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Examining Perspectives of Immigrant Working Learners & Education Providers: CRT as Analytical Framework

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Examining Perspectives of Immigrant Working Learners & Education Providers

CRT as Analytical Framework

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Overview



Context

Frontline service workers
in the US



Theoretical Frame

From sociocultural to
critical theory



Methodology

CRT a priori codes to
better see



Analysis

Figuring out who said
what



Findings

Tensions revealed



Implications

Relationships matter



Context

Frontline workers in the US

Who are frontline service workers in the US?

42%

Are people of color.

Many work in food service, retail,
healthcare & hospitality

30%

Are young adults

Under the age of 35

60–70%

Learning skills

Like language,
literacy, numeracy

Constantakes, P., & Noakes, S. (2019). Tapping data for frontline talent development.
<https://digitalpromise.org/tapping-data-frontline-talent-development/#current-ecosystem>

Race in the workplace : The frontline experience. (2022).
<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/race-in-the-workplace-the-frontline-experience>

The Issue



Frontline Workers



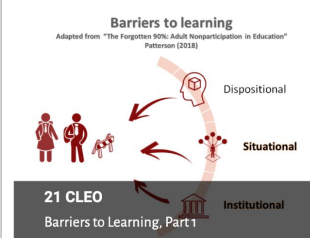
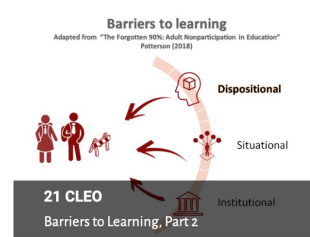
Employers

Literature review

We read into....

- Workforce development/ employer-oriented viewpoints
- Mal-employment
- Structural barriers to education

-
- Racialized systems and exclusion
 - SLA literature centering identity & equity (for example, Darvin & Norton, 2021; Flores & Rosa, 2019; Nelson & Flores, 2019)



<https://edtech.worlded.org/21cleo-news>

Research Questions

What supports English learners' participation and engagement in workplace learning?

Who gets access to learning opportunities?

Whose workplace learning leads to advancement?

What do the perspectives of adult working learners reveal about their education and training when viewed through a CRT lens?





Theoretical Lens

Shift to CRT

Iterative Research: Two Approaches

Sociocultural Theory

(Activity Theory - Engström)

Critical Race Theory

(Crenshaw, 1991; Solorzano, 1997; Bell, 1980;
Yosso, 2005; Gotanda, 1991; Closson, 2010)

Sociocultural frame showed that learners...



Are agentic

Though lit refers to them
as passive participants



Make strategic choices

Based on their goals



Are resilient

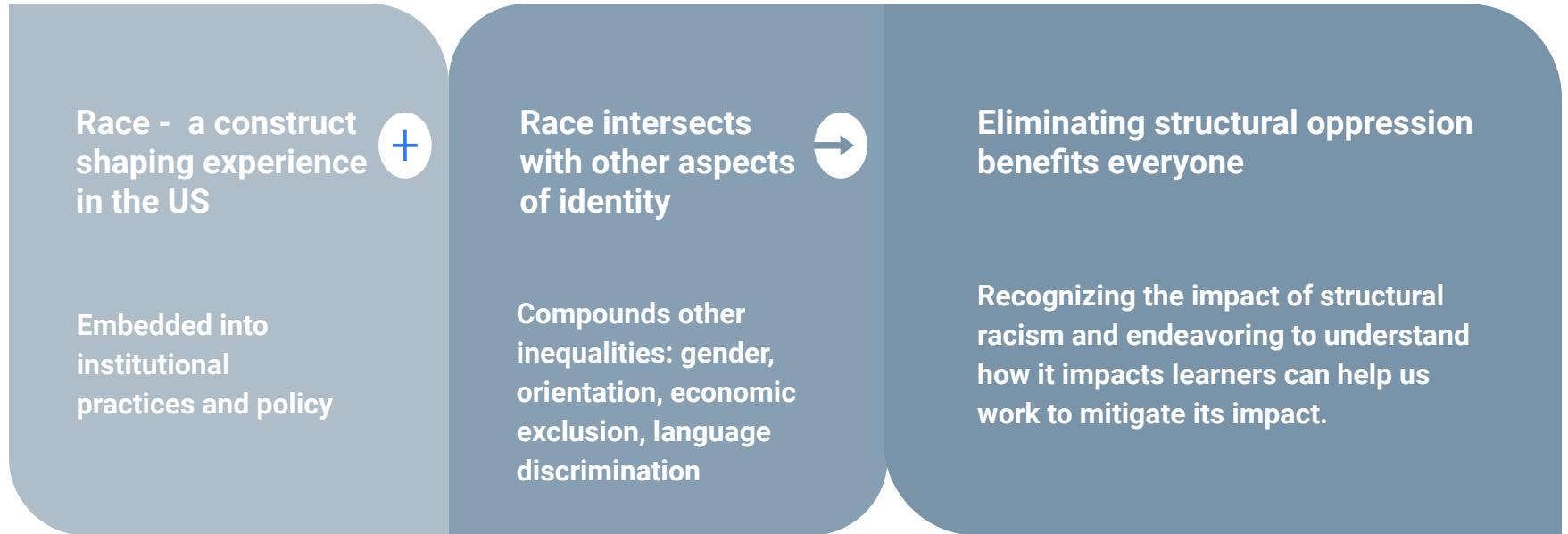
They persist in learning
despite barriers



Independent learning

If no other learning
opportunity is available

Why draw on CRT for adult education research?



