how to enrich these. Other respondents described their successes as students having more fun at

school, increased student engagement in the classroom, and successfully implementing one of Emdin's strategies.

Research Question #2: Value of Program Elements

What supports are most valuable to teachers as they engage in CRE?

Summary of findings:
Teachers valued opportunities to interact with their peers most. They valued the learning trips most highly for the opportunity they provided to see CRE in action and to discuss the implications with others in their cohort. Overall, teachers valued coaching least; however, there was a wide range of responses, dependent on the coach and the teacher's ability to carve out time to participate.

GTC Supports

We asked teachers to rate the value of each training element on a 5-point scale (1 = low value, 5 = high value). Teacher ratings are summarized in Figure 2, below. Overall, teachers rated the opportunities for peer interaction and learning higher than the one-on-one coaching sessions with a CRE expert. Comments included, "It was very helpful to share successes, challenges, and next steps" and opportunities to be "candid and authentic in our discussions."

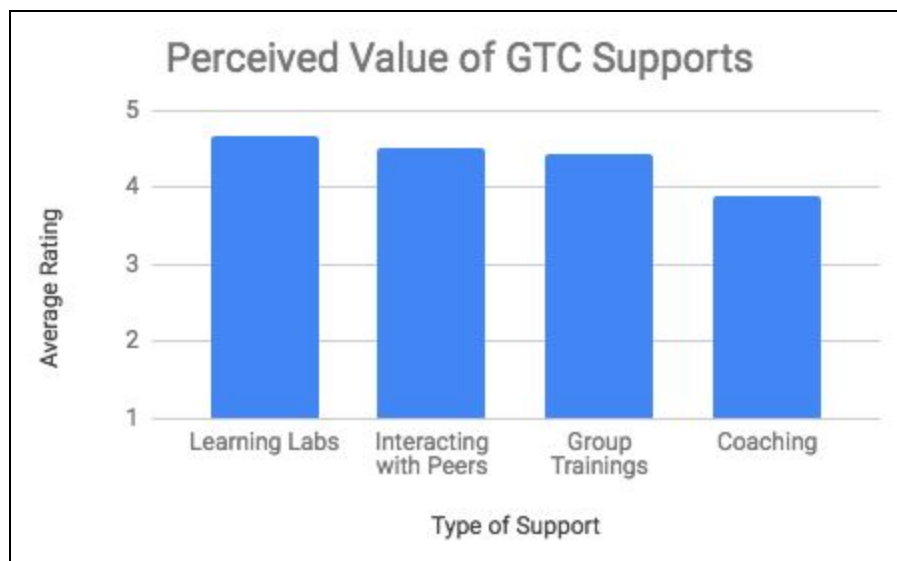
Figure 2.Teacher ratings indicating perceived
value of supports (1=lowest value; 5=highest value)

Learning Labs

Learning labs were rated highest of all the training supports, with 7 of the 9 teachers who completed the final interview assigning a rating of 5 (highest value). During the interviews, five teachers explained that learning labs were, for them, the most powerful part of the GTC training, with comments such as, "the labs help give me hope and ideas." The most valuable part of the learning labs was in seeing the strategies in action and being able to conceptualize them in a concrete way. One teacher suggested that it would be helpful to have a resource bank of video learning labs for teachers wanting to try this work.

Group Training Sessions

Overall, teachers left training sessions feeling confident and prepared to lead the GTC work (per *Post-Training Survey* results). Across all training sessions, 82% of teachers indicated that they felt Confident or Extremely Confident in leading the work at their school. WHen asked about what they had learned of value during a session, more than half the teachers listed a specific skill or strategy, while about a third of the teachers made reference to general support for how to build relationships and/or improve classroom culture. Teachers expressed a need for additional resources providing specific action steps for using CRE strategies, more planning time, additional observation and feedback, and support from school administrators.

Coaching

Although the GTC program plan included 3 coaching sessions, the average number of coaching sessions per teacher was 1.9 for the 2017-18 academic year. For teachers who received less than three coaching sessions, coaches noted challenges with scheduling and teacher responsiveness.

In exit interviews, coaching sessions received the lowest rating of the categories, with only two teachers rating it a 5. The variability in the ratings most likely reflects the inconsistency of the coaching experience, itself a reflection of the different coaching styles of the individual coaches. Coaching was perceived as less valuable than the other elements of the program for different reasons, including that the coach observed only a snapshot that was not fully representative of the teacher's classroom and scheduling challenges. When coaching was perceived as valuable, it was because coaching sessions were non-evaluative and provided insights into how teachers might make specific improvements to their practice.

