

THESE WALLS CAN TALK: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE INTERIOR
SCHOOLScape OF THREE HIGH SCHOOLS

Joshua Hamilton

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2017

APPROVED:

Janelle Mathis, Major Professor
Carol Wickstrom, Committee Member
Rebecca Fredrickson, Committee Member
Dina Castro, Committee Member
James Laney, Chair of the Department of
Teacher Education and Administration
Randy Bomer, Dean of the College of
Education
Victor Prybutok, Dean of the Toulouse
Graduate School

Hamilton, Joshua. *These Walls Can Talk: An Ethnographic Study of the Interior Schoolscape of Three High Schools*. Doctor of Philosophy (Curriculum and Instruction), December 2017, 173 pp., 4 tables, 20 figures, references, 78 titles.

The schoolhouse is a place in which messages for student consumption are typically found with classroom lectures, text, and activities. As with any social setting, however, the communication is not confined to one space but extends, in this case, to hallways, common spaces, and exterior of the building. One of the most common practices for the delivery of messages to students within the schoolhouse is through visual signage. Visual signage can traverse disciplines encompassing concepts from the fields of communication, semiotics, language, literacy, and even interior design. In an effort to understand the impact these signs have on student populations this dissertation asks the question: How are signs within public high schools produced, consumed, and influential to persons in contact with intended messages that are presented in public school spaces? The study utilizes ethnography to describe the production, consumption, and influence of fixed signs in the interior hallways and common spaces at three public high schools in Texas. At each campus, student volunteers, one from each grade level, provided their individual course schedule to follow their daily route from class to class at their particular high school. Post these observations these students engaged in focus groups to discuss the various signs displayed on their campus. In addition, faculty/staff members from each high school volunteered to participate in a separate faculty/staff focus group to discuss the use of signage in schools and the observations made by both the students and myself during the observations. The data suggest that district directives and social happenings guide the production of messages for each campus. The consumption and influence of these messages though is far more complex as a variety of factors contributed to the student and faculty/staff consumption, or lack thereof, and influence to action. As ethnography, this dissertation sheds

light onto these complexities revealing that a host of external and internal issues dictate the messages displayed through school signage within the individual schoolhouse.

Copyright 2017

by

Joshua Hamilton

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my incredible wife Sydney for assisting me in the journey. Without your love and support this would have never crossed the finish line. To my son Jackson, thank you for the late night and early morning writing sessions. Finally, to my incredible committee, chair Dr. Janelle Mathis, as well as members Dr. Wickstrom, Dr. Castro, and Dr. Fredrickson, you all have been invaluable mentors, colleagues, and friends, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY	1
Background of the Study	1
Research Question	5
Significance of the Study	6
Methodology Overview	7
Limitations	8
Assumptions.....	9
Key Terms.....	9
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	13
Discourse, Language, and Text.....	15
Semiotics.....	18
Sociocultural and Sociolinguistics	22
The Schoolhouse.....	23
Linguistic Landscapes.....	25
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY	28
General Perspective	28
Research Context	28
Research Participants	30
Instruments Used in Data Collection	33
Procedures.....	33
Data Analysis	34
Schoolscape Discursive Practice Model	36
Summary of Methodology	41

CHAPTER 4. CRIMSON HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS	43
Production Elements	47
Consumption	59
Influence	68
Summary	72
CHAPTER 5. VIOLET HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS	74
Production Elements	77
Consumption	84
Influence	90
Summary	98
CHAPTER 6. SAPPHIRE HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS	100
Production Elements	103
Consumption	112
Influence	115
Summary	124
CHAPTER 7. CAMPUS COMPARISONS	126
Production Elements	126
Consumption	131
Influence	137
Summary	140
CHAPTER 8. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	144
Summary of Findings.....	145
Discussion.....	153
Further Research	159
Concluding Thoughts.....	160
APPENDIX A. SCHOOLScape DISCURSIVE PRACTICE MODEL	162
APPENDIX B. LOVE IS RESPECT POSTER.....	164
APPENDIX C. EMERGENT CODING PATTERNS EXAMPLE.....	166
REFERENCES	168

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. School Demographics	29
Table 2. Crimson High School Signage Breakdown	44
Table 3. Violet High School Signage Breakdown	75
Table 4. Sapphire High School Signage Breakdown.....	102

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Schoolscape discursive practice model [adapted from Fairclough (1992) and Scollon & Scollon (2003)].	37
Figure 2. Sample image to illustrate evaluation mechanism.	39
Figure 3. Love is Respect poster.	49
Figure 4. Suicide prevention poster.	51
Figure 5. Crimson High school pride posters.	54
Figure 6. R.E.S.P.E.C.T. poster at Crimson High.	57
Figure 7. Sexual assault awareness poster.	63
Figure 8. Poster placement in main stairway.	67
Figure 9. Violet High School graduation commitment signage.	77
Figure 10. R.I.D.E. sign at Violet High.	80
Figure 11. Love is Respect sign at Violet High.	83
Figure 12. "You are not [his] property" poster.	92
Figure 13. Stairstep messages at Violet High.	94
Figure 14. P.R.I.D.E. posters at Sapphire High.	104
Figure 15. Sapphire High School SAT/ACT sign.	105
Figure 16. "Stop teen dating violence" poster at Sapphire High.	107
Figure 17. "Okay to help a friend" support poster at Sapphire High.	109
Figure 18. "It's okay to tell!" poster at Sapphire High.	111
Figure 19. Cyberbullying poster.	114
Figure 20. Spanish version of "love is not control" poster.	114

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

On a typical weekday, your average teenager presumably follows a consistent and predictable routine. They awake, get ready for their day, grab their belongings to head out to school and proceed with their daily high school schedule. Along the way, this individual becomes accustomed to his/her school environment taking the same paths and general route to get from class to class inside their high school. Routines can become second nature; in fact, adults in most instances follow similar routines to that of the average teenager. Throughout the course of one's day, amidst the steps taken, conversations with peers, and daily endeavors, a form of communication looms in the background: signs. Whether directional, political, socially charged, persuasive, or informational, messages delivered from the signs in our public spaces are constantly entering our lives.

Grounded in the theoretical underpinnings of structuralism and semiotics, this research investigates linguistic landscapes, specifically the messages communicated to students via signage on the interior walls of three high schools in the Fort Worth area. Chapter 1 introduces the study including the background, problem/purpose, research question, significance of the study, overview of the methodology, describe limitations as well as assumptions, research organization and define key terms.

Background of the Study

In the United States, common school advocate Horace Mann began a crusade to investigate public schools in the mid-1830s in his role as secretary of the newly created U.S. Board of Education. Mann's primary interest in the beginning was the physical conditions of

schoolhouses and the impact the conditions had on children (Mondale, Patton, Streep, Bernard, Lemann, Finn, Hoffman, 2001). Mann was troubled with the physical dilapidation of the buildings and his investigation was one of the first major research efforts to understand the physical scape of the schoolhouse. At the turn of the century, scholars began focusing on the architectural messages of the schoolhouse, from wooden barn like structures to elaborate brick and stone spaces that resembled castles. In each, however, the focus on space and efficiency was often at the forefront of the design (Weisser, 2006). The design of the schoolhouse has been a place of study for researchers with a diversity of interest for centuries. They were often concerned with the well being of various segments of the population residing in the schoolhouse and/or the social issues represented or carried out via school policies.

In the past decade, the focus on school building design has been examined via various lenses, including the impact of design on autistic students (Mostafa, 2014), design of schools for social connections and advancing collaborative learning in the digital age (Mahony, Hextall, & Richardson, 2011), and recently, due to the national guidelines on school lunches and a societal focus on fighting childhood obesity, a heavy emphasis has been placed on the architecture and design of schools to promote healthy eating and physical activity (Huang, Sorensen, Davis, Frerichs, Brittin, Celentano, & Trowbridge, 2013; Brittin, Sorensen, Trowbridge, Lee, Breithecker, Frerichs, & Huang, 2015; Frerichs, Brittin, Sorensen, Trowbridge, Yaroch, Siahpush, & Huang, 2015). The schoolhouse itself has often been a space for sending messages both social and political.

The architecture and structure of the schoolhouse is only one element of the equation. In order to understand the discursive practices of schools today, it is pivotal to explore inside the building to understand what and how messages are communicated through the architecture of

schools to those who dwell within. Signage is one area of messaging within schools that has received limited attention from scholars. Most studies today regarding the messages to students inside schools are focused on spatial communication and signage use within school libraries. For instance, Beecher (2009) studied the communication of a public school library and noted “one of the most common current forms of spatial written communication is signage” (p. 22). This fascination with the communication of school libraries has found a space among researchers including Johnston and Mandel (2014), Zaugg, Child, Bennett, Brown, Alcaraz, Allred, and Zandamela, (2016), and Huang, Shu, Yeh, and Zeng, (2016). The various places, such as libraries, in which students congregate within the schoolhouse provide an opportunity for examination into how the signs and symbols presented within each space resonate with the consumer. This concern, however, cannot merely be limited to directional, spatial, or way-finding techniques in research provided by the aforementioned library studies; the issue of messaging in public spaces extends beyond the stacks of libraries.

Additionally, trends in research as of late that deal directly with the visual components of communication with school aged children are set within the classrooms themselves, stemming from the field of social semiotics. Social semiotic work in the current research often utilizes the framework provided by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Visual semiotic scholars often credit these two, citing their theoretical framework for visual content, which details several key elements for analysis of visual content. Three structures the authors sketch for use within an analysis include: (1) social distance and relation, which refers to the proxemics of the message to the messenger and relationship this represents; (2) modality, including the image type, colors, lighting, saturation, etc.; (3) angle and point of view, both the horizontal and vertical placement of said image and the angles inside the image itself. This framework has often been utilized as

the foundation for other scholars working with visual images in social spaces due to its practical implications for examining images' various forms and functions.

Danielsson (2016) explored the use of semiotics in chemistry classrooms in the United States and offered a call to action to educators to become more aware of their semiotic choices, including their speech, writing, images, symbols, graphs/diagrams, etc., and encouraged modality in their lesson planning to help diversify learning. From teacher to text book Dimmel and Herbst (2015) explores the signs, symbols and images in twenty-two high school geometry textbooks across the United States to explore how meaning is represented in these sign systems.

From the beginning works of semiotics and the often-acknowledged founder, Ferdinand de Saussure, to the current semiotic scholars of today, the field of social semiotics, including the visual, has often been concerned with the implication of sign systems and their meaning/representation (Deely, 2009). However, little research is identifying the social impact of sign systems on students during their everyday schooling experience. Semiotics resources can assist in the research regarding school sign systems. The term was first coined by Michael Halliday, and was the foundational idea for which van Leeuwen (2005) established the concept of social semiotics. In this sense, social semiotic research explores the notions of language both written and non-verbal, including texts and images inside the social setting in which the language is located. However, as van Leeuwen acknowledges, social semiotic works cannot be left alone; they are not pure theory. Thus, in order to investigate the signs and messages communicated in our everyday lives, it is paramount that researchers establish a theoretical framework to work in tandem with the social semiotic ideology. Together these ideologies can aid researchers in understanding the complex nature of signs and messaging within the lived world.

When it comes to the everyday experience of students, research has suggested that schoolhouse designers and stakeholders do consider the public, interior spaces, but more often than not, they are concerned with flow, efficiency, and safety, attempting to minimize potential crime risks (Lee & Ha, 2016). Although much of the research is rooted within the field of education or linguistics, little has provided an insight into the lived experiences of students consuming everyday messages. Thus, seeking research on this topic has led me outside traditional disciplines to the field of interior design to explore the spaces of schoolhouse and the messages being communicated to students via signs.

Strickland and Hadjiyanni (2013) served as a primary source of inspiration for this study. Their research on the interior walls of schoolhouses focused on the impact these messages have on student identity. Their study will be revisited later. Strickland and Hadjiyanni do note, however, other researchers in the field of design that have conducted similar studies, most of which were used for doctoral dissertations. This lack then of published literature that investigates the social spaces of schoolhouses and the signage within creates a space for further investigation into the messages being presented and consumed in these spaces.

Research Question

In order to better understand the linguistic landscape and social semiotics at work during high school students' everyday experiences within their schoolhouse, this research study seeks to answer the following question:

How are signs within public high schools produced, consumed, and influential to persons in contact with intended messages that are presented in public school spaces?

Significance of the Study

The hope for this study is that it will contribute to the vast body of literature in linguistics, semiotics, and communication by providing a description of the discursive practices within high schools via the visual messages students consume in their everyday schooling experience. This study is situated in real-life situations of everyday high school students and thus provides an opportunity to explore the potential influence and understanding of signage viewed by students in a given day. Someone within a schoolhouse is spending time to produce and distribute these messages, and thus it stands to reason that they are believed to be meaningful in some aspect. As an ethnographic study, the description of the student experience in conjunction with the intentions of stakeholders and an analysis of the signs themselves provide a glimpse into the potential influence/effectiveness of school signage. A primary goal of the study is to assist all parties involved in the process of creation and distribution of school signs become more aware of the potential impact messages on display within the school setting can have on individuals.

Furthermore, the cross-curricular nature of such a study may provide insight for researchers in a variety of fields from education to interior design. Although some research has been conducted in this arena, very few studies have examined the social spaces and linguistic landscape of the schoolhouse walls themselves. The hope of this study is that it can be used as an educational tool for educators, students, and stakeholders alike in order to provide a descriptive account of how signs within public high schools are produced, consumed, and influential to persons in contact with messages presented in public school spaces. To provide a descriptive account, this study utilizes a qualitative research perspective, specifically

ethnography. As such, a variety of qualitative methods were employed to assist with the description.

Methodology Overview

Three suburban high schools in the same district in Fort Worth, Texas serve as the centerpiece and context of the study. The focus is on the interior spaces that make up the schools, including hallways, major intersections of said hallways, the cafeteria, and the front/back foyer of each building. These are the spaces in each school that are the most accessible to students and are traveled through at least once per day by the average student. Within each of these spaces, the signage on display within each area is the primary participant of the study.

The research also utilized focus groups: two at each school one of students, the other of faculty/staff. The groups are comprised at each campus of four students, one from each grade level (9, 10, 11, 12) and a varying number of faculty/staff including a school administrator, a core teacher, guidance counselor, and a teacher highly involved through extracurricular activities on campus as a sponsor of at least one activity on campus.

In total, the human participants of the study were nine adult faculty/staff members: four from Crimson High, two from Violet (due to an unforeseen emergency with participants leaving prior to the start of the focus group), and three from Sapphire. Additionally, twelve students, one from each grade level at each high school, participated. A description of each participant can be found in Chapter 3. Every human participant completed an IRB approved consent form after the study was explained and their consent given. In addition, approval from the school district was

obtained to conduct the study as each building is under the direction and ownership of the school district.

As an ethnographic study, several of the key components to doing ethnography were used to shape the methods and instruments as outlined by Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte, (1999). Field notes and photographs were collected over the course of the spring semester at each high school, with two observation walks at each high school during the spring of 2017 at two different times, once while school was in session, and once when school ended. The student and faculty/staff focus group interviews were conducted separately with the groups as outlined above and occurred after the walks during an agreed upon time for all participants. The focus groups were recorded using the application Evernote, then transcribed using Microsoft Word. During the interviews I kept observation notes to track participants' nonverbal behavior as well.

Limitations

The sample size and timeframe serve as limitations to this study. The sample size is limited to only three high schools, with four students and a few adults from each campus. This size was utilized for data manageability purposes but a study such as this could be replicated and expanded to include several more campuses and/or participants. In addition, the data collection occurred in the spring of 2017 which produced a time limitation for two reasons: (1) at this time the social and political climate of the nation is different than other points in the past and those that will occur in the future, which is unavoidable; (2) the spring semester is only a snapshot into the interior designing of halls inside these schools. Presumably, signs are moved, altered, added/removed, etc. in the fall and/or winter periods at these high schools.

Assumptions

The assumptions I have for this study are drawn from my previous work in one of my doctoral courses in which I investigated for a course assignment the signs and symbols within the high school where I teach. This assignment shed light upon the various messages being portrayed from signs within my schoolhouse and led me to understand that signs are a complex and multidimensional component of school life. It is my belief that this study will come to shed light upon the inconsistencies in messages when it comes to school signage. As an educator, I have witnessed first-hand the juxtaposition between verbal messaging/dialogue with students next to the non-verbal/visual representations of student life and expectations on our school walls. In addition, I believe that school administrators, teachers, and stakeholders are largely unaware of the messages being consumed by students during the course of the day from the signage they come in contact with. I assume that diversity and equal representation within school signs including photos showing diverse students and language that appeals to various races and ethnicities is lacking even in the schools with highly diverse populations. My assumptions aside, the goal of this study is to observe these occurrences as an ethnographic study rather than assume and either confirm or deny. These assumptions are purely the initial motivating concerns I had to pursue such a study. Nonetheless, it is important that the reader understand that I have come into the study with these assumptions based upon my previous experiences.

Key Terms

Often, schoolhouse walls can be flooded with signage depending on the time and climate of the school at a given time. This reality required then a narrow scope into the signage collected and analyzed for purposes of answering the research question. Therefore, signage used for the

study needed to be determined as a fixed sign rather than temporary. Hooperet. al. (2014) was utilized to define these two elements:

- Fixed – little possibility of change
- Temporary – not permanent or transitional.

In practice, fixed signs were typically found to be of professional quality, color printed, and laminated or printed on sustainable materials. Temporary signs however were usually not laminated, printed using standard 8.5 X 11 sized copy paper, and often, in black and white. Additionally, signs/posters produced by clubs/organization on campus as well as directional signs were classified for the purposes of this study as temporary, as they were not intended for stay longer than a seasonal period.

During the analysis of the data, several concepts associated with Scollon and Scollon-Wong's work on geosemiotics were utilized. These concepts are foundational to the study and require an explanation of the various terms/concepts. Each of the terms within this section is either specifically defined from the authors' works, or summarized concepts. Included in the terms is Scollon and Scollon-Wong's use of the works by Kress and van Leeuwen. Those specific to Scollon and Scollon work in geosemiotics include:

- Code preference. The manner in which signage can index (point to/locate) or symbolize (associate with something else) a place or idea (p. 115-120).
- Geosemiotics. "The study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs in the world. By 'signs' we mean to include any semiotic systems including language and discourse" (p. 109).
- Inscription. Texts typeface, material in which text is printed, and the manner in which text on material is hung/positioned (p. 129).

- Interaction order. Adapted from Erving Goffman's "rough categorization of the forms of social interactions we produce when we come together; these include the following: single, with, file or procession, queue, contact, service encounter, conversational encounter, meeting, people-processing encounter (gatekeeping encounter), platform event (watch), celebratory occasion" (p. 212).

- Placement. The physical placement of signage in addition to its indexicality with regards to its interaction with other signs and with respect to the signs meaning (p. 23).

- Place semiotics. "a loose (non-theoretical) set of semiotic systems including code preference, inscription, emplacement but also anything in the built environment or possibly even the weather or regular climate patterns which contribute to the meaning of the place" (p. 214).

- Public performance. Associated with personal acts including how one acts or refrains from acting in a given circumstance as dictated by one's surroundings (p. 74-76).

- Sense of time. This concept has two key factors – urgency and monochronism. Urgency in this sense is illustrated through rapid body movements, signs of impatience, nervousness, or changing positions. Monochronism in contrast is one activity at a time (p. 50-51).

Additionally, several concepts of Kress and van Leeuwen's grammar of visual signs were utilized during the analysis as recommended by Scollon and Scollon-Wong. Specifically for this study, those recommended were:

- Composition. "In visual semiotics, the meanings produced by the relationships in space within a picture. Three main systems are the ideal-real, the given-new, and the center-margin relationships" (p. 209).

- Interactive participants. “In visual semiotics, any element of a picture (image or text) which is designed as being in relationship with a viewer or reader outside of the picture” (p. 212).

- Modality. “The property of showing the degree of validity or truth value in a picture through such means as color saturation, or the use of diagrams as opposed to photographic images” (p. 213).

- Represented participants. “In visual semiotics, any element of a picture (image or text) which is designed as being in relationship with another element in that picture” (p. 215).

These concepts aid in the analysis of each school’s signage by painting a description of the signs themselves and the environment in which they are placed. Throughout Chapters 4 through 7, these concepts are utilized in each section as needed.

Additionally, culture, specifically school culture/environment, is critical to this study. Culture is a complex notion that must be defined within the context of a given study as it has vast meaning across a variety of fields. Russian scholar, Yuri Lotman’s (1990) definition of culture grounds this study as it pertains directly to culture within language and discourse. He notes that culture is defined as “totality of nonhereditary information acquired, preserved, and transmitted by the various groups of human society” (p. 213).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Signs and symbols are part of our everyday lives that we can never escape. From the moment we leave our homes we are flooded with various messages competing for our attention. Messages have been studied for centuries to examine their meaning, relevance, effectiveness, etc. From Aristotle to Ferdinand de Saussure the understanding of signs and symbols has fascinated researchers while expanding the fields, terms, uses, and research concerning these communications (Swiggers, 2013). Philosopher Charles Peirce (1902) defines a sign as “anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its interpretant, that the latter is thereby immediately determined by the former” (p. 478). A sign then is never simple. For Peirce, the complexity of the sign accounts for the various interpretations of both the sender and receiver. Authors throughout the past century have developed ideas, theories, and practices regarding the definition, use, and analysis of signs in our everyday worlds. In order to understand the implication of signs in education it is paramount to uncover the social, environmental, and linguistic underpinnings associated in socio-linguistics, structuralist, and constructivist ideology.

This study is rooted in the theoretical concepts of structuralism. Structuralism as Choat (2010) explains has no set platform that is written in stone, but rather utilizes various scholars who have contributed in varying ways to the theory, including Strauss, Althusser, Barthes, Lacan, and Saussure. To ground this study, the concepts associated with Saussure structuralism are employed due to his focus in the semiotic structures and systems. Choat acknowledges that Saussure’s contributions to structuralism include a focus on unconscious systems, the study of the interrelatedness of said systems, and a synchronic analysis of systems (p. 11-12).

Within the larger theory of structuralism, “linguistic landscapes” is a concept that was first described by Landry and Bourhis (1997), who assert that a linguistic landscape occurs when “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combine to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (p. 25). Their work was later expanded by Shohamy and Guter in Shibliyev and Erozan (2010), noting that linguistic landscapes are applicable to a range of disciplines including: “geography, education, sociology, politics, environmental studies, semiotics, communication, architecture, urban planning, literacy applied linguistics, and economics; they are interested in understanding the deeper meanings and messages conveyed in language in places and space” (p. 2). Thus, linguistic landscapes in this study cross a variety of disciplines to be situated amongst research interested in the signage of schools within public spaces.

Scollon and Scollon-Wong (2003) in their work entitled *Discourses in Place* outline a variety of techniques and characteristics for identifying messages in public spaces. They propose the use of what they call a geosemiotic framework to assist in exploring meaning within signage and messaging. The framework is expanded in Chapter 3, but as a starting point, this framework seeks to encompass the multiple factors associated with studying such a vast and complex set of data through specified characteristics. Scollon and Scollon-Wong often reference the aforementioned works of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), specifically the three structures needed for analyzing social semiotic works. Each of these three structures can be found in the study while overlapping with the concepts of Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model for studying discourse analysis. A full analysis framing shall be addressed in forthcoming chapters.

Discourse, Language, and Text

Linguistic studies as a discipline have emerged in terms of approach during the past centuries. The nineteenth century used ethnographic approaches, exploring various languages and historical contexts of how they functioned/emerged. The twentieth century however brought forth a formalist approach that allowed Ferdinand de Saussure's works to propel linguistic studies from the primarily qualitative to a more quantifiable arena. Saussure helped to establish the structuralist linguistic camp while Derrida introduced the post-structuralist ideology, arguing for deconstruction and the lack of center in construction of language and meaning. The paradigm struggle between these two camps centered on the presence of the self. Dimitriadis and Kamberelis (2006) provide in their text a culmination of literacy and education scholars whose works have influenced the field of education over time. In terms of linguistic scholars, they acknowledge Derrida and Saussure as pivotal to understanding the fundamentals of literacy/language practices beginning with Saussure.

Ferdinand de Saussure was a Swiss linguistic scholar whose work is commonly associated with structural linguistics, which deals with the interrelated structures within language. Saussure focused on language systems as signs and in doing so coined two terms still utilized in the field today – *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* is the systematic structure from which we communicate, while *parole*, or speech, refers to the actual utterance itself (Saussure, 1959). Saussure's work was influential to a range of scholars, including Bakhtin in his notions on heteroglossia, dialogism, and utterance, which stem from the foundations of Saussurian structuralism (2006, p. 38-44).

Jaquez Derrida, as Dimitriadis and Kamberelis (2006) acknowledge, wrote in contrast to the works of Saussure on structuralism and is often noted as giving birth to the post-structuralism

era through the notion of deconstruction. For Derrida, language and text require the consumer to closely examine the structure of text to investigate how and why a message was constructed. Deconstruction in education affords researchers an avenue to examine practices, policies, and pedagogical decisions.

Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian philosopher, was influenced by the structuralist ideology but claims that structure alone cannot account for the living context in which words/meanings are created and exchanged (Renfrew, 2014). His concept of utterance accounts for a variety of other occurrences within the linguistic process. “The utterance is, in short, the medium in which the architectonic structure of interpersonal relations, in life or in literature, becomes perceptible in its eventness” (p. 65). Bakhtin himself outlines the utterance throughout his work, Bakhtin, Holquist, and Emerson, (1986):

Every utterance must be regarded as primarily a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere [...]. Each utterance refutes affirms, supplements, and relies upon the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account [...]. Therefore, each kind of utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication. (p. 91)

The concept of utterance then considers the multitude of reactions and responses within the larger event of communication. This concept runs throughout his works. His epistemological stance is outlined in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984) where he acknowledges that “truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction” (p. 110). The notion of truth by Bakhtin’s account is interwoven within the exchanges occurring through the dialogic.

For Bakhtin, time and space are vastly important to understanding linguistics. He employs the word chronotope (1981), originally derived by Einstein, to understand the time-

space phenomenon in literature. With narratives, the placement and time with visual texts in terms of how they shape one's narrative is significant (Morson & Emerson, 1990; Bieger, 2015; Doloughan, 2015). A chronotopic framing allows for an investigation of not only the message, but the variables outside of the direct message as well. For Bakhtin, this included the verbal, non-verbal, social, contextual, and historical. These ideas traverse disciplines and scholars. In fact, Bakhtin and a group of colleagues, which became known as the Bakhtin circle, wrote, discussed, and taught on the issues concerning language and culture for decades and have become more relevant and topical today than perhaps in their prime (Petrilli, 2016).

Bakhtin's work became influential in an assortment of fields. With regards to language practices, renowned scholar Norman Fairclough draws upon the works of Bakhtin, specifically interested in how the utterance shapes social practices and environment (Reyes, 2011). For Fairclough, the notions of text, language, and discourse are broad. In fact, he acknowledges that each are vast, noting that

written and printed text such as shopping lists and newspaper articles are "text," but so also are transcripts of (spoken) conversations and interviews, as well as television programmes and web pages. We might say that any actual instance of language in use is a 'text' – though even that is too limited, because texts such as a television programmes involved not only language but also visual images and sound effects. The term 'language' will be used in its most usual sense to mean verbal language – words, sentences, etc. We can talk of 'language in a general way, or of a particular language such as English or Swahili. The term discourse (in what is widely called 'discourse analysis') signals the particular view of language in use I have referred to above – as an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements. But again, the term be used in a ritual as well as a general, abstract way... (2003, p. 3-4)

This notion that texts are multifaceted and complex, acknowledges that an utterance is never simply, simplistic. The various environmental, social, political, and modalities of text in language all contribute to the discourse, and each component is vital for understanding discursive practices. Fairclough is well known for his work in discourse analysis, which shall be outlined in

greater detail in the methodology section dealing directly with this studies data analysis. It is paramount nonetheless to acknowledge that the theory of these scholars can be traced to the structuralist and social-constructivist camps. For both scholars, the discourse alone does not acknowledge the entire story—the time and space play a pivotal role as well. This concept, then, crosses disciplines into fields of communication, anthropology, and sociology as it speaks to the wider concept of who, what, and how messages are communicated (Griffiths, Merrison, & Bloomer, 2010).

Semiotics

If, as Bakhtin and Fairclough indicate, the time and space of discourse are intertwined, then various components within each become of vital importance. Semiotics helps provide an understanding of the vast array of messages constructed within space. Yuri Lotman, acclaimed Russian scholar in structuralism and semiotics that founded the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School at Tartu University in Estonia, published throughout his career around eight hundred scholarly level works ranging in topics dealing with semiotics and structuralism (Nelk, et al., 2009). His work in semiotics focused initially on the process of communication and the complexity of signs and systems in the communication process (Lotman, 1977). His later works focused on the role of culture within language and discourse. For Lotman, culture is the “totality of nonhereditary information acquired, preserved, and transmitted by the various groups of human society” (p. 213). This relationship between individuals and the information acquired within the environment became known in later works as the semiosphere. Lotman (1990) notes “the semiosphere is the result and the condition for the development of culture” (p. 125). In this regard the semiosphere

functions as a way of viewing the process of semiotics in an interconnected environment.

Lotman provides the best illustration of the semiosphere:

As an example of a single world looked at synchronically, imagine a museum hall where exhibits from different periods are on display, along with inscriptions in known and unknown languages, and instructions for decoding them; besides there are the explanations composed by the museum staff, plans for tours, and rules for the behavior of the visitors. Imagine also in this hall tour-leaders and the visitors and imagine all this as a single mechanism (which in a certain sense it is). This is an image of the semiosphere. (1990, pp. 126-127)

It stands to reason then that the semiosphere is a complex system of messages and environmental factors that inhabit one's space working together to formulate the person in the space. Lotman acknowledges this relationship is complicated, stating that "on the one hand, the image is created by man, and on the other, it actively forms the person immersed in it" (p. 204). In this regard, the formulation of the individual is multifaceted, dealing with a variety of factors influencing the individual at any different time and in any given space.

