

Disciplinary Literacy as a Support for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning



Leslie Haas and Jill T. Tussey



Disciplinary Literacy as a Support for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning

Leslie Haas
Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

Jill T. Tussey
Buena Vista University, USA



A volume in the Advances in Early Childhood and
K-12 Education (AECKE) Book Series

Published in the United States of America by

IGI Global
Information Science Reference (an imprint of IGI Global)
701 E. Chocolate Avenue
Hershey PA, USA 17033
Tel: 717-533-8845
Fax: 717-533-8661
E-mail: cust@igi-global.com
Web site: <http://www.igi-global.com>

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Haas, Leslie, 1969- editor. | Tussey, Jill, 1982- editor.

Title: Disciplinary literacy as a support for culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning / Leslie Haas and Jill T. Tussey, Editors.

Description: Hershey, PA : Information Science Reference, (an imprint of IGI Global), [2022] | Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Summary: "This publication offers a conceptual framework and pedagogical support for disciplinary literacy practices related to culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning to support student success through explored connections between disciplinary literacy and inclusive pedagogical practices"-- Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022004165 (print) | LCCN 2022004166 (ebook) | ISBN 9781668442159 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781668442197 (paperback) | ISBN 9781668442166 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Multicultural education. | Culturally relevant pedagogy. | Inclusive education.

Classification: LCC LC1099 .D544 2022 (print) | LCC LC1099 (ebook) | DDC 370.117--dc23/eng/20220218

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022004165>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022004166>

This book is published in the IGI Global book series Advances in Early Childhood and K-12 Education (AECKE) (ISSN: 2329-5929; eISSN: 2329-5937)

British Cataloguing in Publication Data

A Cataloguing in Publication record for this book is available from the British Library.

All work contributed to this book is new, previously-unpublished material. The views expressed in this book are those of the authors, but not necessarily of the publisher.

For electronic access to this publication, please contact: eresources@igi-global.com.



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Jared Keengwe
University of North Dakota, USA

ISSN:2329-5929
EISSN:2329-5937

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<i>Jessica A. Manzone, University of Southern California, USA</i>	
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The need for culturally and linguistically sustainable teaching is a call that all educators must answer. Current literacy practices focus on the teaching of skills and strategies through a disciplinary lens with limited connections to students' home and community. This chapter presents a model for creating balanced literacy experiences that honor and value the diversity of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and multilingual learners. Titled the Home and Community Connections Model, this framework provides both teachers and learners with a series of prompts to generate personalized connections to any literacy experience. This chapter presents definitions for the home and community connections prompts, connects them to comprehension skills and strategies, and provides classroom examples to guide teachers in reorienting their practice through the student's home and community assets. Reflective questions and recommendations for implementation are also provided. Therefore, this chapter provides the impetus for creating authentic and culturally sustaining literacy experiences for all learners.

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The Marvel Cinematic Universe has found much success among comic fans and novices alike. Bringing comic book storylines to the big screen has resulted in the public becoming familiar with once obscure characters and plots. This chapter discusses the use of Captain America: Civil War as a form of popular media to teach middle school students about the United States Civil War. Drawing parallels between historical events and the movie's plot resulted in an increase in students' understanding of the concepts of the United States Civil War and allowed students to connect their learning to their lived experiences and develop agency over their own learning. Through this experiment, the researcher developed a lesson plan for teaching the United States Civil War using popular media, which can also be duplicated for use with other historical events.

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This qualitative study used a theoretical framework grounded in the intersection of 21st century learning, critical literacy, and disciplinary literacy to examine how a high school science and math teacher selected and used texts in her classroom. Data from a semi-structured interview, instructional materials, and student work samples were analyzed. Inductive content analysis generated themes about discipline-specific practice and strategies that cut across both content areas. Results suggest that texts in content classrooms can be used to foster critical disciplinary literacy skills that build upon students' outside-of-school interests and their use of technology.

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<i>Afton Schleiff, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, USA</i>	

The authors seek to illustrate how teachers can create a space of inclusive interaction through the development of curriculum and instruction that evidences culturally sustaining pedagogy and disciplinary literacy. In considering these two concepts, the authors also turn to the tenets of social and emotional learning to establish a framework for developing curriculum and instruction that acknowledges the complexity of the classroom space as a subculture. This consideration is not only crucial to making disciplinary discourses relevant, but also illustrating how curriculum and instruction play a critical role in students' learning as well as how they understand and locate themselves in the world that surrounds them. The goals of this chapter are to offer a framework that can help educators develop curriculum and instruction that supports students' emerging knowledge of the discipline, connect disciplinary knowledge to students' multiple discourses, and provide a pathway for generative SEL within and outside of the academic discipline itself.

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Using Mentor Texts to Deconstruct Text Sets: Developing Cultural Awareness in a Modern Society..... 109

Rhonda C. Hylton, Kent State University, USA

William P. Bintz, Kent State University, USA

We recognize that students need literacy practices that transcend grade levels and content areas as well as multiple opportunities to showcase and to see their culture(s) in the texts they read. Therefore, in this chapter, the authors consider how culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy can help support literacy experiences for students and help educators better understand how to teach in ways that honor culture and language in a modern society. The chapter has three main goals: define mentor texts and review the literature on mentor texts across content areas, identify mentor texts across content areas and point to how teachers and teacher educators can use them to demonstrate a clear understanding of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, and provide professional resources for teachers and teacher educators to utilize as they create literacy experiences that build knowledge around mentor texts for the purpose of developing cultural awareness.

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Enhancing the Disciplinary Literacy Vocabulary of Black Early Readers: A Latin-Based Intervention 128

Zwila Martinez, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

Larkin Page, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

This investigation suggests that children should be comprehensively assessed in early foundational components including vocabulary. With this knowledge, teachers can apply the appropriate methods and strategies that support that target vocabulary. Findings can inform teachers of vocabulary interventions including strategies that enhance the foundational knowledge and usage of prior knowledge, vocabulary strategies, and building self-esteem and confidence. The data also can help teachers create an instructional program that utilizes explicit vocabulary instruction and vocabulary usage including Latin affixes.

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Facilitating Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Learning in PreK-3rd Grade Environments: Using Learning Stations With Disciplinary Literacy 148

Ross Glen Chandler Nunamaker, University of Cincinnati, USA

William Arthur Mosier, Istanbul Gelişim University, Turkey

This chapter explores the integration of disciplinary literacy across learning stations in PreK through 3rd Grade classrooms to facilitate culturally and linguistically responsive learning. Through a synthesis of research and the professional experience of the authors, the chapter offers a conceptual framework and pedagogical support for literacy practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive to each child's emerging and developing literacy. Additionally, this chapter describes the components of an interdisciplinary approach to facilitating literacy learning at the prekindergarten through third grade level that ensures a culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum integrating language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies using learning stations. This model supports self-directed learning facilitated by responsive adult-initiated adult-child interaction in a play-based environment for nurturing intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning.

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Using Multicultural Picturebook Biographies to Implement Culturally Relevant Curriculum and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Across K-8 Grade Levels 165

William Paul Bintz, Kent State University, USA

Shabnam M. Chaghervand, Kent State University, USA

The purpose of this chapter is three-fold. One, it discusses how multicultural picture book biographies can be a valuable resource to develop CRC. Two, it describes how teachers can use this curriculum with research-based instructional strategies to implement CRP across major content areas (English/ Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics) and grade levels (K-8). Three, it shares a variety of professional literature and other online resources that teachers and teacher educators can use to deepen and broaden their knowledge on CRC and CRP across grade levels and content areas. It is organized in seven sections including rationale, culturally relevant curriculum, culturally responsive pedagogy, multicultural literature, multicultural picture book biographies, instructional strategies, and final thoughts.

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Academic Engagement and Motivation

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Identity Exploration as a Tool to Enhance Academic Engagement and Growth..... 188

Jessica Hadid, Temple University, USA

Disenfranchised students often develop identity systems that are incompatible with their sense of academic competence and growth, undermining engagement with and persistence in secondary education. This chapter describes a classroom-based approach to enhancing literacy-related task engagement through students' identity exploration and development. The program was designed to address the unique needs of high school students from historically marginalized backgrounds but can be modified for other grade levels and populations. The program presented here guides practitioners and education specialists to integrate a sociocultural approach to identity negotiation within existing curricula. Beyond enhancing task engagement, identity work in classroom settings has the potential to build student agency and wellbeing and increase the likelihood that students will develop academic identities such as reader and writer.

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Navigating Marginalization Through a Motivational Weapon and Resilience: African Sub-Saharan and African American Girls' Lived Experience of Access to Higher Education 217

Philomena Adah, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

This study examines the experience of female education in Northern and North Central Nigeria, South Sudan, South Africa, and the United States. Through empirical reports, articles, journals, and participants' practical experience, this study adopts a qualitative methodology comprising educational system information in the three Sub-Saharan countries and the United States. It explains how gender disparity and exclusive socioeconomic and sociocultural policies impede female education. It examines females from the United States, South Africa, and South Sudan who have shown resilience in overcoming obstacles of slavery, racism, apartheid, patriarchy, poverty, and war to encourage the higher academic pursuit of Idoma girls in Benue State, North Central Nigeria. The study shows that despite policies that have generated varying mechanisms to incorporate marginalized female students in school systems, deep inequalities persist and are palpable in the academic achievement data of female students.

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Motivating and Supporting Academic Achievement in STEM Through Culturally Relevant Literacy Practices: A Theoretical Framework 247

A. Dean Franks, The University of Southern Mississippi, USA

Anna Wan, The University of Southern Mississippi, USA

Motivation and support for academic achievement within STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education is essential as the related fields expand to include more and more jobs. This chapter aims to provide a new theoretical framework for STEM education focused on UDL, student motivation, and culturally relevant literacy practices as a way to increase diversity in STEM fields that expands to include people of color, people with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Authors explain a new theoretical framework that will enhance STEM motivation and support academic achievement through the use of culturally responsive literacy practices and provide examples of how to engage students using the new theoretical framework in the classroom.

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Preservice and Practicing Educator Development

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The Intersection of Disciplinary Literacy, Academic Engagement, and Teaching Diverse Students: Uncertainties of New Alternative Certification Educators 265

Larkin Page, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

The purpose of this study was to investigate the understandings of informational text of new, in-service, alternatively certified seeking educators, as they teach and engage their students. It is significant to grasp what these teachers knew about informational text, specifically the characteristics, structures, purpose, and types, as well as if these teachers were comfortable using informational text as a teaching resource and what reading comprehension strategies were used with informational text in their classrooms. This study offers implications for these teachers, alternative certification program improvement, and the instructors/professors teaching disciplinary literacy in alternative certification programs.

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The Red Bandanna: A Curriculum as Racialized Text Experiment for Pre-Service Teachers 285

Cristina Worley, Texas A&M University, USA

Teachers often think of curriculum as a static set of written content. However, in college level multicultural education (ME) classes, this kind of curriculum rarely provides the student input necessary for authentic transformation. As a result, pre-service teachers lack the ability to understand how their biases and assumptions negatively impact their students. This phenomenon coupled with pre-service teachers' negative associations with terms like "white privilege" and "deficit perspective" beg the question: How can White educators provide positive experiences that result in high levels of cultural competence among White teachers, who make up the workforce majority? With this question in mind, the author set out to create the "red bandanna experiment," a lived curriculum-as-racialized-text experience in present time that relies on both teacher and student input. Ultimately, the experiment allowed for her own critical engagement with curriculum artifacts and also gave students a positive outlet for engaging with their own biases and assumptions.

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A Practitioner's Guide to Responsive School Leadership	306
<i>Bethel E. Cager, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA</i>	

This chapter examines the role of culturally responsive school leadership and how it supports culturally responsive literacy instruction. A progressive and comprehensive approach called the 5Rs of Responsive Leadership is presented as a framework to guide school administrators on their culturally responsive journeys. The phases of the 5Rs of Responsive Leadership are reflect, relate, represent, respond, and revisit. Within this chapter, this leadership approach is supported by and aligned to the Professional Standards of Educational Leaders (PSEL) and the lived experiences of five school and district leaders. The 5Rs of Responsive Leadership can be utilized by school and district leaders across all grade levels and communities as a blueprint to the all-inclusive work required to improve instruction, student achievement, and school culture and climate in a manner that is sustainable and rewarding for all stakeholders.

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Preface

Students deserve inclusive and engaging learning experiences. Opportunities for student growth, in environments that honor culture and language, are essential in a modern society. Thoughtful disciplinary literacy practices offer embedded opportunities across grade levels and content areas to support inclusive classroom cultures. Therefore, the value of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy supported through literacy experiences should not be underestimated and should become a priority for K-12 stakeholders. Furthermore, during this time in history, as the face of education continues to change, it is imperative all stakeholders continue to support efforts related to culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning.

The objective of *Disciplinary Literacy as Support for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning* is to develop a conceptual framework and pedagogical support for disciplinary literacy practices that honor the culture and language of all students and associated school stakeholders. Chapter contributions span a variety of research and practice protocols supporting cultural experience connections, instructional strategies, academic engagement, and professional development. Furthermore, chapters offer support related to culture, diversity, and language.

The target audience for this book consists of all K-12 stakeholders interested in innovative academic supports that honor student culture, language, and academic success across content areas. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to curriculum directors, education faculty, educational researchers, instructional facilitators, literacy professionals, practicing teachers, pre-service teachers, professional development coordinators, school counselors, and teacher preparation programs. Those incorporating culturally and linguistically responsive teaching (CRT) into academic disciplinary literacy will benefit from the variety of methods, strategies, tools, and supports integrated within this book. Furthermore, there are benefits for those interested in how CRT provides engagement with literacy content, practices, and challenges. Lastly, those looking to find innovative ways to support educational equity will find this book beneficial.

This book is divided into four sections. Those sections are titled: 1) Cultural Experience Connections; 2) Instructional Tools and Strategies; 3) Academic Engagement and Motivation; and 4) Preservice and Practicing Educator Development. The first section provides readers with cultural experiences, including those found in popular culture, that can be harnessed to support CRT. Section two offers a wide range of practical tools and strategies that can be implemented in culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments. In section three, student engagement and motivation to learn are explored in a variety of ways in section three. Educator development opportunities connecting CRT and literacy are explored in section four.

CHAPTER 1: SITUATING CULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH COMICS

Jason D. DeHart, Appalachian State University, USA

This chapter explores the affordances of the comics/graphic novels medium for engaging in critical reading and awareness of relevant cultural issues and a range of experiences. The author situates comics as medium before highlighting the work of Faith Erin Hicks, noting both promise and limitation in the graphic novel series *The Nameless City* as a way of beginning conversations about relevant topics. The attention then shifts to include the work of Nate Powell, framed as activism, and the adaptation process of moving the verse novel work of Jason Reynolds to graphic novel form. In this section, the author invites the collaboration of the artist who crafted the adaptation. Finally, attention is given to additional titles that teachers and researchers can consider.

CHAPTER 2: CREATING CULTURALLY SUSTAINABLE LITERACY EXPERIENCES THROUGH HOME AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Jessica A. Manzone, University of Southern California, USA

Julia L. Nyberg, Purdue University Global, USA

The need for culturally and linguistically sustainable teaching is a call that all educators must answer. Current literacy practices focus on the teaching of skills and strategies through a disciplinary lens with limited connections to students' home and community. This chapter presents a model for creating balanced literacy experiences that honor and value the diversity of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and multilingual learners. Titled the Home and Community Connections Model, this framework provides both teachers and learners with a series of prompts to generate personalized connections to any literacy experience. This chapter presents definitions for the Home and Community Connections prompts, connects them to comprehension skills and strategies, and provides classroom examples to guide teachers in reorienting their practice through the student's home and community assets. Reflective questions and recommendations for implementation are also provided. Therefore, this chapter provides the impetus for creating authentic and culturally sustaining literacy experiences for all learners.

CHAPTER 3: FROM MOVIE THEATERS TO HISTORY CLASS – CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR AND THE US CIVIL WAR

August J. Darbonne, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

The Marvel Cinematic Universe has found much success among comic fans and novices alike. Bringing comic book storylines to the big screen has resulted in the public becoming familiar with once obscure characters and plots. This chapter discusses the use of *Captain America: Civil War* as a form of popular media to teach middle school students about the United States Civil War. Drawing parallels between historical events and the movie's plot resulted in an increase in students' understanding of the concepts of the United States Civil War and allowed students to connect their learning to their lived experiences and develop agency over their own learning. Through this experiment, the researcher developed a lesson plan for teaching the United States Civil War using popular media, which can also be duplicated for use with other historical events.

CHAPTER 4: FOSTERING CRITICAL DISCIPLINARY LITERACY IN SECONDARY CONTENT CLASSROOMS

Salika A. Lawrence, The College of New Jersey, USA

Tiffany Labissiere, New York City UFT Teacher Center, USA

This qualitative study used a theoretical framework grounded in the intersection of twenty-first century learning, critical literacy, and disciplinary literacy to examine how a high school science and math teacher selected and used texts in her classroom. Data from a semi-structured interview, instructional materials, and student work samples were analyzed. Inductive content analysis generated themes about discipline-specific practice and strategies that cut across both content areas. Results suggest that texts in content classrooms can be used to foster critical disciplinary literacy skills that build upon students' outside of school interests and their use of technology.

CHAPTER 5: CULTURALLY SUSTAINING, SEL-BASED PRACTICES IN DISCIPLINARY LITERACY CURRICULAR SPACES

Holly Sheppard Riesco, University of Arkansas, USA

Rebecca Carpenter de Cortina, University of Arkansas, USA

Afton Schleiff, University of Arkansas, USA

The authors seek to illustrate how teachers can create a space of inclusive interaction through the development of curriculum and instruction that evidence culturally sustaining pedagogy and disciplinary literacy. In considering these two concepts, the authors also turn to the tenets of social and emotional learning to establish a framework for developing curriculum and instruction that acknowledges the complexity of the classroom space as a subculture. This consideration is not only crucial to making disciplinary discourses relevant, but also illustrating how curriculum and instruction play a critical role in students' learning as well as how they understand and locate themselves in the world that surrounds them. The goals of this chapter are to offer a framework that can help educators develop curriculum and instruction that supports students' emerging knowledge of the discipline, connect disciplinary knowledge to students' multiple discourses, and provide a pathway for generative SEL within and outside of the academic discipline itself.

CHAPTER 6: USING MENTOR TEXTS TO DECONSTRUCT TEXT SETS – DEVELOPING CULTURAL AWARENESS IN A MODERN SOCIETY

Rhonda C. Hylton, Kent State University, USA

William P. Bintz, Kent State University, USA

We recognize that students need literacy practices that transcend grade levels and content areas as well as multiple opportunities to showcase and to see their culture(s) in the texts they read. Therefore, in this chapter, we consider how culturally, and linguistically responsive pedagogy can help support literacy experiences for students and help educators better understand how to teach in ways that honor culture and language in a modern society. The chapter has three main goals: define mentor texts and review the literature on mentor texts across content areas; identify mentor texts across content areas and point to

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how teachers and teacher educators can use them to demonstrate a clear understanding of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy; and provide professional resources for teachers and teacher educators to utilize as they create literacy experiences that build knowledge around mentor texts for the purpose of developing cultural awareness.

CHAPTER 7: ENHANCING DISCIPLINARY LITERACY VOCABULARY OF BLACK EARLY READERS – A LATIN-BASED INTERVENTION

Zwila Martinez, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

Larkin Page, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

This investigation suggests that children should be comprehensively assessed in early foundational components including vocabulary. With this knowledge, teachers can apply the appropriate methods and strategies that support that target vocabulary. Findings can inform teachers of vocabulary interventions including strategies that enhance the foundational knowledge and usage of prior knowledge, vocabulary strategies, and building self-esteem and confidence. The data also can help teachers create an instructional program that utilizes explicit vocabulary instruction and vocabulary usage including Latin affixes.

CHAPTER 8: FACILITATING CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING IN PREK-3RD GRADE ENVIRONMENTS – USING LEARNING STATIONS WITH DISCIPLINARY LITERACY

Ross Glen Chandler Nunamaker, University of Cincinnati, USA

William Arthur Mosier, Istanbul Gelişim University, Turkey

This chapter explores the integration of disciplinary literacy across learning stations in PreK through 3rd Grade classrooms to facilitate culturally and linguistically responsive learning. Through a synthesis of research, and the professional experience of the authors, the chapter offers a conceptual framework and pedagogical support for literacy practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive to each child's emerging and developing literacy. Additionally, this chapter describes the components of an interdisciplinary approach to facilitating literacy learning at the prekindergarten through third grade level that ensures a culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum integrating language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies using learning stations. This model supports self-directed learning facilitated by responsive adult-initiated adult-child interaction in a play-based environment for nurturing intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning.

CHAPTER 9: USING MULTICULTURAL PICTUREBOOK BIOGRAPHIES TO IMPLEMENT CULTURALLY RELEVANT CURRICULUM AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY ACROSS K-8 GRADE LEVELS

William Paul Bintz, Kent State University, USA

Shabnam M. Chaghervand, Kent State University, USA

The purpose of this book chapter is three-fold. One, it discusses how multicultural picturebook biographies can be a valuable resource to develop CRC. Two, it describes how teachers can use this curriculum with research-based instructional strategies to implement CRP across major content areas (English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics) and grade levels (K-8). Three, it shares a variety of professional literature and other online resources that teachers and teacher educators can use to deepen and broaden their knowledge on CRC and CRP across grade levels and content areas. It is organized in seven sections including: rationale, culturally relevant curriculum, culturally responsive pedagogy, multicultural literature, multicultural picturebook biographies, instructional strategies, and final thoughts.

CHAPTER 10: IDENTITY EXPLORATION AS A TOOL TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND GROWTH

Jessica Hadid, Temple University, USA

Disenfranchised students often develop identity systems that are incompatible with their sense of academic competence and growth, undermining engagement with and persistence in secondary education. This chapter describes a classroom-based approach to enhancing literacy-related task engagement through students' identity exploration and development. The program was designed to address the unique needs of high school students from historically marginalized backgrounds, but can be modified for other grade levels and populations. The program presented here guides practitioners and education specialists to integrate a sociocultural approach to identity negotiation within existing curricula. Beyond enhancing task engagement, identity work in classroom settings has the potential to build student agency and well-being, and increase likelihood that students will develop academic identities such as reader and writer.

CHAPTER 11: NAVIGATING MARGINALIZATION THROUGH A MOTIVATIONAL WEAPON AND RESILIENCE – AFRICAN SUB-SAHARAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN GIRLS' LIVED EXPERIENCE OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Philomena Adah, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

This study examined the experience of female education in north and North-central Nigeria, South Sudan, South Africa, and the United States. Through empirical reports, articles, journals, and participants' practical experience, this study adopts a qualitative methodology comprising educational system information in the three Sub-Saharan countries and the United States. It explains how gender disparity, exclusive socioeconomic and sociocultural policies impede female education. It examines females from the United States, South Africa, and South Sudan who have shown resilience in overcoming obstacles of slavery, racism, apartheid, patriarchy, poverty, and war to encourage the higher academic pursuit of Idoma girls in Benue state, Northcentral-Nigeria. The study shows that despite policies that have generated varying mechanisms to incorporate marginalized female students in school systems, deep inequalities persist and are palpable in the academic achievement data of female students.

CHAPTER 12: MOTIVATING AND SUPPORTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN STEM THROUGH CULTURALLY RELEVANT LITERACY PRACTICES – A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Dean Franks, The University of Southern Mississippi, USA

Anna Wan, The University of Southern Mississippi, USA

Motivation and support for academic achievement within STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education is essential as the related fields expand to include more and more jobs. This chapter aims to provide a new theoretical framework for STEM education focused on UDL, student motivation, and culturally relevant literacy practices as a way to increase diversity in STEM fields that expands to include people of color, people with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Authors explain a new theoretical framework that will enhance STEM motivation and support academic achievement through the use of culturally responsive literacy practices and provide examples of how to engage students using the new theoretical framework in the classroom.

CHAPTER 13: THE INTERSECTION OF DISCIPLINARY LITERACY, ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT, AND TEACHING DIVERSE STUDENTS – UNCERTAINTIES OF NEW ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION EDUCATORS

Larkin Page, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

The purpose of this study was to investigate the understandings of informational text of new, in-service, alternatively certified seeking educators, as they teach and engage their students. It is significant to grasp what these teachers knew about informational text, specifically the characteristics, structures, purpose, and types, as well as, if these teachers were comfortable using informational text as a teaching resource, and what reading comprehension strategies were used with informational text in their classrooms. This study offers implications for these teachers, alternative certification program improvement, and the instructors/professors teaching disciplinary literacy in alternative certification programs.

CHAPTER 14: THE RED BANDANNA – A CURRICULUM AS RACIALIZED TEXT EXPERIMENT FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Cristina Worley, Texas A&M University, USA

Teachers often think of curriculum as a static set of written content. However, in college level multi-cultural education (ME) classes, this kind of curriculum rarely provides the student input necessary for authentic transformation. As a result, pre-service teachers lack the ability to understand how their biases and assumptions negatively impact their students. This phenomenon coupled with pre-service teachers' negative associations with terms like "white privilege" and "deficit perspective" beg the question: How can White educators provide positive experiences that result in high levels of cultural competence among White teachers, who make up the workforce majority? With this question in mind, the author set out to create the "red bandanna experiment," a lived curriculum-as-racialized-text experience in present time that relies on both teacher and student input. Ultimately, the experiment allowed for her own critical

engagement with curriculum artifacts and also gave students a positive outlet for engaging with their own biases and assumptions.

CHAPTER 15: A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO RESPONSIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Bethel E. Cager, Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

This chapter examines the role of culturally responsive school leadership and how it supports culturally responsive literacy instruction. A progressive and comprehensive approach called the 5Rs of Responsive Leadership is presented as a framework to guide school administrators on their culturally responsive journeys. The phases of the 5Rs of Responsive Leadership are: reflect, relate, represent, respond, and revisit. Within this chapter, this leadership approach is supported by and aligned to the Professional Standards of Educational Leaders (PSEL) and the lived experiences of five school and district leaders. The 5Rs of Responsive Leadership can be utilized by school and district leaders across all grade levels and communities as a blueprint to the all-inclusive work required to improve instruction, student achievement, and school culture and climate in a manner that is sustainable and rewarding for all stakeholders.

Acknowledgment

In acknowledgment of all those committed to and supportive of this publication, the editors would like to offer their sincere appreciation. Specifically, they would like to thank the authors, reviewers, and all the project cheerleaders. Without their contributions, this book would not be possible.

First, the editors would like to extend a special thank you to each author associated with this book. Their commitment, expertise, and insight are the foundation of this timely project. Their time and tenacity as they researched, wrote, and developed these wonderful works are truly appreciated.

Second, the contribution of the reviewers cannot be underestimated. Their attention to the quality, clarity, and content supported authors as they revised each chapter. The editors would also like to acknowledge those reviewers who took on multiple chapters to support the quality of this project.

Last, but not least, the editors would like to thank their families. Their families' support and understanding through the extension of grace, in terms of time spent on editorial tasks and time spent away from family gatherings, cannot be underestimated. They are both grateful for the amazing communities of support provided by the people they love most.

Leslie Haas
Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

Jill T. Tussey
Buena Vista University, USA

Section 1

Cultural Experience Connections

Chapter 1

Situating Cultural Awareness Through Comics

Jason D. DeHart

Appalachian State University, USA

ABSTRACT

*This chapter explores the affordances of the comics/graphic novels medium for engaging in critical reading and awareness of relevant cultural issues and a range of experiences. The author situates comics as medium before highlighting the work of Faith Erin Hicks, noting both promise and limitation in the graphic novel series *The Nameless City* as a way of beginning conversations about relevant topics. The attention then shifts to include the work of Nate Powell, framed as activism, and the adaptation process of moving the verse novel work of Jason Reynolds to graphic novel form. In this section, the author invites the collaboration of the artist who crafted the adaptation. Finally, attention is given to additional titles that teachers and researchers can consider.*

INTRODUCTION

The author begins with a note on their positionality in exploring topics of representation and cultural relevance in literature and pedagogy.

*The author notes, first, that they speak from the position of many of the marks of the dominant cultural box described by Jewell (2020) in *This Book is Antiracist*. They are a White, cisgender, heterosexual male from a Protestant background. While the author did not grow up as part of the middle class, they now live and work in this box, as well. The author is also a scholar and teacher who wishes to promote a range of texts and who sees great value and power in the ways that a range of identities and experiences can be represented in the graphic novel/comics medium. It would seem inauthentic at this point in my life to only support texts that reify and transmit aspects of my lived experience. The author is learning and continues to learn about the lived experiences that I can only peer into through conversation and through the lens of a book.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch001

This interest in the work of representation comes from the stance of an educator who wants to be an ally and who has become increasingly aware of their privilege. The author is also a long-term comics fan who continues to learn about the ways in which folx from minoritized/marginalized communities are depicted in graphic novels. The breadth and depth of the comics market can hardly be encompassed by a single chapter, but this author aims to highlight texts that might be of particular interest – with the potential of then exploring a further network of texts that can relate to those featured here. These books are more than popular (Freedman, 2011); they are powerful spaces for exploring identity and aspects of lived experiences in the world (Tinker, 2009; Yezbick et al., 2015).

SITUATING COMICS

What does this author mean when using the term comics? Wolk (2021) called comics a serialized form, noting that graphic novels are often longer and sometimes collected works. Comic books are often short and can be folded to fit in a person's back pocket. While shorter examples exist, as afforded by traditional newspaper comic strips and political cartoons, those works are outside of the purview of this exploration.

Despite their complexity and appeal, comics continue to be pushed back on as curricular materials (Tilley, 2013). While some voices in education embrace comics, others continue to denigrate the medium. This opposition seems to be lessening, but is present nevertheless. Harvey and Ward (2017) pointed to the capacity of such a textual range, including verse novels and graphic novels, to engage readers who are striving; the author further notes that studies of comics have also explored the complex ontology of their form, as demonstrated by scholars like Cohn (2013), as well as the work of other researchers who examine comics (Labio, 2015; Priego & Berube, 2020). This author is currently writing from the context of a university literacy professor who encourages the thoughtful use of all texts for attention to both words, as well as the construction of pages for reading and writing experiences. This is not to say that all texts should be presented in comic/graphic novel format; the author again points to the term range when thinking about the texts that can be included in instruction.

Throughout the next sections, the author includes textual examples and traces the ways in which comics can be used beyond surface entertainment to evoke understandings of lived experiences. Wolk (2021) wrote of comics, and Marvel Comics, in particular, that characters in these books “include some extraordinary ones, in whose fantastic excesses you, as a reader, might potentially see parts of yourself, or see what you might hope to become or fear becoming” (p. 7). This quote is particularly salient of the superhero narrative, and the author here suggests that a reader might also view very present and resonant experiences of cultural diversity, including both joy and oppression, and have a glimpse into a sense of advocacy that might not have been considered before.

Powerful books can lead to engaged writing and social action, and so comics can be positioned as not only visually appealing invitations to enter a fictional world, but as artivistic calls to action to engage in self-inquiry and social change. When this author enters the classroom or research space, they recognize that part of the work of literacy education is calling attention to the stories of a range of people across a variety of texts as a signpost to their narratives and not to one limited, monolithic, or dominant cultural experience. In this way, the practice of literacy is never solo or in a silo, but an ongoing conversation among authors, teachers, and students. These conversations are as multidimensional as are perspectives and human experiences. The concept is related to artivism – the use of art to engage in activist work.

As will be traced throughout this chapter, activism combines the affordances of artistic work with the action and change-orientation of community activism for a wider audience. Sometimes this work occurs in video form (Alber et al., 2020; Rhoades, 2012), sometimes within the context of social media platforms (Bernárdez Rodal, et al., 2019), and other times the work appears in the pages of comics – as will be expanded on in this chapter with specific examples. The texts are not limited to this consideration, and the author encourages readers who wish to explore these topics to visit the branching networks of activism that exist in publishing and continue to grow. This call to explore is particularly salient for readers who are dismissive or doubtful of the power of the comics form. An informed criticism may only be born by generous exposure to the medium, across its many sub-genres and styles of storytelling.

Comics may refer to a medium, but the word certainly does not refer to only one type of story. Arguably, a flexible audience exists for these books, in terms of age and cultural experience, as well as prior knowledge demands. Readers from a range of backgrounds can enjoy these books, and can see relatable stories told within their pages. When it comes to classroom use, comics and visual texts afford a host of classroom opportunities, including analysis, classroom read alouds (as seen in the use of a science-related text at the end of this chapter), close reading experiences, and other potential work, including composition (Dallacqua & Peralta, 2019; Kilickaya, 2012) and instruction with learners who are progressing toward bilingual proficiency from a language other than English (Howard, 2012). Both younger students (Ferit, 2012) and older readers (Botzakis, 2006) can find points of engagement with the medium.

BEGINNING/BRIDGING WITH NAMELESS CITY

When it comes to culturally relevant topics, comics can be invitational texts, but must also be critiqued and seen as fully-fledged texts in relationship to other texts. While comics may not represent the entirety of experience, they arguably have a place in text sets and as central texts for study (Boerman-Cornell & Kim, 2020; Graham, 2011; Strum, 2002). Both the use of images and words afford a range of identity work and storytelling practices that are more limited in traditional prose formats; the multimodal production that is intrinsic in the comics medium opens up greater possibilities for communication of self.

Sometimes a book approaches a critical issue, but can serve as a textual space for beginning to explore issues more deeply. For example, Hicks's *Nameless City* as a text which approximates and approaches cultural diversity and awareness, yet has some shortcomings. Jimenez (2016) pointed out that *The Nameless City* contains a number of considerations to interrogate, including the book's use of the term "tribes," as well as its incomplete depiction of central female characters. While the book has positive qualities, there are potential areas of critique that can serve as foundations for critical conversation.

The aesthetics of the way the book works can also be appreciated. While entertaining and grammatically fascinating, even cinematic in its presentation, *The Nameless City* (Hicks, 2017) presents a look into the conflicts that surround refugee experiences, while raising other concerns that can lead to conversation. This does not mean, necessarily, that the book cannot be used effectively; rather, an effective and full use of the text might employ a consideration of both the affordances and limitations of what is contained in its narrative. The motion lines and artistic use of panels in the book can serve as an entry way into discussing more details of the grammar of comics, as well as the books that conversations through comics can lead to.

The examples persist, with some books demonstrating female characters in strong roles. Hicks features a female bodyguard in her comics series, *The Nameless City* (2016). This character acts as one

example of a skilled female warrior who does not need the pity and comfort of her male counterparts. As another example, Hicks features the character of Rat, a young female whose fighting and evasion skills surpass those of the male central character in the book series. Rat takes the male character as a kind of apprentice, and the two experience an interplay of relationship across the book as gender roles are explored, as well as their identities as members of divided communities.

From there, a consideration of refugee experiences might lead to other texts, including *Illegal* (Colfer & Donkin, 2018) and *The Unwanted: Stories of the Syrian Refugees* (Brown, 2018). Though fiction, *Illegal* (2018) is a narrative based in truth, and features jarring images of children trying to escape a war-torn region. Working in a similar fashion, *The Unwanted: Stories of the Syrian Refugees* (2018) draws on a range of real-life events in visual form. These are stories that should be told, and creators in the comic medium have taken up this work. Still yet, there is another recent entry into the comics corpus that teachers can use.

Expanding on Stories

Published in the Fall of 2021, *Our Stories Carried Us Here* (Clark et al., 2021) is a comic anthology of a range of refugee experiences. Each chapter is written and illustrated by an author or author team that has emic experience with this phenomenon, and the organization Green Card Voices is the book's publisher. The text begins with a map chronicling the origin of each voice that is represented in the text, and the book is dedicated to "all the people who had to endure education inequality and systematic displacement, and whose lives have been negatively impacted by hate, fear, prejudice and xenophobia" (Vang et al., 2021, para. 1).

Traveling from story to story, *Our Stories Carried Us Here* operates with a variation in styles, from ornate panels to open splash pages, or full-page layouts, to more simple designs. Sometimes author/author teams use color, and other times the images are presented in stark black and white contrast. The first story, in fact, opens with an image of a cityscape in the city of Aden in Yemen, presented in black and white. Mountains in the distance remind the author of home, and buildings closer to the foreground remind me of places they have been. Only the narrative box, describing the location, and a section of text in Arabic directly speak to the geographic position of the story.

Upon closer inspection, dress and overall design in the first panel on the next page lead the reader into Aden more clearly. From the scope of humanity in visual landscape, the reader travels to a closer and closer view. Images of play appear, and the storyteller's grandmother is prominent on these pages, recalling memories. These visual artifacts of memory are met with violence just a few panels later, as the author recounts: "My sister and I used to go the roof of our house to see the rockets exploding" (Abdi & El-Attar, 2021, p. 7). From scenes of ideal and familial life, the contrast quickly arrives, and the story points to the violence that is experienced around the world.

Visual and verbal representations of refugee experiences can be an emotional and very necessary aspect of lived experience to center in conversation and curriculum. Boerman-Cornell and Kim (2020) have also emphasized *Seeking Refuge: A Graphic Novel* (Watts, 2017) by Irene N. Watts, pointing to the ways in which the author/artist conveyed this refugee story through images that "provide a fitting tone," including struggle and "disorientation" (p. 44). Boerman-Cornell and Kim (2020) highlighted Brown's (2017) work, as well as Colfer and Donkin's (2018) text *Illegal*, noting the ways in which images captured moments of disarray and the effects of war, as well as the difficulties of folx who find themselves trust into this journey. This intersection of lived experience and identity through the affordances of the

written word and figured image contain a multitude of affordances for readers that travel well beyond a singular mode of communication.

POPULAR AVENUES IN DC COMICS

In terms of young adult literature, DC Comics has recently drawn upon the pantheon of authors who work in the young adult genre, including Kami Garcia, Lauren Myracle, and Meg Cabot, to tell stories that appeal to youth, and which include aspects of edgy content and relevant issues that position young adult literature as a viable and growing genre (Ivey & Johnston, 2018). These books are often more organic and realistic in their design and depictions of characters, with supernatural elements acting as additions to the narrative only when called upon by the needs of the narrative. Often, these stories focus on a singular character or pair of characters as part of a larger story structure, allowing for a close inspection of the author's take on that particular superhero.

Sometimes these collaborations result in books that are received with a mixture of response, such as *I Am Not Starfire* (Tamaki & Yoshitani, 2021). At the time of this writing, the book has received a range of reviews on Amazon, including some that critique its central character, Mandy, the daughter of the titular character, Starfire. Mandy is a member of the LGBTQ community, a dimension of her identity that is not a large part of the narrative, and she exists outside the unrealistic boundaries of representation of the female form in comics. A gathering of negative critical reviews outside of Amazon praise the book, while admitting its shortcomings, and point to Mandy as a complex character and to the narrative as a realistic plot. There is a history of complicated and often problematic depictions of feminine bodies in graphic literature (Brown, 2011). The style of *I am Not Starfire* is colorful, bold, and does not apologize for representing a character who necessarily pushes back on gender/body type norms in publication.

One of the salient points of the book, given the slight representation of Mandy's sexuality, is the character's design. Very few such examples exist in the comics medium that portray the female form as anything but statuesque and abnormally thin. Mandy brings to mind the physiognomy of Nimona, the central character of the graphic novel of the same name (Stevenson, 2015). Mandy begins the narrative noting her identity as the child of a superhero and makes a notable comparison to the lives of celebrities.

The author also points to *Nubia: Real One* (McKinney & Smith, 2021) as a text that explores relevant cultural issues in an authentic way. Nubia is an imagining of an Amazonian character who also happens present a Black Indigenous Person of Color (BIPOC) experience, and has been in mainstream Wonder Woman (DC Comics) comics since her first appearance in 1973. In *Nubia: Real One*, the character is given a central role in the story as the main character. Though a hero, Nubia is sometimes perceived as a threat due to the color of her skin, and issues of police violence and questions of the right to protest are part of the book's plot. These elements of the story are woven in and feel like natural pieces precipitated by other events, both from current questions that are explored in society and in the direction of the story.

Characters who are sometimes secondary players in other stories are given more realistic depictions and narrative strands in many of these books, although not every story reaches to this level of representation. DC Comics repositions popular characters in a consideration of timely topics and intersections of identity. This employment of characters to tackle events draws upon the popularity of comics characters, as explored by Warshaw and Cavell (2001), and weaves their story-threads with lived experiences of minoritized communities. It is this play on the popular character and the superhero narrative which moves

these books to the frontline of availability in retail locations, and also affords spaces for new stories to be told, nestled within the folds of narratives that have been spun multiple times.

NATE POWELL AND *SAVE IT FOR LATER*

Nossel (2016) pointed the agency of art as a means of changing thinking, “inspiring us to take on different perspectives and to reimagine our worlds” (p. 103). Comics arguably work in a unique way, presenting a view of reality drawing upon an author/artist’s skills to represent that world in grammatical terms that subsume the visual and verbal. Nossel (2016) then tied this discussion of expression through art to freedom of speech, and noted the importance of reflecting on such freedoms in contemporary context.

Known for the *March* series, this section will focus on the activism/artivism of Nate Powell. Beyond considerations of gender and age, comics touch on a variety of lived experiences and speak to a variety of issues, including race and ethnicity. *March* (2013) by John Lewis and Nate Powell is perhaps one of the most-cited examples of a comic that has gained prominence as a complex work that affords readers the potential for addressing social topics. In this case, the importance of the Civil Rights Movement and the destructive nature of racism form the foundational consideration of the narrative. *Run* (Powell, 2021), the more recently published follow up to the initial story, continues this narrative.

In *Save It for Later*, Powell (2021) presents a narrative that encompasses the 2016 election, subsequent experiences with seeing confederate flags and white supremacy propaganda displayed in public spaces, and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In one scene that was particularly jarring for this author, Powell depicts the experience of going to the grocery store in the pandemic, and the strangeness of this once-normal and weekly routine. Powell artistically renders himself in the narrative, talking with his daughter, who is rendered in magical realistic terms as an inquisitive creature. The book leads from this interaction as a kind of exploration of parental advice, seeking to guide a young person (again, depicted magically in illustration) through a very bizarre and upsetting world of disappointments and dangers. Kuper (2019) spoke of the importance of comics “art that engages with the social discourse,” suggesting that stepping into this artistic process can illuminate both positive and negative elements of stories that are told (p. xxiii).

This author is not certain if these topics are political on their own, or if they are simply politicized in the current context, but explorations of identity, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender can be found in comics through word and image-related autobiographical, biographical, and sometimes fictionalized accounts. Those examples where an authentic voice speaks to the issue are most treasured in terms of the affordance for rich conversation and empathy-building. Such work exists outside of the binary so often produced by limited political formulations and may indeed point the humanity and compassion that is so interwoven into working with literature. In this case, as in many cases, comics qualify as a textual site for exploring important ideas and for positioning stories for a wider audience.

Returning to the source example, Powell’s work is a call to action and the boundaries the author/artist negotiates come through clearly as the role of parent/guide is considered as a central element of the text. The work Powell positions in *Save It for Later* is a narrative recounting of a span of time that captures trauma, anxiety, fear, and future-thinking hope, as well as the importance of the right to protest and be heard. These messages can be traced across the panels of the text and are far-removed from the garish costumed stories of the author’s youth in the 1980s and 1990s; yet, explore possibilities for what it means to a superhero character in more relevant and approachable terms as society shifts and divisions ensue.

THE VOICE OF THE POET IN LONG WAY DOWN WITH DANICA NOVGORODOFF

A number of possibilities exist in transmedial terms when considering the ways in which comics make their way into other media, including film and television (Pratt, 2012); additional questions exist when considering how authors and artists, sometimes operating within a team and sometimes as a solo entity, take the content of other works and translate them to the comics form. In this section of the chapter, the author explores the work of adapting a culturally-relevant story from the pages of a verse novel to the comics form. In order to consider this work analytically and authentically, the author has invited the artist/author, Danica Novgorodoff, to this consideration as a co-author. The author and co-author conducted a discussion via Zoom, which resulted in a transcript. The words from this transcript were then used to form the basis of this section and checked with the co-author prior to publication.

Far from being a one-and-done process of easy permutation, adaptations encompass a number of steps (Tseng & Bateman, 2018). Building on the more complex and adult-oriented work of *Save It for Later*, the comic adaptation of Jason Reynolds's (2017) verse novel, *Long Way Down*, serves as an example of both the verse novel and visual medium. The process of adapting the emotional content of the book was not a simple one; in order to explore this Novgorodoff speaks from first-hand experience on the steps that were taken in adapting the work from verse form to graphic novel/verse form, including the decisions that were part of this creative movement from one medium to another.

The nature of the work as an adaptation led to some initial steps that would have been somewhat different with another project, although Novgorodoff mentioned that the initial step is always the written word in the form of a script. This unity of the written word and graphic novel form undermines the contention that comics are lesser books, and reinforces the idea that these books are textual and narrative from the center of their ontology. According to Novgorodoff, the creative process is:

different with every book that I've done, but I always start with the text, whether I'm writing it, or it's an adaptation. So the first step was to adapt the novel Long Way Down into a script for a graphic novel (personal communication, October 2021).

The author/adaptor then described months of waiting on the publisher to find a voice to step into the process of adapting, and said, "I was like, Wait a minute, I can do this, I'm a writer. So, I adapted it into a script" (Novgorodoff, personal communication, October 2021).

From there, Novgorodoff described the artistic process in translating word to artistic page:

And then next step was character sketches. I photographed models to sketch. This was kind of a hard point in the process. It took a long time to actually nail down the art style and the character sketches. The next step was thumbnails, a very quick sketch of the layout of each page to determine the distribution of text into panels, the pacing, camera angles, and visual layout. The thumbnails are very loose—kind of illegible to anyone but myself. Next, I draw the pencils, which are the tighter sketches that I'll go on to trace on a lightbox. The whole thing is a very labor-intensive process. (personal communication, October 2021)

The artist/author suggested that this process takes quite a long time, undergirding the complexity of the work, even as some critics contend that comics are less complicated in their construction. The

process next involves penciling, and Novgorodoff reported that the *Long Way Down* adaptation was the first time they this was done digitally in their creative process:

I drew my “pencils” on an iPad, while in the past I’ve used paper and pencil. Then I printed the sketches out on computer paper and used a lightbox to add ink and watercolor layers. Typically I’ll ink first and then add color, but in Long Way Down I did several layers of watercolor before adding the linework in ink. In that way there’s a stage where the art consists of abstract color fields (personal communication, October 2021).

Novgorodoff spoke to the extended nature of working in this medium: “I wish I could just churn out a graphic novel a year and be more productive in that way and really publish a lot of books” (personal communication, October 2021). This author/artist mentioned that projects tend to take anywhere from two to four years in terms of work and publishing schedule, and said the experience of adapting *Long Way Down* was one of joy, given the richness of the original text from which the artist was working. There were decisions along the creative process that were made in terms of what to cut and what to keep. In terms of making substantial alterations to the original material, Novgorodoff reported:

I tried to change as little as possible to keep the plot points and the emotional pacing the same as in his first novel. On the first pass I went through and marked with a pencil everything that I loved the most language-wise. Anything that was describing something that could be shown visually, I would cut. Visual descriptions of action can all be shown in the images. I transferred dialogue in verse to word bubbles. But I tried to keep the script as true to the original as possible, even down to the line breaks (personal communication, October 2021).

Finding an initial artistic style at the outset of the project was one of the challenges Novgorodoff reported, aiming for a style that was “painterly, fluid, ghostly, and surreal” (personal communication, October 2021). This artistic style was one that departs from what Novgorodoff called the “traditional comics grid and comic style of drawing” to capture an aesthetic that matched the content of the book (personal communication, October 2021). While comics can stand on their own as texts for classroom consideration, the process described by this artist/author points to the intentional and multi-layered steps from a prose or poetic narrative form to a form afforded by visual modes. In comics, readers can engage with the story through the words presented on the page, but can also navigate the pictorial elements of the story, seeing representations of a range of characters and experiences.

MORE STORIES TO TELL

While there are far too many examples to consider in the space of this chapter, the author recommends further exploration of topics and trends using the following texts:

New Kid. The Newbery-winning graphic novel *New Kid*, written and illustrated by Jerry Craft (2019), features accessibility for younger readers and older readers alike. Craft plays with the affordances of the comics medium, hints at fan culture, and invitingly represents the tensions that can come with growing up as a young person who is African American, along with a sense of Black joy that is not rooted in poverty or urban violence. In *New Kid*, the ways that race and ethnicity shape life are part of the experience, but

this is also a story focused on the main character, including his hopes, his dreams, and his daily life and friendships. Expanding on the love of comics, Craft artistically makes the case that readers should indeed see themselves reflected in the pages of the books they read. The accessibility of the book, along with the complexity of the social and personal issues it explores, make it an exemplary text for classroom use. Craft plays with the expectations of the reader to create humor. Instead, Craft uses the comic medium to simply tell a good story. This author has also explored his personal history with comics (Craft, 2020).

Further experiences of the world. Denying children access to books in which topics of identity, including those represented in this chapter, can be explored through humor and engagement, as well as across a range of other literary and emotional affordances, would be a limitation of the education of young people and a move to erase stories from existence. Examples of comic stories to explore, family and identity include Raina Telgemeier's family narratives, including the 2019 text, *Guts*, in which Telgemeier uses the grammar of the comic book form to normalize experiences of anxiety and healthy steps toward emotional wellness, and Tillie Walden's (2017) exploration of identity and sexuality in *Spinning*. Damian Alexander (2021) has published a text, *Other Boys*, which explores the authors experience of attempting to fit in at a school, and ultimately coming out as a member of the LGBTQ community.

Little White Duck: A Childhood in China (Vera Martínez & Na, 2012) serves as yet another example of the kind of cultural work and personal story that can be rendered in visual form, reaching into the experience of the author, and providing visual renderings of memory and experience. Hart (2018) has pointed to such affordances of the graphic memoir, writing "Everyone has a story to tell. Over the course of a life, we tell so many stories, and hear so many stories over meals, during free time, during work, in public spaces or private" (p. 11), and then explained the unique affordance of comics as visuals that allow for multiple ways of storytelling, comparing them to glyphs and to puppets. The use of images and words to convey experiences also include those that are internal to the author, as in Durand's (2021) exploration of what it was like to deal with a brain tumor and the effects of this tumor on life and memory in *Parenthesis*.

As another example of comics working within yet another cultural experience, Smetana et al. (2009) looked at how comics can engage students who are Deaf in a high school summer class. This use of comics featured mini-lessons focused on building academic language, and attempts at building class discussion. Smetana et al. (2009) noted that a great deal of discussion did not take place, but that all students were engaged in reading. These authors pointed to comics as a textual space where students who are working toward bilingual proficiency, or where students who are Deaf can find visual and verbal ways to construct meaning and engage in literacy practices.

The medium has been explored in terms of its affordances for scaffolding (Clabough 2017), as well as existing as complex artifacts of literacy practice on their own. Humanity is not a singular experience, but one of many strands; quality literature, including comics, can be textual sites for sharing stories to affirm identity and engage in conversation with audience members who need to know more and who need to see the connections to authors and stories within themselves.

Content area connections. The applications of comics reach beyond easy categorization and travel well beyond the boundaries of prescribed content. Although this author once believed that comics were only about superheroes, given their limited interaction with the medium, these books are about and have been about so much more. Through the grammatical features of graphic novels, readers young and old can consider concepts that relate to social studies, science, math, and other content areas (Brozo et al, 2014; Miller, 2015).

Brozo (2013) pointed to the affordances of *Genome* by Andrew Glasgow and JM Schichtel a textual example of applications to science content. *Science Comics* contain affordances for this type of work, as well, and have been the subject of study in the reading/English language arts classroom (Dallaqua & Peralta, 2019). The use of *Genome* in the classroom is the way the teacher in this study shared the text through read-aloud. This text unites scientific content with the comics format to create an inviting literacy experience for young learners, and can be done so through a shared reading context.

Motivation and making. Reading comic books has been shown to be not just an area of popularity and motivation for reading (Bateman et al., 2021; Jones, 2010), but also for steps in composition. In a study of twelve adolescent students from ages 15-17, Hughes, et al. (2011) reported on the ways in which student authors drew on the multiple modes of comics in the writing process, and Connors (2015) has explored composing with comics with educators about to enter the teaching profession. Comics display and draw upon multiple ways of meaning-making, and this is no less true of the potential for teaching processes of composition.

CONCLUSIONS FORWARD

Pointing the way to powerful stories is merely one affordance of the comics medium; these books are popular and have gained wide appeal, beyond the time when this author was a young person, collecting them and viewing the occasional film or television series. The discussion of whether or not they were classroom-approved materials hardly seemed part of this author's personal educational scope as a young person – comics simply were not represented, or at least represented widely. Since their inception, the medium has grown, awareness of its possibilities has expanded, and both authors and stories that were pushed to the underground market have risen to more exposure and awareness among readers. While they are pushed to the margins at times in favor of prose-only texts from specific, canonical authors, there is more to uncover in the efficacy of comics for serving as textual sites for a range of storytelling methods, as well as for engaging young readers and acting as a meaningful text in literacy development.

Moreover, stories from authors who have first-hand experience outside of dominant cultural hegemony have also risen to more exposure, and readers are becoming more aware of these texts. Embracing a wide range of reading materials might be part of the work forward, even as stakeholders and policymakers cling to singular approaches. There is more art in teaching than some contenders realize. At the same time, centering stories of minoritized experiences continues to be important, and the comics medium contains a number of examples, as hinted at in this chapter, for encountering such narratives.

The list of authors and titles that can be explored further continue to grow, and the ways in which artist and author talent are merged in visual storytelling points to the affordances of translating concepts of empathy and humanity, as well as the action-oriented entertainment born by the visual form, visual narratives that might capture the attention of some reluctant readers. While not a cure-all, comics are part of reading life, and policymakers can ignore this reality or embrace it for use in instruction. All of these ramifications might point to the need to interrogate assumptions about what counts as reading, as well as examination of the hierarchical structure that would attempt to lessen the power of some texts.

In the context of traumatic experiences, including those faced by folx around the world, comics can serve as not a replacement for prose texts, but an effective addition to the classroom and personal bookshelf for the representation of culturally relevant stories. What exactly it is about these books that makes them so alluring for some readers bears some further investigation. Suffice it to say for now, there is

something vivid and engaging about the combination of artistic images, bright colors, and text. Beyond their popularity and transmedia appeal, comics can lead to trajectory of literacy experiences for adult readers (Bateman et al, 2021; Botzakis, 2006).

As has been suggested throughout this chapter, comics have the potential to show stories through a series of grammatical features that are unique to them. As the comics field continues to grow, and as cultural stories are presented in relevant and engaging ways, it is this author's hope that the education system can make space not only for the comics medium but for this range of diverse stories to be told. Boerman-Cornell and Jung's (2020) work is an additional source that speaks to this. To deny children access to these books on the basis of either of these elements would be unjust and harmful, and would in effect be the erasure of a multitude of experiences.

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Chapter 2

Creating Culturally Sustainable Literacy Experiences Through Home and Community Connections

Jessica A. Manzone

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6291-894X>
University of Southern California, USA

Julia L. Nyberg

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9687-7285>
Purdue University Global, USA

ABSTRACT

The need for culturally and linguistically sustainable teaching is a call that all educators must answer. Current literacy practices focus on the teaching of skills and strategies through a disciplinary lens with limited connections to students' home and community. This chapter presents a model for creating balanced literacy experiences that honor and value the diversity of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and multilingual learners. Titled the Home and Community Connections Model, this framework provides both teachers and learners with a series of prompts to generate personalized connections to any literacy experience. This chapter presents definitions for the home and community connections prompts, connects them to comprehension skills and strategies, and provides classroom examples to guide teachers in reorienting their practice through the student's home and community assets. Reflective questions and recommendations for implementation are also provided. Therefore, this chapter provides the impetus for creating authentic and culturally sustaining literacy experiences for all learners.

INTRODUCTION

At the start of a graduate class on pedagogy and instruction in the elementary grades, a professor asks

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch002

their students to describe the difference between a successful reader and one who struggles (Manzone, 2022). The graduate students engaged in small group discussions to generate a list of the many factors they believe hinder or facilitate literacy development in young learners. The following is a list of their responses:

- successful readers know and apply lots of strategies to accomplish literacy tasks.
- successful readers have been exposed to literacy-rich homes at a young age.
- successful readers enjoy reading and are more likely to participate in literacy-related tasks.
- successful readers have been exposed to models and other adults as they engage in literacy-related activities.

The results of this exercise highlighted a pattern of deficit thinking. The graduate students neglected to account for students' cultural and communal assets, or the relationship that exists between the teacher's recognition, integration, and value of students' funds of knowledge and how they contribute to success in any learning experience. The graduate students were approaching literacy instruction from a culturally deficit perspective, focusing on the knowledge, skills, and opportunities learners have that align with the school setting, rather than how the community and culture contribute to the development of literacy. They were *missing* the connection to students' home and community assets and the connection to authentic, culturally sustaining pedagogies in literacy development. According to Yoon (2020), authentic instructional strategies must integrate students' home pedagogies and life experiences into organizational structures that "affirm the personhood" of children of color (p. 3). Under this approach, authenticity refers to the degree to which the instructional supports directly align to the needs, interests, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the learners. The authors of this chapter contend that balanced literacy instruction must be built on students' funds of knowledge to create access to literacy skills and strategies in ways that are relevant, responsive, and sustainable to the lived experiences of the students in the classroom.

The construction of culturally authentic and sustaining literacy experiences is not a packaged program or structured series of steps. It is a philosophical belief that can be exemplified in the classroom through a myriad of activities and literacy-based learning experiences. When intentional focus within a learning experience is placed on a student's culture, community, and interests, it increases the equity and access for historically underserved and marginalized populations in classroom settings (Paris, 2012). Culturally authentic and sustaining literacy experiences are anchored by three goals and learning objectives: (a) developing students' positive racial and linguistic identity, (b) increasing students' comfort and knowledge about racial and linguistic diversity, and (c) encouraging students' to recognize and take action against racial and linguistic injustice in the world (Beneke et al., 2019). The development of culturally authentic and sustaining literacy experiences does not happen overnight or in one lesson or learning experience. It is an iterative process that requires teacher observation, critical reflection of practice, the intentional integration of students and their families, and the promotion of social action in the community (Spitzman & Balconi, 2019).