Review of coaches' notes revealed that the focus of each coaching session varied and didn't necessarily focus directly on a concrete GTC strategy. As a model, coaching may have been less valuable to teachers than other supports due to the variability in how and when it was delivered and because it had less of a direct connection to reality pedagogy teaching practices and the work of Christopher Emdin than other supports.

Research Question #3: Impact on Students

What is the impact on students' academic engagement and performance?

Summary of findings:

Our analysis of student grades and attendance data did not show any significant differences between students whose teachers did or did not participate in the GTC program. However, teachers reported increased improved academics, student engagement, and a reduction in disruptive behaviors. At one middle-high school, school records showed significantly fewer teacher-reported behavior incidents among the GTC students. Interviews with a sample of students confirmed that students believed their teachers cared about them and that this made them feel valued as individuals.

Academics, Attendance, and Behavior

In order to better understand the impact of the program on students, we analyzed attendance, behavioral incident data, and grade point average (GPA) to compare outcomes for students who were taught by teachers in the program to students taught by non-GTC teachers in the same school. At the elementary level, a comparison teacher was identified who taught the same grade as a GTC teacher or who held a similar role. At the middle and high school levels, GTC teachers' data was compared to school-wide averages.

Comparison of attendance data, reported behavior incidents, and GPA revealed no significant differences between GTC teachers and their non-GTC counterparts (or schoolwide averages). However, as discussed below, all teachers noted improvements in engagement, disruptive behaviors, and the quality of students' work.

Teachers' Perceptions

In interviews we asked teachers what changes they saw in their students. Teachers identified the following impacts of their work: Increased engagement/motivation, students

appearing to enjoy school more, improved quality of work, improved behavior, and social-emotional growth. Figure 2 illustrates these results.

The perceived impact on student engagement and academic growth was consistent across all grade levels from elementary to high school. A kindergarten teacher described using a community circle for social-emotional processing after recess has improved her students' behavior: "When we went to do our behavior grades for this group of children, in Follows School Rules and Responsibility, we were able to align every single student in this class for the most part with a 3 instead of having many kids who are not following the rules and not always nice to other kids...that was shocking evidence that...I think this is working because everyone really is following those rules."

One fourth grade teacher described her students' increased engagement, "The work ethic is a complete 180. There was a really negative view of school work in fourth grade." However, she found that "when you have a good relationship with students, they do want to work for you."
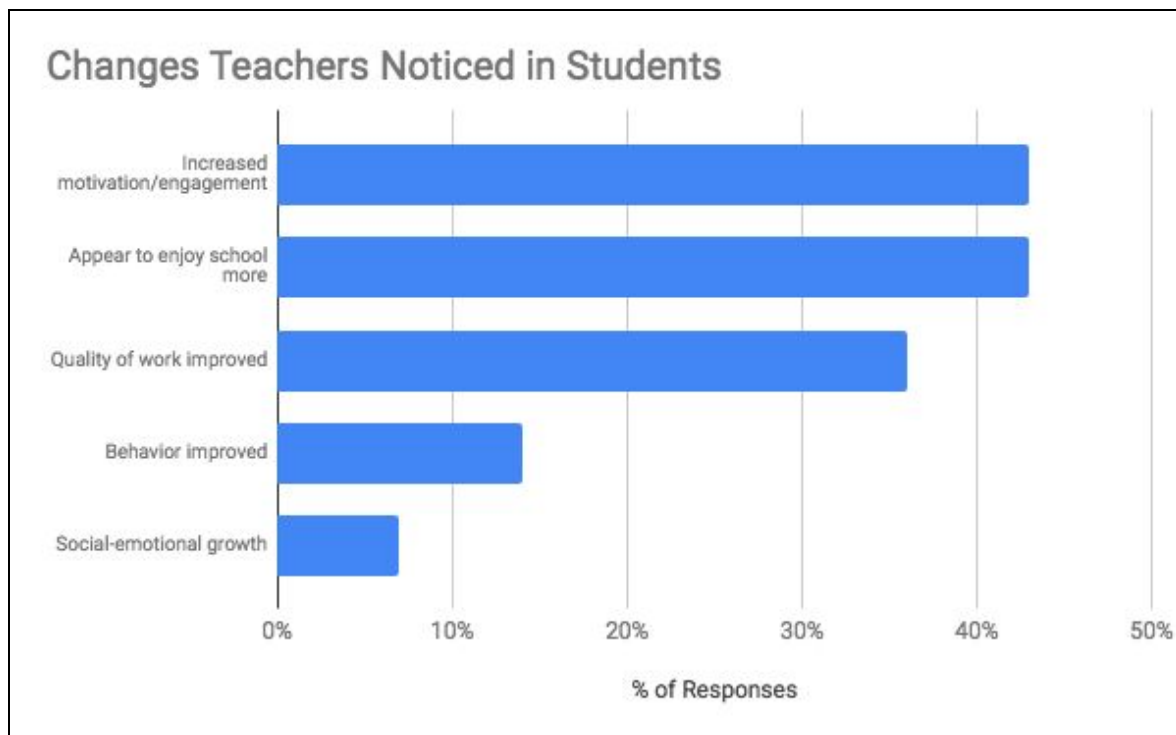