Zylko (2001) explores a multitude of the concepts and texts of Lotman during his career, which is necessary to understand his works as a whole. His in-depth analysis of the various conceptions and influences of the scholar depicts a man fascinated with the relationship of culture and semiotics. It is imperative to acknowledge the influence and leading voice Lotman had on the Moscow-Tartu group which sought to comprise a new language in humanities. Zylko acknowledges the various scholarly works that grounded the group during the mid to late fifties. "The most important sources were structural linguistics (Roman Jakobson, Nikolai Trubetzkoy), the Russian formalist school (Yuri Tynjanov), the works of the Bakhtin circle, folklore studies (Vladimir Propp, Peter Bogatyrev), psychology (Lev Vygotsky), and film technique (Eisenstein)" (p. 392). Lotman was clearly influenced as well as concerned with the various components that affect the study of semiotics, from those of the time-space and utterance

associated with the Bakhtinian Circle, to the social impact of acquiring knowledge as outlined by Vygotsky.

This cross-disciplinary influence allows Lotman's work to be applied in a variety of areas, as he traverses the disciplines of semiotics, space, and culture. Zylko confirms the relevance of Lotman's work with landscapes and semiotics, noting that a Lotman-focused mindset would note a "landscape as an object of geography has no meaning on its own, unless it enters consciousness as (for example) an object of aesthetic contemplation" (p. 394). This analysis is consistent with the understanding of the semiosphere. Lotman's work in the treatment of text as culture and vice versa, gives researchers an opportunity to examine the two concurrently while being part of the same system at varying levels (Torop, 2009).

It is important to note that although Lotman identified through his career as a structuralist (*Universe of the Mind* is a leading example), his later writings (1990) pivoted toward post-structuralism, even though he never identified as such (Schönle & Shine, 2006). Nöth, (2015) explains that "in contrast to his earlier writings influenced by information theory and Saussurean structuralism, Lotman's new model of culture as a semiosphere represents clearly a poststructuralist position" (p. 17). This turn allows Lotman's work to move with the changing ideology of culture in the globalized world. Lotman was not writing during the technologically advanced world in which we live today and therefore could not account for the changing landscape of culture within an interconnected world. It is clear though that the theoretical underpinning of his work in semiotics and culture, whether structuralist or post, creates a foundation for exploring 21st Century intersections of semiotics and culture.

When analyzing semiotic scholars, a variety of approaches and outlooks have emerged concerning what, when, how, and where semiotics should be approached for analysis and using

which method. In fact, within the semiotic community, debates on the function of semiotic structures in terms of best practices for analyzing have continued for decades. Lagopoulos and Boklund-Lagopoulou (2014) note these contrasting viewpoints, specifically regarding the works of Lotman as well as Medvedeu and Bakhtin. For them however, the intersection of ideologies creates an argument for the importance of studying space in semiotics. They acknowledge that “the space referred to may be a model for actual space, a conception of an actually existing space, which would thus belong on the addressee side of the spatial communication circuit, or it may be an imaginary space” (p. 465). The direct study then of an actual existing space, such as this study, does not discount the theoretical underpinning of the seminal authors, but requires, in addition, the understanding of spatial communication.

Edward Hall (1963) distinguished various types of spatial distances: intimate distance, personal distance, social distance, and public distance; each category, however, in this foundational communication study focuses on the interactions in spatial appropriateness between human subjects. In order to understand the function of space and communication between semiotic messages and humans, territorial space must be considered as well. Altman (1975) acknowledges three types of territories: primary, one’s main dwelling place such as your home; secondary, a space in which one frequents often; and public, which is available to the public at large such as a restaurant or movie theatre. Schoolhouses pose a unique challenge to designating the spatial territorial terrain in that each space, and school as a whole, may have varying allocations of said territory for each individual. For instance, students at large may all have everyday interactions in common places of the school such as the hallways, main entrance, or cafeteria. On the other hand, the library may be a place that feels as a secondary territory to

some and never frequented, but may constitute a public space, visited often by others. This dynamic requires then an understanding of both the space and the individual.

Stables (2006) argues that simply living is a means of semiotic engagement. In terms of learning, he goes on to assert that within the process of learning we must abandon the dualism of mind and body claimed by Decartes in order to understand that while we are living, we are engaged in semiotics. Furthermore, Stables faults a lack of teaching and acknowledging semiotics in education today to this dualistic mindset and encourages a break from this mentality to become keenly aware of student experiences with semiotics. In this regard, learning theory and education practice becomes a space that explores the wide range of learning through experience and connections both with the culturally structured semiotics around us, and those we create ourselves, ceasing to claim the two as mutually exclusive.

Sociocultural and Sociolinguistics

Often the terms associated within sociocultural theory are used interchangeably; however, differences do exist, especially with regards to specific use applications in a given study (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). A sociocultural framework is grounded in the notion of learning through interactions within one's context (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978). The process of learning is not only developed through social interactions, but from observation within the environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Sociolinguistic theory, applied in this study, stems from the larger umbrella of sociocultural associated with constructivism and social learning perspectives. Bloome and Green (1984) explain the theory:

As a social process, reading is used to establish, structure, and maintain social relationships between and among people. As a linguistic process, reading is used to communicate intentions and meanings, not only between an author and a reader, but also between people involved in a reading event. (p. 395)

Deeply rooted in the field of anthropology, sociolinguistic theory provides a base for investigating issues surrounding language used in social settings to communicate direction and value to readers. Thus, in applying the concepts of linguistic landscapes to schoolhouses, the concepts associated with sociolinguistic theory becomes useful to explore the impact of messages presented to students within their daily educational routine. Furthermore, in diverse school settings where students' socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds vary widely, the sociolinguistic theory proves useful to exploring issues surrounding the potential inequities within the linguistic landscape.

Renowned scholar Shirley Brice Heath (1982) challenges teachers and researchers alike to call to question the linguistic landscapes of our schools. In this seminal piece she notes that “teachers (and researchers alike) have not recognized that ways of taking from books are as much part of learned behavior as are ways of eating, sitting, playing games, and building houses” (p. 49). In addition, her research goes on to examine three communities, diverse both economically and culturally, to explore how the social and cultural influences of a community affect students' literacy orientation and interactions. If the community environment can influence the literacy practice, then it stands to reason that students in highly diverse schools may experience within the schoolhouse contrasting, affirming, and/or convoluted messages from their school environment to home and community. It is paramount that stakeholders, specifically those in power within education today, understand that the messages sent to students do not begin and end in the classroom; they are throughout the landscape of the school.

The Schoolhouse

Alfie Kohn has conducted extensive research on the classroom environment as well as

created tools for teachers to use that help make informed decisions about what to display for student consumption in classroom settings. His work led to the production of an easy to read chart, “What to look for in a classroom” (2014). The chart explores several dynamics of a classroom setting including tables, chairs, lighting, student face, and the interior walls. For this study’s purpose, his thoughts on the interior spaces prove useful. He uses two columns: on the left, “good signs;” on the right, “reasons to worry,” that are then applied to the classroom dynamics. Good signs for the interior spaces included: “covered with students’ projects, evidence of student collaboration, signs, exhibits, or lists obviously created by students rather than by the teacher, and information about, and personal mementos of, the people who spend their time in the classroom” (p. xx). On the contrary, things you may see to worry about included: “nothing, commercial posters, students’ assignment displayed, but they are (a) suspiciously flawless, (b) only from the “the best” students, or (c) virtually all alike, a list of rules created by an adult and/or list of punitive consequences for misbehavior” (p. xx). While the analysis of interior classroom spaces is contextually different than the current study, Kohn’s findings are a clear indication that posters matter. Signs produce a form of communication that is open for interpretation and ripe for consumption. Furthermore, his labeling of commercial posters as a reason to worry, as well as his notion that student led/created signs are good, provides another voice as to why examining public school space signs is critical as it allows for us to continue to observe and question these messages in public spaces, many of which may fall into one of these two categories.

Kohn (2000) identifies various classroom signs that he believes are giving off the wrong message to students who dwell within. For instance, the probably all-too-familiar no (fill in the blank) sign. A common example is “no whining,” or the word “whining” within a red circle,

with a diagonal slash through the center. Kohn asserts that these signs send negative signals to students. In the whining example, he hypothesizes that students are led to believe that the teacher has no interest in hearing their complaints, explanations, or criticism within the classroom(s) displaying said sign. This analysis ultimately leads Kohn to question the messages these signs propose. Just as important is the question of who is making decisions about which signs go where, which he assumes has little to no student input. This presumption is one of the issues this study seeks to illuminate.

Linguistic Landscapes

The concept of linguistic landscapes is a starting point for studying the signs and symbols in our everyday lives. Landry and Bourhis (1997) are often cited for defining purposes of linguistic landscapes, noting that languages and signs within this concept are “of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (p. 25). The schoolhouse itself is not secluded from the linguistic landscape, providing an environment flooded with various languages and signs within various spaces throughout the building itself.

Studies concerning the effectiveness of signage within the schoolhouse have been a major concern for multicultural and multilingual researchers alike concerned specifically with learners’ ability to consume various messages (Dagenais, Moore, Lamarre, Sabatier, & Armand, 2008; Boudreau & Dubois, 2005; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Dressler, 2015). Often, posters are an effective means for communication for people traveling on foot as they provide a quick glimpse of an image or text within that brief moment of time (Seidman, 2007).

In addition, Shohamy (2006) devoted several chapters in her book to the issues surrounding linguistics within schools, from Language Education Policy (LEP) to the language

used on sides of buildings. Shohamy identifies schools as places to study the signage and messages communicated, as well as various other public spaces within a community such as parks, bus stops, and gathering places.

Strickland and Hadjiyanni (2013) took on this issue of linguistic landscapes in schools, conducting a research study on the interior walls, rooms, and spatial organization of a Minneapolis high school to explore how linguistic landscape influenced student identity. Their research concluded that multiple factors, from interior design choices (signage, graffiti/paint on walls, trophy cases) to room/hallway spatial set-up, influenced the feeling of belonging of the students. Thus, the physical placement and the messages presented had some level of influence on the students in this particular study.

Scollon and Scollon-Wong (2003) outlined two means for studying linguistics in public places: geopolitical and sociocultural. Geopolitical deals directly with the placement and language together, that make up the overall meaning while the sociocultural aspects of signs and meaning, the authors note, may not be presented in the physical sphere at all, but rather constructed from the societal and cultural components of said environment.

In order to explore the collision of sociolinguistics and linguistic landscapes in education, an investigation into the intersection of school environment and messaging utilizing content analysis may provide insight into the potential impact everyday messages have on students within the schoolhouse. The idea that the schoolhouse functions as a linguistic landscape is not new. In fact, Brown (2012) notes, “schoolscapes project ideas and messages about what is officially sanctioned and socially supported within the school. The material use of languages in schoolscapes can be understood as a transformation of social and political ideologies into physical form” (p. 282). The concept of schoolscape acknowledges that our schools can send

messages to our students in a variety of forms, which are often tools to enhance or diminish certain ideologies social and/or political in nature. From a sociolinguistic perspective, recall the aforementioned Bloome and Green explanation noting that social processes of language can be used for meaning and/or intentional purposes for both the reader and those involved in said reading event. This then creates a space for research of the sociolinguistic schoolscape, functioning to investigate the intersection among social processes of the reading experience including the message, meaning, and experience within the school landscape.

This type of investigation then must be multi-faceted. In fact, Gorter (2006) in his investigation of minority languages and linguistic landscapes notes that often the signage in a given environment reflects the linguistic narrative and language of the dominant culture in said environment. In highly diverse environments, this may cause confusion, contrasting messages, or total dismissal of the message.

Linguistic landscapes analysis has moved from the strict dichotomies of top-down or bottom-up to include qualitative approaches seeking to understand the phenomena at play within the scape. Therefore, this research shall employ a variety of ethnographic methods to create a thick description of the discursive practices happening in three high schools in Texas through interior wall signage in an attempt to answer the question: How are signs within public high schools produced, consumed, and influential to persons in contact with intended messages that are presented in public school spaces?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The process for carrying out this study began with a pre-determined order for data collection at each school: observation walks, student interviews, and finally, faculty/staff interviews. This order allowed an opportunity for understanding of the schoolscape prior to inquiry in the focus groups. The order of schools to be evaluated first, second, and third, was based solely on convenience and availability. As I am an employee at Crimson High, it was the logical starting point. From there, Violet High responded second, and Sapphire third, thus determining school order.

General Perspective

As a qualitative study, the research employed several methods of qualitative research under the larger umbrella of ethnography. The purpose of using ethnography in this case was to provide a rich description of the school setting with both visual narrative of the schools appearance, specifically the signage in public spaces, as well as accounts of the lived experiences encountering, distributing, and consuming said signs by both students and faculty/staff.

Research Context

The study took place in the 2017 spring semester at three high schools within the same school district. To retain confidentiality, each school and research subject was given pseudonyms. The district itself was formed in the 1940s and the first high school opened in the 1960s. Within the past decade, however, the area has experienced significant growth leading to the construction of two additional high school as well as multiple elementary and middle

schools. Sapphire was the first high school to be built when the district formed, while Violet High is the newest addition to the district. Currently, the district has approximately 18,500 students and each high school has a student population of close to 2,000 students each. Table 1 shows the demographic breakdown for each school.

Table 1

School Demographics

		Campus (%)	District (%)	State (%)
Crimson High School				
Attendance Rate (2014-15)		94.1	95.5	95.7
Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	African American	15.3	10.2	12.6
	Hispanic	39.5	36.5	52.2
	White	36.2	45.0	28.5
	American Indian	0.4	0.6	0.4
	Asian	5.4	4.0	4.0
	Pacific Islander	0.4	0.3	0.1
	Two or More Races	2.8	3.5	2.1
Enrollment by Student Group	Economically Disadvantaged	42.3	42.4	59.0
	English Language Learners	4.2	8.6	18.5
	Special Education	7.3	8.3	8.6
Mobility Rate (2014-15)		12.7		
Sapphire High School				
Attendance Rate (2014-15)		94.5	95.5	95.7
Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	African American	6.8	10.2	12.6
	Hispanic	25.4	36.5	52.2
	White	58.5	45.0	28.5
	American Indian	1.5	0.6	0.4
	Asian	4.7	4.0	4.0
	Pacific Islander	0.2	0.3	0.1
	Two or More Races	3.1	3.5	2.1
Enrollment by Student Group	Economically Disadvantaged	27.5	42.4	59.0
	English Language Learners	2.7	8.6	18.5
	Special Education	7.7	8.3	8.6
Mobility Rate (2014-15)		14.9	15.0	16.5
Violet High School				
Attendance Rate (2014-15)		94.1	95.5	95.7
Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	African American	11.6	10.2	12.6
	Hispanic	41.7	36.5	52.2
	White	40.6	45.0	28.5
	American Indian	0.6	0.6	0.4
	Asian	2.5	4.0	4.0
	Pacific Islander	0.1	0.3	0.1
	Two or More Races	2.9	3.5	2.1
Enrollment by Student Group	Economically Disadvantaged	43.2	42.4	59.0
	English Language Learners	2.8	8.6	18.5
	Special Education	7.5	8.3	8.6
Mobility Rate (2014-15)		13.6	15.0	16.5

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2016.

The data is revealing to the cultural makeup of each high school, specifically with regards to the diversity present within each school. Crimson and Violet have similar numbers in terms of percentage of students of each race/ethnicity as well as economically disadvantaged. In fact, with regards to percentages of Hispanic, African American, and economically disadvantaged, the two schools are within a difference of less than 4% of one another. White students within the schools are within about a 5% difference of one another, with Violet having the higher percentage over Crimson. The striking difference is not in the similarity of these two schools but the vastly different makeup of the district's third high school, Sapphire. Compared to Crimson and Violet, Sapphire has approximately 15% fewer economically disadvantaged students. With regards to Hispanic and African American students Sapphire has almost half the number of either Violet or Crimson, with a clear majority of 58.5% identifying as White.

Research Participants

Although the researcher is keenly aware of the vastness and diversity in terms of potential research participants in this study, the eight participants from each school were determined using a criterion. Student participants were first determined by grade level, as one student from each of the four was needed. Next, students needed to meet the following criteria: average student GPA between a 2.5-3.5, involvement in at least one extra-curricular activity, and contribute to the creation of a diverse group in light of gender and race/ethnicity. The criteria for student participants were chosen for two reasons: first, the academic range was chosen as it represents students who show a level of academic interest/investment above average. An above average GPA demonstrates a desire for learning (Al-Hattami, 2014), which was deemed necessary as the study calls for students who want to achieve academically. Students with a desire to learn were

deemed more likely to move from class to class in a timely and efficient manner, which was needed to move throughout the school during the observation walks. Second, student involvement has been shown to be an indicator of openness, which was critical to the focus group interviews (Komarraju, Karau, Schmeck, & Avdic, 2011). Student investment and willingness to open up about their experience was deemed critical to the discourse that would occur in the focus groups. In order to find participants, I emailed faculty/staff members from each of the campuses for assistance compiling a list of 10-15 student volunteers that fit the criteria. From the faculty/staff recommendations, I chose participants based on diversity in gender as well as race/ethnicity. The Faculty/staff make-up consisted of a school administrator, a core subject teacher with at least two years' experience working at the school, a guidance counselor, and a teacher of a core subject who is also a sponsor of at least one extracurricular activity on campus. The rationale for these four individuals is two-fold: first, the administrators serve as gatekeepers and key stakeholders for the school itself; the counselor and teachers provide the student socio-emotional account as well as with insight into the everyday activities that happen on each campus.

The final make-up of participants were as follows:

Crimson High School

- Students:
 - Sarah - 9th grade Female, Indian decent, extra-curricular activities: UIL Academics and Key Club
 - Marco - 10th grade Male, Hispanic, extra-curricular activities: football and baseball
 - Gram - 11th grade White, Male, extra-curricular activities: National Honor Society and baseball
 - Joy - 12th grade Mixed race, Pacific Islander and African American, extra curricular activities: cheerleading and student council

- Faculty/Staff
 - Ms. French - Core teacher, Female, White, early 30's, English Department Chair, third year at school
 - Ms. Sand - Extra Curricular Sponsor/Teacher, Female, White, late 20's, Cheer coach and Biology Teacher, second year at school
 - Mr. Turek - Principal, Male, Hispanic, third year at the school
 - Ms. Elliot - Guidance Counselor, Female, White, mid 40's, with the school since it first opened in 2009

Violet High School

- Students:
 - Tiandra - 9th grade Female, Bi-Racial female, extra-curricular activities: Track and Cheerleading
 - Allison - 10th grade Female, White, extra-curricular activities: Cheerleading
 - Jennifer - 11th grade Female, White, extra-curricular activities: art and theatre
 - Tyson - 12th grade Male, African American, extra-curricular activities: speech and debate
- Faculty/Staff
 - Ms. White - Extra-Curricular Sponsor/Core Teacher, Female, African American, late 20's, cheer coach, debate coach, and core course instructor, has been at the school four years
 - Mr. Brooklin - Principal, Male, African American, mid 40's, first year as principal on campus

Sapphire High School

- Students:
 - Becky - 9th grade Female, Bi-Racial, extra-curricular activities: theatre
 - Hailey - 10th grade Female, White, extra-curricular activities: National Honor Society and theatre
 - Brandon - 11th grade White, Male, extra-curricular activities: student council
 - Chloe - 12th grade Female, African American, extra-curricular activities: student council and track

- Faculty/Staff
 - Ms. Reed - Core Teacher, Female, White, late 40's, core course teacher on campus for 10+ years
 - Mr. Jones - Extra-Curricular Sponsor/Teacher, Male, White, mid 30's, advanced placement instructor and speech/debate coach, on campus for 8 years
 - Mr. Black - Guidance Counselor, Male, White, early 40's, first year serving as schools lead guidance counselor

At Violet and Sapphire issues regarding scheduling occurred that hindered individuals from the faculty/staff from joining in the focus group. The data however, even in their absence, revealed ample amounts of insight to proceed without their attendance.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

The instruments for recording and gathering in the data collection process included, first, field notes gathered using my personal journal as well as photos taken of the signs in the public spaces using my own Sony camera. In addition, the application Evernote was used to record each focus group session as it provides quality sound as well as cloud storage capabilities. Each focus group audio was transcribed using Microsoft Word, typing each response word for word from the playback of the audio.

Procedures

In carrying out the research design, the first step was to find student volunteers for the study, as their schedules served as the guide to collecting the visual data. At each campus I contacted via email the lead guidance counselor as well as the student council sponsor for names of potential participants. Once participants were decided upon I began the observation walks in the order of Crimson, Violet, and then Sapphire. The student focus groups were conducted at

most, one week after the walk through in order to ensure that the campus walk through was still fresh in my mind. The student focus groups occurred first and were semi-structured with similar initial questions asked to each group. One week after these interviews were conducted, the faculty/staff and student focus groups were conducted. Each focus group at each campus was conducted in the classroom of a teacher participant that volunteered the space, either before school from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. or after school from 4:30-5:30 p.m. depending on the group's availability. Once complete, the focus group audio was transcribed from Evernote using Microsoft Word. The names and any statements that would indicate the school location were omitted from the transcription or given a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes.

The study was compliant with the US. Department of Health and Human Services code of Federal Regulations as IRB approval through the University of North Texas was acquired and letters distributed and signed to participants for agreement to participate.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using strategies employed by previous researchers but adapted to meet the needs of this study. The transcriptions of the focus group and the field notes/visual images from the walks were the key data used to describe the discursive practices of each school. This process used the schoolscape discursive practice model (Appendices A) I created using Fairclough's three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis (1995) and Scollon and Scollon's (2003) geosemiotics characteristics outline.

Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model was originally used for critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a research tool for examining discursive practices. Although this study is not using CDA specifically as it is not critical, the model allows discursive practices of any sort due

to be analyzed because of the structure of the model. The model itself allows for entry into examining discourses at any of the three dimensions. The three dimensions Fairclough outlines are:

1. The object – this can be verbal and/or visual as well as visual texts themselves.
2. The process – this is the means of which the object is produced which may include speaking, writing, designing, viewing, etc.
3. Socio-historical conditions – these are the external conditions of the society at the time of the discourse and/or the historical backdrop of the environment during the discourse.

These three dimensions require a different analysis within each, which includes:

1. Analysis of the text or a description of the object itself.
2. A processing analysis or an interpretation of how, what, and why is being communicated as well as how the message is being delivered.
3. The explanation or a social analysis that views the entire process within the socio-historical realm in order to best explain the impact of the external factors on the discursive practice itself.

This model provides a tool for analyzing signifiers as well as their sequencing, layout, structure, and the social/historical components contributing to the process/practice overall. The model explores the intersections of object, process, and socio-historical components of discursive practices by allowing the analysis to begin at any of the three dimensions.

Scollon and Wong-Scollon's concepts are multidimensional and include several components, some of which were not used in this study as their work focuses on components of discourse in places outside of the schoolscape such as traffic signs and restaurant menus. However, several of the components in their guidelines on geosemiotics proved helpful in analyzing the actual text itself. The geosemiotic characteristics were aligned with Fairclough's

three-dimensional model to create the schoolscape discursive practice model used for analysis in this study.

Schoolscape Discursive Practice Model

During the analysis process it became clear that the plethora of data compiled from the observations and the focus group transcriptions required a tool for organizing the data effectively and efficiently. Thus, in an effort to compile and analyze the data in one place for each of the signs observed, I created the schoolscape discursive practice model. The model is based on the model created by Norman Fairclough (1995) used for critical discourse analysis (CDA) with the primary adjustment of incorporation of Scollon and Wong-Scollon's geosemiotic components. The inclusion of the geosemiotic concepts allowed for the analysis methods employed by Fairclough to work in tandem with the geosemiotic components of Scollon and Wong-Scollon that best matched the concepts originally coined by Fairclough. To understand how this tool works in practice a clean version of the model is found in Figure 1, with a completed use of the tool analyzing one of the signs in this study available in Appendix A.

As a tool for analysis the model allows for several components of data to be compiled into one space to provide a holistic view of the elements associated with an image. The completed model (Appendix A) demonstrates how an image can be used in the center point of the model to remind the researcher which image is being analyzed. Once the image is established, the analysis can begin at any given point in the model that the researcher desires. In order to describe the process, I shall work from inside (smallest box) to outside (largest box) beginning horizontally (from left to right). Concepts associated with Fairclough's work are positioned at the bottom of each square while Scollon and Wong-Scollon's notions are

positioned at the top within each box. Any data that was seen during the observation walks was placed in the tool on a horizontal plane in its given space aligned with either Fairclough's or Scollon and Wong-Scollon's concepts. Transcription data from the focus group that aligned with a concept was taken from the transcriptions and placed vertically on the chart in the appropriate box as to give the two data sets (observations and focus group) their own designated space.

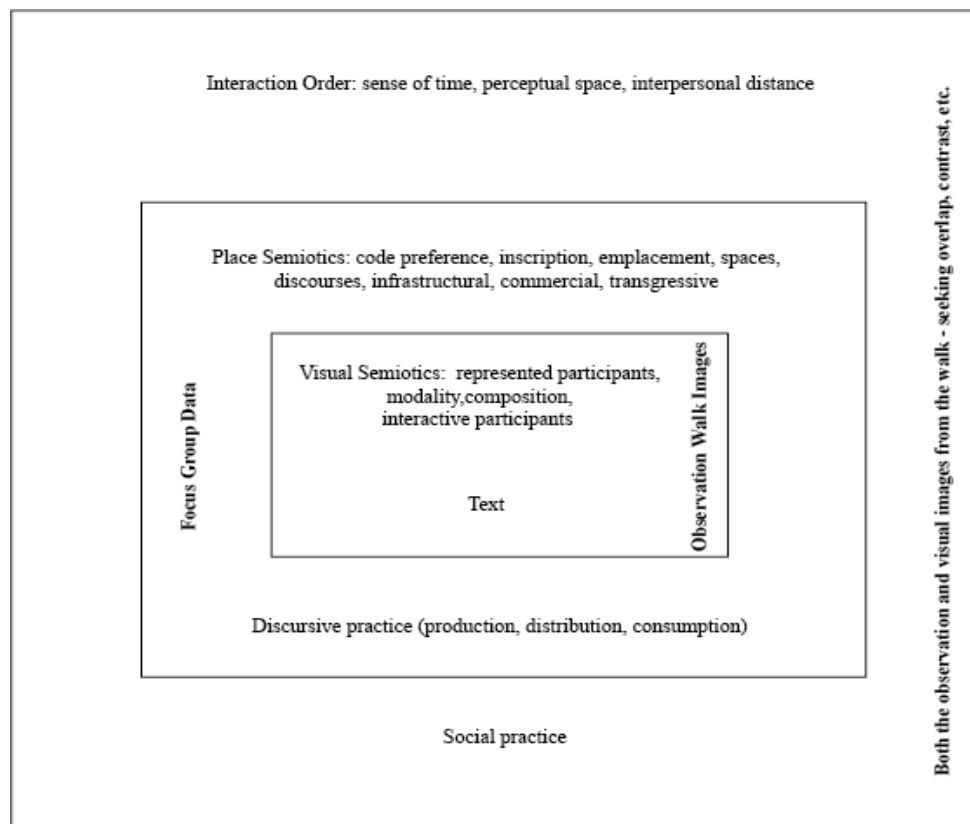


Figure 1. Schoolscape discursive practice model [adapted from Fairclough (1992) and Scollon & Scollon (2003)].

Starting from the center and working with the observation data (horizontally positioned) is Fairclough's notion of the object or in this instance the text, followed by the discursive practice (middle box positioned at the bottom), and finally the socio-historical conditions in the largest outside box positioned at the bottom of the square. Once Fairclough's concepts were utilized, any observations made associated with Scollon and Scollon-Wong's gemossemiotics

concepts were positioned at the top of the appropriate boxes. Again, moving from inside to outside any visual semiotic components observed were positioned at the top of the inside box. Moving to the middle square, signage that demonstrated place semiotic characteristics were noted at the top of the middle box and finally interaction order principles were denoted in the largest box situated at the top as well. This structure allowed for both concepts associated with each scholar to have their own positioning applied within the model. Once the observation data was compiled horizontally, I then moved to the transcription data to find references of these components from the focus group. These statements were added to the model horizontally in their corresponding boxes.

The process for adding transcription data to the model can only occur once coding of the data has been completed. Miles and Huberman's (1994) guidelines for coding data sets was used to code the transcription data. Three rounds of coding were done for each transcription data set. The first round of coding was emergent, highlighting data as it emerged and denoting potential categories with different colors. After the first round was completed I coded the data sets two additional times to narrow in on categories and sub-categories. An example of coded data can be located in appendices C. Once complete, I found data chunks that corresponded with each of the three squares and copied and pasted them from the transcribed data onto the model. For instance, working outside to inside I found mentions from the focus groups about signs placement, school conditions, and social occurrences and copy and pasted them from the transcription into the outside box running vertically. This same process was then completed for the middle square seeking data from the transcriptions concerning the production/distribution of signage, language positioning on signs, and any indication regarding the type or types of signs on display on campus. Finally, for the smallest square references to signage specifically and/or

concepts associated with the message on the sign (for instance suicide references but not the sign specifically) were placed vertically inside the smallest square.

As a tool for analysis, the model allows for researchers to evaluate images, observations, and transcriptions from interviews/focus in one area. The use of the concepts from Fairclough and Scollon and Wong-Scollon provide the researcher with two scholarly perspectives of which visual image analysis has been used throughout academic research. Additionally, two perspectives can provide for a deeper analysis into the structure, positioning, image/font choice, and socio-historic happenings surrounding the image or text.

The outline provides a mechanism for evaluating the various messages, including the visual images themselves, using a multitude of potential characteristics the image encompasses. Figure 2 is an image of a poster, taken in the hallway outside of my own classroom at Crimson High, which I use to illustrate the concept in use.



Figure 2. Sample image to illustrate evaluation mechanism.

