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Resignation and Resilience: Bridging Effective Teaching to the Impacts of Complex and Layered School Culture

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between teacher efficacy, leadership, and how they intersect with complex and layered school system dynamics. Using the Listening Guide Method for Qualitative Inquiry (the Listening Guide, Gilligan, 1993), teacher interviews are examined, resulting in thematic expressions of resignation or resilience. These qualitative data revealed that effective classroom teachers can overcome the limitations of existing bureaucratic structures through resilience anchored in individual self-efficacy. Teacher resilience, anchored in demonstrated self-efficacy, played a major role in teachers' in-classroom experiences and ability to successfully navigate a complex and layered school system dynamics.

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Introduction

United States (US) educational leadership models moved through a series of notable transitions over the last century (Tienken & Mullen, 2015; Halliger, 2011). During that time, the most notable transition was towards corporate culture leadership frameworks and those rooted in Max Weber's (2016) Organizational Theory of Bureaucracy. These frameworks moved education fundamentals away from the classic, moral, and humanistic traditions within education and towards quantitative, data driven outcomes and more "managerial" leadership styles (Shaturaev, et al., 2021; Tienken & Mullen, 2015; Halliger 2011; Blackmore, 2013; Lumby & Foskett, 2011 Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016).

In contrast, during the last decade, US educational leadership frameworks writ large were often critiqued as ineffective, ungrounded, and lacking nuance (Bush, 2015; Meirer et al., 2000; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016) For example, Bush (2011) suggests that "[t]he espousal of one theoretical model [Weber's] leads to the neglect of other approaches" (p. 29), indicating that there is an over-influence of the corporate, "managerial" bureaucratic structure, leaving little room for complimentary or improved theoretical approaches. Specific to this article, we posit that this over-influence is the weakest part of existing leadership frameworks, where an over reliance on prescriptive modalities are disengaged from social justice in practice, individual voice/contributions, and may, in fact, be the problem as opposed to the solution (Graziano & Pelc, 2021; Neische & Gowlett, 2019; Neische & Thomson, 2017; Kellerman, 2012; Hallinger, 2011; Gunter 2012; Minckler, 2011).

As the move towards– and critique of– exclusionary leadership frameworks continues to evolve, a void in available research examining the origins of teacher burnout, higher stress levels, and unique challenges of classroom based individuals has emerged. The need to understand classroom based burnout, stress, and challenge accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, with current literature focused on how teachers' respond to bureaucratic school culture, distance learning, new policy initiatives, as well as the day-to-day expectations of teachers in digitally driven environments (Bush, 2020; Karadag, 2020). This article adds to the existing knowledge base of educational leadership models by examining bureaucratic school culture and the impact on teacher efficacy and agency in the face of challenging administrative behaviors and the first year implementation of a co-teaching program at the secondary level. Specifically driving our inquiry: what are the experiences of teachers within a complex and layered school culture? How do teachers perceive their efficacy in the context of the school culture? How does the administration's leadership behaviors impact teacher efficacy?

The Centrality of Teacher Efficacy

Two decades of teacher efficacy research within American education supports our focus on the flaws of prescriptive modalities disengaged from social justice in practice and the disclusion of individual voice. Historically, research on teacher efficacy was (and is) focused on three key points: (i) core elements of teachers' impact on students; (ii) extents of which teacher behavior and effectiveness is rooted in self-belief; and (iii) how belief is impacted by external factors within the K-12 system (Friedman & Kass, 2001; Guidetti et al., 2018). Furthermore, available research of teacher efficacy is historically broken into three parts: (1) self; (2) collective and (3) proxy (Bandura, 1997; Goddard et al., 2000;

Minckler, 2011, Kleinsasser, 2014). These layers of efficacy show that education is built on the interconnected, individual, interpersonal, and systemic school systems. Notably, these interconnected elements are different from those found in the corporate sector. The reliance of the interpersonal interaction creates a unique dynamic in schools where the leadership, peer mentorship, collaborative time for teachers and reliance of collective and proxy efficacy really does impact the culture of the school. Where as corporate culture does not traditionally rely heavily on the apprenticeship model, or collaborative enterprise to meet the corporate goals, whatever they may be (Boyles, 2018).

Teacher self-efficacy is the extent to which a teacher believes in their professional knowledge base and ability to affect academic achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1997). Teacher collective efficacy is the shared judgment that affects student learning (Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). A third model, teacher proxy efficacy is the mutual belief in the ability of an individual or group to "organize and execute courses of action" and "produce given levels of attainment" (p. 218, Alavi & McCormick, 2016). Particularly salient in the study of teacher proxy efficacy, and effects on resilience, are the narratives of how teachers' efficacy exists in complex and layered school structures. Importantly, available research on teacher efficacy is premised on school systems that function as open, enabling environments when, in reality, many function as closed, traditional, hierarchical bureaucracies (Mayerson, 2010; Veiskarami & Ghadampour, 2017).

Although there is extensive research on teacher, collective, and proxy efficacy over the last 20 years (Friedman & Kass, 2001; Klassen et al., 2011; Guidetti et al., 2018), there is a gap examining efficacy through teacher narratives and bureaucratic school culture. In response to

limited research exploring the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, teacher proxy efficacy, and teacher narratives, this study uses the Listening Guide Method of Qualitative Inquiry (the Listening Guide, Gilligan, 1993). This method supports examination of first-person narratives of general and special educators, co-teachers, and their experiences and perceptions of their school's ability to organize and execute effective courses of action for students and professionals (Bandura, 1997).

To do so, we first provide an overview of the theoretical frameworks guiding the study. Second, we center discussion on teacher self-efficacy and the relationship between leadership and bureaucratic school culture. Third, we argue for the significance of teacher narratives—and their role(s) within the bureaucratic system —as well as the importance of first person voice as a site of study for in-classroom resilience. Finally, the Listening Guide Method is explained, and the resulting methodological themes, or voices, are used to provide rich, qualitative data to understanding the intimate challenges of the teacher-in-classroom experience.

Theoretical Underpinnings for the Listening Guide Method of Qualitative Inquiry

Narrative Theory and theorist Jerome Bruner (1990; 2002) and Feminist Theory and theorists Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) and Carol Gilligan (1989; 1993) provide a theoretical frame for grounding qualitative research within individual voice by thoroughly examining the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, resilience, silence, leadership, and school bureaucracies. Furthermore, these theorists, in concert with Critical Theory (Levitt, et al., 2021), help explain why teacher narratives—and their role(s) within this relationship—are a crucial, and often overlooked, site of study for in-classroom resilience.