This chapter introduces a model for creating authentic and culturally sustaining literacy experiences for children ages 5 through 18. The *Home and Community Connections Model* (Nyberg & Manzone, 2021; 2022) provides teachers with a concrete and tangible means of activating literacy skills and strategies across content areas through students' home pedagogies and funds of knowledge. The model is based on a twofold premise: (a) that a learning experience created using *Home and Community Connections* gives rise to students' home and community aptitudes, talents, and strengths in a literacy context, and (b)

the integration of the *Home and Community Connections Model* provides opportunities for personalization within a literacy learning experience. The model extends existing research (Delgado Bernal, 2001; 2002; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014; Yosso, 2005) on instructional validation and integration of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The goal of this chapter is to articulate how balanced literacy instruction can be reoriented to directly leverage students' home and community pedagogies using the *Home and Community Connections Model* to create culturally sustaining literacy experiences for diverse and multilingual learners.

Black, Latinx, and multilingual learners represent a significant group of students in schools across the country. According to the United States Department of Education (2020), the population of English learners over the last 20 years has grown over 28%, representing approximately 4.9 million children in United States public schools. Multilingual learners in the United States speak over 400 languages representing rich cultural norms, beliefs, and experiences (Mora-Flores, 2022). Black students represent 15% and Latinx students represent 28% of the student population in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Misconceptions, stereotypes, and implicit bias surrounding literacy development continue to perpetuate a deficit perspective of Black, Latinx, and multilingual learners. Recognition and response to this deficit perspective drive the question: *How can teachers create culturally authentic balanced literacy experiences that leverage students' home pedagogies and promote individual and community identity?*

This chapter is written for classroom practitioners working with children ages 5 through 18. The authors are former classroom teachers and instructional coaches. The chapter will provide a series of concrete examples that connect literacy skills and strategies with the student's home and community. Organized into three parts, the chapter (a) defines the *Home and Community Connections Model*, (b) juxtaposes the use of the home and community connections prompts with balanced literacy skills and strategies, and (c) provides a series of recommendations and guiding questions that any classroom teacher can use to reorient their literacy practice through a culturally sustaining lens. This chapter aims to stimulate teachers' creativity and confidence in creating authentic and culturally sustaining literacy experiences for diverse learners. As a consequence of this chapter, teachers and literacy coaches will be able to:

- reorient the literacy skills and strategies they teach on a daily basis through a culturally sustaining lens
- articulate how seminal comprehension skills and strategies can be combined with home and community pedagogies to shift from a cultural deficit to an asset focused approach to literacy instruction
- define the set of prompts (the *Home and Community Connections Model*) that can be used to move students from an impersonal literacy experience to one that is connected with their lived experiences
- create a culturally inclusive and differentiated classroom via opportunities that allow all learners to make personalized connections to literacy-related tasks

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

A Balanced Approach to Literacy

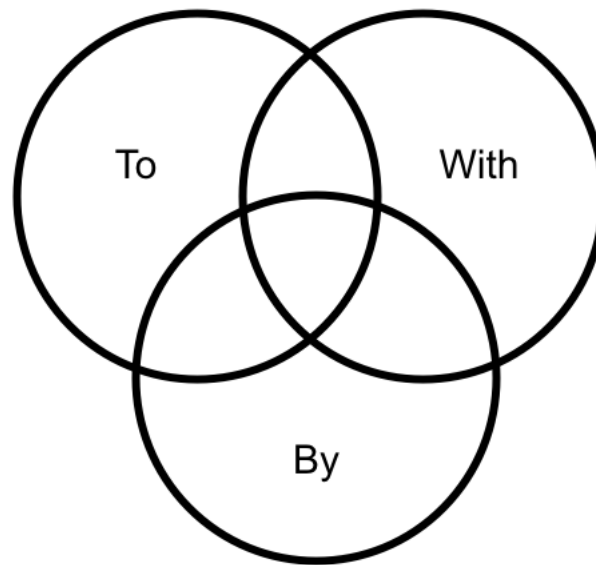
The term “balanced literacy” has evolved over the decades to encompass a series of definitions among practitioners and researchers. Some view balanced literacy as the juxtaposition of whole language and skill-based instruction (Snow et al., 1998). Others use the term “balanced literacy” to explain the interdependent relationship between reading and writing (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). A third group interprets the concept of “balanced” as synonymous with the levels of support provided by the teacher in literacy-based experiences (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Contemporary definitions of balanced literacy reflect a sociocultural perspective that recognizes the impact of the outside environment on instructional practices and literacy development (Fisher et al., 2021; Policastro, 2018). Balanced literacy is a philosophical orientation to instruction that integrates a variety of strategies and supports in connection with students’ home learning environments to make student ownership of literacy the goal of any literacy experience (Au et al., 1997; Connor, 2016; Policastro, 2018). Under this paradigm, the activation of balanced literacy in the classroom is fluid, flexible, and culturally situated. Teachers can implement balanced literacy practices in a myriad of methods that address the needs, readiness levels, prior knowledge, and life experiences of their learners. Examples of balanced literacy practices can include read-aloud, guided reading, and independent reading activities.

Socially constructed balanced literacy experiences should immerse students in stimulating literature while simultaneously allowing them to apply literacy skills and strategies in different contexts and situations (Hudson et al., 2021; Stoetzel & Shedrow, 2021). Mooney (1990) described this process as engaging students in experiences where they are read *to*, reading *with*, and reading *by* themselves. When students are read *to* during an interactive read-aloud, they are hearing the *syntax* as modeled by the teacher, they are hearing the teacher think aloud to *visualize* subconscious reading strategies, and they are making *meaning* by describing the connection to comprehension skills and strategies. When students are reading *with* the teacher during shared reading, there is a shared responsibility for the *syntax*, *meaning*, and *visualization* of the text. In a shared reading experience, reading *with* the teacher enables the student to internalize and develop a subconscious process for reading development. Finally, when the student is reading *by* themselves, they have the opportunity to engage in independent cognitive processes where they are combining comprehension strategies and skills at the conscious and subconscious levels. The figure below highlights the interaction between these three types of balanced literacy experiences. Each experience in the *to*, *with*, and *by* set functions independently. However, when they are used in combination, they form a balanced and differentiated approach to literacy instruction.

The intersection of Figure 1 can translate differently between classrooms and vary based on grade levels and disciplinary focus. However, it is activated through a series of experiences that foster meaning and encourage the application of literacy skills and strategies in different contexts and situations. Some examples for classroom use include, but are not limited to:

- oral language activities that foster receptive and descriptive language
- writing activities that develop the purpose and function of print communication
- thematic activities such as dramas and skits that integrate and extend student’s understanding of literature and literacy skills

Figure 1. The intersection of “To, With, and By” literacy experiences



- art-based activities that promote communication, meaning, and expression through a different medium

Each of these examples can reinforce literacy development and occur *to* the learner, *with* the learner, and *by* the learner. This chapter will focus on *to*, *with*, and *by* literacy experiences that incorporate comprehension strategies and skills for read-aloud, guided reading, and independent reading.

The Home and Community Connections Model

The need for culturally sustaining literacy instruction is not new. Foundational language for the communications, traditions, values, and learnings that occur in the home and the community has historically gone unrecognized by educational institutions. Recent literature (Keehne et al., 2018; Wissman, 2021) attests to the fact that building on a student’s linguistic and cultural resources leads to enhanced literacy learning. As Black, Latinx, and multilingual learners increase in population in our nation’s schools, re-orienting culturally deficit instruction is necessary. Redesigning the curriculum to encourage equitable access through culturally sustaining practices is critical.

- *Culturally deficit instruction* occurs when teachers ignore, devalue, or dismiss the pedagogy from the home or community (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Peck, 2021). Teachers engage in this form of deficit thinking when they do not recognize, integrate, or value what students bring with them from the home and community into the learning experience.
- *Culturally deficit access* impacts the opportunities that students are provided in the classroom and the learning experiences that they interact with (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Peck, 2021). Deficit ac-

cess to learning experiences restricts participation for some learners based on a perceived lack of interest, ability, or readiness level.

The *Home and Community Connections Model* (Nyberg & Manzone, 2021; 2022) is a tool for creating culturally sustaining literacy experiences. Philosophically, the model acknowledges and honors the belief that students bring knowledge with them from their homes and communities to any new literacy experience (Delgado Bernal 2001; 2002). Pragmatically, the model is the recognition and response to students' cultural capital and funds of knowledge through personalized access points into the content. The model uses students' home and community pedagogies as access points to make connections to literacy skills and strategies based on the social, emotional, developmental, linguistic, academic, and *cultural* needs of the learner (Kelly-Howard, 2021). The model offers a tangible way for teachers to culturally scaffold: (a) how learners comprehend information during balanced literacy tasks, (b) how learners express what they know and apply literacy skills and strategies during the learning experience, and (c) how to engage learners in ways that represent their individual and group identities. In short, the model acknowledges the importance of intersectional identities as a scaffold for teachers to "design and implement goals, materials, instructional methods, and assessments that account for complex identities and cultural repertoires their students bring" (Waitoller & Thorius, 2016, p. 384).

The *Home and Community Connections Model* is activated through a series of prompts. The prompts function like a menu of options that allow students to apply literacy skills and strategies through a personalized, home pedagogies lens. They provide learners with the language to describe who they are in relation to their funds of knowledge, their linguistic contributions, their cultural identities, their talent areas, and the value their home and community bring to the development and advancement of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2001; 2002; Gonzalez et al., 2005). Table 1 defines the prompts of the *Home and Community Connections Model*.

The *Home and Community Connections Model* is an authentic and culturally sustaining strategy that teachers of any grade or subject-matter can implement. Examples for classroom teachers to activate a balanced literacy approach to instruction by reorienting "to" "with" and "by" experiences through a home and community lens are outlined below. When teachers believe that students' cultural contributions matter, and use them as a dominant lens in a classroom, they create authentic and culturally sustainable balanced literacy experiences.

REORIENTING BALANCED LITERACY THROUGH HOME AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The intersection between balanced literacy instruction and home and community connections is not new. Decades of research (Au et al., 1997; Calkins, 1994; Moll, 1992) highlight how children's funds of knowledge must be used as the foundation for generating meaning and new literacy learning. Balanced literacy experiences that use home and community connections as the catalyst for learning begin with the strategic and purposeful integration of students' social, linguistic, and cultural wealth. In 1983, Shirley Brice Heath published a seminal text titled *Ways with Words*. Her work argued fiercely that diverse, multilingual learners used language differently and had unique ways of working with words based on their home and community identities. Heath's (1983) research highlighted the deficit perspective that exists in the classroom when children's home literacy practices are not recognized, valued, or infused

Creating Culturally Sustainable Literacy Experiences Through Home and Community Connections

Table 1. The Home and Community Connections Prompts

Prompt Name and Visual Icon	Description of the Home and Community Connections Prompt
Communication Structures 	This prompt refers to the methods, means, and structures that families and communities use to communicate. Structures of communication can include verbal, non-verbal, and written modalities and impact the way that students send and receive messages. This prompt examines how different modes of communication vary between cultural groups and impact how a student participates in any situation or context.
Cultural Elements 	This prompt encompasses the beliefs, rules, knowledge, rituals, collective identities and memories of a family or group of people. This prompt focuses on valuing and recognizing the cultural elements that make each student unique. Students can examine the cultural elements that create the range of diversity in the classroom and world, as well as patterns of overlap between and across groups of people.
Communal Philosophy 	This prompt refers to the intentional variables a family or community shares. These variables can include resources, interest, beliefs, and values. This prompt acknowledges that various communities have different philosophical orientations that impact how they interact with the world. Students can examine their own philosophical beliefs and the degree to which they are similar and/or different from others.
Historical Perspective 	This prompt refers to the influence of time on history; on the culture, heritage, families, and people. This prompt helps to contextualize the treatment of a family, community, or group of people over time. The impact of that treatment at the individual, communal, national, and global level must be examined.
Social Development 	This prompt refers to the relationship individuals have with the world around them. The concept of multiple group memberships is critical to the examination of this prompt. Students are simultaneously members of multiple social groups: peer groups, family groups, religious groups, sports teams, etc. Each group contributes to a different piece of students' social and developmental identity. This prompt also examines the controversies that arise when different social groups have conflicting and competing points of view.
Political Point of View 	This prompt refers to the political affiliations and orientations of students and their families. This prompt recognizes that a students' political perspective is impacted and influenced by multiple groups: their familial group, their peer group, their social media group, etc. This prompt recognizes that how we view and respond to issues is inextricably linked to our individual and familial political point of view.
Artistic Contributions 	This prompt refers to the scope and influence of the artistic works and contributions of families and communities. Art can take any medium, form, or function. This prompt examines the seminal and contemporary relationship between art and culture. This prompt also highlights how art both reflects and projects people and their ideas. It is important to note that this prompt is interested in examining the art created by all people within a community, not just as pieces hanging in museums.
Collective Action 	This prompt refers to the actions taken by a family member or community in service of an intended outcome or objective. These actions can be in response to both internal and external stimuli. For example, a family or community can take collective action to help an ill member, or to rally around an issue of social injustice experienced by many. This prompt examines both the action taken as well as the motives or reasons for that action.

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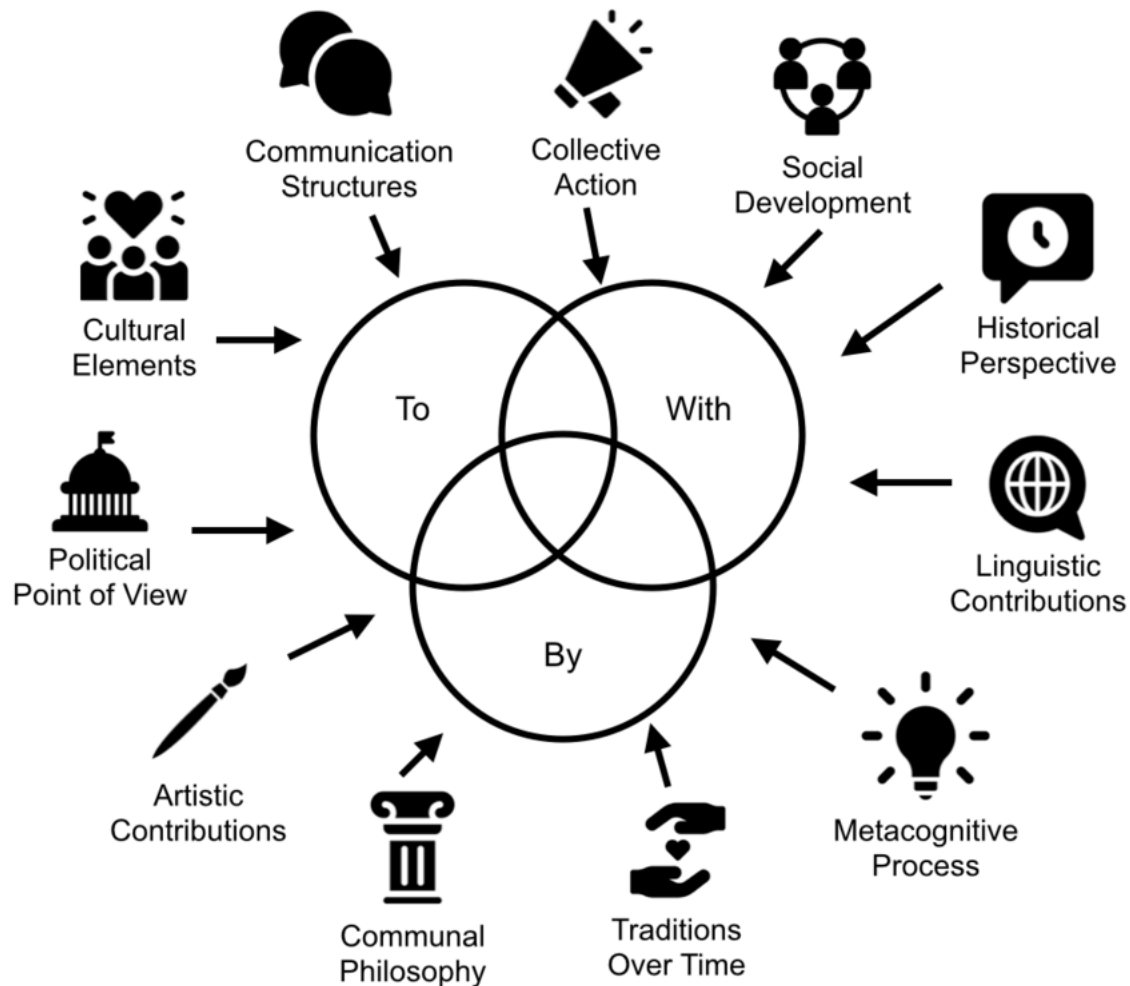
Table 2. Continued

Traditions Over Time 	This prompt focuses on the customs and beliefs passed down over generations between family members and community groups. This prompt examines not only the customs of families, but the symbolic or special meanings of those customs. The relationship between seminal and contemporary family traditions is inherent in this prompt.
Linguistic Contributions 	This prompt focuses on the vernacular, syntax, words, and phrases used by students and their families. This prompt values the language, dialect, and expressions indicative of a specific family or community. Language also refers to the relationship between the home language of the family or community and its uses in various contexts.
Thinking Process 	This prompt refers to the strategies that individuals and families use to solve problems. The integration and juxtaposition of new knowledge with previously learned understandings is a major focus of this prompt. This prompt examines the conditions under which students and their families synthesize and apply knowledge and skills in various contexts and situations. This prompt highlights the idea that different cultures and families solve problems in various ways.

into classroom literacy experiences and activities. This work is mirrored by contemporary articles (Alim & Paris, 2017; Boyd et al., 2015; Kinlock, 2017) highlight how centering curricular experiences around culturally sustaining resources creates authentic learning experiences for diverse groups of students. The prompts of the *Home and Community Connections Model* serve as a tangible resource for teachers to deliberately connect and reorient classroom literacy experiences through students' funds of knowledge. Figure 2 highlights how the *Home and Community Connections* prompts integrate directly into the three components of a balanced literacy approach to instruction.

The integration of the *Home and Community Connections* prompts into "to, with, and by" literacy experiences reinforces and sustains the concept of "community literacies." Community literacies are defined as the literacy practices, skills, and strategies children use in the real world (Honan, 2019). They are social practices that students employ out of the classroom to create meaning in context through different modes and mediums. The following sections of this chapter offer a series of concrete examples that reorient traditional balanced literacy experiences to authentically and purposefully leverage student's

Figure 2. Using home community connections to activate balanced literacy experiences



community literacies. The utilization of community literacies in *to*, *with*, and *by* experiences becomes the culturally sustaining approach to balanced literacy instruction needed in today's educational context.

To: Interactive Read-Alouds

Interactive read-alouds are a classic balanced literacy experience that builds comprehension skills and strategies in learners of grade levels. McGee and Schickedanz (2007) define an interactive read-aloud as an approach to literacy instruction that models higher-level thinking, asks thoughtful questions, and “prompts children to recall a story in various ways” (p. 742). Teacher modeling is a major purpose and intended outcome of interactive read-alouds. Read-alouds provide opportunities for:

- demonstration of fluent, expressive reading
- development of oral language and advanced vocabulary

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Table 2. Inventory sample questions via the home and community connections prompts

Home and Community Connections Prompt	Students Ages 5-10	Students Ages 11-18
Cultural Elements	What stories do you read or tell at home? What do you like about those stories? How do you connect with the characters, setting, or plot in these stories?	How do you connect the stories that you read for pleasure with aspects of your family and community heritage? How do these stories help you learn about your own identity and the identity of others?
Artistic Contributions	What types of art do you see in your home and community? How do the colors and textures make you feel? How do you see yourself as an artist? How does your own art share something about you with the world?	How does the art displayed in your community highlight the culture and heritage of the people? What art is special to your own family, community, and culture? How can art be used in different mediums to convey messages and share stories?
Community Action	What is an issue that is important to your family? How does your family receive information about current events happening in the community and the world? Is your voice heard on issues that are important to you? How can you use your voice for change?	What are some important issues affecting your family and community? How can you critically analyze these issues to determine their ethical issues? How can you take action on these issues to generate individual and community change?

- building of background knowledge by broadening conceptual understandings on a variety of topics and disciplines
- engagement of learners in rich literature-based experiences that increase their interest in books
- connection of information in the text to life experiences
- application of skills such as predicting, inferring, and justifying
- use of puppets and visual aids to develop understanding using multiple modalities
- integration of movement-based activities to engage and extend the literacy experience

According to Lane and Wright (2007), the selection of a text for an interactive read-aloud is the biggest predictor for a successful experience. The authors of this chapter contend that any text used during an interactive read-aloud must be connected to students' home and community assets. This approach to text selection is the fulcrum that moves the traditional practice of an interactive read-aloud into a culturally sustaining literacy experience. Diverse, multilingual learners should be exposed to diverse, multilingual texts (Lucia Osorio, 2020). The specific text selected for a culturally sustaining interactive read-aloud is up to the teacher. However, any text selected for an interactive read-aloud should provide students with opportunities to personally connect to the literature through mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors (Bishop, 1990). A text that provides opportunities for mirrors reflects in the text the identities and diversities of language and culture that exist in the classroom. Window-based texts provide students with opportunities to examine divergent points of view and witness the lives and cultures of others who have had different life experiences. Finally, sliding door texts offer learners opportunities to "step into the shoes" (Fortune et al., 2020, p. 320) of others with the goal of building empathy and compassion.

In order to select texts that offer mirrors, windows, and sliding door opportunities, teachers must first learn about students, their families, and their communities. Teachers can create interest surveys or

Figure 3. Home and community oriented discussion questions

Say	Mean	Matter
This is what you see or hear in the text. How do the words used in the text reflect those of your family and community? What elements of your own culture, family, or heritage do you see reflected in the text? What elements highlight other cultures?	This is your interpretation of what the text or the illustrations means. How does something in the text connect with one of your family or community traditions? How do you interpret the political views in the text? Are they in harmony or discord with your own?	This is why the text matters or connects to you. What issues are highlighted in the text that cause me to take action to make the world a better place? How could I represent my connections to this text through an artistic rendering?

inventories that gather data on families' talents and strengths (Stoetzel & Shedrow, 2021). The prompts of the *Home and Community Connections Model* provide teachers with a tangible means of creating survey questions that elicit these data points and draw on students' funds of knowledge. Table 2 provides a sample of survey questions for different grade level bands that can be created using the *Home and Community Connections* prompts.

Interactive read-alouds constructed using the prompts of the *Home and Community Connections Model* provide teachers and students with authentic and culturally sustaining access points into these conversations. The following example serves as one activity that can be used in the classroom to generate critical conversations as a result of home and community-oriented interactive read-alouds. Allowing a pathway into the read-aloud experience that values what students see or hear in the text (say), what their interpretation is of the text (mean), and why the text connects with them (matter) using the *Home and Community Connections Model* opens the possibility for the text to be a window, mirror, or sliding glass door. When activities such as the one depicted in Figure 3 are implemented as part of a balanced literacy program, they develop the self-efficacy, self-advocacy, and agency in learners necessary to combat the "limitations of societal expectations and perceptions" (Prince & Hayden, 2021, p. 4).

With: Guided Reading

As students progress in their acquisition of literacy skills and strategies, they require more sophisticated means of application. Strategic and targeted instruction is provided through a practice known as guided reading. Guided reading is defined as a "small group instructional context in which a teacher supports

Figure 4. Activating comprehension skills through a home and community connections lens

Comprehension Skill	Home and Community Activation	Questions for Students Ages 5-10	Questions for Students Ages 11-18
Cause and Effect	Cultural Elements 	What are the beliefs of the character in the story? Are they similar or different from yours?	What cultural elements, values, or beliefs contributed to a cause or effect in the story?
Draw Conclusions	Metacognitive Process 	What do you already know that helped you draw conclusions about the text?	Did you draw conclusions about the text from a whole to part of a part to whole relationship?
Author's Purpose	Collective Action 	How does the message of the book make me feel? Does it align with my own sense of justice and action?	What is the author's message in the text? How can you translate that message into action?
Summarize	Traditions Over Time 	How can you connect your summary of the text to a tradition in your family or culture?	How do the traditions of your home and family impact the details you include in your text summary?
Classify and Categorize	Communication Structures 	What words do the characters in the story use? Are they similar or different from how I speak or communicate?	How can you classify the types of dialogue or language used by the characters in the text?
Main Ideas & Details	Social Development 	How do the characters interact with each other and their environment? Is this similar to my community?	How is the character arch in the text impacted and influenced by their social interactions with others?
Sequence	Historical Perspective 	Why is the sequence of the story important? How does this compare with the sequence of a real-life event?	How does the sequence of events in the text parallel something from history?

each reader's development of systems of strategic action for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 12). In this pedagogical model, teachers offer students varying degrees of scaffolded support as they co-construct meaning together. The use of flexible grouping is a core feature of the guided reading model and is critical to differentiating instruction based on student interest, ability, or readiness level. How students are grouped for a given guided reading experience is up to the teacher. However, all grouping patterns should be fluid and dynamic, aligning the needs and strengths of the learner with the texts, objectives, and learning outcomes of the experience (Davis et al., 2019). Small group instruction can be accomplished through the implementation of learning centers, or small areas within the classroom where students work together to explore literacy activities while the teacher provides more directed instruction for a small group during a guided reading experience (Hernandez, 2021; Morrow, 1997). The purpose of guided reading is to provide a bridge between being read *to* and reading independently *by* yourself.

Before, during, and after the guided reading experience, the teacher places an emphasis on modeling comprehension skills during the reading process. The student engages in the practice of these comprehension skills alongside the teacher (Ford & Opitz, 2002; Pressley, 1998). The teacher's perspective is not dominant during guided reading. The teacher and student balance are collaborative as they co-construct

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meaning about the text through their own lived experiences alongside each other. The teacher and student may use the following comprehension skills *before* reading, *during* reading, and *after* reading:

- cause and effect
- draw conclusions
- author's purpose
- summarize
- classify and categorize
- main Idea & details
- sequence

Creating a culturally sustaining guided reading lesson can be achieved by reorienting the traditional concept of a guided learning experience with comprehension skills. The traditional comprehension skills can be rooted in the student's home, community, and culture to make meaning of the text in the comprehension process that is engaged in during a guided reading experience. Bringing a culturally sustaining lens to reading practices integrates critical questions from students' "cultural worlds" that create opportunities for them to use comprehension skills across home and school contexts (Wissman, 2021, p. 565). The *Home and Community Connections Model* can be used to create authentic guided learning experiences that use comprehension skills to (a) parallel diverse texts with integration of the home and community, (b) connect the anchor text to other disciplines or areas of study, and (c) integrate the *Home and Community Connections* prompts into text-based discussions using comprehension skills. In this approach, students are provided many and varied opportunities to apply literacy skills and strategies introduced and reinforced with the teacher through a home and community lens with their peers. Figure 4 provides a set of examples for how a set of comprehension skills can be applied through the student's perspective using the *Home and Community Connections* prompts.

The questions in Figure 4 can be extended on or modified to meet the conditions of the text or the needs of the learners. The essential component of this guided reading experience is that the comprehension skills utilized are partnered with the *Home and Community Connections* prompts. This promotes identity development in relationship to the text and the student's home and community. Incorporating the home and community into the guided reading experience values the assets the student brings as an essential component to literacy development that is culturally sustainable.

By: Independent Reading

Independent reading is the part of a literacy program where a shift occurs between the teacher and student in initiating and controlling comprehension strategies (Lee & Schmitt, 2014; Pearson, 1985). Initially, students apply literacy strategies with the assistance and monitoring of their teachers. In independent reading activities, students become literacy problem solvers who are knowledgeable and comfortable using skills on their own (Lee & Schmitt, 2014). During the independent reading process, the student is reading *by* themselves or in small peer groups. The relationship between independent reading opportunities and students' literacy success is well documented (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Constantino et al., 1997; Liu & Wang, 2015). In this component of a balanced literacy program, students have the ability to self-select texts that are at their independent reading level and aligned with their interests and strengths. Students are able to meet with the teacher to discuss their text, share their understanding of

Figure 5. Activating comprehension strategies through a home and community connections lens

Comprehension Skill	Home and Community Activation	Questions for Students Ages 5-10	Questions for Students Ages 11-18
Ask Questions	Political Point of View 	What questions would you ask the author about the view points presented in the text?	How is the political point of view of the author reflected in the text? How does this view compare with your own?
Make Inferences	Historical Perspective 	How do the events in the story relate to events in your own life? What might happen as a result of these events?	What inferences can you make about how the events in the story impact the characters world view?
Make Connections	Communal Philosophy 	In what ways do your beliefs connect with or overall with that of the characters?	How does the characters connections to their community impact or alter their point of view?
Make Predictions	Metacognitive Process 	How can you use something from your own life experiences to make predictions about this text?	How is your process for solving problems similar or different from that of the main character?
Synthesize	Linguistic Contributions 	What words would you use to synthesize the main ideas of the text? Why are your words be different from others?	How do the linguistic structures employed by the author reinforce the main ideas of the text?
Visualize	Artistic Contributions 	How do you visualize this story? How are your pictures different from the illustrators?	What artistic mediums would your culture and community use to retell this story in a visual way?
Compare and Contrast	Communication Structures 	How do the words used in the text compare with your own and that of your family? What words would you use?	How do the linguistic structures in the text reinforce the setting, plot, and culture of the characters?

the text through discussion, complete writing tasks to reflect on the text, or participate in critique and analysis of the text.

Before, during, and after reading, students engage in comprehension strategies. Students have the ability to independently self-select their comprehension strategy, apply the comprehension strategy, and reflect on its use through direct application to the text. This process requires that learners have procedural knowledge on how to perform the comprehension strategies and metacognitive knowledge on when, where, and why to employ a specific strategy (Lee & Schmitt, 2014). The following comprehension strategies can be engaged in before, during, or after the independent reading process:

- ask questions
- make inferences
- make connections
- make predictions
- synthesize
- visualize
- compare and contrast

According to Magnusson et al. (2018), students need to be “consciously aware of what to do in different reading situations” (p. 188). Awareness increases when students are provided with opportunities to make connections between the reading task and their lived experiences (Wissman, 2021). During independent reading, readers connect to the text through their prior knowledge and lived experiences. Integrating the home, community, and student’s culture into the independent reading experience extends on their comprehension of the text by making associations with their existing schema. The implementation of comprehension strategies is also more likely to occur if the student is able to make a personal relationship to the strategy through a cultural connection (Honan, 2019). Figure 5 suggests how a student would take comprehension strategies and engage them with the *Home and Community Connections* prompts.

The use of comprehension strategies can also function alongside comprehension skills during independent reading, but for the purpose of the examples in Figure 5, the emphasis is placed on comprehension strategies. Culturally sustaining independent reading activities that target the comprehension strategies highlighted above can be implemented in the classroom in a myriad of forms. Common features for culturally sustaining activities that target home and community knowledge include:

- students self-selected use of comprehension strategies to engage in a community-oriented problem of practice or authentic product
- students choice related to avenues of exploitation in the content based on interests, abilities, aptitudes, and strengths
- students synthesis of information from a variety of authentic, diverse, and multimodal resources
- students self-advocacy in relation to a given literacy task or situation

MOVING FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS

Creating literacy experiences through a culturally sustaining paradigm requires recognition and response to students’ home pedagogies and funds of knowledge. This assets-forward approach to disciplinary literacy instruction is built on creating access to the content through a series of parallel pathways. A parallel pathway (Tomlinson, 2014) is conceptually the belief that multiple means within learning exist toward the same objective. The *Home and Community Connections Model* described in this chapter provides a tangible and practical means of creating these parallel pathways. Under this approach to literacy instruction, the creation of parallel pathways starts not with the content, literacy skill, or strategy, but with the home and community pedagogies of the learner. The creation of personalized, culturally sustaining, and responsive pathways accomplish two goals: to respond to the aptitudes, talents, and strengths that students have previously demonstrated, and to create opportunities for the untapped potential to be exposed, uncovered, and maintained. As described in this chapter, The *Home and Community Connections Model* can be explicitly and purposefully aligned with the seminal literacy skills and strategies to create culturally authentic literacy opportunities. The reorientation of balanced literacy skills and strategies through students’ home and community connections creates parallel pathways to authenticity and relevance for diverse, multilingual learners.

There is no one “right” way to use the *Home and Community Connections Model* to create personalized and individualized pathways for learners within a literacy experience. The authors propose the following recommendations and considerations to guide educators in using home and community connections to

Table 3. Reflection questions for leveraging student interests

Teacher Reflection Questions	Student Reflection Questions Ages 5-10	Student Reflection Questions Ages 11-18
What is something I learned about my students as a consequence of integrating home and community connections into the literacy-based assignment? What behaviors and interests were exhibited during this literacy task are not seen during regular curricular experiences? How can I provide opportunities for students to embed their own interests and passions into core literacy tasks? What extension opportunities could I create for students in my literacy tasks that leverage their home and community assets?	What was something I found interesting in this activity? What was one new thing I learned in this activity that I want to continue to explore? How did this activity connect with something that I already knew about? How did I use my strengths to my advantage in this activity? Did this activity help me make a new friend by sharing something we had in common?	To what degree did the home and community connections prompts help me find areas of interest with the task? What new interests do I have as a consequence of my integration of one or more home and community connections prompts? How did I use my home and community connections to capitalize on a strength, interest, or talent in today's literacy experience? How can I continue to use my prior knowledge, interests and talents in future literacy tasks?

build culturally sustaining literacy experiences in their own classrooms. Reflective questions to promote critical authenticity and transfer for both teachers and students have been provided.

Recommendation One: Leverage Student Interests

Literacy-based instructional opportunities must be designed and implemented with the goal of activating students' interests. Studies have shown that children's interest in literacy-based tasks is impacted by the nature, format, and context of the task itself (Zang & Quinn, 2020). Student interest and engagement increase when learners connect with the content in meaningful ways when their curiosity is piqued and the experience honors their uniqueness and allows them to think deeply about their own identity. The *Home and Community Connections Model* offers a tangible means of building and sustaining student interest through intersectionality and multiple group membership. The model allows each learner to find many and varied access points into the core literacy experience in ways that individually leverage their own interests, talents, and passions. The prompts that activate the model provide the catalyst for conversations that allow students to use their own lived experiences to form conclusions and ask questions in balanced literacy experiences. When literacy experiences engage learners using their unique interests, talents, and identities, it builds the efficacy and capacity necessary to develop critical thinkers.

Regular exposure to authentic, interest-based literacy experiences is critical to developing a classroom culture of active engagement and empowerment. Student empowerment is generated when teachers leverage students' cultural capital to create interest-based learning experiences (Bergner et al., 2020). The prompts of the *Home and Community Connections Model* help teachers match literacy-based instructional opportunities to learners' interests and funds of knowledge. Real-world examples, contextualized problems of practice, heritage stories, and the use of diverse literature are a few examples of how the prompts activate students' cultural capital to create interesting and empowering learning experiences. When students engage in enjoyable, creative-productive experiences in the classroom, it increases the likelihood that they will seek out and find these experiences later in life (Reis & Renzulli, 2022). This alignment is key to creating authentic and culturally sustaining literacy experiences for diverse, multi-lingual learners. The following questions can be used to help teachers and students leverage their unique interests in literacy-based learning experiences.

Table 4. Reflection questions for integrating multimodal resources

Teacher Reflection Questions	Student Reflection Questions Ages 5-10	Student Reflection Questions Ages 11-18
How can I select resources that provide access to the content in ways that reflect the diversity and perspectives of my learners? How can I utilize a variety of resources within a literacy learning experience that vary in form and function? How can I integrate community contacts and current events into my learning experiences? How can I provide opportunities for student choice and self-selection of resources in my literacy-based learning experiences?	What do I want my teacher to know about me as a learner? How do I best think and learn? What types of materials do I like to read in the classroom and at home? Did the activity provide me with lots of different ways to read and think about the content? If I could add one additional resource to this activity it would be? Did this activity integrate technology into the presentation of resources?	What types of resources would help me activate the content in ways that align with my strengths and family knowledge? How can I use one or more of the home and community connections prompts to generate meaning from the resources provided? How does the analysis of many and varied resources help me make personal connections to the content and understand its meaning on a deeper level? What additional resources would I add to this learning experience? How would the inclusion of this resource help me make personal connections to the content?

Recommendation Two: Integrate Multimodal Resources

Literacy in today’s educational and social context means more than just being able to read and write. Literacy is about comprehension and meaning, about understanding the nuances of messages, context, and interpretation. Meaning is constructed as students engage in experiences that vary the mode of presentation to include a variety of objects, language, and perception (Eisenlauer & Karatza, 2020). Teaching for meaning requires the implementation of multimodal principles that include the integration of technology, multiple resources, and knowledge of students’ lives outside the classroom (Doyle-Jones, 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992). Culturally sustaining, multimodal resources for literacy experiences should provide students with opportunities to:

- increase their motivation about the content in authentic contexts
- make personalized connections to their own lives
- encourage the individualized application of skills and strategies
- apply what they have learned in authentic ways that benefit the communities in which they live

Discipline-specific information is conveyed through a myriad of modalities and sources. Culturally sustaining literacy experiences must integrate many and varied resources in order to leverage the identities and community assets of each learner. According to Mills and Unsworth (2016), the integration of multimodal resources is critically important in keeping pace with the “practices of communities, professions, and society” (p. 3). The prompts of the *Home and Community Connections Model* provide strategic and tangible opportunities for teachers to integrate authentic and multimodal resources into any literacy experience. For example, paintings, billboards, news outlets, and street art offer community-based compliments to typical literacy programs and materials. These resources should reflect or have the potential to reflect how the learners see themselves, how they demonstrate knowledge, and how they connect with relevant issues within their community. Integrating resources that vary in modality and format provide opportunities for diverse, multilingual learners to connect with literacy skills and strategies in ways that are authentic to the discipline and their community assets (CAST, 2018). The fol-

Table 5. Reflection questions for selecting diverse picture books

Teacher Reflection Questions	Student Reflection Questions Ages 5-10	Student Reflection Questions Ages 11-18
How do the identity representations in my current selections of picture books compare with the home and community identities of my students? To what degree does my current selection of literature or picture books highlight a diversity of perspectives as well as authors and illustrators? Are the home and community experiences of my students reflected in my current selection of picture books? Have I selected picture books that offer opportunities for students to discuss issues of community justice and action?	Am I interested in the picture books that my teacher uses in the classroom? Why or why not? Do I see myself and my family in the pictures provided in my classroom library? Do the picture books that my teacher uses give me a chance to learn about other people and cultures? Do the picture books used in my lessons help me learn about who I am? Do the picture books used in my lessons encourage me to think about issues that are important to my community?	Are the picture books available in my classroom representative of my community and life experiences? To what degree do I see myself and my family represented in the picture books that my teacher uses in the lessons? How often do our literacy experiences connect to larger social issues that are important to my family and community? Do the picture books selected by my teacher value and honor my individual and community identity? What additional picture books could be used that would make my experience more meaningful?

lowing questions can be used to help teachers integrate multimodal and culturally sustaining resources into literacy-based learning experiences.

Recommendation Three: Integrate Diverse Literature through Picture Books

Diverse literature is defined broadly to include books portraying different socioeconomic conditions, racial and ethnic identities, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, religions, cultures, family structures, and abilities (Boyd et al., 2015). Diverse literature refers not just to the diversity of the authors of a text, but how the genre, characterization, and structure of the text itself are reflective and relevant to the students in the classroom. According to Gay (2018), diverse literature is the use of resources that contextualize “content about different ethnic groups’ histories, cultures, and experiences” (p. 152). Fiction, non-fiction, biographies, myths, legends, and narrative books that present factual content are just a few examples of the many forms that diverse literature can take (Manzone & Peebles, 2021). A major source of diverse literature comes in the form of picture books. Picture books are an incredible resource and serve as a great source for authenticating text through home and community connections. The *Home and Community Connections Model* helps students anchor authentic text-based experiences in personal interpretation, and highlights the concept that life experiences are complex and identity-driven. The integration of the *Home and Community Connections* prompts into authentic, diverse picture books creates literacy experiences that:

- activate beliefs, attitudes, and misconceptions about a topic, event, or concept
- bridge prior knowledge, funds of knowledge, and new information
- construct individualized and personalized connections between and across topics and events
- develop empathy, compassion, and a shared set of feelings

Culturally relevant picture books are a critical element of culturally sustaining literacy experiences (Kibler & Chapman, 2018). Diverse picture books provide access to a range of themes and contemporary issues. The *Home and Communication Connections* prompts can be used as the lens by which teachers can validate students’ voices and create inclusive literacy experiences. Through the use of diverse picture

Table 6. Reflection questions for creating authentic products

Teacher Reflection Questions	Student Reflection Questions Ages 5-10	Student Reflection Questions Ages 11-18
How did I extend content area literacy skills and strategies into opportunities that cultivate civic responsibility and social action in my learners? To what degree did I leverage community contacts as mentors in the design and analysis of my authentic products? How can I provide additional instructional time in my classroom for students to engage in self-selected research related to their authentic product? How can I use multimodal resources and diverse picture books in connection with authentic product development?	Did this lesson give me the opportunity to make something that I was proud of? Why or why not? How did my product help me show my teacher and my peers what I know and can do? What is something I learned about myself as I completed my product? How can I share what I made in class with my family and community members? What is one new thing that I learned about the content as a consequence of the product that I made?	To what degree did this product or project problems of practice in my community that I can work to solve? How did this product or authentic experience provide me with opportunities to network with professionals and experts in my community? How can I continue to advocate for and understand the community issues raised as I researched my authentic product? How has my participation in this authentic product helped me to uncover or sustain a talent or passion?

books, students begin to discover their own cultural identities. They learn about the cultures of their classmates, and how one's individual and group memberships contribute to background knowledge and new interpretations of the content. Using the prompts of the *Home and Community Connections Model* to activate diverse picture books builds comprehension, constructs schema, and personalizes the experience for all learners. The following questions can be used to help teachers evaluate and select diverse picture books to create authentic text-based literacy experiences.

Recommendation Four: Create Authentic Products

In the real world, people apply literacy skills and strategies to solve authentic problems that are meaningful, personally interesting, and contextually situated. Authenticity in products relates to the connections between the task, the interests and abilities of the learner, and the features of the content/discipline (Hockett, 2009). Authentic products have several key features. First, the assignment or task is contextually situated in the real world. The *Home and Community Connections Model* provides teachers with the language necessary to anchor any core content experience not only to the real world, but to the culture and community of the learners. Second, authentic products engage students in establishing a plan of action and conducting research. In this stage of the process, students can utilize the *Home and Community Connections* prompts as personalized lenses to research their problem of practice. Finally, a hallmark of authentic tasks is the creation of a product worthy of the discipline itself. These types of products provide students with opportunities to emulate the literacy skills, strategies, and dispositions of practicing professionals in the field (Reis & Renzulli, 2010). When teachers integrate authentic products into disciplinary literacy experiences, they encourage students to reorient the literacy skills and strategies they learned in the classroom to new situations and contexts.

The integration of authentic products into literacy experiences can foster students' creative development in culturally sustaining ways. For example, as educators design products that integrate students' community assets, they become more mindful of the ways that different cultures express creativity (Eddles-Hirsch et al., 2020). Integrating the prompts of the *Home and Community Connections Model* directly into the design of authentic products helps teachers recognize the cultural, linguistic, social, and economic diversities of their students, and encourage their manifestation in the final products. When

students are engaged in the creative expression required of an authentic product, it moves them beyond the rote regurgitation of literacy skills and strategies and into higher conceptual domains of understanding (Blumen, 2021). The following questions can be used to help teachers and students move literacy-based experiences into the creation of authentic products.

CONCLUSION

As children participate in literacy-based learning experiences, they bring with them cultural, navigational, linguistic, social, and cultural capital from the home. According to Paris (2012), the purpose of any learning experience must be to preserve the diversity in culture and language of students to achieve high academic and social outcomes for all children. The learning experience must serve as a means of sustaining and preserving students' culture, language, and heritage. The degree to which the school, teacher, and learning environment value students' home and community knowledge directly impact their level of engagement and efficacy (Kaplan & Mora-Flores, 2021). Teachers must actively solicit learning strategies from the home, strategically construct their lesson plans around the assets and cultural wealth that students bring, and deliberately seek out the talents and potential of these learners (Delgado Bernal, 2001; 2002; Yosso, 2005). This chapter proposed a model for creating culturally sustaining literacy experiences that honor students' culture, create engagement through relevant literature and tasks, and value the knowledge students bring with them from their families. The *Home and Community Connections Model* can be used by teachers and students to see, know, and understand each other as learners and as humans. In the words of one of our third-grade students in the Los Angeles Unified School District (2022), "*see me...know me...understand me...*". The authors hope this chapter has served as a source of inspiration for classroom teachers to *see* their students, to get to *know* their homes and communities and to *understand* how their funds of knowledge can be used to create any literacy learning experience.

In 2019, the National Association for the Education of Young Children stated that classrooms and the world are still not yet a place where "*all children matter and have equitable learning opportunities*" (p. 5). This assertion is exemplified in recent research conducted by Gentry et al., (2019) that found 3,635,533 students were missing from gifted services in the United States. Of those missing, 771,728 (73.08%) are Black, 18,741 (71.53%) are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 1,164,363 (66.41%) are Latinx, and 44,663 (63.25%) are American Indian or Alaskan Native. For decades, students of color, second language learners, and children of poverty have been left out of classes and opportunities to see themselves in the curriculum (Ford et al., 2018; Ford & Russo, 2015; Wright et al., 2022). Diverse learners have sat for too long in programs where their home and community assets have gone unnoticed and undervalued. Where their strengths, interests, and cultural identities were ignored or misunderstood by faculty and administration. There is a dire need to refocus the literacy experiences for diverse learners in ways that honor and leverage their home pedagogies. The time is *now*.

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Chapter 3

From Movie Theaters to History Class: Captain America: Civil War and the US Civil War

August J. Darbonne

Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

ABSTRACT

The Marvel Cinematic Universe has found much success among comic fans and novices alike. Bringing comic book storylines to the big screen has resulted in the public becoming familiar with once obscure characters and plots. This chapter discusses the use of Captain America: Civil War as a form of popular media to teach middle school students about the United States Civil War. Drawing parallels between historical events and the movie's plot resulted in an increase in students' understanding of the concepts of the United States Civil War and allowed students to connect their learning to their lived experiences and develop agency over their own learning. Through this experiment, the researcher developed a lesson plan for teaching the United States Civil War using popular media, which can also be duplicated for use with other historical events.

INTRODUCTION

"Hey, teach, this stuff is confusing. How can the country split in half?"

This was a question from a student that stuck out to the author during his first year of teaching. It was the author's first year living in Dallas, Texas where he was hired to teach Texas Studies. The irony of this was he had just moved from his home state of Louisiana. The author had never studied Texas history or thought of it as something he would study and eventually teach. Nevertheless, here he was, a first-year teacher teaching the Civil War and its effects on Texas to 7th-grade students. Most of these students had very little prior knowledge of the Civil War, and some have never heard of it. This was a significant

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch003

challenge. How could he teach his students about the Civil War and give them enough context of the war on a national scale to get them to understand the effects the war had on the state of Texas?

That first year of teaching was interrupted by the 2020 global COVID-19 pandemic (Decker et al., 2020). With the transition to virtual teaching and learning, the author was forced to get creative in his lesson plans and find unique and interesting ways to keep his students engaged and make the content relatable. This change in lesson plans set him on a path to discovering disciplinary and media literacy. Media literacy is defined as “the ability to access the media, to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media content and to create communications in a variety of contexts” (European Commission, 2007, p. XX). For the purpose of this study, the definition for disciplinary literacy will be:

Disciplinary literacy is an emphasis on the knowledge and abilities possessed by those who create, communicate, and use knowledge within the disciplines [...] disciplinary literacy emphasizes the unique tools that the experts in a discipline use to participate in the work of the discipline. (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 8)

Going into the second year of teaching, the author prepared a lesson plan that incorporated popular media to address the Civil War. Inspired by his love of comic books and superheroes, he used the 2016 film *Captain America: Civil War*, produced by Marvel Studios and part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (Russo & Russo, 2016). In this film, the team of superheroes, the Avengers, is divided over the adoption of legislation that would restrict the movement and actions of superheroes. This plot mirrors the events of the United States Civil War. While not exact parallels, the author could still use the movie to introduce the concept of a body split over legislation and how they might struggle or fight against each other.

This chapter will discuss the methodology used to perform this study and measure its efficacy among students. Using a pre-test, post-test, and artistic presentation, the teacher determined that culturally relevant teaching and popular media increased the students’ understanding of the United States Civil War. In addition, using popular media also created a correlation between historical events and students’ lived experiences, which increased their learning ability (Ning & Downing, 2012).

THE TEXAS CIVIL WAR STANDARDS

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are the standards adopted by the State Board of Education to determine the curriculum of subject areas and grade level (TEKS for Social Studies). Chapter 113 of TEKS outlines the standards for the social studies curriculum (Texas Education Agency, 2018b, 2018b). Because this study was conducted with 7th-grade students, the TEKS for this research are drawn from subchapter B of Chapter 113 of the TEKS outline, which comprises the middle school standards (Texas Education Agency, 2018b). The 7th-grade social studies focus on Texas history and society in Texas. Therefore, the standards related to the United States Civil War include (Texas Education Agency, 2018b, p. 8):

(5) History. The student understands how events and issues shaped the history of Texas during the Civil War and Reconstruction. The student is expected to:

- A. explain the central role the expansion of slavery played in the involvement of Texas in the Civil War;

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- B. identify significant events concerning Texas and the Civil War such as the Battle of Galveston, the Battle of Sabine Pass, and the Battle of Palmito Ranch; and
- C. explain the political, economic, and social effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Texas.

As demonstrated in the TEKS, the standards discussing the United States Civil War are focused on the events of the Civil War in Texas because of the specifics of the 7th-grade social studies standards. When viewing the 6th-grade TEKS, a word search produces no mentions of the United States Civil War, as the 6th-grade course focuses on World Cultures (Texas Education Agency, 2018b). Students in Texas are first exposed to the United States Civil War in the 5th grade. TEKS 5.4D states students are expected to, “explain the central role of the expansion of slavery in causing sectionalism, disagreement over states’ rights, and the Civil War” (Texas Education Agency, 20181, p. 21). Although students are exposed to the United States Civil War prior to the 7th grade, there is a one-year gap in learning about the war. This learning gap about the United States Civil War resulted in lower student retention of key concepts of the war. This learning loss is exacerbated by the lower socio-economic status faced by the students in this study (Vales et al., 2013; Silvernail & Mazjanis, 2015).

Given the opportunity for learning loss amongst students, the teacher felt it pertinent to relearn and review the basic concepts of the United States Civil War, such as the role of slavery as causation and the sectionalism of the United States as seen in the 5th grade standards (Silvernail & Mazjanis, 2015; Kuhfeld et al., 2020). Given the time constraint of also having to teach the United States Civil War through a Texas-focused lens, the teacher used forms of popular media students may have already had exposure to reteach these key concepts. The teacher used the Marvel Studios film *Captain America: Civil War*.

MARVEL’S CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR

Released in 2016 and based on Marvel Comics’ 2006-2007 ‘Civil War’ storyline, the film *Captain America: Civil War* provides an excellent pop culture medium to describe the American Civil War (Russo & Russo, 2016). The plot centers on legislation titled the Sokovia Accords. This legislation is proposed in response to the destruction and casualties resulting from conflicts involving the Avengers. The Sokovia Accords proposed that the Avengers be placed under the jurisdiction of the United Nations and would not interfere or act on global threats until deployed by the United Nations. Seeing the destruction that has resulted from their actions, lead Avenger Tony Stark (Iron Man) fully supported the Sokovia Accords and is backed by several Avengers: Lieutenant James Rhodes (War Machine), Vision, and Natasha Romanoff (Black Widow).

Leading the opposition to the Sokovia Accords is Steve Rogers (Captain America). Rogers, a World War II soldier placed under experimentation by the United States military and created into a ‘super-soldier,’ is all too familiar with having his autonomy in the hands of a governing agency (Russo & Russo, 2016). His opposition to the Sokovia Accords is mainly rooted in the Avengers losing their autonomy and not being able to act when truly needed. Backing him are Wanda Maximoff (Scarlet Witch), Sam Wilson (Falcon), Bucky Barnes (Winter Soldier), and Clint Barton (Hawkeye).

The opinions of the Sokovia Accords cause the Avengers to split into two, with Tony Stark leading the supporting half and Steve Rogers supporting the opposing half (Russo & Russo, 2016). Tensions increase as Stark’s half tries to apprehend Bucky Barnes, who has been framed for many terroristic attacks. In the movie’s climax, these tensions lead to an armed conflict between the two Avenger parties.

However, by the film's conclusion, while Barnes is shown to be innocent because of brainwashing and mind control, the Avengers reunite, but with tensions still present between the two factions (Chang, 2016).

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Academic studies on the comparisons between the American Civil War and Marvel's Civil War have been conducted by professors and researchers since the release of the Marvel Comic storyline in 2006 (Langley, 2007; Erdemendi, 2013; Edlitz, 2014). While very little academic research focuses on the movie *Captain America: Civil War*, using academic research on the comic storyline has lent comparisons from the comic series to the United States Civil War that were included in the classroom lesson. Edlitz (2014) in his chapter 'The Uncivil Debate Within Marvel's *Civil War*' notes that, unlike most narratives that pit superheroes against each other, Marvel's *Civil War* centers around legislation that strips personal freedoms and liberties from the heroes. He compares this to the United States' laws that stripped Africans and African Americans of their freedoms and forced them into the conditions of chattel slavery. Edlitz notes that this comparison is present in the comic storyline and made by an African American superhero, Luke Cage, who is not present in *Captain America: Civil War*. Edlitz also discusses that, much like slavery, something being a law passed by a governing body are not always fair or beneficial for everybody.

Similar to Edlitz's work, research by Max Erdemendi (2013) draws a parallel between the American Civil War and the Marvel Comic's storyline. Erdemendi notes that the dilemma of personal freedom versus personal security faced by those in the Marvel universe is similar to the dilemma of freedom versus slavery centered on the United States Civil War. In both cases, people must grapple with the thoughts of sacrificing personal liberties to better others. Opposing views on the status of personal liberties and freedoms drive the superhero team and the nation apart, leading to major conflicts between the two.

Finally, Travis Langley's (2007) article was utilized for its discussion about the Reconstruction era and the events post-Civil War in the Marvel universe. Langley makes connections showing that, similar to the United States Civil War, the conflicts did not completely die out at the end of Marvel's Civil War. While both sides may have come to an agreement, there are still tensions and conflicts present among the individuals. This tension mirrors the racial violence and government occupation present in the former Confederacy during the Reconstruction era of United States history. While the Civil War was over, tensions were still present, and the 'happily ever after' trope was not present in either reality or fiction.

Despite the similarities in name, Marvel's Civil War has been compared to other events beyond the American Civil War. Growing scholarship compares Marvel's Civil War to the post 9/11 and War on Terror era of United States history (McSweeney, 2018). McSweeney's parallels the extreme measures in the name of security taken in the film's plot mirrors those as seen after the events of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. McSweeney also argues that the plot of *Captain America: Civil War* purposefully permits viewers to take a middle ground position in the debates between Captain America and Iron Man. While the United States Civil War and the 9/11 terrorist attacks occurred over a century apart, the methods used for comparison were still used in this study of comparing *Captain America: Civil War* and the United States Civil War.

Media in Education

While the United States abounds in various forms of media that middle school students have easy access to, such as television, movies, and, most recently, social media, these forms have been notably absent in classrooms throughout the nation (Alvermann et al., 2018). As a result, media literacy education in the United States is not as well used as it is in other countries, contributing to lower levels of critical thinking, student agency, and connections of classroom materials to lived experiences (Kubey, 2003; Tzu-Bin et al., 2013). Using media in education encourages students “to decode, analyze, evaluate, and produce communication in a variety of forms” (Aufderheide & Firestone, 1993, p. 1).

Media literacy in the United States is often incorporated into the existing curriculum and can be used in all subjects, but is mostly seen in English Language Arts, health sciences, and social studies (Stein & Prewett, 2009). Pedagogy and teaching using media began entering social studies classrooms in the later 1990s and early 2000s. Media literacy can provide many uses and benefits in the social studies classroom. Namely, popular media provides narratives of fictional and non-fictional people, places, and events and can often mirror or relate to historical narratives that are discussed in social studies classrooms. Another benefit of media literacy is providing a learning method to which many students have become conditioned. With popular media so easily accessible, many young students’ knowledge of world events and figures comes from various forms of media (Ozerbas & Erdogan, 2013).

Considine (2002) lists the goals of media literacy education in the United States as “protection, preparation, and pleasure” (p. 10). Considine asserts that media literacy can protect students from incorrect and harmful information by teaching students how to critically analyze media for accuracy and biases. Furthermore, media literacy can prepare students with information and communication skills necessary for operating in a democratic society while providing students with the pleasure of consuming popular media.

Media literacy has been incorporated into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies since 1998 (Stein & Prewett, 2009). These standards include the skills of evaluating sources, identifying biases in written and visual media, relating points of view to the historical context and culture from which they are sourced, and understanding the relationship of media to the societies that produce them. While these standards are relegated to the high school level, these skills are present in the studied lesson of the American Civil War at the middle school level.