Using the concepts associated with geosemiotics, a few key elements of the sign can be highlighted. First, in terms of the perceptual space, this image is visual in nature and social due

to its public placement. The purpose then is to attract individuals passing by to stop and fully consume the message. The eye is drawn first to the center image that in terms of modality utilizes color, illuminating with saturation and light differentiation, specifically on the image of a pill and word “danger” itself. The centering and use of color is used to highlight this as the most important message within the larger image. The placement of text-aligned center at the top in larger font highlights the images overarching message about the danger of a singular pill. In addition, the “educate yourself about prescription drug abuse” verbiage shifts the message into the narrative mode of represented participants because this text creates an overarching narrative for consumers of the message that prescription pills are dangerous. Therefore, using this outline one can conclude that the use of the red coloring, text/font choices, as well as the placement of the image and text, establish a narrative of danger and fear with a secondary message of educating oneself in order to avoid said danger.

The adapted model allows for a descriptive narrative to emerge of both the actual images presented to students during their daily routine, as well as insight into the social practices and outcomes that may or not be occurring within the broader environment of the schoolhouse. On the schoolscape discursive practice model, the focus group data including any mention by students or faculty/staff of drug use, abuse, or the sign itself was added on the sides to left and right of the model running vertically. This allowed for all the data concerning the sign to be placed into one space for a fuller understanding of both the text itself, and the feelings of both students and faculty/staff concerning said sign as shown in Appendices A.

Once each of the three high schools’ images and focus group transcriptions were analyzed, a description of the individual school’s discursive practices was created. Each was then compared with one another. This process again utilized a coding pattern as illustrated by

Miles and Huberman (1994). The coding process included two initial rounds of coding - descriptive, then patterned. Descriptive sought to detail chunks of data based upon common ideas presented within each set which were then used to identify patterns among the groups. As an example, one code, “unaware,” was a way to represent responses from the focus groups that illustrate consumers of the signs were not aware of the signage in a given place. In the second round of coding, if multiple responses of various individuals denoted consumers as “uninformed” these descriptive codes were placed into a category together as they have signaled as a pattern within the schools.

Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that coding patterns are, “explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation” (p. 69). Thus, in order to establish patterns and explore emerging themes to aid the description, each data set was coded a minimum of three times. Each set of data was coded by hand. The first round of coding provided the initial coding list. No pre-determined list was created, instead, coding labels were emergent. This coding pattern allowed for an understanding of potential patterns among schools to help uncover potential likeness or contrast in how each school, with differing populations and educational concerns, provide messages to their individual students.

Summary of Methodology

Within any schoolhouse one would find a variety of signs on display in varying spaces. Thus, in seeking to uncover the potential influences of these images it is paramount to situate the methodology of a study in a sound, replicable manner. This particular study sought the input of students as well as faculty/staff, thus, requiring focus groups to find out those perspectives. This two-pronged approach of using both observations and focus group data allows for a picture to

emerge of both the perceived and actual influence of the images on consumers. The initial step in this study was to determine what signs would be used and why. In this regard, signs that were fixed images were chosen over those that were temporary. This allowed for a review of images that had a longer staying time in public spaces. Selecting images based upon this criteria also allowed for a more narrowed scope of images to be evaluated, as some schools have walls covered with signs of student work, promotions of upcoming events, and school spirit of sports, academics, etc. depending on the time of year. Once the criterion was established for signage inclusion, the observation walks of the students' schedules commenced. Following the initial walks and data collection, focus groups were scheduled and carried out.

The focus groups consisted of student volunteers. These individuals were selected based on the criteria mentioned in Chapter 1 as well as from recommendations of the faculty/staff. The focus groups were semi-structured allowing for the conversations to flow freely with follow up questions to be asked when needed. The same structure was used for the faculty/staff interviews.

In the end, the use of the two approaches allowed for an initial understanding of the signs' potential influence as well as insight into the actual perspectives of consumers of said messaging within each space. Once each school was analyzed, a coding process allowed for patterns to emerge within each data set. Finally, similarities and differences were sought through the coding, seeking commonalities and differences amongst each school in response to the research question: how are signs within public high schools produced, consumed, and influential to persons in contact with intended messages that are presented in public school spaces?

CHAPTER 4

CRIMSON HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

As a teacher on campus at Crimson High, I began the collection process by asking the lead guidance counselor for recommendations of students who met the criteria I had previously determined. This was a way to reach out to students beyond my classroom and the clubs/organizations that I sponsor. She suggested several names of students, and after careful consideration of gender balance as well as race/ethnicity, I asked four students if they would be interested in participating in a focus group concerning signs/posters on their campus; each agreed. The students participating included: Sarah, a ninth grade Indian female, Marco, a tenth grade Hispanic male, Gram, an eleventh grade White male, and Joy, a twelfth grade Mixed-Race female.

On April 12, 2017, I obtained a copy of their schedules and with my notebook and camera in hand I began walking from classroom to classroom following each student's daily route. The signs each student passed during their daily routine produced the visual data for the study. The total breakdown of signs including the number of times each sign itself was observed and whether or not that particular sign was mentioned in the focus group data at Crimson High is depicted in Table 2. Only signs that were mentioned in the focus groups and seen during the observations were walked analyzed since both my observations as well as the students and faculty/staff perception were needed to illustrate holistic picture.

Once each scheduled had been walked twice, with observation notes and photos of the signs taken, once after school and again during the school day, I gathered the students to discuss the signs in a focus group. We met in my classroom at 8:30 a.m. on April 13, 2017. After their interview was complete I contacted four colleagues via email to participate in the faculty/staff

focus group. The members of this group included: Ms. Sand, extra-curricular activity sponsor/core teaching instructor; Ms. French, an Advanced Placement teacher/Department Chair; Ms. Elliot, one of the school’s four guidance counselors; and the school principal Mr. Turek. The five of us met in my classroom at 8:30 a.m. on April 17, 2017.

Table 2

Crimson High School Signage Breakdown

Sign	Number of times observed	Mention in focus group
Believe/Graduate	4	
Dating Abuse/Love is Respect	21	
Driving Safety	9	
Drug Abuse	2	X
Mental Health Awareness	1	X
SAT/ACT Dates	2	
Sexual Consent	2	X
School Spirit/Expectations	15	X
Suicide Prevention	3	X

The coding process began with an analysis of each of the signs that were observed along the walks. Those that are included in Chapter 4 were signs that were not only prevalent during the observation walks, but also mentioned frequently in the focus groups. Each analysis of the signs utilized the schoolscape discursive practice model. The signs included in this chapter are: respect (Figure 3), suicide prevention, (Figure 4), pride (Figure 5), and sexual consent (Figure 7). These signs were chosen based upon the frequency of visibility during the walks as well as being mentioned at least once during the focus groups.

Chapter 4 integrates the focus group data, observations I made throughout my time in each high school, and the signs themselves to produce a description of how these signs are produced, consumed, and what, if any, influence they have on students as well as faculty/staff.

The opening question posed to the student focus group was intentionally opened-ended and was used in all six focus group settings to being dialogue. The question spoke to the heart of the study, “what signs do you notice around your school?” Immediately, the Crimson High students began listing a variety of signs covering a wide range of topics. This was unique to this group. Throughout the study no other group at any of the three high schools’ were as open and forthcoming to this initial question. Presumably, this is due to the nature of my relationship with the students. As a teacher, coach of the schools competitive forensic team, and student council sponsor, I was often referred to as the face of Crimson High School. I was currently teaching one of the students in this particular group, Joy. The other three, Daniel, Sarah, and Gram, are either student athletes or class officers that I had spoken to a few times throughout the year at various activities.

The school climate at the time of this interview was turbulent. The school year had entered the final six weeks of classes, students were restless, and the campus was experiencing behavior issues that echoed these sentiments. During the faculty/staff focus group, Mr. Turek, the high school principal, told me that Student tardiness, fighting, and skipping classes were high during the period from April 11th to May 11th. In addition, the student group noted during the interview that during this time the current trending topic amongst many of the students was the release of a television show on Netflix, *13 Reasons Why*. The series chronicles the suicide of a teenager and the fallout within the school among a group of students once her recorded tapes, recorded prior to death, were distributed to persons who she claimed contributed to her action.

The school climate and trending topics of the time yielded significant insight into their various responses throughout the course of the interview.

Guided by the research question, the data analysis focused on the social climate and producers of signage throughout the school first, entering through Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model at the discursive practice level. Using the schoolscape discursive practice model the concepts associated with Scollon and Scollon-Wong's work in place semiotics concerning font, style, placement, and aesthetics, were analyzed alongside the discursive practices. A sample of this can be found in Appendix A. Once production and place were established I moved to the text itself, the inner most square in the model, to analyze consumption of signs messages. Finally, the outer model concerning social practice and interaction order was evaluated to describe the social and cultural components of both the campus climate and narrative produced by school signage.

Instances where agreement or contrast emerged between the student and faculty/staff focus groups were highlighted as a pattern. Additionally, when both groups referenced a specific sign or action that spoke toward the messaging of a school sign such as references to bullying as practice rather than the actual signs, an indication of a pattern was highlighted as well. This process was replicated with all three data sets as a way to categorize and present a description of the lived experience of students as well as faculty/staff in contact with school signage at each campus. Throughout Chapter 4 the organization of the data utilized to describe each campus experience flows as follows: (1) introduction to the campus/participants, (2) insight into production including analysis of the signs themselves, (3) details of the consumption or lack thereof by participants, and (5) an analysis into the potential influences signs have on consumers.

Production Elements

The observation walks of the student participant schedules revealed a variety of signage produced by school clubs and organizations as well as entities outside the school or district. As mentioned previously, permanent signs are the focus of this study, thus the majority of signs analyzed were produced by outside entities as most clubs/organization signs promoted upcoming events happening in the short term.

How are signs determined for placement inside the schoolhouse? Throughout the study this was my initial concern regarding production for each campus. At the start of the Crimson High faculty/staff focus group I posed this question to the group hoping for any insight. Ms. Elliot, one of the schools guidance counselors explained that,

Sometimes we get stuff from the district level that says hey here are some posters, or here's a link you can print a poster. We don't though necessarily as a counseling staff sit down and say here you know...most of that comes from the district.

Two key factors are expressed in this response: the district and the counseling staff on campus. Initially it seems that district level administration controls the narrative of school signage by initiating production. However, within the latter part of her statement, "here's some posters, or here's a link you can print a poster..." Ms. Elliot acknowledges that the counseling staff is the key gatekeeper to which messages make it from the counseling office or links in an email to the actual walls of the building. Within that same section comparing their campus to others, Ms. Sand, acknowledges a characteristic display on the steps of Violet High, to which Ms. Elliot notes that, "their guidance counselor does a great job of trying to get out positivity." Her acknowledgment of another campus's guidance counselor's job well done is more than just a colleague compliment, it's an insight into the role that guidance counselors play on campuses regarding production of school signage.

In addition to the acknowledgement of district directives and counseling decisions to the signage production process, the campus principal, Mr. Turek, pointed out the use of student surveys and discipline data to aide in the process. “I think one of the biggest things we do is we take a lot of information from our survey’s k-12 insight survey information we get because we get teachers, parents, and students from that.” He indicated that these surveys include statements of issues that might be concerning for parents about their child and ask respondents to rank their responses using a Likert scale. This may include comments about how parents, faculty/staff, and students feel about their own personal safety on the school campus. Furthermore, the information received from assistant principals about school discipline was stated to be an influencer, targeting behaviors that are prominent. Specifically he noted students being tardy to class, fighting, and drug use. The combination of both the insight survey and meetings with fellow administrators, he claims, help to guide this process. However, he never acknowledged that this data or administrative meeting notes/ideas went to school counselors or clubs/groups that could then produce signage to address said issues. It seemed as if these meetings and data were used as talking points about school culture and climate rather than a resource used to produce actual signage.

The students seemed unaware or uninterested into how school signs are produced and placed on their interior walls. In fact, Sarah mentioned during the focus that, “I am not sure who decides, they are just there,” to which her three peers nodded in affirmation. Throughout the student interview it became clear that these students were less concerned with the production facets of school signage, but rather fixated on the what. This fixation will be further discussed in the coming sections. In contrast, the faculty/staff provided a keen insight into the actual gatekeepers of the messages, the counseling staff in particular. In this campus’s case, the focus

group data set pushed more of the responsibility to determining the messaging to outside entities such as the state or district, but did leave a window into the counseling staff's ability to make decisions by identifying Violet High's counselor efforts to push forth positive messaging on that particular campus.

Once the issue of how, and by whom, these signs were placed/distributed was discussed, the focus shifted to the actual signs' production elements. Throughout the course of the observation walks at Crimson High, 3 was seen more than any other sign on campus. Its message is intended to raise awareness about the concept of love, specifically noting components associated with healthy teenage relationships. Although this sign was seen more than any other, neither student nor faculty/staff group mentioned it during their focus group session. Nonetheless, its dominating presence requires an analysis of its production.

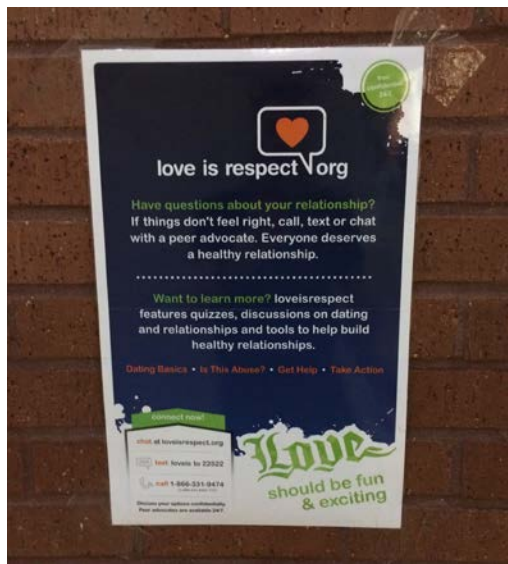


Figure 3. Love is Respect poster.

This particular poster is produced by a non-profit organization, Love is Respect, whose website is the first piece of text appearing on the poster. The group provides individuals with information and various resources about abusive and controlling relationships. Additionally, the website features a section for resources users can download, including signage. Although this

sign led in terms of most frequently visible, the lack of reference to the sign by either focus group leaves room for scrutiny of its production quality.

Presumably the sign's seeming lack of effective messaging for consumption stems from the sign's production makeup, specifically its lack of readability in quick passing. Geosemiotics suggests initially that this sign's inscription does not allow for ease of consumption. The text font is small requiring readers to stop for an extended period of time to consume the message. Additionally, the preponderance of text with no images removes any visual interest. Color differentiation hinders its readability as well with two dark color choices, navy and dark green, serving to merge the textual font in with the background. Finally, the placement of the sign against large walls within long stretches of hallway hinders the sign from standing out as it is printed on 8.5 x 11 paper, seemingly drowned in the presence of the hallways vastness. These elements of production have apparently left it unconsumed. The signs that were mentioned most frequently throughout the two focus groups are analyzed in the coming sections. The Love is Respect sign is not included in the remainder of this high school's analysis, as it was not referenced outside of my observations.

Social awareness was without question the most prevalent category within the school's signage with 44 of 59 of the total signs addressing a social issue. This abundance of signs dealing directly with social issues was echoed in both focus groups as each group speaks specifically to these matters for the longest amount of time in their respective groups. The subjects discussed can be broken into five categories: bullying/suicide, sexual consent, driving habits, drug/alcohol abuse, and school pride/expectations.

Within the student focus group the issue of bullying/suicide came up ten times, compared to the next highest reference, school pride/school expectation with five references. The

bullying/suicide category was clearly dominant in the discourse. In comparison to the actual number of signs on display in the school addressing this issue bullying/suicide actually came in fifth. Figure 4 is the only sign addressing bullying/suicide on campus and upon initial observation, it is underwhelming.

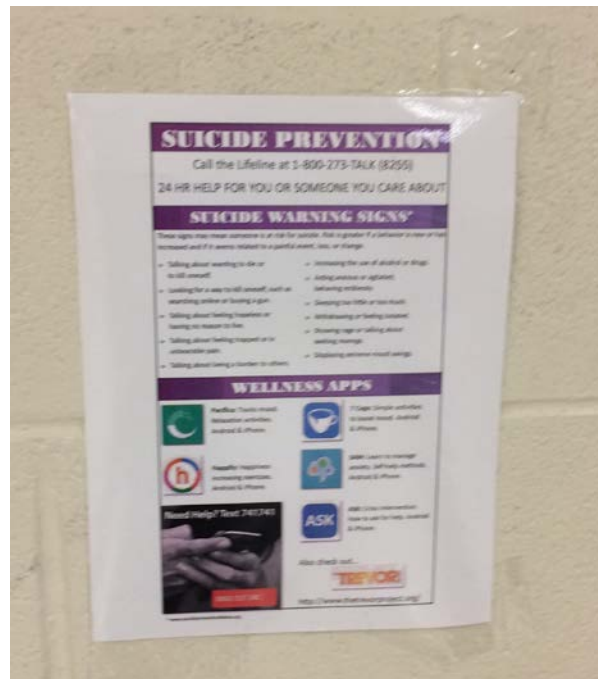


Figure 4. Suicide prevention poster.

Using the concept of place semiotics, the sign reveals the importance of certain information over others. The adjustment of headline text is centered and the titles are highlighted in purple to stand out. This would lead the consumer to acknowledge first the main point of the sign, suicide prevention, and then lead the eye to the next highlighted areas, in this instance, suicide warning signs, and wellness apps. The text beneath the first heading stating suicide prevention is a number to call for help. After the other two headings, one finds a list of warning signs and wellness applications for smart phones that may be utilized to help manage stress or conflict. Place semiotics would suggest that the initial heading and the phone number would be the first two messages conveyed for consumption: they are located on the top of the

sign, highlighted for emphasis, adjusted center, and written in all capital letters. In addition, its physical placement above the water fountains serves as a temporary stop for students along their daily schedule. Thus, it can be reasoned that the everyday student would only encounter those first two initial texts as the sign is placed at a temporary stopping point. This is echoed by the student focus group data. In fact, none of the references from the students about these signs references the additional two sections of the sign addressing warning signs or mobile applications. All four students within the focus group at some point during the interview reference the number to call for help, none of them citing the number verbatim, just referring to its existence. Their understanding then of this sign follows the place semiotic features in that the most prevalent information at the top is consumed, presumably in quick passing.

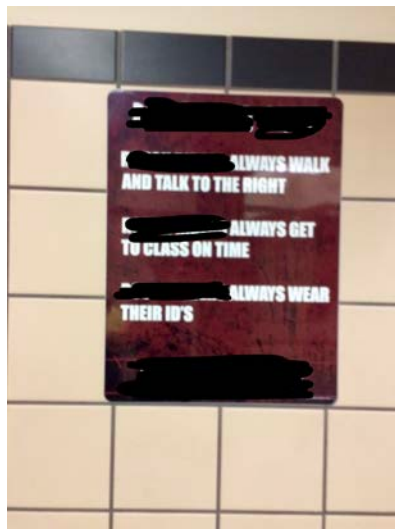
The dominance then of this topic in the discourse is stemming from a factor beyond purely physical consumption of the signs. Production then moves beyond merely the construction and placement of signs into another realm: the social. Recall the school culture/climate and trending topics on campus from the initial section of the Crimson analysis. The Netflix series *13 Reasons Why* at the time of the focus group was gaining significant viewership amongst high school students, finding popularity from mentions on Twitter, the dominance of Netflix in the streaming market, and from the series' origins, the novel published in 2007 written by Jay Asher. In fact, Ms. French told me the book has always been popular amongst teen readers since its release, years before it ever became a Netflix series. The Netflix series itself addresses signs in the second episode where one student, a former friend of the now deceased Hannah Baker, on whom the series centers, begins taking down anti-suicide signs in the school. When questioned as to why the character is removing the signs by another student, he states, "Why do they need a sign...why not just put up a sign that says don't be a dick" ("Tape 2,

side a”, 2017). Perhaps this sign might be an effective message for students that would undoubtedly resonate with students today, as it is currently the buzz within teenage social circles. The series gained significant traction in the Twitter space. According to Elite Daily, after the show’s premiere on March 31, 2017, it garnered over 3.5 million tweets just one week after the premiere. In addition, it has set a Netflix record on consumption in its first week (Menta, 2017). This sheer dominance on social media bolsters the idea that social production, in this instance through social media and social narratives within teens’ worlds, has a vast influence on their consumption of visual messages within their schoolhouse. The combination of visibility in the school and the rising popularity merged to formulate a memorable message ripe for consumption and recall.

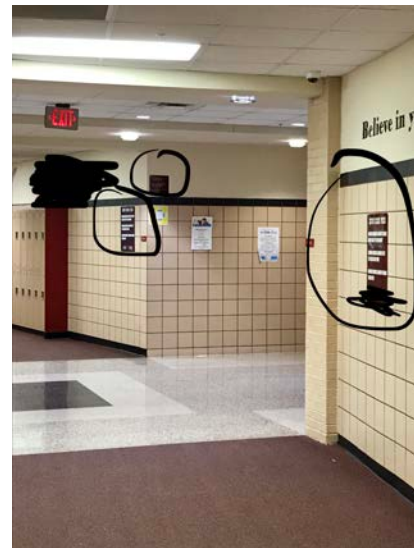
School pride was the second most visible sign at Crimson and was depicted primarily through the use of Crimson High Pride signage detailing expectations of students’ behavior [Figure 5 (a-c)]. The message of school pride varied vastly from the students to the faculty/staff in that the students viewed just the prevalence of signs as showing pride in the school whereas the principal and the guidance counselor referenced the actual school specific expectations for actions as the pride component. Interestingly enough, half of the students, Sarah and Macro, as well as Ms. French, were completely unaware of these signs’ existence within their building.

Concerning the students’ perception of school pride, Gram noted that he sees “the signs as like pride in our school like it’s bettering our school. So the places we don’t have it it’s like we don’t take pride in that place.” In context, this statement was in relation to my questions about where signs are or are not placed within the building right after the discussion about the social awareness signs including bullying, sexual consent, and drugs. His sentiment was further echoed more subtly by Sarah when I asked about the signs promoting how a Crimson High

student acts, Figure 5a, to which she stated perhaps these signs were “promoting school spirit in a way?” Her questioning though of her own statement served as an insight into the non-consumption piece that was immediately echoed by Joy claiming, “I don’t think anyone pays attention to those.” In this instance, Joy is unknowingly reinforcing Gram’s claim that school pride is simply the presence of signage. In fact, after Joy’s comments concerning lack of attention to these signs, Marco added, “yeah I don’t know what those are.”



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 5. Crimson High school pride posters.

The faculty/staff group had a similar exchange regarding these signs with Ms. Sand attempting to explain to Ms. French the location of the Pride signage.

Mr. Hamilton: Yeah when I asked them about ours the students didn't know what I was talking about

Ms. Sand: Yeah it's also like chilling up at the top like

Ms. French: Where is it?

Ms. Sand: Up in places like at the top of halls.

Ms. French: Like by the Bistro?

Ms. Sand: No it's been up for at least two years since I've been here.

Ms. French: Oh...oops

Figures 5b and 5c highlight what Ms. Sand is referring to concerning the placement of these signs. Within the concept of place semiotics this particular sign would serve as a function of regulatory discourse. The easiest example of regulatory discourse we all encounter every day is a traffic sign or a pedestrian crosswalk regulating when we can and cannot move forward. Similarly, these Crimson High signs seek to regulate the behavior of students while they pass through the hallways. However, the lack of acknowledgement of said signs by students, and in one case, a teacher, highlights the signs ineffectiveness. This ineffectiveness is due to two key functions of geosemiotics: placement and inscription.

Placement in this instance seems obvious from the photo in Figure 5c displaying the size and placement of the sign in relation to the hallway and those passing through. Simply put, it is too small for an individual in a crowded hallway to stop and take notice. Additionally, the font choice and color scheme of the larger sign situated on the corner of the main hallway intersection, Figure 5a is problematic for consumption as well. The contrast of the white text against the black and crimson background does allow the statements to pop from the canvas. However, the use of the font in addition to the all capitalization of the sentences gives off a negative connotation. In fact, Costello (2016) outlines recommendations for text use in visual

design. He notes that the use of all caps in signage produces an overwhelming sensation that leads to a lack of readability (pp. 250-251). Thus, the sign's production makeup and distribution has led to an ineffective means for consumption, rendering it useless for sending the desired message of how Crimson High students should act.

This was evident when I addressed the third statement on the sign with the students asking them why no one was wearing their I.D. since, as the sign states, Crimson High students always wear their I.D.'s. Sarah protested exclaiming she had her I.D. on, but admitted this was a practice she started and carried on from her middle school years.

The Crimson High Pride signs reveal a crucial factor in the production process, placement. Throughout the observation walks I got the sense that signage on this particular campus was placed strategically. Although the Crimson High Pride signs indicate that placement can be ineffective in some instances, other areas of the building reinforced my belief of strategic placing. Both the students and faculty/staff affirmed this belief during the focus groups.

Strategically speaking, the students expressed the belief that signage throughout campus is placed in certain areas to promote a sense of caring and to address behavior. In terms of caring, Sarah expressed that she believed these signs were on display as a way to let students know that people care about them. Conversely, in spaces where nothing was on display in the school she stated that those spaces, "can feel like nobody cares." Joy pushed back on that idea expressing that she believed the signs were placed in the spaces where the most people congregate or pass. During my observation walks however I noticed several spaces in the building that each student had to pass in a given day at least once, many of them twice, which had nothing on display, just bare concrete or tiled walls. Wanting to test these contrasting ideas I

revisited the observation walk field notes and photos of the signs to determine if strategy was used in the placement process.

The most heavily populated area in the school during a passing period is the main hallway beneath the student bistro/library. This area has only one sign on display (Figure 6a and b).



(a)



(b)

Figure 6. R.E.S.P.E.C.T. poster at Crimson High.

When I asked the students about this sign all four of them acknowledged they had seen it. Additionally, I asked if they believed this sign proclaiming the importance of R.E.S.P.E.C.T. in their school was strategically placed or just put up without any consideration. Gram explained that,

Yeah um, like the one in main hall yeah I think it's strategically placed, yeah like a lot of the people that are always late to class, not to bash anyone, but they hang out there, that's where they are and so...that's just I don't know it's a reminder to be respectful to teachers.

His assertion matched my experience in my observations as I found this particular part of the hallway during passing periods to be a place that was being monitored on the day of my walk by

both the principal and the student resource officer. While walking the students' schedules this particular area was the most difficult to navigate, as a group of students stood congregating, playing music, and play fighting with one another. Many of them used what one might deem as inappropriate language including swears and slang loosely with one another. It was not a welcoming place for a teacher or student not associated with the group, echoing the sentiment that perhaps, this was a place where students who congregated needed a reminder about the need for R.E.S.P.E.C.T. in their school.

The faculty/staff focus group had an insight into the production of these signs as well. Ms. Elliot explained how the staff within the counseling department determines which signs to put up and how they are chosen. She explained that,

I think for us, that is the counseling staff; there are very specific things the state says we have to get out to students. They prefer we do guidance lessons but at the high school, getting into classrooms isn't always a reality so to be able to at least provide some facts and information, here's your safe place, here's a number you can call whatever, it gets some of that information out to the kids for their social emotional.

The first part of this statement redirects authority of the messaging to the state of Texas indicating that there are some directives that are mandated for schools in terms of messaging. However, it is up to the school to determine how to get said message to students. The latter part of her explanation though notes the social emotional component that these directives seek to address. This insight to the state directive, echoed by Ms. French's previous acknowledgement that often times the signs that stay up longer are based on social significances, illustrates the production starting point of the signs within this school. The larger societal narrative in combination with the state level mandates appears to be the initial point for production of school signage at Crimson. Placement however was not addressed specifically in her response. So I inquired, "Who decides where to put the signs?" Ms. Elliot explained that, "we do not have a

process for that necessarily, we tend to let whomever is told to put the signs up choose the best areas. Typically we put stuff in the same places each time.” Ms. Elliot’s insight into the production and placement process contrasts both my account and the perception of the students as she fails to acknowledge any strategy in placement, other than routine.

Production is the first step to consumption with any message in the communication process. Although Crimson High produced a number of signs concerning healthy teenage relationships, a clear lack of consumption was made evident from the lack of reference to the sign or topic in either focus group. On the contrary, signs addressing suicide prevention were found far less than others during the observation walks. However, suicide prevention was the primary topic of concern for the students. Production of signs in this instance was less important than the social narrative producing discourse surrounding the issue. Furthermore, the Crimson High Pride signs were seemingly hindered not only by their production elements, but their placement/distribution as well. Although production is a critical element to messaging with signage, consumption and influence must be analyzed in tandem to reveal the lived experiences of individuals in contact with intended signage.

Consumption

In order to evaluate consumption of messages, the discourse and recall of the physical signs and issues related to each were coded to highlight patterns Consumption of visual messages is complex and is at the heart of this particular study as it speaks to the other two areas of production and influence. In fact, Scollon and Scollon note Kress and van Leeuwen’s concepts on visual image analysis to highlight this point. Both sets of scholars acknowledge this type of analysis requires more than a simple understanding of a snapshot in time, rather, to understand

the entirety of the image including the social environment and the images producers. At Crimson High, consumption can be narrowed down into two areas: social awareness and school pride.