In his books *Acts of Meaning* (1990), and *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life* (2002), Bruner notes that when individual identity narratives collide with cultural narratives, the product is often tension. Supporting Bruner and Narrative Theory are the works of Anzaldúa (1987) and Gilligan (1989, 1993) whose theoretical contributions assist in operationalizing identity within individual narratives at cultural intersections. Bruner notes that from a young age, "the child is not learning simply what to say but how, where, to whom, and under what circumstances" (Bruner, 1990 p. 71). Bruner's "how, where, whom, and what circumstances" can be seen through the inexhaustible number of narratives–within and outside education– that reinforce or censure specific constructs. These reinforcements and censures are designed to highlight exceptional individual behavior(s) while simultaneously eliminating narrative deviations from accepted cultural pattern(s) (Bruner, 1990). They also inevitably create tension between what is "right" and what is "perceived as right" (Garofalo & Graziano, 2022).

Like Bruner, feminist Gloria Anzaldúa argues that these tensions created by physical, psychological, and cultural intersections inform narrative beliefs, perceptions, and understandings of unchallenged and unquestioned cultural narratives. For Anzaldúa, narratives remain unchallenged because dominant culture reinforces shame, intimidation, or fear on individuals. Gilligan (1993) operationalizes Anzaldúa assertions when– speaking specifically about women– she notes that within dominant culture(s), "women often sensed that it was dangerous to say or even to know what they wanted or thought—upsetting to others and therefore carrying with it the threat of abandonment or retaliation" (p. ix). Collectively, both Anzaldúa and Gilligan give voice to *how* individual narratives that resist dominant narratives are seen, heard, and understood.

Given the theoretical underpinnings of Narrative and Feminist frameworks, we posit that if one considers schools as an arm of a dominant culture (i.e. public schools equal public good), one might see them as a microcosm or reflection of larger society (Neal & Neal, 2012; Alexander, 1997). For example, "[m]any critical scholars consider the educational system a highly politicized, oppressive and hegemonic institution with its neoliberal, neoconservative agendas that perpetuate the status quo through regulatory social structures, prescriptive curricula, top down decision making processes, and standardized assessments (Marcine, 2020). Given this, Critical Theory, and its emphasis on the individual's understanding of issues regarding inequity, power and oppression within a society within and beyond education, grounds this study by using this lens to examine the lived experiences of teachers within the complex and layered bureaucratic school culture (Apple, 2013; Giroux, 1999). Critical Theory and the Listening Guide (LG) methodology work in concert to give a voice to those teachers who are voiceless within the context of the social structure of the school, and to bring to the surface the narratives of those who have chosen to or felt forced to remain silent. As a whole, this framework and methodology allows for the construction and analysis of multiple realities shaping the experiences of those feeling marginalized within a system.

Leadership, School Culture, and Teacher Efficacy

The theoretical roots of teacher self-efficacy reside in overlapping concepts: Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control, and Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) Social Cognitive Theory.

Bandura identified self-efficacy as "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Building on Bandura's definition,

further research suggests that a strong sense self-efficacy of teachers powerfully predicts persistence, effort, achievement, a willingness to take risks, and successfully employ strategies to help students across the spectrum (Kurt et al., 2011; Bandura, 2001; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ross & Gray, 2006).

In an expansion of available self-efficacy research, Cherniss (1993), focuses on the organizational aspect of teachers' work environment and the impact on teachers' self-efficacy. Their research spurred further study of school climate, administrative behaviors, sense of belonging and school culture, and a school's administrative decision making (Friedman & Kass, 2002; Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk- Hoy, 2001). Friedman & Kass (2002) further contributed to the conceptual model of teacher efficacy through the addition of school context and interpersonal relationships between teachers and significant others in the school community, breaking the context down into three factors: (i) in-classroom environment & school environment; (ii) autonomy & value/ belonging; and (iii) tasks & relationships. The understanding of an individual's experiences of a system where external factors, like leadership and school culture can impose structural, systemic inequity closely ties to Critical Theory.

Among others, Kurt et al.'s (2012) research ties teacher efficacy to school leadership by identifying two kinds of leadership, transformational and transactional (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ball, 1993). These researchers found that transformational leadership enhances efficacy beliefs among teachers by providing emotional and ideological explanations that link individual identities to that of the collective identity of organizations (Ball, 1993, Kurt et al., 2012). "Transactional leadership focuses only on the task and avoids the

individual who performs the task. This approach results in low-self-efficacy of individuals by detaching the task from the employees" (Kurt et al., 2012, p. 76).

Teacher- proxy efficacy, as well as a combination of leadership and bureaucratic structures, are necessary for individuals to seek support from others in order to achieve desired goals and meet the objectives of the organization writ large (Bandura, 2001). Leadership and governance are key to teacher-proxy efficacy, in that it can only occur if leadership is committed to the common goal, in this case, successful teaching (Garofalo, 2019).

Bureaucratic School Culture, Silence, and Resilience

As defined by the literature, bureaucracy is an organization having a special structure with certain characteristics defined systematically by Weber (Mouzelis, 2001). One of the areas in which bureaucracy is implemented is education, where the products of the school are individuals, families, generations and nations with non-linear, emotional personalities (Mouzelis, 2001). Unlike the economy sector, schools have different duties and applications in building society (Balicki & Aypay, 2018). U.S. schools are different entities than other bureaucratic organizations, in that they are specifically designed to be a "public good", where other organizations are designed to grow the bottom line, appease stakeholders, and increase financial success, stability and influence. Schools have built in mentorship structures (students mentoring students, teachers mentoring students, teachers mentoring teachers, administration mentoring teachers, administrators mentoring administrator) and are not designed to produce a profit, but rather to have a well trained workforce and an informed electorate (Labaree et al., 1997). These altruistic goals of the educational sector are based on the common goal of improving society.

Although school bureaucracies have different systematic goals than other organizations, schools are still part of the dominant culture, and therefore—according to Feminist Theories and Narrative Theory—is governed by the same societal rules.