The author’s primary goal of this study for using media literacy differs from the purposes of Considine (2002). While the teacher does hope to provide pleasure to students, the teacher’s main goals in incorporating media literacy into the social studies curriculum are to provide differentiation for students, provide different materials and modes of education, and encourage critical thinking amongst students by encouraging making connections between popular media and historical events and narratives.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy, first coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings in 1995, strives to connect schools to the home-community culture of students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). While culturally relevant pedagogy studies often focus on differences amongst ethnic backgrounds of students and relationships to the education setting, this study focuses on culture as it relates to pop culture amongst students of this generation. Culturally relevant pedagogy is used in this lesson to connect school learning to the informal learning students’ experience outside of school (Au & Jordan, 1981). By

incorporating *Captain America: Civil War* into a lesson, the teacher uses media that we expose students to outside of the classroom and transforms that media into an instructional tool. This exposure provides students with a connection to their learning and accounts for differences in cognitive style and learning levels (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

METHODOLOGY AND PRETEST

Before teaching about Texas's role in the United States Civil War, the author first wanted to determine how much information about the Civil War students retained from their 5th-grade year. This study took place during the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year. The period of this study is significant because it took place during the global COVID-19 pandemic and occurred during a time of immense learning loss (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2021). Closure of schools and transitions to virtual learning negatively affected students of lower socio-economic status who faced limited access to technology. The study was conducted in an urban school where 96.29% of students were economically disadvantaged, as reported by the school district (Dallas Independent School District, 2022).

The school hosting this study participated in a hybrid-flexible approach, also known as the 'hyflex model of learning' (Lakhal et al., 2014), in which students had the option to learn in person (physically present at the school) or virtually through the district provided laptops and digital platforms (Trail et al., 2020). The hyflex model provided students with the agency over how they would like to receive their learning and the amount of access to their instructor. While earlier research has showed that in-person students in a hyflex model typically performed higher on assessments, more recent research has argued that mode of delivery does not significantly affect student learning (Miller et al., 2013; Rhoads, 2020).

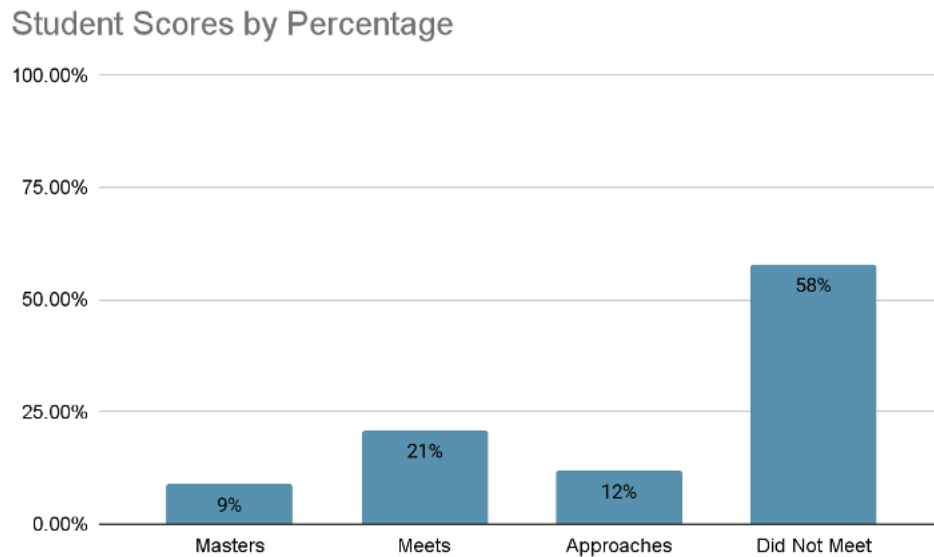
The teacher interacted simultaneously with students in the classroom and students on Zoom. All students had access to the same learning materials and participated in the same lessons. Instructional materials were posted through the learning platform Google Classroom. Virtual and in-person students had equal access to the teacher and could access all learning materials outside of standard class times. The teacher had 109 students, with 74 students being virtual learners and 35 in-person.

Before the lesson began, the teacher conducted a pre-test to determine the basis of understanding the students had about the U.S. Civil War and what information they could recall from previous coursework, which would have occurred pre-pandemic. The pre-test comprised 10 multiple-choice questions focusing on TEKS 5.4D, "the student is expected to explain the central role of the expansion of slavery in causing sectionalism, disagreement over states' rights, and the Civil War" (Texas Education Agency, 2018a, p. 21). Sample questions included:

1. What two sides were fighting in the American Civil War?
2. While many factors led to the American Civil War, what root issue was the major cause for the secession of Southern states and the beginning of the war?
3. Which of the following statements best summarizes the conclusion of the American Civil War?

The test included an ungraded question asking students if they had seen the movie *Captain America: Civil War*. The pre-quiz was administered to students using the All In Learning platform allowing both in-person and virtual students to take the quiz virtually. The students had one 90-minute class period to complete the quiz. Student scores were compiled into data sets of Masters (100-90%), Meets (89%-

Figure 1. Student Scores on Pretest by Percentages



70%), Approaches (69%-60%), and Did Not Meet (59%-0%). Table 1 shows the data results of the Civil War pre-test.

As shown in Figure 1, 58% of students scored between 59% to 0% on the pre-test, showing most of the students did not recall basic understandings of the U.S. Civil War. 70% of students did not achieve a passing score on the pretest. This result affirmed the author's hypothesis of learning loss because of the time gap between learning about the American Civil War and the learning loss attributed to schools closing during the Spring 2020 semester because of the global COVID-19 pandemic. For question 11, 78% of students answered they had seen *Captain America: Civil War*. This last question was critical for the author to know the number of students who had prior knowledge or familiarity with the movie's plot and which students would need to be provided with a summary of the movie's plot during the lesson plan.

Comparisons of the United States Civil War and Captain America: Civil War

As an introduction to the lesson, the teacher played the trailer for *Captain America: Civil War*. In the trailer, students were introduced to the Sokovia Accords, the legislation proposed to limit the actions of superheroes, and the disagreements between Captain America and Iron Man stemming from the proposition of the Sokovia Accords (Russo & Russo, 2016). The trailer also included small clips of a fight scene between the two Avengers factions. Next, the teacher asked students to note what actions, conversations, and scenes they noticed in the trailer that may later appear in the lesson. The purpose of this exercise was to access prior knowledge about the American Civil War and for the students to make predictions on how the movie would relate to or parallel the historical narrative.

The teacher then began teaching a brief lesson about the American Civil War. Utilizing a slideshow presentation, the teacher taught students about the institution of chattel slavery in the American South, the opposition to slavery amongst abolitionists, the concepts of 'slave' states and 'free' states, the opposition and election of Abraham Lincoln, and the cession of Southern states from the Union. These

concepts were taught at a surface level at this point, rather than in extensive detail. However, students were provided with a Civil War review addressing tensions between the Union and Confederate states. Students were then asked to make comparisons between the historical narrative and the movie.

Students drew parallels between the United States Civil War and the *Captain America: Civil War* movie. Examples of student connections include a unified entity splitting into two, in this case, the Avengers and the United States. Another student example discussed how each conflict centered around a political issue on which each side had an opposing view on. Nevertheless, perhaps the most surprising connections students made were deeper than surface-level observations. At a minimum, one student in each class observed that after the United States Civil War and *Captain America: Civil War*, no clear solutions were found and tensions between the two sides still existed. This observation transitioned the lesson to discussions focused on the purposes and goals of the Reconstruction era. This connection displays critical thinking amongst some students and makes predictions on what will occur next in the sequence of historical events.

Another example of students displaying critical thinking is the connection of characters and historical persons who did not fully support either side of the conflicts discussed. Students were taught the concepts of border states, states who supported slavery but did not secede from the United States (Taylor, 2011), and Unionists in the state of Texas (Buenger, n.d.). Although Unionists lived in a state that seceded from the United States, they generally did not support this separation from the Union for various reasons (Buenger, n.d.). Perhaps the most influential Unionist was Sam Houston, the first and third president of the Republic of Texas and the governor of Texas at the time of secession. Due to his opposition to secession and refusal to sign an oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America, he was deposed from his office. Houston's conflict and position similarly mirrors that of Natasha Romanoff, also known as Black Widow. While Natasha Romanoff sided with Tony Stark (Iron Man) in the Avenger's civil war, she sympathized with Steve Rogers (Captain America) and felt conflicted about battling him over this issue, even allowing Rogers to escape after an intense battle scene. Viewing characters who are caught in the middle of conflicts and do not fit neatly on either side instills an important lesson for Social Studies students. Through viewing the movie, students were able to see that conflicts and oppositions are not simply two-sided, but often complex and feature conflicting opinions amongst people involved in the conflict.

Through the use of popular media, social studies students could form an understanding of key and important concepts of not only the United States Civil War but also concepts and patterns of other historical concepts that will later be studied in Texas history. These concepts are:

1. Conflicting political and moral ideologies promoted the United States Civil War, with Northern states opposed to slavery and Southern states reliant upon slavery.
2. Clashing beliefs centered on the legality of slavery and personal liberties caused intense conflict between varying factions in the United States.
3. Supporting the Confederacy was widespread in Texas, though a minority of Texans supported the Union.
4. Fighting in Texas occurred as part of the larger conflict, as seen in the Battles of Sabine Pass, Galveston, and Palmito Ranch, all of which occurred in Texas.
5. Following the conclusion of the United States Civil War, there was no cessation of tensions or conflicts surrounding enslavement and the social beliefs of the position of African Americans in United States society.

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These concepts, directly and indirectly, parallel the events of *Captain America: Civil War* such as:

1. The Avengers have differing views over the Sokovia Accords, legislation that would limit their actions as superheroes. Differences of opinion over the legality and morality of the Sokovia Accords lead to a split amongst the team.
2. The debates over the Sokovia Accords center on the personal liberties of individual superheroes as humans and citizens and the public safety of those around them.
3. While most of the Avengers were clearly aligned with either side, some characters were caught in the middle of the conflict, sympathizing with both sides.
4. Various fights, such as the fight scene at the airport and the fight scene between Tony Stark (Iron Man) and Steve Rogers (Captain America), comprise the larger conflict.
5. After the Avenger's Civil War, all conflicts and issues were not neatly settled, such as Bucky Barnes (Winter Soldier) still facing brainwashing manipulation and Natasha Romanoff going into hiding.

By utilizing cultural literacy and incorporating popular media into the classroom lesson, students were able to successfully learn key concepts of the United States Civil War and grasp concepts of conflicts that can be applied to other historical conflicts that will be studied throughout the Texas studies course and future history courses. A post-test and scores measured students' progress in comparison to the pre-test scores acquired before the lesson began.

Post-Test Measurements

After a week of two 90-minute class periods, each class was given a post-test. This post-test aimed to measure students' growth in understanding the key concepts of the United States Civil War and the political, economic, and social effects of the United States Civil War on Texas. The post-test consisted of four multiple-choice questions and five open response questions for ten questions, matching the pre-test. Including open response questions in place of multiple-choice questions avoided false-positive measurements because of random guesses. By providing all multiple-choice questions, students had a 25% chance of guessing the correct answer, while open response questions required students to provide their answers using previous background knowledge. In total, 98 students took the post-test. Of the 98, 68 were virtual learners, while the other 30 took the post-test in person.

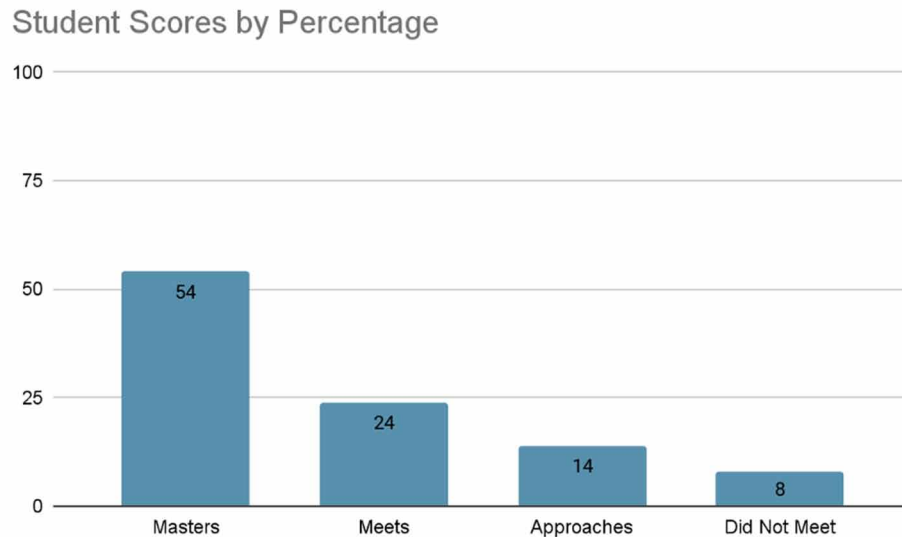
The post-test results showed students received the benefits of cultural literacy learning. Using the same standards measurements of Masters (100%-90%), Meets (89%-70%), Approaches (69%-60%), and Did Not Meet (59% and below). The results of the post-test are shown in Figure 2.

As the chart demonstrates, the number of students who passed had a growth of 48% with 70% being at benchmark. This shows improvement in students' understanding of the United States Civil War. This study used media literacy to facilitate drawing connections between popular media and historical narratives and ensured students understood the basic concepts of the United States Civil War.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER STUDIES

This teacher's lesson on the American Civil War shows the benefits of media literacy in a social studies classroom (Alvermann et al., 2018). Facing students who had very little knowledge of the American

Figure 2. Student Scores on Post-Test by Percentage



Civil War as measured by a pre-test, the teacher improved his students' understanding of the American Civil War before teaching how the war specifically affected the state of Texas. By using Marvel Studio's *Captain America: Civil War*, the teacher could increase students' understanding of the basic concepts of the American Civil War by using a form of popular media. Students could draw parallels between the movie and the historical narrative. Having background knowledge of the plot of *Captain America: Civil War*, the students had a base to form their understandings of the concepts of the American Civil War.

Many factors of this study can be recreated by other social studies teachers or teachers of other disciplines. It is crucial to note that this study was conducted during the COVID-19 global pandemic, which resulted in the school setting being a 'hyflex' model, with both in-person and virtual students. This study should be conducted with all in-person students to record if similar results are produced or if the learning success rate increased because of more student engagement (Lakhali et al., 2014). Lack of technology, such as reliable internet connection, resulted in some students missing parts or all of the lessons on the Civil War.

Another variation of this study could occur with comic books in place of a movie adaptation of a comic book storyline. Implementing comic books can increase literacy and encourage reading among students of all ages (Rapp, 2011). Various skills essential for Social Studies and English Language Arts can be taught and practiced by incorporating comic books into classroom lessons. Students can learn to infer future events through comics based on the graphics provided. Additionally, students learn how to differentiate and compare sources when using comics and popular media adaptations, such as movies and television shows. Along with historical narratives, comic books can also teach past and present social issues (Decker & Castro, 2012; Facciani, Warren, & Vendemia, 2015).

While the author of this chapter has found success with this study, other educators are encouraged to recreate and adapt this study in social studies and other disciplines and measure the results through pre and post-tests. Educators can incorporate differentiation by implanting project-based assessments

instead of multiple-choice quizzes to measure learning. Educators are also encouraged to duplicate this study while utilizing different delivery modes such as traditional or fully remote. Adaptation of this study with a different mode of delivery can support research that shows that the delivery mode significantly impacts teaching (Miller et al., 2013; Rhoads, 2020).

Teacher Resources

Teachers can use the below lesson plan to incorporate this research into their pedagogy when teaching about the United States Civil War. While this research occurred in a 7th grade Social Studies course, we can adapt the lesson plan for any grade level and other disciplines. The lesson plan in Table 1. will also need to be adapted to fit state and local standards and curricula.

Teachers are also invited to duplicate this lesson design for teaching other historical events and issues while utilizing comic book storylines and movies. One commonly used example supported by scholarship is Marvel Comic's X-Men (Hiatt, 2018), where parallels have been drawn between two main characters of the X-Men universe and two influential leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. Professor Xavier, leader of the X-Men and advocate for peace between superpowered mutants and humans, is often in conflict with Magneto, a metal-controlling mutant who believes in mutant superiority and defense at all costs of mutants from the discrimination and violence often dispensed by humans. These two figures are often compared to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s missions and methods and his non-violence activism, and how Malcolm X often found himself at odds with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. because of his radical ideals and strident defense of African Americans against attacks.

The X-Men storyline could also teach about discrimination and segregation. The superpowered mutants featured in the X-Men are often discriminated against by humans, who fear mutants and the potential for evil their powers give them. Those whose mutations cause physical deformities are often relegated to living in the sewers. This specific subplot can teach students about the system of redlining and segregation. Using the X-Men storyline, especially focusing on the discrimination faced by mutants and the various responses in the struggle for mutant equality, can be used by educators to teach about the United States Civil Rights Movement.

Just as the Civil Rights Movement directly inspired the X-Men, later historical events in United States history have inspired comic book storylines (Ciampaglia, 2021; Erdemendi, 2013; Edlitz, 2014). Erdemendi (2013) and Edlitz (2014) draw parallels between Marvel's *Civil War* comic storyline and the USA PATRIOT Act, signed by President George W. Bush in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In both instances, debates over the legality of sacrificing personal freedoms for greater public safety and security divide the country. Specifically, teachers can focus on the subplot of the 'Superhero Registration Act,' in which individuals with superhuman abilities must register with the United States government and have their actions and movements monitored and regulated by the government.

While just a few examples are provided above, educators are encouraged to explore comic storylines to discover great examples and parallels of the content they teach in the classroom. Teachers should also communicate with their students to gather their interest in superheroes and comic storylines. Research shows that student ownership and agency increase understanding of concept goals, increase student participation, and improve student achievement overall (Chan et al., 2014). By learning and including the superheroes that students are most connected to in lessons and learning, teachers can facilitate personal connections between students and their learning to increase student achievement.

Table 1. Teacher resources and planning

Learning Objective	The student will be able to explain the events and concepts of the United States Civil War, such as the role of slavery as a cause of the war, the secession of Southern states, and ongoing debates and differences after the conclusion of the war.
Essential Questions	What political and social issues led to the beginning of the United States Civil War? What political, economic, geographic, and social differences provided advantages and disadvantages to each United States Civil War faction? What political and social issues remained after the conclusion of the United States Civil War? What political, economic, geographic, and social impact does the United States Civil War have on our modern day?
Academic Vocabulary	Civil War, Union, Confederacy, Secession, blockade, agricultural economy, industrial economy, state's rights, abolish, sovereignty
Demonstration of Learning	Students will take a 10-question multiple-choice quiz covering the key concepts of the United States Civil War, including the role of slavery as a cause for the war, the secession of the Southern states, and ongoing debates and differences after the conclusion of the war. Students will score a passing rate of 80% or higher
Supplies	Civil War map, <i>Captain America: Civil War</i> movie, Comparison graphic organizer, Civil War photographs, Civil War soldier diaries
Structure	The teacher should measure student's prior knowledge of the United States Civil War by utilizing a pre-test. While this study opted for a multiple-choice assessment, teachers are encouraged to adapt methods that are best for their classroom and student population. After measuring for prior knowledge, the teacher should then show students <i>Captain America: Civil War</i> . The option of showing the entire movie or clips will be at the discretion of the teacher when allocating for the time of lesson. If time does not allow for the entire movie, the teacher should focus on clips that showcase the proposal of the Sokovia accords, the conflict between Ironman and Captain America, the fight scene at the airport, and the conclusion showing the two factions going separate ways and Captain America and his allies still being considered fugitives. The teacher will then teach concepts about the United States Civil War, focusing on local and state standards. To demonstrate their learning, students will draw parallels between the plot of <i>Captain America: Civil War</i> and the concepts of the United States Civil War they learned. Special attention should be drawn to the political debates over the legality of slavery, the secession of Southern states, political and military leaders of the Union and Confederacy, and the conclusion of the United States Civil War and beginning of the Reconstruction era. Teacher will address any misconceptions or misunderstandings. Teacher should encourage students to make predictions about the Reconstruction era and what issues the United States will still have, using the movie plot as a basis for their estimates. Finally, the teacher will conclude with a post assessment, such as a multiple-choice quiz, or in a format best fit for their classroom and student population.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Teaching curriculum, instruction, and practices that relates to the culture and lived experiences of the students receiving the instruction.

Marvel Cinematic Universe: A film franchise produced by Marvel Studios based on their superhero comic books.

Popular Media: Methods of media and media content easily accessible to a wide audience, spanning geographic and socioeconomic realms. Examples include movies, music, and social media apps.

United States Civil War: Spanning from 1861-1865, this war occurred between Northern states and Southern states of the United States. The main issue causing the civil war was the legality of slavery in the United States.

Chapter 4

Fostering Critical Disciplinary Literacy in Secondary Content Classrooms

Salika A. Lawrence

The College of New Jersey, USA

Tiffany Labissiere

New York City UFT Teacher Center, USA

Katherine De Oliveira

The College of New Jersey, USA

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study used a theoretical framework grounded in the intersection of 21st century learning, critical literacy, and disciplinary literacy to examine how a high school science and math teacher selected and used texts in her classroom. Data from a semi-structured interview, instructional materials, and student work samples were analyzed. Inductive content analysis generated themes about discipline-specific practice and strategies that cut across both content areas. Results suggest that texts in content classrooms can be used to foster critical disciplinary literacy skills that build upon students' outside-of-school interests and their use of technology.

INTRODUCTION

As citizens of the twenty-first century, we are inundated with digital texts daily. Technology has reframed access to information, ways of communicating, and redefined the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom. This proliferation of technology and multimodal texts raise considerations for students' literacy and content instruction in secondary classrooms, specifically how students gain access to content and the ways they can demonstrate their learning. In this context, it is important to understand teachers' instructional choices and the kinds of literacy strategies that can be enacted in content classrooms because

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch004

our knowledge of theories and perspective of how frameworks can be employed in practice continues to evolve (Adams & Pegg, 2012).

Although many secondary content teachers do not perceive themselves as reading/literacy teachers (Hurst & Pearman, 2013) they perform a balancing act to support students' multiple literacy skills and their content knowledge acquisition. O'Byrne et. al. (2021) points out that the recent increased focus on content area reading and disciplinary literacy indicates the need to better assess teachers' knowledge and ability to foster literacy skills in the discipline to identify potential areas for professional development to better support middle and high school teachers. A teacher's attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy can shape their instructional actions, which can have significant implications for students' academic achievement (Gay, 2013; O'Byrne et. al., 2021). Therefore, educators should consider ways to support all students, so they reach their potential in mainstream classrooms by understanding how practices need to evolve to support twenty-first-century learners. Over the past two decades, discussions about secondary literacy instruction have transitioned from teaching content area reading to using discipline-specific lenses to foster close reading and analysis of complex texts and helping students use various sources for critical inquiry, text production, and arguments in content classrooms (Brozo, Moorman, Meyer, & Stewart, 2013; Fisher & Frey, 2014, 2015, 2016; Gutierrez de Blume, Katz, & Bass, 2021; Lawrence & Labisiere, 2017; Rainey, Maher, Coupland, Franchi, & Moje, 2017; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, 2012). This increased focus on literacy practices within a discipline has signaled the need for more reports about how teachers embed this practice within a broader discussion about teaching for social justice. More research that examines how content teachers use disciplinary literacy to approach teaching can increase understanding of the ways teachers use students' experiences to enhance the curriculum to address social issues, how teachers build relationships with students to support their academic achievement and empowerment, and how teachers facilitate ways for students to ask questions and engage in social action (Comber, 2015; Dover, 2009; Duncan-Andrade, 2005; Grysko, & Zygouris-Cor, 2019; Hawley, Crowe, & Mooney, 2016; Marciano & Warren, 2019; Williams, 2020; Woodrow, 2018; Yang, 2009).

Increasing academic expectations in content classrooms have shifted curriculum, teaching, and learning in secondary classrooms by integrating literacy-based experiences across subject areas along with opportunities for students to apply content knowledge to real-world situations that link math and science (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010; National Research Council, 2012; New York State Department of Education, 2017). Across subjects, teachers support students' academic development and their proficiency to make arguments, conduct research, and analyze information from multiple sources. The introduction of digital texts in the classroom provides students with the chance to investigate what true information looks like by adopting critical literacy practices like examining issues from different points of view, identifying bias from the author, making an inference on the intended audience and who is left out, and conducting research to understand the impact of events in different contexts. When engaging in these practices experts across disciplines interact with various texts, which are usually primary sources and artifacts, to draw conclusions and try to solve real problems.

Understanding teachers' instructional decision-making can inform us about the contextual factors that influence the academic outcomes of students. This chapter describes a case study of a high school teacher. The study examined the teacher's classroom practices in two contexts, science and math, to understand how disciplinary literacy was enacted in the classroom and to document the approaches used to foster students' critical literacy skills. The following questions guided the research:

1. What approaches does the teacher use to foster students' disciplinary literacy skills?
2. What kinds of texts does the teacher use and how are these texts used to engage students in critical conversations about social issues?

The chapter provides an overview of the connections between disciplinary literacy and critical literacy by explaining how this framework transforms content area teaching in today's classrooms. Then a description of the research methods and findings are presented to describe how one teacher employs this approach in the classroom. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications for future research and practices in twenty-first-century classrooms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Project-Based Learning Prepares Students for 21st-Century College and Careers

Preparing students for 21st-century jobs goes beyond content knowledge. A 2018 report from America Achieves Educator Networks stated, "that over the next decade, demand for social and emotional and higher cognitive skills is expected to grow significantly, along with demand for technical skills" (p. 55). Therefore, more emphasis should be placed on strategies that help prepare students to work across industries in their future careers that require problem-solving and good communication skills. America Achieves Educator Networks (2019) asserts "project based learning, if planned deliberate, can be an important lever in developing a range of career readiness skills" (p. 56-57). Project-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered instructional approach that uses projects to improve student engagement, teamwork and collaboration, and academic outcomes (Achieves Educator Networks, 2019; Anderson, 2010; Aristidou, 2020; Munakata & Vaidya, 2015).

There are numerous benefits for student collaboration, problem-solving, motivation and engagement, and management skills when PBL is used in college-level content courses such as physics, biology, and math (Aristidou, 2020; Elsamanoudy, Al Fayed, Alamoudi, Awan, Bima, Ghoneim, & Hassanien, 2021). However, it appears that PBL academically benefits the content knowledge acquisition of middle and high school students while it can be debated whether similar outcomes can be achieved in college content classrooms such as math where students are learning to solve problems using advanced mathematical concepts (Aristidou, 2020) vs biology courses where students apply knowledge to solve real-world discipline-specific problems (Elsamanoudy, Al Fayed, Alamoudi, Awan, Bima, Ghoneim, & Hassanien, 2021). For example, a study where middle school science teachers used a PBL curriculum for students to study climate change by monitoring the power and energy output in their homes found that students improved their science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) literacy and science content knowledge (Knezek & Christensen, 2020). In contrast to college content classrooms, in K-12 classrooms, rather than teaching subjects in isolation, PBL fosters active learning by allowing students to have the choice, voice, and opportunity to integrate subject matter knowledge while exploring real-world problems that interest them (Achieves Educator Networks, 2019; Revelle, Wise, Duke, & Halvorsen, 2019; Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020; Smith, 2018). Through a PBL approach, learning is also more relevant and personalized to the student because the curriculum is adapted to include students' voices and interests (DeMink-Carthew & Olofson, 2020). When using the PBL method, the teacher's role is to create space

for students to have the choice in the direction of their learning; teachers guide, provide resources to scaffold and facilitate learning (Aristidou, 2020; Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020). In many math and science classrooms today, older students are using various digital and technology tools such as simulations, videos, QR codes, Padlets, photographs, and artwork to enhance their learning and demonstrate what they know in creative ways (Munakata & Vaidya, 2015; Smith, 2018). The authenticity of the project helps students think about how they can communicate what they know to different audiences (Revelle, Wise, Duke, & Halvorsen, 2019).

The PBL approach is an immersive experience that allows students to use disciplinary literacy skills that help them think like experts, use the discourse and vocabularies of experts in the field, and use different tools for information, problem-solving, and communication (Elsamanoudy, Al Fayez, Alamoudi, Awan, Bima, Ghoneim, & Hassanien, 2021; Welsh, Brock, Robertson, & Thrailkill, 2019). Using authentic disciplinary literacy skills helps students learn how to synthesize a plethora of texts through critical thinking and discipline-specific practices that can be honed across grades starting in elementary classrooms so students learn how to integrate subjects such as science, writing, and history, and their ability to analyze multiple sources and texts from historical contexts (Juel, Hebard, Haubner, & Moran, 2010; Popp & Hoard, 2018; Welsh, Brock, Robertson, & Thrailkill, 2019). Students are also able to engage with a broad range of texts to foster their critical awareness of social issues in the world around them (Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020). As students move up the grades these skills help learners to develop frameworks, processes, and lenses that inform their objectivity because we are shaped by our experience and social positionality (Dyches & Gunderson, 2020). Developing students' objectivity, critical thinking, and analytical skills can help students begin to closely examine social inequities in society. Dyches and Gunderson (2020) suggest that students need "discipline-specific training in disciplinary deconstruction to both comprehend the text *and* [original italics] the power structures the text reifies and perpetuates" (p. 379). In their recent study, Dyches and Gunderson (2020) describe how critical disciplinary literacy skills were fostered through a unit in a U.S. History/American Literature course unit where students examined Supreme Court cases while working with a real judge who guided class discussions and analysis of the Court's decisions, which helped students to develop their questions about the facts, language used, and local laws. This kind of close analysis of real-world text "helped students begin to recognize the powerful role language player in judiciary writings" (Dyches & Gunderson, 2020, p. 384).

Supporting Critical Disciplinary Literacy in Twenty-First Century Classrooms

Given the current information-rich, digital world students use multi-modal texts and tools to collaborate, create, think critically, and communicate (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2019). To hone students' skills in these areas, teachers need to provide opportunities for students to work with peers from diverse backgrounds and experiences, foster opportunities for students to problem-solve real-world issues and create space in the curriculum for students to share their knowledge with different audiences using various communication tools. Although teachers have always played a critical role in cultivating a classroom culture that can either support or disengage students in academic spaces, today digital tools can influence students' interactions, empower them by providing a platform to share their perspectives, or help foster a sense of belonging, community-building, and trust in virtual spaces where they might otherwise be silenced. One challenge facing educators is that traditional assignments and content topics dominate the curriculum with few opportunities for alternative ways for students to express themselves

and use a broad range of literacy practices within secondary classrooms (Johnson, 2018; O’Byrne, 2021; Welsh, Brock, Robertson, & Thrailkill, 2019).

Critical disciplinary literacy builds upon foundational skills within content areas to allow students to apply their knowledge to real-world inquiries. Given the uniqueness of several subject areas, namely the specific vocabularies as well as the ways of reading and communicating dominant ideas, critical disciplinary literacy emphasizes the skills students need to be able to deconstruct, analyze text, and raise questions about overlooked perspectives and voices within the disciplines to critique society from a discipline-specific perspective (Dyches, 2018; Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020). O’Byrne, et. al. (2021) explained

In disciplinary literacy, the goal is not necessarily for history students, for example, to learn a host of content-neutral reading comprehension strategies. Instead, the goal is that history students will learn to think and act like historians- which necessarily entails learning to read and write as historians do. (p. 65)

For example, in their research, Wilson-Lopez, Strong, and Sias (2017) examine how high school students examined the way engineering, accessible design, and product development in their local community marginalize some groups, particularly individuals from historically marginalized groups and people with disabilities. During the research “high school students ... adopted the text analyst stance when they read case studies, often taken from news reports, which described the development and consequences of different technologies” (Wilson-Lopez, Strong, & Sias, 2017, p. 239). Similarly, Parmentier, Van Acker, Saldien, and Detand (2021) describe a project-based assignment where students developed their products that better meet the needs of the user including children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Students were able to use creative problem solving to identify solutions, address design flaws that might be problematic for potential users of products, and create user-friendly prototypes (Parmentier, Van Acker, Saldien, & Detand, 2021).

Critical disciplinary literacy (CDL) is a framework that conceptualizes the skills students need to be able to closely examine, analyze, critique, and question text within a subject area and create their texts reflecting the practices and discourse of experts in the field. CDL draws upon the practices of project-based learning, which is a constructivist approach to student-centered learning that emphasizes “the importance of honoring the knowledge, interests, and experiences that students bring to the classroom” (Revelle, Wise, Duke, & Halvorsen, 2019, p. 698). An important part of supporting students as learners today is fostering their agency and ownership to “add their voices and experiences to discourses that show up in their academic learning” (Johnson, 2018, p. 311). Students benefit from opportunities to create texts that demonstrate their content knowledge and perspective on various topics, experiences where they can share their work with different audiences as well as receive feedback and explore issues that were previously marginalized or absent from the curriculum (Johnson, 2018; Shand & Konza, 2016; Welsh, Brock, Robertson, & Thrailkill, 2019).

Teachers should strategically select texts that will help students make meaning through personal connections by integrating their own beliefs and attitudes (Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020). To do so students need access to

texts that offer multiple perspectives, offer different formats to study, and ask students to question more traditional textbook information encourage a critical lens for learning and place value on minority or

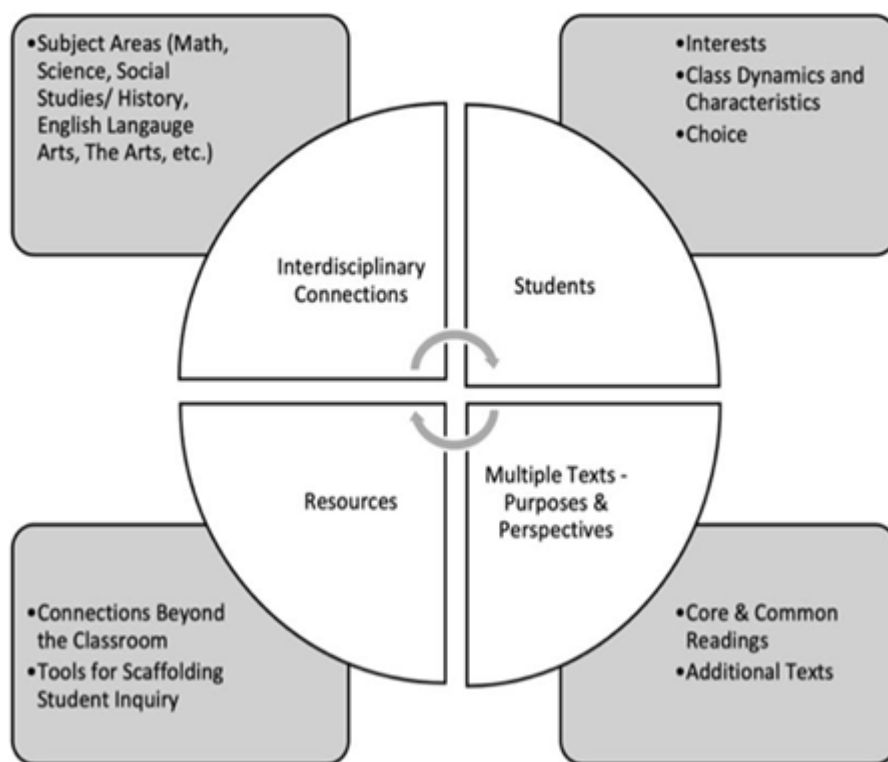
less-focal viewpoints...text selection becomes a balance of choosing information that supports multiple perspectives and offers students a variety of formats to study (Colwell, 2018, p. 632).

Text selection requires time, research and knowledge of the texts and practices in the discipline to plan lessons accordingly (Colwell, 2018; Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020). The prevalence of technology in the twenty-first century creates opportunities for implementing digital content in classrooms. Today's classrooms are populated by digital natives who are proficient with digital communication tools including personal technological devices used to communicate with various audiences over the Internet through social media and software applications (APPS). Therefore, incorporating digital tools like Twitter into a classroom affords students unique comfortability to communicate with their peers. In an action research case study exploring the unpreparedness of youth to address problematic and potentially offensive texts, Kunnath and Jackson (2019) found that using Twitter as an instructional tool in an AP English Language and Composition class bridged the gap between in-school academics and outside-of-school fun.

- Students were engaged in discussions about real-world and relevant topics of interest to them.
- Using the App amplified student voice by “provid[ing] them with a medium to have their voices heard,” it transformed teaching and learning in a classroom, increased student engagement, and potential for student action (Kunnath & Jackson, 2019, p. 63).
- Juxtaposing this modern digital communication tool in an English literature course about traditional topics discouraged the concept of *banking education* in which educators are viewed as the sole provider of information, rather it pushes toward a *liberating education* in which students become “critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher” (Kunnath & Jackson, 2019, p. 68).

Given this digital context with its proliferation of multimodal texts, biased sources, and technological tools used to communicate with various audiences, critical literacy calls for repositioning oneself to structures and power systems (Bishop, 2014; Clarke & Whitney, 2009; Freire, 1983). Despite the *digital fluency* of individuals in today's society, the intentional concealment of social media operations like “codes that structure the apps, the data produced through the digital labor of subscribers” (Burnett & Merchant, 2019, p. 263) raise concerns for the ethical implications of individuals' participation over time (Burnett & Merchant, 2019, p. 263). The continual construction and exposure to social media content by younger demographics lays a foundation for their perception of the world and themselves. Unbeknownst to most, if not all of them, the exploitative use of *algorithms* and *search preferences* provide a particular viewing experience that over time may “nudge us into certain ways of being, doing, patterns that in turn shape what others do and can be” (Burnett & Merchant, 2019, p. 265) but does not necessarily reflect the *truth* of the circumstance, social issue, or political issue in their line of sight (Burnett & Merchant, 2019, p. 265). When teachers use a critical lens in their practice it helps them to recognize their position of power, biases and understandings of culture and social justice that can influence their practice (Kelly, Laminack, & Gould, 2020). Therefore, teachers who seek to foster students' critical literacy skills “create a learning environment that raises expectations for academic achievement by challenging traditional notions of literacy instruction” (Wood & Jocius, 2013, p. 663). Craig and Marshall (2018) found that high school students taught through a PBL approach matched the performance outcomes of peers on the state's standardized 11th-grade science and 9-11th grade math test and exceeded peers on the 10th-grade science test. Some common characteristics of critical literacy (Figure 1) suggest that students should interact with multiple voices in texts and sources of authority (Behrman, 2006; Iyer

Figure 1. Critical literacy instructional framework



& Ramachandran, 2020). Students demonstrating critical literacy also enact their agency and voice by sharing their perspectives, experiences, and writing skills through inquiry to make connections across subject areas (Marciano & Warren, 2018).

To foster students' critical literacy skills in today's classrooms means that teachers need to find ways to make real-world connections (Driessens & Parr, 2019) such as bringing outside-of-school practices into formal educational settings, which can help students develop their agency (Kazembe, 2017). In this way, critical literacy practices align with culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) through teacher-directed opportunities for students to engage in learning by making cultural connections to their everyday, lived experiences and interests. Taking this asset-based approach teachers adapt their curriculum to create a supportive, caring environment that respects and engages all students as learners (Toppel, 2015).

Fostering students' critical literacy skills in content area classrooms requires that teachers emphasize discipline-specific strategies used to examine real-world issues. Disciplinary literacy speaks to the specific skills, practices, and processes used by experts in a particular field (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). The core aspects of these practices align with twenty-first-century skills advocated by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, namely communication, critical thinking, communication, and creativity. When teachers guide students in disciplinary literacy practices, students are asked to work collaboratively as a team to use creative thinking and problem-solving and then share their knowledge with a wider audience, thereby mirroring the behaviors and practices of other experts. When using disciplinary literacy practices employed by experts students extend their thinking "beyond the information found in traditional

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textbooks...which often offer only one perspective” (Colwell, 2018, p. 632) and provides students with access to information through different formats and sources.

When seeking to foster critical literacy, text selection is an important part of the teacher’s instructional decision-making (Colwell, 2018; Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020). Therefore, the text selected to support students’ critical disciplinary literacy is important because it can help students “to analyze multiple sources of information when addressing a question or a problem ... can [help them] construct informed, well-grounded knowledge” (Colwell, 2018, p. 632). This chapter draws from Colwell (2018) to define *text* broadly as:

- print or nonprint sources of information, which can include videos, music/songs, signs/billboards, text messages, a commentary on the radio or television news report.
- blogs, podcasts, videos, digital images, and online research used for more up-to-date, relevant and contemporary information about issues in society.
- charts, equations, formulas, graphs, symbols, diagrams as well as math proofs and shapes in mathematics and lab reports, photographs, and images in science.

When selecting these kinds of texts, emphasizing discipline-specific vocabulary is one strategy teachers can use to foster students’ disciplinary literacy (Boyd, Sullivan, Popp, & Hughes, 2012). Literacy strategies are often looked at as tools to support knowledge construction in the discipline (Adams & Pegg, 2012). Vocabulary instruction can be used as a steppingstone to scaffold students’ disciplinary thinking, help students understand the meaning of words within the discipline, and to help contextualize a broader social issue under investigation (Boyd, Sullivan, Popp, & Hughes, 2012).

In some instances, teachers have used explicit vocabulary instructional methods to introduce students to specific vocabulary tools and processes such as using the Frayer Model during a math lesson to provide examples and definitions of words or using anticipation guides to activate prior knowledge when reading (Adams & Pegg, 2012). To help students better understand the phenomenon they are studying, individual actions related to that issue, or events impacted, discipline-specific vocabulary lessons can focus on developing a disciplinary discourse (Boyd, Sullivan, Popp, & Hughes, 2012) by teaching the connotation of words and their meaning in a subject; the study of prefixes, suffixes; and ways to analyze context-specific vernacular used by individuals during a particular time in history or geographical location. To be adept at this discourse students need to build their fluency with vocabulary so they can develop and interpret texts, and deliberate (Windschitl, 2019) real issues with peers in the classroom. Therefore, when selecting texts teachers need to consider the readability level, vocabulary and structure and plan accordingly to support students’ comprehension (Colwell, 2018).

Disciplinary literacy engages students as active learners who can collaborate, think critically, communicate, and creatively share ideas in different ways. For example, Windschitl (2019) observed high school students in a biology classroom engaging in various disciplinary practices.

Groups of students used informational readings and historical population data graphs of different plant and animal species in Yellowstone National Park to defend competing explanations for why the reintroduction of wolves in the 1990s was unexpectedly correlated with increases in the numbers of beaver, trout, and songbirds. Students took turns querying one another’s interpretations of the graphs, proposing narratives for what might have happened in the ecosystem, pointing out supporting passages

in the readings, defending their own assertions with empirical data, and asking for clarification about classmates' lines of reasoning (p. 7).

Students engaged in disciplinary literacy practices to collaborate with peers, problem-solve issues, ask questions about the theories generated by peers, critique and challenge ideas, evaluate different kinds of data, extract information from different kinds of sources, and produce different kinds of original texts (Smith & Shen, 2017; Windschitl, 2019). Windschitl (2019) calls these kinds of literacy practices “trans-disciplinary” (p. 7) because they can be used across subject areas. He argues that this kind of collaborative, student-centered inquiry grounded in classroom talk helps students develop a disciplinary discourse that can improve their academic outcomes (Windschitl, 2019). Facilitating classroom talk requires a supportive classroom environment that can address potential barriers to disciplinary literacy practices such as students’ limited background knowledge on a particular topic, students’ ability to ask questions and comment on peers’ work, and risk-taking in a respectful yet accountable manner (Windschitl, 2019).

In today’s classrooms, integrating twenty-first-century technological tools can further enhance students’ disciplinary practices through collaborative inquiry (Smith & Shen, 2017). In their research on Project Imagine the Future, Smith and Shen (2017) described how middle school students used disciplinary literacy expertise in technology and science to create science fiction stories with multimodal texts that embedded hyperlinks, comics, infographics, visuals, and sound. Students in the study used digital tools to research to learn about content, compose original text reflective of the genre, and share information with different audiences (Smith & Shen, 2017). When structuring the class around disciplinary literacy practices students have the freedom to work independently based on interests and skills, collaborate with peers, and provide each other with productive feedback to help enhance their work (Smith & Shen, 2017). In this way, students are supported to make deeper connections to ideas and vocabulary concepts in the discipline. Similarly, Adams and Pegg (2012) found that students who engage in research using disciplinary literacy practices help to foster critical thinking and analysis skills.

Strategies are enacted in ways that provide opportunities for students to do their own thinking or develop more personal meanings and connections with the material. Students are encouraged to make claims supported by evidence, write definitions based on personal understanding, and engage in activities designed to develop meaning and understanding of terms, key concepts, and relationships (p. 154).

Potential resources and sources of knowledge are expanded beyond the classroom as expertise is redefined when students are empowered to lead and share their knowledge. Brozo and Crain (2018) suggest that in math for example generic literacy strategies are generally met with resistance by math teachers for their seemingly irrelevant application, yet a discipline-specific literacy practice can enable students to connect writing and mathematics to enhance their understanding of the content and build connections between prior knowledge and applications to the real world. Students develop their critical thinking and analytical thinking skills, efficacy and expertise and they interact with and learn from various experts outside of the class including those invited as guest speakers (Smith & Shen, 2017). Students are empowered to lead the direction of their learning by “negotiating their own groups and roles and deciding how to productively allocate their time to learning new digital tools and creatively addressing open, real-world problems” (Smith & Shen, 2017, p. 89). One way that teachers can facilitate these skills and disciplinary practices is by using project-based learning (Aristidou, 2020; Elsamanoudy, Al Fayez, Alamoudi, Awan, Bima, Ghoneim, & Hassanien, 2021; Habok & Nagy, 2016; Munakata &

Vaidya, 2015; Revelle, Wise, Duke, & Halvorsen, 2019; Smith, 2018). According to Habok and Nagy (2016) although time-consuming, projects allow opportunities for thoughtfulness in the idea, execution, and end goal. This self-selection of topics and student-centered learning can empower students, increase their engagement, and enable students to maintain a high degree of motivation (Habok & Nagy, 2016).

THE CURRENT STUDY

Methods

This study is part of a larger project with four teachers designed to explore the kinds of texts teachers working in urban schools use, how they use these texts in content classrooms and how the teachers' instructional choices impact the classroom culture, learning opportunities, and outcomes of students. Focusing on teachers' instructional choices, specifically their text selection, helps to contextualize one of the ways content teachers can influence students' classroom conversation and student engagement (Hollingworth, 2009; Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020). This chapter describes one teacher who participated in the broader study. April (all names are pseudonyms) was selected for this investigation through purposeful sampling because she taught more than one subject area and had the least number of years of experience within the sample; having taught in an urban classroom for less than 10 years. April teaches mathematics and earth science to students in grades 9 through 11 in a densely populated, urban city in the northeastern United States. She works with diverse students and describes her class demographics as White, Black, Asian, Latinx, as well as multi-racial and Indigenous students.

This qualitative case study used an in-depth interview to collect rich data on the participant's perceptions and practices (Mertler & Charles, 2008) to examine the practice of a high school teacher working in an urban school. Using interviews helps to capture the authentic voice and narrative of individuals who agree to participate in a study (Mertler & Charles, 2008). Retaining the teacher's voice and perspective throughout this study was crucial to for the exploration of the teacher's practice. This approach allows the participant to reflect on their practice while the researchers, examine specific, individual behaviors to understand what influences habits, beliefs, and actions in specific contexts (Forester, Kuitenbrouwer, & Laws, 2019). In addition, the reflective case study is beneficial because it uses retrospective reflections to make practice visible for critical analysis (Collins et. al., 2018). Case studies allow for the in-depth investigation to create a thick description of practices that characterize the cultural and contextual factors impacting interactions in those contexts (Geertz, 1973).

The data for this study were collected during one, two-hour, semi-structured interview with the teacher, which was recorded via Zoom and the transcript was subsequently downloaded and analyzed. Using interview methods for this case study captured information about the teacher's practice through retrospective reflections of a transparent narrative account that makes her practice visible for critical analysis (Collins et. al., 2018). The interview questions (Appendix A) helped generate quality-rich data sources because they focused on a broad range of topics such as text selection, perceptions of and purposes for using text, students' responses to text choices. Although first-hand observations of classroom practice posed a limitation to the study, content analysis of the transcript revealed patterns used to recursively review the data to document the ways the patterns are replicated throughout the data source. Content analysis helped

to address prior questions concerning why available texts came into being, what they mean and to whom, how they mediate between antecedent and consequent conditions, and ultimately, whether they enable the analysts to select valid answers to questions concerning the contexts (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 82).

Content analysis is a process of closely and systematically examining qualitative data to reduce and quantify the data to report on observed patterns (Krippendorff, 2004). Hackert, van Exel, and Brouwer (2021) point out,

In inductive content analysis raw textual data is subjected to open coding, creating categories and abstraction through extensive examination, quantifying words and phrases, and comparison. Without using prior knowledge or theories, the aim is to move from the specific to the general, in order to systematically describe phenomena to develop context-specific meaning (p. 4).

Next, to strengthen validity, the data were triangulated to identify commonalities between the sources to contextualize her reported instructional practices, during her interview, April also shared examples of instructional materials and artifacts including lesson plans, unit plans, student work samples, and assessment results to help characterize their practice and reflect expected student outcomes.

To capture April's story, the transcript was edited for clarity and coherence to retain the narrative structure. Through this process, "*narrating* [original italics] the answers to [the research] questions amounts to the researchers' making their results comprehensible to others" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 85). When working with the qualitative data the emphasis was on descriptive validity to avoid embellishment or distortion of information (Hayashi Jr, Abib, & Hoppen, 2019). Discourse analysis of the transcript looked specifically at the content; examining how the teacher conveyed and described her practice and situated decision-making within the context (Gee, 2016). The transcript was edited in three phases. First, all researcher-led questions from the interview and time sequence were removed. Next, pauses, false starts, and repetitions, such as "I think – I think" were removed. Finally, placeholders and colloquialism within the conversations such as "um," "like," "you know" were removed. After each phase, the transcript was reviewed and discussed with the overall research goals for the data, as well as the researchers' thoughts, questions, observations, and emerging themes from the data. Content and document analysis of the data used an inductive, multi-step process to identify emerging themes. Initially, an excerpt from the transcript was used to establish codes. The first 20 minutes of the interview were selected for independent review and analysis by each member of the research team. Then the team met to discuss patterns emerging from the independent reviews. After each team member shared their patterns, the team grouped the patterns into categories to develop a list of overarching codes. To aid the data analysis process, an Excel spreadsheet was used to capture the codes, data source(s) that provided the example/evidence, interpretation of the data/what it means, implications for practice/what it means for classroom practice, link to research/articles, and implications for future research/unanswered questions. Some of the codes from the spreadsheet were: culturally responsive teaching practices, accountability/firm, student choice, teacher efficacy, social-emotional learning: respect, empathy, compassion, technology/technology integration, rule breaker, student voice, teacher expectations, factors that influence planning, teaching as theatre/performance, text selection and use of texts, teaching skills and strategies, instructional approaches, high expectations, group work, life skills, student engagement. These codes were used for all subsequent close readings of the transcript.

Fostering Critical Disciplinary Literacy in Secondary Content Classrooms

Table 1. Content analysis of transcript

Instructional Strategy	Descriptors & Examples of Phrases Used in Transcript	Content Analysis Search Terms in Transcript
Collaboration	Students working in a partnerships or groups, collaboration, or working with peers	group members, group, groups, grouping, group work, group concept, group convo/time/dynamics, partners, partnership, teammates, collaboration, work together, peer review, discussion, divide and conquer
Critical Thinking	Analysis, problem-posing or asking questions, problem-solving	asking, ask/asking questions, problem solve, problem solving skill set, question(s), make (any) connections, common mistake, reflect, self-reflection
Literacy Skills	Reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, comprehension, explaining	reading aloud, reading level, reading, read, writing, writing level, justify, explain, academic vocabulary, vocabulary, comprehend, understand/understanding, listening, speaking, communication, literacy, discussion
Technology	Digital tools and software (e.g., Zoom, PowerPoint, chat, videos), using technology for teaching and/or learning	technology, PowerPoint, breakout, room(s), flexibility, digital type of media, chat, video(s), guest speaker, zoom, zooming, privacy, data backup
Creativity	Students create their own texts (e.g., math problems, formulas, presentations)	create, project based materials, project based learning, project, presentation(s), choice(s), [kids] choose, formula(s)
Content	Math or Earth science content, content-related examples (e.g., financial literacy connects to math)	financial literacy, purchasing power, history, environmental justice, economic justice, scenario(s), factoring, graph(ing), functions

During the second round of review, the content analysis looked at recurring words to determine where the teacher appeared to emphasize her instruction. Key terms frequently emerging in April's narrative (Table 1) were aligned to the twenty-first-century learning skills. First, descriptors of twenty-first-century skills were identified to provide synonyms of terms to look for that pertained to each instructional strategy. The word search was limited by context, meaning, and frequency. For example, "peer review" could have been used to highlight literacy skills based on its definition, but April referred to peer review as a tool to ensure accountability among students by having groups evaluate one another. Therefore, its context and use closely aligns with collaboration. Several key terms required one or multiple distinctions to prevent miscalculation and misinterpretation of the content. For example, group and groups were noted as two different terms, so the calculated frequencies are independent of one another. This ensured that no two seemingly identical terms overlapped.

Continuously returning to the transcript for this recursive analysis helped describe how the teacher fostered critical disciplinary literacy by using project-based learning to make real-world connections to help her students develop what she perceived as 'transferrable skills' beyond the discipline. The final step was to use content analysis of the lesson plans and student work samples to triangulate and corroborate findings from the transcript. Saturating the findings through this recursive process and triangulating the findings with classroom artifacts helps to validate the findings and compensate for the limitations (Mertler & Charles, 2008) posed by self-reported data and lack of field notes and observations. The next section provides the findings and some illustrative examples of the three strategies used by the teacher to foster students' critical disciplinary skills and the impact on students' outcomes.

Table 2. Twenty-first century skills emphasized in the teacher's practice

Rank		# of Utterances	% of Occurrence*
1	Critical Thinking	67	1.19%
2	Collaboration	63	1.12%
3	Literacy Skills	63	1.12%
4	Creativity	52	0.93%
5	Technology	42	0.75%
6	Content	23	0.41%

*rounded to nearest hundredth

RESULTS

Strategy #1: Fostering 21st Century Skills for the Real World

April's instructional strategies appear to foster students' twenty-first century learning skills, namely critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication (Table 2). April helps students develop these skills through problem-solving ways to understand and share information, analysis of sources and texts, and opportunities to work collaboratively with peers. The transcript shows that these practices emerged most often in her report compared to other practices: critical thinking (1.19%), collaboration (1.12%), and literacy skills (1.12%).

To foster students' critical thinking and inquiry in the classroom, April used a variety of texts. She appears to select texts based on her perceived value within the discipline, or the extent to which the texts can be used to foster critical thinking. She also considers the readability level of the texts and content connections that can be made to the real-world. April reported that she does not use a textbook. Instead, she uses different types of texts and media to help students understand the content, based on their reading level and writing skills. She explained,

I try to bring in different perspectives in terms of the starting materials. I give them the choices. I know what direction [it's] going to be - not just focus on one side; where you can be opposing parties with different viewpoints, but then it's like the discussion will be there and people can hear something which is different, from what they're thinking.

Although making strategic text selection choices can help facilitate student-centered discussions about real issues helps to foster critical disciplinary literacy (Hollingworth, 2009; Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020), April claims that her text selection process is more feasible in science than math.

[In science] it's totally so much easier to do all this because ... resources are plentiful. You can already represent different viewpoints. I can bring in the globe, the whole world ... into the classroom which is quite easy. We have so many issues happening and the kids can really make connection[s]. For math class it's a little bit difficult. It has to be a little intentional. I need more persuasion because the kids were so adjusted to this concept that oh doing math that you have to get the right answer and if I don't have the right answer then it's like I'm not gonna talk or if I'm not quite sure I'm not going to ask questions.

Figure 2. Excerpt of student's peer review completed in Algebra 1 class

✓ Questions/Feedback for the first presentation or what you learn from them. * 5 / 5

My group went first, something I learned was that even though things were hard for me at the end, I still kept trying and my team mates fixed all their mistakes that Ms. April pointed out so the presentation was perfect, I'm proud of my team as well as myself because I was nervous and didn't know how things would turn out for me during the presentation considering that math is pretty difficult for me and that I didn't even finish my slide but somehow it still worked out, I did want to add more though, but that's only if I had more time to fix my slide well, it came together in the end.

Add individual feedback

✓ Questions/Feedback for the second presentation or what you learn from them. * 5 / 5

I think that next time Mark, Samuel and the other members should go over their work thoroughly and get someone to help them so they can have a better understanding of how to set up the equations and how to solve for the answers because, they made a few hours here and there, revising things before it's finalized is very important and essential if you want to have a good presentation you always need to be prepared.

Add individual feedback

Even though I try to bring in current events, the materials, the math that we are teaching is not really a diverse curriculum. It's 500 years old from Europe. It's a male dominated, White male dominated type of concepts.

She reported that the emphasis on the right answer silences some students in her class and they do not ask questions because the math concepts do not connect with the diverse students she teaches. It appears that the contexts of the content classroom influence her instructional choices and students' experiences as she shifts from math to science.

- In math: "So for [a] few years I really put a lot of emphasis on modeling how to use the vocabulary. When they're talking, ask them the vocabulary to use them as well, so that kind of inform they're thinking, as well as check for their understanding."
- In science: "I have to frontload those skill set to show them okay doing a video actually is not that difficult. It's the way to go. You guys do videos on your own so many times Tik Tok and all this, but then, when it comes to Some common beliefs emerged in both subject areas. "In both subject areas she explained that "I told my students all my classes, that I set high expectations for them. I believe every voice is important."

To foster twenty-first century skills such as collaborative learning, April uses different grouping structures in her classroom. For example, one classroom activity April uses is a peer review process in her math class. She shared an example of a peer review form she uses for student accountability (Figure 2). A Google Forms survey was created for students to reflect on their experiences working on group projects and providing feedback on how their peers performed when reporting the results of their projects.