(Bell, 1980; Closson, 2010; Crenshaw, 1991; Gotanda, 1991; Solorzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005)



Methodology

Qualitative coding: 2 ways

Our Participants

Frontline service workers engaged in employer supported education and training

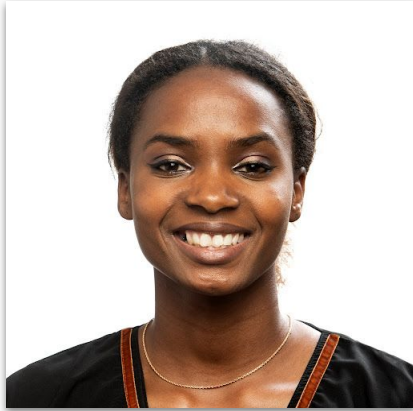
45 first interviews: learners, teachers, supervisors, career navigators

10 follow-up interviews with focal participants who responded to a questionnaire

3 convenings with workforce development advisors, educators, & participant learners



Selected Focal Participants



Ijakoo

- Multilingual (Somali, English)
- BA in Economics
- Job in retail
- Workplace English class
- Single parent of 2 children



Ombeni

- Multilingual
- MA in Management
- Job in computer recycling center
- English class, Bookkeeping, Excel
- Family with 6 children



Muhazzim

- Multilingual
- MA in Business Administration
- Job in retail pharmacy
- Management Certificate
- Part-time father of two children

Qualitative Approach

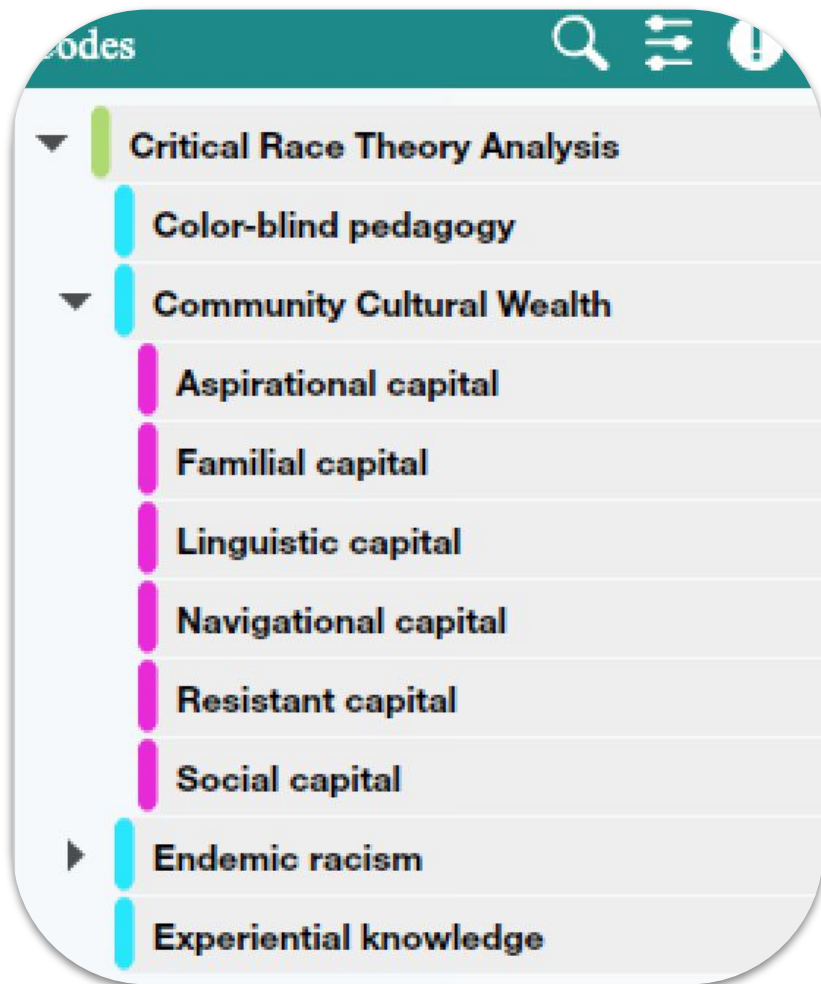
Shift to CRT

Grounded Theory

Open coding of interview data for finding themes, then more focused inductive coding to better understand them

CRT: Building a priori codes

Reviewed seminal CRT literature; pulled salient themes; applied a priori codes to data



Bell, 1980; Closson, 2010;
Crenshaw, 1991; Gotanda,
1991; Solórzano, 1997;
Yosso, 2005



Analysis

Applying a priori codes

333

334 J - [15:05] I see. Okay. So you're thinking of the future when you study now? And the future is to be a CPA?

Range: 10384-10723

User: glojacobs

Aspirational capital

Community Cultural Wealth

Critical Race Theory Analysis

J - Yeah.