School environment is created through bureaucracy and layers of authority (Demirbolat, 2010; Demirbolat et al., 2014). Hoy & Sweetland (2001) examined the features of bureaucratic school structures, naming a centralized locus of power and formal rules and/or procedures as foundational components. As these elements work together, they form a "distinctive bureaucratic climate" (Demirbolat 2010; et al., 2014, p. 496) which impacts the effectiveness of school operations as well as the perceptions and behaviors of those working within that structure (Demirbolat et al., 2014). However, research suggests that bureaucracies writ large are seen as largely negative, inefficient systems, yet are important for organizational structure. According to study on school bureaucracies, Balicki & Aypay (2018) understood that there was usually an incompatibility between what happens and what should happen within the bureaucratic structure.

Prior to the global pandemic of 2020, the literature focused on two perspectives on the role of bureaucratic school structure: (i) enabling and (ii) complex & layered (Sinden et al., 2004). Enabling bureaucratic school structures positively affects behaviors by engendering trust, encouraging professional autonomy, and fostering inclusive, valuable rules and policies (Hoy, 2003; Demirbolat et al., 2014). Transformational leadership is often at the root of an enabling bureaucratic system, putting collective goals above individual leadership goals. This enabling bureaucracy supports transparency and collaboration (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

The opposite holds true of the complex and layered school bureaucracy. Hierarchy and regulations are mandatory, with hallmarks being control and conflict avoidance (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). Complex and layered bureaucracies demand strict adherence to rules, decreased autonomy, increased autocratic control, discourage progressive change, lean on disciplinary action, attach importance to compromise, utilize fear, punish missteps, and regard issues within the system as problems (Sinden et al., 2004; Demirbolat, Kalkan, & Dagli, 2014). Transactional leadership is largely at the core of complex and layered bureaucracies (Hoy & Miskel, 2010; Eppard, 2004). Two categories of culture within transactional leadership are identified in the literature: passive-defensive culture and aggressive-defensive culture. As such, the transactional leadership style expects faculty to conform to rules, do what they are told, are punished for non-conformity but not rewarded for success. Additionally, transactional leadership encourages teachers to compete against each other, rather than work together (Eppard, 2004). Additionally, the limits of this leadership style were on vivid display during the COVID-19 pandemic, when large, top down systems struggled to adapt to new learning environments (Mette, 2020).

This article and these data are drawn from, and nested in, American bureaucratic school culture, silence, and resilience. As such, many of the issues that are facing practitioners and policymakers are by products of the American bureaucratic system, such as failure to bring best practices to scale, failure to capitalize on the expertise of teachers, the mistrusting and often strained relationship between policymakers and practitioners (Mehta, 2013). However, post pandemic, Weber (2020) explains changes in bureaucratic culture and mindset; how its norms of assembly, rules, rule-makers, rule-enforcers, and standards

were disrupted by the onset of the international pandemic in March 2020. Relatedly, Pollock (2020) highlights the changing nature of school leaders' work during the pandemic and characterizes it as leadership in times of predictability to leadership in times of uncertainty. Most recently, Peter Green (2022) suggests that administrators are facing uniquely challenging issues creating an environment where they have "all the responsibility with none of the power" (p.1).

Internationally, the cultural impact transactional bureaucratic systems are evident in the studies of Organizational Silence (OS) and the link between silence and bureaucratic school culture (Daniilidou et al., 2020; Ngui & Lay, 2020, Peixoto et al., 2018; Balicki & Aypay, 2018). Of note, recent studies show a significant relationship between school culture and teacher silence when there is a perceived lack of communication, trust, empathy and/ or support from the educational administration (Alqarni, 2020; Durnali et al., 2020; Saglam, 2016; Ruclar, 2013). When there is an absence of communication, there is an absence of trust, which may lead to Organizational Silence.

Organizational Silence (OS) is defined as withholding of thoughts, opinions and concerns about organizational problems, which may be deliberate, as people who feel that they need to protect themselves, the institution, or other individuals from negative consequences of speaking out (Saglam, 2016). Specifically, for teachers, OS exists when they feel that that cannot express their opinions, feelings and perceptions freely, they stay silent, even in the face of criticism, as they do not feel valued or trust in their administration (Bayram, 2010; Kahveci et al., 2012; Zengin, 2011). International studies indicate that OS can negatively impact a teachers' emotional well-being, impacts teacher efficacy, performance, and motivation (Perlow & Williams, 2003; (Saglam, 2016; Durnali, Akbasli, & Dis, 2020). For educational

systems based on interpersonal altruism and mentorship, OS can also have a negative impact systemically, in particular impacting the effectiveness of the human structures on which the systems rely. Within those closed bureaucratic structures, teacher efficacy and resilience are closely linked. In fact, individuals with high levels for self-efficacy tend to perceive problems within their environment, as challenges, rather than threats, often demonstrating flexibility and resolve (Daniilidou et al., 2020).

Resilience is coping adaptively with challenges and is linked to self-efficacy (Schwarzer & Warner, 2013; Daniilidou et al., 2020). Self-efficacy is essential to developing effective coping strategies when faced with challenges, maintaining persistence in the face of failure and has been shown to positively affect and, in some cases, predict resilience (Gschwend, 1999; Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011; Eg & Chang, 2010; Peixoto et al., 2018; Daniilidou et al., 2020). Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to maintain their enthusiasm, remain steadfast in their persistence, and have higher levels of resilience than teachers who do not perceive themselves to be efficacious (Gibbs, 2009; Tschannen- Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007).

Resilience in educational leaders has not been widely studied, however, Patterson et al., (2009) define a resilient leader as one who demonstrates the ability to recover, learn from, and developmentally mature when confronted by chronic or crisis adversity. Benight & Cieslak (2011), the recognized authority on organizational leadership, said resilience is the cornerstone to successful leadership. In a study of resilience in female educational leaders, Reed & Blaine (2015) found that, often, leaders become both the target and an outlet for the frustrations of others, which often causes them to have deteriorating levels of resilience. Therefore, leaders think and act in ways that cause

stress to become more intense, becoming angry and aggressive. As blame is placed on others, the emotions of denial, grief, and anger thrust leaders into a reactive role. This pattern of behavior directly correlates to the characteristics of the transactional leadership model existing in a complex and layered school culture (Reed & Blaine, 2015).