April explained how she facilitates the peer review process in her math class. She said that initially "The peer review, in the past, the whole class [was] doing peer review, but still, there are people not

engaging [in] the work.” Although she uses the peer review form and it carries weight for their grades, some students complete it and others don’t. She observed that in the past the students used “divide and conquer; they just don’t care about the whole project. They don’t know the whole project, they just know their own part.” To address this and increase expectations so students engage more with the content she incorporated more in individual accountability. She said, she placed students in breakout rooms and split up the groups so that individual group members are “presenting the whole project to the other group.” She believes this was a more rigorous approach to the group work. She said,

That’s even tougher. ... When we did the peer review like that, if you don’t know the rest of the slide, the content you’ll be speechless. It’s not like trying to give them a hard time but just try to use, the different setting to encourage the kids. When you do group work, what is real group work, because they already were engaged we try to push them to a higher level; really understand your materials. No matter what you can present the whole thing the whole slides.

She believes the benefit of working in teams overshadows the challenges that might arise when students are asked to work together, and she adjusts her practices to increase the efficiency of the groups.

Some groups, they brought in great materials, and they really worked well. But, then there’s a couple of groups which are not. So I’m thinking, how to change it, or the frequency or something like that because I realized that if you have good partners, the collaboration is there the trust is there really bringing kids along. Even for those who are being labeled or less engaged in other classes, it’s not happening in our groups, because they are so interested in doing so. I think getting them that part I need to think more, but then I have to understand the kids too, the kids have to know them too; know themselves too. Even though you and I, are buddies when it comes to work, maybe a different ball game. I think it’s more on extending their comfort zone.

From April’s perspective, preparing students for the real-world requires frequent curricular shifts. She expands her curriculum to go beyond individual, disparate subjects to provide students with opportunities to make deeper connections with the content.

[Making connections is] definitely intentional because I always emphasize that if you learn something then when you leave the classroom I asked them how [are] you going to apply it? If you’re not going to apply it, then you’re going to forget soon.... Five years after the class, you keep 5% of what you learn in class, so this is reality. So that’s why I keep asking the kids before you leave the unit think about how you’re going to apply it. How you’re going to use your concept, use your skills, and then you are the ones that connect all the dots.... Connecting the dots, I may demonstrate one or two, but then how are they gonna connect the dots is really their job. If they can do that more the learning is gonna make more sense.

April also spoke frequently about technology and the role it plays in the real world. She expressed that her students used technology to conduct research on different topics and used it to communicate. She also shared her concerns about the limited ways in which technology was being used for academic purposes. She indicated that she wanted them to use tools available to them to demonstrate what they know in innovative and creative ways. She said,

It's like, take risks and try to learn new things or areas, new regions, and also to try to take risks in terms of their presentations. Everybody used to use PowerPoint but then I encourage them; you can do a video. If you don't want to show your face, you can do an audio. I want to have different types of presentations instead of just PowerPoint [which] is getting boring. I have to frontload those skill set to show them okay doing a video actually is not that difficult. It's the way to go. You guys do videos on your own so many times Tik Tok and all this, but then, when it comes to academic you're not comfortable I don't get it. So try to connect to what the world is doing. Then they can bring in the skill sets and they don't have to hide it when it comes to academics. Those are the areas that I've been thinking.

Strategy #2: Using Project-Based Learning for Student-Centered Choices

April provided students with choice in different ways. April spoke frequently about projects in her curriculum. Her report and the samples shared suggest that April uses project-based learning because she believes it challenges students to think more deeply about the content and allows them to demonstrate what they learn in different ways. When describing one project in her science class, she said,

[I've] made a few changes already. In the beginning [of the year], I asked the kids to choose the area or the countries that they want to focus on as the final project. Then I changed it to giving them two so that they can compare. Then the last one, I give them choices to pick. Then pick one from the United States, but everybody [picked] one from the United States. So [I] can't do it like that [laughs]. It may be because of the presumption they have already: thinking about America is the best or something like that, or they don't have enough knowledge about the globe or anywhere in the world. I have to think about how to lay that out also in terms of the grouping. In the beginning, I have [to] really mix them around. Different group work would have different groupings; make it an expert group and then different from the final group. But then it came to a point that it's really too much. I think that the group, this time, I just let them have one group throughout the whole unit. It worked out the best.

Her comments reveal that she used a structured approach to the project, providing students with some choice as they worked on collaborative projects with peers. Expectations in math, allow students to work in groups to examine real-world scenarios. She explained,

a scenario that there's basically an issue and it's open ended. So how are they gonna address the issue? It's more technical with a little description, and then problem solve. So, eventually, if we have the time, we can create something that will be great but it's not - we're not there yet. For Earth science, or Geology- Geology and Natural Disasters, I can pull in all types of texts, 'cuz it's quite fun. It can be any articles [sic]. It can be papers and then it can be digital type of media that help the kids to understand what they are talking about. So that you can really address different levels of students reading and writing skill. I can bring in all types. I always use grouping, so I don't have to worry about if the kids cannot understand it. They always have partners to help them out because I always emphasize the partnership; divide and conquer. When they do the grouping, I ask them to find a buddy; know your partner. But then I bring two groups together, meaning that they at least have one person they trust- they want to group with, but then I may bring in another group to form a bigger group. Depends on the situation, what their needs are, whether it's the reading level, whether to make it less homogeneous, or whether bringing in other racial groups or whatsoever. I can play around with that - giving them choices, but then, at the

same time, I have some type of - it's not like monitoring but it's like some type of encouragement for them or to push them to the next level.

When discussing student work samples from one of the assigned projects in her math class, April explained that the students exceeded expectations when working in teams on project for factoring quadratics. She instructed students “*You must create five different quadratic problems, solving them, describing them, and addressing a possible mistake.*” She explained that students were only instructed to create math problems on factoring.

This [student sample] is the Algebra 2 classroom. ... They have to create the questions, they have to factor, and then they have to show the exception. It's really bringing in the project-based learning. It really worked quite well. I used it for the second time for the second marking period. This time I asked the kids to create 10 questions as a group, math questions and then solve them and present them. On top of that, I asked them to do a review, give feedback when they doing presentation. ... The first one is when A equals to 1. They create this one. They create this equation, and they solve it. This part is where, usually they, does the misconception, or where they have the mistakes. Part B is when A is bigger than 1. The AC method. You see they are using different materials, how to do it. The second part, that is common mistake. The C part is completing square factoring. They create this question, they solve it, and then, at the same time, they have to tell us the common mistake. The fourth question is when the discriminant is a perfect square. Then again they show the formula. How they solve it, and then the common mistake. The last part is when the discriminant is not a perfect square. The common mistake and the equation, they bring in. The next part is, another five questions that they have to create. The first one is the coefficient which is bigger than zero and then even. They have to graph it as well, and then show their understanding. So five questions on factoring, five questions on graphing odd and even- functions. ... I just asked the kids to create 10 questions and then bring out the common mistake and show us how to solve it, so that, in a way, when they doing the presentation, they can show us the speaking, and also when creating this slide they can do some writing in math. But then I didn't ask this part how to factor quadratics. She put it. She found the rules and all this. She prepare [sic] a couple of slides on this, and this is really awesome. Above and beyond. A good summary on how to do it.

April believes projects make the math content relevant for students. She said, “I really have to do something else, such as bring in project-based materials, so that at least I can connect with what the world is doing now.” She explained that adjusting her approach to integrate project-based activities helped to address what they perceive is a gap in the curriculum, limited access to authentic texts. When reviewing one student's project during the interview she said, “I just think she has a lot of sense.” Similar comments were evident during her evaluation of student work.

As previously mentioned, rather than teaching topics in isolation, the projects allow students to make interdisciplinary connections. Students explore topics and issues from different disciplinary perspectives a look for connections to the real world. April shared,

I connect the functions with financial literacy and talking about the exponential decay of purchasing power to one of the questions I asked the kids. Can you make any connections that happened in history, in the past? That kids[sic] mentioned about depression, those eras and then 1980, 1918 the Spanish flu. Then we had the discussion about that, and what she thought about it, and decreasing purchasing power

and then what happened, we have the Big deal. Bringing in all types of work, that type of intentional question it's important, because then the kids [sic] can share her knowledge about history with me and also understanding [of] what happened. ... So now she's really interested in doing math and then she's more comfortable. And for her- maybe the abstract math is not her cup of tea, but then, when it comes to wow making sense of math, using math for investment, it really makes sense. She can explain it so well, and I'm like this is awesome.

Strategy #3: Leveraging Students' Strengths to Empower Them as Learners

April did not discuss the specific processes and ways she scaffolded students through the projects. She did, however, repeatedly place emphasis on how presentation resembles the essence of these literacy practices in that students must be able to work beyond simply finding a solution. Brozo and Crain's (2018) research suggests that teachers must provide students with the opportunity to justify their reasoning and to critique their own arguments and others by following the logic and reasoning of others. Students must learn how to think critically and that begins and ends with literacy. April works with a wide range of students who have varying skill levels. She seeks ways to provide them with access to the content in engaging ways or by using scaffolds to differentiate for variations in their reading abilities.

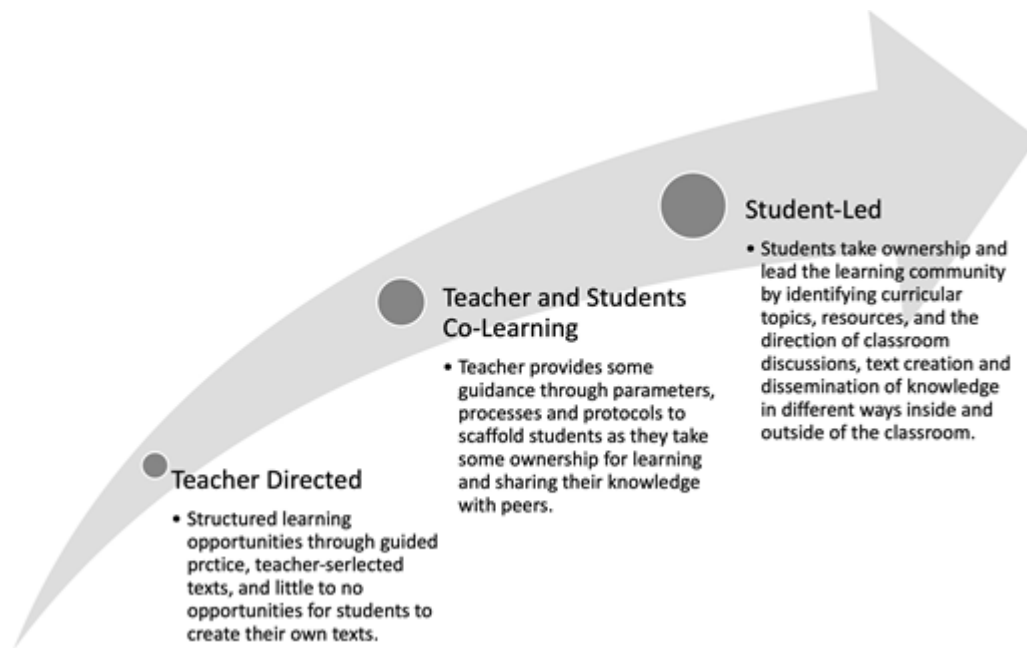
I think that to thrive in the digital environment, but then, at the same time, the other thing [is] flexibility. Why it's important that there are always some exceptions because learning is not linear. I think a lot of people is just saying learning is linear at that moment. If they don't get it, that means they don't learn it. I think during the remote environment really showcase this learning is not linear. It can be multidimensional so that you build in flexibility. At the same time the kids use the environment and then engage you in the learning at their own pace at their own time.

She reported that technology during the COVID-19 pandemic provided students with flexibility “for the kids to engage in the work at different times at their own pace.” April explained how being flexible and providing students with choice considers their individual learning, interests, and helps to support students' literacy development while increasing their understanding of the content.

If I tell them you gonna read [the text] all by yourself, they- no but I never do that. I present it in a way that they have the choice of the groupings, they have the choice of the topic, or they have the choice of the direction. That way nobody's feeling uncomfortable because that's what you choose, that's what you [are] interested in, and that's what direction you're going to. When we're doing the modules, the whole week just flies by so quickly and, and then the response is so great because the kids come back with a lot of different, new things. I don't think the choice of the text or difficulty or complexity is the problem. It's just, maybe sometimes some of the group members are not doing [their] part that's basically it.

During her interview, April described a student labeled by teachers as “disengaged.” She believed the student lacked confidence in her ability to do well in math. April moved beyond a deficit perspective of the student. From her perspective, her role was to provide the student with an “entry point for her to believe that she can do math”, so the student felt comfortable making interdisciplinary and real-world connections with math. When recounting the performance of this student, April said,

Figure 3. Developmental progression of student-centered teaching



Hopefully she can capitalize on it and then have confidence, and connect the dots based on what she could explain; the math and history. That's awesome. She really has a lot of sense, but then she was being labeled as the one [who] does not engage; coming to class, failing all classes, and all this.

DISCUSSION

The first question explored in this case study was, What approaches does the teacher use to foster students' disciplinary literacy skills? As described above, April uses three overlapping strategies to support students' critical disciplinary literacy skills. April's approach to project-based learning appears to fall midway on a teaching continuum (Figure 3) of student-centered teaching. Students work as a team of experts who bring knowledge to collaborative problem-solving situations where they present to each other and learn from each other. It appears that April is still working towards allowing students to take the lead in bringing in their texts. April is behind the scenes structuring all learning experiences but allowing some flexibility in the final product and ways in which students engage with each other and with various texts.

April's comments suggest that she used group work as a learning opportunity to increase rigor. She expects that students demonstrate their content mastery. She said that although students appear to be engaged she wants to challenge and "push them to a higher level." It appears that in her classes students are expected to have a strong understanding of the materials and be able to explain what they have learned to each other. April places emphasis on students' content mastery, which they can demonstrate through their application of content knowledge. Her comments show that opportunity to apply their knowledge or make connections is what helps students retain information long-term. To facilitate this

process, students reflect on their learning and consider ways they can apply their knowledge and skills so that the content makes more sense.

The second research question in this study was, What kinds of texts do the teacher use and how are these texts used to engage students in critical conversations about social issues? The findings indicate that April purposefully selects texts to provide students with opportunities to see topics from different perspectives. This goal is enacted by

- Asking students to take on different viewpoints and discuss issues from multiple sides.
- Using texts as the “starting materials” to spring-board discussions that can lead students to further, more in-depth examination of the topic.
- Selecting texts aligned to her content area but have real-world connections.

April appears to be aware of digital tools that can facilitate more connections to the real world through opportunities for students to create their texts. Although it appears that she integrates technology into her class and allows students to use digital tools to expand access to texts and sources for communication, she does not explain during the interview why she believes students are not shifting towards a more sophisticated use of technology in the classroom to demonstrate their learning.

In both math and science, April uses real-world topics and resources to help students make connections. Her comments suggest that she believes she can facilitate discussions from multiple perspectives a lot easier in science. She noted that in science links to current issues using resources and global connections are readily available. In contrast, facilitating the same experiences in math requires more intentionality when planning so she can persuade students. April believes that students bring fixed mindsets about math where they are looking for “the right answer.”

Similar to Habok and Nagy’s (2016) research, April’s approach to empowering students by giving them choice, rather than confining them to a ‘most convenient’ method of evaluation by the teacher. April’s use of vocabulary in the math and science classrooms enabled her students to construct knowledge that would deepen their understanding of the material. Implementing a day of just discussing vocabulary terms in science and math classrooms could help improve students’ understanding of the math content. By pairing students up, it allows them to learn from each other as a classroom community, which can help to strengthen their learning, communication, and peer-to-peer interactions (Adams & Pegg, 2012; Colwell, 2018; Hurley & Henry, n.d.). Previous research (see Habok & Nagy, 2016; O’Byrne et. al., 2021; Welsh, Brock, Robertson, & Thrailkill, 2019) demonstrates that PBL allows students to increase their intercultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, motivation, and language proficiency while extending to pronunciation teaching. The efficacy of PBL depends upon the significance of its content, namely the driving question, in-depth inquiry, and public audience as well as 21st-century practices like student voice and choice, reflection, cooperation, etc. April demonstrated these in her approach to PBL in the math classroom as she led by questions, prompted critical thinking, interdisciplinary science projects frequently resulted in increased motivation to learn, even by low-achieving students. Despite the front-loading projects entail, their benefits are indisputable. April’s inclination towards PBL emphasizes the importance of providing students with different avenues to learn because learning is different for different people. Deciding to adjust her groups based on her observations of students’ practices and outcomes when working collaboratively helps students learn about themselves and their peers. Although she allows students to select their groups, she also shifts the groups around so they learn to work with different people to build trust in the class, so students see the benefit of learning from each other not just work-

ing with their friends. She believes that project-based learning provides opportunities for students to explore texts and helps them to increase their knowledge and expand their worldview and perspective. They are asked to do research focused on inquiry skills and analysis: asking questions and analyzing sources within the content area.

April believes that the students exceeded her expectations by going beyond her instructions to conduct their research and create text that demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of the math concept. Emphasizing empowering students so they feel they can do the math and apply it to different real-world contexts is a recurring theme in April's report. She believes that using projects helps to facilitate these opportunities for students. From her perspective, using project-based open-ended scenarios helped students explore real-world issues and consider alternative perspectives through their research. Her report also suggests that using project-based learning helps to combat a challenge she has observed in mathematics: students don't want to answer if they don't know the right answer. From her perspective, students are applying their knowledge to better understand policies and social practices. Her comments reveal her pride when students are comfortable enough with a disciplinary identity to make connections across subject areas to consider the real-world implications of the subject. Using their content knowledge and expertise to make these connections are disciplinary literacy practices demonstrated by mathematicians. She is proud when students use their prior knowledge to solve problems and think more deeply about how to apply the content to different situations when math begins to make sense.

FUTURE RESEARCH

When implementing research projects, teachers need to consider how technology is used. Teachers can provide opportunities for students to decode content-rich text, which can help students learn to ask key questions, analyze texts, identify perspectives, and draw conclusions about different kinds of text to closely examine social issues from a disciplinary perspective (Comber, 2015; Kunnath & Jackson, 2019; Grysko, & Zygouris-Cor, 2019; Hawley, Crowe, & Mooney, 2016; Marciano & Warren, 2019; Smith & Shen, 2017; Williams, 2020; Woodrow, 2018). When selecting texts teachers should consider entry points for challenging the sources, ways to facilitate opportunities for students to explore their local identities, and gaps that help students see beyond the bias (Comber, 2015; Kunnath & Jackson, 2019; Windschitl, 2019). Future research can look at the different kinds of digital tools being used and how they facilitate opportunities for students to access a wide array of texts across disciplines and use the texts in real-time to solve problems. In a rapidly changing world, to better prepare students for college and career transferrable skills and strategies, which are not measured on standardized tests, teachers need to foster literacy-based life schools (Gutierrez de Blume, Katz, & Bass, 2021) to help students build confidence, resilience, inquiry, and empathy which are often overlooked in the curriculum but can have implications for students' academic achievement in content classrooms (Craig & Marshall, 2018).

The findings from this case study raise implications for using project-based learning as an open-ended and student-centered approach that allows teachers to fall at the midpoint of an instructional continuum that emphasizes critical disciplinary literacy. Table 3 provides some examples of action-research projects teachers can incorporate into the curriculum to support students' integrated learning and critical disciplinary literacy skills. All of the projects integrate technology and allow students to use different kinds of digital tools for different purposes, connect learning through real-world experiences by connecting English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies/ History, with the Arts.

Fostering Critical Disciplinary Literacy in Secondary Content Classrooms

Table 3. Suggested project-based learning ideas that integrate disciplines

Project	Description
Sneaker Design	Students will design their own sneaker using Vans.com. They use rhetorical techniques to write commercials for their new brand. During the design process, students will use ratio and proportion to construct the best sneaker while considering size/shape, color, composition, etc. Students will also conduct research to learn how sneakers are made in our modern-day society and compare social issues related to production in different countries. They will design an experiment to do market research to test their sneaker design regarding production cost and potential price for the product.
Voices Heard	Students will work in teams to research a topic of interest to the group. They will conduct research to learn more about the topic. Then write an original play about the topic of choice. The group will perform their play. During the play they will find creative ways to explain the topic and share data about what they learned via music, song lyrics, art, etc.
Fashion Design	Students will research a Black/African American, Latinx, or Indigenous fashion designer. They will write a letter requesting to be part of their design team. In the letter they will explain their innovative ideas for a new product to add to their collection. They will describe the project, argue how it will help enhance the designer's current collection, increase revenue, etc. Students will develop and solve unit rate problems to explore the best price for the product. They will also research types of fashion designs over time and across cultures to determine gaps in contemporary fashion options that can be addressed. Students will also create a 3D version of their design.

Future research should look at the critical disciplinary literacy practices across subject areas to determine how teachers foster these skills within specific contexts. These studies can look at how discipline-specific practices allow students to employ knowledge and perspectives from the discipline to solve real-world problems. These kinds of projects can help to empower students and increase their agency. Research questions can investigate areas such as

- How do real-world connections and opportunities in content classrooms vary across disciplines?
- What kinds of student-generated questions, topics and approaches are used for student-centered inquiry within specific disciplines?
- How are students empowered to explore social issues when using real-world texts and primary sources compared to when using textbooks?
- To what extent does critical disciplinary literacy help students confront and break down misconceptions about what they know and re-think what they know and re-think their theories?

CONCLUSION

April enacted critical disciplinary literacy in her content classrooms by using multiple texts for different purposes, specifically to provide students with opportunities to examine issues from different perspectives. These practices reinforced disciplinary literacy practices used by experts to research, corroborate, and ask questions to problem-solve social issues. Using critical disciplinary literacy can help reinforce content knowledge and skills. In math, for example, students develop a math identity early but as students move up the grades, they need experiences where they can apply their knowledge to different contexts. They also need authentic learning opportunities to increase their confidence through the application of math in real situations to solve real problems. April believes that giving students a purpose for doing the math made students want to learn it and go above April's expectations when working on projects. April believed that her students were able to take action and make interdisciplinary connections. Her empha-

sis appears to be on helping students make sense and understand the why and how through real-world connections. She also indicated that the real connections provide an entry point for students to learn.

April's approach to project-based learning in her urban math and science classes created opportunities for interdisciplinary connections and differentiation. Her planning increased rigor and expectations for student outcomes. While she does acknowledge the need to support students, specifically their peer interaction and collaborative learning to build more accountability, there is also a need to plan for addressing possible misconceptions that might arise with the topics being addressed in the class. In the text, the truth is implied by the author. For example, April's comments suggest that in math the truth is evident because it's proven by mathematicians in history. April's practice suggests that in science the prevailing thought is that knowledge evolves along with technology and prompts scientific change. From her perspective, Math helps build students' resilience because once you "get it" their understanding of math concepts holds and they can apply their knowledge to the real world in different ways. Teaching specific lessons on how truth is evident in different subjects such as absolute truth in math, is important to cultivating critical disciplinary literacy. When teachers show students why something is 'true' in the content classroom it can help students move beyond the basic understanding of concepts. This approach can help students understand how experts prove something and that they don't have to take their content knowledge for granted. Teachers can design discipline-specific problems that allow students to figure out ways to apply their knowledge to authentic learning experiences to better understand disciplinary literacy practices.

This case study shows that critical disciplinary literacy requires that students develop twenty-first-century skills that transcend a specific discipline (Comber, 2015; Kunnath & Jackson, 2019; Windschitl, 2019). More specifically, when attempting to support students' critical disciplinary literacy skills teachers should progress along a continuum of instructional decisions: completely teacher-directed on one end and completely open for students to choose their texts and do research. In the latter context, students feel comfortable enough to bring forth these ideas. The lowest part of the continuum is explicit teaching. Teachers can consider the range of opportunities they can incorporate into the content classroom to support students' critical disciplinary literacy skills in secondary classrooms. April's practices helped to foster students' critical literacy and disciplinary literacy skills in four ways: (1) transferrable skills; (2) collaborative learning and problem-solving; (3) rigor and expectations; and (4) real-world connections. April selects texts for different goals and purposes which range from academic to social. She perceives texts as sources of information and uses primary sources instead of a textbook. Although this study is limited to the practice of one teacher, the findings suggest that teachers must consider when and how the technology and digital tools because it can have implications for the types of texts students have access to as well as how students use technology to communicate what they have learned.

It appears that students in April's class worked on projects throughout the year. Although April gives students opportunities to interact with real-world texts and ask questions she does not believe that students are at the point of creating their own texts. It appears that April's narrow definition of text influenced her perceptions of students' text production in her classes. For example, in math students created their texts, specifically math equations and proofs to argue their points about common problems encountered when solving math problems. Students did not produce their texts in science, which is the opposite of April's initial assertions, whereby she indicated that it was easier to address critical literacy and empower students in science and not math. This study showed that her use of project-based learning in math also allowed for those opportunities. In science, she brought in the texts and fostered discussions from different perspectives where students had limited opportunities to move to the action taking in science.

April emphasized challenging students to move beyond their comfort zone. She frequently noted risk-taking, group work, and critical thinking or analysis specifically when students are collaborating on projects and developing their texts and presentations. How can we help teachers move students through these steps? Much of the critical disciplinary literacy practices are done in collaboration with student input. However, April is directing student learning in her classes. The theatre performance in April's class includes actors, everyone has an identity and a space to feel a sense of belonging, where they can feel safe and be successful. By creating an environment that supports their social-emotional learning, April explains how she sees the students and conveys that all students can participate, by being seen and heard, she uses their multiple intelligences to build on the strengths of the students and to introduce a level of respect, and acceptance in "small ways". The intentional practice of allowing space in the class allows everyone in the class to have a role and voice.

When explaining the types of texts used and their purpose in her classroom, April appears to be aware of the significance of her text selections. To address her emphasis on the skills she wants to foster in her students and their readiness to engage with texts in the broader society, she creates opportunities for students to explore their questions about controversial issues (Labadie, Wetzel, & Rogers, 2012; Wood & Jocius, 2013). Overall, her text selection is intentional and focused on overarching goals such as persuasion, making connections, or looking at topics from different perspectives. One limitation of April's practice is that although the students have a choice in the texts they read, most texts are still teacher selected.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Interdisciplinary: A curricular and instructional approach that links topics across subject areas.

Problem-Based Learning: A scenario-based activity that allows students to collaborate on a shared inquiry experience in which they draw upon a wide range of sources and skills to examine a real-world issue as experts.

Project-Based Learning: Students work together on a learning activity to create an outcome or product that demonstrates their content knowledge and ability to integrate information about various topics across subject areas.

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Student-Centered: An instructional approach that places students at the center of the learning environment and creates opportunities for students to self-select learning experiences and be able to self-assess their performance in relation to differentiated learning goals.

APPENDIX: RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please state the name (a pseudonym) you wish to be referred to during this interview and the study.
2. What subject(s) and grade(s) do you teach?
3. Describe your classroom and the students?
4. What are your expectations for students in your class?
5. What are some of the things you typically consider when planning your lessons and units?
6. Describe a typical lesson you would teach in your class?
7. Tell me about the kinds of texts that you use in your lesson(s). How do they use them? How do you choose these texts?
8. What have you noticed about how students' respond/react to the texts you use?
9. How would this look in different units you teach throughout the year? What kinds of changes would you make and why?
10. Do you make any kinds of connections when teaching? Why do you make these references or connections?
11. Do you have any instructional artifacts, student work samples or outcomes you can share to illustrate how your teaching has impacted students in your class?
12. How do you respond when students raise questions about sensitive, personal, or social justice issues?
13. Do you feel prepared or unprepared to foster these discussions in the classroom? If you feel prepared, what do you think prepared you for these discussions?
14. Do you think teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your approach to teaching? If so, how?
15. Can you describe an instance where you think your student felt empowered this year? What do you believe led to this result?

Chapter 5

Culturally Sustaining, SEL– Based Practices in Disciplinary Literacy Curricular Spaces

Holly Sheppard Riesco

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, USA

Rebecca Carpenter de Cortina

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, USA

Afton Schleiff

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, USA

ABSTRACT

The authors seek to illustrate how teachers can create a space of inclusive interaction through the development of curriculum and instruction that evidences culturally sustaining pedagogy and disciplinary literacy. In considering these two concepts, the authors also turn to the tenets of social and emotional learning to establish a framework for developing curriculum and instruction that acknowledges the complexity of the classroom space as a subculture. This consideration is not only crucial to making disciplinary discourses relevant, but also illustrating how curriculum and instruction play a critical role in students' learning as well as how they understand and locate themselves in the world that surrounds them. The goals of this chapter are to offer a framework that can help educators develop curriculum and instruction that supports students' emerging knowledge of the discipline, connect disciplinary knowledge to students' multiple discourses, and provide a pathway for generative SEL within and outside of the academic discipline itself.

INTRODUCTION

A secondary classroom is a place that can unify multiple languages, multiple cultures, multiple discourses, and multiple perspectives, all interacting simultaneously in one space where students' emerging under-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch005

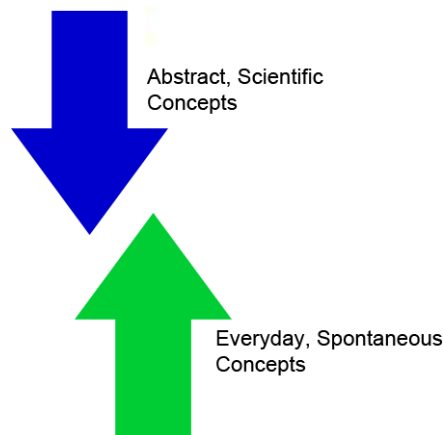
standings of disciplinary practices are cultivated. The concept of place and space is an interesting one to consider in the development of inclusive curriculum and instruction. Comber (2016) illustrates the interconnectedness of place and space within school and community institutions. According to Comber (2016), schools are “‘placed’ institutions with architectural divisions and furniture within their spaces that contain and prescribe activities and bodily habitus for specified groups” (p. 6). Within these spaces, both teachers and students create classrooms that are “negotiated by participants” (p. 23), where students interact with and negotiate multiple non-academic and academic discourses throughout the school day.

Furthering Comber’s (2016) ecological framing of place and space, schools and classrooms also exist within a particular temporal and spatial context as they symbolize the “throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now (itself drawing on a history and a geography of thens and theres); and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman” (Massey, 2005, p. 140) of place itself. An acknowledgment of the importance of a students’ non-academic lives within disciplinary spaces must also be realized in order for academic influences to become a part of their lived literacies (Riesco, 2021c), which are those discourses that students take with them from non-disciplinary and disciplinary spaces to read the word and the world in order to rewrite their worlds and discourses (Freire, 1985) according to their experiences and emerging knowledge.

Situating the idea of the classroom as both a place and space of “throwntogetherness” (Comber, 2016; Massey, 2005) is relevant to the process presented at the end of this chapter for two reasons. First, as Comber (2016) notes, the classroom is a place and space where both students and teachers of multiple perspectives and discourses come together to gain knowledge within a particular discipline. Moreover, the enactment of effective pedagogy often requires a deliberate “throwntogetherness” of multiple pedagogies in order to meet the needs of students within a discipline. Teachers who acknowledge the “throwntogetherness” of student discourses by merging multiple pedagogies can develop effective curricula and instruction that support disciplinary and non-disciplinary understandings.

In this chapter, the authors seek to illustrate how teachers can create a space of inclusive interaction in the “throwntogetherness” of the classroom through the development of curriculum and instruction that evidences social and emotional learning (SEL), culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP), and disciplinary literacy (DL). In considering these concepts, the authors turn to the tenets of each to establish a process for developing, or redeveloping, curriculum and instruction that acknowledges the complexity of the classroom space as a subculture (Ball & Lacey, 1984) of the discipline itself. This consideration is crucial to making disciplinary discourses relevant and illuminating how curriculum and instruction play a critical role in students’ learning as they understand and locate themselves within the discipline and world that surrounds them (Peoples, 2019). Offering such a process can help educators further develop their knowledge of DL and its relationship to CSP and SEL. Therefore, this chapter can guide the audience of teachers in creating a curriculum that supports students’ emerging knowledge of the discipline, connects disciplinary knowledge to students’ multiple social and cultural discourses, and provides a pathway for generative SEL within and outside of the academic discipline itself.

Figure 1. Spontaneous and scientific concepts



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

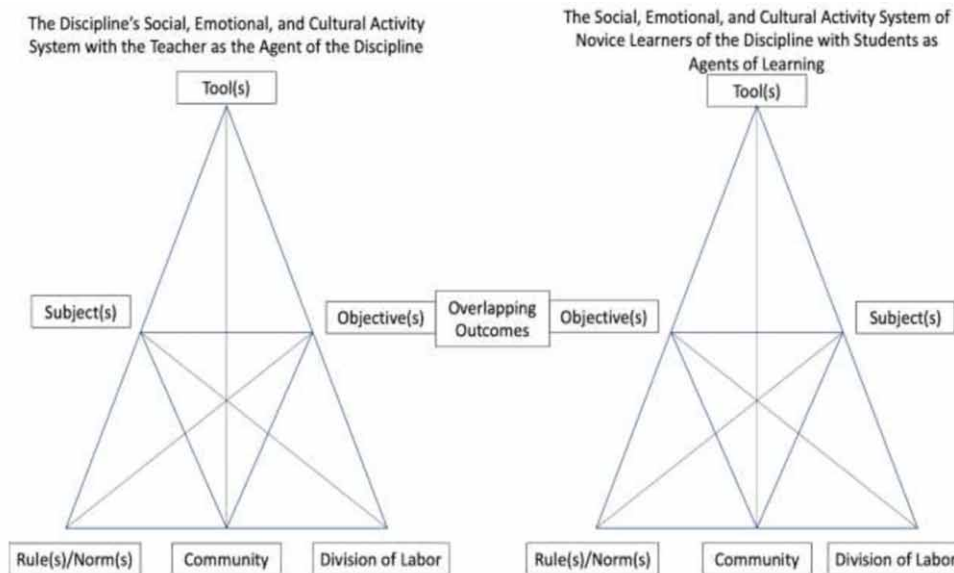
Sociocultural Theory

When using Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory as a point of departure, learning and cognition cannot be seen as a sole response to the environment nor as concrete hierarchical, unilateral stages of development. Instead, individuals move through a nonlinear dialectical process within which individuals interact with others through situated lived experiences in all that is social and cultural (Kozulin et al., 2003). Throughout the junctures where learning intertwines with development and the individual interacts with society, concept formation builds from thought and language, and mediation is imparted with more experienced others (Ageyev, 2003; Kozulin et al., 2003).

Since students intrinsically learn by all that is sociocultural and biological "from the very first day of life" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 84), social interaction and cultural tools, such as language, are central to development. They are what historically influence and move higher psychological functions inward and through both intramental and intermental planes (Cole & Wertsch, 1996). It is in this spiral where the interdependent spontaneous everyday concepts from lived experiences intertwine with the scientific concepts, which forge structure and meaning and move in an upward path towards unidirectional development (Kozulin et al., 2003; Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978).

While this transfer and transformation may not always be transparent or intuitive, especially in the beginning as perception, attention, memory, and thinking are forming, teachers can still amplify and support cognitive development by building trust, fostering relationships, and making connections (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). Successfully applying a meaningful *asset-based* approach leads to greater insights into students' lives, employs (Moll et al., 1992), and utilizes mediation to increase engagement and learning. As students' academic achievement and social-emotional foundations strengthen, their more experienced others see them as agents of their own cultural identities (Herrera, 2010; García & Kleifgen, 2018; Gay, 2018; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). This inclusivity and cultural specificity set sociocultural theory apart and distinguish it as "a framework [that] is highly relevant to modern multicultural education" and has "enormous potential for teaching culturally diverse learners" (Ageyev, 2003, p. 442).

Figure 2. Third-generation activity theory
(Adapted from Engeström, 2019)



In fact, it is Vygotsky's (1978) concept of *mediation* that is of interest to the interconnectedness of DL, CSP, and SEL. While teachers mediate DL in class, students are mediating their learning through often invisible connections from both their previous academic and non-academic, as well as their affective, lives (Mutekwe, 2014). By situating DL within the frames of CSP and SEL, teachers allow students to make broader connections to discourses outside of the discipline in order to expand students' current learning. Without framing their cultural, social, and emotional experiences as mediators of the discipline itself, teachers may implicitly devalue the richness of students' lived literacies and stress only isolation of disciplinary skills that do not apply to discourses outside of the discipline itself (del Carmen Salazar, 2013).

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

Furthering the ideas about mediation within the disciplines, cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) supports blending the three pedagogical lenses in curriculum development. CHAT relates to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory because the third-generation activity theory (Engeström, 2019; see Figure 2) sheds light on a mental model that can help show the interconnectedness of the plurality of pedagogies and the mediation that teachers and students enact in spaces of learning. In the third generation of CHAT (Engeström, 1987), the model suggests that a particular space may have multiple lenses within the disciplinary space. For example, when the teacher approaches the class through the lens of DL, the perspective is narrowed within the disciplinary discourse itself from the lens of an expert within the field; however, novice students within disciplines approach the same concept through emerging perspectives rather than expert ones. In doing so, they borrow and make intertextual connections to their own lived literacies, using their background knowledge (Riesco, 2021a) to make sense of what they are learning.

If a teacher is unaware of the activity systems that students bring to the classroom space, then misunderstandings may occur.

Using CHAT, teachers consider not only how they themselves have been influenced from their cultural-historical activities through their own college experiences and research within the disciplines but also what cultural-historical activities and connections *students* may bring to the lesson or unit. In framing curriculum development around both the teacher and students as subjects, teachers can begin to connect to students' cultural, historical, and social lives to expand students' knowledge by learning about the discipline and its application to their lives (Engeström, 2019). Moreover, disciplinary teachers add to the literacies, both within and beyond that of the discipline and the students, to create metacognitive awareness of literacy. Students then learn what lenses they can use to read and compose their sense of self, identity, and the world around them in an authentic, action-oriented way. As Vygotsky (1978) noted, "teaching should be organized in such a way that reading and writing are necessary for something" (p. 117) and are based on "something the child needs" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 117). The child's or student's needs are met when students understand that DL is about narrating and building themselves individually, narrating and building themselves in conjunction with the world around them, and narrating and building the world around them (Freire, 1985).

Spontaneous concepts are also developed within the CHAT framework through connecting to the students' objectives and outcomes in relation to their creation of the authentic, action-oriented compositions that "rewrite" their identity, their social spaces, or their communities at large. Without consideration of how students mediate and relate their spontaneous cultural, social, and emotional experiences to the discipline's scientific concepts, then units of instruction can lack relevance and purpose to the students' lives. Therefore, CHAT allows for a combination of a teacher's disciplinary outcome with the students' cultural, social, and emotional lives. The teacher blends DL, CSP, and SEL through the interconnected activity frameworks present within the space. CHAT also allows for reciprocity of the concepts so that the More Experienced Other (MEO) is a fluid state with both teachers and students playing a role in the development of learning (Walker, 2017).

In considering Figure 2 above, the discipline's activity system with the teacher in the agentive role illustrates the cultural-historical activity influence of the discipline on the teacher, meaning that the teacher has a strong influence from his/her/their DL understandings. These DL understandings shape the lens through which the teacher views the unit of learning within the shared classroom space. The same can be applied to SEL and the self-regulation skills students bring to and interact with across the classroom space. On the other hand, the students, who are novices to the DL centered in the classroom space, shape the units of learning through their lenses, whether from previous coursework connections or their non-academic influences. Sometimes the collective objectives and the purpose of learning are the same, but sometimes the objective is misaligned because of the different expertise and discourses within the two systems. In including the students' non-disciplinary activity systems in the classroom, teachers begin to frame the DL of the shared classroom as a connection to the students' cultural-historical activity systems. Ultimately, the students' activity systems are steeped in their social, emotional, and cultural influences, and CHAT gives teachers a way to access and acknowledge those influences within the disciplinary space, incorporating and valuing students' prior knowledge while expanding their knowledge. In balancing and valuing disciplinary needs with sociocultural activity systems, teachers create spaces that center DL, CSP, and SEL.

AFFORDANCES OF THE INDIVIDUAL PEDAGOGIES

Disciplinary Literacy and Its Affordances

In relation to the activity systems at work within a classroom space, it is essential to note that DL already relates to both the cultural discourses and affective behaviors of interaction within the discipline. Moje (2015) establishes that “any work on adolescent literacy teaching and learning should include domains such as affect and emotion, imagination and curiosity, value, and purpose (what some refer to as “motivation”), and social and cultural practices, interactions, conventions, and norms” (p. 255). Borrowing Ball and Lacey’s (1984) term subcultures, Moje (2015) defines the classroom as a microcosm of disciplinary cultures where students learn to navigate the new discourses through interactions with the discipline, multiple perspectives within the classroom, and their funds of knowledge and identity. Such subcultural disciplinary classrooms ultimately create discursive connections to students’ development and transfer of social and emotional practices across discourse communities. These social and emotional practices can be seamlessly woven into academic content. For example, Schleiff (2021a) provides ways SEL can be implemented in a secondary English Language Arts curriculum, such as integrating SEL concepts with discussion, journaling activities, and community impact projects.

What Moje (2015) discusses is essential to the argument of connecting DL to CSP and SEL as a practice. Therefore, it is highly beneficial to explain this connection before breaking down the process for developing, or redeveloping, a curriculum that centers DL as a tool for CSP and SEL. Disciplinary literacy, CSP, and SEL have a natural synthesis that teachers can make visible to their students through curricular and instructional choices. Moreover, DL encompasses the idea that disciplines exist within discourse communities (Gee, 2001) and that a classroom is a place and space where students learn “social and cultural practices, interactions, conventions, and norms within the discipline” (Moje, 2015, p. 255).

The goal of DL is for students to begin their journey of moving from an outsider to an insider perspective within the discipline, although whether they continue to expand their knowledge in that discipline often depends on students’ future course choices and interests. In this regard, it is not merely the “what” in the discipline, but rather the “how” to approach, interact with, and develop a voice within the discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Furthermore, in making DL a priority, teachers add disciplinary cultures and norms to students’ perceptions, influencing how they can see the disciplinary discourse within their own lives and those of the discourses surrounding them.

In fact, a DL approach does connect to students’ social, emotional, and cultural literacy practices as part of its complex framework. Unfortunately, a DL perspective can become oversimplified and risk absenting itself from the inclusion of multiple cultures and discourses in support of privileging the hegemonic ideological literacies of the discipline. In turn, those who promote DL approaches within the content areas may also isolate the discipline’s literacy as a separate field that does not always welcome outsider perspectives.

In DL, the purpose and audience within the discipline’s literacy practices are inextricably linked to students’ emerging understanding of and interaction with the content knowledge (Riesco, 2021b). Often, the purpose and audience are an insider’s understanding of the field, but the teacher defines and limits the audience and purpose to the classroom borders. If teachers narrow and constrain students’ DL to that of the classroom space in isolation, students may not see themselves or others within the literacy systems of the discipline. Additionally, in reviewing the extant literature, metacognition is developed solely from the lens of content-based ideologies through strategies such as think alouds (Schleiff, 2021b)

and modeling of DL practices. Consequently, DL can lead to code-switching of linguistic and disciplinary discourses, rather than promoting the culturally sustaining and SEL practices of code meshing (Young, 2011) or translanguaging (Carpenter de Cortina, 2021; Fu et al., 2019). Incorporating CSP and SEL practices could therefore support the connection between the discipline's literacy discourse and students' literacy practices.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Its Affordances

When evaluating and revising curricular and instructional DL choices that implement CSP and SEL, it is first necessary to consider specific junctures in scholarship that historically inform CSP. A pivotal starting point is Moll et al.'s (1992) ethnographic research which illustrates the importance of funds of knowledge, or in other words, what students bring from their home discourses, or what Gee (1998) refers to as primary discourse, to the classroom. Asserting that the incorporation of students' funds of knowledge, a student's "social, economic, and productive activities...that [teachers can] seek to incorporate strategically into classrooms" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 139). Building upon this concept, Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) recently incorporated funds of identity, or "the box of tools that people use to define themselves" (p. 74), to explain how knowledge is connected to identity. In their research, Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) also make a point to acknowledge how funds of identity can be invisible and that funds of knowledge do not always equate to individual identity.

The concept of funds of knowledge and identity relates to the creation of a "third space" (Gutiérrez et al., 1997; Gutiérrez et al., 1999; Gutiérrez, 2008) that acknowledges multiple activity systems at work within the classroom space. In considering funds of knowledge and identity, both implicitly support the connection of non-academic discourses with the DL of the subject. In considering how DL connects to culturally responsive pedagogy, teachers should consider their students' funds of knowledge and identities in order to develop DL that connects to students' authentic literacies across subjects. Gutiérrez (2008) illustrates through student examples how the third space is ultimately an intersection of transformation, a spatiotemporal continuum where students can develop, or redevelop, their identities in conjunction with the discipline itself. Therefore, the development taking place within this sphere should not erase identities, especially those which are cultural. These academic spaces, ones that are asset-based and foster collaboration, openness, and acceptance, have the opportunity to enhance and extend, rather than eliminate or belittle, the potential knowledge and identities students need to be recognized and appreciated.

In supporting and valuing multiple perspectives, some scholars turn to culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002; 2010), and CSP (Paris, 2012). Rooted in multicultural education and an asset-based perspective, each framework overlaps and builds on the latter, creating a pedagogical foundation that centers around and validates students' cultures, identities, languages, and learning. In juxtaposition, they also attend to teachers' perspectives, perceptions, and instructional practices to support student learning and success both within and outside the classroom. While each framework has its own theoretical orientation, the overarching concept is seminal in creating best practices and curricula that engage students to "honor, explore, and extend" (Paris, 2012, p. 94) their cultural experiences.

Ladson-Billings (1994) first coined the term culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as one that "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 18). The underpinnings of this paradigm focus on three essential elements that speak to developing students' academic success; supporting and nurturing cultural com-

petencies and inclusion; and fostering sociopolitical or critical consciousness to critique inequalities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In culturally relevant pedagogy, the development of classroom disciplinary space encourages transformative experiences beyond teachers providing simplistic notions between home and school; instead, an element of criticality exists, one that values their cultural identities.

Geneva Gay (2010; 2018) relates to Ladson-Billings' CRP framework with her proposal of culturally responsive teaching, which further broadens and shifts teacher practice through "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them...teach[ing] to and through the strengths of these students" (p. 36). Gay (2002) additionally notes the need for teachers to analyze their curricula so instruction can "deal directly with controversy; studying a wide range of ethnic individuals and groups; contextualizing issues within race, class, ethnicity, and gender; and including multiple kinds of knowledge and perspectives" (p. 108). Rather than avoiding tensions, Gay (2002) supports curricula that allow students to explore the various contexts of concepts across disciplines. Teachers then facilitate student learning through their knowledge of culturally responsive practices within their respective disciplines.

Paris (2012) further developed the discourse on culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching by arguing that culturally sustaining pedagogy affords teachers with the understanding of how "linguistic and cultural dexterity and plurality [are] necessary for success and access in our demographically changing U.S. and global schools and communities" (Paris, 2012, p. 95). Paris' (2012) acknowledgment of the plurality of cultural influences illustrates the teacher's responsibility to honor, incorporate, and connect students' funds of knowledge and identity to academic knowledge. Ultimately, teachers have a responsibility to create curricula that do not devalue students' cultural identity and literacy practices.

For this chapter, the authors have chosen to operate from the lens of culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) because of Paris and Alim's (2014) consideration of how disciplinary discourse also has the responsibility to allow for critique and challenges to biased ideologies within students' discourses that do not support the valuation of multiple perspectives. Additionally, the concepts of CSP, third space, and funds of knowledge and identity can be seen in relation to the tenets of critical literacy. Critical literacy can be defined as "students engaging in forms of ideology critique: exposing and reconstructing misleading ideological versions of the world provided in media, literature, textbooks, and everyday texts" (Luke, 2016, p. 354). As Ladson-Billings (1995) and Paris and Alim (2014) assert, one goal of culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy is to critique existing power structures within and outside the disciplines themselves. By challenging hegemony in disciplinary discourses, then teachers engender moments of student transformation, a key component of multicultural education (Banks, 2016). By critiquing hegemonic forces, students learn to question the dominant power structures that are in place while learning how to develop ideas to act as agents of change in society. Moreover, they begin to problematize the discipline's hegemony, as well as that of their sociocultural hegemonies, which promotes social awareness and self-management.

SEL and Its Affordances

In allowing for the critiques and challenges with the discipline while valuing students' funds of knowledge and identity, the concept of SEL becomes intertwined with culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy and DL. However, Mahfouz and Anthony-Stevens (2020) argue that the interconnectedness of SEL and CSP is not always a given and that educators intentionally need to attend to a student population's cul-

tural, social, and emotional practices. For students to develop into discerning readers and writers of the world (Freire, 1985), the overlapping literacies of both SEL and CSP must be present in the curricula. Students, in turn, could bring their experiences, skills, and background knowledge to the curriculum viewed through their personal lenses of SEL. Educators can intentionally welcome these lenses by creating a space and place that privileges an SEL foundation.

Osher et al. (2016) suggest five central tenets of SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. These are also the same tenets used by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a well-known organization that has been leading North American and international SEL practices for over two decades. These tenets could be present and provide a guiding foundation in any educational space, no matter the grade level or content area. A meta-analysis of SEL program implementation in schools found that students who received SEL programming had higher academic achievement, fewer disruptive behaviors, improved attitudes, and greater motivation in the classroom (Durlak et al., 2011). Taylor et al.'s (2017) meta-analysis found that SEL program participation had a lasting positive effect on students up to 18 years later regardless of race, socioeconomic background, or school location. These benefits and lasting effects help demonstrate the importance of SEL program implementation in the classroom for all students, regardless of age or discipline. Therefore, a teacher's understanding and implementation of SEL practices can be powerful. Jones et al. (2013) posit three ways a teacher's effectiveness of SEL implementation impacts students: the quality of the student-teacher relationship, teacher modeling of SEL skills, and classroom management and organization. All of these lay a foundation for students to benefit not only socially and emotionally but also academically.

Relationships between teachers and students also play a significant role in student engagement and achievement (Roorda et al., 2011). The studies from the meta-analysis Roorda et al. (2011) conducted show that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with positive engagement and achievement, with more substantial positive effects shown with older students. Conversely, Roorda et al. (2011) found that the adverse effects of poor teacher-student relationships were more significant in the younger students than with the older ones. Building positive relationships between secondary educators and their students can create an environment where students thrive in each academic discipline. Other benefits to building a relationship with one's students could be to understand further who students are, what they are interested in, and what they may need to be successful. Taking time to build relationships in the classroom between students could help them feel safe with one another and promote a positive classroom culture where students can discuss academic concepts and work through differing thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. Creating a space where students can have an open dialogue could help cultivate a culture of continual learning and growing through the content explored. In doing so, the classroom place and space welcomes all voices and quiets any power structures.

By creating environments that decentralize the discipline's power structures as absolute, teachers develop a third space that promotes SEL competencies, which they can then make visible to students through critically connecting the SEL practices within the discipline in comparison or contrast to other discourse communities. Additionally, countering hegemonic forces within the disciplines supports the creation of DL spaces of SEL, so students become more socially aware as they consider differing perspectives. By learning the disciplinary language, students can develop relationship skills that allow them to communicate clearly and create positive disciplinary relationships.

Educators can blend CSP and SEL in their approaches to DL. Providing students with affordances to participate in the "rewriting" of the world through disciplinary community action projects can promote

action within the students themselves. However, these skills must be explicitly tied to CSP and SEL so that students can become explicitly aware of the way they are building knowledge between the two.

AFFORDANCES OF BLENDING MULTIPLE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

By intentionally creating a plurality of pedagogies that centers DL as interconnected with CSP and SEL, teachers can engage fully with the complex activity systems that exist within a classroom space. In treating the three pedagogical concepts as necessary lenses for curricular and instructional planning, teachers not only begin to recognize the interconnectedness and interdependence of each but also how they each have their unique elements. Additionally, teachers who implement DL, CSP, and SEL within their classrooms offer spaces that value the assets and multiple perspectives that students bring.

Considering the discussion around asset pedagogy in both CSP (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2014) and SEL (Jones et al., 2013; Ramirez et al., 2021), connecting funds of knowledge and identity into the DL discourse can help create a conglomeration, or confluence, of discourses in the disciplinary space that shapes collective identity and knowledge. Allowing the disciplinary space to remain open to students' multitudinous discourses shows how the subculture of the classroom DL is and should be dialogic and does not adhere to the authoritative voice. Instead, students can create dialogic approaches to their development of understandings that allow for interdisciplinary, cross-cultural lenses that teachers can use to support learning and growth within the discipline, making SEL a foreground for the appreciation of these multiversal discourse communities.

Visualizing DL, CSP, and SEL

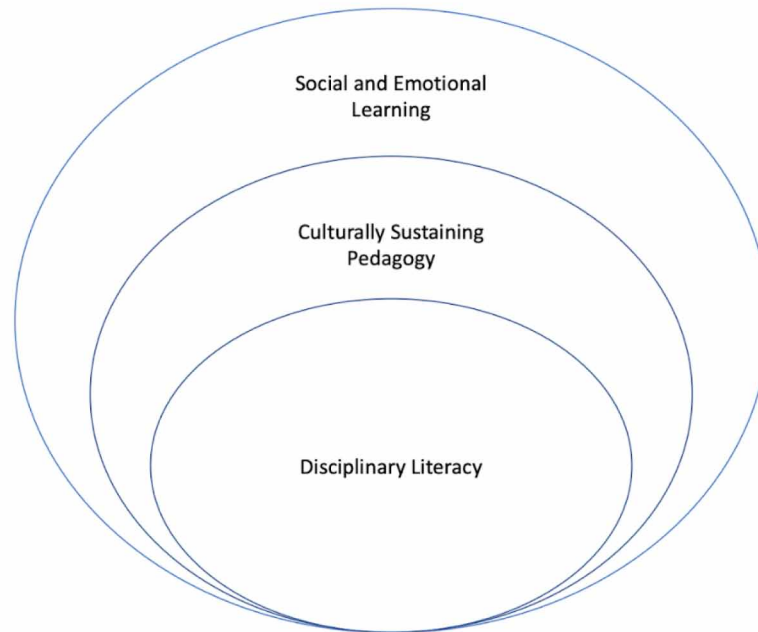
To that end, Figure 3 offers a visualization of how the three concepts are embedded in a single disciplinary space. Disciplinary literacy is narrower toward the discipline's cultures, norms, purposes, and communicative interactions (Moje, 2015) but should connect to broader student discourses and affective student learning. In other words, DL allows for a connection to students' social, emotional, and cultural discourses. Breaking down Moje's 4E's for disciplinary literacy (Moje, 2015; Rainey et al., 2018) can help clarify the connections between each.

Engage

Moje (2015) discusses first drawing students into DL by engaging them in the practices of the field itself. She asserts that student engagement in the discipline relies on teachers framing the curriculum within the "everyday work of the discipline" (Moje, 2015, p. 261). Students take on roles such as the researcher, the inquirer, the theorist, and the scientist, all within their respective disciplines, and learn how the profession applies literacy within its field. By taking on the roles within the discipline, students learn how literacy moves reading and writing to analysis, inquiry, synthesis, and problem solving, all while immersing themselves in the data texts within that discipline to sparse data according to the discursive norms.

However, the professional literacy practices of the discipline itself often include social and emotional literacy (Riesco, 2021c) that exists within the interactions within the disciplinary space. In extending their knowledge within the discipline, students often implicitly learn to meet the discipline's social and

Figure 3. Integrating disciplinary literacy, CSP, and SEL in the classroom space for a plurality of pedagogies



emotional practices as well. SEL's five tenets of self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills interact in various ways throughout the disciplines. For example, responsible decision-making in a science discipline may involve making ethical choices regarding the pursuit of the inquiry. In an English discipline, responsible decision-making may involve responding to or questioning texts that lack a multiplicity of voices. The disciplinary space itself, especially when employing tasks that support DL, is implicitly teaching students the discursive cultures of the disciplines by developing more self-awareness of their identity through the lenses of the discipline. The classroom space, then, becomes an activity system that develops students' social awareness of the discipline as it relates to the world around them, develops students' self-management techniques to apply in other discourses, or develops students' understandings about the interactive relationships that exist within the collaborative or individual work of the discipline.

Elicit/Engineer

It is important to note that the SEL skills within the discipline are often regulated to an implied state of understanding rather than an explicit one. Additionally, by solely focusing on their "engagement" with the discipline itself, literacy practices outside of the discipline may be excluded, and this exclusion of non-disciplinary activity systems can erase valuable social, cultural, and emotional literacy practices tied to students and their learning. With the elicit/engineer stage, Moje (2015) acknowledges that students are emerging disciplinary researchers rather than experienced disciplinary participants, so teachers must employ tools and strategies to support students' meaningful and authentic learning within DL practices.

Within the elicit and engineer stage, teachers can identify and apply tools that support the multiversal discourses students bring with them into the classroom. Tools such as K-W-L charts or anticipation guides (Riesco, 2021a) help students access prior understandings and promote students' disciplinary, social, emotional, and cultural metacognitive development. These tools empower students to track changes in their thinking patterns and expand their cultural knowledge within the academic realm. Without connecting these discourses to their lived experiences and literacies, teachers may isolate the discipline as a school-only culture that does not relate to students' authentic lives. Teachers have access to a multitude of tools and strategies that allow students to make connections to the other disciplines and their non-academic discourses, offering an opportunity for DL knowledge to expand their learning beyond the classroom space into the broader world. For example, having students complete think alouds (Schleiff, 2021b) or welcoming the practices of translanguageing (Carpenter de Cortina, 2021) as a springboard into a synthesis of the discipline can support students' lived literacy practices.

Beyond connecting this dimension to CSP, engineering and eliciting students' engagement can also relate to students' SEL development. In determining tools and strategies that build a bridge between students' lived literacies and the classroom space's DL, teachers can also create engagement by engineering students' understanding of the SEL literacy practices that they sometimes unconsciously use to build and manage the construction of knowledge within the disciplinary space. Deliberately linking the SEL tenets to students' cultural ways of building knowledge adds an element of complexity to students' valuation of themselves as cultural beings and of the discipline as a pocket of their cultural journeys.