The faculty/staff focus expressed that the social world drives the consumption of messages with teens today. When asked what they believed to be the biggest challenge facing students today, two areas were emphasized over any other: stress and FOMO or the fear of missing out. Both of these issues were linked back to the prevalence of social media. Mr. Turek, when asked what he thought was the biggest issue facing his students on his campus, first discussed the pervasiveness of drug use, which will be addressed later, but then shifted his attention to stress, noting that, “a lot of kids are super stressed out. Are you stressed about your grades or fitting in or stressed about...” to which he was cut off by Ms. French mentioning home life as a lead stressor for students. This is the first indication that perhaps the stress of school, grades, fitting in, and family life play a factor in students’ consumption of various messages within their school. In addition, Ms. Sand passionately began to make the case for social media and FOMO as being the biggest concern for students today. She explained that, “the biggest thing for them is FOMO. Fear of missing out because they see all the updates on Twitter, SnapChat, and they are constantly like oh look what this person is doing, they are doing this, what am I doing?” Their insights speak to the largest concern for students in the school today for a variety of reasons. First, the principal is tapping into his everyday administrative experience. He presumably deals primarily with discipline issues and in his words, drugs are the leading issue; whereas, Ms. French teaches the high achieving Advanced Placement courses that presumably produce students who are concerned with academic expectations and grades. Furthermore she admits that, “I close my door also so that’s just what happens in my classroom I

know there is a lot of stuff that happens that I am unaware of.” In contrast, Ms. Sand teaches several sections of an on-level core course and is the sponsor of a large organization on campus that is social and school spirited in nature. Her daily encounters admittedly are with a wide range of the student body producing presumably a more rounded understanding of the everyday student on campus. Her statement lends credence to the notion that the online world is a major factor into the consumption of teens’ lived worlds.

The issue that dominated the discussion of the student focus group affirmed this sentiment of social media influencing consumption that was held by faculty/staff. Suicide prevention dominated the discourse throughout the student focus group. In fact, it became the pivot point to the conversation for these students, and often, the conversation is directed back to the physical sign as a reference point. In terms of consumption, it became apparent that this was a relevant issue as each student referred to suicide at least once. Gram asked me in our initial discussion about suicide if I “know about the new T.V. show *13 Reasons Why?*” When I confirmed that I was aware of it he explained, “that’s a good example right there like if she would have saw the sign like she would have saw the sign and called it, maybe none of that would have happened.” His ability to recall the signage in his school back to the popular Netflix television show unveils the collision of the social and school world on display at Crimson High. It is not just the students who notice this collision either. Within the faculty/staff group, Ms. French acknowledged when discussing how signs are chosen for display on campus that, “I think it also has to do with things that are like going on in the news right, like if there is a suicide in the school that sign might stay up there all year.” At this particular point in the school year a suicide had not occurred. However, the year prior a student had successfully carried out the act. Perhaps this sign then is in response to a perceived risk of students’ committing suicide that

carried over from the previous year in addition to the heightened societal attention to the issue that began with the release of the Netflix series.

In my opening questions of the student focus group I asked the students to identify the various signs in their school and they accurately detailed most of the signs I had observed as well with a few exceptions, the “Love is Respect” poster being one. Their initial responses outlined the aforementioned suicide prevention topic as well as drugs/alcohol and driving awareness posters scattered throughout their school. It appeared that the consumption of these messages was effective: students knew of the signs, their whereabouts, and the messaging. Throughout the course of the focus group students spent most of the time discussing how they perceived the signs in their school as an extension of a social narrative. Sarah mentioned the plethora of posters addressing social issues in her view as meant to “make us more aware of our surroundings.” Both Tyler and Marco elaborated, indicating they believed signs were used to help prevent students from engaging in various negative behaviors. The perception that the majority of signs on campus were geared toward negative behaviors speaks to the actual consumption of these messages as it indicates that for these students, the majority of messaging through signs on campus is negative in nature.

The only mention of a positive or uplifting sign was when I prompted the students to try to find any potential positive reaction. When asking them to tell me about the signs in their school I reiterated, “those types of things, like how to get to college, and sexual dating abuse, and suicide prevention – so what’s the narrative then that we are giving at our school if someone just evaluated our story from our visuals?” After that initial framing, Sarah mentioned that the visuals produce a narrative of, “a school that tells people we are there for them.” Marco echoed this sentiment, noting, “that we actually care,” followed by Gram mentioning, “that we value the

students and their decisions.” This chain of responses addressing student perceptions seemed positive in nature. However, this was the only period during the analysis coded as a positive perception. The overwhelming majority of the interview was spent talking about those aforementioned signs that dealt specifically with negative behaviors.

Consider Gram’s assertion that the narrative being produced by Crimson High is that we value students. This statement is initially positive, but the latter half of that statement addresses the negative actions, “and their decisions.” This points back to the decision-making process of teens when dealing with these potential harmful actions. Additionally, Sarah indicated in the concluding thoughts regarding school signage narratives that “maybe that we have a bullying problem and suicide problem.” To which I inquired if the students believed they had those problems in their school, each unanimously agreed that yes, in fact, they did.



Figure 7. Sexual assault awareness poster.

One negative sign in particular received the same initial response from faculty/staff and students--laughter. Surprisingly, this was the sexual assault awareness sign (Figure 7), which

displays a white female pushing away a white male who looks as if he is questioning this female's action. The text above the sign reads, "without consent, it's sexual assault."

This particular sign was the subject of several discussions throughout both focus groups. For the teachers, it is the initial sign they discuss when asked what signs they see throughout their building and the initial response without even mentioning the sign was laughter. Post the initial laughter the exchange occurred as follows:

Ms. Sand: The one's {that} say no or something about saying no is all I know

Mr. Hamilton: The sexual consent one?

Ms. Sand: Yes, I know it because it makes me think of a really bad joke from college.

Ms. French: And it's like not that big of a poster on a really blank large wall

Ms. Sand: Yes

Ms. French: With literally nothing around it. I mean if I didn't park back there and I probably would never see it so like I don't know how many kids actually go that way I am sure a lot because it's a connection between the cafeteria and another wing.

Ms. Sand: We both enter that way, I am sure we all do, and there is that girl staring at you so...

Furthermore, the students acknowledge this sign as well initially with laughter but only after I questioned them about it specifically, bearing in mind it was initially brought up by Sarah:

Mr. Hamilton: Do you think we have a sexual consent problem? That one is up a lot?

Marco: yeah (laughter)

Gram: (laughter) Not as much here but like some of the people that maybe graduated last year.

Mr. Hamilton: Ok so maybe it's been a problem before.

Gram: yeah

Mr. Hamilton: I also noticed that where the consent posters were the most happened to be in place where like the athletic students would have to walk. The two of you are both athletes when, I walked your schedules I saw that one several times, so I don't know if those are strategically placed.

(laughter by 10, 11, 12)

Marco: Yeah.

Gram: Yeah.

Joy: Yeah, probably.

These exchanges are telling as they speak to one of the key principles in geosemiotics, interaction order and the personal front. For Scollon and Scollon-Wong this concept is utilized when analyzing messages that are being constructed in the co-presence of other social actors. In this instance, the interaction order is telling as the student data suggest these signs are placed to catch the attention of student athletes. When questioned about sexual consent as a potential problem the students affirm its existence but propagate that perhaps this was more prevalent of an issue years prior. Nonetheless, the interaction order speaks to at a minimum a perceived issue by gatekeepers of school sign messaging with regards to the actions of student athletes. Additionally, the use of the couple to display the message presents appropriate rules of appropriate relational space or personal front. The female pushing the male backward in the image gives the message that personal space between male-female couples is the appropriate behavior even within intimate relationships. Both focus group data sets affirm the school's need for messaging on this particular issue and the effectiveness of consumption of this particular message as it a dominant topic within the discourse.

Admittedly, this laughter might have been caused by the subject matter of sex in and of itself. A maturity factor has to be acknowledged surrounding this particular topic, however, when mentioned in the beginning of the interview in context of simply what do you see around the school, Sarah mentioned sex and no laughter occurred. In this exchange however in the context of strategically placing these signs in view of athletes, it is met by three of the students with laughter. It felt as if it was an inside joke of which I found myself on the outside. To keep

them from potentially shutting down I did not feel it was appropriate to inquire about the laughter to keep the camaraderie and flow of the discussion moving. However, I can say from my perspective it felt as if from both the students and faculty/staff that this issue was laughable, definitely for different reasons, but comical nonetheless. For the faculty/staff it seemed as if the poster itself was funny, which I can understand to an extent, the photo of the two teens does come off as staged and a bit unrealistic. The content though itself is no laughing matter, as the students show through their apparent recognition that the school athletes at least, do in fact need reminders about what sexual consent is and requires.

In addition to this school culture of negative social actions, a feeling of school pride and a caring atmosphere was also prevalent. Initially, these two concepts might seem mutually exclusive, however, the focus group data reveals that even in the midst of negative social actions amongst the members of the student body, the presence of caring and pride are still ever-present.

Throughout the student focus group, each member of the group illustrates these concepts. Previously the comments by Sarah, Marco, and Gram illustrated these points. Joy however never outright stated this belief as unequivocally as her peers. However, it was still clear to me that she had similar feelings. During an exchange referencing the lack of signage in certain areas of the building she explained that,

I don't know because where they are placed is where people are so like just because there is not a sign in like S hall by the doors where no one is, it might not seem that way, but maybe for other people who might actually hang out there it may seem like no one cares.

Her acknowledgement of the lack of signs in certain areas is simply linked back to the lack of traffic in those particular areas. In addition, I would argue from my observations that there is truth for the most part to this statement. In the areas in which I found little to no signage two occurrences were present. Either individuals did not congregate in said space or these were

spaces that were for quick passage on the way to the next location such as the main stairway (Figure 8).

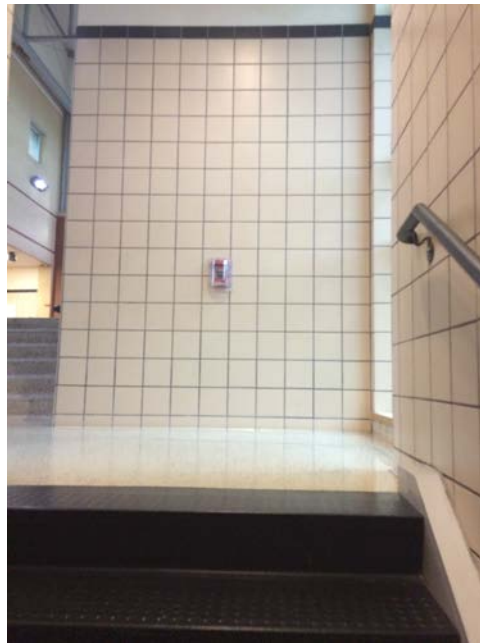


Figure 8. Poster placement in main stairway.

One of the most revealing comments regarding consumption of school signage came from Sarah who noted that signs to her are “little reminders that people still care.” I had never imagined that the influence of signs would affect the social emotional state of a student; rather I thought of them as perhaps reminders or warnings against participation in various taboo activities. However, this statement gave me pause during the interview and throughout the rest of the study. In fact, she went on to echo this sentiment again later on the focus group. When asked to compare their school to others they had visited or attended she explained that their school “seems like people actually go here.” This statement spoke to her feeling that this was a school where people came together and existed, beyond the routine of showing up and going to class. The other students echoed this as well. Gram followed up her response by noting, “I’ve been to Sapphire High to take the SAT and their walls are kind of plain, at least where I went

kind of plain.” While Joy acknowledged that her school was “yeah maybe better,” than others at displaying visual messages on campus.

Throughout the interview I perceived that although the majority of the signs in this schoolhouse were negative in nature, the overwhelming feeling of the students was that of a culture of caring. Perhaps this is due to the groundwork that teachers and faculty/staff put in on a daily bases to reinforce this message through their individual words of encouragement and openness with students. Further studies would be needed to confirm this assumption.

Nonetheless, the ideas that Sarah and Marco presented I believe speaks to the heart of the issue regarding consumption in this school; they serve as little reminders that someone in the building still cares about their well-being, even if it is displayed through negatively worded signage.

Consumption of messaging is complex, as it requires insight into a variety of external factors beyond those contained in the schoolhouse walls. For Crimson students, it seems evident that the topics and trends on social media and throughout their community impact their consumption of school messaging. As topics begin to trend and are increasingly discussed in varying social circles, the likelihood of signage consumption and recall increases as well. Perhaps then the faculty/staff concern with the influence of social media is appropriate and may lend guidance to the decision making process for school sign distribution and placement.

Influence

The easiest way to observe influence of a message on an individual is to observe their actions. In the absence though of an identifiable action, insight into individuals’ perceptions and feelings may reveal messages’ influence. The data from the focus group was utilized to reveal any potential influence signs might have on consumers by seeking patterns within the students

and faculty/staff focus group which reference feeling and/or perceptions of school signage. During both groups, often, these perceptions/feelings came across when addressing negative signage messaging and school culture.

The initial insight into consumption occurred when the students were asked about the story that signs in their school produce. They outlined two key storylines: negative social actions and caring for students' individual wellbeing. Within these two areas the topics of sexual consent as well as suicide were addressed. Specific to these two issues, I inquired if the students believed that signs warning about negative social actions worked. Gram initiated the dialogue addressing suicide:

Gram: I think it depends on the person and the amount of trouble or how deep they are in the situation

Mr. Hamilton: Ok

(long pause)

Mr. Hamilton: What about the sexual consent one? Sarah, you brought that up, you think that works?

Sarah: No

Mr. Hamilton: Why not?

Sarah: I don't know people are just like.....I don't know they don't value each other as much as the like the sign is trying to promote you to.

Mr. Hamilton: So what's the point of having them then? If all of you agree that they don't really work why do we even have them at all?

Sarah: Little reminders that people still care.

Mr. Hamilton: Ok

Gram: Yeah I mean it may not work for everyone but there's like some people, like for me, it reminds me that it's a big issue in today's society.

Joy: Yeah it may not help the majority of people but someone who is actually suicidal they see the sign and they call, that helps just 1 person over the majority of people who would look over it.

Mr. Hamilton: So even if that one person it helps that's worth it.

Joy: Yeah

Gram: Definitely

Sarah: Yes

This exchange was the first inclination that although the posters may not generate suicide hotline calls or convince students that sexual consent is important, they did have some influence on the students' understanding of the larger social world in which they are living. Even Marco, who spoke the least in the group, acknowledges that the issue of bullying/suicide exists even if, as he puts it, "not even half of them see that poster and called." He at least is acknowledging there is a segment of the student population that needs to call, even if the signs do not necessarily push them to action, just as Joy explains that even if it "helps just 1 person over the majority of people who would look over it" it is worth putting the signs up.

Initially, the faculty/staff focus group focused on the sexual consent sign when asked about the school's narrative to an outside observer. This made sense, as it was the initial sign brought up the interview process. Ms. Sand acknowledged the narrative proclaiming that these signs are telling, "Guys, keep your hands off the girls," followed with a further explanation that the signs give off a narrative that is "trying to get away from rape and drug culture." This recognition of the social implications signs have on discourse within the schoolhouse is consistent with the elements of production of consumption as it speaks to the prevalence of social concerns in school signage. Additionally, this poster is aiming at curbing a negative behavior by seeking to influence actions before they occur. This was a factor throughout the majority of the signs both present during observations and discussed during the focus groups.

Ms. French acknowledged this trend of curbing behavior indication that "they all have this negative stem to them. Like warning or danger, there's no like, here's how to make the right

decision, rather they are all here's how to not make the wrong decision." Affirming this claim was the focus on the negative action signs in the student group. Signs dealing specifically with drugs, sexual consent, bullying, suicide, and dangerous driving are all worded in a manner that stems negative, proclaiming actions not to engage in rather than recommending positive alternatives.

School culture encompasses a multitude of factors. Specific to the influence of Crimson High signage on school culture, the data analysis focused on areas of student and/or faculty/staff recognition of the signs within their school influencing perception about the campus culture itself. Several of these exchanges were noted previously in the production and consumption sections. Notably however is Mr. Turek's insight into the progress made during his time as principal. He mentioned that prior to his administration, the school was lacking identification signs for various school related areas, most notably the student section at the sports stadium. He mentioned, "Before I got here the student section was hard to find and did not make sense location wise. So, we moved it. Got a clear sign to designate it which made a huge difference." Although this reference is outside the interior walls, his insight into the influence the mere presence and location of signage had on school spirit reveals the potential influence signs can have on school spirit. Additionally, Ms. French and Ms. Elliot acknowledged that the school has a need for signs that promote the various positive attributes of the school and student body. Mr. Turek echoed this sentiment noting that, "of course, there is always room for growth."

The preponderance of data concerning influence and school culture was found in the student focus group. Throughout the course of the interview students acknowledged a range of perceptions about their school's culture. Recall Sarah and Gram's belief that their school is one that shows through signage that individuals are cared for at Crimson. Furthermore, all four

students indicated that they believed their school was superior to others they had either attended or visited in the area of school sign production. Specifically the students noted that the signs in their building made it feel as if students actually attended and as Sarah put it, “take pride in the school.” Although the students did not believe that the Crimson High Pride signs outlining desired behaviors is effective, they did reiterate that their presence adds to the ambiance of school pride. The data does not suggest necessarily that school pride is heightened at Crimson due to the presence of signage, but rather the culmination of various signs contributes to the overall Crimson High school culture.

Summary

Crimson High is inundated with a variety of messages, primarily concerning social issues that may be facing students today. It is clear that the narrative of the school hallways and public spaces within this high school is predominantly negative in nature including multiple signs that speak to why one should not indulge in perceived negative behaviors such as bullying, suicide, sexual assault, alcohol/drug use, driving dangers, and abusive relationships. To the outside observer it may appear that this school is facing a host of issues concerning said topics amongst its student body, and they might be correct in that assumption. In fact, the faculty/staff proclaimed several times that these were issues facing the student body. However, the biggest issues they perceived, as obstacles facing their student body were marijuana use, as stated by Mr. Turek, and stress. Interestingly, these issues were not addressed in any school signage within the hallways of the campus. Furthermore, the student body when pressed about signage noted they would like to see more positive posters about colleges and real world application to content. It

seems then that there is a disconnect between student wants and desires, and the messages that faculty/staff believe need to be presented for consumption.

CHAPTER 5

VIOLET HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

Striking is the first word that comes to mind when pulling up to the front of Violet High School. The curbside appeal of this particular school is unlike any other in this district, or any that I have seen to date. Several aspects of the school caught my attention upon arrival: the immaculate landscape, vast scale of the building both in height and width, and the overall fresh look of the building. Violet High is the newest of the campuses within the district, built in 2009. The interior of this building matched the exterior in terms of cleanliness and order. An overall feeling of welcoming, school pride, and newness was in the air when I stepped through the front doors.

In order to find research participants at Violet, I initially contacted the school guidance counselor. However, with the busyness of the time of year administering various state and national tests, she was not able to assist at that particular time. I then called a colleague of mine that I have known for two years through speech and debate coaching that is on this particular campus as a teacher and coach. Using the study's criteria, she was able to send me a list of twelve students she thought would work for the study. Seeking a diverse range of opinions, I contacted four students initially via their school email, and within a day, these four students and parents confirmed their willingness to participate. I arrived on campus April 19th at 3:30 p.m. to begin my observation walks. I walked the students' schedules twice that day, once during the passing period, and again after school when the building was clear. The total breakdown of signs including the number of times each sign itself was observed and whether or not that particular sign was mentioned in the focus group data at Violet High is depicted in Table 3.

Table 3

Violet High School Signage Breakdown

Sign	Number of times observed	Mention in focus group
Believe/Graduate	4	X
Bullying	2	
Dating Abuse/Love is Respect	4	X
Driving Safety	3	
Positive Traits	2	X
SAT/ACT Dates	4	
School Spirit/Expectations	6	X
Suicide/Depression	4	
Temporary Signs	40	

The amount of signs observed when walking the student participant schedules was far fewer than Crimson and similar to Sapphire. Temporary signs were visible most often, including a range of posters promoting upcoming events and items for purchase such as the annual yearbook. Overall the number of permanent signs on display was relatively balanced in terms of numbers of signs within each category.

Once the student schedules were walked I met with the student group the following day after school. The Violet High student participants consisted of Tiandra, ninth grade Bi-Racial female; Allison, tenth grade White female; Jennifer, eleventh grade White female; and Tyson, twelfth grade African American male. This particular group was predominately female; however, the male student is captain of the debate team on campus and was more than willing to speak his mind throughout. In addition, the students in this group have varying backgrounds of

interests and activities. Tiandra is a campus athlete, Allison is part of the cheerleading squad, Jennifer is involved in art club and theatre, while Tyson is debate captain and involved in several University Interscholastic League (the governing body for competition in the state of Texas) Academic competitions. We met in Ms. White's classroom, as she was the one who provided me with the initial list of names and offered her room up as a quiet meeting location.

The faculty/staff group was comprised of Ms. White, an African American female, late 20s, who teaches a core course and sponsors two campus clubs/organizations. In addition, the school principal, Mr. Brooklin, African American male in his early 40s, agreed to participate as well. The school guidance counselor who agreed to participate initially had a family emergency occur minutes before the focus group and had to leave. I decided to proceed with the group that day with just the two participants and allowed time to meet with the guidance counselor if any of the data suggested it was necessary. The data never pointed to a need to follow up.

The coding process for Violet High was the same used with Crimson High's data. The process utilized the schoolscape discursive practice model to evaluate each sign individually initially. Once the signs themselves were evaluated the focus group data was added to the model in corresponding places. For instance, if a student mentioned dating violence or abuse as a social concern, their statement was placed in the outmost square on the model along the vertical signs. This created an artifact that represented both the signs' characteristics and participant insights. This section of analysis specific to Violet High follows the same patterns as previously followed analyzing Crimson beginning first with production, then consumption, influence, and concluding with a summary over this particular campus.

Production Elements

Upon entering the building two signs immediately catch the eye of those passing-by: graduation promises and college/career acceptance (Figure 9). Interestingly enough, this was the first sign mentioned by the faculty/staff and the second mentioned by the students. The principal of the campus, Mr. Brooklin, when asked about the process for approving school signage pointed to the graduation promises first. He explained that these are for the, “Class of 15, 16, 17, the thought process there is to have students thinking about not just going to class and the monotony of being in school every day but understand there is a goal in mind.”



(a)



(b)

Figure 9. Violet High School graduation commitment signage.

This notion of a goal-oriented attitude was reiterated by the student focus group when Tyson acknowledged the “I Made It” wall. His recognition of this wall was in response to my question about what signs they see throughout their school day. In this instance, I followed up with the student about what this wall was meant for. He explained that it is used, “whenever you like get into a trade school or a college, community, it doesn’t matter—succeeding in your education, going on to the next level of education.”

The acknowledgement from both focus groups in addition to my initial response into entering the building highlights the significance of these two displays. First, it acknowledges

from the onset that Violet High is focused on student graduation and education beyond the high school experience. In terms of production, Figure 9a is school produced while Figure 9b is a mixture of school (the inclusion of the signatures) and purchase through an outside company. With regards to production, the school is controlling the initial narrative both to outside observers and to those within their population.

In the case of both signs, the concept of visual representation of narrative is present. This concept acknowledges that signs and symbols can exist to create a call to action to consumers either through direct action or reaction. In the case of the “I Made It” wall, either of these two responses might exist. On the one hand, the acknowledgement of these students’ acceptance might prompt a student who has been accepted, but is not on the wall, to report their acceptance to the appropriate party. On the other hand, a student might view this wall and become inspired to pursue post-secondary education. In either instance, this concept is present. With regards to the “Commitment to Graduate” banners, both responses are prevalent as well. The action of signing the banner as a commitment elicits the reaction. The call to action of actually graduating may cause a student to think about the steps it will take to reach said goal, potentially producing an action to complete those steps. In either sense, it is clear these two visual representations produce visually represented narratives of the high school experience both lived and perceived.

School control over production, though, was not limited to these initial encounters. In fact, one of my first observations was the lack of signage altogether. The vast majority of signage within this building is limited to two areas: above water fountains, and in sitting areas. Any other signage that is outside of these spaces deals directly with school pride and expectations, which shall be addressed under this school’s influence section. The limiting of the signs to these particular areas however is not lost on either focus group. Ms. White initially

noted that, “one of things about this school that I really like is it’s not overwhelming with signs.” The student group did not specifically echo this; however, the sheer dominance of one particular sign in this focus group spoke to the limited encounters these students have on a daily basis with signage inside their school.

The overwhelming majority of signs within Violet High were classified as temporary. Most of these signs were directly linked to a school club or organization. In terms of prevalence of fixed signage the majority were school pride specific, including signs that address behavioral expectations. Driving safety, dating abuse, and bullying were the only social issues addressed and were limited to specific locations – above water fountains and outside the cafeteria in the common spaces above benches.

With specific regard to how posters are produced, decided upon, and then placed throughout the building, both groups referenced the influence of the district. In fact, Mr. Brooklin acknowledged that he was in an administrative meeting that day in which a human trafficking expert was presenting data to principals and administrators. Within this meeting he affirmed that district officials do give guidance on the signage and school narratives to be addressed across the campuses.

It is almost tailored to everyone, understanding that hey, there is some validity to what is being said and we know that this is an issue... and so in that situation it would be a push that begins at the district level and then each campus has its own issues that people address. So we sit down and have a PBIS committee and with that committee we talk about some of the issues we have.

This insight also speaks to the individualization of school signage and campus freedom to choose which messages would be most beneficial to their specific student body. The positive behavioral intervention and support (PBIS) program that was implemented by the district across campuses seeks to target positive behaviors through awareness and expectations. Each campus has a PBIS

committee that meets to discuss target behaviors, school climate/culture, as well as campus goals. The PBIS is where the school expectation behavior concepts, which are visible across all three campuses through signage, are established. At Violet High, these are the R.I.D.E. signs and similar signs are prevalent at the other two campuses (Crimson High Way and Sapphire Pride).

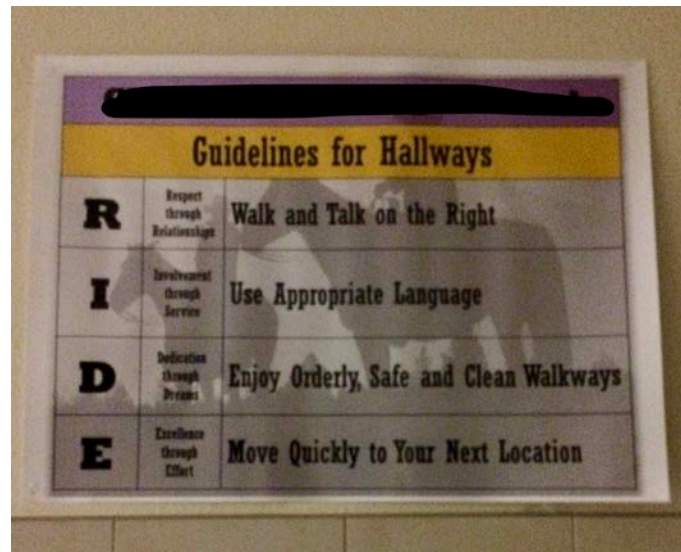


Figure 10. R.I.D.E. sign at Violet High.

The students acknowledge these PBIS initiated signs but do not speak to the committee itself. Using a team effort, they were able to recall the primary sign, Figure 10, and its message:

Tyson: We do have signs up that help reflect who we are as a school, alma mater, anthem, and everything we do. Violet excellence, what's his face, spirit, pride,

Allison: Ride?

Tyson: Yeah to show what rangers are supposed to be.

Mr. Hamilton: Ok so those signs, does anyone know off the top of your head what those say?

Jennifer: There should be a sign up in every classroom, just not in here.

Mr. Hamilton: What about the ones in the hallways?

Tyson: Ride is uh...

Jennifer: R is respect.

Tyson: I is integrity, E excellence and D is determination! That's what I am talking about! Team work, we riding today.

Although it took a group effort to recall the signs message exactly, it was clear that the students did have some semblance of understanding and pride in their recall. Figure 10, the R.I.D.E. poster, is school produced and showcases a variety of school specific colors and fonts.

The R.I.D.E. poster is similar in concept to both the Crimson High Way (Figure 5) as well as the Violet High signage (Figure 10), in that each was produced by and for the individual school based on the PBIS committee recommendations. In addition, each of the three schools' signs falls into the geosemiotic category of interactive participant, as each seeks to produce some direct action or behavior. Each of the three schools' PBIS signs utilize font and color scheme to align the school's mascot and campus colors. For Violet High, the physical placement, or public performance, was the most relevant component.

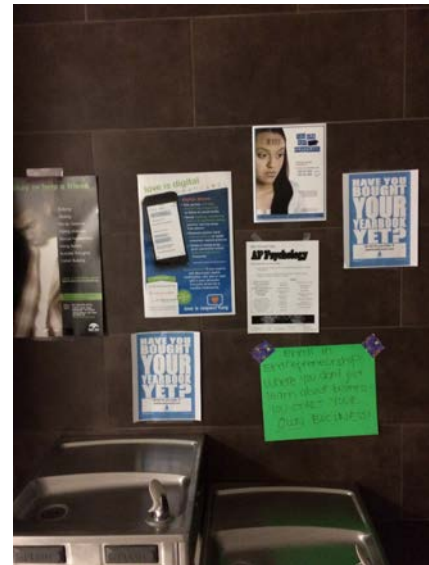
The placement of the R.I.D.E. signs appears to be strategic. One could locate the majority of these posters at the intersection of each major hallway, situated at eye level in a glass windowpane. During the observation walks, these signs stood out more than any other in the building as they are positioned in a manner that would draw the eye at almost each major turn. This is significant as it dictates a public performance narrative for consumers of the message. Upon quick passage one might notice simply the title "Guidelines for Hallways" as it sits adjusted center and highlighted in yellow. Next, the eye is drawn to the largest font, all capitalization, of the R.I.D.E. text situated along the left side. As an acronym, it is presumably ineffective, as the letters do not correspond to the actions to be taken to the right as a traditional acronym would. The "R" directs that individuals "walk and talk to the right," the "I" asks to "use appropriate language" (no I within that request), the "D" to "enjoy orderly, safe, and clean

walkways” (again no “D”) and the “E” to “move quickly to your next location” (no “E” present). In order to understand this as a true acronym one would need to stop and study the smaller print in between the larger letters and requested actions, which in passing, I found to be very difficult. Nonetheless, as previously stated the students were able to recall the acronym but not the commands, rather the character traits of a Violet High student. This lack of recall strengthens the presumption that in terms of consumption of the requested actions, this sign is ineffective.