Teacher Narratives as tools: Understanding lived experiences within school cultures

Teacher narratives within the bureaucratic school system contain valuable information to inform policy, practice, and organizational health. Researchers have, to date, sought to tell the teachers' story through different lenses in a myriad of contexts (Day, 2013). However, education research often excludes the first-person voices of the teachers and how they are affected by educational policy (as stated by e.g., Purcell- Gates, 2000; Shaker & Ruitenberg, 2007). Dillon (2010) notes that "lived experiences" are capable of dominant cultural narrative critique. However, dominant cultural contexts and constructs persist *despite* the ability of powerful individual "lived experiences" to inform the complexities and flaws of dominant cultural narratives (White, 1989; Graziano et al., 2018). Like culture writ large, flawed dominant cultural narratives about education persist while the individual narratives of the teacher become lost within the system (Day, 2013). Examining this invisibility of the teacher through the lens of Narrative Theory, Feminist Theory, and Critical Theory, it is evident that silence, resilience and resignation come through the narratives of the teachers, in the form of "I" poems.

Methods

The Listening Guide (LG) specifically focuses on the researchers' active role in understanding the participant narrative(s). By operating from a

subjective stance and using a relational methodology, the researcher and the participant are encouraged to share what they know and how they know it (Gilligan, 1993; 2015). Specific to educational policy implementation, we posit that teachers' voices, experiences, and input are wholly excluded from the process, but central to understanding the complexities of their profession at the intersection of self and structure (Graziano & Pelc, 2019). By utilizing the Listening Guide, we seek to untangle individual co-teachers' experiences from dominant narratives within education, allowing for the teacher's voices to emerge through a systematic examination of the under-explored relationship between teacher self-efficacy and a complex and layered school culture (Woodcock, 2016).

The Listening Guide Method of Inquiry

As a method, the Listening Guide acknowledges how themes, patterns, and silences in voice can be studied to critique dominant cultural contexts and constructs (Graziano et al., 2018; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1997). The goal of the Listening Guide is *not* generalizability, but to uncover underlying themes of the participants as they are narrated through first person voice. To uncover these underlying, narrated themes, the Listening Guide uses four steps, or "listenings" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, Graziano et al., 2018): (1) interview transcription; (2) Listening for Plot; (3) Creation of the "I" poems; and (4) Creation of Contrapuntal Voices.

Listening for the Plot

During the first listening and after transcription, the main objective of the researcher is to understand a participant narrative (Graziano et al., 2018; Woodcock, 2016). Here, several questions should emerge: What do (don't) we know? What are the potential themes emerging from

these first person voices? What is (not) being narrated and/or said? In order to answer these questions, the researcher approaches Listening for Plot through: (1) researcher self-reflexivity and (2) focus on participant voices in relationship to the researcher.

Creation of "I" poems & attention to the participant voice

At the heart of the Listening Guide methodology are "I" poems (Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1997). The researcher, by returning to the transcripts for the third listening and linking the "I" statement with a verb, is looking for shifts in voice. Shifts in voice are identified through changes in tone, rhythm, pauses, and conversational direction. Additionally, through the creation of "I" poems, the researcher is mindful of the central questions framing the "I" statements; what is the participant voicing or narrating when they refer to themselves? How do they describe, narrate, or give voice to themselves or their experiences? (Woodcock, 2016).

By following and noting the participants "I" statements during the third listening, researchers are better able to focus on—and understand—participant first person voice (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Raider-Roth, 2004). Then, through this still growing understanding of how a first person voice is being narrated by participants, a researcher can begin to uncover the themes present within and across these shared narratives. Thus, at this stage, several important questions emerge for the researcher: How is context impacting the relationship between researcher and participant? How is context impacting the researcher's understanding of the transcript? How is context impacting what is being shared? How do the researcher's biases impact the responses of the participant? (Graziano et al., 2018).

Creations of contrapuntal voices

The fourth listening is the creation of contrapuntal voices. Contrapuntal voices are the (often unexplored) relationship of individual participant voices to each other (Graziano et al., 2018). During this listening, the researcher looks for what is (or isn't) being said, what is being said (in)differently, as well as what might be silenced or voiced (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017). Because of dominant cultural contexts and constructs, individual voices are often kept independent to maintain the dominant cultural status quo. When these individual voices do challenge the cultural status quo, they are explained away, threatened, or summarily dismissed (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bruner, 2002). Said differently, as Gilligan notes, when faced with cultural pressure, individuals and their voices are often forced to not know what they know (Brown & Gilligan, 1993).

With these data, the relationship(s) between teacher narratives and leadership, school culture, and teacher efficacy were closely studied within and across interviews. The particular attention to participant voice within and across interviews allowed the researchers to hear changes in tone, cadence, and rhythm that were a reaction to, or a shying away from, speaking about school structures. By comparing the impressions from each interview and noting the relationship each interview has to others, researchers are able to theoretically analyze each transcript by looking for commonalities in silences and narratives—the shared voice—present within these data. The contrapuntal voices, then, after careful deliberation, analysis, and discussion between all researchers, are created through these data. are presented The results of this analysis are located in the findings section of this article as the Voice of Red Tape (direct and indirect) and the Voice of Teacher Resilience.

Use of Voices within the Listening Guide. In tandem with the previously stated goal of the Listening Guide not being generalizability, a related endeavor is the absence of a concrete research question. The absence of a concrete research question does two things. First, it challenges the quantitative concepts of a hypothesis and null hypothesis created by such a question. Second, but related, analysis using the Listening Guide involves using a "real question" (Gilligan, 1989, p. 9). A "real question" is one that requires the researcher to have a desire for both an answer and a desire to enter into conversation and relationship with another. When using traditional qualitative methods, a cornerstone of thematic analysis and discussion is reliability and validity (two concepts most often associated, if not wholly borrowed from, quantitative methods). Furthermore, in other qualitative methods, such as Grounded Theory, emphasis is placed on the integration of themes into broader (and widely accepted) social and cultural contexts and constructs.

Participants

The 12 teacher participants were tenured faculty at a regional secondary school in the Northeastern United States (Table 1). There were 16 teachers who were involved in the first year of the new programmatic co-teaching initiative of co-teaching, as the school bureaucracy moved away from the self-contained, resource model for classified students. Twelve teachers of the sixteen volunteered to participate in the study. Six self-identified as women and six self-identified as men. Six participants were special education teachers and six were general education teachers. Participant ages ranged from mid 20's to late 60's, and the teaching experience ranged from five to 34 years. At the time of interview, each participant was engaged in their first year of co-teaching as part of a new program for the regional

secondary school. All participants were given [pseudonyms to protect confidentiality and anonymity].