Examine

Moje (2015) notes that *examination* relates to the "meanings of words, phrases, and symbols in a given subject area or discipline and the ways that people use language in the discipline under study" (p. 267). In relation to Vygotskian scientific and spontaneous concepts (Vygotsky, 1986), "to examine" in this case means to frame their emerging understandings within the discipline around the scientific and theoretical meanings of the disciplinary's literacy. By acknowledging that the disciplines uniquely apply language, teachers offer students the opportunity to view language and communication as a discursive tool that employs specific norms.

However, students must acknowledge that the discipline's language has overlapping application to their social, emotional, and cultural lives. In considering a confluence of the "engineering" and "examining" (Moje, 2015; Rainey et al., 2018) of language within the curriculum, teachers need to determine how to facilitate students' understanding that disciplinary language may relate to students' cultural, social, and emotional literacy practices. For example, assessing students' background knowledge through anticipation guides or K-W-L charts (Riesco, 2021c) or having students use graphic organizers that connect disciplinary language to their authentic literacy practices allows them to situate the self, the social, and the relational elements of their lives within that of the discipline.

Evaluate

In developing a disciplinary awareness of students' social, emotional, and cultural lives, the dimension of evaluation becomes the force behind the connections. Purveyors of DL often address the disciplinary cultures and the metacognitive awareness needed to become versed within the discipline's literacy practices. Moje (2015) notes that this dimension engenders adolescents to determine "why, when, and

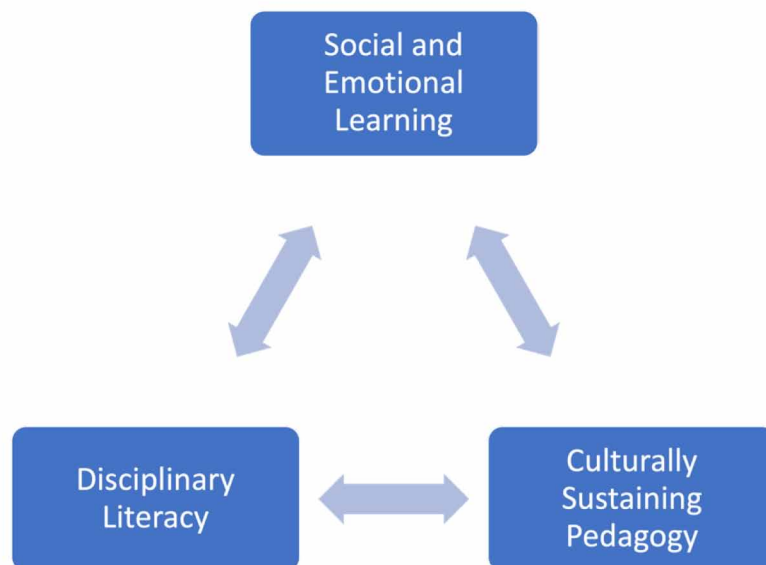
how disciplinary discourses are useful and why, when and how they are not useful” (p. 268). She continues by acknowledging that “[e]xplicit attention to these questions can help students learn to navigate across and between their own everyday habits of mind, their identities and cultural practices, and those that are valued in the discipline” (Moje, 2015, p. 268-269). When evaluating, teachers have students access the metacognitive awareness that they need for the synthesis of the disciplinary discourse with their social, emotional, and cultural literacies. In doing so, this evaluative stage has the potential for students to engage with the disciplines in direct relationship with their prior knowledge, including their prior academic knowledge within the discipline, their prior social and emotional knowledge, and their prior cultural knowledge, creating interdependence between the DL and their authentic lived literacies. For example, teachers can support making students’ thinking visible through meta-dialogues that allow students to recognize the structures that exist in their social, emotional, cultural, and disciplinary lives.

The importance of the evaluation dimension within Moje’s framework (2015) is undeniable to the incorporation of CSP and SEL within DL practices and the activity systems within the classroom. Without the explicit acknowledgment that the discipline connects to students’ lived literacy practices, the disciplinary space can become one that focuses solely on the social, emotional, and cultural norms of the field, rather than illustrating the interconnectedness of the discipline with students’ authentic lives and spaces. Both teachers and students need an awareness of how interactions within the activity systems of the discipline itself relate to the interactions of external activity systems and how the interactions outside the disciplinary activity systems can relate to the field’s activity itself. Additionally, the reciprocity and interconnectedness within the evaluative dimension grant students the ability to critique the disciplinary discourse and their non-disciplinary discursive practices, both of which may hold bias and ideological beliefs. Further, in focusing on the development of metacognitive awareness for all three pedagogical concepts, teachers allow students to begin to see how each other’s social, emotional, and cultural differences can help support individual growth and understanding of the multiplicity of the classroom, or the multiversal activity systems that exist within the “throwntogetherness” (Massey, 2005) of these classroom spaces. Combining a plurality of pedagogies that focuses on DL, CSP, and SEL within secondary curriculum and instruction is about giving students the opportunity to see their social, emotional, and cultural activity systems in interaction with the disciplinary spaces. Further, this plurality gives teachers and students a space that values different activity systems across discourse communities.

PROCESS FOR CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

In developing or redeveloping units of instruction around the plurality of DL, CSP, and SEL, teachers can work through questions that can help guide their curriculum revisions. Additionally, the process requires an understanding of the flexibility surrounding the incorporation between the pedagogies. Within units of instruction, teachers can touch on all three elements, while teachers center one or two at other points. Moving interchangeably between the three concepts (Figure 4) adds an element of fluidity that needs to exist not just within the discipline itself but as students analyze the discipline through their own social, emotional, and cultural lenses and vice versa. Curriculum development relies on the reciprocity of these pedagogies to expand student learning, allowing students to think of their lived literacy practices and disciplinary literacies as intertextual. Within this process, framing the classroom space around the tenets of students’ social, emotional, and cultural lives may help students connect to the discipline. For example, creating “Getting to Know You” sheets, checking students’ understanding of their social and emotional

Figure 4. The fluidity of the plurality of pedagogies within a unit of instruction



coping mechanisms and executive functioning skills, and having students examine their lived literacy practices can support teachers' inclusion of those connections throughout the disciplinary discourse.

Guiding Questions

The following are some questions teachers can consider in creating a curriculum that showcases the intertextuality of discipline's literacy practices and the students' lived literacies.

CASEL's Five Areas of SEL Competence

- How is self-awareness modeled within the activity system of the discipline? How are students taught self-awareness outside of the discipline?
- What self-management strategies are taught within the discipline? How do teachers encourage students to develop self-management in the disciplinary space? What disciplinary tools are available within the activity systems to help students self-regulate their expansion of disciplinary knowledge and their knowledge of self-regulation?
- How are responsible decision-making opportunities woven into the discipline? How do students reflect over their decision-making process within their activity systems and outcomes and those of others? How and when is responsible decision-making explicitly modeled within the discipline's literacy practices?
- What opportunities do teachers give students to develop their relationships with other activity systems? How are relationship skills taught in the disciplinary space?

Culturally Sustaining, SEL-Based Practices in Disciplinary Literacy Curricular Spaces

- What opportunities are students afforded to develop social awareness of the discipline? When do teachers give students the opportunity to understand the intertextuality between the discipline itself and non-disciplinary perspectives and empathize with them?

Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Pedagogy

- How can teachers make the classroom a welcoming, risk-free environment that values and respects social, emotional, and cultural perspectives of the DL practices and outside of the DL practices?
- How can teachers help students see themselves within the disciplinary activity systems?
- What is the culture and climate of the disciplinary space, and how is it constantly evolving based on the plurality of activity systems within the space?
- How can teachers learn more about the students' funds of knowledge and identity they bring to our classroom? How can teachers incorporate these funds into their DL practices?
- What efforts can teachers make to learn student identities, languages, cultures, traditions, interests, and lived experiences, and how can teachers include these assets as an intertextual piece necessary to develop disciplinary knowledge?
- How can teachers highlight the importance of students' cultural-bound ways of learning and sharing within the discipline's activity system?
- How can teachers purposefully group students so they can use their entire language and learn from each other?
- How can teachers provide students resources and materials that are accessible and authentically represent students' lived experiences and literacies?
- How can teachers frame DL practices in developing lessons and instructional practices that are student-centered?
- Do teachers provide accommodation within the disciplinary activity system that elevates students' learning and SEL practices? (Adapted from Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017)

Disciplinary Literacy

- What are the teachers' desired outcomes within the disciplinary activity system?
- How can teachers teach the DL practices while valuing students' lived literacies?
- How can teachers include awareness of students' social, emotional, and cultural literacy practices in the unit of instruction?
- How does the unit of instruction connect to students' past, present, and future lives?
- How can students critique and challenge the discipline's literacy practices through their own social, emotional, or cultural literacy discourse lenses?
- How can students expand their social, emotional, or cultural literacy discourse practices through the disciplinary lens?
- How can teachers align social, emotional, and cultural literacy practices with DL practices to guide students' metacognitive development?
- How can teachers have students question the potential inequities within the discipline's literacy practices, and how can teachers support students' ability to challenge inequitable practices?
- How can teachers access students' counter-narratives that help build a complex understanding of DL practices?

- How can teachers support students in framing the DL practices to challenge students' non-disciplinary discourses, ideologies, or biases?
- How can teachers illustrate how students' social, emotional, and cultural literacies have intertextual connections to the discipline's social, emotional, and cultural literacy practices?

These questions can support teachers in guiding themselves through creating meaningful disciplinary units of instruction that also relate to the students' social, emotional, and cultural literacy practices, or students' lived literacies, that influence the way they perceive the discipline itself. Teachers do not have to answer all these questions for each unit but can choose the ones that support their goals and purpose. By connecting the discipline to students' lived literacies, teachers have a way to reciprocally influence students and how they see and write the world outside of the classroom space (Freire, 1985).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

To address the exponentially increasing interest of these three dimensions and the gap in the extant literature of how they are interconnected, it would be highly beneficial to the field if additional research was conducted. Whether qualitative or mixed methods, such research could be framed through participatory action research that includes interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations on both teacher and student levels. In addition, providing meaningful professional development and comprehensive teacher education programming that incorporates the "throwntogetherness" (Comber, 2016; Massey, 2005) of the classroom would not only expand teachers' knowledge bases but also provide them with the affordances they need to develop, or redesign, curriculum and instructional practices that integrate all three concepts. However, such programming should be ongoing and job-embedded while accounting for multiple perspectives and funds of knowledge and identity that derive from students' homes and communities (Appleman, 2015; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Moll et al., 1992). Supporting such initiatives would require school districts and state educational agencies to work together, especially if explicit, hidden, and excluded curricular standards are to be aligned and reach the classroom level. Finally, the field of education could also benefit from considering the more recent work in transformative social and emotional learning (Jagers et al., 2021; TSEL) and its potential connection to DL and CSP and potential extension to the ideas in this chapter.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the authors believe educational institutions must develop curricula that center community building through a DL approach that considers students' social, emotional, and cultural literacy practices while simultaneously extending such practices to engage with the discipline. These three concepts have a natural synthesis as they can provide teachers with an opportunity to make visible the integrations of multiple disciplines, literacies, and discourses within a particular discipline. Further, teachers can find value in the lived literacies their students bring to these spaces toward a more pluralistic, humanizing pedagogy (del Carmen Salazar, 2013). This chapter aims to offer support to teachers for the development or revision of curriculum and instruction that expands their understanding of how to incorporate CSP and SEL as part of their curricular choices within the disciplinary spaces. After all, Massey (2005)

asks to “imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far” (p. 9). In the complex activity spaces of the classroom, the plurality of these three pedagogical approaches offers a way to support student learning within and beyond the discipline by encouraging intertextual, perspectival connections between the discipline’s literacies and students’ social, emotional, and cultural literacies that create spaces for students to expand their stories.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT): Refers to a framework that offers a model for observing activities within discourse in conjunction with the internal mediation of the individual, connecting the moment of the activity to the invisible influences from the social, historical, and cultural lives of the individual.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP): Refers to a teaching approach that values students' social, cultural, and emotional influences, incorporates those influences within curricular spaces, and supports a critical analysis of discourses through multiple perspectives.

Disciplinary Literacy (DL): Refers to the specific cultures, norms, language, purpose, style, and organization of literacy within a particular discipline.

Scientific Concepts: Refers to formal learning that helps shape spontaneous concepts through the lenses of a discipline or theoretical framework.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Refers to the life skills that support healthy management of emotions, knowledge, and attitudes within social, cultural, and personal contexts.

Sociocultural Theory: Refers to the theoretical framework that describes how culture and historical influences and social interactions are mediated and situated in the learning process, and in turn, lead to the development of thought, language, and higher cognitive functions.

Spontaneous Concepts: Refers to everyday, informal learning that leads individuals to draw conclusions about their social, cultural, and historical spaces.

Section 2

Instructional Tools and Strategies

Chapter 6

Using Mentor Texts to Deconstruct Text Sets: Developing Cultural Awareness in a Modern Society

Rhonda C. Hylton

Kent State University, USA

William P. Bintz

Kent State University, USA

ABSTRACT

We recognize that students need literacy practices that transcend grade levels and content areas as well as multiple opportunities to showcase and to see their culture(s) in the texts they read. Therefore, in this chapter, the authors consider how culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy can help support literacy experiences for students and help educators better understand how to teach in ways that honor culture and language in a modern society. The chapter has three main goals: define mentor texts and review the literature on mentor texts across content areas, identify mentor texts across content areas and point to how teachers and teacher educators can use them to demonstrate a clear understanding of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, and provide professional resources for teachers and teacher educators to utilize as they create literacy experiences that build knowledge around mentor texts for the purpose of developing cultural awareness.

INTRODUCTION

“I am struggling to find mentor texts for argumentative essays in social studies. I have been looking for approximately half an hour and have yet to find anything that’s usable.”

This sentiment of frustration was shared by an undergraduate preservice teacher as she compiled resources for an inquiry related to deconstructing texts and building text sets. The goal was for students to consider

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch006

the role of textbooks and text sets in and across the content areas. Author 1, the instructor of the course, aimed to help students explore diverse voices and perspectives in the content areas by encouraging them to locate mentor texts written by authors of color and embed them within a text set. However, she noted that it seemed difficult for the student to find mentor texts that were usable. Author 1 wondered: How was the student searching for mentor texts in her content area? Would her unsuccessful attempts deter her from using mentor texts written by authors of color in her future classroom?

As literacy educators and teacher educators, we conduct research on literacy concepts such as mentor texts and text sets. We share personal and professional interests around cultural diversity and developing cultural awareness in K-12 classrooms. The purpose of this book chapter is two-fold: (1) to contribute to ongoing conversations on the importance of mentor texts in literacy instruction, especially as supports for pre-service teachers, practicing teachers, and teacher educators, as they engage with ideas of how to present different cultures in their classrooms, and (2) to share with these groups how they can align mentor texts written by authors of color to their instructional goals. The inquiry that drove our investigation was: How can teacher educators assist preservice teachers and other educators in their understanding of using mentor texts as a support for developing cultural awareness?

We share the background and context that led to this work and examine the usefulness of deconstructing texts and explore the importance of cultural diversity in schools. Then, we situate authors of color within mentor texts and define mentor texts and offer a review of the literature on the topic. We also identify mentor texts across content areas and point to how teacher educators and others can use them to demonstrate a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy. We offer general strategies for finding and selecting mentor texts and then focus on instructional strategies to use with mentor texts. We end the chapter with a list of professional resources for teacher educators and others to utilize as they think about creating literacy experiences that use mentor texts for the purpose of developing cultural awareness. Finally, we share final thoughts and lessons learned by Author 1 about how to best support students in their understanding of mentor texts and helping them select the best mentor texts to use across content areas.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The short vignette in the introduction was selected by Author 1, who teaches a course titled Reading and Writing in Adolescence and Adulthood, in which undergraduate preservice teachers mainly enroll; students must have gained admission to advanced study to take the course. At the time, the course was delivered asynchronously online as part of the Curriculum and Instruction program in the School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies at a mid-size university in a midwestern state. As outlined in the course description, the course targets an understanding of literacy learning in adolescence and adulthood (ages 12-21) with an emphasis on strategies for text learning, literacy in electronic environments and teaching students who struggle as readers and writers. One module in the course centered on deconstructing texts and the role of textbooks and text sets in content area classrooms.

For the task, students were asked to: (1) determine the topic or theme of a text set; (2) explain why they chose the topic and how it relates to the standards for their content area; and (3) cite their content area standards to demonstrate an understanding of how the standards influence literacy language and learning. Additionally, they had to choose an anchor, or mentor text, and outline: (1) reasons why the text was critical to their content standards and/or instructional goals; (2) how they would lead students

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through a reading of the text; (3) specific reading strategies they would employ to teach the text; and (4) how they would assess students' understanding of the text. Finally, students were required to choose at least three supporting texts and answer the same questions above.

We are both employed at a predominantly White University and work in Literacy Education. Author 1 is an African American woman and maintains a strong commitment to ensuring diverse voices are explored and valued through her research and literacy pedagogy. The goal of her assignment was to help students explore authors of color in the context of a text set as a way for them to develop cultural and linguistic awareness for themselves and for the students they may teach. Author 2 served as a strong support for Author 1 and this work and offered his expertise in using award-winning literature to teach across the K-12 curriculum.

DECONSTRUCTING TEXTS

From a critical literacy perspective (Comber, 2016; Vasquez, 2010, 2014b; Janks, 2014; Luke, 2014) texts are socially constructed from different viewpoints; they are never neutral (Vasquez, 2019). In her instruction around the text set assignment, Author 1 shared with students that textbooks and other texts they consume are written by authors who have certain interests or the interests of a larger constituency in mind. Vasquez (2019) offered, "Texts work to have us think about and believe certain things in specific ways, and as such they work to position readers in certain ways. We therefore need to question the perspectives conveyed by the writer" (p. 306). Thus, it was important to Author 1 that students learned to critically interrogate texts and consider how they are created and subsequently used in content area classrooms. She believed this learning would positively impact their instruction and possibly lead them to include text sets in their practices with students.

To deconstruct means to dismantle, or to take apart. Author 1 aimed for students to disentangle their perceptions of how texts have traditionally been used in the content areas and look to new possibilities of how they might use texts in their future classrooms. Sulistiani & Sudikan (2019) noted, "Deconstruction thinking must be based on critical thinking" (p. 318). A strong proponent of critical thinking, Author 1 encouraged students to reconsider the role textbooks play in instruction by focusing on the process of text selection in their content areas. While Author 1 guided students through the assignment and provided direct instruction and modeling, the primary focus was for students to immerse themselves in processes of thinking about various types of texts that would make sense to include in a set of readings to engage secondary students in their learning about different content area topics. To engage in this work, students read discipline-specific articles and participated in online discussions about the usefulness of trade books in their content areas; thought about ways they might use trade books in their future classrooms; considered the importance of design and structural elements present in texts within their disciplines and whether they affect how students read or engage with the texts; and decided whether they would include textbooks in a text set for their own students. As a result, students would apply their knowledge to planning for future instruction.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS

Schools are sites for the development of academic and socio-emotional skills (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Therefore, teachers need to be prepared to embrace each part of students' lives, including how culture impacts the ways in which students live and perceive the world around them. This learning also extends to teachers and teacher educators because we should be aware of how we view culture and how these views affect our daily work with students. In our extensive time in schools with many different types of students, we understand that it is imperative for teachers to be willing to present the stories of various cultural and racial groups for their own learning. It is also important for preservice teachers to cultivate a similar sense of cultural awareness for the students they will teach. Schachner (2019) observed, "As cultural diversity approaches in schools are relevant for the development of ethnic identity and intergroup attitudes, they may be particularly salient and therefore also show greater effects in adolescence" (p. 2). Incorporating text sets into content area instruction is one way to achieve this goal. In our roles preparing preservice teachers to enter schools, we also recognize that engagement with cultural diversity through various types of mentor texts can help our students enhance their knowledge of topics they might not know about or have not been exposed to, and work to apply their learning when they set instructional goals for students.

According to a report from the U.S Department of Education (2016), "The elementary and secondary educator workforce is overwhelmingly homogeneous (82 percent white in public schools)" (p. 3). In addition, educational leaders are predominantly white. A teaching workforce that remains uniform is likely to educate students of various races, ethnicities, socio-economic classes, and languages. Muñiz (2019) asserted, "The need for culturally responsive teaching is more pressing than ever before, especially when you consider the deep demographic gaps between teachers and students" (p. 6). Thus, the changing nature of schools and communities impacts the curricular learning experiences offered to all students. It is critical that schools recognize that students need to feel part of environments that honor the cultures they belong to; teachers should draw upon these cultures in planning and instruction. This is a fundamental component of the modern society we live in.

Hilaski (2020) addressed the cultural mismatch between home and school literacy instruction. She acknowledged results can be damaging when schools do not realize the unique social and cultural experiences students bring into classrooms. She wrote, "Teachers, consequently, may form inaccurate perceptions of their students' capabilities and miss opportunities to celebrate their literacy development when they ignore their students' racial identities and unique cultural beliefs, perceptions, values, and world views" (p. 358). When students experience this mismatch between their home and school literacy practices, they resist literacy learning that threatens their cultural identities, or succumb to what Valenzuela (1999) referred to as 'subtractive schooling,' "where they sacrifice their cultural identities and beliefs to adapt to those of the school" (Hilaski, 2020, p. 358). Thus, a bridge between home and school is necessary for culturally diverse students to experience academic success in content area classrooms.

Additionally, Souto-Manning (2016a) shared, "By valuing students' cultures, teachers can engineer bridges between their experiences and academic standards" (p. 266). Accordingly, teachers are called to offer thoughtful disciplinary literacy practices across content areas and build and support inclusive classroom cultures to connect students' life experiences to the content they teach. Introducing students to mentor texts and demonstrating how to select them and use them in instruction is a valuable practice we believe all educators should engage in. The next section situates mentor texts written by authors of color to highlight the work that still needs to be done to ensure that students know how to search for

these mentor texts, and they understand the value in using them in instruction so that learners can see themselves represented in the literature they read. Additionally, learning about mentor texts and authors of color can help educators think critically about which voices are included in literacy instruction, and the voices are often eliminated.

MENTOR TEXTS AND AUTHORS OF COLOR

If one searches “mentor texts and authors of color” in Google and in Google Scholar, few results appear that seem to offer insight into the writings of authors of color and how teachers at any level can integrate them into their classrooms to help support culturally responsive pedagogy. However, Muhammad (2015) shared her experiences with a group of young women of color who worked together during a literacy collaborative to read and write across representations of their lives. The girls in the group had a desire to write and “wanted to know if the stories of other Black girls were similar to their own” (p. 275). The difference between this and Muhammad’s project is that although Author 1 wanted to help students explore diverse voices, the intent of the course was focused more broadly on understanding literacy learning in adolescence and adulthood. Muhammad’s (2015) “class was centered on reading the works of African American women writers along with the girls’ strong desire to write about critical issues in their lives” (p. 277). Stone (2005) used mentor texts alongside selected children’s literature to help students create literary worlds that were entertaining, and that they could relate to. One Black teenage girl reappropriated the well-known children’s story of *Cinderella* to adjust the traditional storyline so that it better aligned with her contemporary cultural values. Winn (2011, 2013) conducted a similar literacy collaborative involving Black teenage girls who drew on their challenging life experiences to write and perform their identities (Muhammad, 2015). The research conducted by Muhammad, Stone, and Winn, along with other studies on Black adolescent girls, suggests that writing texts offers them “the tools to support, disrupt, and transform fixed discourses and may help conceptualize self-representations” (Muhammad, 2015, p. 278). It is important to note that instructional supports, such as student choice in writing, the ability to reference multiple literacies, and support of writing to define self, are significant in enabling students’ writing and use of mentor texts to explore diverse voices.

MENTOR TEXTS

Writers and writing teachers, state departments of education, curriculum specialists, and school districts generally define a mentor text as “any text you can learn from as a writer” (Laminack, 2017, p. 754). Examples include essays, poems, stories and research reports, menus and catalog descriptions, picture books, novels, screen plays, and billboards (Laminack, 2017). Almost any text can serve as a textual model for students to analyze and imitate.

Mentor texts are integral in reading and writing instruction. Wright (2018-2019) advocated for interactive read-alouds to support student learning. The approach focuses on two main areas: (1) promoting active thinking and talking about a selected text and (2) being purposeful and planned to ensure student learning. Read-alouds also target how texts work, which supports students as writers. High-quality mentor texts can be read aloud to help students understand specific text features that demonstrate clear examples of writing.

In an apprenticeship approach to learning specific writing skills, students are taught to apply the knowledge they gain to their own writing. Sudhoff (2019) noted, researchers “have found a connection between reading and writing instruction and the benefits the instruction has on reading comprehension and writing expression.” (p. 2) This connection increases the quality of student writing. Morrison et al. (2017) indicated that using mentor texts is one way “to help students learn how professional writers perform” (p. 290). Premont et al. (2017) wrote, “mentor texts allow published authors to step into the classroom and act as writing coaches” (p. 291). Teachers can ensure students’ writing success by exposing them to mentor texts frequently (Anderson, 2005; Dorfman & Capelli, 2009) and illustrating how to locate and analyze mentor texts to be successful in whatever they write (Anderson, 2005; Graham & Perin, 2007; Pytash & Morgan, 2014; Ray, 1999). According to Thompson and Reed (2019),

a good mentor text will be something student writers can read (individually or as a group), identify techniques and approaches used by the writer, discuss and understand why those approaches were effective, and integrate what they learned from this process into their own writing. (What Constitutes a Good Mentor Text section, para. 5).

Simply put, an effective mentor text shows students how to write well and allows them to visualize the type of writer they can become (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2017). Ivey (2021) asserted:

Not only can you teach reading and writing standards using mentor texts, but you can also integrate other content (social studies, science, and even math), provide life lessons and teach social/emotional strategies, and allow multicultural literature (also what is known as ‘diverse books’) to be windows, doors, and mirrors to the world. We want students to not only be able to identify with characters in a book, but also be exposed to other cultures, views, and experiences that they may not know otherwise.

A mentor text is considered good quality when teachers think it is good; students can understand it; and it is relevant to what is being taught. However, Laminack (2017) argued the term mentor text “has become almost ubiquitous in literacy education” (p. 753). It is a part of the universal language regarding the teaching of writing, yet there seems to be a larger focus on workshops and in-class demonstrations followed by requests for a list of mentor texts that can be used to teach specific elements of writing, rather than understanding how mentor texts can be used in literacy teaching practices (Laminack, 2017). In the sections that follow, we offer samples of mentor texts across the curriculum and strategies for finding, selecting mentor texts, and instructional strategies for mentor texts.

MENTOR TEXTS ACROSS CONTENT AREAS

Author I asked prompting questions to students in her online course to better understand how they were searching for mentor texts in their content areas, particularly mentor texts written by authors of color. After communicating with individual students and reflecting on how the text set assignment was presented, it became clear that students needed more direct instruction, particularly scaffolding of reading and the process of searching for mentor texts in their content areas. Scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy originates from Vygotsky’s (1978) learning theory and his zone of proximal development (ZPD). Rojas Rojas et al. (2019) pointed out the importance of scaffolding in reading instruction: “The

teacher's support seems particularly important when students have a reduced vocabulary because their academic and disciplinary language is insufficiently developed" (p. 1829). Herawati et al. (2020) stated, "The ZPD refers to the range between what a child is able to do independently and what the child is able to do with assistance of a more knowledgeable other" (p. 106). The authors also offered, "In scaffolding instruction, a teacher provides scaffolds or supports to facilitate students' ability to build on prior knowledge and internalize new information" (Herawati et al., 2020, p. 106). After the text set assignment was complete, Author 1 noted that students' disciplinary learning may not have been sufficiently realized and developed in the online environment. She thought that if students had an opportunity to take the course in-person, she may have been able to build on students' prior knowledge of their content areas and connect their expertise in those settings to the use of mentor texts.

GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR FINDING AND SELECTING MENTOR TEXTS

When searching for mentor texts and selecting those that are appropriate for instruction, we focus on relevancy because if mentor texts are used as reflective tools for students to transform themselves, as Lee, Jacobs, & Mann (2022) posit, teachers' choices of mentor texts must be relevant to students' lives and intentional to offer a "unique layer to the students' writing" (p. 2). Meehan and Sorum (2021) suggested thinking about whether texts are responsive to students and their communities. This is called responsive writing instruction. In this teaching method, an asset-based mindset is stimulated when teachers need to modify instruction. Important questions to consider are: How do we meet students where they are with what they have? How do we celebrate who they are?

Teachers and other educators can search for and select mentor texts that are congruent with students' writing lives. However, this can be a daunting task, especially when there are many types of writing to consider. According to Marchetti (2019), teachers can take actionable steps to achieve this goal. They are: "Step 1: Determine your purpose; Step 2: Determine your audience; Step 3: Begin your search in trusted sources that match your purpose; Step 4: Consider engagement; and Step 5: Be realistic" (Moving Writers Finds Just-Right Mentor Texts section, para. 6). These five steps highlight the habits and routines that can be used when planning instruction with mentor texts. Moreover, the steps demonstrate how teachers and other educators can use mentor texts to showcase how students can explore various topics and their effects on their reading and writing lives.

One more general strategy for finding and selecting mentor texts is to think creatively and employ informational text such as picture books. Picture books demonstrate a variety of writing styles and crafts that authors use; students can imitate these elements in their own writing. Teachers can combine picture books with other texts such as poems, articles, and media sources, to demonstrate the importance of learning about writing from a range of sources. Premont et al. (2017) noted that although research has focused on the use of mentor texts in secondary schools, little has been devoted to the use of picture books as mentor texts at this level. Picture books can be used during a social studies unit to teach historical concepts or to teach elements of literature in an English class. Additionally, they can help students who struggle with word choice, sentence fluency, and writing conventions in narrative writing, all components of writing that are seen across the curriculum.

Table 1. Mentor texts and instructional strategies

Mentor Texts	Instructional Strategies
<i>Knock, Knock: My Dad's Dream</i> (Beaty, 2013) <i>Wolves in the Sitee</i> (Wild, 2006) <i>Voices in the Park</i> (Browne, 1998) <i>The Bracelet</i> (Uchida, 1976) <i>Diamonds</i> (Greder, 2020)	<i>Becoming a Text Analyst</i> (Luke & Freebody, 1997) <i>Analyzing Discourse</i> (Fairclough, 1989) <i>Discourse Analysis for Kids</i> (Gee, 1999) <i>Target, Perpetrator, Ally, Bystander</i> (Cristensen, 2009) <i>What's Nice to Know vs. What's Critical to Understand</i> (Author 2, 2022)

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR MENTOR TEXTS

In this section, we share examples of mentor texts, specifically picture books and research-based instructional strategies to use with these mentor texts to illustrate how teachers can effectively implement them in their teaching instruction. Thompson & Reed (2019) proposed the following:

(1) Directly teach students what they should look for in a mentor text; (2) Have students read the mentor text; (3) Engage in a discussion about the text by asking questions; (4) Time for students to write using what they learned from the mentor text; and (5) Assess the students' writing and provide feedback. (Overview of Steps for Teaching Writing Using Mentor Texts section, para. 16).

Informational texts can also be used as entry points into students' inquiry on a particular topic. Bingham et al. (2017) offered, "Informational texts provide students with an opportunity to explore concepts about the world and how it works" (p. 467). Informational text can be selected as a mentor text and teachers can read the text aloud to allow students to demonstrate their natural curiosity around a topic. Here, we share five mentor texts and five instructional strategies as examples for teachers to consider (see Table 1). We selected these specific mentor texts to illustrate a cultural diversity of authors.

1. *Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me* (Beaty, 2013) is a poignant and inspiring story of a young boy who enjoys his papa playing the game "knock, knock" with him each morning. One morning, however, and quite unexpectedly, that "knock, knock" doesn't come. Morning after morning, his papa doesn't come to play. The boy is confused until he receives a letter one day from his papa, telling him that he will not be coming home but that they share a spirit with each other for life. This mentor text beautifully illustrates the love an absent parent can leave behind and the courage children can experience as they follow their dreams.

Becoming a Text Analyst. This instructional strategy is based on the four resources model and asserts that readers need to go beyond being proficient code breakers, meaning makers, and text users, and become text analysts (Freebody and Luke, 1990). Text analysts not only gain personal and social meanings from texts but also examine how the text is trying to position them (see Harste, 2014; see also, Leland & Bruzas, 2014). This strategy can be used with most any piece of children's, young adult, or adult literature and focuses on inquiry questions across three major headings: characters and perspectives, plot and meanings, and positioning.

- For characters and perspectives:

Whose voices are represented and whose are missing in this text?

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Why is _____ (character) so prominent in this text?

What would _____ (missing character) say if he/she had a voice in this text?

- For plot and meanings:

Which stories are privileged and which are marginalized in this text?

How would this story be different if it were told from the perspective of _____ rather than _____?

What views are represented in this text? Not represented?

- For positioning:

In what ways am I positioned within this text?

What did the author want me to believe after reading the text?

What are the ways this text could be rewritten to reposition the reader?

Table 2 illustrates the use of this strategy on the mentor text, *Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me*.

2. *Woolvs in the Sitee* (Wild, 2006) is a provocative story about Ben, a young boy who must face his fears alone in a strange and sinister world. Ben has no family, little food and water, and lives in a basement room located in a mostly abandoned city. He has no family and little food and water. His biggest fear, however, are the woolvs that dwell in the shadows outside in the streets. He is befriended by Missus Radinski, an upstairs neighbor who doesn't believe any woolvs exist at all. These are not common wolves, however, but an unidentified and undefined, hovering threat that creeps closer and closer every day. One day Missus Radinski disappears, forcing Ben to go outside and face his fears. This mentor text uses semi-phonetic spelling and dark, slashing art to create an eerie atmosphere with high anxiety from a lurking threat.

Analyzing Discourse. This instructional strategy is based on the notion that readers need to pay attention to the nature and function of language and how it can shape reader perceptions of text. It, too, can be used with most any piece of children's, young adult, or adult literature and focuses on inquiry questions across three major headings: examining words, examining grammatical features, and examining types of agency.

- Examining Words:

What formal or polite language is used?

How is respect for status or position shown?

Do words express positive or negative values to readers?

- Examining Grammatical Features:

How are grammatical forms used to express certain messages (active voice, passive voice)?

How are conditionals used – may, might, should, could, can, can't ought?

Table 2. Becoming a text analyst

Characters and Perspectives	Plot and Meanings	Positioning
Whose voices are represented and whose are missing in this text? The voice of the young boy (unnamed) is prominent. Why is the young boy so prominent in this text? He is the main character. This story describes the love of a young son for his father, the joy of playing knock-knock with him in the mornings and looking forward to the life lessons his father will teach him throughout life. Although confused, he learns over time that his father is not returning to him and his mother. The story focuses solely on the profound impact this revelation has on the boy and how he courageously develops the strength to overcome this hardship and successfully pursue his dreams. The young boy is also prominent because no other siblings appear in the story. Apparently, he is an only child. What would the young boy's mother say if she had a voice in this text? The young boy's mother could say many things if she had a voice in this story, depending on the perspective she would take. As a mother, she could talk to the young boy about his father and why he is not coming back. As a wife, she could talk about why her husband is not coming back and what it means to raise a young boy by herself. As a woman, she could talk about what it means to her to be a head of family and sole provider.	Which stories are privileged, and which are marginalized in this text? The young boy's story is prominent and privileged. The stories marginalized include the stories of the mother, the stories of other siblings, especially young girls, the stories of grandparents, and any other family members. How would this story be different if it were told from the perspective of the mother rather than young boy? The young boy's mother is illustrated in the story, but she is not given a voice. In one evocative illustration, the mother is seen sending the young boy off to school and at the same time holding her hands over both of his ears. This illustration is highly interpretive. One interpretation is that, unlike her son, she knows why his father is not coming home, and wants to protect the young boy from the reason. If the young boy's mother had a prominent voice in the story, she might use her voice to: 1) continue playing knock-knock with the young boy in place of his father, 2) reveal the reason the young boy's father is not coming back and provide some comfort for his loss, 3) start a new game that she and her son can play to help replace the knock-knock game, and/or 4) discuss ways with her son to reconnect him with his father. What views are represented in this text? The young boy's views are represented in this text. Not represented? The views of any other family and non-family members. The mother's views as well as any other family members are not represented. Moreover, non-family member view are not represented such as the young boy's neighbors, friends, fellows students, etc.	In what ways am I positioned within this text? I am positioned within this text as a reader who is sympathetic to and hopeful for the young boy. He is a loving young boy with a loving father, but that relationship abruptly ends. I am also positioned as a reader who admires how the young boy finds strength and courage to overcome an absent father and successfully seeks his dreams. What did the author want me to believe after reading the text? I think the author wants me to understand the confusion and heartbreak of a young boy who must deal with consequences of an absent father, as well as how the boy finds the courage and strength to overcome the struggles of an absent father and find success and happiness with his own family. What are the ways this text could be rewritten to reposition the reader? This text could be written in 1st person and told from the perspective on the father or the mother. It could also be written as hybrid; that is, a text that integrates fiction and nonfiction. The hybrid text could add information about some of the causes and effects of absent fathers. Moreover, this text could be written from the perspective of an absent mother.

- What types of agency predominate (direct action, non-directed action)?

What attributions are given agents?

Is agency unclear?

Is the agent an inanimate object?

What is the authority of one character in relation to other?

Table 3 illustrates the use of this strategy on the mentor text, *Woolvs in the Sitee*.

3. *Voices in the Park* (Browne, 1998) tells the story of four different voices, each sharing their own unique versions of the same walk in the park. The voices come from four anthropomorphic chimps. One is an uppity, overprotective mother and her glum son, Charles. Another is an unemployed father and his cheerful daughter, Smudge. At a surface level, the story describes Charles, Smudge, and

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Table 3. Analyzing discourse

Examining Words	Examining Grammatical Features	What Types of Agency Predominate?
What formal or polite language is used? This story uses informal language in innovative ways. One, it uses semi-phonetic spelling of words to create an eerie effect. It starts with the title, <i>Woolvs in the Sitee</i>. It also uses different size letters between words in the same sentence, e.g. “But the SEESONS are TOPSEE-TURVEE, and illustrates different words with different emphases, e.g. “I peers THROO keratins.” How is respect for status or position shown? The story illustrates a different status for Ben and Missus Radinski. Ben is described and illustrated as living in a single, dark, musty, basement room. Missus Radinsky lives upstairs in the same building but in a comfortable, presumably furnished room that is illustrated with a bright yellow color. Moreover, Ben is depicted as a lonely and terrified boy who relies on Missus Radinsky for help. Missus Radinsky is depicted as a wise woman who reassures Ben that he has nothing to fear and needs to go outside. Do words express positive or negative values to readers? The author uses many words that mostly convey a sense of fear and high anxiety. For example, at the beginning the author states, “There are WOOLVS in the sitee. And soon they will kum. They will kum for me and for yoo. NO WON is spared.	How are grammatical forms used to express certain messages (active voice, passive voice)? The story is written in first person narration, active voice, and with short, declarative sentences. For example, Ben states, “I longs for bloo skys. I longs for it to rane. Nothing is rite.” How are conditionals used – may, might, should, could, can, can’t ought? For the most part, the author does not use many conditional words. One instance is when Ben states, “Wooivish SHADOWS krawling. I cannot moov.”	What attributions are given agents? In the beginning Ben is described as having little agency. He isolates himself in a musty basement room, terrified by the woolvs lurking outside. He depends on Missus Radinsky for physical help (water and food) and emotional help (believing what he believes about the woolvs). When Missus Radinsky suddenly and unexpectedly disappears, Ben gains personal agency. Her disappearance gives him the courage and willpower to venture outside and face his fears. Is agency unclear? Ben’s development of agency is slow, but progresses, and ultimately appears to take action when Missus Radinsky disappears. Is the agent an inanimate object? The agent is not an inanimate object, but a terrified young boy. What is the authority of one character in relation to other? One character does not have authority over the other. Missus Radinsky is not a family member to Ben, just a neighbor upstairs. If authority exists between them, it is depicted by Ben depending on Missus Radinsky and she providing him wise counsel.

their respective dogs playing together while their parents keep to themselves. At a deeper level, the story is very complex. Each voice presents a scene from the same walk in the park and presents a tension between the parent and child version of the same scene. Charles’s mother is stylishly dressed and allows her ““pedigree Labrador” off the leash while at the same time scoffs at ““some scruffy mongrel””(Smudge’s dog). The mother also seeks to protect Charles from Smudge who she describes as “a very rough-looking child.” Unlike the adults, Charles and Smudge connect with each other and become friends.

Discourse Analysis for Kids. This instructional strategy is based on the same notion of analyzing discourse but is designed for all students. It can be used with most any piece of children’s or young adult literature and focuses on inquiry questions across three major headings: examining situated meanings, examining social languages, and examining cultural models.

- Examining situated meanings

What words are key?
What message do these words convey?
How does the font impact the meaning?

- Examining social languages

Whose language is this?
Where do people speak in this way?

- Examining cultural models

What story world is set up?
What would you have to believe for this story to make sense?
What symbols are important to the meaning of the story?
Table 4 illustrates the use of this strategy on the mentor text, *Voices in the Park*.

4. *The Bracelet* (Uchida, 1976) is a compelling and informative story about Emi, a seven-year-old Japanese-American girl who in 1942 must leave her home due to the war with Japan. Emi and her family are sent to a Japanese internment camp, leaving her friends, school, and house. She receives a bracelet from her best friend, Laurie, as a good-bye gift. She vows never to take it off but loses it on the first day at the camp. Emi fears that without the bracelet their friendship will disappear. She searches and searches for the bracelet but does not find it. Fortunately, Emi realizes that the bracelet is neither necessary to remember her friend, nor just as a photo to remember her father, who has been sent to a prisoner-of-war camp because he worked for a Japanese company. This mentor text underscore the absurdity and injustice suffered by Japanese American families such as Emi's.

Target, Perpetrator, Ally, Bystander (Christensen, 2009; see also, Christensen, 2000). This instructional strategy invites students to understand the meanings of each of these terms by asking. What is a target? What does a perpetrator do? How are an ally's actions different from those of a bystander? Students can work in small groups to figure out who fits into each category after reading a mentor text.

5. *Diamonds* (Greder, 2020) is the provocative story of Carolina, a young, white girl, who is curious about her Mama's new diamond earrings. She asks, *How much do they cost?* Mama doesn't know. They were just a loving gift from her uncle. *Where do diamonds come from?* Mama doesn't know but thinks Africa. Carolina wonders why Amina, their maid, has no diamonds. After all, she comes from Africa. Mama quickly ends her questioning and leaves for an elaborate party. That night, Carolina dreams of Amina digging in a diamond mine, surrounded by intimidating gun-toting men who mistreat the miners. She also dreams, illustrated through a chronology of vivid black-and-white scenes, the journey of diamonds, progressing through a variety of people who take their profit slice. Then, the diamond earrings appear in Mama's hands. Finally, Carolina awakens, crying, as if from a nightmare, but is comforted by Amina, not Mama.

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Table 4. Discourse Analysis for Kids

Examining Situated Meanings	Examining Social Languages	Examining Cultural Models
What words are key? The story is replete with many key words. Some include pedigree, Charles, Victoria, mongrel, rough-looking, Smudge, and leash. What message do these words convey? Each one of these words convey important messages. Pedigree is used to describe the dog owned by the uppity mother, and mongrel is used to describe the dog owned by Smudge. The message is that there is a big difference in status between the dogs and their owners, a difference that means separation not integration. Leash is used practically and symbolically in the story. The mother was reluctant to unleash her pedigree dog for fear that it would mingle with any other dogs at the park, particularly mongrels. Smudge's father always unleashes their dog at the park so it can play with any other dog. The uppity mother named her son, Charles, and their dog, Victoria, both formal names often associated with royalty. The little girl was named Smudge, inferring a mixture of something, not a blue blood, and her dog was not named in the story. How does the font impact the meaning? Font is a very important design element in this story. Each of the four voices (mother, father, Charles, Smudge) have a different type of font and each type represents an important characteristic of that voice. For example, the uppity mother is represented by a formal font, indicating her high status. The unemployed father is represented by an informal, bold, and dark font, indicating his lower status. Charles is represented by a lighter version of a formal font, indicating his evolving high status. Smudge is represented by a darker and playful font, indicating her friendly and playful nature.	Whose language is this? This story intentionally uses two distinct types of social languages. The language used by the mother and her son, Charles, is formal language, a type of language that high class or high-status people are expected to use. The language used by the unemployed father and his daughter is informal, a type of language middle class and lower-class people often use. Where do people speak in this way? This story illustrates the uppity mother and her son (no father is identified in the story) living in a very nice neighborhood and in a very nice home. The inference is that this is a high-class neighborhood, occupied by financially successful homeowners. The story illustrates the father and Smudge living in a crowded neighborhood and in a large building occupied by many families. The inference is that this is a lower-class neighborhood, occupied by financially stressed renters.	What story world is set up? The story world set up is one that illustrates the tensions between people who live in a class-based society. This society is comprised of lower, middle, and high class populations. What would you have to believe for this story to make sense? This story is already believable to me as a reader. In large part, this is due to the fact that I have visited and lived in countries that are class-based. What symbols are important to the meaning of the story? There are several symbols that are important to the story. Among others, these include the formal red hat worn by the uppity mother, the bending of the trees in the park whenever the mother calls for Charles, the dark colors used to illustrate the neighborhood of the father and Smudge, the references to famous artists throughout the story both in language and pictures, the backdrop colors used to describe the mood of Charles and Smudge as they play in the park, the switch of the dog's tails, the playground equipment, the chimp who is depicted as Cupid, the colors of the park as seen from the perspective of Smudge, and the shadow of the uppity mother always overshadowing Charles.

This mentor text depicts the controversial journey of diamonds from source to customer, including the appalling conditions, black market, and blind ignorance of customers rich enough to purchase them. It is a disturbing and evocative depiction of how the diamond industry, historically and contemporaneously, feeds an insatiable appetite for diamonds, and in the process, also perpetuates inequality, conflict, and corruption. Metaphorically, this visually unsettling book removes the sparkle from diamonds.

What's Nice to Know – What's Critical to Understand invites students to make critical distinctions between what information is nice to know versus information that is critical to understand. Table 6 illustrates this strategy on the mentor text, *Diamonds*.

Table 5. Target, perpetrator, ally, bystander

Target	Perpetrator	Ally	Bystander
In this story the target could be perceived by the reader as Japanese-Americans. These individuals were born in Japan, immigrated to the United States and eventually became citizens. When World War II started, especially following Japan bombing Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, an American state, legislation was passed that allowed the United States government to send Japanese-Americans to internment camps during the war. The rationale was that the Japanese-American citizens represented a threat to the United States. That is, they might remain loyal to their native country, Japan, rather than to their new country, the United States.	In this story the perpetrator could be perceived by the reader as the United States government. On the one hand, the United States allowed Japanese people to immigrate to this country and granted them citizenship. On the other hand, the government passed legislation that would allow it to send US citizens, in this case Japanese, to internment camps. At the same time, another reader could perceive the perpetrator as the Japanese government, since it was Japan who bombed Pearl Harbor.	Historically, Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Theodore Roosevelt, worked diligently and publicly to stop the president from approving Japanese internment camps during World War II.	In this story the bystander could be perceived by the reader as native United States citizens who did not protest against the legislation to send Japanese-American citizens to internment camps. The reader could also perceive non-native American citizens other than Japanese-American, e.g. Spanish-American, Cuban-American, German-American, etc. as bystanders since they also did not protest the legislation.

Table 6. What's nice to know, what's critical to understand

What's Nice to Know	What's Critical to Understand
<i>It is nice to know...</i> - Historically, diamonds have been valued around the world and across cultures; "A diamond is forever" is a universally recognized phrase referring to both the physical and emotional nature of the gem. The physical is that diamonds are hard gems, durable, and do live forever and emotionally is the loving sentiment and eternal connection that diamonds convey from one person to another. - Diamonds are one the most valued, coveted, and expensive gems in the world. They have been passed down from generation to generation as gifts, from marriages, and as investments; - Diamonds are not made but mined, dug up from below the earth; - Diamond mines are located around the world; - The value of a diamond is determined by size, weight, quality, etc. - Diamonds are shipped from mines to major cities to be displayed and sold in jewelry stores;	<i>It's critical to understand...</i> - The demand for diamonds has been, and continues to be, insatiable; - Mining diamonds continue to be a controversial issue around the world; - Diamond mines are not always safe – many miners have been killed in mines that have collapsed; - Diamond miners are exploited because they work in appalling conditions for little pay; - There is a black market in the diamond industry; - Many customers who purchase expensive diamonds are clueless to what it takes to mine diamonds; - The diamond industry can and does perpetuate inequality, conflict, and corruption. - It is critical for consumers to look past the beautiful sparkle of diamonds.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES (TEXTUAL AND VIRTUAL)

Now we offer resources to help preservice teachers, practicing teachers, and teacher educators implement literacy experiences in content area classrooms that build knowledge around mentor texts for the purpose

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of developing cultural awareness. We recommend visiting these resources and the sources cited within them to continue professional learning that will build students knowledge of mentor texts.

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FINAL THOUGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This work began with our inquiry around how teacher educators can assist preservice teachers and other educators in their understanding of using mentor texts as a support for developing cultural awareness. In her online course, Author 1 asked students prompting questions to better understand how they were searching for mentor texts in their content areas for a text set assignment, particularly mentor texts written by authors of color. One important lesson Author 1 learned by engaging in this inquiry was that finding mentor texts written by authors of color did not seem like it was a priority for students because it was not a required element of the larger text set assignment. Instead of explaining the relevance of culturally responsive texts to students, and ways they can be embedded within text sets, students were expected to search for mentor texts by authors of color without understanding why it is important to center their contributions in content area classrooms.

Another lesson Author 1 learned was that when students searched for mentor texts written by authors of color in online spaces using digital search engines, they noted it was difficult to ensure texts were authored by a person of color solely based on an author's last name. If a headshot or picture of the author

was included at the end of a text, it was still challenging to identify whether the person identified as someone of color. Lastly, after communicating with individual students and reflecting on how the text set assignment was presented, Author 1 realized that students needed more direct instruction, particularly scaffolding of reading and the process of searching for mentor texts in their content areas. After the text set assignment was complete, Author 1 noted that students' academic and disciplinary language may not have been sufficiently developed in the online environment, and that she did not build on students' prior knowledge of texts.

In this chapter, we emphasized the importance of mentor texts in literacy instruction as supports for students and teachers who would like to further engage with ideas of culture and how to align them to their instructional goals. Author 1 shared lessons she learned from her attempts at getting undergraduate preservice teachers to find and select mentor texts written by authors of color and their contribution to literacy across the content areas. The question we were interested in exploring was: How can teacher educators assist preservice teachers and other educators in their understanding of using mentor texts as a support for developing cultural awareness? This remains a critical inquiry for teachers and other educators because the texts used in schools should reflect the changing cultures and races of our students.

Author 1 now teaches her course in-person and continues to think through and grapple with ways she can improve the text set assignment and go beyond encouraging students to include authors of color in a text set. Her goal is to set the purpose for why mentor texts written by authors of color matter in content area instruction and explicitly teach students how to search for them. Simple observations and wonderings about her previous instruction and how students found and selected mentor texts made her more aware of ways all educators can consider their own goals and instructional strategies couples with students' needs to utilize mentor texts as a support for developing cultural awareness.

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Chapter 7

Enhancing the Disciplinary Literacy Vocabulary of Black Early Readers: A Latin–Based Intervention

Zwila Martinez

Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

Larkin Page

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3131-4697>

Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

ABSTRACT

This investigation suggests that children should be comprehensively assessed in early foundational components including vocabulary. With this knowledge, teachers can apply the appropriate methods and strategies that support that target vocabulary. Findings can inform teachers of vocabulary interventions including strategies that enhance the foundational knowledge and usage of prior knowledge, vocabulary strategies, and building self-esteem and confidence. The data also can help teachers create an instructional program that utilizes explicit vocabulary instruction and vocabulary usage including Latin affixes.

INTRODUCTION

Many view reading as an essential tool that should be mastered in the early years to provide a better quality of life for people. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality (2020), it is extremely important that by third grade children be on a path of success in reading on grade level while also gaining advanced reading skills as they interact with more challenging and complex texts. As students move from early childhood grade levels in which they learn to read to upper grades where they read to learn is paramount. Reading to learn can challenge students to use their foundational reading skills to gain deeper understanding, solve problems, and think critically because students often interact more with

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch007

non-fiction informational text, advanced vocabulary, and complex concepts (Goldman, et al, 2016). A report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2013) notes that grade-level reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a strong predictor of future success, including high school graduation and advanced education, employment outcomes, and successful adulthood. Hernandez (2011) in a report to the Annie E. Casey Foundation indicates students who are not reading proficiently by the third grade potentially can limit their future educational and individual success. Hernandez notes, “one in six children who are not reading proficiently in third grade fails to graduate from high school on time, four times the rate for children with proficient third-grade reading skills (p. 5).” The reports continues, “Children who live in poverty and are not reading proficiently in third grade are about three times more likely to drop out or fail to graduate from high school than those who have never been poor (p. 7).” The same study reveals that children of color are most likely to face the highest number of challenges in early literacy, and specifically Black children who are not reading proficiently in third grade are about twice as likely as similar White children to graduate from high school. Gozali-Lee and Mueller (2013) suggest children, including children of color, that are subject to challenging socio-economic status and low-literacy environments as economically distressed homes and neighborhoods and low-performing schools, can contribute to early literacy struggles. These struggles can be amplified as students face a transition to third grade. This transition can be smooth for students who do not struggle with early reading and literacy skills; Yet for those who face challenges in early literacy, a reading-based intervention can be a viable method to assist with student success in future grades, standardized testing, and life-long reading comprehension (Westerveld, et al., 2020).

Scammacca, et al. (2016) denotes many schools search for successful reading intervention programs for students who struggle to read. With the origin of reading interventions beginning over 100 years ago in 1914, the design of interventions often were for students who were unable to read in Grades 4 through 12 (Scammacca et al., 2016). The same study notes that intervention approaches to reading during the past century many times did not include a Latin-based approach when working to improve vocabulary knowledge and skills. Consequently, the idea of implementing a Latin-based intervention in the primary grades as a reading intervention has been overlooked. Over one hundred years ago Perkins (1918) successfully used Latin as an intervention to improve the English vocabulary of high school students. But ironically, very few commercially Latin-based intervention programs have been available for educators to use with younger children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culturally Diverse Students, Gaps in Achievement, and Literacy

Children in all ethnicities can struggle with grade level reading proficiency, however, for Black children the data continuously reveals substantial differences with reading levels between Black and White children since the seminal Coleman Report (Coleman, et al., 1966), also known as the Equality of Educational Opportunity (EEO) was released. This concerning trend has continued through many years, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) also has shown a clear and persistent discrepancy in educational achievement among Blacks and White peers since the 1960s (Cowan Pitre, 2014). According to Blandin (2017) this disparity remains a relevant problem in the 21st century with many

attempts to narrow the Black and White achievement gap such as reducing class size, using standards-based practices in science and math, de-tracking, employing mentors.

Research indicates there are substantial differences between Black and White students in educational achievement. One of the most startling differences is that for many by first grade the achievement gap between Black and White students is notably wide (Coleman et al., 1966; Potter & Morris, 2017). These differences often exist at every grade level and have increase with student age and cross socioeconomic boundaries (Campos, 2008; Cowan Pitre, 2014). According to Jencks and Phillips (2011) this achievement gap has existed for years and has caused great concern for educational stakeholders. Determining how to close this gap has become one of the most studied issues in education research. Studies address a wide variety of topics such as school funding, poverty rates, highly-qualified and experienced teachers, student engagement, graduation rates, student discipline policies, parental involvement, students of color in schools attending highly segregated schools, and standardized test results often with a focus on math and reading scores (Children's Defense Fund, 2021). Garcia (2020) reported 60% of Black children attend high-poverty schools with a high share of students of color, while fewer than 9% of White children did. Additionally, only one in eight White students attend a school where the majority of students are Black, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian, while nearly seven in 10 Black children attend such schools. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2019) reading achievement results for Black and White students indicate White students have an average higher score than their Black peers in fourth and eighth grades. Scores for fourth grade Black students average 204 verses a 230 average for White students. Scores for eight grade Black students average 244 verses a 272 average for White students. The numbers are significant because the NAEP reading assessment utilizes literary and informational texts to assess students' reading comprehension skills. Literary and informational texts frequently contain advanced vocabulary which require students to apply enhanced reading strategies for comprehension (NAEP, 2019).

Educators continually strive to implement a wide array of strategies to stem the achievement disproportion of Black students. Greater understanding of the challenges students face is vital to develop processes to limit the disparity. One potential cause of the performance gap could be limited literacy exposure (Duursma, et al., 2008). An example revealed that the average number of words that a poor child will hear spoken per hour is 616, while the average number of words that a child from a higher socioeconomic status will hear is 2,153 words per hour, almost 3.5 times more. According to Hoff (2013) this limited exposure is relevant because language exposure and acquisition is a key component in early literacy skills and the development of reading comprehension. Contributing to this development is vocabulary acquisition which has also been shown to heavily impact student success on reading comprehension, standardized tests, and student performance (Wright, 2014). For a young learner, vocabulary often holds the key to understanding what is heard and read in the classroom. By exposing underprivileged students to a broader vocabulary, language acquisition can often become a gateway to accessing knowledge at many levels (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2020).

Another gap that is regularly addressed is the disproportion of assessment scores between Blacks and Whites which frequently begins before children enter kindergarten and tend to widen over time (Hindman, et al., 2016; Williams, 2011). Of the subjects and skills assessed in standardized testing, Black students are behind their White counterparts in the major content areas of reading and math (NAEP, 2019). One method to address the reading gap is early intervention. Early intervention strategies can contribute to preventing the continued widening of a disparity noted to begin as early as three years old (Hart and Risley, 2003; Hindman, et al., 2016). In a situation where so many factors can impede success,

it is important to focus on early intervention instructional strategies that could have the most significant impact in closing the reading gap. With early intervention children as young as sixteen months have a higher rate of language acquisition and speed of understanding (Fernald, et al., 2013).