Although the PBIS data, district recommendations, and positive school culture, factions are the dominant production forces present within this school, outside resources are utilized as well. In fact, the issue that dominates the student conversation and is acknowledged as well by the faculty/staff is that of dating violence and abuse. For the students, Figure 11 became the pivot point to their responses, continually used as an example. In Figure 11, (a) is the poster itself while (b) is its positioning at one of the water fountain locations situated amongst a variety of other school signage. Figure 11(c) depicts a close up of the sponsors of the sign/campaign, situated along the bottom right of the poster, including Mary Kay and Verizon. Presumably, these signs were printed directly from the website or shipped to the school from the Love is Respect organization that created the posters. Recall Crimson High’s counselor, who discussed this very practice, indicating that often, web links are sent by the district of posters that may be printed by school employees. This sign is on display in several places at Crimson and in a few places at Sapphire as well, reinforcing the idea that perhaps this was sent over to campuses by the district. The fact that this sign is mentioned most by the student focus group of Violet indicates that production from larger organizations may have a wider reach to their student population.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 11. Love is Respect sign at Violet High.

Due to the abundance of mentions of this particular sign amongst the students, it is paramount to understand its visual production elements. First, the notion of interpersonal distance appears, as it is the first view one would have if they went to the water fountains situated at the ends of the main hallways. Figure 11(b) illustrates the positioning of this particular sign in the context of the variety of other messages present. At either water fountain, one would arguably come into close proximity of the sign prior, during, and after consumption. Furthermore, as a man of average height, 5'8", this was the sign at my direct eye level, which allowed me to consume most of the information. Its placement is in direct, personal contact to

individuals utilizing the fountains. The prominent display of a cellphone and the word love grabs the attention of a teenage audience as love and technology (cellphone), are vital parts of the modern teenage experience for the majority of students. The concept of code preference then highlights the “Love is Digital” text, as it is diagonal, colored in green font, and situated in the top right above the cell phone. This gives the “Love is Digital” text a prominent display to the forthcoming information. The use of relevant photos and text presumably draws the reader into the image to then consume the list of potential digital abuse warning signs that may occur within a relationship. This list is mentioned at several points throughout the student focus group and speaks to the quality of production, leading to effective consumption and influence, for these particular students.

Production for Violet High signs is the product of two key factors: district/campus directives, and individualized messaging for the campuses specific student concerns both perceived and acknowledged. Both campus produced and company/organization produced signs are utilized. However, in terms of company/organization signage, there are far fewer of these types prevalent throughout the building, but their potential influence is nonetheless far reaching. Both types of signs though appeared to have some level of consumption by both students as well as faculty/staff.

Consumption

As previously noted, Figure 11 is central to the students’ conversation regarding school signage within their building. Due to its dominance of the focus group the initial conclusion drawn was that students consumed this message. During an exchange regarding the positive or negative nature of their school’s signage, Tyson explained that,

I think it all comes down to what you've been through personally. Posters have a way of re-jogging or rekindling experiences that happened in someone's life and bringing up that pain and they may be like meh I am not going to do that.

The consumption of messages under this concept suggests that each sign might have a greater impact upon individuals that have had direct experience with the issue on display. In fact, the same student acknowledged later in the conversation that he looks at the digital dating abuse sign (Figure 11) and checks himself for awareness about his own relationship. He explained that, "I always see it and I am like am I in an abusive relationship? I don't think I am in an abusive relationship. And then I have to think about it, am I? That one gets me though." This response received an affirming response from his peers, two of the other three nodding along and affirming with a chorus of "yes" and "yep." It became evident quickly that this particular sign was consumed in its entirety by each member of this group. Throughout the conversation not only was it continually referenced, but specifics from the list of potential dating abuse signs were cited as well.

Consumption for these students was not limited to merely the words and images presented before them; rather, they consumed these messages in the context of their societal experience as well. The social aspect became clear as the students spoke with me about issues that they perceived as prevalent amongst their student body. When pressed about the issues they viewed as the largest challenges for students in their high school the following exchange occurred:

Tyson: The online domestic violence, when I was looking at that list, a lot of it applies and you don't even think about. Like TV shows saying this is what a relationship is supposed to be and then you like see what it is like. What the government or our adults think it's supposed to be and like theirs a difference. I think that sign makes you the most aware.

Jennifer: Yeah because the media paints like a picture of what this is what a relationship is supposed to be and whenever you read between the lines you can see that's not the perfect relationship, it's more a controlling one.

Both of these students are speaking to a larger experience within society. Initially, Tyson is addressing concerns about the media's portrayal of relationships. His acknowledgement speaks to the critical nature of this topic for himself, but also addresses the larger concern of messaging in today's society, a vast and steady stream of potentially conflicting narratives. His proclamation that "government or adults" want him to see issues in a light that is based upon those in powers self-interests rather than of his own is telling. He ends his statement by again praising Figure 11's potential power noting, "I think that sign makes you the most aware." These assertions are affirmed by Sarah mentioning the influence as well of the media in painting a picture of relationships for consumers; however, both are skeptical, attempting to see beyond these given narratives. Nonetheless, the sign's message is unquestionably consumed by these students and serves as a talking point for addressing perceived societal issues.

Taking a critical position such as these on a given issue occurred several times within this focus group. Tyson tends to lead these critical conversations, which makes sense; he is actively involved in the teams' competitive debate program. However, he is not the only student willing to address societal issues and positions of the day. Tiandra when asked about the biggest issues she views within her school and society today explained that for her.

I think it's more like how people, you know, racism stuff like that. It's not like a bunch in this school but I think teachers and stuff like play favorites, different people and like kids would rather hang out with you know the same color or something like that.

Initially this came across as a student expressing grievances she had with her schoolteachers and peers but not necessarily speaking to a larger societal narrative. However, when asked about diversity in the images around their school in terms of an appropriate representation of minority students, first, a chorus of laughter arose. Once the laughter subsided Tyson explained that, "well whenever it comes to problems like drugs, domestic violence, like at least I know in our

culture, the black culture...” to which Tiandra cut him off to state, “it’s the minorities that are mainly depicted on those pictures.” This was insightful. During the observation walks I found no evidence of signs dealing with drug use. Furthermore, the domestic violence signs only featured one poster with an image of an actual individual. In that instance, a female of presumably Hispanic or Middle-Eastern decent (Figure 12) is depicted, but zero signs in this school had images of Blacks as the featured image. Perhaps then this was an insight into the students’ experiences with signs in other locations outside of Violet or at other periods of time within the school year where other images were potentially present. Regardless, this exchange presents the lived experience of these minority students. For them, it seems each has feelings of under- and misrepresentation with regards to social issues in society and on school signage.

Social issues, more specifically societal changes, were a pivotal component of how the faculty/staff group consumed the messages displayed around their building. From the start of the conversation both Ms. White and Mr. Brooklin outlined the correlation between societal influences and school signage. The shift, though, they believe has come over time. For instance, Ms. White acknowledges that,

I think a lot has to do with what’s going on in society today. I remember when I was in high school the big sign was this is your brain on drugs with the cracked egg and like the “don’t smoke.” And it’s not that we don’t have those issues anymore but they are far less common then what you’ve seen society wise.

This recollection of images from her past in contrast to those within her building today gives an insight into her perception of social narratives changing and dictating the schoolhouse message. When I pressed the principal on how adults would know these are the prevailing issues students face he acknowledged the difficulty of knowing for certain with regards to dating abuse and violence that, “outside of kids self-identifying, or a parent calling and saying her little Walter had a tough deal and Kam beat him up because he broke up with her...” Once this statement trailed

off, he held up his cell phone to note the prevalence of technology, specifically social media, in aiding teachers and administrators in the task of identifying said behaviors and conflicts.

The social media piece became a major issue of discussion at this point and spoke directly to the idea that societal changes dictate school narratives. Ms. White affirms this notion and outlined that for her, the biggest challenge facing the students today she works with is social media decorum. In this area she is speaking to her perception of students' difficulties navigating the social media landscape, including lack of knowledge on appropriate communication, dealing with conflicts, and using their time away from social media wisely. Mr. Brooklin echoes this concern and adds that respect for teachers and other adults is probably the largest disciplinary problem on his campus. However, in the student focus group, I asked Allison, a cheerleader, directly what she believed to be the biggest problem facing her peers. While the other students in the group claimed dating communication and/or dating violence, she told me point blank, "drugs." Perhaps then a mismatch between student experience and faculty/staff perception on the major concerns of this particular student body is present. This becomes even more important when analyzing the potential influence these signs might have on students because as the principal acknowledged, "I don't think we have very many signs about alcohol or drugs." To which I affirmed, "you don't have any." This apparent mismatch between experience and perception highlighted the overall lack of diversity in messaging within Violet High. In terms of consumption of the school's signage, the overwhelming responses in both groups to the questions concerning what signs and messages they see throughout their day that address social issues can be categorized into two groups, dating and technology. The evidence from both the focus groups and physical signage throughout the building highlights the lack of diversity in

messaging. Diversity though was not limited to the signs' messages and physical poster counts; representation of diverse populations was a concern as well.

The faculty/staff acknowledged the lack of diversity as well, or at minimum, their ignorance to the issue. During a similar exchange as the one from the student group about diversity in signage, Ms. White mentioned that,

I came from Hill Mound, so anything looks diverse to me; I know that is not always the case so I have very different perspective on it. As far as matching the campus I think we are getting there. It comes down to who produces them though, unless they are school produced there is going to be a message that wants to be portrayed by certain groups. I think as far as diversity what you get out there, yes we have it compared to other campuses in the area, but again we don't have that many signs that show diverse people in affairs.

Her insight into diversity of signage is based on personal experience and the realization that production plays a larger role into diversification. The personal experience component speaks to Tyson's prior reference to his understanding of the effectiveness of signage and personal experience. Furthermore, the criticism of the production companies reinforces the notions of the student group as well, in that they perceived minorities to primarily be represented on signs dealing with negative or taboo social activities. As Ms. White indicates, "there is going to be a message that wants to be portrayed by certain groups." It is important to acknowledge that both the student (Tyson) and teacher (Ms. White) leveling these claims are Black, and have debate backgrounds. Tiandra however is a ninth grade, bi-racial student with no debate experience. Her perspective is an indication that perhaps there is some level of credence to these criticisms, even if these types of signs are not displayed at this particular high school.

Consumption of the messages in Violet High was acknowledged throughout the focus groups. Their recollection of the signs within their building and the messages associated with each aligned with the physical counts. Based on number of signs on display and positioning

within the building for maximum consumption, both groups spoke to the three signs most prominent: Figures 9, 10, and 11. Consumption though is only one aspect. In order to understand any potential effectiveness or ineffectiveness of school signage within a campus one must explore signs' influence.

Influence

As previously noted, this school is not cluttered with signage; in fact, most of the signs are isolated to above the water fountains, sitting areas, or the entrances to major hallway. The observation walks and the focus groups highlighted the lack of signage, as well as the school layout and design, and strategic nature of sign placement. Each of these components contribute to potential influence of signs on students and faculty/staff at an individual level due to their isolated placement. When signs are sparse, consuming their messages requires individuals to spend an extended amount of time observing the message since they are not repeatedly on display for continued consumption. Scarcity in signage then promotes an individual approach to consumption as individual effort to consume is increased when signs are sparse.

Initially, Tyson outlined a perspective on their schools signage as lacking any real influence on him personally, due to a perception that most signage fails to address real life.

Tyson notes that,

I think it's super stereotypical, like with the bad decisions it's very one track mind so it's like me seeing it doesn't have any impact because it's not real world. Nobody goes out and I says like I smoke cigarettes so now I am going to do it the rest of my life. Like now I have got friends who do it. I smoke then and I am like I am done, and they only did a year or two. It doesn't tell the full story and it doesn't tell the real story so it doesn't apply.

This insight seemed predictable for a student his age. Often, in my own experience as a public high school teacher, teenagers become skeptical of adult warnings regarding potentially negative

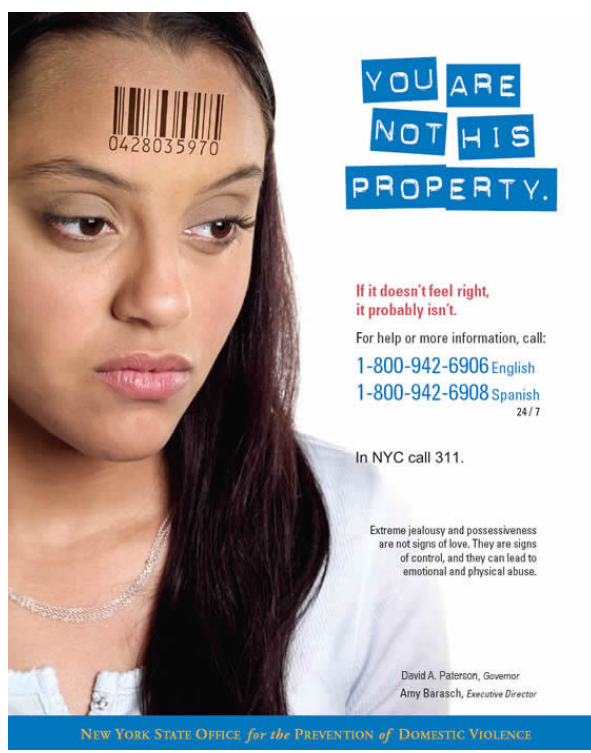
actions/behaviors. His continued reference back to himself using the pronoun “I” is indicative of this notion. However, this same student led the conversation regarding the digital dating abuse sign praising its potential effectiveness. In fact, his final response in the focus group circled back to the “Love is Digital” sign where he noted, “Whoever made that sign should get a raise.” At face value these two responses do not align. One speaks to the ineffectiveness of school signage while the other praises effectiveness. The seemingly disconnected opinion on influence, though, speaks to the importance of lived experiences and an individual’s personal lens when viewing signs for consumption. For Tyson, signs addressing smoking are seemingly ineffective because his own experience does not align with the story being portrayed. On the contrary, the “Love is Digital” sign seemingly speaks directly to his experience within his teenage relationship. Recall his words on the subject claiming that, “I always see it and I am like am I in an abusive relationship? I don’t think I am in an abusive relationship. And then I have to think about it, am I? That one gets me though.” This perspective provides an example of how individuals’ experiences dictate the messages influence on consumers. For Tyson, an anti-smoking sign would have no influence on his actions, as he perceives it as not telling the full story. However, the dating abuse signs from the “Love is Digital” poster not only receive his high praise, but Tyson also acknowledges that he uses the checklist in his own relationship.

Perhaps the most telling example of influence at the individual level came when asking students about Figure 12. This particular sign was situated amongst the others above the water fountain. At first, even I passed over this sign in my initial analysis as it was situated the highest away from any other in relation to the water fountain. This positioning would indicate that it is less important than the others due to its placement. While other signs are at eye level with the person consuming from the fountain, this sign would require consumers to observe the entirety

of the wall. After reexamining the photos, I noticed that this particular sign, which was on display four times at different water fountain locations, all had the same markings on a word in the focal sentence to the right of the female's image. As featured on the wall the prominent message is, "You are not property." However, I was intrigued by the scratched out word. After a search in Google Images I found the original poster produced by the New York State Office [Figure 12(b)].



(a) Violet High version



(b) Original version

Figure 12. "You are not [his] property" poster.

The word that was marked out in the Violet High version is "his." I asked the student group about this sign in particular when we were discussing dating violence.

Mr. Hamilton: One of things I saw speaking of dating abuse, I saw the digital abuse, love is respect, one of the ones I saw above the water fountain had a girl's face on it and a bar code

Jennifer: Oh yes.

Mr. Hamilton: Something about property and it was like scribbled out, anyone see that?

Jennifer: I know what you are talking about. The poster is basically about if you are in an abusive relationship sometimes the dominant force in the relationship will treat you like property. That poster is basically insinuating that you have a choice to be in that relationship still and basically allow them to say you're my property. I own you, I tell you where to go, what to do, who you hang out with, or you can just turn in the different perspective and say, no, I am done, I am not something you can control anymore.

This was a passionate moment for Jennifer. It was clear from her tone/volume and gestures that this was something she felt strongly about. Although she did not directly state she had experienced this first hand, the sense I got from her testimony concerning the sign indicated that perhaps she or someone close to her had direct experience with a controlling relationship. Recall the students' perceptions of signs and real-world situations. Jennifer's testimony aligned with this notion of lived experience being an indicator of consumption and influence for consumers. In fact, her account of this poster's meaning was not limited to how it influenced her perception on control in relationships. When I asked about the scratched out word on this sign, Jennifer and Tyson explained:

Jennifer: People marked out his and put something else because like people now are getting so upset with the gender equality. Women who are in relationships with other women they can still suffer through domestic abuse. Their significant other can say you are mine, I tell you what to do, and it's not just the men anymore.

Tyson: It also goes back to the real world situation. It's like, whenever I [look at the] am I in an abusive relationship, I don't just say am I the only one doing this I also ask if someone I am with doing this? I also ask if you know someone I am with is doing it. Women can be just as abusive as men and those posters only make it seem like its men. Those posters make it seem like it's not, which only perpetuates the culturally ignorance.

Jennifer: Those are only signifying that women are the innocent ones when you look at it in the real world. Like Tyson said women can be more abusive because of what power they hold over men.

In this instance, students are expressing both the influence of the sign over their actions within their relationships and the physical actions they have taken to correct their perceived problem with the sign itself. Seemingly, then, the influence of signs can be both internal and external. On the one hand, they have consumed the dating abuse message and use the information to

evaluate their personal relationships, while externally they can be motivated to take action within their environment, in this instance, by marking through the word “his.” Throughout the course of the focus group, each participant spoke about dating violence and the effectiveness of the messaging present at their school to spot and potentially combat dating abuse. This universal recognition does indicate that a level of influence of signage on students’ actions is present within Violet High.



Figure 13. Stairstep messages at Violet High.

The concept of individualized narratives though was not limited to the students. In fact, Ms. White noted several instances of her personal experiences and perceptions when addressing the school signage. For instance, she notes that

One of the most effective things we have signage wise is on the steps going up the main stairs. I walk those stairs at least 4 times a day and the very top one says finished and sometimes it’s the only reason I am getting to the last step because you know I am looking at that motivation and not looking at my phone and you see those going up and I

think there is a place on social media and we just can't take them out of the school's all together.

This was not the first I heard of this staircase (Figure 13). In fact, Crimson High teachers acknowledged it in their focus group noting that it was a positive messaging technique that was new to Violet High this year. Ms. White's initial insight into the stairs displays the concept of individualized messaging as she notes that, "I walk those stairs at least 4 times a day and the very top one says finished, and sometimes it's the only reason I am getting to the last step."

Arguably, people within this school walk those same steps each day and never think twice about that last steps sign with the word proclaiming, "finished," but for her, that motivator pushes her to keep on climbing.

Additionally, when speaking about effectiveness or ineffectiveness of school sign she recalls signs from her past high school experience as a student, the aforementioned anti-drug signs that were prominent in the late 1980s and 1990s. Later in the discussion Mr. Brooklin as well acknowledges signs of influence from his previous experiences; however, he also acknowledges the social forces shifting the school narrative.

You know we thought about, I guess the generation before mine thought about ... we started talking about smoking, it was big deal, and then our generation came along and we started talking about smoking marijuana, and then and the mid-late 90's you saw in an influx of kids doing hard drugs, cocaine, and Plano, I remember was real real bad in and number of kids actually OD'ed and then we moved into the whole prescription piece and that causes whole another deal. I think the way it has evolved is now the drugs are more of the prescriptive nature, as opposed to just smoking marijuana or doing cocaine—those things still happen, but I think you see far more of the prescription piece, but I believe we are seeing so much of the um, the kids harming themselves because of the bullying and all, and I think it's tied back to dating violence and abuse at home so I think there are has been a shift where we are talking far more about that then the whole drug piece.

As the oldest member of any of the focus groups, his insight aids in understanding how social and personal experiences have altered schools' narratives. It became clear from the faculty/staff perspective that an individual's personal experiences matter to consumption and influence.

However, the social narrative appears to be the broader narrative of the individual student as outlined by both Ms. White and Mr. Brooklin's account.

The individual experiences' impact on influence from the signs at Violet High speaks to the lived experience facing students within the school. Whereas the presence of signs revealed individuals' influence, the lack of influence expressed regarding the overall messaging of the signs within the school was prevalent as well. When asked if the signs within their school paint an accurate representation of the typical Violet High School student experience, each student simply stated, no. This was surprising, as the previous discourse seemed to indicate that in fact, many of the signs did depict the issues facing students today. Once students sat and thought about this question, Jennifer spoke to the various Violet High pride and R.I.D.E. signs. When discussing these school related signs, Jennifer acknowledged that these do in fact represent the typical student body experience. For clarity, I asked, "Ok so correct me if I am wrong, I don't want to get you wrong here. The lived experience then of the pride of our student body is accurate, but maybe not the actual real world experience?" To which each student expressed, yes, that school pride was accurately depicted but to the outside observer, one might think Violet High "kids get the flu a lot, they are obviously drinking and doing drug...they beating up on each other, their needs to be some rehabilitation" as Tyson put it. It seems then that to the outside observer, this school's signage may influence one's perception of the typical Violet High student inaccurately.

The faculty/staff perspective on influence produced a contradicting narrative of perceived effectiveness in signage. In their view, signage accurately represents the lived Violet High experience. As Ms. White notes,

I do think that it is cause like you are forming your own story. You know what the expectations are because they are there and you know what the motivation is because it's

there, but you get to write everything else in between. So in that sense I do think they reflect what the students, teachers, faculty experience here.

This perception speaks to the feelings expressed by the student group that a sense of pride is prevalent and visible throughout the campus in the form of story creation. Furthermore, this alignment also gives further credence to the notion that these Violet High pride signs have some level of influence on students as they set forth visibly the expectations set by campus faculty/staff, which is acknowledged by the students. However, Mr. Brooklin, when asked to name the most prevalent student discipline issue on campus stated simply, “disrespect.” When pressed to elaborate he explained that this includes

How we engage with our peers with an adult when Ms. White asks little Walter to put his phone away like well this is my phone. Well that’s not the appropriate way let’s rewind that deal and try it again. Um, so that’s typically what we see the most those are the most of the conversations that I have with teachers who are dealing with discipline. I want to be spoken to like I am an adult like I have a degree like I am educated and like I care about kids as opposed to your responding in a negative way. So for me that is what I see the most and probably the majority of the issues that I get in brought in is kids responding to adversity when something happening.

Recall however Figure 10, the R.I.D.E. sign that outlines the expectations of behavior for students. This particular sign addresses this very issue under the letter “I” standing for “Involvement through service.” To meet this expectation in the hallway a Violet High student “uses appropriate language.” Initially, this piece of the sign is confusing. If the “I” stands for “involvement through service,” the behavior command aligned with the letter fails to match character trait and behavior. I failed to see the connection between service involvement and the use of language in the hallway. The principal’s recount of his experience also seemingly contradicts the previous statement of perceived effectiveness of these signs. If the signs were influential on student behavior, and thus effective, then presumably disrespect in communication with adults would not be the prominent concern for school administrators on campus. Perhaps

then this is a working aspiration for the faculty/staff as the expectation signs are the most prevalent throughout campus and as Ms. White stated, “we are getting there.”

Summary

Violet High as a campus is a place in which school pride is undoubtedly present. This feeling is a product of a culmination of two key factors: the newness of the building and the dominance of fixated school pride signs. Initially, these feelings were stemming from my own experience and interaction in the building during the observation walks. However, the focus group data confirmed my feelings. Students and faculty/staff spoke of these various signage components in a positive manner. Still, it was also clear that the lived experience of a Violet High student could not be reduced to simply the narratives given on the interior space walls. In fact, the students raised concerns throughout about realness and applicability of the signs they encounter to teenage life, indicating that there is always more to the story than meets the eye.

As a campus, it is evident that the focus is on positive, proactive rather than reactive messaging. As Ms. White put it, “we are switching from more responsive signage to like ok here’s the problem we have to prevent, here’s some positive other ways to cope. So they don’t have to put don’t do drugs because we are trying to beat it before that stage.” This perspective I found to be accurate. Throughout my observations I never encountered signage that was negative in nature, but rather signage aimed to give a positive or empowering spin to potentially negative behaviors. However, it was also evident that the campus has not had complete success with this strategy since both focus groups still acknowledged negative teenage behaviors such as drinking and drug use were still prevalent amongst the students. Nevertheless, the use of signs to

raise awareness has shifted perception on critical issues for students on campus as illustrated through the student responses concerning dating abuse.

As a whole, the campus's positive image that I initially felt can be reaffirmed from the focus group data. Although the students and faculty/staff admit that they have room for growth in the area of school messaging through signs, the majority of the data suggests this is a school focused on positivity, empowerment, and individual responsibility. From social issues to school pride and expectations, the messaging at Violet High through the use of signs is clear, clean, and precise.

CHAPTER 6

SAPPHIRE HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

The final school visited is also the oldest and first high school in the district, Sapphire High. This particular school is situated along a main road within the town and is currently experiencing heavy growth in the area. In fact, during my route to the visit, I encountered a plethora of traffic detours due to road and building construction within a mile of the school itself. Once I arrived, I was immediately lost. The layout of this campus could be summarized as compartmentalized. It is structured in a manner that indicates additions have been made over the years and the various wings were not part of the grand vision of the school when it was originally conceived and built. This is not surprising as it was the first high school built and is experiencing the most growth of the three high schools in the district.

Similar to the experience at Violet High, I contacted the school guidance counselor first. Like the Violet High counselor, he was in the middle of testing procedures and students schedules for the coming year. He indicated that he would not be able to assist until the year's end but gave me the contact information for a teacher on campus, Mrs. Pinetree, who is active with several student organizations on campus. After speaking with Mrs. Pinetree and explaining the study, she agreed to help locate participants for the study. She provided me an initial list, which was narrowed down to four. The twelfth grade participant, Chloe, is an African American female athlete and involved in student council. Brandon is an eleventh grade white male, and student council president for the upcoming year. Hayden is a tenth grade white male, involved in various theatre arts clubs, and Becky is a ninth grade Bi-Racial female and involved in the school's theatre arts program. The students and I met on April 21, 2017 in Mrs. Pinetree's

classroom prior to school at 8:15 a.m. Towards the end of the interview students began entering Mrs. Pinetree's room in anticipation for the first bell to start the school day.

Once student participants were obtained I proceeded with the observation walks of the campus following the route of their schedules. The total breakdown of signs including the number of times each sign itself was observed and whether or not that particular sign was mentioned in the focus group data at Sapphire High is depicted in Table 4.

The dominant signage at Sapphire is club/organization produced, which would be classified for this study as temporary and not included in the full analysis. However, the permanent signage that was most visible along the routes was school related as well, but permanent fixtures throughout the campus. The faculty/staff group acknowledged the Sapphire Pride and Zone signs were part of the school's PBIS initiative.

Mrs. Pinetree recommended the faculty/staff members for the study. I contacted through email several individuals to find a common meeting time and confirmed with two teachers and a school guidance counselor. I emailed the school principal five times in two weeks and never got a response. Unfortunately the school principal's lack of response meant no administrator would be present for the faculty/staff focus group. As it turned out, administrators present might have hindered the responses of this group, as their insights at times were critical of various policies and procedures. The three faculty/staff participants included: Ms. Reed, white female in her mid-40s, a core teacher and sponsor of an academic club on campus; Mr. Jones, a white male in his mid-30s, a psychology teacher and debate team sponsor; and Mr. Black, a white male in his mid-30s and the school's lead guidance counselor. We met on May 17, 2017 in Mr. Jones's classroom at 4:30 p.m. once school had ended and the building cleared.

Table 4

Sapphire High School Signage Breakdown

Sign	Number of times observed	Mention in focus group
AP Exam Sign-up	4	
Control is not love	8	X
Crime Stoppers	3	X
Cyber Safety	2	
Friendship Counts	1	
It's OK to TELL	2	X
It's OK to help a friend	2	X
Love is Digital	4	
SAT/ACT	6	X
Sapphire Pride	15	X
Sapphire Zone	10	X
Temporary/Organization Promotions	25	X

My initial impression that the school was disconnected in terms of architecture mirrored the sentiments of the students within the focus group with regards to their feelings about the school's culture. On the contrary, the faculty/staff group came across as firm in their assertions that Sapphire High is a united place in terms of school culture and in their own understandings of the lived experience of Sapphire students and faculty/staff. Following suit with the previous two schools, this analysis seeks to uncover these sentiments by exploring the production, consumption, and influence of the signs within Sapphire's interior walls. The same process for data analysis was used at Sapphire as the other two schools.

Production Elements

In terms of production, the signage at Sapphire is sparse, perhaps by design. In fact, Mr. Jones's response to the opening question asking about the signs members of the group encounter in their daily routines noted, "I don't think it's terribly prevalent here," which the school guidance counselor, Mr. Black, affirmed as his own perception. Although in terms of numbers Sapphire does have the second largest amount of signs on display, behind Crimson, the vastness of the school made it seem far less. Sapphire has approximately the same number of students enrolled as the other two campuses; however, the layout makes it seem larger. Mr. Jones noted that the campus was originally built like a 1990s era community college with different buildings housing different subjects. It was not until mid-2000 that the school was reconfigured to connect the buildings using extended hallways. These elongated hallways connecting the buildings were sparse with signage. Presumably the lack of signs throughout these particular hallways is due to their function, used for travel and access to each building rather than a traditional school hallway with classrooms throughout.

The most prevalent permanent sign within the school centers on the acronym P.R.I.D.E. (Figure 14). These signs are part of the larger PBIS initiative that is also present on the other two campuses (Figures 6 & 10). The Sapphire version of these PBIS based signs is similar in concept to those on the other two campuses, showcasing behavioral expectations through the use of an acronym and school colors. In addition to the P.R.I.D.E. sign, location indicators [Figure 14(b)] are found throughout the hallways to indicate which area of the school one is within. The location indicator signs follow the same theme as the P.R.I.D.E. posters, giving them all a consistent and professional appearance.



(a)

Figure 14. P.R.I.D.E. posters at Sapphire High.