316 about a time when learning gets really challenging like it's hard. What do you do?

317

318 M - The first thing when its become a challenge for me in class or school I will try to ask my teacher the first
319 thing I will do. I will try to ask my teacher I didn't get this one I can't understand easily can you help me? And

224 J - [15:05] I see. Okay. So you're thinking of the future when you study now? And the future is to be a CPA?

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Aspirational capital

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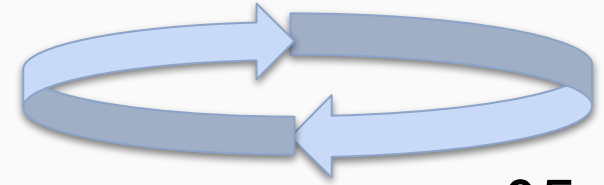
J - Yeah.

Date: 09/10/2020

lection: (9816-9816)

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Analysis Timeline



01

Selected
focal
participant

Applied the
CRT codes

02

03

Identified
salient
themes

Conducted
theoretical
sampling

04

05

Refined
themes,
raised new
questions



Findings & Discussion

Better understanding of learner experience



Findings & Discussion

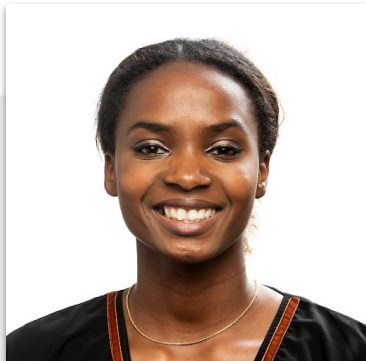
Malemployment

Getting noticed matters

Provision of mediated support

Access to social capital

Who gets noticed can be a site for race, gender, and language discrimination



- From Somalia
- Somali
- Bachelors in Economics
- Currently working in retail
- Learning English
- Hopes to work in software development or IT

Ijakoo

Not recognized or visible

“I used to work [as] a cashier and the schedule and the pay is, it wasn't good so and also I don't see any future on that, that's why I just wanted switch.”



- From Democratic Republic of Congo
- Speaks French, Swahili, Lingala, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, learning English
- Master's in Management
- Worked for 20 years in accounting and finance
- Currently working in a computer recycling center
- Finished bookkeeping, Excel, ESL, will start tax preparation classes

Ombeni

Waits to be noticed

Researcher: Would you ask about the position if someone quit, a supervisor quit, would you ask, to see “Oh, I would like to be a supervisor”

Ombeni: No ((chuckle)), I [couldn't] ask. .. I prefer them to choose me.



- From Pakistan
- Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi as a first languages, English since age 5
- Master's in Business Administration
- Currently working in a drugstore chain as a database support
- Has completed a retail supervisor certificate
- Hopes to go into management

Muhazzim

Seen as having potential

"I keep asking and even, you know, in every evaluation my supervisor commends for me. He said, like, hey, he's the one who will question most of the time, and I love it. He said he literally said, he said, I love it, how much questions you ask, and that's, that's a lot of learning."

A. Not identifying an issue

Perpetuation white supremacy though not named as such.

Codes (Closson, 2010):
Endemic racism, color-blindness

- Ex. Ralph - *“what are you doing that you can't afford a couple hours a day, or, or, you know, half of your Saturday or four hours one evening to, to help further your career?”*
- Matthew; failed to notice race at play in identification of jobs available for BIPOC students

B. Identifying an issue but not problematizing

Willingness to create opportunities, but not questioning limitations of a course set up for the benefit of the employer

Codes (Closson, 2010):
Color blindness, Interest convergence

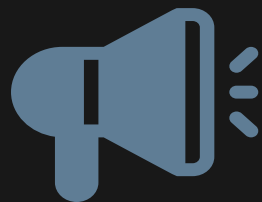
- Lynn noted: location of class in the workplace benefited both the employer setting and the learners.
- Carmen noted: workers needed *“understanding [of soft skills] how to be, how to be someone that the companies would want to hire...”*

C. Identifying an issue and taking action

Recognition of potential perpetuation of white supremacy AND description of how they work to mitigate problem.

Codes (Closson, 2010):
Social Justice Orientation

- Leslie advocated for changes in curriculum and HR training resources to make them more accessible
- Matthew allowed students to bring children to class



Implications

So what?



Practical

Theoretical/Analytical

Training as “opportunity” ???

Mediating scaffolding as
nourishment

CRT as beneficial in SLA research

You have to learn how to see it.

Read more about it.

Jacobs, G.E., Castek, J., Harris, K. and Vanek, J. (2022), "Examining the perspectives of adult working learners and key stakeholders using critical race theory", *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, <https://doi.org/10.1108/HESWBL-08-2021-0158>

Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

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From here to end is not used