Fernald, et al., (2013) and Cowan Pitre, (2014) affirm that Black children continue to perform poorly on standardized tests when compared to their White counterparts with numerous factors accounting for the achievement gap. Williams, et al., (2014) suggest that out of school factors like hunger and nutrition, housing insecurities, income inequity, community safety, parent availability, and student mobility can influence the gap and students' ability to succeed. Among all children under 18 years old in the United States, 43% live in low-income families (Jiang, Granja, & Koball, 2017). According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2021) historical poverty data from 1976-2019 indicate Black children living in poverty ranges from 46.6% in 1992 to a low of 26.4% in 2019. While percentages are improving Black children are overrepresented among America's impoverished population. In-school factors are also significant in developing processes for enhanced student achievement. Matters such as teacher quality, rigor of curriculum, student engagement in academics, and a school culture of high expectations can contribute to closing the gap but are beyond the control of students and their families (Cowan Pitre, 2014).

Research by Apel, et al. (2013) suggests that socioeconomically disadvantaged children are at increased risk for reading failure compared to their nonminority peers. Subsequent research by Lonigan & Phillips (2016) declare the factors cited contribute to the belief that many Black young learners will likely enter primary grade levels behind in reading. The relationship between low socioeconomic status and poor reading ability is often one of the most enduring problems in education (Buckingham et al., 2014). Kieffer (2010) declares that socioeconomic status is clearly related to literacy and reading difficulties for students aged four and five that enter primary school. The difficulties can impact a young child's ability to follow oral directions, understand stories that are read aloud during early reading experiences, and relate to test questioning. Difficulties may also have an impact on reading comprehension because a reader should comprehend the word and the context to grasp the overall meaning of a text.

Vocabulary Challenges for Students

A watershed moment in reading education, including instruction, came with the publication of the report from the National Reading Panel (NRP) in 2000 (Burks-Martinez & Page, 2021). The report identifies five reading components that should be addressed in the context of reading instruction (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Vocabulary erudition is one of the major components in the report. Other components of reading in the report are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. Nagy and Townsend (2012) note that vocabulary is essential to a student's academic success and reading comprehension. Buckingham, et al. (2014) contend there are vocabulary gaps between students who come from economically advantaged backgrounds and those who live in poverty.

Vocabulary Instruction

Pikulski and Templeton (2004) proposed that the greatest tool children can receive is a large, rich vocabulary and the skills needed to utilize vocabulary effectively. While vocabulary is vital to reading comprehension, pivotal curriculum-based vocabulary research by Beck, et al., (2002) reveals there is little explicit focus on the attainment of vocabulary in curricula. Subsequent finding by Schmoker, M. (2018) suggests specific, effective vocabulary instruction is often still missing in classrooms. Research data

connects the importance of children's vocabulary levels to gains in reading comprehension. Educators, including early childhood teachers, have a responsibility to teach vocabulary more effectively (Jalongo and Sobolak, 2011). Yet, through research observations, Wanzek (2014) suggests very little intentional vocabulary instruction takes place in primary grades.

A groundbreaking study by Durkin (1979) examined the amount of time devoted to vocabulary instruction and finds that in the 4,469 minutes of reading instruction observed, only 19 minutes were devoted to vocabulary instruction. Jalongo and Sobolak (2011) recognize more vocabulary instruction time is needed with instruction being centered on evidence-based strategies for teaching vocabulary. Jalongo and Sobolak (2011) affirm English language complexity can make vocabulary development a challenge for students but can also be a challenge for those teaching vocabulary. Vocabulary development is a multi-faceted process that should be learned to the lifelong benefit of students and to accomplish these benefits vocabulary needs to be taught effectively. The researchers assert effective vocabulary instruction should ensure students vigorously participate in their vocabulary development to gain a greater sense of comprehensive understanding. This vigorous participation is also centered in the awareness that all students, regardless of socio-economic status or background, need to generate substantial gains in vocabulary skills each year to promote their literacy development. Faced with many complex challenges, many students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can be in jeopardy of failing to make these proficient vocabulary gains.

Rasinski, et al. (2011) denotes vocabulary instruction is a crucial component of reading instruction with the goal of assisting students learn the meanings. This learning contributes to effective social and academic literacy skills. Students need robust, multifaceted instructional opportunities to assemble a broad collection of words. Vocabulary instruction should include student understandings of word knowledge at advanced levels. These understandings include developing, grasping, and using multiple vocabulary strategies that aid student's independent word acquisition for various social and academic settings. In social and academic settings vocabulary skills in the context of disciplinary literacy is paramount. Mc-Conachie & Petrosky (2010) define disciplinary literacy as the use of reading, reasoning, investigating, speaking, and writing essential to obtaining complex content knowledge. Shanahan and Shanahan (2012) reveal disciplinary literacy functions to support student awareness of the distinctive characteristics and intentions of various disciplines. A major aspect of content knowledge is discipline-specific vocabulary. According to Shanahan and Shanahan (2012) vocabulary instruction should create opportunities for students to gain awareness and use of wide-ranging definitions of words, rigorous and diverse occasions for repetition of words, analysis of the relationships among words, craft personal connections to words, and a constant review of words.

Vocabulary-Based Reading Interventions

The NRP's (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) synthesis of vocabulary research ascertain eight conclusions that offer a quantitative, scientific-based keystone for resonant, multidimensional vocabulary instruction. The findings include:

1. Provide direct instruction of vocabulary words for a specific text.
2. Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important.
3. Vocabulary words should be those that the learner will find useful in many contexts.
4. Vocabulary tasks should be restructured as necessary.

5. Vocabulary learning is effective when it entails active engagement that goes beyond definitional knowledge.
6. Computer technology can be used effectively to help teach vocabulary.
7. Vocabulary can be acquired through incidental learning.
8. Dependence on a single vocabulary instruction method will not result in optimal learning.

Vocabulary-based reading interventions offer instructional opportunities to utilize these findings. According to Gambrell, et al. (2011) reading interventions, including those with a focus on vocabulary, can be viewed as an effective avenue to maximize student achievement. Reading interventions can also offer intensive opportunities to bridge the achievement gap that some students find themselves. Early vocabulary intervention is seen as even more important for young struggling readers because many times after third grade, interventions are seldom seen as effective as those in the early years (Lesnick, et al., 2010). The study of Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2001) reveal that 85 to 90% of poor readers increase their reading skills at grade level when given an intervention before third grade. Consequently, if an intervention is given to poor readers after third grade, 75% of them continue with reading difficulties even as an adult (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Many schools search for reading intervention programs to teach students to read. Interventions can promote strategies for acquiring and using vocabulary to aid comprehension (Scammacca et al., 2016) however many of these interventions do not include Latin. Over 100 years ago, it was determined that Latin contributes to 60% of English vocabulary (Perkins, 1918). This number rises to 90% in the sciences and technological fields (Green, 2008). According to Lyons (2018), Latin is considered a dead language because it no longer a native language of a community of people but has influenced languages spoken worldwide. The Latin language spread with the Roman Empire advancement across much a Europe and northern Africa. With the fall of the Roman Empire the Latin language evolved into Romance languages such as French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, with a great influence on the English language. In the context of English many words utilize Latin affixes, which comprise prefixes and suffixes, and root words. With the Latin influence in English teaching vocabulary to include these affies and root words is vital (Heitin, 2016). One Latin affix can contribute to at least 20 vocabulary words and there are nearly 800 Latin affixes (Rasinski, et. al, 2011). With this number of affixes and root words, a Latin-based vocabulary intervention should be considered. Consequently, the idea of implementing a Latin-based intervention in the primary grades as a reading intervention has been overlooked and there remains a void of commercial Latin-based interventions to provide foundational support for struggling readers (Burks-Martinez & Page, 2021).

Latin-Based Intervention

According to Holliday (2012) Latin is a language that emerged within the American educational settings during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. During this timeframe, Latin was a key focus in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. By the early 1920's teaching Latin began to fade. Even with a decline, Latin-based studies occurred with a focus on the association between Latin and improved academic performance. Holliday (2012) indicates, studies occurred connecting Latin to enhanced English grammar and composition, pronunciation, cognitive skills, transference of content knowledge, test scores, reading comprehension, and vocabulary understanding. A study by Mavrogenes (1979) discovered the average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) verbal scores dropped 33 points between

1957 and 1973. The study data renewed interest in Latin again serving as a foreign language and being taught in schools to improve academic performance. As a foundational language Latin greatly influences several other languages including Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and English (Broccolis 2013; Rasinski, et al., 2011).

METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed-method design including a quantitative, quasi-experimental approach and a qualitative, multiple case study approach to collect and analyze data. The explanatory sequential mixed method design supported efforts to develop a complete understanding to determine if implementing a Latin-based intervention could improve vocabulary skills in Black early aged readers who are at risk for reading failure. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained that, in a sequential explanatory design, the researcher first collects quantitative data and then qualitative data. Edmund and Kennedy (2017) contended the purpose of the sequential explanatory mixed methods design of the study is to interpret, explain, clarify, and refine the statistical quantitative results further through follow-up qualitative data. The purpose of the study was to (1) create a greater understanding of a Latin-based intervention's vital role in improving vocabulary skills of younger Black students; (2) contribute to enhancing classroom vocabulary instruction, and (3) increase the potential for future research in the context of Latin-based interventions.

Questions guiding this study:

- Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between participating in a Latin-based intervention and the acquisition of vocabulary skills among Black early readers?
- Research Question 2: What explanatory themes can emerge from a Latin-based intervention with Black early readers?
- Research Question 3: To what extent is the impact of a Latin-based intervention on vocabulary acquisition in Black early readers?

In the initial, quantitative phase of the study, data from a CORE Vocabulary Screening-Form A (Arena Press, 2008) was collected from four students attending two elementary schools identified as low-performing by the state education agency. The schools, located in an urban city in a state in the southern region of the United States, are considered low because each has received a performance rating of D or F, which are the two lowest grades a school can receive for three years (Louisiana Department of Education, 2018). According to the most recent U. S. Census Bureau (2021a), the population of this urban city was 383,997 with 59.2% claiming to be Black or African American. The median household income for all families in the city was \$43,258. 23% of the population live in poverty. According to the Louisiana Department of Education (2020), within the city kindergarten students reading below level was 61.25%. First grade students below reading level was 70%. Students in second grade reading below level was 67.65%. Third grade students below reading level was 45.59%. The CORE Vocabulary Screening measured the participants' vocabulary knowledge at grade level to determine whether a Latin-based intervention relates to improving vocabulary acquisition. A CORE pre-screening was given and created a baseline of vocabulary knowledge. A CORE post-screening indicated if the Latin-based intervention expanded vocabulary erudition. The second, qualitative phase was conducted as a measure to gain a

greater depth of understanding to the quantitative results. In the qualitative explanatory follow-up, the Latin-based intervention was explored with the subjects. Each subject was interviewed individually and closely observed through a Latin-based intervention and reading sessions. An assembly of data included report cards, early reading assessment scores, progress reports, and other documents to support the identification of reading difficulties of each participant. The researcher recorded field notes that included descriptive notes of the subjects' behavior before, during, and after intervention and reading sessions. The study used a purposeful sampling. The four case study participants were chosen because they met the requirements of the study and were perceived as information-rich with respect for this study (Palinkas, et. al., 2015).

The participants were recruited by meeting the following requirements:

- Scored below benchmark on a chosen reading assessment and may be at risk for reading comprehension difficulties. The reading assessment measured early childhood literacy skills, assessing phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy, and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary.
- Qualified for free or reduced lunch. According to the National School Lunch Program, children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals (Ralston, et. al, 2008).
- Identified as Black
- Acknowledged as Second-graders aged between seven and eight years old
- Attended a low-performing school that does not provide a foreign language study. For this study, a low-performing school educates a minimum of 51% of Black students and maintains a grade of *C*, *D*, or *F* from the Louisiana Department of Education.

The four participants were placed in a treatment group and a control group according to the order of correspondence. The treatment group consisted of Subject A and Subject B. The control consists of Subject C and Subject D. The treatment group was assigned to two specific days of the week for intervention for eight weeks, whereas the control group was assigned to two different days of the week for eight weeks. Allen (2017) defined a control group as participants who receive no treatment or an alternative treatment to that given to the treatment group. For eight weeks, both groups were exposed to a second grade, reading curriculum that focused on 10 vocabulary words per week. The treatment group received a Latin-based intervention in addition to the reading curriculum.

The quantitative data analysis included the CORE Vocabulary Screening responses using a Mann-Whitney U test. The Mann-Whitney U test examined differences in improvement between the intervention and control group. The Mann-Whitney U test is appropriate because it does not assume normally distributed data (McFarland & Yates, 2016). The improvement was calculated by subtracting the pre-test score from the post-test score for each of the nine subscales (1-syllable words, 2-syllable words, 3-syllable-words, Nouns, Verbs, Adjective, Adverbs, Multiple Meaning words, and Latin-based words); an improvement score indicated that test scores increased from pre-test to post-test. Additionally, results from the effect size were calculated. Spearman's correlation analysis coefficient was used to identify the correlation between the participants' scores received on the pre and post-test. Spearman's rho is a nonparametric test used to measure the strength of the relationship between two variables (Hauke & Kossowski, 2011).

The qualitative data analysis included transcribing the recorded data and provided a complete transcript for each interview. Transcription is a process of converting audiotape recordings of field notes into text data (Tessier, 2012). A coding system was used to analyze and interpret data within the transcribed data. Nowell, et al. (2017) indicated coding qualitative data enables the researcher to recognize and recontextualize data, allowing a fresh view of what is in the data. Data analysis involves “making sense out of text and data...and preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data” (Creswell, 2009, p. 183). Patterns and themes were determined through the analysis of interviews, a collection of artifacts, observation, and field notes. Nowell, et al. (2017) denoted the recognition of themes offer insight to the complexity of a story and supplement the depth of understanding of a person’s experiences. The goal was to provide insight into reading through the lens of Black early readers.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine whether implementing a Latin-based intervention during second grade would improve vocabulary acquisition with Black children in low-performing schools. Three research questions guided the study. The questions had a focus of Black early readers, Latin-based intervention, and vocabulary acquisition. The questions included:

- Is there a relationship between participating in a Latin-based intervention and the acquisition of vocabulary skills among Black early readers?
- Research Question 2: What explanatory themes can emerge from a Latin-based intervention with Black early readers?
- Research Question 3: To what extent is the impact of a Latin-based intervention on vocabulary acquisition in Black early readers?

The findings of the study offered insight for educators and researchers with interests in Black early readers, Latin-based intervention, and vocabulary acquisition. The CORE Vocabulary Screening quantitative pre-test and posttest results, combined with the qualitative six themes from the interviews, observations, collection of data, and field notes, revealed the study participants were at risk in not being proficient readers by third grade. The five emergent themes shed light on the subjects’ detailed thoughts about reading and their reading skills. The study examined vocabulary acquisition in more detail separating the words in nine categories. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicated no significant differences between the control and intervention group on test score improvement for any of the nine subscales on the CORE Vocabulary Screening including 1-syllable words, 2-syllable words, 3-syllable words, nouns, verbs, adjective, adverbs, multiple meaning words, and Latin-based words. Some of the effect sizes are quite large, above .5, which suggested the non-significant findings are likely a result of the small sample. However, Spearman’s rho correlations indicated significant relationships between the pre and post-test scores with the intervention group.

Table 1 contains the correlations between the pre and post-test scores with the intervention group. The Spearman’s rho revealed a statistically significant relationship between Subject A’s pre and post-test scores ($r_s = .590$, $p < .01$). Based on the results, there was a large correlation between a Latin-based interven-

Table 1. Results of Spearman's rho Correlations

	PreTestA	PostTestA	PreTestB	PostTestB
PreTestA	1.00	.590**	-.180	.265
PostTestA	.590**	1.00	.087	.124
PreTestB	-.180	.087	1.00	.385*
PostTestB	.265	.124	.385*	1.00

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

tion and vocabulary acquisition. Subject A's pretest score showed they had some reading difficulties of grade-level material because of insufficient vocabulary knowledge. After the Latin-based intervention, Subject A's post-test indicated they had adequate vocabulary knowledge of grade-level material. The Spearman's rho revealed a statistically significant relationship between Subject B's pre and post-test scores ($r_s = .385$, $p < .05$). Based on the results, there was a medium correlation between a Latin-based intervention and vocabulary acquisition. Subject B's pretest score indicated they had significant reading difficulties of grade-level material because of insufficient vocabulary knowledge. After the Latin-based intervention, Subject B's post-test signified they had some reading difficulties of grade-level material. The Spearman's rho revealed no significant relationship between Subject A and Subject B's post-test scores. ($r_s = .124$). It was no surprise there was no significant relationship between the two subjects in the intervention group because pre-test indicated Subject B had significant difficulties with grade-level material because of insufficient knowledge and Subject A had some reading difficulties.

Qualitative results highlighted several themes that were prominent factors in determining that a Latin-based intervention can play a vital role in improving vocabulary acquisition with young Black children with reading difficulties. Black children within this study had positive reflections of reading but faced a greater chance at having reading difficulties, including vocabulary challenges. The first primary theme that emerged from the qualitative data collected through interviews, observations, a collection of artifacts, and field notes is the participants like school but struggle in reading. While three of the subjects expressed a liking for school, Subject C did not because they believed school was closed too often and they wanted to attend more. The student framed their answer as negative, but the answer could also be viewed as a positive. According to Berns (2016) children at a young age often feel a strong connection to what school offers daily. Whether this connection is feeling safe at school, building friendships and relationships, feeling valued, or enjoying the learning process, these different reasons provide children a chance for higher academic achievement. However, there are factors children from lower socioeconomic and minority status are born into and face that may hinder and delay their learning.

The second theme that appeared within the qualitative data is the students enjoy reading but are also struggling readers. Young children enjoy reading many kinds of books. Books that are full of vibrant and colorful pictures invite children to explore the world around them. More importantly, students often share their imagination with parents, teachers or caregivers who may read along with them to help with the development of reading and language skills (Lewis, 2012). All four participants expressed their enjoyment in reading. Subject A and Subject B stated the types of books they prefer reading. Subject A and Subject C also provided the name of their favorite book. Subject A's favorite book was called *Goblins Don't Play Videogames* (Dadey, 1999) and Subject D favorite was called *Pete the Cat and the Surprise*

Teacher (Dean, 2017). Subject B stated he enjoys reading non-fiction books; however, he did not have a favorite book. Although Subject D could not recall the name of his favorite book, he was able to give the character of his favorite book which is Martin Luther King. This may be important to Subject D and children alike because these books offer cultural relevance to their lives from characters who look like them and make a difference in the world.

The third theme that emerged from the data was even with struggles the students have positive internal feelings connected with reading. According to Duursma, et al., (2008) often Black, poverty-stricken children face the unfortunate effect of educational disparities every day of their young lives. The student's daily experiences may cause feelings of anger, sadness, loss, or withdrawal. These feelings can be overwhelming and may, in turn interfere, with their reading performance. Trelease (2013) and Cowan Pitre (2014) each denoted children poorly skilled in reading many times have limited exposure to being read and talked to in economically distressed homes and low-performing schools. The participants responded to how they feel when they do not know a word or words when reading. Subject A said they feel lost. Both Subject C and Subject D stated that they feel sad, but Subject C added they feel sad because they do not know that word because it was a word they did not have to learn in class. However, Subject B did not respond with an answer that reflects a strong feeling. They responded they find the word in their heart, which they called "the heart strategy." Following up for more information on this comment, they further explained the strategy by saying, "I think of the word in my brain and then I bring it to my heart and then my heart brings it back to my brain, and then I say the word." These comments contributed to the theme of internal feelings. Some children may create a "mental escape route" to prevent or lessen what they feel. This "mental escape route" could have been developed to fill the void of having limited exposure to reading strategies.

The fourth theme that emerged from the qualitative data is the lack of foundational knowledge. By third grade, children should be equipped with knowledge gained in previous years of learning to transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Ideally, students build on previously acquired knowledge, creating links between prior and new knowledge for incoming information. For some children, either there is limited foundational knowledge, or prior knowledge has not been activated. Thus, it is important that teachers activate previously acquired knowledge to take on new learning situations (Smith, 2011). Phonemic awareness and phonics are two pillars of reading that second graders should have mastered (Kunkel, 2021). Having a firm knowledge foundation in these components is a building block to reading comprehension. When there are weaknesses, it may cause delays in the reading process. Subject B often exhibited flaws in these areas causing him to spend more time with pronunciation than the task at hand. As noted in observations, the researcher noticed additional flaws that cemented from Subject B that resulted in a weakness in phonemic awareness and phonics. Although Subject C was almost flawless according to her post-test score, she demonstrated weakness with rules that are applied to the English vocabulary. She struggled with the English rule with what sound *c* makes when followed by the vowels *e*, *i*, and *y*. While observing during their post-test, Subject C continued to pronounce the word as "curtain" instead of "certain." As evident Subject C did not understand this rule, but perhaps Subject A and Subject D did not understand it as well according to the post-test results. During the reading sessions, Subject D often struggled with articulating words leading them to not knowing what the words meant. With assistance to help to say the words, they were able to provide meaning to some of them. Through observation, Subject A did not struggle in phonemic awareness or phonics. Lack of foundational reading knowledge impacted Subject B, Subject C, and Subject D. Subject A did not have the depth of reading

challenges as the other study participants. The other subjects exhibited these difficulties so much it created an overarching theme.

The fifth theme that transpired from the qualitative data is *sound it out*. According to Perrett (2020) sounding out words is often one of the first strategies early readers learn. This strategy is learned through phonemic awareness and phonics. It is the strategy many children resort to when faced with unknown words. Although *sound it out* is an important method toward reading comprehension, it is not always useful when there are exceptions to the English language rules. When children are unaware of the rules or have difficulties with them, they began to turn to other strategies that can hinder learning. Within the study, it was apparent that all participants struggled with English language rules as it relates to vocabulary words. The participants were asked what strategies they attempt to figure out a word meaning. Subject A and Subject B stated they *sound it out*. Subject B also expressed that reading was their least favorite subject because they had to *sound it out*. Subject C said they often give up reading certain book and choose others to read when they have difficulty sounding out words. This comment validated struggles children have when told to *sound it out*. Subject D conveyed they often ask their friend how to *sound it out* while they are in school and his mother while at home. It is apparent through their comments that using *sound it out* without assistance does not work for them. This was verified through the intervention sessions. Findings indicate when students are sounding it out this approach to unknown words appears to fail poor readers, and many of them give up or rely on others because of a lack of reading strategies and foundational knowledge. This is evident as an overarching theme throughout the study.

The findings of this study offer insight determining if there is a relationship between a Latin-based intervention and the acquisition of vocabulary skills among Black early readers. The CORE Vocabulary Screening pre-test and posttest results, combined with the five themes from the interviews, observations, collection of data, and field notes, reveal study participants were at risk in not being proficient readers by third grade. The five emergent themes shed light on the subjects' detailed thoughts about reading and their reading skills. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicate no significant differences between the control and intervention group on test score improvement for any of the nine subscales found on the CORE Vocabulary Screening. The sub-scales include 1-syllable words, 2-syllable words, 3-syllable-words, nouns, verbs, adjective, adverbs, multiple meaning words, and Latin-based words. Some of the effect sizes are quite large (above .5), which suggests that the non-significant findings are likely a result of the small sample. Yet, Spearman' rho correlations indicate significant relationships between the pre and post-test scores with the intervention group.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To listen, speak, read, and write effectively, one should understand and utilize a variety of vocabulary words. In the National Reading Panel's 2000 report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000), vocabulary was highlighted as one of the five pillars of literacy including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. The NRP further expresses readers cannot fully understand content unless they understand vocabulary needed for success. Pikulski and Templeton (2004) denote vocabulary development is essential for beginning readers especially those who are subjected to educational disparities. Disparities such as low socioeconomic and minority status can place children at a disadvantage from the day of birth. Apel, et al. (2013) conveys, children with these identifiers are often at an increased risk for reading failure compared to their nonminority peers. Buckingham, et. al. (2014)

notes children with disparities as these are often at increased risk for reading failure compared to their nonminority peers. Furthermore, Hart and Risley (2003) document reading deficits can begin as early as 18 months causing a 30-million-word gap by the time they enter kindergarten. Schechter, et al. (2015) reveals too many Black early readers from low-socioeconomic status families continue to struggle in the foundational knowledge in reading. Valentino (2018) expresses Black children often enter primary grades performing levels below their non-minority peers. Narrowing the achievement gap between White and Black students is often a top priority among educational stakeholders including policymakers, school administrators, and teachers (Williams, 2011). Understanding the value of a Latin-based vocabulary intervention can broaden the conversations and actions of these educational stakeholders in an effort to narrow the achievement gap between Black students and their peers.

Implications for Policy Makers

As Williams (2011) asserts narrowing the Black-White achievement gap is a top priority among policymakers nationwide. Educational policies, often reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or policies that impact reading, by United States Presidents indicate the strong consistent desire to address gaps among students, especially in the context of improving reading skills of students. *Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994* during the William Clinton Administration (Clinton Digital Library, 2022), the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* by the George W. Bush Administration (Congress.gov, 2001), and the 2009 *Race to the Top Initiative* from the Barack Obama Administration (obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/, 2022) stress the value of reading instruction including curriculum components, methodologies, and interventions can contribute to reading strides for students. These strides, such as vocabulary interventions, are especially beneficial if initiated before third grade and may have a more significant impact on students' success and can work toward closing the achievement gap (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013). The intervention findings of this study can inform educational stakeholders who make education policy, and specifically those that include vocabulary instruction and enhanced vocabulary development by students.

Implications for School Administrators

The study findings have the potential to support school administrators, who often make school-specific educational decisions, come to a resolution on a standard vocabulary intervention for students that struggle, including Black children. Theodos, et al. (2014) affirm Black children often face a greater chance at reading difficulties including vocabulary and often attend low-performing schools. These schools often lack appropriate funding and resources, including quality interventions, to assist with efforts of improving student achievement, including reading and vocabulary skills. This study supports the idea that a Latin-based intervention is a tool that can help reduce vocabulary deficiencies and apply instructional methods and strategies to bolster achievement in vocabulary. A Latin-based intervention exposes children to a multitude of Latin affixes that includes prefixes, roots, and suffixes. Data results from this study confirms a Latin-based intervention impacts foundational skills such as syllable awareness, parts of speech, multiple meaning words and Latin-based words. Quantitative data indicates students learn through effectively via direct vocabulary instruction and the qualitative findings verify vocabulary intervention has the potential to influence student reading self-esteem and confidence. These dynamics can impact knowledge and perhaps increase student reading performance which often is paramount for

school administrators. Particularly, this study provides case studies of how Black early readers approach unknown words in a text and on an informal assessment. Such knowledge could inform school administrators to consider a commercial or effectual teacher designed Latin-based intervention program that demonstrates instructional methods and strategies in building student vocabulary acquisition. Findings also can inform school administrators of what intervention Black early readers could utilize to increase a variety of strategies for reading comprehension including vocabulary, which may lead to narrowing the Black-White achievement gap. When school administrators are better informed of the crucial relationship between Latin and English vocabulary, the idea of a successful Latin-based intervention should impact their decision-making, especially in the context of Black early readers.

Implications for Teachers

This investigation suggests children should be comprehensively assessed in early foundational components including vocabulary. With this knowledge, teachers can apply the appropriate methods and strategies that target vocabulary acquisition. The pre-assessment and post-assessment indicate each student struggled to some degree in vocabulary. Findings can inform teachers of a vocabulary intervention including strategies that enriches the foundational knowledge and usage of prior knowledge, vocabulary strategies, and building self-esteem and confidence. The data also can help teachers create an instructional program that utilize explicit vocabulary instruction and vocabulary usage including Latin affixes. In the context commercial Latin-based intervention programs, a simple Google search indicates there is a lack of commercially sold intervention curriculums or supplements to curriculums (Burks-Martinez & Page, 2021). A Latin and Greek program is accessible, can be purchased, and named Vocabulary from Classical Roots (School Specialty, 2022). Beyond this program are very limited choices. Data from this study can encourage commercial curriculum companies to create Latin-based instructional programs that utilize explicit vocabulary instruction and vocabulary usage including Latin affixes. Study results can also encourage teachers to develop or improve Latin-based vocabulary interventions for students in their classrooms. In the context of Black early readers, effective Latin-based vocabulary intervention could impact the size of readers' vocabulary and give them the tools to enhance their understanding, which can contribute to a successful educational journey.

Limitations

There are limitations to the findings of this study. A mixed method design gathering quantitative and qualitative data was applied. The informal pretest/posttest CORE Vocabulary screening offered quantitative information and interviews, observations, a collection of artifacts, and field notes revealed qualitative data. The sample size was limited to four subjects in an urban city in the southern region of the United States. The small sample also only included students in second grade and were of low socioeconomic status. While these identifiers can be similar to other students, the findings cannot be extrapolated to other groups, including Black early readers with reading challenges.

CONCLUSION

The present research study contributes to the educational field on the effect of a Latin-based intervention on vocabulary acquisition of Black early readers with reading difficulties. Too many Black early readers from low-income families continue to struggle in the foundational knowledge in reading, including vocabulary knowledge and skills. Black early readers often enter primary grades performing at levels below their non-minority peers. Effective student intervention offers opportunities to address these levels to close the achievement gap between Black children and their White counterparts. A Latin-based intervention can be valuable as children can build the size of their present vocabulary through Latin understandings in relation to the English language (Rasinski et al., 2011). Puhfahl & Rhodes (2011) conveys Latin is rarely provided to children in elementary public schools. Understanding and using a Latin-based intervention can contribute to greater usage in schools to the advantage of students. The benefits of Latin erudition and usage can also improve the vocabulary skills of students which can also serve as a connector to the evolving world, including advanced schooling, career, and life. One goal of educators is often to prepare children for the future, beyond the present classroom. A Latin-based approach can provide children with the appropriate tools needed to face future experiences with vocabulary to effectively communicate in verbal and written form for an advanced education, profession, and existence in the changing world. The Latin-based approach to vocabulary intervention may also minimize reading fears and build confidence in young readers. This assurance can contribute to overcoming disparities that could positively influence the chance of reaching one's highest potential.

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Chapter 8

Facilitating Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Learning in PreK–3rd Grade Environments: Using Learning Stations With Disciplinary Literacy

Ross Glen Chandler Nunamaker

University of Cincinnati, USA

William Arthur Mosier

Istanbul Gelişim University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the integration of disciplinary literacy across learning stations in PreK through 3rd Grade classrooms to facilitate culturally and linguistically responsive learning. Through a synthesis of research and the professional experience of the authors, the chapter offers a conceptual framework and pedagogical support for literacy practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive to each child's emerging and developing literacy. Additionally, this chapter describes the components of an interdisciplinary approach to facilitating literacy learning at the prekindergarten through third grade level that ensures a culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum integrating language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies using learning stations. This model supports self-directed learning facilitated by responsive adult-initiated adult-child interaction in a play-based environment for nurturing intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch008

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is necessary for success in adult life, and literacy skills begin during early childhood (Flint & Adams, 2018). In theory, disciplinary literacy incorporates subject-specific literacy strategies and skills into content instruction (Colwell et al., 2022). Through direct exposure to discipline specific language, young children can develop literacy skills relevant to the disciplines of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and technology. Introducing young children to the literacy concepts embedded in the content standards for each content area of the curriculum will provide a solid foundation in disciplinary literacy that will enhance the emerging literacy of young children (Clark et al., 2021).

Young children need to be provided inclusive and engaging learning experiences (NAEYC, 2019). Opportunities to actively explore a safe and healthy learning environment that embraces cultural and language diversity is essential for enhancing optimal social and emotional development while building literacy skills (Barton & Garvis, 2019). There is considerable evidence-based research to substantiate that early childhood experiences provide the foundation for, and greatly influence, sophisticated forms of learning and that young children gain significant cognitive, social, and emotional enhancement to their development when they are exposed to a high-quality early childhood setting that supports independent thinking and social competence while providing appropriate emotional supports for the development of trust, autonomy, and initiative (Institute of Medicine & National Research Council, 2015).

Developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) for emergent literacy must be embedded in early childhood education curriculum content that supports an inclusive classroom environment of respect for the wide range of diversity found in every early childhood classroom (NAEYC, 2019, 2022). Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy must support each child's literacy experience. A high priority for all early childhood educators and the early childhood education training programs at the university level that provide pre-service training for early childhood educators should be to facilitate culturally and linguistically responsive learning in educational settings for young children.

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Disciplinary literacy during early childhood may be viewed as the convergence of content knowledge, experience, and skills joined with the ability to listen, speak, read, write, think critically, and act on one's thoughts in a socially competent manner (Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022). A strong appreciation of child development theory and DAP will help early childhood educators understand the value of utilizing learning stations as a foundation for disciplinary literacy (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014). Well-planned learning stations create an inviting learning environment for young children that encourages active learning and exploration of materials that can enhance creative expression, while supporting self-determination (Porter, 2020). Learning stations are a convenient venue for the use of authentic assessment that can assist the early childhood educator in scaffolding learning experiences that meet children in their zone of proximal development (Areljung et al., 2021).

Oral verbal interaction with young children during the school day is a critical component of supporting literacy in all content areas (Graham et al., 2018). Research has identified many techniques for using verbal interaction with young children as pedagogical support for disciplinary literacy (Hadley & Mendez, 2021). The techniques are not specific to any one discipline and can be used to support literacy in all academic subjects (Garner et al., 2019; Hadley & Mendez, 2021).

This chapter offers a conceptual framework and pedagogical support for literacy practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive to each child's emerging literacy development. This chapter describes the components of an interdisciplinary approach to facilitating literacy learning at the pre-kindergarten through third grade level that ensures a culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum integrating language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies using learning stations. This model supports self-directed learning facilitated by responsive adult-child interaction in a play-based environment for nurturing intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning (Yogman et al., 2018).

The model includes content learning objectives stemming from DAP consistent with the essential components of an early childhood curriculum, as well as specific culturally and linguistically responsive content activities relevant to the home environment of children (NAEYC, 2019, 2022). This model offers a pro-social learning environment that promotes autonomy and independent learning through active exploration of the learning environment with periodic group activities to support social competence. In this environment, the role of the adult is that of a *facilitator of learning* rather than a *teacher*. The adult role requires responsiveness to each child's need for academic support by being prepared to scaffold learning, as needed, to provide individually guided support for emerging literacy.

Play-based early childhood learning environments must responsively build on the cultural and linguistic background of each child to ensure learning is personally meaningful to each child (Colliver et al., 2022; Salinas-González et al., 2018). The specific curriculum will evolve from the prior knowledge and experiences that the children bring to the classroom (Garner et al., 2019). The key role of culture in language and literacy learning is integrated throughout curriculum activities. Respecting the cultural and linguistic diversity representative of children in the classroom is reflected throughout the strategies used to support each child's emerging literacy (Klvacek et al., 2019). The strategies presented in this chapter are designed to support a student-centered, multidisciplinary, play-based learning environment for young children from prekindergarten through third grade or approximately from ages three to eight (NAEYC, 2022).

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING: CONNECTIONS TO DISCIPLINARY LITERACY

All young children need an inclusive and engaging learning experience. Early childhood classrooms that embrace cultural and language diversity are essential for promote inclusivity and support for self-esteem (Mosier, 2013b, 2013a). Discipline-specific literacy practices can be embedded across content areas to support a respect for individual differences (Welsh et al., 2020). Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy can be supported through literacy experiences across the curriculum in an early childhood classroom (T. S. Wright & Gotwals, 2017).

Disciplinary literacy is a natural fit for supporting cultural and linguistically responsive facilitation of learning (Martin et al., 2021). Using learning stations can provide a conceptual framework and pedagogical support for disciplinary literacy that is culturally and linguistically responsive to all young children in an early learning environment (Trautner & Schwinger, 2020). An early childhood classroom that utilizes learning stations to support individually guided education and self-directed learning strengthens the connection between disciplinary literacy and inclusive pedagogical practices (Martin et al., 2021; Moses & Kelly, 2019; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014). Understanding how to set-up and facilitate the flow of activity and engagement in learning stations is useful for pre-service early childhood educators in university

training programs to acquire. Empowering young children to take ownership of their learning is critical for the development of self-directed learning, self-regulation, social competence skills (Fitton et al., 2018; Houen et al., 2018). Ensuring the learning environment is culturally and linguistically responsive to the individual learning needs of each child is key (NAEYC, 2019). Being culturally responsive in our educational practices nurtures a sense of belonging in young children and helps them feel safe, loved, heard, and appropriately challenged (C. Z. Wright & Dunsmuir, 2019).

It is necessary to design early learning curriculum that is responsive to the disciplinary literacy needs of every child while at the same time supporting individual differences (Kim et al., 2018). Yet, many early childhood educators struggle to meet the needs of diverse learners, in a manner which is socially and emotionally supportive, and learning outcomes at the same time (Holland & Ohle, 2020). The literacy demands of society reflect the need to explore strategies that support emerging literacy in developmentally appropriate ways for each young child (Williams & Lowrance-Faulhaber, 2018). The development of basic literacy skills is required to develop more advanced literacy skills and will eventually lead to writing and reading fluently (Freeman et al., 2019). The use of learning stations in the early childhood classroom supports both disciplinary literacy and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity (Traga Philippakos et al., 2018).

LEARNING STATIONS WITH A LITERACY FOCUS

Facilitating children's learning through an integration of their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs is at the core of DAP (NAEYC, 2022). To do this effectively, early childhood educators should be both intentional and reflective in the methods they choose to support children's literacy development. Setting up a classroom with learning stations is an effective method for early childhood educators to keep young children actively engaged in the learning process with a focus on literacy (Aydogmus & Senturk, 2019; Pho et al., 2021). Learning stations facilitate self-directed behavior that places the child in a position of responsibility for their own learning (Rowe, 2019). Learning stations encourage young children to be active participants in the environment exercising the executive functions of decision-making and problem-solving and provide the context for positive adult-child interactions that are developmentally supportive (Colliver et al., 2022).

A theoretical foundation of how children process information for learning is crucial for the early childhood educator to understand, such as the importance of hands-on, self-directed learning (Mosier, 2013a; NAEYC, 2022). Typical learning stations useful to nurture cognitive, social, and emotional development during early childhood, approximately ages three through eight, include areas for art, block building, computer word processing, dramatic play, math, music, movement, puzzles, reading, science, and writing. Outdoor learning stations might include sand and water play, and woodworking. Providing meaningful hands-on learning tools that allow a child to independently make connections between the activities available at a learning station and the child's individual experiences linguistically and culturally should be woven into the design of each learning station.

Young children need active engagement with printed material throughout early childhood (NAEYC, 2022). For example, holding a story time every morning and every afternoon is an excellent opportunity to introduce young children to new vocabulary (Wargo, 2018; C. Z. Wright & Dunsmuir, 2019). The children who choose to do so will go to the story area for circle time and the adult reads a story about a topic that may be related to some event that occurred earlier in the day that needs resolution, such as an

argument between two children, or a current event related to a culturally relevant topic, such as a cultural celebration significant to some of the children in the class (NAEYC, 2022).

Dewey's notion of integrating the curriculum for young children with meaningful hands-on activities nurtures a child's construction of their own ideas of how the world works (NAEYC, 2022; Ültanır, 2012). Technology can be a powerful learning tool, when used appropriately. The use of educational software at a learning station, when it is developmentally appropriate, can assist in scaffolding learning individually to assist a child in scaling their zone of proximal development. It is well-documented that young children learn best when the learning environment is interactive. Therefore, designing active and engaging learning stations for young children must be considered an integral part of every high-quality classroom for children from pre-kindergarten to third grade.

In an early childhood learning environment, these learning stations can offer young children a range of options for active engagement with the learning process. Each station offers children a variety of developmentally appropriate learning materials from which to choose. A typical learning station has a place to sit such as a table with chairs or floor space and shelving with materials to be used at the learning station. Each learning stations serves as a space where children can work independently or within a small group of other children.

Intentionality on the part of the early childhood educator when selecting materials to support learning at each station is highly beneficial (Pho et al., 2021). A learning station might incorporate materials that respond to the specific interests of one or more children. Other learning stations could provide a more open-ended focus such as a writing station or a reading station that provides an assortment of books for a variety of reading levels. The adult role is to observe what children are doing, interacting with them without interfering in the child's free flow of ideas, to scaffold learning (NAEYC, 2022). The adult actively interacts with individual children using learning stations as a structure for facilitating active engagement in the learning process. An early childhood educator's verbal interactions with a child might include providing information when a question is asked or modeling language usage for problem solving in response to an observed conflict. The key is to patiently wait for the teachable moment to scaffold learning. The adult responsibility also includes gathering assessment information for planning adjustments to learning stations.

Learning stations can be used to teach specific content (Aydogmus & Senturk, 2019; Pho et al., 2021). However, multiple concepts can also be integrated within each learning station. A learning station should contain material that can be manipulated by young children that address specific standards related to the content area. A learning station can be a permanent area in the classroom or activity areas for children to explore can be rotated. For example, a learning station can include a specific task, such as a name activity or a letter sorting game. Typical literacy activities in a learning station might include alphabet puzzles, picture books, paper and pencils for writing and drawing. A math station might contain learning tools such as counting sets of objects or comparing numbers. Regardless of the specific learning station children select, each child might be working on a similar concept but at their own level of difficulty (Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022). The benefits of learning stations are that they provide opportunities for young children to exercise responsibility for their own learning and provide build-in opportunities for the adult in the classroom to individualize the learning process for a child who might need one-on-one guidance.

A learning station can be defined as a physical location in an early childhood education classroom where a limited number of children, usually limited to five children at any one time, can engage with the materials available at the station either individually or with others, including the early childhood

educator, who are at the same station. The authors acknowledge that some references to learning stations in the literature distinguish learning stations from learning centers by suggesting that learning stations are timed, which means a child is only allowed a specific amount of time at the station. However, historically, the term learning stations entered the early childhood lexicon over fifty-years ago, not as an entity distinct from learning centers, but as a movement away from the use of the term center once early care and education programs became known as child development centers, such as when Head Start programs began being referred to as child development centers. Therefore, to avoid the confusion, the learning areas within a child development center were renamed learning stations (Mosier, 2013a). A learning station provides:

1. Activities that enhance active engagement with materials for stimulating literacy in a specific domain;
2. Activities that are open-ended;
3. Opportunity for the child to be self-directed;
4. No time limit for amount of time a child stays in any one station during the day;
5. Record keeping system for each child to record what they did in the learning station.

The role of the adult is not that of an *instructor* but rather a *facilitator of the learning process* (NAEYC, 2022). The early childhood educator is available to assist individual children with entering their zone of proximal development and to work with a small group of children that might need adult intervention and assistance. Examples of promoting literacy through play-based learning stations can be found in in Table 1.

Facilitating Children's Usage of Learning Stations

As a facilitator of learning in a classroom that utilizes learning stations, the early childhood educator must start out the school year establishing the ground rules for use of learning stations. Strategies useful to nurture self-regulation and self-directedness in young children include:

1. Generating classrooms rules using a cooperative approach (Porter, 2020).
2. Verbally reinforcing socially competent behavior (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021; Jenkins et al., 2015)
3. Allowing for natural and logical consequences to redirect disruptive behavior (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021; Strain et al., 2017).
4. Serving as a role model for socially competent and pro-social interactions (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014; Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022).
5. Utilizing interventions that nurture self-regulation (Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022; Trautner & Schwinger, 2020).
6. Applying strategies for behavior intervention consistently to ensure a smooth flow of the use of learning stations (Mosier, 2013b; Reinke et al., 2013).

Diverse approaches to facilitating children's learning through methods that support children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development are emphasized in DAP (NAEYC, 2022). The adult's role is to support each individual child's development of literacy skills using intentional, reflective ap-

proaches (Lindo et al., 2018). Literacy skills include any communication, including writing, reading, speaking, drawing, and interpreting symbols (Kennedy et al., 2012). As a result of the linkage between communication and literacy, a child's development of literacy skills is driven by the child's desire to communicate their wants, needs, and feelings with others (Kim et al., 2018). Since communication is a significant part of play, children engaged in play-based experiences are developing literacy skills—play, literacy, and language develop in tandem with, and support, one another (Carlson & White, 2013; Yogman et al., 2018; Zosh et al., 2017). Uninterrupted play in learning stations with a literacy focus, regardless of the discipline that is the emphasis of the learning station, supports the type of early learning that fosters literacy development (Carlson & White, 2013; Mosier, 2013a; Yogman et al., 2018).

Providing young children with literacy support through play-based learning stations involves finding a balance between spontaneous play and guided play (Cavanaugh et al., 2017; Graham et al., 2018; Yogman et al., 2018). The early childhood educator may guide play through a variety of methods including helping children draw and describe their plans for block construction, develop written materials for dramatic play, or explore ideas for creating a storybook (Flint & Adams, 2018; Salinas-González et al., 2018). Play-based learning stations in an early childhood environment should include extended periods of time for unplanned, emergent approaches for using materials to support literacy development (Görmez, 2018). The early childhood educator should consider including an author and illustrator station that includes plentiful writing materials (Rowe, 2019; Traga Philippakos et al., 2018), a listening station that includes picture books and other texts (Fitton et al., 2018; Jalongo, 2010), and a dramatic play area that allows for culturally relevant spontaneous and guided play (Hadley et al., 2019; Salinas-González et al., 2018). A balance of learning spaces, opportunity for independent discovery learning, and adequate materials available for each learning station supports literacy development as well as social skill development when the adult in the environment is an active role-model for prosocial behavior (Flint & Adams, 2018). When young children are provided many opportunities for spontaneous play in discipline specific learning stations, they integrate the experiences by using language as a vehicle for enhancing their learning (Pho et al., 2021). Therefore, supporting literacy learning across the curriculum through the vehicle of play (Williams & Lowrance-Faulhaber, 2018). Examples of promoting literacy through play-based learning stations can be found in Table 1.

Establishing Rules and Procedures for Working at Learning Stations

For learning stations to be effective, early childhood educators should establish rules and procedures, with children, that will support children's development of prosocial skills and self-regulation (McLeod et al., 2017; Mosier, 2013b; Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022; Porter, 2020). Rules and procedures should be established in a cooperative manner to ensure children see themselves as involved in a democratic process, rather than victims of authoritarian adult control—which supports children's social, emotional, and moral development (Gartrell, 2012). Creating rules and procedures for the operation of learning stations, as a collective process, facilitates children's internalizing of the rules and procedures. Rules and procedures should be written as positive affirmations to align with children's developmental tendencies such as emulating models, egocentrism, autonomy, initiative, and repeating what they hear (Holland & Ohle, 2020; Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022). For example, instead of rules that say: *No hitting* or *No running*, clearly state what specific behaviors are expected. Early childhood educators should avoid focusing on what children are not allowed to do. Instead, help children identify what behaviors demonstrate social competence (Holland & Ohle, 2020; McLeod et al., 2017; Mosier, 2013b; Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022).

Facilitating Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Learning in PreK-3rd Grade Environments

Table 1. Examples of promoting literacy through play-based learning stations

Learning Station	Description
Classroom Pet Care	The classroom pet care station is focused on caring for the classroom pet, such as a guinea pig. Children are invited and encouraged to care for the pet by ensuring the pet has enough food, water, and other necessities, such as bedding. This can be accomplished with reviewing a daily checklist. Additional tasks may include careful handling of the pet using methods that are co-determined by the children and early childhood educator. For example, there may be sign up list for handling the classroom pet, limited to a few children per day or at certain times depending on the pet, as well as specific handling procedures. Integration of literacy: The station should include written text that describes the handling procedures, the animal's needs, and how to carry out key tasks. The station should also include books about the work of veterinarians, zookeepers, and similar professions that provide care for animals. Additionally, books on responsible pet ownership should be included. To be sensitive to the needs of the children in the classroom, the included written text and books should reflect the cultural and linguistic background of the children. For example, the early childhood educator may read the child a picture book, written at the reading level of the children, that explores terms related to pet care in a child's native language. The early childhood educator should emphasize and model the use of specific language and concepts unique to the classroom pet's needs. For example, the early childhood educator may call a hamster's water bottle a <i>sipper water bottle</i> and describe and define hamsters as primarily <i>crepuscular</i>, <i>omnivores</i>, and <i>burrowers</i>.
Nature Observation	The nature observation station is focused on studying nature through a classroom window. Children are invited and encouraged to carefully watch the immediate outdoor area, in an open-ended manner, by noticing anything occurring outside. The observation station should include items that encourage children's skill in carefully observing nature, such as monoculars or binoculars. Additionally, items can be included on the outdoor side of the window for measurements such as a thermometer, barometer, and rain gauge. For documenting observations, the early childhood educator may include paper, writing utensils, and anchor charts. Long-term data collection can also occur with chart paper. Additionally, technology can be integrated for taking photos of notable events outside of the window, such as with a tablet. Integration of literacy: The station should include written text that describes the scientific process skills of observing, measuring, sorting, classifying, inferring, predicting, experimenting, and communicating. To be sensitive to the needs of the children in the classroom, the included written text should reflect the cultural and linguistic background of the children. For example, high-frequency terms related to nature observation, such as the words describing common animals, should be presented in the languages present in the classroom. The scientific process skills should be clearly defined and scaffolded by the early childhood educator. For example, the early childhood educator may introduce the process of observing, sorting one's observations, and then communicating findings using a chart. Then, the early childhood educator would ensure the nature observation station has an ample number of charts for children to use throughout the day. The station should also include books about the work of scientists, naturalists, environmentalists, and astronomers.
Math Manipulatives	The math manipulatives station is focused on engaging with different math materials such as, but not limited to, unit cubes, fraction pies, and golden beads. Children are invited to participate in a variety of tasks from simple unit cube addition and subtraction to more advanced work involving fractions and decimals. For older children, manipulatives may be more abstract such as interactive diagrams providing visual representation of mathematical concepts. Importantly, mathematical tasks should be related to real-life problems and, whenever possible, problems in the classroom such as figuring out the best way to provide each child with an equally sized piece of cake during a birthday celebration. Integration of literacy: The station should include written text that describes various mathematical processes and concepts such as, but not limited to, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, and place value. The station should also include books about the work of scientists, mathematicians, and the many ways that mathematical concepts are useful in everyday life, careers, and for solving specific problems. To be sensitive to the needs of the children in the classroom, the included written text and books should reflect the cultural and linguistic background of the children. For example, the early childhood educator could select picture books showing people of various cultural backgrounds using math in their everyday lives.
Listening	The listening station is focused on allowing children to listen to key texts being read. This station should include recorded texts from around the classroom that children can listen to and read along with. The listening station should include recorded texts from around the classrooms, including those from other stations, allowing children to listen and read along. Technology plays a key role in this station and the device playing the text recording should include headphones. The early childhood educator can create their own recordings for use in the classroom. Additionally, children can be invited to record themselves reading and listen back to their recordings. Integration of literacy: Being focused on listening to recordings of texts, the station should include written texts and books that also have corresponding recordings. To be sensitive to the needs of the children in the classroom, the included written texts and books should reflect the cultural and linguistic background of the children. For example, the early childhood educator can select texts that are written at various reading levels based on the needs of students and ensuring the selected texts include pictures are culturally relevant and reflect the background of the children in the classroom. The texts should be derived from the classroom texts including books shared during classroom meetings, books found in other learning stations, and books found in the classroom library. Specific attention can be paid to support texts, including anchor charts, that describe reading and listening skills such as, but not limited to, identifying meaning, asking questions, and considering elements of genre.
Author & Illustrator	The author and illustrator station is focused on allowing children to create their own texts. Children are invited to take on the role of an author and illustrator. Technology may play a role in this station with word processing software or apps. The station should also include opportunities for work with concrete writing utensils and other creative approaches to illustrations such as, but not limited to, tempura paint, watercolors, and mixed media. Integration of literacy: By definition, the station should include the materials children need to create their own texts serving as an author, illustrator, or both. This station allows for a collaborative, open-ended, and self-directed learning. The early childhood educator can carefully scaffold children's experiences in this center to provide academic support that is culturally and linguistically sensitive. For example, the early childhood educator may consider how the child's home life could spur their interest in writing a story about a recent family experience. Furthermore, the early childhood educator could include additional resources in the station that are based on the linguistic needs of the child such as a word wall, list of translated words, or dictionary. Finally, the early childhood educator can also ensure that children are welcome to explore the writing process in their native language.
Reading Buddies	The reading buddies station is focused on practicing reading skills in a low-stakes environment. Children are invited to read to either another classmate or a favorite stuffed animal. The texts to read are chosen by the child and can include leveled reading texts. Integration of literacy: Being focused on reading texts, the station should include written texts. The texts should include classroom texts such as books shared during classroom meetings, books found in other learning stations, and books found in the classroom library. Additionally, books written in the author and illustrator station can also be included. Anchor charts, focused on decoding skills, should play a key role in this station. By including a variety of books focusing on a variety of skills, the early childhood educator can ensure children's linguistic needs are being met. Additionally, the early childhood educator can select books that are culturally relevant and reflective of the children in the classroom.
Word Detectives	The word detective station is focused on finding words in the classroom environment. Children are invited to go around the classroom and find words in the environment including, but not limited to, anchor charts, displays, classroom books, labels, and signs. The station should include some element of minor costuming, such as glasses without lenses, for the child to pretend to become a detective. Additionally, the station should include clipboards, paper, and writing utensils. The goal of this station is to encourage noticing environment print, print in books and other texts, and writing. Integration of literacy: Being focused on finding words and writing them down, the station should include writing utensils and paper. Books, and other texts, should include that describe and model the skills of noticing, being attentive to details, and investigating. To be sensitive to the needs of the children in the classroom, chosen texts may include translations of entire books, translated terms that commonly occur in the environment, and culturally relevant descriptions of the skills involved in being a word detective. For example, the early childhood educator may need to be sensitive to a child from a background where children are expected to be more passive by allowing the child to direct their own experience in the station.

Sources: Areljung et al. (2021); Aydogmus & Senturk (2019); Clark et al. (2021); Colwell et al. (2022); Hadley & Mendez (2021); NAEYC (2022); Pho et al. (2021); Welsh et al. (2020); Wright & Gotwals (2017)

For example, instead of a rule that states *No running*, the rule would read *Running is an outside activity. I walk inside* (Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022). Examples of rules and procedures for learning stations, written as positive affirmations, might include:

1. *I touch people gently.*
2. *I talk in a quiet tone of voice.*
3. *When I finish with an activity, I put it back where I found it.*
4. *I place trash in the waste basket.*
5. *Running is an outside activity. I walk inside.*

After establishing the rules for learning stations, the early childhood educator should practice the rules and procedures with children through songs, roleplay, and reading books that depict children following rules and procedures (Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022). The rules should be posted on the wall in a prominent location for all to see. Rules and procedures should be regularly reinforced through both referring to the posted rules and procedure, gentle reminders, verbally reinforcing children who are following the rules and procedures, and through adult modeling of the rules and procedures (McLeod et al., 2017; Mosier, 2013b; Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022; Porter, 2020).

Determining the Flow of Children Through Learning Stations

In the experience of the authors, early childhood educators should carefully consider how they will manage the flow of children through learning stations while supporting children's self-regulation (Mosier, 2013b). An effective way to monitor this is to use color-coded geometric shapes as the *keys* to enter a learning station. The authors have used geometric shapes that are cut from a piece of tag board and suspended on a lanyard of thick yarn of the same color. The lanyards are placed at the entrance to each learning station on hooks. For example, the reading buddies station would have five three-by-five-inch large red circles suspended from thick red yarn. The author and illustrator station would have five three-by-five-inch large green rectangles suspended from thick green yarn. An option that the authors have found especially useful is to suspend from the ceiling a larger shape of the same color as the lanyards directly above the center of the learning station with the name of the learning station printed with black marker on both sides of the geometric shape.

Supporting Children's Prosocial Behavior in Learning Stations

Should one elect to utilize a play-based approach to installing learning stations in the classroom, supporting children's prosocial behavior is a key consideration. Guiding young children toward social competence is key part of facilitating the development of each child's emotional intelligence (Garner et al., 2019; Holland & Ohle, 2020; Mosier, 2013a; Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022). Early childhood educators need tools to address the problems they face with disruptive behavior that can interfere with the academic goals of using learning stations. Any child guidance methods intended to encourage prosocial behavior, and reduce disruptive behavior, in learning stations should be consistent with DAP (NAEYC, 2022) and develop children's self-regulation without resulting in any damage to the child's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Colliver et al., 2022; NAEYC, 2022; Trautner & Schwinger, 2020). For example, upon noticing that too many children are in the nature observation station, an early childhood educator

may wonder how to address this issue in a manner reflecting DAP. An effective way to resolve the issue of too many children in one learning station at a time is to monitor who is wearing a key to the learning station around their neck (Mosier, 2013b, 2013a). The child who does not have a key to the learning station should be reminded that they will have to find another learning station until a key becomes available.

Developing a Method for Positive Reinforcement

Early childhood educators can commit to providing positive reinforcement to prosocial behaviors that they want young children to display in ways which support self-regulation (Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022). The early childhood educator can intentionally use verbal reinforcement, through encouragement and attention, to focus on prosocial behaviors and avoid giving attention to disruptive behaviors (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021; McLeod et al., 2017; Sigler & Aamidor, 2005; Strain et al., 2017). Verbal reinforcement, encouragement, and attention are distinct from trait- or ability-focused praise, which can have negative outcomes for young children (Brummelman et al., 2017; Jenkins et al., 2015; Porter, 2020; Strain et al., 2017; Zentall & Morris, 2010, 2012). Positive affirmations of specific behaviors can provide verbal reinforcement, through encouragement and attention, while avoiding the potential negative outcomes associated with certain types of praise.

A method for positive reinforcement that encourages prosocial behaviors and self-regulation is the use of tangible reinforcers such as ice cream scoops, made out of construction paper, that can be stacked on an ice cream cone, similarly made out of construction paper, with the child's name on it that is posted on a display wall or bulletin board (Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022; Porter, 2020). Each child in the classroom would have an ice cream cone posted on the wall. At the beginning of the school year, each child would contribute to a collection of ice cream scoops, cut out of construction paper, that would be kept in a container near the display wall or bulletin board with the posted ice cream cones. The early childhood educator would then model usage of the system, and encourage children to use the system as well, by showing that each ice cream scoop was added to the ice cream cone after engaging in a socially competent behavior. The tangible reinforcer is then combined with a verbal reinforcer. It is important for the early childhood educator to provide verbal reinforcement in a way that encourages children's self-regulation (Mosier, 2013b, 2013a; Strain et al., 2017; Zentall & Morris, 2010, 2012).