Each general education participant was given the choice to either engage in co-teaching and/ or choose their co-teaching partners, although special education teachers were mandated to participate, but could choose their partners. Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2009). By purposefully sampling the teachers who had choice of participation and/or partner, researchers were able to focus on teachers' feelings of autonomy, value, and overall perceptions of their experiences of self-efficacy, and proxy efficacy. Administrative decisions & participant impact.

The special education teachers were told that they would be co-teaching, with policy decisions made by the superintendent. By teacher report(s), decision making largely occurred in isolation; changes to the existing special education program, input from affected stakeholders (the board of education, parents, students, faculty, staff, and some administrators), and the rationale behind the co-teaching program were all cited as decisions made out input from relevant stakeholders.

An understanding of the rationale behind this implementation strategy was brought to light through a series of administrative interviews completed for a different study using the same research site and co-teaching program as the case (Garofalo & Graziano, 2022). These data indicate a parallel process of school bureaucracy, one where administrators were unclear or unable to discuss the rationale behind the programmatic switch. As with the data presented within this article, OS was evident with the administrative interviews. For example, in an interview with the superintendent, they discussed her programmatic decisions. In an apparent attempt to thwart any teacher pushback, the program was rolled out as a punishment for teachers

due to failure to perform their duties effectively (Garofalo & Graziano, 2022). Notably, for this study, each participant was asked their qualification status and each participant of both the special education and general education faculty is designated as "highly qualified" by the federal and state guidelines. It was made clear to the faculty that the messaging about the new program would be sotto voce from the superintendent. There was an active decision to silence teachers and to centralize authority and communication. It is important to note that administrators, themselves immersed in, and reflective of, a punitive school culture, gave voice to being tasked with enforcing or creating rules that were based in punishment. That said, drawing on the theoretical frameworks guiding the study, the school culture is reflective of the normative culture, therefore, those within the system are forced to conform to the cultural norms. Additionally, the elements of a coercive bureaucratic culture—such as lack of transparency, punishment, silence, utilizing fear, increased autocratic control, lack of trust in leadership conversely, perceived lack of trust by leadership, decrease teacher autonomy, and issues regarded as problems—are evident throughout the data.

Results

Based on the analysis of 12 interviews using The Listening Guide (Gilligan et al., 2006), two contrapuntal voices emerged from this data: The *Voice of Red Tape* and the *Voice of Teacher Resilience*. All pronouns used to identify participants are their chosen pronouns.

Voice of Red Tape

The contrapuntal voice discussed as the *Voice of Red Tape* emerged when participants gave voice to the power, authority, and constant presence of the bureaucracy as both external and internal actors within

their professional lives. This voice indicated that teachers felt defeated, self-doubting, silenced, replaceable, secondary, or non-existent. During repeated listenings, the researchers noted that teachers used two versions of this voice, addressing both the direct and indirect "red tape" generated by school bureaucracy. The direct *Voice of Red Tape* was evidenced as criticism of administration policy and procedures. This voice emerged for the researchers during earlier listenings. The indirect *Voice of Red Tape* was evidenced as an internalized doubt about professional roles within the school system. Given the indirect nature of this voice, it emerged during later listenings.

Direct Voice of Red Tape

Jennifer and Veronica spoke in-depth to the administration's rollout of policies and procedures for inclusion classrooms and co-teaching dyads. Jennifer and Veronica's "I" Poems, widely reflected in the narratives of other participants, and showcased an unwillingness or inability to communicate or support the administration, concerns about the implementation of the new policy, and understanding increased autocratic control (and decreased autonomy) for teachers. Jennifer notes:

> *I don't know what [the superintendent] is doing and I don't care what [the superintendent] is doing. I don't want to figure it out, and I don't want to try to. I haven't had to before... even though [the director of Special Services] tried.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I don't know/ I don't care/ I don't/ I haven't

And later, they state:

> *I'm sorry. I'm not gonna mince words. I mean, there's, there's a way to do things. There's no tact, no finesse. It's like this is the way it's going to be whether it's good, bad or indifferent. You don't ask anybody... [the director of Special Services] said [they] didn't know anything about. Maybe they didn't, maybe they did. I don't know. I don't know. But, I'm not pleased with it was shoved down our throats.*

I'm/ I'm/ I mean/ I don't/ I don't/ I'm not pleased

Repeated listenings of Jennifers narrative support a direct interpretation of her "I" poems, which suggest confusion, resignation ("I don't know/ I don't care"), feelings of isolation, exclusion ("I don't/ I don't/ I haven't") and frustration, ("I am not pleased") in reaction to her experience with the administration's lack of communication and increased autocratic control.

Veronica spoke about how the administration executed the new policy of co-teaching.

> *I'm a little bitter right now because I hear that [the director of special services] said they [administration] are taking us away from the resource kids, too. So, I am currently set to co-teaching all day-which I have no problem with., but its June and I have no idea who my new person is. I mean, I've been polling the whole history department to find out. I have to say communication is a problem with the administration. I think communication is a huge problem. Huge! My boss doesn't have a clue what's going on and [they] the director of special education. And they are purposely keeping [them] out because they don't want to hear. I mean, that's my opinion. They don't want to hear [their] "legalese" what's legal and what's not legal.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I'm a little bitter/ I / I am
I have / I have / I mean / I [have been] I have / I think/ I mean

The repeated listenings of Veronica's narrative clearly verbalizes resentment ("I'm a little bitter"), feelings of indignation ("I/ I am/ I have/ I have"), and uncertainty of her role and how to navigate the situation within the school ("I mean/ I have been/ I have/ I think/ I mean").

During later listenings of Colin's narrative, it became clear that he was acutely aware of the unequal or unfair treatment of the special education teachers by the administration.

> *[The superintendent] literally treat us like like second-class citizens. I mean, we are all highly qualified and have been working our tails of to get these kids where they need to be. [The superintendent] literally called us into the auditorium to tell us that we were failing to do our jobs and that we weren't qualified. She was punishing us with by taking away our classes. I had my own classroom for more than a decade. I have designed a reading program that has proven successful. How could she talk to us like that. I can't wrap my head around it. I see red when I think about how she talks to us.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I mean /I had my own classroom
I have designed
I can't wrap my head around it I see red

These later listenings showed that Colin demonstrates clear resentment, feelings of exclusion and punishment ("I had my own classroom"), confusion ("I can't wrap my head around it") and anger ("I see red") at the administration's treatment of the special education teachers.. During later listenings, the researchers noted that Colin uses the words "punishment" and the phrase "second-class citizens" in the transcript, which further demonstrates the feelings of inequitable treatment of the faculty by the bureaucratic school culture.