Figure 2. Teacher descriptions of GTC program's impact on students.

At the higher grade levels, the effect was equally powerful: "I had two students last trimester who last year would leave class and could barely write a sentence and this year,

they were engaged and they were writing full essays and I attribute that to me just meeting them where they're at. If they had something to share that day about their outside life that was really eating them up, I paused the lesson, we'll get to that CLL later, this is the real work that I do as a teacher and this is what I love to do...helping students through life problems, world issues, giving them advice. They want someone to listen...one of them wanted Philosophy Fridays so we implemented Philosophy Fridays. And because I tried to listen to them and implement what they wanted, I've seen great growth in those two."

All teachers also noted that their students had increased mastery and improved the quality of their academic work and attributed this to the GTC work. Again, the impact was felt by teachers of the youngest to the oldest students.

The same kindergarten teacher cited earlier also observed academic growth in her students: "The impact on my students has absolutely been student growth. In kindergarten, getting kids in charge of their own learning as well as being responsible for their learning and the learning of their classmates, especially through co-teaching and student teachers has really impacted their growth. On our end of year SLOs each student in my class for Math made at least 1 year of growth, so everyone met that expectation...I really do credit this to the fact that I pushed the kids to learn from one another and not just from me. So all of our work with relationships being built through putting the work into the kids hands really impacted student growth."

One high school teacher described "how differently a student can view themselves and their education when they see themselves there or see their culture there represented, and they feel like they're wanted at the school...and feel that ownership in the classroom...everything changes from their willingness to participate to truly academic success."

When asked what the impact of the program has been on his students, another teacher responded: "Academic gains and what they have produced in class. When students feel like they can learn and want to learn, which really is encouraged by building those relationships, you see a lot more effort in class and a lot more engagement if they feel a connection to you and a connection to real world examples in the material."

Students' Perspective

To better understand the impact of the GTC program on students, we interviewed seven students about their experience in the classes of three teachers who were participating in

the program .[5] Six of the seven students described positive relationships with their teachers. However, it is in hearing the students' voices that we can appreciate the difference they experience when a teacher takes the time to get to know each one as an individual. One eighth grade student described feeling safe in his classroom. Another student in that same class explained, "I feel like I really understand everything in this class. She does things in a way that you'll understand." An eleventh grade student described his teacher as "Amazing. I feel like there needs to be more teachers like her who aren't just here to teach but are here to learn about their students' lives and actually care about them." That same student explained, "She tries to learn about our backgrounds, as well. She really tries to understand what we're comfortable with and what we see as okay in our cultures...not only does she help us in school, but also out of school and things going on in our lives." Another student in the same class described a time when his teacher went out of her way to learn about him: "She took me out of class before and asked me about the things I was writing and sort of just asked me what was going on in my life and what I enjoyed about her class and how she can improve that."

Research Question #4 School Context

What are the school-level benefits and challenges of the GTC program?

Summary of findings:

Overall, school leaders found their teachers' participation in the GTC program was valuable, noting a positive impact on school culture as well as the participating teachers and their students. They expressed a desire to find ways to share the learning to other school staff. Unlike their teachers, school leaders saw significant value in the coaching.

Some common challenges were finding ways to reduce the amount of out-of-school time required of teachers, communicating the goals of the program more widely, both within the school and in the community, aligning participation in the program with the school's core improvement strategies, and ensuring that participating teachers have the experience and commitment necessary to succeed in the program.

---

[5] Additional student interviews were attempted, but due to scheduling difficulties and many students not wanting to be filmed or interviewed, only seven were completed.