(b)

It is important to note that this sign is school produced but analyzed in this study, as they are fixated as permanent, laminated, and on display all year. The students immediately noted the vast reach of these signs. Chloe acknowledged when asked about what signs she sees in her school that, “I don’t know why because I actually hate these posters but all of the ones that say.....excellence that are across every single inch of our campus.” Later in the conversation I confirmed that Figure 14(a) is the signage she was referencing, although no student could recall the acronym P.R.I.D.E. in its entirety. The acronym P.R.I.D.E. stands for pride, respect, integrity, daily, and excellence. To the right of these words is a list of behavioral expectations that are meant to align with said traits. When analyzing the photo using geosemantics, several key elements can be found. Initially, this sign uses the concept of embodiment, specifically, personal front, as it seeks to dictate how a person should act in given areas around the school at varying times within a given space. Additionally, the concept of inscription highlights the choice of the font and colors in two key ways. First, the cleanliness of the font and the dominance of the heading (all caps) indicate desired character traits of Sapphire students. The staggering colors serve to break the sign into columns, but again use the sign as a way to show school spirit by

utilizing the school colors. Code preference dictates that the most common places for desired actions should occur first in the formatting from left to right. In addition, the composition of left–right provides a real to new structure, which is common, and indicates real information to the new important details. The real information is the mascot and pride, which is the known information, while the new information, to the right, is how to live these traits out within various spaces. The problem with this sign aesthetically is its readability of information. The new information does not align well with the character traits and its overall size would make it difficult for someone passing-by to consume the entirety of the message. The lack of any student fully acknowledging the characteristic traits or behavioral actions strengthens this notion.



Figure 15. Sapphire High School SAT/ACT sign.

In terms of frequency on campus, the SAT/ACT sign, Figure 15, is second to P.R.I.D.E. Hayden first spoke of said sign noting that, “the ACT/SAT testings ones those do catch my eye, they are colorful.” His assessment is accurate, these signs are in fact colorful and on display in the most frequently visited locations including the library, cafeteria, main hallway into the building, and the common bistro lounge.

This particular sign does not have any identifiable marks as to its producer. However,

this sign was found on each campus so one may assume that it was either distributed by district administration, or by an institution of higher learning. Searching for this particular sign online yielded me no results of an exact match; however, several signs of a similar nature could be found with ease.

Upon examination, this sign from a geosemantics lens illustrates the concepts associated with social performance. Its initial messaging prompts consumers to follow the two sides of questions for which test, SAT or ACT, may be right for them. In addition, the placement of the sign seeks to attract a wide range of students as it is prominently displayed in the major public spaces. This allows for the social performance to commence, in other words, allows for consumers to publically consume the message and potentially promote their results. In this sense, students are actively performing a social role of academic by going through the list of their educational abilities and preferences. Additionally, the use of “what’s right for you” gives it a personal and monochronic sense of time as it reads one item at a time, answering the questions to reach an outcome. The SAT is given the dominant position in terms of code preference due to its placement on the left while the arrows navigate you through the questions. In terms of inscription, the font choice of orange is more difficult to read while the green easier on the eyes. The layering of the images is also significant. The ACT side images are more identifiable with the text in terms of text matching the image. When referencing math or science, the ACT side image is a calculator for math and an atom for science. At the bottom, the sign asks about how one might deal with timed tests. To illustrate this concept, a clock is present. The SAT is less aligned. In fact, the first image used to connote test taking is a host of various books, a pencil, and compass. A light bulb and open book are used toward the bottom as visual cues about questions concerning memory recall and reading abilities. Due to the fact that both

sides have readability concerns, SAT image choice and ACT font color, as a whole, the sign requires consumers to spend time with the message fully examining each aspect to draw a conclusion. This poster is not meant for consumption in quick passing, as it requires a level of consumption and reflection that would require a longer staying period.



Figure 16. "Stop teen dating violence" poster at Sapphire High.

Although the signage at Sapphire is mostly school spirit/expectations related or academically focused such as the SAT or ACT, a few social issues are displayed as well. Based solely on count, Figure 16 can be seen the most of any social issue specific poster. It designates in the bottom right that it was designed by a student in a contest associated with the Texas Advocacy Project and is sponsored by an organization called HOPE. The Texas Advocacy Project website displays its purposes prominently on the homepage noting that the "Texas Advocacy Project provides advice over the phone, support with do-it-yourself legal filing processes and complete client representation. Our experienced attorneys guide and advocate for you through the entire process, and our services are always completely free" (Texas Advocacy Project, n.d.). The site initially appears to be focused on assisting adults dealing with domestic

abuse. However, the project does have several online resources for teens under their resources tab. This particular poster was not found on the website for download, so the actual origins of this signs were not located.

In terms of its geosemotic features, sense of time can be found in the interaction order of the single individual and their gaze. It does not appear to be urgent, although the words on the wrists are meant to symbolize handcuffs, however, the individual's facial expression does not indicate she is in urgent need of help. Unhappy, perhaps, but the sign itself does not give the viewer a sense of urgency. The female subject also seems to have something in her hand, presumably a cellphone. The text itself uses code preference as the sign draws you to the image first, which would then move you to the words situated in a handcuff pattern on the subject's wrist. This is a choice to highlight the female in order to draw the reader into the text. The text itself has "control is not" in one color and "love" in another to suggest the two are separate. In the same white as the word "love" is the phrase "stop teen dating violence" while the remainder of the text is in black. The preference is on the female image and the words "love" and "control" rather than the action items at the bottom. In terms of modality, the difference in color between the pink and the black is juxtaposed. The pink is soft and subtle whereas the black is hard and aggressive, even in the word choices against the pink.

Overall, this poster highlights the idea that love is not control but fails to give a strong, consumer friendly position to the action steps that one could take to receive help. Perhaps this is due to the creator of the sign being a student in a contest where the individual's focus was likely on the design aesthetics rather than the content. Regardless, this sign was found throughout the campus observation walks on the route of each Sapphire student in the study, which suggests it is

a message in the path for consumption multiple times throughout a given day. However, the actual consumption and influence of this sign seemed minimal.



Figure 17. "Okay to help a friend" support poster at Sapphire High.

Interestingly, Figure 17's female subject looks similar to the female in Figure 16. A link between the two could not be located. Nonetheless, their similarity sheds light into the lack of diversity in signage representation on campus. The initial component of the sign intended to catch one's attention is the female subject seemingly staring directly at the viewer. This gaze is seeking to give credibility or truth to the coming information, a concept associated with modality. If the subject of the sign were smiling, wearing bright colored clothing and looking as if she is enjoying her environment/circumstance, the information on the sign pertaining to bullying, violence, and various other negative social concerns would presumably have little impact. The use of the female subject's makeup (dark colors, black eyeliner, smudged black mascara) adds to the modal by giving the appearance that subject was perhaps crying. The text itself utilizes code preference, specifically font choice and text placement, situating the main text in a green font on a black background with a simple, yet readable font. Using the concept of code preference, the next most important information is underneath this initial statement, the list of "bullying, sexting, family violence, dating violence, sexual harassment, gang activity, suicidal

thoughts, cyber bullying.” This list outlines a wide range of potential activities that one might need help with covering topics from violence against another individual to self-harm.

My initial instinct concerning the organization that produced this sign was that perhaps it aims to help teenagers with any of the listed issues they might be facing. However, this poster was produced by Safe City (sponsor found in bottom right) in conjunction with the local crime stoppers, an organization that seeks to prevent crime in local cities. The producer in this instance is an organization seeking to stop crime. Due to the sponsor, this sign may be viewed as an outlet for reporting rather than one for getting individuals help. If the goal is to find help for people, but the manner in which to do so is through an organization called crime stoppers, one might be swayed from calling as it could be seen as snitching rather than reaching out for help. Ms. Reed mentioned another potential concern with crime stoppers posters stating that, “I don’t know if they were reading to see if they could get money for something or what was going to happen if someone caught them.” Her insight echoes the sentiment that perhaps the producer of this sign is not the best messenger if the goal is to simply get help for persons in distress.

Finally, in terms of visible presence during the observation walks, Figure 18 was positioned throughout the campus’s major cross sections of hallways and the cafeteria. Three sponsors are located as producers of this signage in the bottom right corner, the Texas Education Association (TEA), One with Courage, and CACTX. The combination of these three sponsors is interesting as none of them were previously noted as producing any other signage in this study. TEA is the legislating association for public schools in the state of Texas and is the credentialing body for teachers and administrators within the state. In addition, they set standards and expectations for school curriculum. One with Courage indicates on their website that they are “a national initiative centered around the courage it takes to talk about child sexual abuse and the

unique role children’s advocacy centers play in providing comprehensive, coordinated and compassionate services to child victims of abuse” (“One with Courage,” n.d.). The Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX) notes it “is the statewide membership association representing all local children’s advocacy centers in the Lone Star state (“We Are CACTX - Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Inc," n.d.). Seemingly the TEA is the oddity within the group. However, TEA also sets requirements and school procedures for reporting incidents of neglect and/or abuse of students as set forth by the larger Texas Family Code (TFC), Texas Education Code (TEC), and Texas Administration Code (TAC) (Texas Education Association, n.d.). Having these three specific sponsors gives credibility to the messaging of reporting abuse and/or neglect.



Figure 18. "It's okay to tell!" poster at Sapphire High.

Initially, this sign utilizes inscription and code preference concepts to highlight the initial message of “IT’S OK TO TELL!” The use of all capital letters sends an aggressive or commanding message to tell the viewer that this statement is important. Additionally, placing this centered above all other content gives preference to this message over other information. Utilizing the same techniques the message of “NO” “GO” and “TELL” are capitalized, giving

prominence to the larger font over the messages beneath each word. The intention then of the sign is to give the reader an easy to recall set of steps one could take if one needed to report an incident of abuse and/or neglect. The use of differing colors for each of the four sections adds to the semblance of importance for each step as it highlights them as individual steps to be taken in the process. As with previously mentioned signs, the contact information for reporting is positioned at the bottom, smaller than the rest of the information. However, this sign does highlight phone numbers in a red accent font to heighten awareness of this information. Finally, the use of the hand holding a cell phone image uses a modality of participant representation to give the consumer a visual representation of how to report.

This sign functions as a clear, easy to use informational text that a consumer could utilize without issue. However, it became clear with this and other signs at this school, that the message is either being overlooked or not utilized. Both the student as well as faculty/staff focus groups produced a narrative concerning consumption and influence that support this assertion.

Consumption

During the student focus group the majority of the discourse pivoted back to temporary signage within the school, specifically information about upcoming events or clubs/organizations on campus. The initial response to the opening inquiry of what signs the students notice during their day was met by Brandon responding, “probably the signs that I’ve helped with, those are the first ones I notice and the ones that support that our class and class fundraising those are the ones that get my attention most.” As an eleventh grader, this is not surprising considering the previous history the school has had with an abundance of school-produced signs. Ms. Reed explained in the faculty/staff group during a follow up question concerning the lack of signage in

the school that, “It didn’t used to be that way; it used to be that people had signs up for anything and everything. Like whatever their club was doing or what was going on.” Presumably Brandon notices more of the signs today because fewer have been permitted over the years, so those he encounters today have a longer staying period in his memory than years prior. However, the other students pivot back throughout the course of the interview as well to temporary signs. Temporary signage was mentioned a total of fifteen times throughout the course of the interview. Upon review of the transcript, I noticed that throughout the course of the interview I continually phrased questions in a manner that would hopefully produce a comment about a permanent rather than a temporary sign. For instance,

Mr. Hamilton: What else, tell me about the narrative, what story would it tell, I heard pride and integrity, what else? Do you think anyone would have a negative reaction? Like they would see it and think, oh that’s a problem here?

Chloe: I don’t know, I think it’s the same groups who put everything up so I mean, I don’t think it’s a very good representation of everything, all the clubs and diverse groups at our school. But I also think that some groups either don’t have the stuff or the initiative to do it and they’re cool with that.

In this exchange I am attempting to reference signs about dating abuse, bullying, crime, or helping a friend narratives throughout the school without directly prompting the participants to address those signs. However, Chloe pivots back to clubs/organizations on campus and their signage as a reference point. This happened several times throughout the interview, however, some responses did point to consumption of permanent sign messaging on campus.

Temporary signage aside, the messages that seemingly were consumed that would be classified as permanent signage were either academic related, or in reference to Figure 16, the Love is Not Control poster. At the start of the interview, Hayden mentioned he has seen anti-bullying posters around the school, I however, only noticed one. Regardless, I inquired about this sign:

Mr. Hamilton : ok Hayden you mentioned you've seen the teen bullying ones and stuff like that. Do you think there is enough of those to the outside observer for someone to think, that is a problem here?

Hayden: No not really. I mean it's just really the ones in the Spanish hallways. The one in Spanish, and then six or seven of those. History hall has some and a couple in the math hall.



Figure 19. Cyberbullying poster.



Figure 20. Spanish version of "love is not control" poster.

At first, I was confused. My records and recollection of anything specific to anti-bullying was one sign, Figure 19 that was located in one spot in a hallway outside of the cafeteria. During my observation walks, I would not have passed this sign if I had not been lost moving from one location to the next. However, after poring over the photos I found which sign he was referencing: the only sign in Spanish in the building, Figure 20. This sign is actually Figure 16, the Love is Not Control message, but in a different color scheme and Spanish rather than English. It became evident that Hayden was referring to Figure 20 as the anti-bullying signs he had seen throughout the hallways. However, this sign is not referencing anti-bullying – it is intended for awareness and resources for help to individuals experiencing domestic abuse. This exchange made it clear that in terms of consumption, this sign was not being consumed but rather presumed. Perhaps this is due to the mentality of signage in the school. Perceptions

ranged in both focus groups from too many signs, to only important if they address what is happening on campus. The mentality surrounding signage at Sapphire was most clearly expressed by Mr. Jones when he explained in reference to social awareness signs that Sapphire does not have those “typical high school PSA posters that you typically see, we don’t have very much at all.” On the contrary, Sapphire does have these types of signs on display; they are simply being overlooked.

After this exchange concerning anti-bullying signage I shifted toward a more direct approach to attempt to uncover any other consumption.

Mr. Hamilton: I would say I saw more of the SAT ACT ones.

Brandon: Yeah those are up around the counselor’s office and on the walls around it. The intention of this probe was successful as the student correctly identified these signs in a given location. However, Figure 16 is also up throughout the cafeteria and in the lounge bistro, not simply around the counselor’s offices. His statement might have been an oversight and a quick recall to where he last viewed this image. Regardless, the overwhelming feeling regarding consumption of signage on campus was lacking, as it was clear that neither teacher nor faculty/staff had a clear knowledge of the signs or their messaging throughout their building.

Influence

Sapphire High’s data revealed a complex web of interrelated findings regarding the influence of signage on campus. Initially, a sense of pride for their campus emerged as many participants spoke not only of the school related signage promoting Sapphire, but also within their rhetoric each spoke passionately about the school culture. For instance, with the students, I asked post their discussion concerning the signs they noticed each day, “If you had to classify ... would you say the overwhelming narrative of the posters in your school are positive or

negative?” Overwhelmingly, three of the four participants stated simply, positive. The fourth student did not outright commit either way noting he was neutral on the matter. The faculty/staff echoed this sentiment several times recalling the history of the school, telling various stories of the schools beginning in a positive manner. In fact, the two teachers in the group, both at least ten years into the teaching profession, told me this was the only school they have ever worked at. This commitment alone speaks to the seemingly positive experience they have had during their time as a Sapphire teacher. Recall that Sapphire was the first high school in the district. This factor plays a role into the feelings of excellence and pride on campus. Mr. Jones, when asked, “Would you say that there is a level of expectation that is higher here than at other campuses in the district?” explained, “I think so, at least that is the perception that there is.” When pressed with this same question, the student focus group senior, Chloe, jarringly told me, “of course, this is Sapphire.” This sentiment is expressed throughout both groups and is evident as well on the walls within the building. The abundance of school related signs both PBIS and club/organization related illustrate this notion.

The community at large has a hand in the expressed notions of those dwelling within the high school. Following Mr. Jones’s insight into the perception of higher expectations placed on Sapphire High, Ms. Reed explained that she believed, “it’s because the people that went here never moved away so the community is alumni to here.” Perhaps this feeling is an isolated feeling from a teacher who has been on campus for a number of years. However, Mr. Jones echoed her sentiment noting, “I think you are right.” Ms. Reed went on to explain that “the community and the leaders in the community have a higher expectation, I don’t know if it’s us, I think it’s community driven because everyone in this community graduated from here.” It stands to reason then that these feelings of pride, positivity, and high expectations are not necessarily

coming from within the school itself, but from the community outside their walls as well. The perception of alumni expectations speaks to the influence of societal factors on school culture and in turn, signage.

One of the most telling accounts regarding external influences surrounding Sapphire High came from Chloe during an exchange on diversity within their school. When the question was initially asked, “What about diversity wise?” in reference to school signage. A chorus of laughter emerged from each participant. Then, Chloe explained:

No, I don't think we represent diversity well. We live in the middle of white country um, I don't I mean I don't even think we represent student interests and diversity well because there's so many like underground clubs. I mean they are all listed on the website so I don't know why they are called underground, that's kind of stupid, but like the anime club, and the gamers club, and I think someone started like a Pokémon club and all these other clubs that are advertised and peoples select interest that no one really knows about. I am sure they would get a lot more interest if they did, and then, so I think that's a big thing. And then it's like oh well Student Council or class officers, all these sports especially football because you know we are in Texas and rah rah football, and then I don't know just like students physically wise I don't think we are diverse but we live in the middle of the country with like fields and a bunch of white people, that's fine I love white people I just don't think our school is diverse.

Her response sheds light into a variety of issues regarding diversity and influence on campus.

First, her notion of a predominately white demographic within the area is not false, however, it appears that her perception is that whites are dominant throughout the community and in the school. The demographic data of the school would suggest however that some diversity does exist even if the majority population is white. Furthermore, her mention of the various clubs and organization that are underrepresented speaks to a larger issue of control, outlined below.

Following her statement on clubs/organization was another reference to the dominance of an interest from the community, football. Football in this regard came across as an extension of Texas white culture. Her thought process moved effortlessly from the white community to school club/organization, back to the “fields and a bunch of white people.” The football in Texas

references appeared to be a bridge from the school back to the issue of white culture. Overall, Chloe passionately argued that her campus is not diverse, and to think otherwise would be a false representation in her view. It is important to note that Chloe is an African American female, a double minority within the school. However, her experience is no less important and reveals the influence external factors such as the community can have on school representation.

On the contrary, when I asked the faculty/staff about their perception of diversity, Ms. Reed pushed back against the assertions made in the student group.

Mr. Hamilton: So in the student focus group when I brought up diversity in their signage, do you see different things in your signage, they laughed at me and said, what diversity? That got me thinking, the other two campuses seem really diverse, demographically is this just then more like a highly white area.

Ms. Reed: (head nodding no)

Mr. Hamilton: No. Ok, so are the students wrong or...

Ms. Reed: I mean we have that but now we have a lot of Laotian kids? Cause the temple is right there I don't know if you knew that.

Mr. Hamilton: No I didn't.

Ms. Reed: We also have a lot of Hispanic and I think those two outnumber the Black.

Mr. Jones: Yeah the African American population is low.

Ms. Reed: But we don't have a lot of racism if that makes sense?

Mr. Hamilton: Ok

Ms. Reed: Like they are really integrated with each other here, so maybe that's why they don't think there's a lot of diversity.

Mr. Jones: I don't know if we are as diverse though as the other campuses I think there is not as much diversity here as there.

Ms. Reed: Yeah

Mr. Hamilton: But to say you are not diverse would be inaccurate.

Mr. Jones: Right I wouldn't say that.

Ms. Reed: like my 8th period class only has one white person in the whole class. So we can't say we aren't diverse.

Throughout this exchange Ms. Reed is detailing a variety of sentiments she believes speaks to the diversity at Sapphire. Her mention of the Laotian and Hispanic population is central to her claims of school diversity. However, Mr. Jones pushes back on Ms. Reed throughout this exchange citing demographic realities throughout. In addition, Ms. Reed's personal experience in her eighth period class came across as a pivot against a perceived accusation of racism. Often, people accused of lacking diversity or propagating racism claim that they have minority members in their family or friend groups. However, one account of diversity does not equate to diversity at large; rather, it is an isolated example that is subject to scrutiny. The demographic data as well as the student focus group deliver a narrative that contrasts with Ms. Reed's proclamations. Take for instance a personal recount of the students that occurred when I inquired about programs they planned during Black History Month.

Mr. Hamilton: Did we do anything for Black History Month?

Chloe: Yeah we tried.

Brandon: Chloe did a lot.

Mr. Hamilton: Good for you.

Chloe: It wasn't a very big success though. It was interesting because we only put up one poster which was like our main poster and it literally said black history and it was like the United States and it said black history in the middle and like oh my gosh you would have thought we said bloods versus crips. Like all these people were yelling out racial slurs and stuff about white supremacy. One of our AP's was like you are going to have to take that down, today. And I was like what?

Mr. Hamilton: Because it said black history month?

Chloe: Because it could possible incite violence and fights at our school.

Brandon: Like a racial war.

Chloe: And I was like a sign that says black history month is going to incite violence and fights at our school like I don't get it?

Mr. Hamilton: Is there racial tension?

Chloe: I was like what are we talking about it's mostly white people.

Mr. Hamilton: That's interesting.

Chloe: It was so dumb it ended up getting to stay there because I was like I am not taking this down.

Mr. Hamilton: Ok so maybe we don't have diversity in our signs for a reason?

Chloe: Yeah.

Mr. Hamilton: We don't know what that reason is do we?

Chloe: Like what are you talking about it's black history month.

Admittedly, I am certain there is more to this story than this account. However, their experience does contrast directly with the narrative set forth by Ms. Reed who, with no prompting, made sure to let me know "we don't have a lot of racism" on this campus because the students have integrated well. Regardless of any potentially differing narratives to this experience the facts remain: a Black student on campus experienced direct racial tension in an attempt to promote diversity. The school culture and policies at the time of the incident may have accounted for the experience as well. This factor was addressed in the faculty/staff group when referencing instances outside of this direct incident, specifically regarding the increase of administration's control over school signage.

Initially, the teachers in the group acknowledged that the lack of signage throughout the school stems from upper administrations control. Compared to years prior at their campus, and to other campuses both teachers had recollections of visiting, Sapphire has far fewer signs.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Jones, you mentioned it's [signage] not really prevalent, I would agree with that, is this the only place you've worked?

Mr. Jones: Yes.

Mr. Hamilton: Have you?

Ms. Reed: No, but we've gone to a lot of places because of UIL Academics.

Mr. Hamilton: Oh yeah! You go everywhere.

Mr. Jones: Comparatively then yeah very few.

Mr. Hamilton: Do you think that's by choice?

Mr. Jones: I think so.

Ms. Reed: Oh definitely. Because it didn't used to be that way, it used to be that people had signs up for anything and everything. Like whatever their club was doing or what was going on.

Mr. Jones: Yeah there is an intentional effort to control what was out there, not in a bad way necessarily.

Ms. Reed: It was just a thing they did.

Mr. Hamilton: Would you say that's a better approach?

Mr. Jones: I hate to say it but it's probably better.

Ms. Reed: Yeah. I think it kind of came about when the new building opened up to just to kind of keep it looking cleaner and not like just, you know it was kind of just a thing to keep it looking cleaner.

Both teachers' insight into the control element of signs within the school speaks to the administrators' influence on messaging. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of this control being intentional illustrates that persons in power are seeking to regulate the school's narrative.

Ms. Reed explained that this was probably due to the opening of the new addition to the school in an attempt to keep it cleaner. This makes sense, however, control of a narrative may hinder individuals from consuming messages that could potentially be beneficial. In fact, the students expressed discontent in the visual images available on campus.

Mr. Hamilton: Do you think that your administration does a good job of showing you guys visually in terms of posters issues that are important to you?

Hayden: No.

Mr. Hamilton: Why not?

Chloe: I think a lot of schools these days especially where we live they have to be concerned with legality, conservatism and being politically correct. And I think conservatism and being politically correct are the main things too so a lot of times they can't address these issues. Like we can't acknowledge that people are doing drugs or being bullied expect some kid with their head down like what I am going to do or a kid drinking or our lack of diversity.

Brandon: I mean and like that could save lives.

Mr. Hamilton: Sure. Have you guys had any fatalities like in your 4 years?

Chloe: Every year, at least once.

The fatalities they explained were either driving related or in one instance, a teacher committing suicide. The students seemingly longed for messaging that was not only relevant to their everyday lives, but that represented their experiences. As the interview continued, I inquired as to why students believed these issues were not being displayed visually. Chloe stated, "Well, we can't talk about that at Sapphire." To which the other students began nodding in agreement. The school guidance counselor, Mr. Black, expressed that at Sapphire the counseling staff seeks to address these issues using individual speakers in classrooms to hit specific target groups with various messaging, as opposed to a larger narrative aimed at the entire student body. Initially, Ms. Reed noted that she was unaware that these programs existed. Mr. Jones agreed with that sentiment, acknowledging that in his experience, these types of programs had dwindled over the years. The lack of knowledge by teachers that these programs exist on campus may be due to the classes chosen for individual seminars. The focus group data suggests that this approach is producing little to no influence on said target behaviors. The target behaviors were discussed as still prevalent even in the midst of these programs. When the students were asked if fellow Sapphire students engaged in various negative behaviors including drug use, alcohol consumption, or physical abuse, they pointed toward the drug use on and off campus.

Hayden: Yeah there's a place out back where people go and smoke weed and like...

Chloe: Nobody ever wants to talk about the big drug issues at Sapphire.

Mr. Hamilton: Yeah, I didn't notice any awareness signs that dealt with drinking or even drugs that I don't think.

Chloe: We can't acknowledge it.

Brandon: We can't acknowledge that students are doing it.

Chloe: Yeah we can't do that.

Hayden: Yep.

Their understanding of the school narrative is that Sapphire hypes up and promotes the various positive issues, while seemingly ignoring any potential negative. The faculty/staff group demonstrated this behavior through their lack of acknowledgement of student participation in negative behaviors, as well as in their defense of diversity denying any racial tensions. In both instances, the faculty/staff pivoted the conversation away from negative behaviors or outright denied existence. One may argue that this could simply be due to ignorance of campus issues. However, both teachers in the group have been at this campus for an extended period of time. It stands to reason then that at some point in time these teachers became aware of any potential negative behaviors on campus. Their understanding of the lived experience of a Sapphire student was vastly different from that of the students. Perhaps then, this school is at a place in which the public narrative is different from the actual experience. However, when Mr. Black was asked if the one could determine the Sapphire school experience from the signs in their building, he noted, "you would miss a lot." He is correct. One could never formulate this school's experience and culture simply from the messages portrayed on the walls. Elements ranging from control to diversity would be undoubtedly missed.

Overall, the influence of signs within Sapphire seems limited. Without question the use of the P.R.I.D.E. signage in conjunction with the various school signs promoting school spirit have influenced student pride and school appreciation. This was evident in the students' passion and continued references of the various programs and activities they have taken part in to make their school an enjoyable place. Furthermore, the faculty/staff explained that they believed the PBIS initiative has had an overall positive impact serving as a starting point for conversations addressing student discipline, expectations, and behaviors.

Summary

The story of Sapphire High is seemingly beyond the words on the walls. Varying factors contribute to this culture of silence concerning taboo issues facing teens today. Community expectations and pressure in conjunction with the administrations close control over messaging has produced walls inside Sapphire that do not talk, and if they do, their story is carefully calculated. The calculated messaging extends to the school walls through the use of predominately school sponsored/created signage. Often, student groups contribute to the schools wall décor with varying signs for upcoming events and to express school pride. However, school officials seemingly control these messages at a high level. The accounts of the students in the focus group reveal a culture of restriction in terms of messaging through school signage. For students, this control was negative, hindering their perceived ability to create and distribute messages deemed as controversial yet pertinent to the everyday lives and/or school groups. The faculty/staff differed in this perception acknowledging that in fact the control aspect is present at Sapphire, but for good reason. Each member of the faculty/staff group reasoned that increased control over school signage on their campus has had a positive impact on the overall aesthetic of

the building. The Sapphire faculty/staff and students differed on several issues throughout the course of the interviews pointing to a disconnect between student and faculty/staff experience.

CHAPTER 7

CAMPUS COMPARISONS

Throughout the course of the study similarities and differences amongst the three campuses were prevalent. Crimson and Violet High had the most in common while Sapphire remained an outlier in almost every category. This was not surprising as the demographics of Crimson and Violet mirrored one another both in terms of school population and culture. Sapphire however not only has a significantly different make-up in terms of student population, but the campus culture/climate were also revealed as strikingly dissimilar within the data. When analyzing the similarities and differences across the campus the same themes were utilized, production, consumption, and influence, to continue consistency.

Production Elements

At each of the three campuses, production of school signage was either internally produced on campus or suggested for display by district administration. Signs produced internally were catered specifically to the campus climate/culture and each individual school's mascot. These signs are a product of the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) initiatives set for each campus. A key contributor to the PBIS programs at each of the three high schools is visible reminders of behavior through signage. The focus group data reveals that Violet and Sapphire High's efforts in reminding students of appropriate behaviors is more effective than Crimson. During both the student and faculty/staff focus group at Crimson, participants struggled to recall the Crimson High Way signage that addresses the PBIS initiatives. None of the students in the Crimson group and only half of the faculty/staff had any knowledge of these signs whereabouts or message. In contrast, each student as well as

faculty/staff member in the groups at Violet and Sapphire were aware of these PBIS signage and messaging, although verbatim recall was limited. Violet High students were less familiar with the specific contents of the signs than those at Sapphire who could recall placement, content, and themes of signage, but not necessarily the acronyms verbatim. Faculty/staff at both high schools were knowledgeable of placement, message, and PBIS initiatives associated with their schools signs.