In early listenings, the researchers noted John's discussion around the way the administration implemented the new policy and the lack of communication about expectations and input from teachers.

> *One day they were just like; you're teaching a co-teaching class. [The administration] didn't really ask, [the administration] just told us. I mean, I get it, right of assignment. But [the administration] didn't even train us or ask what we thought about anything. Student placement was a nightmare. I think there was not forethought. [The administration] just shoved it down our throats. I don't think they cared at all about what we thought, and we are the experts. I am pretty tired of it.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I mean/ I get/ I think
I don't think
I am pretty tired of it

Further, John's "I" poem indicates he is uncertain about his place ("I mean/ I get/ I think/ I don't think"). In later listenings, it became clear to the researchers that John communicates resentment and feelings of exclusion ("But...[they] didn't even train us or ask us what we thought about anything.") Importantly, this forced silence is seen throughout

these data, as people demonstrate hesitation to speak about, and/or felt silenced by the administration. Yet, even here, John acknowledges his own self efficacy and collective efficacy of the teaching staff ("we are the experts"), but also indicates resignation about his treatment by the administration "I am pretty tired of it."

Through both early and later listenings by the researchers, The *Direct Voice of Red Tape* was voiced as an overt discussion of the effects of school bureaucracy on teacher self-efficacy. Examples were echoed in all 12 interviews, reflecting an acrimony created by a school bureaucracy that limited communication, transparency, autonomy, and voice (and, therefore, teacher- proxy efficacy).

Indirect Voice of Red Tape

In later listenings it became clear that participants were, indirectly, discussing other aspects of the bureaucratic red tape within their positions. During these later listenings, researchers noted that all participants gave voice to the doubt that was instilled by the bureaucratic system, which created a pattern of wavering confidence. Importantly, each participant seemingly internalized the messages of the school bureaucracy, and gave voice to feeling unseen, unheard, replaceable and/or secondary.

During these later listenings, researchers noted that Christina described her presence in the classroom in terms of perennial absence, floating in and out, without impact on students, administrators, or peers.

> *Like, I'm in and out, you know. There's no- and I think that probably a lot of it, too. I'm very like, I'm like a blip in her-- ya. At all. I have nothing in her classroom. Like, I don't leave anything in there. It's not my home base. It's not...*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I'm in and out/ I think
I'm/ I'm a blip
I have nothing [in her classroom]/I don't [leave anything in there]

Christina's "I" poem support this, by indicating her feelings of invisibility and impermanence ("I'm in and out/ I think/ I'm/ I'm a blip") without direct impact of value to the people or the culture of the school. Her "I" poem suggests her resignation to her current situation within the system ("I have nothing/I don't").

Other teacher-participants voiced that, in the face of the system red tape, they just gave up. In both early and later listenings of Katherine's narrative this was apparent. For example, she states:

> *I mean, I think they tried to give us the, [Professor-in-Residence]. Ya, I guess they did that with the hopes of her being somewhat of a support for us? Uh, I didn't really find that at all. I didn't- she didn't come in one of our classes ever and I didn't turn to her for any type of support in any type of way. I know we had, we were directed to sit through some of her presentations but, again, I didn't find it as really like a support. But, I guess the administration was giving her to us as a support.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I mean/ I think [they tried]/ I guess/ I didn't
I didn't
I know/ I didn't
I guess

Katherine's "I" poem suggests that she is hesitant to express her feelings and perceptions regarding the new program and

administration ("I mean/ I think/ I guess"). Katherine also indicates that she felt there was a lack of support by the administration and she was unclear about the administration's goals in the implementation of the new program ("I didn't/ I know/ I didn't/ I guess"). By *existing* in this system, Katherine avoids conflict, punishment, and undue attention; she does not challenge the system, and, in return, the system does not challenge her. Unlike the voice of direct red tape, which offered a direct challenge to the administration, the voice of indirect red tape was, as these data suggest, subtle, hidden, and guided by not disrupting the status quo (while also acknowledging the administration flaws). This particular piece of the contrapuntal voices offered within this analysis reinforce the crucial need for multiple listenings, so hidden themes can become emergent through repetition.

Voice of Teacher Resilience

The contrapuntal voice discussed as the *Voice of Teacher Resilience* emerged when participants were asked about their individual role(s) in the co-teaching classroom. This voice was agentic and revealed a willingness and ability to thrive *despite* system red tape. The *Voice of Teacher Resilience* emerged from these data when teachers shifted their focus away from bureaucratic failures, shortcomings, and difficulties, and centered their professional self-efficacy on student well-being, relationship building, classroom learning, and advancement.

Andrea's agentic voice was identified through multiple listenings, and seemingly honored a commitment to meeting the needs of all her students:

> *I mean, the pace is [different]. I think we have a higher demand on the students this year from resource. Um, ya know, when I personally felt like I was always the um, what did they call me?*

> *The "harder" English teacher out of the special ed or resources because I feel that I challenge them. I hold them to a higher standard, I shouldn't say higher, high standard, but um. And, I feel like it was still a step up this year. So, the pace is different. The content is a little bit, is different. Ya know, I want these students to be exposed to a mainstream curriculum because I think it's important. And a lot of our students that were in resource last year, are going to college. So, they need this college prep. They're going to community college and they're transferring. And I've had students come back to me in the past and they're like "Wow! It was really hard year one because I feel like there was a gap between what we were learning and where we were supposed to be." So, another reason why I was behind co-teaching, is because I think it is important for students to be exposed to these types of materials and requirements of a mainstream class.*

Culled from other points in Andrea's narrative, her "I" Poems further support these repeated listenings and their indication of self-reliance and resilience. For example, when asked about how she plans on continuing her work in the classroom next year, despite uncertainty, she plans to be successful in a less-than ideal situation.

I think/ I am / I think
I can build/ I have / I already have
I can build/ I can change /I can add
I know what worked/ I know what didn't

Here, Andrea thrives *despite* the lack of transparency, training, or communication and the administration questioning of abilities and qualifications. Her self-efficacy is powerful ("I think/ I am/ I think/ I can build/ I have/ I already have"). Andrea illustrates her foundational

belief that she has come through the administrative and programmatic challenges by focusing on her students and how she can be better ("I know what worked/ I know what didn't"). Additionally, she is planning to continue to meet those challenges ("I can build/ I can change/ I can add") to improve in the future.