School Leader Perspective

In order to understand the broader context in which the GTC work took place, we interviewed school leaders mid-year (December--4 interviews) and at the end of the school year (March--5 interviews). Results from these interviews are summarized below.
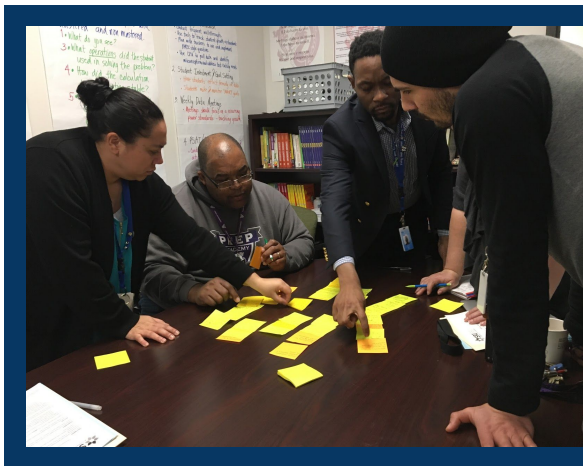
Left: School leaders (left to right) Rhianna Burroughs, Eric Rowe, David McAdams, Julie Murgel, and Zach Serrano collaborate on affinity mapping exercise during January 24, 2018 school leader Revisit and Renew and Plan Meeting. Right: David Adams, McMeen Elementary School Principal, discussing his school's priorities and challenges at January 24, 2018 leader meeting.

Strengths of GTC
- Overall, leaders were very positive about the GTC model, its value, and impacts on teachers, students, and school culture.
- Leaders expressed appreciation for the "grassroots"/"organic"/"authentic"/ "transformational" nature of the program – especially compared to typical "turnkey PD" that can feel "transactional."

Important Program Elements – "Influential Factors"
- Several leaders suggested that the book study plays an important role – the book as an "anchor text:"
   - Creating space for healthy discussion and debate (teachers and school leaders)
   - Shared language and framework
   - Emdin's talk[6] was especially compelling for many teachers
- Several leaders noted that "on site" work/coaching/feedback is especially helpful:
   - Coaching from PEBC and Imaginarium has a powerful impact

---

[6] Dr. Emdin made a personal visit to some schools in the program; this visit was funded separately from the Janus-Henderson funding.

- ○ Additional on-site coaching would beneficial
- ○ It would be beneficial to have "model classrooms" on site to make learning more accessible and transferable

Replication & Scaling
- ● Several leaders observed that it is crucial to have grade-level leaders, Senior Team Leads or Deans involved in the GTC program in order to broaden impacts:
  - ○ Helps disseminate and integrate learning through coaching
  - ○ Becomes part of the school's instructional model
  - ○ Might be beneficial to invite all Assistant Principals to training meetings so that vision is shared across leadership team
  - ○ This won't "take off" if it's just classroom teachers – need leaders involved
- ● Several leaders mentioned the importance of integrating GTC into the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), ensuring alignment of all school initiatives:
  - ○ Need to think about these issues on a deeper level – how do we redesign schools and systems, so that we're not just using GTC as an "add on" program
  - ○ Need to think about how to "blend" GTC into what a school is already doing
- ● Several leaders noted the importance of supportive leadership:
  - ○ The school leader needs to provide teachers with the autonomy and agency to take risks and try new things

Challenges/Concerns with GTC Program
- ● Several leaders discussed the need for greater planning so that GTC learning gets shared across the staff:
  - ○ Consider planning out PD at the beginning of the year so that GTC is integrated with other school learning goals and reinforced throughout the year
  - ○ Create systems for ongoing sharing (e.g. biweekly meetings)
  - ○ Need to get whole community on board (including parents)
  - ○ Need some more "turnkey" version of GTC to help other teachers "catch up"
- ● Several leaders mentioned the importance of vetting participating teachers:
  - ○ Teachers might need a baseline level of experience/skill to benefit from this program
  - ○ Teachers need to be prepared to commit to full participation
  - ○ Teachers should be willing/able to effectively share knowledge with others
  - ○ Teachers should be open to examining their own biases and to helping others examine their biases in a productive manner
- ● Most leaders mentioned the challenges associated with out-of-school time required by the GTC Program:

- ○ Suggested it might be helpful to rotate hosting programming at various schools
- Leaders would have liked clearer and more consistent communication about the GTC program goals and expectations:
    - ○ Suggested the need for more regular updates about teacher learning experiences and overall program goals (e.g. a high-level written recap of each learning session; what to "look for" with new instructional practices; what is mandatory vs. optional with the model)
    - ○ Requested access to a list of participating schools/school leaders from the outset; would be beneficial to have a feeling of "cohort of leaders" and more opportunities to learn from each other

Lessons Learned and Looking Ahead

Overall, our results suggest that there is great potential for the GTC program to help shape teacher practices that can address the demographic mismatch and cultural divides experienced by many of Denver's public school students. Teachers described positive experiences in the program, finding the most value in seeing the practices in action (learning labs) and sharing and reflecting with their peers. Teachers also reported that their participation in the program strengthened their beliefs and provided them with many more tools and strategies with which to implement a pedagogy based on strong relationships with their students. Teachers described many positive impacts on students, including increased engagement, enjoyment of school, improved quality of work, and fewer problematic behaviors.

School leaders and teachers alike found the supports offered were valuable; however, the participation in the program required a considerable out-of-school time commitment, and attention should be paid to both minimizing that time and ensuring that the information learned is shared back within the whole school. One approach, for example, might be to identify what makes some teachers more likely to succeed and developing a set of selection criteria for participation in order to set teachers up for success and encourage sharing. In terms of specific supports, the coaching model received mixed reviews. Although teachers identified observing and learning from others as the most beneficial supports, school leaders named coaching as a highly impactful component of the GTC support. Teachers, however, were less consistent in the value they attached to coaching. Because coaching is a resource-intensive support, it will be important to understand what makes some coaching sessions more effective than others and what are the barriers teachers and coaches experience in establishing a coaching routine.

Similarly, since the support of the school leader was essential to the program's success, school participation in the program might need to be contingent on the capacity of the leader to provide the necessary level of support. One specific challenge that school leaders could help mitigate is the tension felt by teachers between the values promoted by GTC, with its focus on building relationships, and the urgency of focusing on academic improvement for students at the expense of building softer skills. Another area where a school leader can influence the success of the program is by ensuring alignment between the GTC program and the school's overall improvement strategy.

Next year, GTC will expand to include about 50 teachers. The Janus-Henderson Foundation will continue to fund half of the program and the other half of the funding will come from the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The program and our approach to evaluating it met the standards required by ESSA for the level of evidence required. As the program expands, so will the research requirements for participants and we will develop more robust data collection from students, in particular, to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the program on the people it is intended to serve.

Appendix A

Reality Pedagogy Teaching Practice Descriptions (From *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...And the Rest of Y'all Too)*

Co-teaching: Assigning students the task of writing a lesson plan and putting it into practice, perhaps even providing them with a teacher's manual or sample lesson plan to get them started.

Personalizing classroom aesthetics: Teachers allow students to personalize the classroom with posters, artwork, lighting, seating, and scents that they like.

Cosmopolitanism: Cosmopolitanism in the pedagogy sense is about creating a classroom environment that incorporates norms, behaviors, and roles that exist in students' lives outside the classroom. Students are assigned various responsibilities and roles in the classroom.

Visiting Students' communities: Emdin encourages educators to embed themselves to some extent in the communities their students live in and then incorporate elements of that community into the classroom.

Cogens (cogenerative dialogues): The teacher meets with a small group of students outside of class and invites their input and critiques of the way things are going in the classroom.

Competition: Competition can build positive emotions, foster intense collaboration, and make content relevant.

Call-and-response: The teacher invites students' language from outside of the classroom into the class in an effort to support and reinforce the notion of a shared community.

Code switching: Code switching is defined as alternating or mixed use of two or more languages, especially within the same discourse.

Discourse wall: This process involves creating a classroom chart that includes words used in both informal and formal settings. Youth then learn how to navigate between the two.

Using pictures of students in lesson: By using pictures of students in lessons, the divides between the school world and their real lives are bridged.

Student-created handshakes: A special handshake to share with students when they get an answer right.

Classroom name: Students create a name for the classroom.

Classroom Twitter: A paper-based form of the digital platform that can be used in classrooms to engage youth, allow them to move around the class, listen attentively, engage with their peers, and learn content during lectures by the teacher.

Classroom Instagram: A template is created and an image is placed on it for students to respond to. For example, in a science class, the teacher may place an image or other artistic representation of a phenomenon being described, and then students would respond to it based on what they may have learned or read.