Signs produced externally by charitable groups and/or non-profits were also present on each of the three campuses. In terms of production, a range of outside entities makes up the signs on display within each school. How these signs make it from outside production to inside the schoolhouse, though, is through district recommendation or individual campus counselors. Each campus in at least one of the focus groups noted that school district administrators provide recommendations for school signage regarding a range of issues. How these recommendations are acted upon is left to the individual campus ranging from use of district recommendations to individual counseling staff's determining/creating signs for display. The data indicates that the level of administrative control varies by campus. Crimson High administrators cede control to school guidance counselors, Violet High's counseling staff distributes signs with approval of the principal in charge, and Sapphire High led the group revealing the most control by administrators. Levels of control correlated with the numbers of signs present during the observation walks. Where less administration control was present, Crimson High, the most signs were on display. Sapphire High had the least amount of signage visible during the walks and the data suggests it has the most control by administrators.

Sapphire High's student and faculty/staff both spoke to the campus administration as having complete control over signs and their messages. Chloe spoke passionately about this

issue exclaiming that, “I think certain campuses even within our district are allowed to do things we either haven’t thought of or we aren’t allowed to do.” When pressed about the types of things she believed they are not “allowed to do” a lengthy discussion occurred regarding signage during Black History Month. In this exchange, she and her fellow peers/participants explained that during the month of February they placed a sign with the outline of the United States and the words “Black History Month” for display in the school common area. Soon after, school administrators instructed them to take the sign down because as Chloe explained it, school administrators believed it would “incite violence.” The faculty/staff echoed the sentiment of administrator control of signage. Both teachers in the group, Mr. Jones and Ms. Reed, explained that in years past posters had little processes in place for approval, leading to an abundance on display. However, in recent years school signage has been drastically reduced, requiring approval by a campus administrator. When speaking with the Sapphire students about the lack of messaging regarding the issues of drugs, alcohol, and suicide, all of which were present to some degree on the other campuses, student Chloe told me, “we don’t talk about that at Sapphire.” Her insight was affirmed by her peers/participants noting that these issues are present amongst the student body, but are not issues that they believed administration wanted discussed.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Crimson High. This particular campus has the most signs on display covering a range of issues including drugs, alcohol, dating, teen suicide, bullying, and driving behaviors. Neither the student nor faculty/staff group could definitively explain the process of how these signs were approved. The school principal, Mr. Turek, acknowledged that as a team of administrators and counselors, a review of their survey and discipline data guided the decision making process on signage. However, as aforementioned,

none of the eight participants noted a process for approval indicating that little control of signage is present.

Violet High fell in between the other two schools on the control spectrum. The school principal, Mr. Brooklin, acknowledged that a process is in place for school signage requiring approval by a school administrator. However, Ms. White noted that the process is simple and in her view, fair. Throughout Violet High, signage is designated to specific areas, above water fountains and seating areas within the common spaces. This designation of sign placement is by design, seeking to keep the school's fresh/new appearance throughout. The students made no mention of control by administrators or teachers regarding signage display.

The bulk of messaging on all three campuses outside of the PBIS initiated signage was produced to reinforce social narratives. All three campuses had on display signs dealing directly with an issue that extends beyond the schoolhouse into everyday society. A multitude of issues are covered across the campuses with Crimson High producing the largest variety, Violet High second, and Sapphire with the least.

Crimson High's messaging was vast. Dating abuse warning signs via the Love is Respect campaign poster dominated the discourse with twenty-one total signs. Second to this in terms of numbers of signs on display was driving safety with nine. The Love is Respect campaign signage was also found on the other two campuses as well indicating that this issue is one that is either a major concern for students as well as faculty/staff on each campus or was district mandated. None of the focus groups produced a definitive answer as to which of the two dictated the display of said sign. At Crimson, the social issues covered included not only the two previously mentioned, but also signs addressing drug abuse, mental health, sexual consent, and teen suicide. Crimson was the only high school to address through signage drug abuse, mental

health, or sexual consent. Although teen suicide and prevention signs were only found in three locations on campus, it was the dominant topic of discussion in the student focus group. Their focus group transcription reveals that teen suicide during the time of the interview was a trending topic due to the release of a highly viewed Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*. Production then at Crimson was not positively correlated between social narrative and signage display, as suicide prevention signage was far less prevalent than other issues.

Violet High's leading social issue was teen dating awareness, same as Crimson and Sapphire. Their specific sign deals directly with controlling relationships, providing consumers a checklist of warning signs. The student focus group pivoted back to this sign throughout the interview using it as an example for effective sign messaging. Additionally, three of the four students in the group spoke about personal experiences with dating abuse, reinforcing the notion that social issues and lived experiences guide the production of school signage. Both faculty/staff members reiterated this point in their focus group, mentioning that these signs help address an issue that can often goes unreported. One sign in particular that addresses control in relationships and only found at Violet High focuses on individuals in relationships as property. When addressing this particular sign the student group explained that students intentionally crossed out the word "his" situated in the phrase "you are not his property." The reason for the strike through of this word they explained was because in society today, it is no longer just men controlling women. Furthermore, the students spoke to the increase of same-sex relationships and abuse of men by women. Their stance on this issue further emphasizes the influence of society on messaging inside the schoolhouse.

Sapphire High's signage focused primarily on school related activities or promotion of academic endeavors such as SAT/ACT testing and Advanced Placement (AP) exams. Outside of

school spirit or academics, the leading issue displayed via school signage deals with controlling relationships. Similar to Violet High these signs seek to raise awareness about control and abuse within a relationship. However, the producers of the signs at Sapphire differ from the other two campuses and the message itself is more vague than the specifics found on the Violet High poster. Within the student focus group, only one student mentioned this particular sign's existence. During this exchange Hayden references his encounters each day with signs addressing bullying prevention. However, no bullying prevention signs exist on his route. This misunderstanding of the messaging of the sign points toward the prevalence of social narratives. Students within this group acknowledged the importance of bullying prevention and the increased awareness surrounding the issue. Although no signs directly address bullying prevention at Sapphire, the discourse surrounding the issue points to their understanding of production influencing school signage. Additionally, the faculty/staff group pointed to the alumni/community influence dictating the expectations and messaging of the school. Their perception of a large alumni presence in the community pushing school narratives furthers the conclusion that social concerns and societal issues impact the signs produced for display on campus.

Consumption

Signage produced for any location or environment becomes ineffective if the message is not consumed. Basic tenants of effective communication dictate that in order for consumption of a message to occur, the sender must actively choose to decode the message. Choosing to decode a message, however, requires motivation on the part of the receiver. Throughout the focus group data for all three campuses, students noted that the ability for messages to relate was the key

component to consumption, while the faculty/staff seemed unaware of school signage messaging, and in some cases, its very existence.

The perception of signage's ability to relate for students varied in the extreme with regards to consumption. While some students praised their school's relatable messaging, others spoke to its importance; for others, the lack of relatable messaging caused them to ignore posters all together. From an aesthetic perspective, the concepts of Kress and van Leeuwen in Scollon and Wong-Scollon regarding modality aid in understanding the students' perspective. Modality emphasizes the credibility or truth/value given to an image via its visual representations. The concept stresses the significance of natural representation within a visual image, noting that the more an image is seen as natural or authentic in its representation, the more credibility that image is given. Thus, when examining the signs at each campus using factors associated with modality, the students' perspectives showed a positive correlation. When students believed the images to be a natural or realistic representation of an experience, their overall consumption of the image increased. As previously noted the signage at each campus varied with few signs present on all three campuses, thus, it is important to understand this correlation at a campus level to understand the correlation.

Crimson High students spoke of the teen suicide prevention signs more than any other sign in the focus group even though they were seen during the observation walks a mere three times. The sign itself is seemingly produced by an individual, presumably a campus administrator and shows no evidence of mass production. Furthermore, of any of the signs on campus it is the smallest, 8.5 X 11 inches with little visual interest. In fact, the majority of the sign is made up of textual information. However, as Kress and van Leeuwen note, modality can also be applied to textual information as well. In this instance, the actual text of the sign speaks

truth and value to the students. Throughout the interview students recalled several personal examples ranging from first-hand accounts to media exposure to the issue of teen suicide. This combination of personal experience and modality of the text produced an increased consumption of a poster that is far less prevalent within the building. The students were not limited to this exchange regarding the image; in fact, it was the most mentioned sign throughout any focus group.

Violet High's students had similar insight into consumption of messages benefiting from relatable content. The dominant topic during their student focus group was teen dating violence; specifically the Love is Digital sign addressing signs of control within a relationship. Similar to students at Crimson, Violet High students addressed the relatable factors of this signage to their personal lives. The sign itself features a range of textual information positioned next to an image of a cellphone with text messages on the screen. The key modality presented in this image is the cellphone. The image of cellular text conversation provides the consumer with a visual representation of everyday life, especially for teenagers. This particular image is not graphically enhanced; it is an actual photograph of an iPhone with what a typical user would view on their screen in the midst of sending/receiving text messages. Positioned to the right of the cell image is a list of warning signs highlighting digital abuse within a relationship. Within these warning signs key indicators are given an alternate font color within the sentence, green. This use of contrasting font color aides the consumption as it provides for consumers a quick reference of potential actions one within a digitally abusive relationship might look for. Finally, the sign itself is larger than most positioned next to it, 11 X 17 inches, while others are standard 8.5 X 11 paper size. Furthermore, visually it uses complimentary colors, reader friendly fonts, text positioning, and is laminated, giving it an overall aesthetic of professionalism. The students

throughout the course of the focus group reference this particular sign praising its effectiveness. The combination of social relevance and modality in this instance produce an image that is not only consumed by students within the schoolhouse, but from their accounts, a message to be used within their daily lives.

Sapphire High's student focus group revealed a stark contrast of consumption of messages compared to that of Crimson and Violet. The Sapphire group never had a moment of clear consumption of an individual sign on their school's campus. Although the other two group interviews produced a moment in which students made their consumption practices situated in social realities clear, Sapphire students ceased to reference any school signage specifically. Although this campus displayed several permanent signs throughout campus, neither of the two prominent signs in the discourse during the Violet or Crimson focus group is on display within Sapphire. Shifting then the focus back to the relatable aspect of school signage, I searched throughout the transcript of indications of relatable messaging mentioned by the students. The only reference to relatable signage found was during an exchange of signs students believed should be visible for their peers, but currently are not. This particular exchange occurred toward the end of the interview when I asked the students about issues facing their student body today. They explained that alcohol and drug use in addition to suicide were the issues they believed to be most relevant. No such signage for these issues is on display within the school. When I inquired about the lack of signage on these issues Chloe told me, "we don't talk about that at Sapphire." To which Brandon echoed, "Nope, we can't do that." Consumption then for these students is seemingly not occurring because the messaging on display in their school does not align with their experiences. Hayden noted that the display of these types of signage had the ability to "save lives" to which his peers nodded in agreement. Their insights throughout the

interview about their school signage could best be surmised in the words of Chloe who explained that “a lot of the time we are not addressing issues that they are interested in or that they think are actual issues they are not going to relate to it or not care about it.” Overall, the lack of consumption at Sapphire is caused by the lack of relatable messaging present for consumption. Throughout the course of the interview no student at any time could recall from memory a sign or message with details that was visible on the Sapphire High campus, seemingly due to the fact that the messages that are on display are not relatable to them.

Although each campus displayed a variety of messages ranging in topic, design, and placement, the overall perspective of faculty/staff from each campus was similar. Throughout each of the three faculty/staff focus groups, the general consensus was that members of the group were overwhelmingly unaware of the signage within their individual schools. While Sapphire High students attributed their lack of awareness and consumption to relatable messaging, the faculty/staff noted either ignorance or apathy toward messaging as a reason for non-consumption. During the Crimson High faculty/staff focus group I inquired about the lack of awareness students portrayed in their focus group at Crimson about the PBIS instituted signage that outlined how a Crimson student behaves. These Crimson High Way signs are the most prevalent throughout the campus yet the student group had little to no recollection of their message. When I asked the faculty/staff about these signs a similar ignorance to the signs whereabouts was revealed with one teacher having no knowledge of the signs existence. This lack of knowledge of these signs reiterates the perception of ignorance to school signage on this campus.

Violet High’s faculty/staff also demonstrated ignorance to the messaging throughout their building. Surprisingly this was displayed not by the teacher in the group, but rather the principal,

Mr. Brooklin. During the course of their focus group both Mr. Brooklin, and Ms. White, discussed their perception of effective messaging through signage occurring on the Violet High campus. They spoke often about the diversity in their messaging as well as individual recollections of signage at previous schools they have worked or attended. In comparison to other campuses they believed that Violet High was modeling a new way forward in school signage that was calculated and clean. However, as we discussed the range of messaging on campus Mr. Brooklin was taken aback when I pointed out that the school had no signs referencing drugs or alcohol use anywhere on campus. Once this fact was mentioned, he acknowledged that this was an area for improvement. Nonetheless, both members' ignorance toward what messages are on display for consumption in their building aligns with the experience of Crimson High faculty/staff. It seems then that for some faculty/staff members on campus the signage within their building takes a backseat toward the daily requirements of teaching/administrating. Ignorance though in this instance is not bliss, since as seen through the student focus groups, messages via signage on school campuses are not only being consumed, but necessary, as students illustrated their desire for messaging that is socially relevant to them.

Sapphire High once again had a different perspective on this particular topic within the faculty/staff group. The participants in this group were not ignorant to the signage on display within the building. In fact, each of the three participants spoke specifically about a sign either currently displayed or from the previous year with accurate details. However, the consensus amongst the faculty/staff members in this particular group was apathy rather than ignorance. When asked about specific signs that were mentioned in the student focus group the members in this group would either defend the school's decisionmaking process and/or reputation, or pivot the conversation to a new topic. For example, in an exchange regarding the students'

perceptions on lack of diversity in messaging on campus Ms. Reed nodded her head in disagreement several times. When I asked if the students were wrong she began to explain that their school does not have a racism problem, but rather had an inclusive population that has “integrated well.” My initial inquiry in this exchange was not about population or even race. However, the mere mention of diversity triggered what I perceived as both a pivot and defense. Additionally, as the district’s oldest campus the faculty/staff revealed a perception of high expectations from community members surrounding Sapphire High. This became evident throughout the interview as each member frequently spoke to the positive attributes they associated with the school. For these faculty/staff members it became clear that the signage on display within the building was far less important than the actual results and school climate/culture. Throughout the years, increased control of messaging on display to curb an overabundance of messaging presumably aided in this notion. If those that controlled the messaging believed less is more, then that same ideology over time seems to have trickled down to the faculty/staff level, leaving them apathetic to the school’s interior space messaging.

Influence

Across the campuses and within each of their groups, influence ranged vastly. However, within each of the six total focus groups one commonality was prevalent throughout: societal factors. As mentioned previously, social narratives/trends within a society have an impact on the choice and consumption of messages for both students and faculty/staff. These external factors have a way of moving from external to internal, shaping our perceptions and views about various topics. This shift may ultimately influence one to take action.

The best indicator of external narratives merging with internal perceptions leading to action can be found in the views and actions taken by students at Violet High. Figure 12 stuck out amongst an array of various signs situated above school water fountains not because of its aesthetics or message, but rather what was removed from the message. Figure 12's initial verbiage included the word "his" in the phrase "you are not property." The students explained they crossed through "his" on their school's posters to make the sign more inclusive. Their internal beliefs prompted an external action to be taken to correct this sign's message. Furthermore, as mentioned in the consumption section (Chapter 5), the Violet High students continually addressed issues of dating abuse both physical and digital. Currently, this issue is increasing in the social discourse. From the National Football League's (NFL) players facing charges leading to the league's stance against domestic abuse, to the media spectacle swirling around former television star Bill Cosby's trial for sexual assault, sexual violence prevention during this time was dominant in the social discourse.

Similar to Violet High, Crimson High students also discussed examples of the internal-external factors of influence. For Crimson, influence from signage centered on suicide prevention. Without question the topic of suicide was heightened during the time of the focus group due to the increased social narrative stemming from the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*. Though the topic was circulating in the social discourse, it was clear that this issue was one of significance beyond the social through their discussions of how this topic impacts the personal. Although Daniel expressed his belief that these signs were not effective to curbing teenage suicide, Gram defended the signs noting that personal experience and depth of an individual's turmoil plays a significant factor in one's willingness to reach out for help. This perception of how an individual's personal experiences or internal factors influence actual behavior furthers

the notion that although external social narratives play a significant role into the influence of signage on individual consumers, internal factions are influential as well.

Students from Violet and Sapphire alike echoed the sentiment that individual experience is key to consumption and potential influence for individuals in contact with signage. Violet High student Tyson gave a striking response that summed this notion up nicely. He claimed that “it all comes down to what you’ve been through personally. Posters have a way of re-jogging or rekindling experiences that happened in someone’s life and bringing up that pain.” This notion appears to be accurate, as several students throughout all three focus groups mentioned personal experiences as the reference point for their perceptions regarding their schools’ posters. The Sapphire students for instance focused throughout their interview on the temporary signs that they had personal experience with either helping to create or interest in attending. These recountings speak to the personal level of interest and involvement that leads them to actions of creation, attendance, and/or inquiry. For Sapphire students specifically, the issue of influence often was referenced in a negative sense. Often students discussed the lack of influence they are given into the production of school signage on their campus. The faculty/staff affirmed this notion during their discussion of increased school control over approved signage. These external factions are guided by individual motives, merging again the external-internal components. The process of production for consumption, which may lead to influence, is then cyclical. External social narratives produce issues for potential introduction into the school discourse; individuals determine the relativeness of said issues for display within their school guided by personal experiences; ultimately leading to either the consumption or denial of said message. If consumed, these messages are circulated throughout the schoolhouse creating in many cases a discourse around the issue that may be carried back to external domains. Outside of the

schoolhouse walls these messages can adapt, change, and morph into new areas of concerns based upon varying social factors which can then be introduced back into the schoolhouse discourse continuing the cycle.

Summary

Across the data sets from each school, patterns emerged that can indicate commonality amongst the schools within the district. In terms of production, it is clear that all three campuses are led by two key factors: district directives and campus level interests/concerns. From the district level, the PBIS initiatives serve as the primary method for determining permanent messaging on each campus for display. The manner in which these signs are produced are similar across each campus, as all three PBIS specific signs use the school's color schemes, mascot, and acronyms to depict expectations of behaviors for students within each school. Although the production element of the PBIS based signage is consistent, the effectiveness varies. While Violet and Sapphire showed clear indications of signs effectiveness through students recall ability, Crimson High's initiative was undoubtedly ineffective with half of the total participants in the study noting they had no knowledge of these signs' messages and/or whereabouts. Factors outside of the signs themselves have an influence on the messages effectiveness. In fact, the Crimson High faculty/staff acknowledged their PBIS initiative was implemented and focused on heavily during previous campus administrations' time leading the school.

Individual interests/concerns were found to be common across all three campuses. This was found initially in simply the varying array of messages across the campuses. Although a few signs were present at all three campuses, dating abuse, SAT/ACT facts/information, and

varying displays of bullying/suicide prevention, Crimson High stood out as displaying a range of topics not covered on the other two campuses. Their principal, Mr. Turek, acknowledged that much of the messaging displayed through signs comes from their student/parent survey data in conjunction with discipline reports from administrators. Using these data sets, he noted, the campus administration team works to target issues and behaviors believed to be of concern and/or interest to their student body. Perhaps then Crimson High has shifted from a PBIS focused campus to a more individualized approach utilizing the data sets collected by campus officials rather than those directed by the district. This shift speaks to the influence that campus climate/culture has on school messaging within the district, as a one size fits all approach to messaging was not present outside of the established, yet individualized PBIS signage.

Consumption varied across campuses and participants. The student data suggests that relatable messages have a stronger recall of specific sign messaging, while faculty/staff have become seemingly immune or in a few cases, ignorant to the signage within their schools. For students, the relatable messaging factor was expressed at each campus. For Crimson High students this was found in the numerous mentions and recollections of the suicide prevention poster and the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*. Students at Violet High utilized personal experiences of dating when recalling the Love is Digital poster prominent on their campus, while Sapphire students pivoted toward their own experience creating school signage. Each of these connections between personal experience and signs within their individual schoolhouse speaks to the common factor associated with sign consumption: individual experience. For Crimson and Violet, the evidence suggests administrators are tuned into this connection, as often the signage on display corresponds with the issues students are facing/experiencing. Sapphire however produced no evidence that the messages displayed via signage aligned with student's interests,

concerns, and/or personal dilemmas. The faculty/staff data suggests that the decrease in visible signage due to the increased administrative control of messaging plays a factor in the lack of consumption on campus.

Influence of school signage is dependent on production and consumption as both dictate what and how messages are portrayed to the population at large within the school. Crimson and Violet had the strongest participant response in the areas of both production and consumption, which subsequently elicited instances of signs influencing behaviors. For Crimson High students, the signage concerning teenage suicide impacted their overall awareness. This particular sign was mentioned the most number of times by these student with the highest level of accuracy about the sign's content. Additionally, the students discussed throughout the level of influence this type of signage can have on their peers providing resources for individuals to utilize to seek help. Similarly, Violet High students expressed the influence of the Love is Digital signage for their peers as well as their individual lives. The list provided on the Love is Digital sign outlining warning signs for potentially abusive relationships was not only recounted with accuracy, but described as a tool for evaluating their individual dating relationships. Furthermore, the second dating abuse awareness sign proclaiming "you are not his property" was shown to influence the students to take action, marking through the word "his" to create a gender balanced message. For Sapphire, however, no clear evidence suggests that signage within the schoolhouse influenced students' perceptions and/or behaviors.

The commonalities amongst the three schools reveal several factors for consideration when producing school signage. Patterns emerged that suggest the importance of individualization and relatable messaging for student consumption. Furthermore, faculty/staff, although aware of PBIS based initiatives, needed more information on the signs present in their

buildings. For the most part, the faculty/staff seemed either immune to or unaware of the messaging on display in their individual campuses. This suggests a need for further knowledge about the purpose and specifics to school sign messaging.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As an aid to the reader, this final chapter reviews the primary research question and methods used during the study. While Chapters 4 through 6 present the findings of the individual experiences at each campus as well as patterns across the three, Chapter 7 provides a summary of the findings, implications for practice, recommendation for further research, and concluding thoughts.

As explained in Chapter 2, this study is an ethnography examining three high schools in Texas within the same school district with a focus on the interior walls signage within each building. The sole research question guided the study posing the question: how are signs within public high schools produced, consumed, and influential to persons in contact with intended messages that are presented in public school spaces?

The study was conducted over the course of three months in the spring of 2017 utilizing observations, school signage present on the interior walls at each campus, and focus groups of students as well as faculty/staff. Observations walks in which I walked the paths of participants' daily schedules twice, once during the school day and once after classes ended, provided the signage data and observation notes. In addition, focus groups of 4 students, one from each grade level, and faculty/staff with diverse experience and campus roles, were carried out on all 3 campuses. In total, 12 student participants, 4 at each campus, and 9 faculty/staff members, 4 at Crimson, 2 at Violet, and 3 at Sapphire, made up the focus groups. The observation walks, actual signs, and focus groups, conveyed a description of how signs are produced and consumed by both students and faculty/staff, as well as revealed the influence of the messaging on consumers.

Summary of Findings

The sole research question focused on three key elements of school signage: production, consumption, and influence. Each of these elements was revealed in some capacity during the focus groups. Production elements were consistent across all three high schools, with the bulk of signage produced by outside entities. Crimson High had the most campus produced permanent signage on display, followed by Violet and then Sapphire. This order was also the same order in terms of school totals of signs displayed regardless of production. In terms of external production the majority of signs are produced by organizations/charities focused on a specific issue. For instance, Love is Respect is an organization focused on raising awareness to end dating abuse/violence. Their organization had signage on display at all three campuses, many of which can be found via their website for free download to display. The method of choosing which organizations' signage is displayed was never directly acknowledged. In fact, none of the faculty/staff could definitively point toward a process of how these external signs were chosen. Crimson High's guidance counselor, Ms. Elliot, did note that often links for signs to download are sent by a district administrator to school counselors. This top-down suggestion was the only insight into the process of production leading to display on each campus.

School produced permanent signage were visible on all three campuses as well, most notably in the form of spirit/pride expectations. These signs (Figures 6, 10, & 14) are part of the broader PBIS initiatives occurring at each campus. All six focus groups, both student as well as faculty/staff, acknowledged the existence of these signs but to varying degrees. The actual production and rationale for these signs was explained by faculty/staff at each campus as a tool for reminding students about positive behaviors. Outside of the PBIS signage, only Crimson High displayed school-produced signage addressing issues outside of behavioral expectations.

These signs addressed the topic of suicide with a variety of resources and warning signs. Suicide is not an issue exclusive to Crimson; however, the Sapphire High students addressed the issue by citing a faculty member who completed the act the school year prior. No signs addressing this topic directly were on display however on Sapphire's campus. The guidance counselors created this unique set of signage specific to Crimson High. The data did not reveal reasoning for why Crimson High counselors created signs whereas the other two campuses did not. My belief is that this came down to perceived need and initiative rather than any policy or directive. Ms. Elliot spoke often and passionately about several issues facing teens on her campus, including suicide, bullying, and healthy dating. Each issue came across as urgent, demanding attention in any manner. The other two campus faculty/staff focus groups spoke of these issues but with less urgency.

The production of signage at each campus stems from two areas: district directives/initiatives and external narratives. The PBIS programs at each campus are part of the broader district goals, which trickle down into the schools. Furthermore, Ms. Elliot's insight into the recommendations of district officials on signage for display echoes the district directive element at work within the school. External narratives can be found throughout the data sets specifically when referencing consumption or influence. The use of external organizations' signage speaks to the outside narratives guiding the interior wall discourse throughout each campus. This factor becomes more pronounced when analyzing the consumption and influence similarities across each campus.

In addition to the process and gatekeepers involved in the process of displaying signage on campus is the actual make-up/design of the signs themselves. To evaluate said signage, the concepts associated with geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon-Wong, 2003) and Norman

Fairclough's (1995) Three-Dimensional Model for content analysis were employed for analysis combining the two concepts into one mapping aide (Appendices A) which I coined the schoolscape discursive practice model. The model itself is similar in structure to Fairclough's design with three squares ranging in size within one another representing various components in analysis. This model allowed for analysis of the varying concepts ranging from the text/image itself to the social practices and narratives occurring outside of the text, to be viewed on a singular map (Appendices A). In addition to the content analysis itself was the data transcription from the focus group situated along the perimeters of each square. Having both the physical traits and focus group data on a singular map allowed for an analysis of the entire production process, which allowed for a more in-depth analysis into the consumption and influence elements as well.

The overall lack of knowledge into the process of production by both students and faculty/staff suggests that either production elements are less important than the actual message and/or that the messaging of said signage is ineffective. In either case, the concern for an unknowing population to the messages producers is the lack of awareness into potential messaging biases. Throughout the course of this study both students and faculty/staff alike spoke to the fact that individuals both producing and consuming messages have individual motives, reactions, and responses to varying messages. Therefore, if individuals at large are unaware of the initial producer of a message, they lack the knowledge to critically access potential biases or misinformation that could potentially come from the messenger through the message.

Consumption of messages displayed through school signage across each campus varied across the schools and for each participant. This is to be expected since individuals consume

messages differently based on a host of external and personal factors. In fact, Violet High student, Tyson, addressed this issue when he noted that, “posters have a way of re-jogging or rekindling experiences that happened in someone’s life.” This concept can be carried throughout the study as each participant spoke about the signs they have encountered in varying manners with different degrees of insight, passionate, and fervor. Within each of these individual recollections and insights, a commonality persisted throughout--societal narratives.

Crimson and Violet High students as well as faculty/staff spoke frequently about the signs in their buildings in tandem with societal concerns. Both the Crimson High students and Violet High faculty/staff referred frequently to the topic of suicide and prevention via signage. When addressing the issue, both groups referenced the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why* in differing manners. For the students, the show was a way to express the need for signs addressing the issue of suicide as to prevent someone from taking their own life. For the Violet High faculty/staff, the show was referenced as an external factor creeping into the school discourse, thus requiring addressing. In either instance it became clear that the topics of interest for students outside of the schoolhouse play a prominent role in the potential consumption of school sign messaging. Not only was suicide prevention a topic of conversation but also dating violence/abuse was mentioned across each focus group in the study. Within the discourse surrounding this particular issue were insights into the changing laws about digital dating abuse as well as references to national organizations’ attempts to address this issue head on including the National Football League (NFL). The external factors affecting the consumption of school signage at Crimson and Violet were clear—the trending topics and issues outside of the schoolhouse walls have a direct influence on the consumption of these messages. When topics

displayed through interior school signage aligned with those trending externally, the consumption and recall of the message increased.

Sapphire High, however, produced no clear correlation between the external and internal narratives. Consumption at Sapphire for students was fixated on Sapphire High specific issues, primarily rules and policies. Throughout the course of both focus groups the participants often returned to either temporary school produced signage or the PBIS signs specific to Sapphire. When pressed about issues such as illegal drug use or alcohol abuse the student group simply told me they do not talk about such issues at Sapphire. The students did however speak often about the PBIS signs, often noting the annoyance they have with the vast amount. The faculty/staff echoed these sentiments but spoke of them in a more positive, effective manner. Nonetheless, the overall consumption of signage at Sapphire was limited to almost exclusively the PBIS signage. This is presumably due to two factors: lack of signage and school administrative control. Both focus groups acknowledged that their campus was limited in the amount of signage on display via the interior walls. I found this to be true during the observation walks. Furthermore, both groups acknowledged the limitation as being part of a larger administrative controlling of what messages are allowed to go on display inside the campus. The student group spoke of this control as an overreach of authoritative power, while the faculty/staff viewed it as a means of controlling a previous overabundance of messaging throughout the building. Either way, control over messaging within Sapphire was present, ultimately limiting the amount of messages available for potential consumption.