Similarly, Zeek is acutely aware of bureaucratic pressure. Across the totality of his narrative, his responses honor the requirement of new teachers to be diplomatic when discussing policy, procedures, and decisions mandated by the administration,

> *I think I did- I obviously liked having my own class, my own group of kids. You don't see the same group of kids every day. Um, but I was excited for inclusion. I think it was-I knew it was going to be good for the kids- to kind of not be in that stigma of "Oh, I'm in a resource class" or "It doesn't really matter what I do." Um, I knew it was going to be good for them to get into that general population.*

When asked about co-teaching, Zeek offered his support, framing it as important for the students. However, Zeek's "I" poems reveal his commitment to what is best for his students.

I obviously liked/ I was excited for inclusion/ I think/ I knew/ I knew

The resilience demonstrated across the multiple listenings of Zeek's narrative, one in which he narrates the painful loss his classroom, demonstrated resilience, *despite* the soft power of having your own space among faculty and administrators ("I was excited for inclusion").

Like Andrea, Zeek focuses on the opportunity to provide the best learning environment for his students, even though that means he will have to share instructional time with a co-teacher ("I obviously liked/

I was excited"). His self-efficacy is apparent; he knows that he has the ability to help his students, ("I knew/ I knew"). Lacking resources from administration, Veronica begins to educate herself on the needs of her students, realizing that even provided resources are netted out in ways that create an unintentional, bureaucratic hierarchy.

> *I did hear that the administration sent a select few to the Marilyn Friend Workshop. I understand that those things cost money, but, it would be nice to have access to her material. Because of even last year I found myself googling strategies in a co-teaching classroom because I [could not] believe I was the only person to ever deal with the discord of co-teacher relationship. So, I wanted to know what my options were, but I did that on my own, informally.*

Veronica's accompanying "I" Poems and repeated listenings support a narrative that is self actualizing.

I did/ I understand
I found/ I/ I/ /I wanted to know/ I did that on my own

Veronica's "I" poem shows her flexibility and resourcefulness in the face of lack of support, communication and training by the administration. She takes it upon herself to learn as much as she can about co-teaching best practices to better serve her students and her co-teaching partner ("I found/ I/ I/ /I wanted to know/ I did that on my own"). Her self-efficacy is demonstrated in her actions and her words ("I did/ I understand")"

Finally, Jennifer, when reflecting on nearly 40 years of teaching, spoke in both early and later listenings in terms that showed how she was

agentic *despite* the bureaucracy and operated as her own boss, one guided by personal ethics and a want for change within her students.

> *And I am a real person to them. And they are real people to me. And I like that I just take them for what they are the minute they walk into the classroom. They coulda been killing someone in the hallway. OK, slight exaggeration. But then when they walk in, it's me and it's them and it's us together and we will figure it out. That the way I look at it. I want to figure it out with them. I want to help them do whatever they can do in their lives. And that's the way I want it. And I see them as people. And I explain things to them. I just don't say "Because". Sometimes I do. "It's because I said so. I'm the boss, this is not a democracy. It is a dictatorship, whether you like it or not". And that's the way I do.*

I am/ I /I/ I
I want [to figure it out with them]/ I want [to help them do whatever they can]/ I want
I see/ I explain/ I/ I do
I/ I'm the boss/ I do

Jennifer's narrative indicates that she knows her value is and is flexible enough to solve any problem on her own ("I am/ I/ I/I"). She believes in her own abilities to help her students succeed and is solely focused on helping her students get there, despite the bureaucratic school culture and pressure from the administration ("I want [to figure it out with them]/ I want [to help them do whatever they can]"). Jennifer also describes herself as the expert, the one in charge in her classroom ("I explain/ I/ I do/ I / I'm the boss/ I do"), almost as if the bureaucratic issues do not impact the work she does in her classroom at all. She suggests a powerful, collective efficacy with her co-teacher and her students through the transcripts ("...it's me and it's them and it's us

together and we'll figure it out"), as she describes an ecosystem where there is equality, belonging and value for each member of the co-teaching classroom community.

Findings and Discussion

In an effort to understand teachers' experiences of a complex and layered school culture, this study explored teacher narratives to give voice to, and uncover how, teachers operate in a coercive and transactional school bureaucracy. Specifically, the study focused on teachers' self- efficacy and how rigid school bureaucratic structures impact teacher efficacy. The contrapuntal voices that emerged from the application of the Listening Guide Method to these data revealed that most of the participants felt that, in addition to the red tape, they were exercising some level of silence, motivated by fear of punishment, and/or harboring feelings of valuelessness.

Consistent with the central tenants of Narrative, Feminist, and Critical theory, and the application of the Listening Guide Method, included narratives reveal three consistent themes around teachers' perceptions of the bureaucratic school culture and the impact on organizational effectiveness: (1) teacher reporting the issue of lack of transparency and communication throughout the system; (2) anger expressed at the increased centralization of power, autocratic control; (3) punishment.

Lack of transparency and communication

This is supported by evidence from the "I" poems where teachers discuss not understanding the rationale behind administrative decisions, absence of any chain of command, specifically where to go for administrative support and confusion around what co-teaching roles look like. The lack of transparency fuels the lack of

communication between administration and teachers, administration and other stakeholders, among administrators, themselves, indicative of low level of proxy efficacy in the participants. In fact, the absence of a chain of command is noted across interviews, creating confusion for all stakeholders, especially impactful for teachers implementing a new instructional model with little training or input.

Expressed teacher anger

Teachers cite their anger at the increased centralization of power, autocratic control. This is evidenced by the descriptions "second class citizens," "cogs in a wheel" and "seeing red."

Punishment

The theme of punishment is also evident across the data set. Teachers indicate that they feel that things were taken away unfairly, like autonomy in their own classes, programs they helped develop and students that they were invested in. The theme of punishment is evidenced by the lack of autonomy, specifically feeling like the new program was "shoved down our throats", illustrating the absence of consent, and absence of voice within the system.

Voice on social elements within the system

Teacher narratives indicate that as a result of the transactional bureaucracy, there were three common themes within voice expressed across these data: (1) alienation within the system; (2) lack of belonging both in/ out of the classroom, and (3) lack of value.

Alienation within the system

Alienation within the system is evidenced by teachers' descriptions of feeling they are "in and out," "just a blip" and that they do not feel

secure in their roles within the system, due to lack of training and support.