When the early childhood educator observes a child exhibiting a prosocial behavior, following an established rule, or following an established procedure, the early childhood educator can state the observed prosocial behavior, how they feel about the observed behavior, and the behavior they want to execute in response to their feelings about the child's observed behavior (Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022). Example: "Khalid, when I see you remembering to place the writing utensils in their proper place, I feel so happy, I want to invite you to add an ice cream scoop to your cone!" It is important that the child is the one who retrieves and places the tangible reinforcer to help encourage self-regulation (Porter, 2020). The type of phrasing described, combined with the tangible reinforcer placed by the child, tends to encourage intrinsic motivation in the child without harming the child's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Mosier, 2013b; Strain et al., 2017).

Modeling Socially Competent Behavior

It is unrealistic for early childhood educators to expect children to engage in prosocial behaviors without the early childhood educators themselves modeling prosocial behaviors (NAEYC, 2022). In fact, model-

ing is one of the most effective methods for encouraging children to engage in prosocial behaviors while supporting self-regulation (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014). Socially competent behavior can be cultivated in young children through adult modeling since children learn from observing adults around them. There are two communication skills that early childhood educators can implement, through modeling, that support children's socially competent behavior: communicating empathic understanding and using three-part "I" messages (Barton & Garvis, 2019; Hendrix-Soto & Mosley Wetzel, 2019; Mosier, 2013b, 2013a; Porter, 2020)

Communicating Empathic Understanding

Communicating empathic understanding, also known as reflective listening, is critical to young children's development of socially competent behavior (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2022; Barton & Garvis, 2019; Schipper & Petermann, 2013). For example, empathic understanding can be a useful tool when addressing tattling behavior which may be classified as a passive-aggressive means to get attention from adults (Frick & Kemp, 2021; Schipper & Petermann, 2013). Modeling empathic understanding, or reflective listening, can help children develop prosocial skills related to awareness of others' emotions, improve the emotional climate of the classroom, and regulate children's excitement (Barton & Garvis, 2019; Park et al., 2019; Schipper & Petermann, 2013). An example of a developmentally appropriate response to a child's initiation of communication with an early childhood educator might be: The child says, "Shaelyn took my marker," and the educator responds, "Ah, and you did not like that." A response such as this keeps the emphasis on the child's feeling as opposed to giving undue attention to the disruptive behavior of another child, provides a model for the child to express their thoughts and feelings using words, and helps encourage the child to discuss their thoughts and feelings in the future (Frick & Kemp, 2021; Garner et al., 2019; Park et al., 2019; Schipper & Petermann, 2013).

Using Three-Part "I" Messages

Early childhood educators can use three-part "I" messages to reinforce prosocial behavior, confront disruptive behavior, and model effective communication skills (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2022; Porter, 2020). "I" messages help reduce the likelihood of children perceiving an adult's communication as judgmental or blaming (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2022). A three-part "I" message provides a consistent method for communication that can convey information to a child about a behavior being displayed while supporting the child's self-regulation (Mosier, 2013b, 2013a). The following is an example for creating three-part "I" messages that promote prosocial behavior:

1. When I see you: *identify acceptable behavior*;
2. it makes me feel: *identify your feelings about the behavior*;
3. so that I want to: *identify what it makes you want to do*.

For example: "Wow, Tanner, when I see you carefully organizing the listening station, I feel so excited, I want to give you a thumbs up." To use a three-part "I" message to confront disruptive behavior, and early childhood educator may say something like: "Sam, when I hear you yelling at Diana, it makes me feel sad. So, I am going to help you practice speaking quietly until I feel safe that you understand the classroom rule is 'I talk in a quiet tone of voice'." An early childhood educator could simply look for

when the behavior occurs and use a three-part “I” message to encourage prosocial behavior. Similarly, when the early childhood educator needs to confront a disruptive behavior, a three-part “I” message can help bring attention back to the desired behavior, usually in alignment with classroom rules or procedures. This approach can be used to reduce the likelihood of inadvertently reinforcing the disruptive behavior (Mosier, 2013a, 2013b; Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022; Porter, 2020; Strain et al., 2017)

CONCLUSION

No two children have an identical roadmap for learning basic skills, but all young children benefit from a play-based learning environment within a differentiated classroom that respects the unique learning needs and approaches to learning of each individual child (NAEYC, 2022). Learning during early childhood is determined by what a child is interested in learning during their play activities (C. Z. Wright & Dunsmuir, 2019). A classroom arranged in learning stations allows young children to learn through self-directed, hands-on, play-based experiences. Studies of young children consistently document that limited literacy skills tend to exacerbate the occurrence of disruptive behavior in early learning environments (Flint & Adams, 2018; Kennedy et al., 2012; Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022; Yogman et al., 2018). As literacy and self-directed behavior are linked, addressing the needs of the whole child is important because young children do not develop one domain at a time (NAEYC, 2022). Helping young children to learn and play together using learning stations in a cooperative manner is an effective method for supporting disciplinary literacy development because it integrates both disciplinary literacy approaches with approaches grounded in DAP (Clark et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2021; NAEYC, 2022; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014; Welsh et al., 2020; T. S. Wright & Gotwals, 2017). When young children are afforded many opportunities for learning through play, such as the guided and spontaneous play that can be achieved through learning stations, they integrate their here and now experiences by using language as a vehicle for enhancing their learning of language through play within the context of their cultural background (NAEYC, 2022; Williams & Lowrance-Faulhaber, 2018).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

3-Part I-Message: A template for expressing one's emotion that uses first-person singular language to address a behavior, the speaker's feeling about the behavior, and the resulting response of the speaker to their feelings regarding the behavior.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An approach to interacting with, and facilitating the learning of, young children that is play-based, addresses all developmental domains, is culturally and linguistically relevant, and supports their optimal development in alignment with developmental science.

Disruptive Classroom Behavior: A child's actions in the classroom setting that might interfere in the classroom's educational flow and run counter to social expectations.

Early Childhood Educator: A professional educator who works with young children from birth through age eight.

Empathic Understanding: A method of listening where the focus is on the feelings of the speaker.

Learning Stations: A physical location in an early childhood education classroom where a small number of children can engage with the materials available at the station either individually or with others, including the early childhood educator, who are at the same station.

Logical Consequence: A consequence, implemented by an adult, that is logically related to the behavior and provides a clear path for the child to avoid the consequence in the future.

Natural Consequence: A consequence, not implemented by an adult, that occurs naturally as the result of a behavior.

Play-Based Learning: Approaches to early childhood education that emphasize the vital role of play, exploration, and discovery in the learning process.

Positive Child Guidance: A method of child guidance that emphasizes developmentally appropriate practices and positive adult-child interactions with the goal of cultivating self-regulation in young children.

Self-Regulation: A person's ability to be self-directed and self-correcting of their own behavior based on social norms.

Chapter 9

Using Multicultural Picturebook Biographies to Implement Culturally Relevant Curriculum and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Across K–8 Grade Levels

William Paul Bintz

Kent State University, USA

Shabnam M. Chaghervand

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5091-7517>

Kent State University, USA

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is three-fold. One, it discusses how multicultural picture book biographies can be a valuable resource to develop CRC. Two, it describes how teachers can use this curriculum with research-based instructional strategies to implement CRP across major content areas (English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics) and grade levels (K-8). Three, it shares a variety of professional literature and other online resources that teachers and teacher educators can use to deepen and broaden their knowledge on CRC and CRP across grade levels and content areas. It is organized in seven sections including rationale, culturally relevant curriculum, culturally responsive pedagogy, multicultural literature, multicultural picture book biographies, instructional strategies, and final thoughts.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout time, humans have told stories to themselves and each other. They have told stories orally,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch009

in writing, and through art in the form of cave paintings, one of the oldest pictorial records of storytelling in the world (Ferreira, 2019). Humans continue to tell stories for a variety of reasons. Perhaps, Joan Didion, famous American novelist and essayist, identified one of the most important reasons, stating “We tell ourselves stories in order to live” (Grimes, 2021).

Many people are good storytellers (Fox, 2008). Parents tell their children bedtime stories, grandparents tell their grandchildren stories of their past, and siblings often tell each other stories they do not want their parents to know. Artists are also good storytellers. Authors with texts and illustrators with pictures tell stories they hope will entertain, inform, and inspire readers. Songwriters tell stories with music and lyrics, painters tell stories with media, perspective, and design, and even outdoor campers tell stories, often exaggerated, to heighten the experience of sleeping outdoors.

The best storytellers, however, are teachers (Smith, 2014). They know the power and potential of storytelling, especially reading aloud, as an instructional tool to engage student interest and engagement across the curriculum. Teacher educators and researchers also recognize the value of vignettes, stories that spark curiosity, influence thinking, and ignite inspiration. The following vignette is an example.

VIGNETTE

Recently, Shabnam volunteered to review trade books for the Ohio Literacy Center. One of the books I chose to review was called *Peace and Me* (Winter, 2018). It is a beautiful and informative collection of minibiographies about famous historical figures who have won the prestigious Nobel Prize. The first two pages of the book illustrate the Pacific Ocean with multiple boats on it. Each boat represents a Nobel Prize winner. I am a Persian woman, born in Italy but raised in Isfahan, Iran. As such, this book really warmed my heart when I saw a boat with a Persian name, *Shirin Ebadi*, written on it. This book gave me a sense of voice. It gave me an opportunity to not only learn more about my own country but also to talk about my own culture and history. Since then, this book has captured my heart and attention.

This vignette illustrates the importance, power, and potential of multicultural stories. It inspired us to write this book chapter. For us, it raised two interrelated questions, one about curriculum and the other instruction: How can multicultural picturebook biographies, like *Peace and Me*, be used to develop culturally relevant curriculum (CRC) across K-8 grade levels and content areas? and What instructional strategies can be used in CRC to implement culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) across K-8 grade levels and content areas?

PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

The purpose of this book chapter is three-fold. One, it discusses how multicultural picturebook biographies can be a valuable resource to develop CRC. Two, it describes how teachers can use CRC with research-based instructional strategies to implement CRP across major content areas including English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics and across grade levels, kindergarten through grades eight. Three, it shares a variety of professional literature and other online resources that teachers and teacher educators can use to deepen and broaden their knowledge of CRC and CRP across grade levels and content areas.

Using Multicultural Picturebook Biographies to Implement Culturally Relevant Curriculum

The chapter is organized in seven sections. These sections begin with a rationale for this chapter. Next, it provides an overview of the concept of CRC and CRP and the important distinction between the two. Then, it describes the nature and function of multicultural literature, focusing specifically on multicultural picturebook biographies, and instructional strategies to use with these biographies. It ends with some final thoughts.

RATIONALE

Today, a significant percentage of the population of the United States consists of immigrants, individuals and families who have fled their home countries due to war, poverty, religious persecution, government corruption (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Presently, more than 44 million foreign-born people live in the United States, a number that accounts for more immigrants coming from diverse cultural backgrounds than any other country in the world (Radford & Noe-Bustamante, 2019). Moreover, it reflects a reality that the United States is a diverse, multicultural society, characterized more by difference than sameness, diversity than uniformity, and variability than consistency.

Increasing immigration has had, and continues to have, a significant impact on public education (Lamme, Fu, & Lowery 2004). Every year, United States public schools continue to welcome increasing amounts of immigrant children in the pre-K-12 system, representing many different cultures, histories, languages, religions, and traditions. Consequently, and fortunately, in addition to African American, Hispanic, and native American populations, K-12 classrooms today are not monochromatic or homogenous, but rich mosaics of cultural diversity.

DIVERSE STUDENT POPULATION

Today, schools in the United States reflect a diverse student population. According to the United States Department of Education (2015), forty-nine percent of the total school student population represents students of color. This rich and increasing cultural diversity of multicultural populations of students in public schools have important implications and raise critical questions for diverse student populations. One implication is curriculum. *How can curriculum and curriculum development accommodate with increasing student diversity?* Another implication is text mentality. *How can teachers develop a multiple versus a single text mentality?* Still another implication is reader preferences. *What role does reader preferences play in addressing student diversity?* Lastly, multicultural literature, specifically multicultural picturebook biographies, is an important implication. *How can multicultural literature, specifically multicultural picturebook biographies, be helpful to use with student diversity?*

Curriculum. Culturally relevant curriculum needs to be based on a theoretical model that posits *curriculum as experience*. This model highlights culturally diversity, individual difference, and personal voice, rather than current theoretical models that posit *curriculum as discrete skills*, mastery of a sequentially structured set of individual and isolated skills irrespective of culture or socio-economic status.

Text Mentality. CRC needs to shift from a single text to a multiple text mentality. Typically, especially in literacy, curriculum consists of single, required readings often found in commercially published reading programs in the elementary school levels, and commercially published textbooks and anthologies at the middle grades and high school levels. A single text mentality is problematic because it cannot

accommodate cultural diversity. A multiple text mentality acknowledges cultural diversity and advocates teachers use multiple texts, in the form of authentic literature, across content areas and grade levels. Multicultural literature is but one genre and a good example of a curricular resource that is consistent with a multiple text mentality.

Reader Preferences. Much research has been conducted on identifying reader preferences based on age and gender and a variety of other factors. A considerable amount of this research indicates that both K-12 male and female students prefer informational over narrative text (Boltz, 2007; see also, Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; Brozo, 2002). More specifically, in terms of genre, both male and female students prefer biography over other genres. And yet, the importance of reader preferences has not been recognized or used to development reading curriculum. The elementary reading curriculum, as evidenced by countless commercially produced reading materials from kindergarten through grade 8 is a good example

For the most part, the elementary reading curriculum continues to privilege fiction over nonfiction reading materials. Likewise, the upper elementary and middle grades reading curriculum privileges fiction over nonfiction reading materials in English/Language Arts, and while content areas like Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics include nonfiction reading materials, they do not include the genre of biography in meaningful ways. Conversely, culturally responsive teaching recognizes the importance of reader preferences by highlight nonfiction over fiction reading materials, especially using multicultural picturebook biographies with multicultural literature.

Multicultural Literature. The International Literacy Association (ILA) defines multicultural literature as books, poetry, and other forms of writing that are created by or focused on underrepresented or minority groups (ILA, 2022). This literature is valuable because teachers can use them with students who are members of one or both groups. More specifically, multicultural literature refers to stories that focus on different cultures, languages, and customs. These stories can inform readers about an individual's cultural beliefs and traditions. Multicultural literature, however, is much more than telling a story about a different culture; "it is a story of a group's experiences that reflect their history, their current existence, and their future" (Turner, Tonatiuh, & Harris, 2016, p. 125).

Multicultural literature, also referred to as global literature, has many benefits. First and foremost, this literature posits that "readers are cultural and emotional beings. What they bring to a book, shapes what they take from it" (Johnson et al., 2017, p. 569). It also recognizes that the world today is not monocultural, but multicultural. Multicultural literature is important because it helps students develop multicultural and intercultural understanding in an interconnected world (Short, Day, & Schroeder, 2016)

Multicultural literature has much power and potential to shape student identity and perception towards other cultures. In this way, it serves as both a mirror and a window. As a mirror, this literature enables readers to see themselves in stories and gain a deeper understanding of their own culture. As a window, it allows readers to learn about other cultures. Incorporating multicultural literature in a safe and welcoming classroom can provide students with both a window to look at diverse cultures and a mirror to reflect on their own (Galda, 1998).

Moreover, rich and authentic multicultural literature has the potential to take readers on a journey where they can hear new voices, experience different worlds, and develop global perspectives. This literature "helps children to identify with their own culture, exposes children to other cultures, and opens the dialogue on issues regarding diversity" (Colby & Lyon, 2004, p. 24). Finally, multicultural literature is important because "it invites students to develop deeper understandings of people's lived experiences, particularly, those who have different identities" (Chaghervand & Bintz, 2021, p.43). In today's diverse classrooms, students need to be able to connect to the text, situation, and characters in order to construct

meaning (Dietrich & Ralph, 1995; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Rosenblatt, 1978). Creative meaning is the reason to read in the first place.

CULTURALLY RELEVANT CURRICULUM

Historically, curriculum is a term that means the road to be taken (Kliebard, 1992). Over time, many definitions of curriculum have been developed and, for the most part, they all are anchored in the metaphor of curriculum as a road to be taken (Beyer & Apple, 1988). At the same time, many historians of curriculum, as well as many contemporary curriculum theorists and specialists, have continued to problematize this metaphor of curriculum (Apple, 1990). They argue that the *curriculum as road* metaphor is not culturally, politically, and socially neutral or innocent. Among other questions, they ask:

1. What road is to be taken?
2. Who decides what road is to be taken?
3. Who makes this road?
4. Do all students take the same road, regardless of gender, race, and socio-economic status?
5. What about students and teachers who wish to take a different road?
6. Who decides whether students have successfully completed the road?
7. How is success determined?

These questions are not new. On the contrary, historically, these kinds of questions have always been asked, indicating that curriculum has been, and continues to be, a highly controversial and contested idea (Kliebard, 1992). These questions also indicate that battles over the curriculum, in terms of what curriculum is, how is curriculum defined, and who gets to decide, continue to be waged. In large part, this is due to the fact that many different definitions of curriculum have been developed over time. Here, we define curriculum as a system of beliefs that teachers put into action in the classroom (Short & Burke, 1991).

Like all theories of curriculum, culturally relevant curriculum has a rich history, represents a particular perspective on curriculum, and is based on a system of interrelated beliefs (Allen, Hancock, Lewis, & Starker-Glass, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2011). These beliefs posit that curriculum recognize and respect different cultures, languages, and contexts (Santamaria, 2009); connect home life and school culture in ways that engages and empowers students, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically (Ladson-Billings, 1992); intentionally promote intercultural awareness and understanding; incorporate cultural information into the curriculum, rather than simply adding it *on top of* the existing curriculum (International Bureau of Education), and value and imbed the community's social and political customs, and 6) develop meaningful interactions and engagements between school and community. In essence, culturally relevant curriculum posits that meaningful learning takes place when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the cultural experiences of students (Gay, 2002).

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Like curriculum, many different definitions of pedagogy have been developed over time. These definitions have described pedagogy in terms of direct and indirect instruction, standards-based teaching, skills-based instruction, problem-based pedagogy, assessment-driven pedagogy, intervention-based teaching, among many others. Here, we define pedagogy broadly; it is the artistic process of making complex topics interesting and enjoyable (Smith, 2006).

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), also called culturally relevant teaching, is a perspective on pedagogy. Like curriculum, CRP has a rich history and is based on a system of interrelated beliefs about pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009; 1995a; 1995b; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2010; Paris, 2012). These beliefs posit that pedagogy:

1. Recognize the importance of including student culture in learning.
2. All students from all cultures can achieve academic success at very high levels.
3. Embed culture in instruction to enhance knowledge.
4. Actively engage students in sociopolitical issues that help them identify, explore, and solve issues impacting their lives (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Theoretically, CRP puts culturally relevant curriculum into action in the classroom. It aims to teach to the whole child, views the classroom as a community of learners, aims to develop and implement lessons that connect new content material to students' past and existing experiences through a variety of learning modalities and styles. In the area of literacy, CRP uses authentic and high-quality literature by diverse authors and from a variety of other cultures. This literature strengthens students' sense of identity, promotes equity and inclusivity in the classroom, engages students in course material, and supports critical thinking. Simply stated, CRP enables students to see themselves in their readings, that is, to see people who look, talk, and dress like them, and who eat food and celebrate traditions just them. Picturebook biographies, especially multicultural picturebook biographies, are important to all teaching, but particularly to culturally responsive teaching.

PICTUREBOOK BIOGRAPHIES

Historically, picturebooks have been a rich part of childhood for generations (Rice, 2002, p. 552). Traditionally, "biographies were written to provide young people with the opportunity to read about people they might emulate, so they portrayed only the positive aspects of people's lives" (Cullinan & Galda, in Flood, 2003, p. 342). According to Morgan & Collett (2018), "the value of learning about people who have achieved something extraordinary is immeasurable. Children need to find heroes and role models who can inspire and motivate them (14).

In general, biography is a literary genre that describes a real person's life. The subjects of biography are usually people who are famous, such as national leaders, artists, sports figures, writers, or explorers, but there are also many biographies about ordinary people who do extraordinary things. Simply put, biographies are "cool things, about cool people, doing cool stuff" (Pinkney, 2014, p. 5).

Picturebook biographies is a literary sub-genre of biography. This sub-genre is very popular within children's literature because it "tells the life story of a significant historical figure" (Coffin, 2006, p.

53). Most picturebook biographies are works of art, as well as works of fact (Galda, Liang, & Cullinan, 2017). They “offer elementary and middle school students an opportunity to describe the decisions of individuals and groups, as well as the impact of their decisions on historical events” (Fertig, 2008).

Picturebook biographies have many appealing qualities. Three of the most important qualities are: each tells a true story, each concerns people, and each inspires readers with ideals. Moreover, picturebook biographies include beautiful and evocative illustrations that enrich the text, bring drama to historical events, and humanize history in ways that textbooks may not (Morgan & Collett, 2018). Recently, picturebook biographies have started to “surge and thrive” (Deskins & Dorr, 2016, p. 1).

For example, The World Cat library database catalogued 2414 biographies in their juvenile literature section for 2017, a peak year between 2010 and 2019, and shows numbers in steady increase since the 1980s. Amazon references a staggering 30,000 biographies in their children’s section, double the number of classics, and far more than mysteries or comics (Beauvais, 2020). This evidence reasonably suggests that the surge in picturebook biographies will continue and increase.

MULTICULTURAL PICTUREBOOK BIOGRAPHIES & INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

In this section, we share a variety of multicultural picturebook biographies across content areas in English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics), along with instructional strategies, examples, and extensions that can be used with these and other biographies, across two grade bands: K-4 and 5-8. The instructional strategies were selected because they are generic in nature, and therefore can be used across different content areas. Moreover, in each grade band, the multicultural picturebook biographies include mostly realistic fiction, but will also include nonfiction texts as well. These multicultural picturebook biographies that can be included in a culturally relevant curriculum and used with culturally responsive teaching across K-4 and 5-8 grade bands. In addition to those included in this book chapter, we share other multicultural picturebook biographies that also can be used for grades K-4 (see Table 1) and for grades 5-8 (see Table 2).

Grades K-4

English/Language Arts

Multicultural picturebook biography: *Emmanuel’s Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah*.

Summary: This biography is the true and inspiring story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah, a young boy from Ghana who was born with one deformed leg. Unlike most other people in his life, his mother taught him to dream big. So, he did. Emmanuel hopped to school, two miles each way, played soccer, and left home at age thirteen to provide for his family. His biggest dream focused on cycling. He became a cyclist and rode, with only one leg, a remarkable 400 miles across Ghana in 2001 to share his message: disability is not inability. Today, Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah continues to advocate for the disabled around the world.

Strategy: Biographical poem is an instructional strategy that students can use to think about a main character, personally, deeply, and thoughtfully. These poems, also called bio poems, are short biographies told in poetic format. Typically, biographical poems follow a standard format. They include important information such as, the character’s first and last name, personal characteristics, the location where they

Table 1. Biographical Poem

Biographical Poem	
(Line 1) First name (Line 2) 4 adjectives that describe the person (Line 3) Important relationship (Line 4) 2-3 things, people, or ideas the person loved (Line 5) Three feelings the person experienced (Line 6) Three fears the person experienced (Line 7) Accomplishments (Line 8) 2-3 things the person wanted to see happen or wanted to experience (Line 9) His or her residence (Line 10) Last name	Emmanuel hero, inspirational, courageous, determined Ghana (Africa),

lived, important relationships with others, insights into the character's emotions, important achievements, and goals, dreams, and ambitions (Boggs, 2022). Figure 1 illustrates a biographical poem based on Emmanuel in *Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah*.

In addition to biographical poems, there are many other poetic formats students can use to represent and share their understanding of text. Among others, these include;

1. Haiku
2. Ballad
3. Limerick
4. Song Lyrics
5. Sonnet
6. An Occasional Poem
7. Shape or Concrete Poems
8. Ode
9. Acrostic
10. Color Poem
11. I Wish... Poem
12. Five-Senses Poems
13. If I Were...Poem
14. Contrast Poem
15. Definition Poem
16. Preposition Poem
17. Clerihews
18. Model Poem
19. Contrast Poem
20. Two-voice, Three-voice, Four-voice...Poems.

Social Studies

Multicultural picturebook biography: *Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan* (Winter, 2009).

Summary: This biography tells the true story about a grandmother who defies tyranny to provide a better future for her young granddaughter, Nasreen. Like all girls, Nasreen girls are forbidden to attend school. Grandmother quietly hears about a secret school for girls operated by a teacher in a private house. There, Nasreen meets Mina, and eventually they open their hearts and minds to each other. Over time, Nasreen learns to read, write, and do math. Now, grandmother is at peace, grateful that a secret school opened new windows and opportunities for her beloved granddaughter.

Strategy: Flushing Out a Character is an instructional strategy that helps students understand and represent character development (Allen, 1999). This strategy helps students understand the depth and breadth of a character; that is, to better understand a character's history, personality, personality traits, and strengths and challenges. In short, flushing out a character helps students understand the hidden depths of a character. Figure 2 illustrates the use of this strategy on the grandmother in *Nasreen's Secret School*.

After completing the Flushing Out a Character strategy, students can spend time reviewing and reflecting on the responses on the sheet. Then, students can select one where they made a personal connection to the character. For example, like grandmother, students may have exhibited courage or perseverance in a difficult situation, resisted authority or power when it was being used to hurt, not help, people, or acted secretly to help a person or group of people because they could not publicly. Lastly, students can use that personal connection to write and illustrate a personal narrative in tribute to or in solidarity with the grandmother.

Science

Multicultural picturebook biography: *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (Kamkwamba, 2012).

Summary: This is the inspiring biography of William Kamkwamba, a young boy from Malawi, Africa who built a windmill from junk to produce and provide electricity and pump water to his village during a severe drought and famine. Using books and dictionaries from a local library, William read science books. He saw a windmill illustrated in one book. It was the inspiration for his invention and the solution for his village which now did not have to depend on rain.

Strategy: Guided Questions for Content Area Reading is an instructional strategy that guides student thinking on three open-ended, inquiry-based questions about a text: What was happening? Why did it matter? What was done? Individually, each question is designed to highlight important events and key concepts in the text. Collectively, these questions invite students to make connections across questions in the form of event, significance, and consequence. Figure 3 illustrates the use of this strategy on William, the main character in *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.

In addition to Guided Questions for Content Area Reading strategy, students can extend their understanding not only about William as a scientist, but also about the science behind his windmill with the instructional strategy, Know Me, Know My Science. This strategy is important, especially in the content area of science, because much science literature portrays an imbalance between the scientist and the science. It either highlights the life and times of a famous scientist or provides information about the science behind, or in front of, the scientist. Terrell, (2006) identified the inherent tensions between biography to study both the science and the scientist, stating:

The biographical form highlights the very real tensions between the study of individuals and the study of disciplines, institutions, cultural movements, rhetoric, and ideology, not to mention ideas and practices (308).

Figure 1. Flushing Out a Character

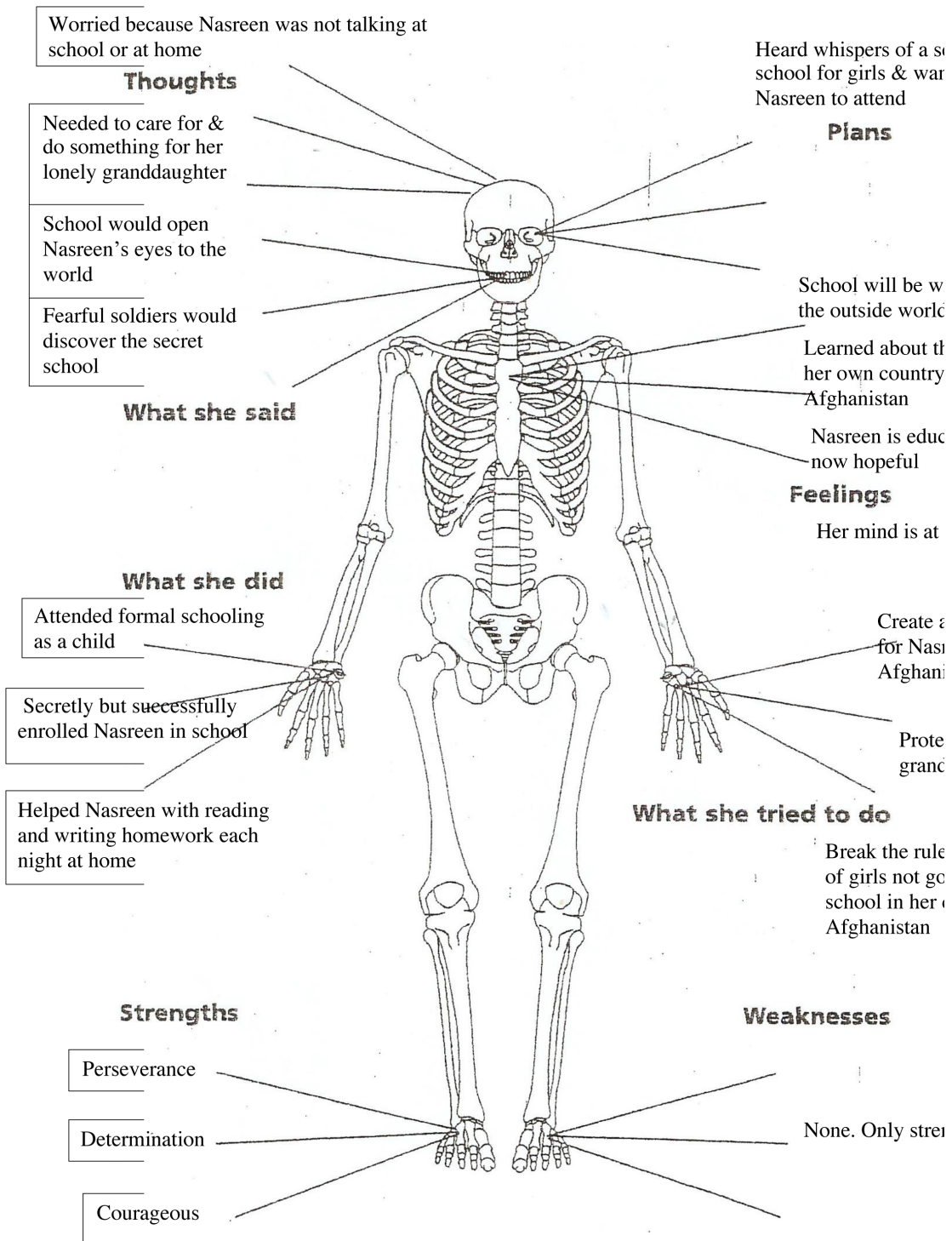


Table 2. Guided Questions for Content Area Reading

Guiding Questions for Content-Area Reading		
What Was Happening?	Why Did It Matter?	What Was Done?
1. At the time, there was a severe drought and famine in Malawi, a small country in Southeastern Africa. A drought is a long period of time when there is abnormally low rainfall. Without rain, it leads to a shortage of water. 2. William's mother and father told him he could no longer attend school because he needed to work to help the family cope with the drought and famine. 3. The drought and famine were continuing and getting worse. 4. William often took walks along the dirt roads in his village. On these walks, he noticed junk littered on the sides of roads. He collected this junk for the purpose of designing and building a windmill. 5. William's windmill brought energy to his village and community.	6. Like many rural, landlocked, agricultural countries, Malawi needs water for crops to grow and thus people to eat and live. Rainfall means food and food means life. 7. Many children in poor countries do not attend formal schooling. So, it was an honor for William's family and a special privilege for him to go to school. 8. Increasing amounts of people were in danger of not having enough food to eat. 9. William's family was poor and could not afford to purchase materials for William to build a windmill. But, William was an imaginary, creative, and visionary person who did not let poverty stop him from solving a problem. 10. The windmill helped pump water to his village and community and the water saved crops which produced food.	11. Advanced countries use science to make it rain. Airplanes or rockets are used to sow clouds with catalysts like dry ice, silver iodide, and salt powder to make clouds rain or increase precipitation. Malawi is not a rich country, so little was done by the government. It took William, a young 13-year-old boy, to solve the problem by building a windmill. 12. William had to quit school, but he did not stop his education. He visited the local library, sponsored and financed by the American Government, to read books about science, his favorite subject. 13. William saw a windmill illustrated in a science book at the library. He learned that windmills were used around the world to produce energy and was inspired to build one himself. 14. Over time William built a windmill out of junk he found on the sides of roads. 15. William saved his family, village, and community from the dangers of drought and famine.

When used with Guided Questions for Content Area Reading, *Know Me, Know My Science* allows students to better understand the scientist and the science. Figure 4 illustrates the use of this strategy with *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.

Mathematics

Multicultural picturebook biography: *Maryam Mirzakhani: Women in Science and Technology* (Eboch, 2021)

Summary: This biography tells the remarkable story of Maryam Mirzakhani, an internationally renowned mathematician and, still to this day, the first person from Iran and the only woman ever to be awarded the Fields Medal, the most prestigious honor a mathematician can receive. Born and raised in Tehran, Maryam did not like mathematics, but rather loved to read stories and hoped to become a writer one day. Fortunately, with the help of a friend, she learned that math could be fun. Representing Iran, Maryam won a gold medal at the International Mathematical Olympiad while still in high school. She died at a young age from breast cancer but left a legacy that still continues today to inspire girls, women, and mathematicians around the world.

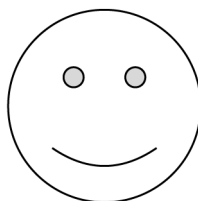
Strategy: Circle, Triangle, Square is an instructional strategy that uses mathematical shapes to help students reflect on and extend their understanding of a text. Circle asks students to identify and describe what is still going around in their head; that is, what idea, problem, or concept requires more thinking. Triangle asks students to identify and explain what fact, idea, problem, or concept that fascinated, impressed, or impacted them. Square invites students to identify and discuss when they agreed with a

Table 3. *Know Me, Know My Science*

Know Me, Know My Science	
If you want to know about me, here are some questions you should ask.	If you want to know about my invention, here are some questions you should ask.
Where is Malawi? What is your country like?	Why is your windmill a good energy source?
Where is the name of your village? What is it like to live there?	Are there different kinds of windmills? If so, what kind of windmill did you make?
What is the name of your school? What is your school like?	What makes your windmill such a good energy source for your country?
Before you built the windmill, what was it like to have no food or water? How did you and your family survive?	What are some of the differences between your windmill and an ordinary fan, like a ceiling fan in a house?
What was the worst part of experiencing a drought and famine? What advice do you have to survive a drought or famine?	What are important parts of your windmill? How do all of the parts work together?
What were the biggest problems you faced trying to build a windmill? Did you ever consider building something other than a windmill?	How is your windmill, if at all, affected by temperature, location, height, air pressure, length of rotor blades, speed of wind, and wind flow patterns?
How do you feel about having two books published about you?	Did your windmill have a generator and a gearbox? If so, how did you make those?
What happened to you after you built the windmill?	What is the difference between your windmill and today's wind turbine?
Where are you today? What are you currently doing?	What is the differences or similarities of your windmill to solar energy?
What plans do you have for the future?	If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently to make your windmill?

fact, idea or concept discussed in the text. Figure 5 illustrates the application of this strategy to *Maryam Mirzakhani: Women in Science and Technology*.

Figure 2. *Circle, Triangle, Square*



Something that is still going around in your head

I am still thinking about how Maryam grew up wanting to be a writer. But she learned math was fun, even though her math teacher said she wasn't talented in math.

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She drew diagrams and formulas on large pieces of paper as a strategy for understanding math problems.

I am still thinking about all of the struggles and challenges she overcame to become one of the most famous mathematicians in the world.

How can a person so famous be so little known at the same time?

Something pointed that stood out in your mind

She and her friend, Roya, were determined to be the first girls from Iran to compete in the International Mathematics Competition and asked their principal for new math classes to prepare for it. Maryam won a gold medal for a perfect score!

Maryam took class notes in Persian because English was her second language.

Maryam's life and work still inspires young girls and women to find the exciting side of math.

Something that "squared" or agreed with your thinking

Maryam was curious throughout her life. She wasn't intimidated by what she didn't know.

She gave old ideas new solutions and new answers to big questions.

She won The Fields Medal, the highest honor in mathematics.

What's Interesting vs. What's Important is another instructional strategy students can use to reflect on and respond to text. It is based on the notion that students often find interesting and important information in both fiction and nonfiction text. This strategy highlights that both kinds of information are important, but they are not the same and do not necessarily have the same value, depending on the purpose of the reading.

Students can draw a T-chart on a separate piece of paper, labeling the left column What's Interesting (What's Nice to Know) and the right column What's Important (What's Critical to Know). After reading, students record information from the text in the appropriate column and share it with others in the class.

Grades 5-8

English/Language Arts

Multicultural picturebook biography: *Honda: The Boy Who Dreamed of Cars*

Summary: This is a narrative biography of Soichiro Honda, the pioneering Japanese businessman who was an innovative motorcycle and car manufacturer and founder of the Honda Motor Company. From childhood to adulthood, Honda showed a strong work ethic and a love of mechanical things, especially cars. After working as an apprentice in a mechanic's shop, Honda soon opened his own automobile service station. Eventually, Honda attached an engine to a bike, and the motorcycle was born, leading him to build cars for the Japanese market. In 1972 he exported cars to the United States with the famous Honda Civic.

Strategy: The element of surprise is important to learning (Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2014). It Says, I'm Surprised, I'm Not Surprised is the title of an instructional strategy that invites students to record their surprises from the text. Surprises can include learning new information about people, places, things, innovations, ideas, and concepts. It also invites them to record non-surprises. Non-surprises can include information about people, places, things, innovations, ideas, and concepts that they already know or that

Table 4. *It Says, I'm Surprised, I'm Not Surprised*

It Says	I'm Surprised	I'm Not Surprised
As a boy, Soichiro watched boats in the harbor and wondered how they worked.		Being curious about how boats work predicted his future interest in how cars and engines work.
Soichiro was not a good student.	Soichiro was the oldest of 9 children from a poor family. I thought he would see education as a way out of poverty.	
He worked for 1 year at a car garage sweeping floors but not touching cars.		Soichiro was humble, not entitled, and a hard worker who worked his way up.
For 6 years, Soichiro trained as a mechanic and soon after opened his own garage with 50 employees.	It takes lots of money to start a business. His family was poor. His job didn't pay much. How did Soichiro get the money to start a business?	Nearing the age of 30, he married and started a family.
He loved to drive fast and built and drove the fastest race car in Japan.	I never associated Honda with racing cars, only with domestic cars.	Many successful people are risk-takers, always looking for innovative ideas. Soichiro was a risk-taker.
Soichiro began manufacturing piston rings, and later sold them to Toyota, one of Japan's first car companies.	Toyota was already a successful car manufacturer, along with other companies. Honda company started later.	Manufacturing pistons attracted the Japanese Air Force. It was World War II. Honda asked to also manufacture airplane propellers.
Honda built a faster bicycle and turned it into a small motorcycle, starting the Honda Motor Company.	Japan was crowded with people. Soichiro looked to make products that were practical, and useful people and transportation.	Manufacturing motor scooters was just another variation in his passion for learning how machines work.
In 1963 his dream came true, making small cars for Japan and the world.	Honda invented air-cooled, not water-cooled, cars in time to meet the USA Clean Air Act.	Sales of Honda cars (Civic) in the USA soared.
Retired in 1973 Died in 1991	He enjoyed watching television, installed on his bedroom ceiling. Thought he would be bored.	He enjoyed hang gliding and playing golf. Always a risk taker.

they would reasonably expect from reading a biography about a famous person. Figure 6 illustrates the application of this strategy to Soichiro Honda in *Honda: The Boy Who Dreamed of Cars*.

Like the element of surprise, reflection is also an essential component of reading and for reading comprehension. This strategy uses the alphabet to help students record new learnings from their reading. During and/or after reading, students use each letter of the alphabet to identify and briefly describe an idea, insight, question, fact, anomaly, etc. from their reading. For example,

A is for _____
 B is for _____
 C is for _____

Students bring their ABC reflections to class and use them to participate in a discussion circle.

Social Studies

Multicultural picturebook biography: *The People's Painter: How Ben Shahn Fought for Justice with Art*.

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Table 5. *Becoming a Text Analyst*

Characters and Perspectives	Plot and Meanings	Positioning
<i>Whose voices are represented and whose are missing in this text?</i> The voice of Ben Shahn is prominent. <i>Why is Ben Shahn so prominent in this text?</i> He is the main character. This story tells the life and times of a little-known artist from a small village in Lithuania. It is told in 3rd person and focuses on Ben's fight against discrimination, injustice, and persecution by the Russian Czar. It also describes his family's immigration to the US, Ben's experiences with bullying, but also his success as a lithographer and later an artist. He painted stories of outsiders, especially stories of injustice against immigrants. In 1935, Franklin D. Roosevelt hired Ben to paint pictures of poor people struggling from the Depression. He spent the rest of his life painting stories of injustice and became known as "the people's painter." <i>What would Zayde say if he/she had a voice in this text?</i> Zayde is the Yiddish word for grandfather. Ben's grandfather could not immigrate to the US with the rest of the family. I don't know if Ben ever saw him again. I suspect Zayde would say that he missed Ben but was so proud of him.	<i>Which stories are privileged, and which are marginalized in this text?</i> Ben's story is privileged. Stories marginalized include the stories of people he painted. These people include civil rights activists, workers demanding fair pay, political prisoners, and advocates for peace. <i>How would this story be different if it were told from the perspective of the Czar of Russia at the time rather than Ben?</i> From the Czar's perspective, this would tell the story of Ben as an insurgent, disloyal to the Czar, and a criminal who sought to overthrow the government. <i>What views are represented in this text?</i> Ben's views are represented. <i>Not represented?</i> The views of his other family members, e.g., father, mother, and siblings are not represented. Ben's father was imprisoned by the Czar and imprisoned in Siberia. The story does not reveal any of the family's views about leaving Lithuania and immigrating to the United States.	<i>In what ways am I positioned within this text?</i> I am positioned as a reader to primarily focus on Ben Shahn, his life and times, problems and pleasures, and legacy. <i>What did the author want me to believe after reading the text?</i> The author wanted me as a reader to see Ben Shahn from different perspectives: as an immigrant, a little-known painter, but, most importantly, a civil rights hero. <i>What are the ways this text could be rewritten to reposition the reader?</i> This text could be written as a 1st person autobiography rather than 3rd person biography. It could also be written as an informational text, including historical information about Lithuania and its relationship to Russia, as well as real photographs of his paintings. Lastly, it could be written as a hybrid text, a text that integrates narrative and informational text.

Summary: This book tells the inspiring biography of artist and activist Ben Shahn. As a young boy, Ben learned about injustice when his father was banished to Siberia by the Czar of Russia for demanding fair pay for working people. In 1906, the Shahn family emigrated from Lithuania to the United States but once again experienced anti-Semitism. Ben painted, and later photographed, injustice and persecution in realistic ways and the United States government hired him to take photographs across the United States that revealed hard lives in troubled times. He was the people's painter.

Strategy: Becoming a Text Analyst is an instructional strategy that invites students to go beyond being a meaning-maker from a text to also becoming a text analyst. Text analysts invite students to see texts as objects for inquiry and reading as an opportunity to "wonder without having to come up with one answer or even one set of answers" (Leland & Bruzas, 2014, p. 23). As part of the process, students not only create multiple meanings from texts, but also examine how a text is trying to influence and position them (Short & Harste, 1996, pp. 257-258). Figure 7 illustrates an example of this strategy based on the story *The People's Painter: How Ben Shahn Fought for Justice with Art*.

Generating More Ideas is another instructional strategy that invites students to stretch and share their thinking during or after reading a text. They can use a variety of items, like the ones listed below, as prompts to stretch their thinking.

Anomalies I detected...

Best guesses or hunches about why...

Connections I made between...

Dislikes I noted...
Insights I liked...
Minuses I viewed...
New learnings for me...
Pluses I liked...
Questions I have...
Requests I'd like to make...
Suggestions for next time...
What I need to know more about...

Science

Multicultural picturebook biography: *Gregor Mendel: The Friar Who Grew Peas* (Bardoe, 2015)

Summary: This book tells the story of Gregor Mendel, an Austrian friar-scientist who applied the scientific method to the field of biology. Mendel planned field experiments to explain how parents pass down traits to their children. One experiment involved the breeding of peas from thousands of offspring to see how often specific traits appeared. His findings changed science forever. Today, he is commonly known as the world's first geneticist.

Strategy: Story Impressions is a prereading activity that is designed to arouse curiosity and anticipate the meaning of a story. In pairs, students receive a Story Impressions sheet, consisting of a story chain and a story guess. The story chain consists of important words and phrases that function as clues for students to write a retelling of the story. Together, students use the clues, in the order in which they are presented, to compose a story of their own, a story guess, before they read the actual story. Afterwards, students compare and contrast their story guess with the original text. Figure 8 illustrates a story impression on *Gregor Mendel: The Friar Who Grew Peas*.

Cloning an Author is an instructional strategy that helps students see reading as a holistic process and meaning as organized and unified (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1995). Students use a small stack of 3 X 5 index cards, and during or after reading, they write a key concept from the text on each of the cards. These can be words, phrases, or sentences. Students can create as many cards as they wish. After reading, students review their cards and select the 7 major concepts, setting aside the remaining cards. Then, students identify the key concept most central to the selection, and place it in the center of an imaginary circle on their desk or table top, organizing remaining concepts around this card. Finally, students work in small groups and take turns walking group members through why they selected the cards and why they arranged them as they did.

Mathematics

Multicultural picturebook biography: *Ada Byron Lovelace and the Thinking Machine* (Wallmark, 2015)

Summary: This biography tells the story of Ada Byron Lovelace, the world's first computer programmer. It describes her early life but focuses mostly on her work with Charles Babbage, a famous mathematician and inventor who designed but not yet built a mechanical computer. Ada extended the work of Babbage by developing an algorithm for the mechanical computer and in the process created the first computer program.

Table 6. Story Impressions

Story Chain	Story Guess
1822, Czech Republic	
Boarding school	
Tutor	
Friar	
University of Vienna	
Universal Laws	
Parents pass down traits to children	
Scientific Method	
Experiment with peas in garden	
Yellow peas with green peas/ Wrinkled peas and smooth peas	
Heredity	
Genes	
Dominant & Recessive genes	
The 1 st Geneticist	
Mendel's Laws	

Strategy: Reflection and Response Prompts is an instructional strategy that invites students to think critically. These prompts allow students to move beyond simple, surface level descriptions and toward complex, deep level understandings on a text. They help students see old understandings from different perspectives, generate new curiosities and inquiry questions, hear new voices and start new conversations based on a text. Figure 9 illustrates an example of this strategy based on *Ada Byron Lovelace and the Thinking Machine*.

I already understood who Lord Byron was, but I did not know that he had a daughter, much less a famous one. I also knew about some of the famous mathematicians mentioned in the story, like Michael Faraday and Mary Somerville, but I did not know about Charles Babbage. I also knew a primitive calculator was invented at the time.

Now, I understand why Ada Byron Lovelace is considered and admired as the first computer programmer. She overcame temporary blindness and other struggles as a child and young woman to become one of the world's most respected mathematicians at the time. Now, I also understand what the term means. Ada created an algorithm, a set of instructions, for the thinking machine. Without the algorithm, the machine could not think.

I still don't understand why Ada Byron Lovelace is still so little-known today. Why isn't she recognized and acknowledged as one of the great pioneers in computer science? Also, I still don't understand

how a computer program talks to a computer to make it work effectively and efficiently. I know it's with an algorithm, but I still don't how a computer, back then and now, reads it.

I am most curious about why Ada remains so little-known around the world, but especially in the computer science world. Most academic disciplines recognize the importance of standing on the shoulders of giants, famous people who have come before others. However, do computer scientists and computer programmers today even know about the shoulders of Ada Byron Lovelace?

My new inquiry questions are: How has computer programming and computer programs changed over time?

If I could talk with Ada, I would ask her: If you could live your life again, what changes, if any, would you make? Did you have any dreams that were unfulfilled?

Extension: Inquiry Bag is an instructional strategy that supports students to ask and solve high-order questions based on the reading of a text. Higher-order questions are those in which answers are not obvious. Rather, these questions are thought provoking, stimulate conversation, have multiple answers, or even no answers at all. Higher-order questions can begin with:

"I wonder..."

"What if..."

"How might..."

"Why would..."

Students organize themselves in small groups of 4-5 students. Each group shares a stack of 3 X 5 cards. While reading, students jot down important, higher-order questions based on the text. After reading, students put their cards in an inquiry bag, a small brown paper bag. One at a time, students select a card, not their own, read it aloud to the group, and use it to facilitate a discussion that focuses on answering the question.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Ultimately, CRC and CRP are inclusive terms with many responsibilities. The most important inter-related responsibilities of CRC and CRP are to be sensitive, reflect diversity, provide perspective, spark interest, and support engagement. A major goal is for teachers to develop CRC and implement CRP to meet these responsibilities. The aim of this book chapter is to help and support teachers and teacher educators to achieve this goal.

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Section 3

Academic Engagement and Motivation

Chapter 10

Identity Exploration as a Tool to Enhance Academic Engagement and Growth

Jessica Hadid

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3501-255X>

Temple University, USA

ABSTRACT

Disenfranchised students often develop identity systems that are incompatible with their sense of academic competence and growth, undermining engagement with and persistence in secondary education. This chapter describes a classroom-based approach to enhancing literacy-related task engagement through students' identity exploration and development. The program was designed to address the unique needs of high school students from historically marginalized backgrounds but can be modified for other grade levels and populations. The program presented here guides practitioners and education specialists to integrate a sociocultural approach to identity negotiation within existing curricula. Beyond enhancing task engagement, identity work in classroom settings has the potential to build student agency and well-being and increase the likelihood that students will develop academic identities such as reader and writer.

INTRODUCTION

Students' positionality within the education system often plays a significant role in their inclination to engage with (or disengage from) daily learning events. One important construct that helps shape this positionality is the student's interconnected network of identities. For example, a student may be simultaneously negotiating the interrelationship of identities like *son*, *street smart*, *math whiz*, *Black*, and *loyal friend* (Vignoles et al., 2011). A student's system of identities is connected to their academic motivation in the learning context, with certain identities becoming more salient as the student experiences and responds to stimuli within the setting (Oyserman, 2015). This chapter addresses issues of literacy motivation through an identity-based approach that acknowledges and values students' lived realities in and out of school. Research points to a steady decrease in reading motivation as United States students

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch010

ascend in grade level, a phenomenon that appears to be more pronounced in students from historically marginalized populations (NAEP, 2019; Wigfield, et al., 2016). Although researchers have identified contextual and motivational factors as critical to addressing low literacy (Wigfield, et al., 2016), effective classroom-based approaches that address motivation remain limited, and often fail to resonate with the students who need them most.

The chapter first considers why identity work is important for students who experience alienation in academic contexts. Next, it examines identity negotiation in the context of literacy focused settings, giving particular attention to the role that developing students' writing voice can play in identity construction, a formative engagement factor. It then describes the design and scope of an ongoing program within one 11th and one 12th grade English course in a North Philadelphia public school. The author positions her curricular design within a set of conceptual principles that informed its creation: the PRESS for Exploration model (Kaplan et al., 2014), and within the conceptual framework that guides her analysis: the Dynamic Systems Model of Role Identity (DSMRI; Kaplan & Garner, 2017). The chapter ends by providing recommendations for the design and implementation of identity development programs in educational settings, and discusses directions for future identity research in literacy focused settings. Throughout the chapter the author applies a sociocultural lens to the construct of literacy engagement within historically marginalized populations.

THE VALUE OF IDENTITY WORK FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

Identity is deeply rooted in the cultural meanings that help make up an individual's lived reality (Kaplan et al., in press). The complex construct of identity is defined herein as an individual's pliant but governable system of interrelated notions of self. In part, these culturally informed meanings are products of historical and present-day social institutions, and the discourses and practices that emerge from them, including those informed by systems of bias and discrimination, as well as by notions of tolerance and justice (Côté & Levine, 2002; Galliher et al., 2017; Nasir et al., 2016;). These externally derived meanings are integrated with more person-centered aspects of self that reflect an individual's temperament and predilections. Although identity is a highly contextualized component of a larger complex system, it is not viewed here as deterministic. Instead, identity and identity systems are viewed as amenable to intentional change. Because identity development begins at the onset of one's life and proceeds mostly beneath the everyday consciousness of the individual, developing an awareness of one's own identity formation processes and their potential outcomes can be a challenge for adolescents. However, student identity negotiation can positively impact classroom engagement. Identity informs what a student gives their attention to, the actions they choose to engage with, and the sacrifices they decide to make (Oyserman, 2015). Identity also informs perceived competence for a task, and an individual's notion of what is possible to accomplish today, or ten years from today (Master et al., 2016). Cultivating students' awareness of their own identity development by engaging them in a process of actively negotiating their interrelated network of selves, positions them as primary agents in their own learning trajectories (Kaplan et al., 2019). Identity development can also help students integrate fragmented or misaligned identity systems, rendering their school experiences more harmonious and their actions more adaptive (Kaplan et al., 2019). Ultimately, this supports their academic engagement and growth. It is common for students from historically marginalized backgrounds to perceive academics as "not for them" (Oyserman, 2013). Stated otherwise, these students' identity system may not incorporate such roles as *reader*,

writer, or even *student*. Such experiences often correspond with students' feelings of low belonging and relevance in the classroom (Oyserman & Lewis, Jr., 2017). These responses are often complicated by social identity threat, or the concern held by minoritized individuals that a group they associate with is threatened by negative stereotypes or stigma. Such anxieties have been shown to undermine learning and performance (Aronson & McGlone, 2009), but can also be counteracted by critical actions (Rapa et al., 2017) like self-reflection. Further, when student identity systems are characterized by an exploratory orientation informing movement toward integration and alignment, the student is better able to respond adaptively to challenges and change (Flum & Kaplan, 2006). There are also more concrete reasons to engage students in identity work. Identity exploration guides students to construct and work toward long term goals (Urdu & Kaplan, 2020). For example, when a student is asked to imagine and flesh out representations of their ideal and feared future selves, they create cognitive manifestations of goals, and are more likely to join their self-concept with their motivational choices (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Master et al., 2016; Oyserman & Dawson, 2019). This will broaden students' perception and scope of what actions are possible for them to engage in both in the moment, and as they move toward their imagined futures. In short, identity work helps students connect their daily decisions to their long-term outcomes. Finally, some forms of classroom identity work may facilitate more empathetic and informed teaching practices. For example, students' structured journaling practice can help teachers gain critical knowledge about students' personal and academic goals, the role emotions play in students' pursuit or avoidance of these goals, and what gaps need to be filled by the learning community to support students' success. Gaps may be academic or social-emotional in nature. As students engage in structured introspection, they often explore out-of-school challenges that otherwise remain invisible to teachers, such as a student's need to care for siblings, or their lack of housing stability. Insights like these can foster student-teacher connections and provide teachers with knowledge that critically informs their design of supportive classroom experiences.

Each of the positive outcomes of identity work discussed above helps ensure students' success in school. The next section explores how a well-integrated system of identities can directly benefit students' literacy engagement.

IDENTITY NEGOTIATION IN LITERACY FOCUSED SETTINGS

Academic disciplines that engage diverse student populations in complex text consumption and production are particularly well suited to identity work. This includes science, math, and humanities courses in minority-dominant schools. Students who experience a sense of alienation in academic settings often struggle to express themselves fluently in written formats, inhibiting development of their authentic writing voice and their deeper understanding of topical concepts within text. Although it may not initially seem so, a writers' voice and conceptual understanding are intimately related, and have downstream effects on identity formation processes. This section explores the evolving construct of voice in written discourse, and then examines the ways that voice and conceptual understanding can help shape students' identities and academic engagement.

Historical Context of Voice

In past decades, the construct of writers' voice has undergone notable criticism and change (Matsuda, 2015). Notions of voice first gained traction among Western writing teachers in the second half of the 20th century. Here, the term applied metaphorically and drew on parallels to the physical aspects of voice in which particularities served to individuate the writer. This locating of the visceral being within a text emphasized a writer's uniqueness, and was considered an important aspect of their discourse. Elbow (1968) called writing with voice "prose which contain not just propositions but a person," and "writing that is alive"; however, he also conceded that he could not name the "objective ingredients" of such aliveness (p. 122). Authenticity of the writer's voice was also emphasized. Stewart (1969) argued that the "the user of words must believe that they are true," underscoring the importance of integrity in prose (p. 224). In these conceptions, the value of a text is partly determined by the voice it manifests. Stapleton (2002) suggests that teachers' preoccupation with developing writers' voice inadvertently conveys, both to scholars and students, a message that strength of voice is a greater writing priority than is quality of argument, thus undermining the development of students' rhetorical competence.

Others (Spellmeyer, 1993; LeCourt, 2004) attempted to negotiate the deep-seated but murky division between process-oriented notions of voice that emphasize a writer's individuality, and notions of voice that adhere to the more prescriptive conventions of academic discourse (Matsuda, 2015). Trimbur (1994) traces this divide back to the 1960s and early 1970s when "process teachers and theorists sought to free themselves from the formalism of current-traditional rhetoric and return the text to the student composer" (p. 109). Although noble in its intentions, the practical application of empowering student writers based largely on their intuitive and self-derived discourse strategies proved problematic. Supporters of the academic discourse perspective argued that effective writing instruction nevertheless demanded some grounding in the formal institutions of discourse (Bartholomae, 1995; Enos & Brown, 1992). Skills could not simply be imparted through students' embracing and wielding of their authentic dialogic and linguistic abilities. Cogent and economic use of language also mattered, and was achievable largely through targeted practice, direct instruction, and feedback (LeCourt, 2004; Swales, 2001).