Consumption across each of the campuses varied in terms of individuals' recall and retention of messaging. This was due to a variety of factors including signage placement, amount, visual interest, and relatable content. At each campus, relatable content was the biggest

influential factor contributing to recall of the message. At Crimson and Violet, the students were able to recall at least one of the non-school related PBIS signs messaging and content with detail. In both of these recounts the students applied individual experiences with the topic (suicide/bullying at Crimson, digital dating abuse at Violet) to aid in their recollection. Although the Sapphire students failed to mention in detail any sign dealing directly with an issue outside of the PBIS or school-related temporary signage, their experiences factored into their consumption as well. Throughout the Sapphire interview the students were fixated on the temporary signage they had personally helped created through the various clubs/organizations. Furthermore, their perception of administrators' strict control over their school's signage/messaging stemmed from their individual encounters with administration. The influence of individual experience on consumption of school signage messages is paramount. This study revealed that for the students at these schools in this district, relatable messaging that is applicable to their everyday lives are more likely to be consumed, and potentially influence individual actions.

Influence of messaging followed a similar pattern to that of consumption, which is to be expected, as consumption of a message is needed in order to influence any potential action. Both Crimson and Violet High students and faculty/staff revealed inside the focus groups instances of school signage leading to influence of action. Sapphire however did not reveal any direct influential actions from messaging but rather spoke of the influence external factors have on the school messaging and culture itself.

Influence for Crimson and Violet students specifically was direct. At Crimson, the focus groups data revealed several instances of the school signs influencing students' perceptions and actions towards one another. For instance, students Sarah and Gram spoke often about feelings the signs inside their school portray to those who dwell within. Both students referred often to a

feeling of caring toward individuals, which they believe translates to action. They suggest that this can be seen physically in reminders about how to treat one another or cognitively as subconscious reminders. Students Marco and Joy in the group echoed these sentiments although less passionately than their peers. In addition, the Crimson faculty/staff acknowledged that they believed the purpose of the signs within their school is to influence action and remind students of how treat one another, and themselves. These reminders could be found throughout campus with signs covering a range of topics from what constitutes sexual assault to resources for getting help when dealing with suicidal thoughts or actions.

Violet High's data produced similar findings but specific to the issue of dating abuse. Each student participant spoke of one sign in particular, Love is Digital, and the checklist of digital dating abuse signs found on the sign. They acknowledged that the sign not only provided relevant and useful information for consumers, but also, that the list was used in their own lives. It is clear that this sign was not only consumed by the students but influenced their individual actions. In addition to the Love is Digital sign the students spoke of a sign that the student body had corrected. This particular poster originally displayed a message over a teenage female stating "you are not his property." However, these signs on display at Violet have the word "his" marked out. When asked about the mark through the students explained that their peers did not perceive the sign in its original form to be all-inclusive. They believed that issue of control in relationships could be female-to-male, female-to-female, or male-to-male. Their belief prompted them to mark through the signifier "his" to make the sign more reflective of these inclusive ideas. The sign itself influenced the students to take action in this instance. Whether through individual use or visible action, it was clear that the signs on display at Violet influenced the behaviors of the students.

Sapphire however had no direct data revealing signage messaging leading to influence. Both groups did acknowledge that several outside factors influenced the school culture, which may shed light on the control factor found in the consumption data. Influence for both the student and faculty/staff group stemmed from external factors, specifically the community at large. The student group spoke about the lack of diversity in their school and community as a factor contributing to the lack of diverse messaging on campus. Sapphire student, Chloe, spoke about her perception of the community as a primarily white and rural environment in which minority groups are often left out of the discourse. The faculty/staff pushed back against this assertion, noting that they believed the school had diversity and little to no issues with racism. Their perspective about the lack of diverse messaging shifted toward the desires of the community and alumni base. In their account, the faculty/staff spoke toward the heavy alumni base in the community and the perception that Sapphire, as the oldest school in the district with the most history, should be discussed as superior amongst the group of schools. The perceptions of the student, Chloe, were dismissed by the faculty/staff group and substituted for the community guidance of school discourse. However, these two concerns are seemingly one and the same. Chloe's argument was that the rural white community in which she resides excludes minority voices, while the faculty/staff seemingly echoed this sentiment merely excluding the racial components. The redirection by the faculty/staff appeared to be an attempt to stave off any perception of racism within the school itself. In any case, the external factors at play may be influencing the control over the messaging as Sapphire displayed and discussed far less controversial subject matter compared to Crimson and Violet. Perhaps then the community/alumni base has set expectations for the school that dictate the overall narrative being produced internally and externally at Sapphire.

Influence varied throughout the study. Although varied, the data reveals that consumption has a positive correlation to influence. Since Crimson and Violet High students showed the most consumption, they also showed signs of influence. On the contrary, the lack of consumption at Sapphire yielded a positive correlation to no direct influence from the school's interior signage. The degree of influence a sign may have on an individual and/or school campus varies based upon several external factors beyond the sign including: societal narratives, administrative control over messaging, and community standards/expectations. The key to influence though is the actual consumption of the message, which requires thoughtful production to ensure consumption occurs.

Discussion

The findings in this study alone make it difficult to ascribe specific recommendations for best practices using signage within a schoolhouse. Factors contributing to this assertion include the study's limited sample size in addition to the revelation throughout that individual meaning and external factors contribute to messages' consumption and/or influence. Nonetheless, the study does reveal three significant factors that aide in the process of signage messaging being consumed, potentially causing individual influence: societal narratives, individual experiences, and quality of production.

Societal narratives were revealed as significant factors in all three campus groups including both students and faculty/staff. These social elements' contributions align with Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the chronotope. In this concept, the placement and time of a message contributes to the shaping of an individual's narrative. It became evident throughout that the trending topics and discourses surrounding said topics shaped individual consumptions of the

signs on display at each campus. In this study those included the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*, societal narratives surrounding dating violence/abuse, social factors at the time of this particular study within social spaces (online social networking, television, film, etc.) and local/community narratives surrounding the school. Fairclough's (2003) discussion surrounding discourse analysis addresses the need for understanding discourse and messaging as part of an interconnected social life. Within the context of this study the social component not only impacted participants' perceptions of school signage, but also allowed for a broader insight into the social world at the time. This varied from campus to campus. At Crimson, the social components that were dictating both the school's interior signage and the student body's thoughts revolved around student behavior and deviant social behaviors including bullying, drug/alcohol abuse, and dating violence. For Violet, the school's signs depicted a social world inundated with dating abuse both physical and digital. The focus group data revealed this to be a concern amongst students at some level, however, as Mr. Brooklin, school principal, acknowledged, often these issues go unreported. Sapphire in contrast has the fewest number of school signs displayed that addressed social activities/life. However, the focus group data revealed the social components outside of the schoolhouse, specifically community expectations and makeup that influence the social narrative produced within the schoolhouse. In any case, understanding the lived social worlds of those who dwell within the schoolhouse allows for producers of school signage to formulate messages that are relevant, timely, and apt for consumption.

An individual's personal experience is more difficult to tailor school signage toward than societal narratives. Signage is often used to appeal to a wide audience with overarching messages and themes rather than specific narratives for individual consumption. These broader

messages may omit certain experiences within the larger context applicable to an individual. However, throughout the course of this research participants' personal experiences became a factor into their overall perception and/or recall of signage. For Lotman, (1990) the complex relationship between the space in which messages are found and the individual's experience is known as the semiosphere. This concept acknowledges not only the varying messages on display within an environment but also the individual's connectedness or disconnectedness with the content of said messages. This works on two levels: the individual creating said messages and the individual being formed from the messages. During this exchange an individual's personal experiences shape their perception, consumption, and overall influence the message might have on the person. Throughout the focus groups across each campus participants often spoke of their personal encounters with school signage in a variety of manners. For instance, Crimson High teacher Ms. Sand, recounted a collegiate experience in the form of a joke when laughing at the mere mention of a sexual assault sign on campus. Violet High student Tyson, spoke frequently about his experiences with digital dating abuse in his current relationship, while Sapphire High staff all spoke of their previous involvement with school signage on campus. In each of these instances it became clear that the individual experience plays a pivotal role in the potential success or failure of signage messaging. As previously stated, it would be difficult for school signage gatekeepers to tailor their signage to individual experience. However, across each campus a link between social narratives and individual experience was found specifically with the student participants. When societal issues were being discussed, more student participants responded with personal and detailed examples. The faculty/staff data set showed no such linkage, with several participants acknowledging their lack of familiarity with social topics and trending issues of the time. Nonetheless, if the goal of school signage is to produce

relevant and pertinent messages for student consumption, perhaps in practice the most effective starting point would be with the social discourses of the time.

Less evident on influencing consumption than the previous two items, but revealed nonetheless, is the quality of production of school signage. This particular study limited the research to permanent signage within the schoolhouse, which ultimately narrowed the number of signs analyzed. However, the quality of production of the permanent signs throughout each building was observed to be a consumption factor. Scollon and Scollon-Wong (2003) became a centerpiece for this study with their multitude of concepts associated within geosemiotics. The data revealed two key geosemiotic concepts that point toward a lack of consumption of a message: placement and inscription. At Crimson High for instance the PBIS signs across campus were unknown to six of the eight total participants. Their ignorance to these signs is due to placement. These signs are situated in main hallways on top of the connecting double doors, adjusted center. Their size compared to the depth and height of the hallway entrance is significantly mismatched. Figure 3 depicts this difference illustrating that the sign itself is significantly smaller compared to its surroundings. Furthermore, the readability of the PBIS signage at Violet and Sapphire caused difficulty in the recall and thus presumably consumption and influence of these signs on each campus. Inscription for Scollon and Scollon-Wong requires effective use of font type and size for optimal readability. The PBIS signage on these two campuses (Figures 10 and 14) depicts an ineffective use of both type and size. The font size is small compared to the walls surrounding and requires an intimate encounter with the sign in order to obtain readability. In addition, the font type on the Violet sign (Figure 10) is ridged with hard lines and shapes seemingly stretched across the page. Figure 14 at Sapphire depicts a font type that is not only bolded against an already bright backdrop, but an edging around each font

that again makes readability limited without close proximity. Throughout all three campuses focus groups the lack of acknowledgment/recall of the PBIS signs was not due to lack of frequency in encounters with said images, but rather the lack of consumption of the signs messaging. It stands to reason that the actual production of a sign is the first step in the process to producing effective, meaningful signage. Without a message that is reader friendly, the likelihood of consumption is low. Furthermore, the placement of signs throughout all three campuses was sporadic and seemingly random. If school officials desire school messaging through signage to be effective they must address the production elements strategically.

In terms of production, the works of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) on visual content analysis provides a framework for use by key stakeholders when seeking to produce and distribute school signage. Elements of their concepts regarding visual content was found throughout the course of this study, indicating that these elements could be utilized by school officials to potentially increase consumption of signage messaging. When analyzing visual content they recommend identifying/analyzing three key components: (1) social distance and relation, which refers to the proxemics of the message to the messenger and relationship this represents; (2) modality, including the image type, colors, lighting, saturation, etc.; (3) angle and point of view, both the horizontal and vertical placement of said image and the angles inside the image itself. These three elements to analysis are also useful for planning production. Furthermore, each element was found within this research as a component to either successful or unsuccessful consumption of the school's messaging through signs.

First, social distance and relation was found to be a critical element throughout the data. In areas where successful recognition and recall of signage was produced, the signs tended to be closer in proximity to the consumer, for instance, over water fountains, benches and at eye level

before major hallway intersections. On the contrary, recall the Crimson High Way signage located above the hallway intersections. Those signs were deemed ineffective due to their lack of knowledge of presence and distance from the consumer, which hindered readability. Modality was frequently cited as a factor for consumption as well. At both Violet and Sapphire students spoke of signs' layout, color schemes, and formatting as influential factors on their overall intake of the signs message. Specific to both schools was the Love is Digital signs that utilized a realistic photo of a text message conversation on a popular cellphone device to showcase to readers the textual information. In this instance, the sign's image choice, color/font consistency and placement, as well as the actual message worked together to produce the pertinent information. Finally, within the signs themselves the angles of text and subjects seemingly impacted the perceptions of students about the coming signs message. At Sapphire, students continually spoke of a bullying sign that they had seen throughout the building. However, upon further investigation it was revealed that this sign was actually an informational poster about dating abuse. The confusion presumably occurred due to the point of view and visual placement of the female subject in the photo. Abstract in nature it appears that the subject is handcuffed by words and angled in a manner that depicts negative/depressed body language. Individuals in the actual bullying related signs on campus depict subjects in a similar manner as that of the subject in the dating abuse signage. The similarity between the positions and angles of the subjects within the overall image itself caused confusion amongst the consumer, leading to an ineffective delivery of the dating abuse message.

Throughout the course of this study Kress and van Leuween's elements became increasingly pertinent as the study continued. Although these recommendations are suggested for use in visual content analysis, utilizing each as a framework for developing visual content

allows for greater potential of message consumption. Often as educators and researchers we strive to take concepts and work backwards, moving from desired outcome to initial planning, using these elements for production works in the same manner. If stakeholders and producers of visual content for student consumption within schoolhouses take the time to analyze the message first, they can determine which styles, types, and content might best reach the desired audience.

Additional research into interior space signage within schools is necessary to uncover the potential effectiveness or ineffectiveness of signage. For instance, research into school signage recall, retention, and influence over individuals and campus culture may contribute to our understanding signs effective or ineffectiveness. This study sought simply to uncover the production, consumption, and influence of signs on individuals within three high school campuses. My insights into potential practical implications using Kress and van Leeuwen's model were merely my recommendations based upon what was unveiled in this study.

Further Research

Further research may seek to answer the effectiveness question. Overall effectiveness of school signage could not be answered in this study with finality as the data varied across each campus experience. This varied experience stems from the differing culture/climate at each campus. Crimson and Violet are similar in their demographic make-up but differed in terms of school culture both from the aesthetics of each campus as well as the discipline issues present at the time of the study. Sapphire was an outlier from the other two campuses in both demographic make-up and overall school culture. Thus, in attempt to answer school effectiveness specifics to a particular type of campus, further studies analyzing similar schools in terms of climate/culture

may shed light on the potential effect of school signage. I would suggest that discipline problems of a student body serve as a driving factor to the narrative produced on the walls within a schoolhouse. This was seen in the case of Crimson High School where the desired messages via signage of students in the focus group did not necessarily align with the campuses visible messages at the time. Rather, the messages on display were geared toward curbing potentially negative social behaviors, often, those acknowledged by school officials as discipline concerns on campus such as illegal drug use.

The limited sample size and use of one school district is also limitation to this study. Larger sample sizes with multiple school districts from across the United States and/or globe would provide a larger context for the impact of school signage within schoolhouses. A larger sample size may also assist in determining production procedures, specifically those external signs that can be found on multiple campuses.

Concluding Thoughts

My hope for this dissertation is that it serves as a starting point for conversations surrounding the use of signage within school buildings in terms of signs production elements, influence, and consumption by those who dwell within. Often as an educator and sponsor of various school related activities I find myself approving signage for display without thinking of their potential impact. As educators, we must commit ourselves to continuous educational growth in every area. Education is not limited to the pages of books or classroom lectures. In fact, it became clear throughout this study that students are keenly aware of the messages portrayed across their individual campuses. The degree to which students in particular consume and process these messages varies; however, student recognition of their mere existence requires

educators to give attention to their potential impact. I believe that as we evolve in an ever-changing globalized world, technology will continue to change the way in which literacy practices are carried out. However, the use of signage does not appear to be fading anytime soon. A desire for visually pleasing spaces is within our human nature and because of this, we must take time to understand that literacy practices extend into our surroundings. School signs are a place in which the practice of literacy can impact individuals' perceptions and it is up to us to ensure that these messages are given a proper platform for potential consumption, learning, and growth.

While not every student consumes the messages on display within the schoolhouse, the majority of students are aware of their presence. This became clear throughout the course of this study. School officials must take the time to determine the rationale for signage on their campus. It starts with a simple question: what is the purpose of this sign? Is it to fill up space on an empty wall or to provide a message to those who dwell within the space? Determining purpose for signage is critical. During this study often it felt as if neither faculty/staff nor students could answer this initial question of purpose; rather, both groups merely accepted posters' existences as a schoolhouse norm. Acknowledgement of signage purpose allows school officials another avenue to student messaging, literacy practice, and creation of school culture. The old adage, "if these walls could talk," is not merely a phrase used to describe conversations held behind closed doors. This notion of discourse in spaces through visual signage is ever present in our daily lives and the schoolhouse is no exception. These walls can talk and it is up to school officials, stakeholders, and students alike to determine if the walls are exuding a message worthy of consumption.

APPENDIX A
SCHOOLScape DISCURSIVE PRACTICE MODEL

Sense of time is in the interaction order of the single individual and their gaze. It doesn't seem urgent, although the words on the wrists are meant to symbolize hand cuffs, it doesn't appear that this individual is in urgent need of help. Un-happy? Perhaps, but the sign itself does not give the viewer a sense of urgency. The female subject also has a phone in her hand it seems she's looking at but not in a distressful way

code preference – the sign draws you to the image itself first, which would then move you to the words in a handcuff manner on the subjects wrist. This is a choice to highlight the female to draw the reader into the text. The text itself has the control is not in one color and love in another to suggest the two as separate. In the same white is the phrase stop teen dating violence and then the rest in black the preference here then is on the female image and the words love and control rather than the action items at the bottom.

modality – the difference in color between the pink and the black, the pink is soft and subtle whereas the black is hard and aggressive, even in the word choices against the pink.



No reference in the transcripts

Text – the text that could produce action is in the same harshness of black Text font that the contrast the pink. The word choice of control and love Gives a juxtaposition of incompatible of the two. The help line information Is put at the bottom.

Production – Texas advocacy project, winner of a design project

“It’s really just the one sign in the Spanish Hallway” - insight into placement
SA, “ I really notice artistic signs because I have no artistic ability.”

Mr. Hamilton, “What is the biggest issue facing students in your school?” KA, “A lot of people are rude and judgemental.” CA, “I was going to say that.” KA, “Yeah and like nothing gets done about it.”

Social practice – teen dating violence, specifically against women is present

APPENDIX B

LOVE IS RESPECT POSTER

DATING ABUSE AFFECTS 1 IN 3 YOUNG PEOPLE

You deserve a safe and healthy relationship. Visit loveisrespect.org



Connect NOW!
Live Chat @ www.loveisrespect.org
"loveis" to 77054 | 1-866-331-9474
Discuss your options anonymously. Peer advocates are available 24/7.



love is respect org
A collaboration between Break the Cycle and the National Dating Abuse Helpline

APPENDIX C

EMERGENT CODING PATTERNS EXAMPLE

Temporary Sigh

One Pill Can Kill/Drug Awareness

Suicide

Bullying Prevention

Texting and Driving

College |

Sexual

Digital Media

Awareness

Ineffective

Potentially effective

Value/Worth of Individuals

Current Issue/Events

Positive Narrative

Negative Narrative

nobody cares

Pride in School

Lived Experience Represented

What would you put up.

Perception

11 – I think it depends on the person and the amount of trouble or how deep they are in the situation

what about the consent one SHS 9 – you brought that up – you think that works?

9 – No

Why not?

9 – I don't know people are just like.....I don't know they don't value each other as much as the like sign is trying to promote you too

so what's the point of having them then? If all of you agree that they don't really work why do we have them at all?

9 – little reminders that people still care

ok

11- yeah I mean it may not work for everyone but their's like some people, like for me, it reminds that it's a big issue in today's society.

12 – yeah it may not help the majority of people but someone who is actually suicidal they see the and they call, that helps just 1 person over the majority of people who would look over it

so even if that one person it helps that's worth it

REFERENCES

- Al-Hattami, A. (2014). Short-and long-term validity of high school GPA for admission to colleges outside the united states. *Journal of College Student Retention, 16*(2), 277-291. doi:10.2190/CS.16.2.g
- Altman, I. (1975). *The environment and social behavior: Privacy, personal space, territory, and crowding*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Bakhtin, M. M., & Holquist, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M., & Emerson, C. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M., Holquist, M., & Emerson, C. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Beecher, A. B. (2009). *Wayfinding tools in public library buildings: A multiple case study*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. Database. (3126555).
- Bieger, L. (2015). No place like home; or, dwelling in narrative. *New Literary History, 46*(1), 17-39,187.
- Bloome, D., & Green, J. (1984). Directions in the sociolinguistic study of reading. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 395-422). New York: Longman.
- Brittin, J., Sorensen, D., Trowbridge, M., Lee, K. K., Breithecker, D., Frerichs, L., & Huang, T. (2015). Physical activity design guidelines for school architecture:E0132597. *PLOS ONE, 10*(7) doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0132597
- Brown, K. D. 2012. The linguistic landscape of educational spaces: Language revitalization and schools in southeastern Estonia. In H. F. Marten, D. Gorter & L. van Mensel (eds.), *Minority languages in the linguistic landscape* (281–298). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Boudreau, A., and Dubois, L. (2005). 'L' affichage a Moncton. *Miroir ou masque? Revue de l'universite de Moncton, 36, 1, 185-217.*
- Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2006) Linguistic landscape and minority languages. *The International Journal of Multilingualism, 3*: 67-80.
- Choat, S. (2010). *Continuum studies in continental philosophy : Marx through post-structuralism : Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze (1)*. London, GB: Continuum. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrary.com>

- Costello, V. (2016). *Multimedia foundations: Core concepts for digital design* (2nd ed., pp. 250-251). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dagenais, D., Moore, D., Lamarre, S., Sabatier, C., & Armand, F. (2008). Linguistic landscape and language awareness. In E. Shohamy & D. Gorter (Eds.), *Linguistic landscape: Expanding the scenery* (pp. 253-269). New York & London: Routledge.
- Danielsson, K. (2016). Modes and meaning in the classroom – the role of different semiotic resources to convey meaning in science classrooms. *Linguistics and Education*, 35, 88-99. doi:10.1016/j.linged.2016.07.005
- Deely, J. (2009). Pars pro toto from culture to nature: An overview of semiotics as a postmodern development, with an anticipation of developments to Come1. *The American Journal of Semiotics*, 25(1), 167-192.
- Dimitriadis, G., & Kamberelis, G. (2006). *Theory for education: Adapted from theory for religious studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Dimmel, J. K., & Herbst, P. G. (2015). The semiotic structure of geometry diagrams: How textbook diagrams convey meaning. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 46(2), 147-195. doi:10.5951/jresmetheduc.46.2.0147
- Doloughan, F. (2015). The construction of space in contemporary narrative. *Journal of Narrative Theory, JNT*, 45(1), 1-17.
- Dressler, R. (2015). Sign"geist": Promoting bilingualism through the linguistic landscape of school signage. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 12(1), 128-145.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Frerichs, L., Brittin, J., Sorensen, D., Trowbridge, M. J., Yaroch, A. L., Siahpush, M., . . . Gherlone, L. (2015). Vygotsky, Bakhtin, Lotman: Towards a theory of communication in the horizon of the other. *Semiotica*, 2016(213), 75-90. doi:10.1515/sem-2015-0031
- Gorter, D. (2006). Introduction: The study of the linguistic landscape as a new approach to multilingualism. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 3(1):1-6.
- Griffiths, P., Merrison, A., & Bloomer, A. (2010). *Language in use: A reader*. London: Routledge.
- Hall, E. T. (1963, October). A system for the notation of proxemic behavior. *American Anthropologist*, 65(5).

- Harste, J. C., Burke, C., & Woodward, V. (1984) *Language stories and literacy lessons*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Heath, S. (1982). What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and School. *Language in Society*, 11(1), 49-76.
- Hooper, L. M., L'Abate, L., Sweeney, L. G., Giancesini, G., & Jankowski, P. J. (2014). *Models of psychopathology*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Huang, T. T. (2015). Influence of school architecture and design on healthy eating: A review of the evidence. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(4), e46.
- Huang, T. T., Sorensen, D., Davis, S., Frerichs, L., Brittin, J., Celentano, J., .Trowbridge, M. J. (2013). Healthy eating design guidelines for school architecture. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 10, E27.
- Huang, T., Shu, Y., Yeh, T., & Zeng, P. (2016). Get lost in the library?: An innovative application of augmented reality and indoor positioning technologies. *The Electronic Library*, 34(1), 99-115. doi:10.1108/EL-08-2014-0148
- Johnston, M. P., & Mandel, L. H. (2014). Are we leaving them lost in the woods with no breadcrumbs to follow? Assessing signage systems in school libraries. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 20(2), 38-53.
- Komarraju, M., Karau, S. J., Schmeck, R. R., & Avdic, A. (2011). The big five personality traits, learning styles, and academic achievement. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 51(4), 472-477. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2011.04.019
- Kohn, A. (2000). *What to look for in a classroom and other essays*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kohn, A. (2014). "What to Look for in a Classroom". Retrieved March 09, 2017, from <http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/look-classroom2>
- Kress, G., and Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. New York: Routledge.
- Lagopoulos, A. P., & Boklund-Lagopoulou, K. (2014). Semiotics, culture and space. *Sign Systems Studies*, 42(4), 435-486. doi:10.12697/SSS.2014.42.4.02
- Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 16(1), 23-49. doi:10.1177/0261927X970161002
- Lee, S., & Ha, M. (2016). The effects of visibility on fear of crime in schools' interior environments. *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*, 15(3), 527-534. doi:10.3130/jaabe.15.527

- Lotman, J. (1977). Problems in the typology of culture [K probleme tipologii kul'tury]. In: Daniel Peri Lucid (trans., ed.), *Soviet semiotics. An anthology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 213–221.
- Lotman, Y.M. (1990). *Universe of the mind: A semiotic theory of culture*, trans. Shukman A. Bloomington, In: Indiana University Press. [Russian: *Vnutri mysljaščich mirov*. In: Lotman Y, Semiosfera. Saint Petersburg, 2000, pp. 150–390.]
- Mahony, P., Hextall, I., & Richardson, M. (2011). 'building schools for the future': Reflections on a new social architecture. *Journal of Education Policy*, 26(3), 341. doi:10.1080/02680939.2010.513741
- Menta, A. (2017, April 13). "13 Reasons Why" broke a Netflix record, so you should probably start watching. In *Elite Daily*. Retrieved from <http://elitedaily.com/entertainment/13-reasons-why-netflix-twitter-record/1859399/>
- Mondale, S., Patton, S. B., Streep, M., Bernard, S. C., Lemann, N., Finn, C. E., & Hoffman, N... Films for the Humanities (Firm). (2001). *School, the story of American public education: Episode 1*. Chevy Chase, Md: Stone Lantern Films.
- Mostafa, M. (2014). Architecture for autism: Autism ASPECTSS(TM) in school design. *ArchNet-IJAR : International Journal of Architectural Research*, 8(1), 143.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Morson, G., & Emerson, C. (1990). *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a prosaics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford.
- Nelk, A., Pakk, R., Aarma, K., Lotman, I. M., Siska, R., Murd, J., . . . Icarus Films. (2009). *Lotmani maailm*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Distributed by Icarus Films.
- Nöth, W. (2015;2014;). The topography of yuri lotman's semiosphere. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18(1), 11. doi:10.1177/1367877914528114
One with Courage. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.onewithcourage.org/>
- Peirce, C. S. (1902). *The essential Peirce*. (2nd ed.). The Peirce Edition Project in 1998. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Petrilli, S. (2016). Dialogue, responsibility and literary writing: Mikhail Bakhtin and his circle. *Semiotica*, 2016(213), 307-343. doi:10.1515/sem-2015-0094
- Renfrew, A. (2014). *Routledge critical thinkers: Mikhail Bakhtin*. Florence, US: Routledge.
- Reyes, A. (2011). *Voice in Political Discourse: Castro, Chavez, Bush and their strategic use of language*. London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Saussure, F. (1959). *Course in general linguistics*. New York: Philosophical Library.

- Schensul, L., Schensul, J., & LeCompte, D. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods: observations, interviews, and questionnaires* (Book 2 in *Ethnographer's Toolkit*). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press
- Scollon, R., & Wong-Scollon, S. (2003). *Discourses in Place*. London: Routledge.
- Schönle, A., & Shine, J. (2006). Introduction. In: Schönle A (ed.) *Lotman and cultural studies: Encounters and extensions*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 3–35.
- Shohamy, E. (2006). *Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Stables, A. (2006). Sign(al)s: living and learning as semiotic engagement. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 38(4), 373-387.
- Strickland, A., & Hadjiyanni, T. (2013). My school and me? Exploring the intersections of insideness and interior environments. *Journal of Interior Design*, 38(4), 17-35. doi:10.1111/joid.12016
- Swiggers, P. (2013). Linguistics through its proper mirror-glass: Saussure, signs, segments. *Semiotica*, 2013(193), 1-29. doi:10.1515/sem-2013-0001
- Tape 2, side a [Television series episode]. (2017, March 31). In B. Yorker (Producer), *Thirteen reasons why*. Netflix.
- Texas Advocacy Project |. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.texasadvocacyproject.org/>
- Texas Education Agency. (2016). *Boswell high school 2015-16 School Report Card*. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency.
- Texas Education Agency. (2016). *Chisholm Trail high school 2015-16 School Report Card*. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency.
- Texas Education Agency, (n.d.). Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting and Requirements. http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Correspondence/TAA_Letters/Child_Abuse_and_Neglect_Reporting_and_Requirements/
- Texas Education Agency. (2016). *Saginaw high school 2015-16 School Report Card*. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency.
- Torop, P. (2009). In Lotman, J. *Culture and explosion*. New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Tracey, D. H., & Morrow, L. M. (2012). *Lenses on reading: An introduction to theories and models*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Introducing Social Semiotics*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

We Are CACTX - Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Inc. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.cactx.org/>

Weisser, A. S. (2006). "Little red school house, what now?" Two centuries of American public school architecture. *Journal of Planning History*, 5(3), 196-217. doi:10.1177/1538513206289223

Zaugg, H., Child, C., Bennett, D., Brown, J., Alcaraz, M., Allred, A., Zandamela, T. (2016). Comparing library wayfinding among novices and experts. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, 17(1), 70-82. doi:10.1108/PMM-12-2015-0041

Żyłko, B. (2001). Culture and Semiotics: Notes on Lotman's Conception of Culture. *New Literary History* 32(2), 391-408. The Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved October 9, 2017, from Project MUSE database.