Lack of belonging

Lack of belonging is highlighted by teachers' anger and resentment due to the labeling that they are lacking the qualifications necessary to be experts, and the humiliation that comes with teaching assignments that feel like punishment. Additionally, aside from the voices of anger and resentment, there were feelings of confusion that emerged from the "I" poems, specifically in relation to their co-teaching counterparts and roles within the classroom.

Lack of value

Lack of value is evidenced by teachers feeling that they have no voice or input in the decision-making, that administrations does not regard them as experts. The existence of this theme compounds the overall lack of trust in administrative behaviors. The voice of powerlessness, that *this* was happening *to* them, and they had no agency to change anything, contributed to the revelation of the voice of resignation.

Reactions to Red Tape

Teacher narratives revealed two kinds of reactions to the transactional school culture: (1) resignation, and (2) resilience.

Resignation

The theme of resignation is evidenced by teachers' self- reporting "exhaustion" from operating within the system, lack of investment /interest in the programs and administrative decision-making, notably because they have no voice. Several teachers suggest that their job is really about survival- negotiating the system with as little negative impact on them as possible. These data indicate that those teachers

who are resigned to the bureaucratic culture feel attacked, undervalued, and replaceable, focusing much of their energy discussing systems over students, with the researchers.

Resilience

Teachers who demonstrate resilience, which is anchored in their self-efficacy, express spirit to transcend the challenges and feeling undervalued within the system. Instead, they double down on the expertise, strength and abilities, in the classroom, where they demonstrate their commitment to their career – helping students succeed (Gschwend, 1999; Gu, 2014). Although these teachers who demonstrate resilience identify all of the same issues of transparency, value, voice, autonomy and fear as the other participants, they balance the interaction between the external conflicts of the social and organizational environment with their own self-reliance, commitment to students, and personal ethics. These resilient teachers are committed to creating conducive learning environments, focusing their energy and efforts on the students in their classes, voicing the value of inclusion, and seeking out their own resources to answer questions or solve problems.

In some cases, these resilient teachers serve as a bridge between the resigned and enraged teachers and the administration, using soft power, attempting to communicate with the leadership for the collective in a clear, respectful way. The complex and layered transactional bureaucracy was merely something these teachers chose to work around in order to do their jobs to the best of their abilities while focusing on the students. Those teachers who maintain a higher level of self- efficacy were able to focus on their own students and classes, appearing to navigate the complex and layered system *despite* the complex and layered school culture and seeming transactional

leadership (Demirbolat et al., 2014). Those teachers demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity.

The contrapuntal voices of the teachers also indicate that, although each teacher believed in their own efficacy, the lack of transparency, administrative support, and general collaboration in the implementation of the co-teaching program deeply affected teacher proxy efficacy, as well as their desire to perform and thrive in the system. Despite the negative impact of the bureaucratic system, teachers did find ways to feel that administrative choice to implement co-teaching may have positively impacted student classroom experiences, as is consistent with the literature on co-teaching instructional model (Friend et al., 2007; Friend, et al., 2010; Friend, 2015), especially in terms of engagement, destigmatization of students with disabilities and social and emotional growth for students across the spectrum of abilities.

Implications and future research

The bureaucratic school culture is indicative of a system that forces people into certain roles, including educational leaders. School administrators are as much a part of, and victims of, the bureaucratic education system as teachers are. To use these data as evidence: all stakeholders, including administrators, are just "cogs in a wheel". The question, then, remains, how do we address the systemic issues associated with transactional school culture?

In the U.S. educational leadership programs are plentiful and often they subscribe to the teaching of proscriptive and ineffective leadership styles (Tienken & Mullen, 2015; Halliger, 2011). However, it would be essential to educate future leaders on the pitfalls of the complex and layered bureaucratic structure. Ultimately, this means an

examination of the system for corrosive behaviors that lead to OS which erodes the core mission of educational systems, writ large. Suggestions for improvement of the preparation of educational leaders include empowering future leaders to articulate their values and create an appropriate professional plan to operate within a system which may contradict their personal leadership values. It may be significant to draw a distinction between educational leadership and educational management (Shaturaev et al., 2021).

Educational leaders are often removed from the actualities that occur within the classroom (Bush, 2011). A challenge that leaders face is having a real world understanding of the changing trends, behaviors, and issues within the classrooms. This is especially salient in the post pandemic world, where U.S. teachers are raising the alarms of notable shortcoming in the social and emotional development of students when compared to students at the same level, pre- pandemic. It would be important for educational leaders to find ways to immerse themselves in the classroom to collect observable data on the trends and behaviors in the classroom, in order to address the issues that are ever-present in a bureaucratic school system.

Implications for research & practice

Based on this study's findings, school administration should try to clarify goals and objectives with stakeholders when beginning a programmatic change. Clearly communicated goals can result in improved trust in the leadership, as well as a higher level of commitment to achieving goals from stakeholders, communicated through teachers as higher levels of efficacy (Santoli et al., 2008). Relatedly, transparency regarding expectations of teachers within the system, specifically regarding teachers' roles within a co-teaching classroom, may increase feelings of efficacy and thereby teacher

resilience. Conversely, clearly communicated roles and expectations from the school leadership may cut down the feelings of resignation and rage, giving the teachers clear goals to achieve and specific tasks to make the programmatic change successful.

Also, administrators should think about giving teachers an opportunity to sit at the proverbial table, as experienced partners and collaborators working towards the same goals, to create a clear path of communication between policy and practice as well as to allow teachers to feel they have a voice in a system that has historically undervalued and dismissed their roles.

Lastly, those teachers who feel silenced by "red tape" could look to their peers who used their voice and resilience, diplomatically, to meet the needs of students to bridge the divide between bureaucratic layers. These teachers emerge as quiet leaders, often using soft power to influence the bureaucracy on different levels. Based on the research on teacher leadership within a bureaucracy and the impetus for teachers to work as agents of change within a system that often has conflicting goals and challenges for those teachers who operate within the system.

Given the limitations of the study, specifically with sample size and site selection, researchers should examine teachers' perceptions of efficacy within the bureaucratic school culture in a post- pandemic world. This would shed light on the undercurrents of change that are sometimes unknowable, except through teacher narratives. This would allow for future policy and practice to be grounded in the most current trends in education. Additionally, researchers might benefit from longitudinal study of teacher efficacy over time, including the pre and post pandemic time periods.

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