Some theorists and practitioners (Jones, 2000; Matsuda, 2015) attempted to bridge divisions between those working within this academic discourse perspective, and those working to accommodate students who were traditionally excluded from such realms. Ivanic and Camps (2001) suggest that writers purposefully combine "the repertoire of voices they have encountered in their experience of participating in genres and discourses" to meet the variable needs of their task (p. 6). Hyland (2001) argued that use of first-person pronouns in academic discourse allowed writers to establish authority over their ideas. But this notion of harnessing voice as a tool of rhetoric was also viewed critically; Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996) advanced the view that voice was largely associated with Western notions of individualism, and therefore privileged writers with roots in mainstream culture.

Others (Bizzell, 1992; Jones, 2000) argued for exposing students to the formal aspects of discourse as a means both to reveal the exclusionary nature of the institutions upholding such discourses, and to promote students' agency as learners within them. This empathetic stance toward students of diverse backgrounds helped usher in a reckoning of student difficulties around writing instruction. Bizzell (1992) asserted that lack of familiarity with academic registers did not equate to deficits in cognitive or linguistic abilities, but was instead the consequence of lack of privilege. Nonetheless, Bizzell's efforts were viewed by some as foisting an academic discourse perspective upon those who saw little value in it (Trimbur, 1994). In this view, notions of a writer's voice, and what some call the writer's authentic

self, were unduly constrained in the quest to endow underprivileged students with the affordances of rhetorical competence. Although modern conceptions of voice account for a multiplicity of perspectives, interpretations that include reductionist viewpoints often prevail.

Voice has also been associated with writer identity and overlaps with the construct in important ways. Matsuda (2015) describes voice as a phenomenological construct embedded within a writer's negotiated identity. While he acknowledges that writer identity is viewed by some as individually (or personally) derived, and by others as socially constructed, he advances a view in which writer identity straddles this division. From Matsuda's perspective writer identity, which prominently features the writer's voice, is a product of three dynamic forces: (1) how the writer employs the social conventions of discourse, (2) the situated demands of the discourse, and (3) how the writer's actions in turn affect the ever-evolving social conventions of the discourse. Matsuda (2015) hereby suggests that a writer's identity is "mediated by written discourse" with voice playing a key role in its development, in part by shaping interactions among writer and reader (p. 141).

To illustrate how these forces shape writer identity, imagine the writer as a student in a classroom, and the reader as the teacher. Throughout the school year, the student's writer identity is shaped both by how they employ the conventions of academic writing to meet the demands of their assignments, and by incoming feedback received from the teacher in response to their application of conventions and assignment expectations. Whether implicit or explicit, this feedback is incorporated into the student's evolving notion of what is expected, revising their understanding of conventions, *and* their understanding of who they are as a writer. The latter may include notions of writer competence, the potential utility of the writing, and more. But this student's classroom experience can also affect their peers' understanding of conventions, along with *their peers'* ongoing development of writer identities. For example, if the student has developed a reputation in the class for being an "excellent writer" the feedback given them will be perceived by classmates differently than feedback given to a student with a reputation as "struggling student." The collective uptake of academic writing conventions by the students will also inform the future shape and treatment of those conventions by the teacher, or the readers, per Matsuda's (2015) account. Although the dynamism of this feedback loop is admittedly more complex than a single example can show, the illustration captures the process accurately enough to demonstrate the interdependent forces involved in the development of students' writing within a classroom.

Perhaps due to its complex nature, the definition of *writers' voice* remains fraught with contention. Often it is depicted in deceptively simple terms. Other times it is dismissed altogether as a construct. However, understanding the general process of identity development in the literacy focused classroom demands an examination of how voice contributes to one's writing identity.

Voice and its Connection to Identity

Although voice is often considered a nebulous concept by those in the discourse community, it plays an important role in a writer's identity development (Ivanic & Camps, 2001; Li & Deng, 2019). Given the many ways others have conceived of the term *voice*, it now becomes necessary to define the current chapter's use of the term from this point forward. *Voice* is conceived of here as an emergent and situated quality of written discourse that signifies the agency, intentions, perceived competence, and ethos of the writer. Use of the word *ethos* evokes cultural or community connections, suggesting a degree of adherence to one's foundations, whether stable or in flux.

According to this definition, voice can exist along a spectrum of writer-perceived authenticity wherein the degree attained is relevant in two respects: First, authenticity of voice lends the writer a sense of groundedness in what they already know as language-users, supporting their sense of writing competence (Bagheri & Deng, 2019). Second, authenticity of one's academic writing voice is likely to result in part through a student's process of productive struggle to express an idea clearly, rather than through emulation of another's expression. Here, one's authentic writing voice emerges as a product of the individual's "bottom-up" or inductive processes (Hyland, 2015). This is not to suggest an absence of a deductive or "top-down" influence on the writer's emerging voice; certainly, the voices of more expert writers should and will inform a developing writer. However, striving to produce prose that achieve purpose and clarity, over a more passive adherence to formulaic conventions in a quest to emulate, affords young writers an increased sense of autonomy that benefits their confidence and willingness to experiment (Lehman & Sułkowski, 2021). This affordance helps shape students' writing voices, which prominently feature in their developing writing identities (Matsuda, 2015). When a student has a well-formed writing identity, they are more likely to approach writing tasks from a motivated stance (Oyserman, 2015).

When disenfranchised students write with a voice that falls toward the authentic end of this spectrum, they demonstrate ownership of the craft, evidencing their movement toward developing a coherent writing identity. Because literacy underlies academic success, this is a beneficial asset to students across disciplines (Lannegrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006). A strong writer identity strengthens an individual's broader *student identity*, and can positively affect their classroom experience, including their text comprehension, which is discussed next.

Identity, Voice, and Making-Meaning

The development of voice, and a writer's conceptual understanding of text, play interconnected roles in identity development. Novice writers may demonstrate an inordinate desire to produce prose that *sound* writerly, prioritizing the surface level characteristics of academic language over clarity and purpose (Hyland, 2015; Ivanic & Camps, 2001). Although emulation is a powerful writing tool when used for analytical purposes such as mapping the structure of an essay, when employed in a generalized manner that lacks targeted intent, emulation tends to result in more awkward constructions, out-of-place phrasing, and decreased coherency (Farmer & Arrington, 1993; Geist, 2005). Alternately, inviting students to cultivate and use a more authentic writing voice can result in greater clarity and cohesion because it emerges from a secure and grounded place within the individual.

This is particularly true when a student does not fully comprehend the topical concept about which they write. Articulating complex ideas through discourse is a form of analysis: to express an idea clearly the writer must break the idea into smaller parts and organize it effectively. This suggests that writing acts as a scaffold in the construction of meaning, so supports new understanding. But for an academically alienated student who views the main challenge of writing to be achieving a "writerly style" instead of clarity and purpose, the common practice of writing-to-learn is less beneficial. Therefore, helping novice writers construct more authentic writing voices will likely benefit their development as meaning-makers, while also strengthening their writing identities (Garcia & Gaddes, 2012). This can have a ripple effect in other academic areas, and across the students' broader system of identities.

Developing Identity to Support Wellbeing and Literacy Engagement

Because more integrated identity systems conduce toward more adaptive responses to academic challenges and increased wellbeing (Kaplan et al., 2019), pursuing effective avenues for fostering such integration is worthwhile. If this occurs in a literacy focused setting, it should include the cultivation of students' authentic writing voices. Such a pursuit can occur in any domain that deals in complex texts and written discourse, from a physics to a music appreciation course. Identity focused, reflective writing activities can be integrated with course content to help students negotiate greater congruence among their *in-* and *out-of-school* identities.

Because students are the utmost authority on themselves, they tend to approach identity focused writing with greater ease than other topics. While a reflective writing prompt may demand linguistic complexity, in responding to it students are likely to exhibit increased aptitude due to their expertise on the topic. This affords the disenfranchised student a position rarely experienced in school. Such roles of authority can enhance students' sense of competence and autonomy, supporting their overall wellbeing and performance (Ryan & Deci, 2020). When these experiences occur within the literacy focused classroom, they contribute to students' recalibration of what it means to be a student, to be a scientist, or to be a writer.

Engaging in identity focused writing can also provide disenfranchised students with a needed sense of validation. When teachers ask students to hold their own developmental processes up to the microscope of self-reflection, it is as if the teacher has labeled those processes important acts. This conveys messages to students about the value of who they are and who they are attempting to become. For students who experience alienation in academic settings, this can be a crucial message of inclusivity. As they come to view their own identity development processes as legitimate subject matter in the classroom, their feelings of belonging are likely to grow, and their notion that identity work is worth their while may also increase. Such feelings of value and belonging contribute to students' emerging writing voices and broader identity development (Lannengrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006; Oyserman, 2017).

Attending to students' sense of worth and wellbeing are important aspects of a discourse-centered identity development program. Integrating such intentions and subsequent practices into existing literacy focused curricula can set in motion a process by which students become more likely to form identities such as *reader*, *statistician*, *biologist*, and *good student*. They also become more likely to demonstrate academic agency across disciplines. But what does such a program look like, and what should be considered when designing it?

IDENTITY EXPLORATION WITHIN TWO ENGLISH CLASSES: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

The author is in her second year of implementing an identity development program at a public high school set within a historically marginalized urban community. She acted as a participant-observer throughout each implementation. Although the example here involves one 11th and one 12th grade English course, the program can be adapted to a variety of literacy-focused settings across grade levels. This section first describes the program, and then discusses the program assessment and findings.

The Identity Development Program

The program consists of bi-weekly journal activities and classroom discussions that have been integrated within a standards-based college preparatory curriculum which uses argument construction to develop students' writing. On occasion the identity development program also uses psychometric tools to generate and document students' insight into their own processes. A key aim of the program is to help students generate congruence among their home and school identities, a state associated with increased academic engagement (Flum & Kaplan, 2006; Kaplan et al., 2019; Oyserman, 2014).

Program Overview

The identity development program described here is set within a larger ongoing research project focused on facilitating academic persistence in first generation students as they move from a high school to college setting. It is being implemented in two "opt-in" honors English courses at a midsize high school serving a minority-dominant student population (8.4% identify as White). The school designates 100% of its students as "economically disadvantaged." In the year prior to program implementation only 16% of students scored proficient on state mandated ELA assessments.

The primary curriculum in both English courses employs the Toulmin model of argumentation, or a claim-data-warrant framework (Kneupper, 1978). Each grade level of the curriculum features four essential questions such as: *What does it mean to be smart?* These questions provide a thematic framework that guides student inquiry. A typical class period involves students reading an article or narrative that connects to the essential question. Periodically, they stop to address strategically placed probes using written and verbal discourse; these scaffold their reading and thinking and facilitate class conversation and debate. Students round out the period by drafting a formal essay response to a culminating prompt, again employing the Toulmin principles.

Into this already existing curriculum the author integrated biweekly journal activities (JAs) that engage students in self-reflective writing to help them explore their diverse identities in and out of the school setting. JA prompts are designed to move students through a process of questioning who they are, how they came to be this individual, who they want to become, and why. To ensure continuity with the primary curriculum while also reinforcing target aptitudes, the JAs incorporate key features of that curriculum. For example, JAs often incorporate the claim-data-warrant structure within a writing task. JA prompts often guide students to apply a theoretical lens to their behaviors and self-perceptions, introducing them to structured forms of self-analysis. While the JAs elicit writing that is stylistically informal, enabling the "bottom up" development of their writer's voice, they also promote writing that is conceptually complex and demands selective attention to syntax and clarity. This requires students to engage in productive struggle around a topic they deem relevant: themselves. Both this familiarity and relevance are intended to increase students' sense of competence and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Design Principles and Their Application

The program was designed by the author according to the tenets of Kaplan and colleagues' (2014) PRESS for Exploration framework. The PRESS was created to foster students' agentic identity development in educational settings. It supports students' proactive and reflective engagement with existing curricular content, while also operationalizing some of that content, and additions to it, as vehicles to promote

students' identity exploration and growth. In this way the PRESS is intended as an integrative, long-term intervention applicable within a wide array of disciplines and design-based methodologies. Extensive research demonstrates the model's successful implementation in association with adaptive student engagement outcomes (Granit-Dgani et al., 2011; Heffernan & Newton, 2019; Sanai et al., 2012). However, this is the first documented implementation of the model among majority-disenfranchised learners.

The PRESS stipulates four overlapping and interdependent principles to guide program design: Promoting students' perceived self-relevance, facilitating students' sense of safety in the learning context, triggering identity exploration, and scaffolding strategies for that exploration. An illustration of how the author applied these principles within the research setting is offered next.

Self-Relevance

When students perceive academic content as relevant to who they are, they are more likely to ascribe value to related tasks, which supports their motivation to engage (Wigfield, et al., 2017). To promote students' sense of self-relevance the author paid particular attention to 1) what content from the primary curriculum resonated with students, and 2) the challenges students were experiencing throughout their semester. Speaking to the first strategy, when students demonstrated a clear connection to a character in the short story "I Go Along" by Richard Peck, the author incorporated aspects of the story into students' next JA, enabling them to explore attributes of the character that they saw in themselves (see Appendix, Figure 1, Figure 2: JA7- *Thoughts on Your Intelligence*). The second strategy, tapping into students' ongoing challenges, is exemplified by JA10 and JA11 (see Appendix, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5), designed in response to students' expressed frustrations with online learning. JA10 (*Learning Online*) invited students to examine how the difficulties they were encountering online affected their work habits, peer relations, and sense of belonging in the class. One theme that emerged in their responses was a struggle to self-regulate. They described significant challenges to retain focus and alertness while learning online. To provide students a lens for understanding and confronting these struggles, JA11 (*Psychological Needs*) introduced the tenets of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wang, et al., 2019), which suggests individuals have three overarching psychological needs that help inform their overall wellbeing and situated motivation. Students were asked to examine the degree to which the online context was meeting their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and how this might be affecting their engagement. In the subsequent group discussion students demonstrated their agency as they exchanged potential avenues for satisfying their psychological needs. As the example shows, students' writing in response to earlier JAs, paired with careful observation of students' challenges, helped the author develop subsequent JAs likely to be perceived by students as self-relevant.

Sense of Safety

Ensuring students' sense of safety in the classroom enables them to approach their identity exploration beyond the surface level. Identity work requires a degree of vulnerability that students may not be ready to express, especially when their sense of belonging is low (Kaplan et al., 2014). To convey the relative safety of the classroom setting, the author established the following intentions for the school year, revisiting them with regularity:

- To normalize "not being in the know," both by modeling such a state to students, and by embracing it when exhibited by students.

Identity Exploration as a Tool to Enhance Academic Engagement and Growth

- To convey, wherever possible, that there is a multitude of correct answers, rather than a single one.
- To disrupt the typical classroom hierarchy by prioritizing student voices and opinions over those of teachers and practitioners.
- To convey unconditional regard for students, and to make this regard clear through daily discourse such as lesson instruction and providing feedback on student work.
- To assure students they will never be made to share-out personal or sensitive information from their JA responses.
- To cultivate a community of learning based on care, support, and explicit tolerance.

While many of the intentions above were already a daily practice for the research team, regularly communicating them to students helped reassure their perception that the classroom was a safe and supportive space, while simultaneously helping them to construct such a space.

Triggering Exploration

If students' self-relevance and sense of safety are both attended to, successfully triggering their identity exploration is more probable. Effective triggers involve causing students to question and wrestle with their values and beliefs; this is often accomplished by placing students in "subjective experiences of discrepancy" from their currently held identities (Kaplan, et al. 2014, p. 251). However, students who have limited experience with tasks that present ambiguity or demand introspection may benefit from a "ramping up" to such activities. For students accustomed to tasks tightly aligned with scripted and reform-based curricula, it is often beneficial to introduce exploratory activities that feature small doses of such discrepancy because these can be perceived as more familiar and less threatening. The goal is to facilitate students' *identity development*, or "moving the needle" so to speak. However, this is often helped along by engaging students in a process of becoming comfortable with *identity exploration*, which is akin to examining the self-definitions and self-perceptions that already exist.

To accomplish this "ramping up" of discrepant activities the author designed the first five JAs around a broad appraisal of self, enabling students to view their goals and actions through a critical lens. The first JA of the school year (JA1- *What Item Represents You?*) had students choose a tangible artifact that metaphorically depicted how they perceived themselves, examining this self-to-artifact alignment through a series of prompts. In the next activity (JA2 – *What Makes Me Me?*) students examined influences on their developing sense of self, including friends, family, race/ethnicity, media/social media, intelligence, gender, and possessions. By JA 3 (*Possible Selves*) students were ready to project further, exploring the future selves they expected, hoped, and feared becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Dawson, 2019). This consideration of their broader goals was also carried into the next activity JA4 (*Mapping a Path*). Here, students revisited the hoped-for-selves they described in JA3, and then critically viewed their actions and behaviors to assess progress toward their hoped-for-selves. When the author observed an emergent theme of conflicting social and academic identities in students' responses to JA4, she designed JA5 (*Comparing Selves*). This activity engaged students in examining the possible consequences of this conflict, and then asked them to brainstorm avenues for resolving it. The discussion that followed was marked by students' integrity and care for one another. Although these initial JAs did not accomplish identity development, they provided a groundwork for digging deeper in subsequent activities, while acclimating students in the practice of classroom-based introspection. As the semester moved on, students became more comfortable with vicariously stepping into experiences that featured discrepancy

between such identity components as values and goals, enabling activities like JA 12 (*Step Into These Shoes*). Here, students read a short scenario delivered in second-person point of view, imagined being the protagonist, and were then charged with making a difficult decision likely to pit their desires against their goals. They were then asked to justify their decision (see JA 12, Appendix, Figure 6). While the above process illustrates how a practitioner might approach the process of triggering students' identity exploration, it also describes a series of scaffolds that structure identity development.

Scaffolding Development

Although examples of scaffolding are provided above, some points warrant additional attention. Scaffolds should be tailored to the students and the context. This means that the identity development curriculum should not be fully developed at the onset of implementation. Instead, it is advisable to develop an open-ended framework that can be fleshed out slowly in response both to students' JA writings, and to the constraints and affordances of the class as it unfolds. The curriculum described here was built in this manner, enabling each iteration to form in direct response to students' expressed and observed needs. For example, year one of the program was tailored to students' unique challenges of retaining motivation and emotional connections as they learned online, whereas the current year's program has thus far focused on developing students' awareness of the ways their identities adjust and transform in response to their changing context. Each focus manifests itself piecemeal in response to student needs; only later did each become evident as a coherent theme.

Program developers should also strive to design an identity development curriculum that reinforces the intended outcomes of the primary curriculum. As articulated by Kaplan et al. (2014), when students "explore their identity in relation to the academic material [in the primary curriculum], their agency and motivation for exploring their identity involves critical and reflective engagement both with the academic material itself and with the meaning of the content to the self" (pp. 248-249). This suggests that primary curricular content, from physics to music theory to African American history, can itself undergo transformation when effectively integrated with self-reflective identity work, even while simultaneously enriching student engagement and helping students negotiate their identity systems. Such integration among curricula can take a variety of forms. In the curriculum described here the author built thematically upon the primary curriculum's four essential questions; incorporated multiple of its texts and structural elements, such as the claim-data-warrant framework and semantic scales; and designed activities that prompted students to revisit their work within the primary curriculum through a critically reflective lens. Integrating students' identity work with their academic learning will support their ongoing agency within the practice (Kaplan et al., 2014).

Achieving a constructive balance among the four interrelated PRESS principles is an ongoing challenge. Because the author's presence in the classroom was regular and frequent, it enabled informal conversations with students about their out-of-school lives, their insights into the school and community, and their ideas around the work they were expected to engage with. Such relations can be instrumental in successfully tailoring a program to student needs. Additionally, reading students' reflective response to JA prompts, and facilitating adjacent discussions, helped the author achieve a tailored and balanced application of PRESS principles. Like most teaching endeavors, effectively employing a set of principles requires continual program evaluation paired with responsive course-corrections. Remaining open to formative assessment, even soliciting it from students through surveys and informal queries, is optimal. It is also useful to conduct summative program assessments. These are each discussed next.

Program Assessment

To evaluate and refine the program described here, the author engaged in three forms of assessment: a comparative case study, the keeping of regular fieldnotes focused on the degree and quality of class-wide student engagement, and student self-reports to ascertain their valuing of the activities and the student-perceived effects. Collectively, these metrics suggest the first year of the program was successful in fostering student engagement and developing congruence among students' identity systems. Year two is still undergoing assessment.

Case Study

The author conducted a comparative case study of two students in the 12th grade class who exhibited disparate levels of engagement. Each participant was 17 to 18 years old during the study, and each identified as African American or Black. The study covered the entire first year of program's implementation, and took place in an online format due to pandemic conditions. Maximum variation sampling was employed to facilitate participant selection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The goal of the study was to address the research question: *How do honors students from a disadvantaged community explore their identities and engage academically in the context of PRESS activities?* Because the PRESS model has not been implemented in minority-dominant settings, the author sought to ensure program effectiveness, gaining insight into the ways students negotiated identity development in response to JAs. She also sought to better understand how the journaling practice affected engagement.

Data and Analysis

The primary data source was the corpus of each participant's 14 JA responses. Additional data included chat logs from the online class sessions, student performance reports (include reading and writing assessments, report card data, and attendance records), and fieldnotes taken by the author during 50+ participant-observation hours.

To guide data analysis the author applied the Dynamic Systems Model of Role Identity (DSMRI; Kaplan & Garner, 2017), an integrative framework for interpreting the contextual and dynamic emergence of identity, motivation, and actions. The DSMRI conceives of identity as a complex system of interrelated elements including: epistemological and ontological beliefs; purpose and goals; self-perceptions and self-definitions; and perceived action possibilities. These elements continually interact with the social-cultural context, the disciplinary domain, and the various dispositions of the individual. This dynamic network of influences helps shape a person's system of identities, including relative levels of harmony to dissonance, alignment to misalignment, and integration to fragmentation exhibited among identity and its elements. In turn, these states help inform the individual's actions and decision-making. Coding of each participant's corpus of JA responses was guided by the DSMRI Manual (Kaplan & Garner, 2020), and involved an iterative process of deductive and inductive meaning-making based on levels of harmony, alignment, and integration, and their structural change. Additional attention was paid to indicators of participant emotions, and participants' perceptions of affordances and constraints within the context.

Findings

Overall, case findings suggest the program was beneficial for both students. DSMRI aligned analysis reveal that whereas one participant's identity system demonstrated fragmentation among his *in-* and *out-of-school* identities paired with decreasing levels of task engagement, the other participant's identity system demonstrated greater integration paired with a growing sense of agency, and persistently higher levels of task engagement. In addition, by the close of the year this student had developed a sense of himself as an effective writer, whereas at the onset of the year he often referenced his writing deficiencies and distaste for writing tasks. For example, early in the school year he referred to himself as "*no good at all at this writing stuff.*" In the second half of the year he described his evolving relationship with writing: "*I have come a long way and made so much progress with my writing skills...I no longer struggle. I am continuing to improve...and I hope to become an amazing writer.*" The passage illustrates the student's changed perception of his own identity within the English class. These findings add to previous research outcomes (Kaplan et al., 2019; Oyserman, 2014) that suggest identity work supports students' adaptive motivation and wellbeing in school. The findings also suggest the PRESS for Exploration (Kaplan et al., 2014) model has viability in minority-dominant settings.

Comprehensive Fieldnotes

To examine program effectiveness more broadly, and with particular focus on student engagement across each class, the author conducted over 50 hours of participant-observation and notetaking. Records of student engagement were taken to document when, and to what degree, students demonstrated task engagement, among other relevant information. Comprehensive fieldnotes, collected at an average rate of twice per week over the duration of each term, reveal increased levels of engagement during JA sessions for both the online school year, and the in-person year implementations, when compared to engagement in primary curriculum activities.

A concerning theme that emerged from the fieldnotes in year-one was the common occurrence of significant auxiliary noise in students' learning environments; most students attended online class from their homes. This consisted of high volume and extended verbal exchanges by nearby others, and media noise such as that from a television or video. In other cases, students attended their online class from a vehicle or workplace. These instances are noted because they are likely to present engagement challenges. Nevertheless, it was more common than not for students to retain their focus on the given activity in the face of such distraction. For example, when a student was faced with the sound of back-and-forth yelling in close proximity to her, she persisted in reading aloud the text segment to the class, stopping only briefly to apologize for the noise.

Another theme that emerged from the fieldnotes was the students' tendency to demonstrate kindness and tolerance toward one another. Even though many of the students had never met one another in person during year-one's implementation, the class managed to exhibit a sense of community, albeit one notably less cohesive than a typical in-person class might manage. This is one indication that the teaching and research team successfully managed to facilitate a sense of safety despite limitations related to the online setting.

Student Self-Reports

To better understand the identity development program from the students' perspective the author asked for their feedback through surveys. Calculations of self-reported in-class motivation levels at the beginning and end of year-one, using a scale of 1-7 (1=low; 7=high), suggest an overall motivation boost. Mean scores for juniors moved from 2.94 to 5.11, and mean scores for seniors moved from 3.4 to 4.93. Even as students and educators were adapting to a new model of online learning, motivation levels improved. Although it is not possible to link this result directly to the newly implemented identity development program, there is reason to believe it played a role. One survey item asked how the JAs contributed to students' experience in the class; from among a diverse array of options, a majority selected: "I like how they got me to reflect on myself." When asked whether the program should or should not be retained in the following school year, 78% of students replied that it should. Perhaps most telling is that an overwhelming majority of participants reported experiencing significant growth as writers. This indicates change in students' identity systems whereby, over the course of a school year, they achieved greater integration among their *in-* and *out-of-school* identities.

A key aim of this program is to increase students' engagement with academic tasks. Findings to date, including data from a comparative case study, participant-observer fieldnotes, and student self-reports, suggest the program was likely responsible for a degree of success in this area. However, the program is currently in its second year of implementation, and data continues to be collected and analyzed. Conclusions are therefore preliminary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This final section of the chapter brings together a set of guiding ideas for practitioners and curriculum designers interested in using reflective writing to facilitate student identity exploration and development. The section concludes by describing future directions for identity research in literacy related contexts.

Guiding Ideas for Practitioners

Although the program described in this chapter was implemented in a secondary ELA context, it also lends itself to other grade levels and other literacy-centered settings. For example, in a primary or secondary level science course a corpus of JAs could help students investigate their various connections to, and interest around science content, helping to integrate their *scientist selves* within their *out-of-school selves*, while supporting their in-class engagement. Below are seven guiding ideas for adapting and implementing a program within any literacy focused classroom.

Ensure Relevance

As discussed in the context of the PRESS model, attending to students' sense of self-relevance is fundamental to motivation (Kaplan et al., 2014). If students do not see value in the task, they are less likely to invest time in it (Wigfield et al., 2017). One simple, but not commonly practiced, method for building students' sense of relevance is to explain why the task matters. For example, teachers might present and help students answer such questions as: *How does this task connect to the larger tasks we are pursuing?*

and *How might these learning outcomes be used outside of my classroom?* Although it is not possible to design tasks that all students regard as valuable, it is possible to ensure value for a majority. Appealing to the dynamic and overlapping constructs of interest and curiosity can support students' valuing of activities and is associated with increased engagement (Alexander & Grossnickle, 2016). But such appeals demand task designers to tap students' self-knowledge with regularity. Because implementing a series of JAs elicits student reflective writing about their own needs and experiences, it produces a resource for such information. It is therefore advisable that program designers are informed by regular analysis of JA responses to build knowledge about what students value and deem relevant.

Build Community

Creating a supportive and tolerant classroom space is connected to ensuring a sense of safety, another PRESS principle (see "Design Principles and their Application" for specific ideas around sense of safety), but it also goes beyond safety. Learning contexts each come with unique challenges, and how teachers respond to them can shape behavioral norms. It is crucial that practitioners know in advance what norms they are striving for. Conveying these norms to students, and even asking students to hold practitioners accountable when they stumble, can support students' sense of belonging and safety in the classroom (Walton & Cohen, 2011). Sometimes it is even possible to involve students in norm construction. The creation and upholding of norms in turn affects students' behavior toward one another. This dynamic interaction is further informed by class discussions inspired by reflective JA writing, and helps build cohesion among students, while contributing to their sense of community in the classroom (Lannegrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006).

Integrate the Program

As previously discussed, a reflective program of JA writing should be woven within an existing curriculum. This reinforces the target skills of the primary curriculum while also demonstrating to students the relevance of those skills across contexts. To begin, practitioners can identify which target skills are most important to support, and which best lend themselves to self-reflective writing. Another strategy for program integration is incorporating topical content from the primary curriculum into the JA prompts. It is also advisable to integrate the curricula by importing structural features of the primary curriculum into the JA corpus. One example of this is the author's use of semantic scales (see JA7, item 3 in Appendix, Figure 2).

Prolong Implementation

In the program described here, the author implemented a JA every other week, consistently throughout the school year. Because students need time to adjust to and develop a sense of trust around the style of writing asked for in JAs, the benefits of their identity work will take time to emerge. But these benefits are accumulative and dynamic; each step forward in a student's identity development further supports their subsequent steps (Branje et al., 2021). Therefore, a JA program that extends across an entire school year is ideal.

Practice Agility

An effective corpus of JAs should be responsive to students' emerging needs. To accomplish this the program designer must remain perceptive, and willing to pivot. Therefore, developing the entire JA corpus before implementation is not advisable. Instead, attempt to develop each JA as a response to observable trends reflected in both students' behaviors and collective expression. For example, if a program designer observes waning motivation among most students, they might review past JA responses for possible explanations, and this in turn could inform their design of an upcoming JA that supports student reflection and examination of their motivational conflicts. If the designer of JA tasks is not positioned to make such observations, they should consult regularly with classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, or others positioned to provide such insights.

Evaluate as You Go

Never consider it a foregone conclusion that the program is working. Instead, attempt to discover both students' "buy in" regarding JA tasks, and whether the tasks themselves are helping students *explore* and eventually *develop* their identity systems. To do so, it is helpful to develop metrics that gauge areas of program strength and needs. Wherever possible, metrics should prioritize student feedback over that given by individuals disconnected from the work. One reason is that there are likely more students than outside individuals, and numbers matter. If the program is being implemented in a primary grade setting, it is possible to adapt feedback tools for use by younger students. Metrics should determine whether students enjoy the JA tasks and engage in them willingly. If they do not, attempt to determine why, and then make needed adjustments. To evaluate whether the tasks are helping student development, look for deep levels of self-reflection and self-discovery, for evidence of students' increased sense of agency, and for change in the ways students characterize their various identities. Employing a theoretical framework such as the DSMRI (Kaplan & Garner, 2017) is advised.

Revisit Your Purpose

Evaluation is most efficacious when program purpose and intentions are well articulated. Just as research projects are driven by a research question which researchers return to for a sense of grounding as complexity builds, a stated purpose and set of intentions should guide JA implementation and design. The purpose and intentions of the program should also inform the metrics used for evaluation. Sharing this purpose with students can also help build self-relevance. As the project progresses revisit the stated purpose and intentions to help develop needed course-corrections.

The guiding ideas discussed above are interrelated with one another; the application of one will affect the demands of another. They are not rules, but ideas to inform practice. They will apply more to some projects than to others. In the spirit of practicing agility, practitioners and curriculum designers are encouraged to make use of the ideas, but also to build upon and adapt them such that they can best serve the situated needs of those involved.

Future Research Directions

The identity development program and accompanying research described herein contribute to the literature linking student identity systems with literacy motivation. However, they account for a meager portion of the understanding needed to address persistent gaps in literacy across student populations.

Several avenues offer rich opportunities for additional exploration and formal inquiry. Most broadly, the author encourages the use of a complex systems approach to study identity development and engagement. Such approaches enable research that accounts for the interdependence of system elements, the dynamic emergence of students' processes, and the highly contextualized nature of both identity formation and issues of engagement (Hilpert & Marchand, 2018; Hong & Francis, 2020; Kaplan & Garner, 2017). There is also a demand for identity research that aims to address racial disparities in literacy achievement. Minority-dominant schools present unique challenges with regard to students' basic needs, sense of belonging, and goal formation (Oyserman & Lewis, 2017). Identity work that incorporates the PRESS model is well suited to target these challenges (Kaplan et al., 2019), but more work is needed to construct and refine best practices. Finally, the author is unaware of any research that examines the identity development of highly disengaged students. Because these students produce minimal work and often attend classes only intermittently, study designs such as that described in this chapter do not generate the access needed to better understand their plight. Researchers should consider alternate study designs such as narrative analysis and phenomenology to better understand the identity formation of highly disengaged students in literacy focused classrooms. Because identity work has the potential to increase students' sense of agency and wellbeing in academic and other contexts, it remains an important avenue for meeting the needs of disenfranchised students.

CONCLUSION

Literacy underlies the variable pathways to academic success. Yet, improving the proficiency rates for K-12 literacy in the United States remains an elusive goal, especially among historically disenfranchised students. An important process in a student's literacy development is their construction of a writing voice, with implications for sense of belonging in the classroom, identity development, and academic engagement. This chapter outlines an integrated approach to support students' literacy motivation and wellbeing through structured, self-reflective writing activities that both honor and cultivate students' voices. The program positions students as conscious and judicious agents in their own identity exploration and development.

Case study findings support previous research that suggest a greater alignment and integration within a student's identity system is associated with a more adaptive style of academic engagement. More broadly, findings from the ongoing implementation of the identity development program in two high school English courses suggest it played an important role in supporting the literacy engagement of disenfranchised students. These findings are the first to support the use of a PRESS for Exploration model in such a setting. The model lends itself to adaptations in multiple contexts, and can be implemented by novice to mastery-level practitioners. As such, it provides teachers the opportunity to enact meaningful change in literacy focused settings.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Authentic Writing Voice: A voice cultivated by a writer or emerging writer; is developed over time productive struggle to achieve written discourse characterized by clarity and purpose, and is grounded in what the individual is familiar with.

Identity: The pliant but governable system of interrelated notions of self held by an individual.

Identity Congruence: A state of connection or alignment among otherwise separate identities within a system of identities (e.g., school identity and home identity).

Identity Development: The process of, or evidence of change within a person's system of identities such as an increased level of integration among two identities.

Identity Exploration: The process of, or evidence of self-reflective processes likely to precede identity development.

System of Identities: An overarching term for the dynamic and emergent plurality of identities held by an individual at any given time.

Voice: An emergent and situated quality of written discourse that helps signify the agency, intentions, perceived competence, and ethos of a writer or emerging writer.

APPENDIX

Figure 1. JA7, page 1

Journal Activity 7 Thoughts on Your Intelligence

First, let's recall Richard Peck's story "I Go Along." To help, there are two excerpts below:

At five-thirty that night I'm in the parking lot. I have no idea why. Needless to say, I'm the only one here from second period. Marty Crawshaw and Pink Hohenfield will be out on the access highway about now, at 7-Eleven, sitting on their hoods. Darla couldn't make it either. Right offhand I can't think of anybody who wants to ride a school bus thirty miles to see a poet. Including me.

"So what are you going to write about him tomorrow?" I'm really curious about this.

"I don't know," she says. "I've never heard a poet reading before, not in person. Mrs. Tibbetts shows us tapes of poets reading."

"She doesn't show them to our class."

"What would you do if she did?" Sharon asks.

"Laugh a lot." The bus settles down on the return trip. I picture all these people going home to do algebra homework, or whatever. When Sharon speaks again, I almost don't hear her.

"You ought to be in this class," she says.

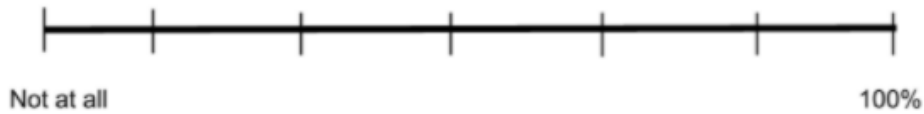
I pull my ball cap down to my nose and lace my fingers behind my head and kick back in the seat. Which should be answer enough.

1). When you recall this story, where do you place yourself in it? Do you relate more to Sharon or Gene? Or a bit of both? Explain.

Figure 2. JA7, page 2

2). Do you think that other people (besides you) have played a role in shaping your idea of how intelligent you are? Explain.

3). How much do you think your own actions shape your intelligence?



4). As a peer, what is one piece of advice you could offer Gene as he moves closer to his senior year of high school?

Figure 3. JA10

Journal Activity 10

Learning Online

Attending school during the Covid-19 pandemic comes with challenges. In this journal you'll explore the specific ways those challenges have been affecting you. Sometimes putting difficulties into words can help you become more proactive in addressing them.

1. How is your desire to come to class affected by the online format? Before answering, think back to the days of face-to-face classes, and what your desire to come to class looked like then.

2. How do you think the online format affects the way you interact with others during class? Consider your interactions with the teachers and with your peers.

3. What are your feelings around the act of *doing the assignments* in this online format? For example, how does being online affect your experience of reading an article? What about your experience of writing an essay? If it makes the experience more or less difficult, more or less pleasant, etc... *in what ways*? Be specific.

4. Think about your sense of comfort and belonging in class. In a physical classroom you may get used to sitting in a certain place in the room, or near a certain person, and these repetitions can help you feel that you belong. How has the online format affected how connected or disconnected you feel to others, and how secure or insecure you feel in the setting? (e.g., Are you more or less likely to ask a question when online?). Explain.

Figure 4. JA11, page 1

Journal Activity 11

Psychological Needs

Your last Journal Activity asked you to reflect on the experience of learning online. Many of you discussed things about the online environment that make learning more difficult. Essentially, you were talking about needs that are not being met. For this Journal Activity we are going to dig a bit deeper into needs by using a set of ideas called Self-Determination Theory. This is one of the many theories that try to explain how motivation works in people.

A simplified overview of Self-Determination Theory:

The developers of this theory, Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, argue that there are three psychological needs that all humans have, and that when these needs are met for an individual in a particular setting (like a school), then that person is more likely to exhibit motivated behavior in that setting. Today's activities will help you explore the degree to which these three needs are being met for you in your school setting. Then you will connect your findings to your level of motivation at school, and see if you think Self-Determination Theory holds up in your situation, or not. The three needs are autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

1. **The need for autonomy:** Autonomy is the degree to which you are able to govern your own actions. GENERAL EXAMPLE: If you have a lot of autonomy in a setting you are likely to have a lot of choice in how you carry out tasks, instead of having the process dictated to you. Below, discuss the level of autonomy you feel you have in this class. Include a specific example. How do you think this affects your motivation in class?

2. **The need for competence:** Competence is feeling that you have the skills and ability to complete the tasks you're being asked to complete. GENERAL EXAMPLE: If the assignment is to write a sonnet, and you have no idea what a sonnet is, then you have a low sense of competence. Below, discuss the level of competence that you feel you have in this class. Include a specific example. If your sense of competence varies a lot depending on the assignment, discuss the specifics. How do you think this affects your motivation in class?

Figure 5. JA11, page 2

- 3. The need for relatedness:** By “relatedness” Deci and Ryan meant a couple of things. First, they meant the need to feel connected to others that matter to you. Second, they meant the need to feel you *belong* in the setting, that you are an important part of the setting. GENERAL EXAMPLE: If you feel your presence contributes in a meaningful way to the class, and that you have relationships in the class that are important to you, your need for relatedness is being met. Below, discuss how well or unwell your relatedness needs are being met by this class. How do you think this affects your motivation in class?

- 4. Your Assessment:** Now that you’ve examined how well the three needs are being met for you in this class, and how your motivation might be affected, discuss whether you think Self-Determination Theory seems to apply in your case? (Reminder of the theory: the three needs being met suggests you’ll be more motivated). Connect your overall motivation to how well your needs are being met. Do your findings make logical sense to you? Does the theory hold water in your eyes? Explain.

Figure 6. JA12

Journal Activity 12

Step into These Shoes

It's the day of your high school graduation. It's been a long four years, with a good deal of difficulty. Sophomore year, for example, when your grandma died, you had a hard time getting up in the morning for over three months. Your grandma was your rock. Life didn't make sense without her. Your grades plummeted. The good marks you got the year before were just being cancelled out by an 'F' in Algebra and a 'D' in Honors History. *But you came back.* Somehow. Because one day you looked at yourself in the mirror and felt shame. You hardly recognized who you'd become. After that, you found a way to change. It was hard. It took months to kick your depression. But you made it. And that summer you enrolled in courses to replace the Algebra and History grades with better ones. When the acceptance letter came from Lehigh University last March, with a full scholarship offer, the first thing you did was silently thank your grandma for showing you the way. Today you graduate from high school. In fall you head off to a brand new life. You're scared, but you're excited too. It's been a long four years.

Imagine you are the person in the story. Now imagine you have the unusual opportunity to trade your seat at Lehigh University for \$300,000. What is the right decision to make, and why?

Below, explain your decision-making process. Include detailed reasons to explain your decision. Use the CLAIM, DATA, WARRANT format. Your claim is what you believe to be the right decision. Your data are the concrete reasons you give for this being the right decision (make sure they are indisputable). Your warrant is the logical reasoning that connects your data to your claim (usually this is a general "rule" or principle).

Chapter 11

Navigating Marginalization Through a Motivational Weapon and Resilience: African Sub-Saharan and African American Girls' Lived Experience of Access to Higher Education

Philomena Adah

Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

ABSTRACT

This study examines the experience of female education in Northern and North Central Nigeria, South Sudan, South Africa, and the United States. Through empirical reports, articles, journals, and participants' practical experience, this study adopts a qualitative methodology comprising educational system information in the three Sub-Saharan countries and the United States. It explains how gender disparity and exclusive socioeconomic and sociocultural policies impede female education. It examines females from the United States, South Africa, and South Sudan who have shown resilience in overcoming obstacles of slavery, racism, apartheid, patriarchy, poverty, and war to encourage the higher academic pursuit of Idoma girls in Benue State, North Central Nigeria. The study shows that despite policies that have generated varying mechanisms to incorporate marginalized female students in school systems, deep inequalities persist and are palpable in the academic achievement data of female students.

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the experience of the education of girls and women in North Central Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan, and the United States. The study adopts a qualitative methodology using empirical reports, articles, and journals of the educational system to argue that development in any country would be more rapid if women were better educated, especially at the higher education level (Asante, 2022).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch011

Research reveals that women's labor force participation has led to significant economic developments in the past 50 years (Benett, 2014). Previous studies also show that any organization that considers gender diversity as one of its top priorities stands a chance to retain a talented workforce and increase its performance (Sharma, 2016). For this reason, women need to be well educated so that they are not considered as less skilled and less qualified as they work in a diversified work environment (Kundu & Mor, 2017).

Higher education plays a significant role in global development (Lebrón et al., 2014-2018). It is an institution that is a vital element of human development and an inspiration that aids girls and women in making fuller and more influential contributions to national and global development. Ewoh-Odoyi (2021) posits that the study of women in higher education has been neglected, especially in developing countries and less studied places like North Central Nigeria. For example, Nigerian policy documents reveal that cultural factors threaten the recognition of women in the society. The issues of harmful traditional and religious practices against women are linked to the culture, which perpetrates men and women's gender roles and lifestyles. Sociocultural barriers in the policy text are also connected to socioeconomic issues like cultural barriers, which impedes female participation in primary education, contributing to early marriages among young girls prevalent in northern and central Nigeria (Mobolaji et al., 2020).

This study uses initiatives from American, South African, and Sudanese girls who have shown resilience overcoming obstacles of slavery, racism, apartheid, patriarchy, poverty, and war to encourage the higher academic pursuit of Idoma girls in Benue State, North Central Nigeria. Every child's right to education is imperative, irrespective of gender or family status. It is access to a transformed life and a liberated mind (Machado and Bilo, 2018). Denying a girl, the right to education deprives her of the opportunity to discover herself and her full potential. Coker-Kolo and Jones (2021) assert that to achieve any form of national development, everyone's participation is essential. For this reason, social protection policies can help address the multifaceted nature of child poverty and improve children's well-being, especially in education (Machado & Bilo, 2018).

Women and girls experience oppression and discrimination through cultural practices in different parts of the world, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which accounts for why several national and international organizations have intervened concerning gender equality, liberation, and women's empowerment. (Arnot & Fennell 2008; Call, A. U. 2019; Unterhalter 1999). At the World Conference on Education (1990) in Geneva, steps toward girls' autonomy created awareness of gender parity in education. To complement this initiative, the Beijing Conference (1995) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2005) also emphasized gender parity and sustainable development goals (SDGs). They maintained that inclusive and equitable quality education promotes lifelong learning opportunities for boys and girls and aim to achieve equity by 2030 (U.N., 2015). However, in March 2016, the Nigerian senate failed to enact the bill of gender and equal opportunity, which forbids the physical, psychological, sexual, verbal, economic, social, and cultural abuse or similar mistreatment or mishandling that interferes with the integrity of women (Makinde et al., 2017).

Access to higher education comprised physical access and enrolment (Du Plooy & Zilindile, 2014; Ghandani et al., 2007; Motala et al. 2009; Shindler & Fleisch, 2007). Physical access refers to the learner's physical admission into school Gamede (2005). Also, access to higher education includes research, the development of civic duties, and public solidarity. It is a vital means of attaining and achieving sustainable development, respect, and tolerance in the community.

WESTERN EDUCATION IN IDOMA LAND BENUE STATE, NIGERIA FROM 1940 AND 1960

In 1800, the arrival of Christian missionaries in Africa was a crucial historical episode with a longstanding effect on African religions and cultural practices (Sundkler & Steed, 2000; Nunn, 2010). Missionary societies were vital to nineteenth-century efforts to end the transatlantic slave trade, and research reveals that introducing Western education and Christianity would advance civilization (Buxton, 1840). The history of education in Nigeria has a close nexus with the arrival of the missionaries on the West African coast, which has had a persistent effect on schooling outcomes and contributed to women's education in Southern Nigeria. For this reason, girls and women whose ancestors embraced Western education in the south have higher levels of schooling, and the early advantages in educational infrastructure are a vital channel through which the effect has persisted (Okoye & Pongou, 2014). Hence, the impact of schooling is more significant for population subgroups that have historically suffered disadvantages in access to education. Among such subgroups are Idoma girls in north-central Benue State. Missionary activity on schooling among Muslims ruled out the link between religion and education as the primary mechanism. The intergenerational transmission of human capital partly explains the persistence of the relationship between missionary activity and schooling. Early exposure to missionary activity is positively related to current household wealth in Nigeria. The missionaries' emphasis was primarily on the education of all children. However, discrimination between boys' and girls' education is ingrained historically in the Nigerian system regarding female education, which means that female education is not as profitable as male education (Okoye & Pongou, 2014).

The evolution of the Idoma people's education was through the missionaries in their evangelization activities. Creating the foundation for western education was alien and challenging initially. Thus, children were not allowed the opportunity to attend the mission school. The Idoma people were farmers, and because the boys needed to be responsible for their families in the future, they participated in farming for economic purposes. The girls assisted their mothers in domestic chores. However, the people later embraced education in 1940 and 1960. There was a significant increase in the enrolment of pupils in these mission schools. Boys went to the mission schools, while girls had an early marriage, and their dowry paid the boys' tuition. The need to improve their quality of life was the motivating factor that led Idoma people to develop an interest in western education; they wanted to become professionals. Hence, communities would sometimes contribute money and send a boy they deemed to be intelligent and responsible to the mission school. The families and communities who were collaborating with the colonial masters became more affluent than those who were not (Adibe, 2008a). The Idoma's have now realized women's potential role as contributors to the overall family income; thus, economic factors are the essential motive for pursuing higher education. Western education seems to have had a significant influence on the transformation of embracing modernity, which has brought about girls' and women's education; however, even in this 21st century, girls and women still lag in pursuing higher education (Anizoba & Johnson, 2021).

Idoma's n Agatu are predominantly farmers and are frequently threatened by Fulani herders in what has become a conflict zone (Apenda, 2016). The conflict has led to the destruction of farmlands, properties, and lives and has negatively impacted education. As mentioned earlier, girls' education originally was not a common practice among the Idoma in rural areas. The conflict exacerbated the situation of girls and women because the high volume of food production, which was of economic advantage to families and used by some families as a means of educating their girls, was halted by the incessant clashes be-

tween the Fulani herders and Agatu farmers. The drastic reduction in farm outputs has resulted in food insecurity, so many school children are hungry, leading to less enrollment in school.

The attack on the Agatu by the Fulani herders is observable in the patterns of genocides, disruption of economic and social order, and increase in death tolls (Vanguard News, 2016). The Fulani herders' activities instill the fear of education in girls and women and stop their participation in school. Over two decades, there has been a drastic decline in education nationwide, especially in rural Nigeria. However, in Agatu, the conflict between farmers and Fulani herders decreased the enrollment of girls and women, inhibiting their participation in school, which seems to stifle the growth and development of women (Oguche et al., 2016). By implication, schools' enrollment goals over time to ensure change and continuity of the system are unattainable, crippling academic programs and the entire educational institution, which explains in a significant way the effect of conflict activity on education attainment for females (Okoye & Pongou, 2014).

The 1999 Nigerian Constitution, Section 14 subsection (1) states that the nation is based on the principle of social justice, security, and the welfare of all citizen, and section 18 subsection (1) the government's direct policy towards ensuring equal and adequate educational opportunities between males and females at all levels (Bisoye, 2019). However, many obstacles inhibit girls and women from fully exercising their right to participate in education. Minority status, role, poverty, geographical location, early marriage, pregnancy, gender-based violence, and cultural and traditional attitudes make it impossible to complete and benefit from education in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially Northern Nigeria.

Girls' educational opportunities tended to be circumscribed by patriarchal attitudes. Thus, their lack of formal education has visible barriers to female participation (Jacob & George, 2014). The social pressures on females' education are secondary to males. Females experienced religious practices, which caused the high illiteracy rate among women in the north and north-central regions, where these practices are rampant. Parents lacked resources to enroll all children in school resulted in early marriage. Moreover, some families regard investing in girls' education to benefit the family that would eventually marry the girl.

NIGERIA AND OTHER SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Despite the critical achievement in increasing enrollment, especially at the primary level, many children from Sub-Saharan Africa drop out of school before completing primary education. According to Bashir et al. (2018), in Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, girls form most of the population of children who never go to school. An estimate of 52.3 million primary and lower secondary school age, which range from 6 years to 14 years or 7 years to 15 years depending on the country's official entry age, are out of school in Sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 45 percent of the world child out of school population, showing a high increase in Nigeria's 10.5 million out of school children (Bashir et al., 2018). Similarly, an Ogunnaike study in 2020 revealed that the national average of school children not in school in 2018 was 12.7 million. However, Nigeria has an increased rate of 14 million children not in school in 2020 (Ogunnaike, 2020).

Bashir et al. (2018) maintained that the reasons for children dropping out of primary school are the high cost of schooling, poor quality service, and long-distance to school, especially in the rural areas. For example, some people attributed girls dropping out of secondary school to child marriage and pregnancy (Bashir et al., 2018). Scholarship grants could counter these challenges to improve enrollment and attendance; other interventions could be through presenting role models for girls. For this reason, Bashir

et al. (2018) assert that Sub-Saharan African countries need an overhaul of policies and programs. Sub-Saharan African countries have diverged significantly in their educational system over the past 25 years.

Three challenges that are currently shaping and defining the Sub-Saharan

African country's future school system will affect their prospects, which include economic growth, population, and conflict. Several political instabilities in Nigeria, Sudan, and South Africa seem to slow economic growth as the population rises (Bashir et al., 2018). The chapter presents how girls suffer discrimination and lack of access to schooling from this background than other parts of the world. Education for all is a human right and social development issue fundamental to gender equality. However, gender parity in education seems to be a distant prospect in these countries. UNESCO reveals 132 million girls are out of school; this includes 34.3 million primary school age, 30 million lower-secondary school age, and 67.4 million upper-secondary (World Bank, 2020). Only a few girls who enroll in primary and secondary education graduate in North-central Nigeria. The gap becomes wider when it gets to higher education. Ewoh-Odoyi (2021) revealed that the problem is due to gender disparity, cultural bias, and poverty which clearly shows the dearth of girls' higher education in the North Central region of Nigeria, thereby making this research a worthwhile endeavor.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Critical race theory (CRT) and feminist education theory provided a framework for girls' and women's context and epistemology. Their lived experiences regarding discrimination and marginalization make their voice central in this research. CRT is concerned with discrimination and subordination. CRT and Feminist education theory highlight the essential elements that hinder people from making important decisions regarding their lives (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Parker, 2019).

Feminist education theory is concerned with oppressive situations surrounding women. It focuses on gender disparity and the interplay of differences in education (Evans-Winters & Love 2015; Bryant, 2017). Black Feminist Theory address the intersectionality of race, gender, culture in the context of social oppression and privilege. Evans-Winters and Love (2015) use endarkened feminist epistemology (EFE) framework "to construct stories on culturally embodied work" (p. 1). Based upon Cynthia Dillard's work, EFE portrays the social position of Black women and is unique to them. Evans-Winters and Love focus on Black feminist thought in the context of higher education and scholarship to explain methodologies, frameworks, and pedagogies. They expounded on the ways students, researchers, teachers make sense of and explore their identities as "other" in the context that privileged Whiteness, maleness, Eurocentric ways of knowing and being" (Evans-Winters, 2015, p. 5)

This research explores both theories to highlight inequality and biases against girls as social justice issues. These theories are vital to this study because of their relevance to understanding girls' systems of oppression and subjugation. It explores how patriarchal systems oppress and marginalize girls giving attention to the concept of "voice" of the marginalized (Carter, 2022). This study responded and addressed girls' and women's exclusion from higher education and suggested insights highlighting some experience as a learning tool to support inclusion.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Few studies have focused on women's viewpoints regarding their motivation and ability to overcome obstacles that hinder their access to higher education. Therefore, this study explores the motivation of first-generation Idoma women who attained higher education. Understanding these women's experiences could aid the achievement of girls/women who aspire to gain access to higher education.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Despite local policies, such as the National Gender Policy, the disparity in girls' educational opportunities is still a pressing issue in Nigeria. This study can guide policy decision-makers to prioritize girls' higher education and understand inequality, poverty, and socio-cultural factors responsible for the deprivation of girls' right to education. It focused on Idoma girls' higher education access rates in Benue State, Nigeria.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study demonstrates that girls' academic empowerment has the potential to advance economic development in Nigeria and every nation worldwide. This study also seeks to encourage the motivation of girls/women to overcome obstacles that prevent the advancement of a girl's potential. This study aims to use phenomenological research to understand the meaning of the lived experience of Idoma girls who are marginalized and have limited access to higher education (Adamu and Ben, 2017).

It seeks to describe the motivation of first-generation Idoma women in Okpokwu local government, Benue, SSA, and African American women, who have attained higher education. It uses multiple in-depth interviews to understand the perspectives of the participant's motivation (Bell, 2010). This study intends to get the essence of their inspiration by locating significant statements in the interview transcripts, developing meaningful units that aggregate these statements, and creating a description of what the individuals have experienced and the context of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). It intends to draw conclusions that will link Sub-Saharan African (SSA) and African American women's experiences. This chapter highlights women who have shown resilience in overcoming patriarchy, poverty, colonialism, slavery, and war to encourage the higher academic pursuit of Idoma girls in Benue state, Nigeria.

Global agencies like UNESCO, the World Health Organization, and the World Bank (2020) focus on girls' dropout rates, blaming poverty for girls' low enrollment. None has concentrated on obtaining the motivation of those who pursued higher education. Therefore, this study focuses on awareness, inspiration, and encouragement to highlight the experience of women who have attained higher education in Benue and Kaduna states, Nigeria, South Sudan, South Africa, and New Orleans, United States of America.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Global agencies like UNESCO, the World Health Organization (WHO), and World Bank have focused on generic studies regarding girls' dropout rates, blaming poverty as the underlying factor for girls' low enrollment (Etang, 2018). These studies on women's education in Nigeria have their limitations. It is

observable from the literature review that these organizations have all focused-on surveying girls who dropped out. None has focused on obtaining the views and motivation of those who persevered and pursued higher education. Therefore, this study focused on awareness, inspiration, and encouragement to highlight gender inequality and the socio-cultural and socio-economic barriers that hinder girls' access to higher education. Also, the aim is to understand girls' and women's marginalization, and it seeks to find ways to encourage the self-esteem required to overcome the obstacles that hinder their academic pursuits.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative phenomenological research design and a descriptive method for data analysis. In this study, equity means justice in access to girls' and women's schooling. The survey used advocacy/participatory because it best fits marginalized individuals. In addition, the study desire to highlight the essential reform that focuses on changing the lives of girls and women, institutions, and places of work. Marginalized girls and women are of paramount importance to this study. The study shows their oppression, domination, suppression, alienation, and hegemony (Crewell, 2016). Participatory action is recursive or dialectical, focusing on bringing about change which is emancipatory to liberate girls and women from unjust structures that limit self-development and self-determination. The study engages its participant in in-depth interviews with women by administering questionnaires that address research questions and phenomenon interest (Bell, 2010; Chase, 2011; Cousin, 2009). The study explored a sample of teachers, administrators, and students in Central Nigeria, United States, South Africa, and Sudanese living in the United States.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The research context influenced the data collection method's decision, structure, and timing flows from research questions Ritchie and Lewis (2003). The choice between naturally occurring or generated data depends on the researcher's role and participant interpretation and consideration, likely to shed light on the research subject (Willgens, 2016). The art of skillful interviewing to generate quality data depends on the interviewer (Patton, 2002). Phenomenological interviews begin with a social conversation to create a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere for the participant. The researcher's responsibility is to make the interviewees feel confident to respond to questions without inhibitions (Moustakas, 1994). Because interviews "open up what is inside people" (Patton, 2002, p. 407), the personal presence of the interviewer may reduce the respondents' spontaneity and willingness to be completely frank (Vockell & Asher, 1998); thus, the critical feature is to combine structure with the flexibility (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Wa-Mbaleka (2019) suggests the researcher's practical consideration before, during, and after data collection in qualitative research. The researcher followed ethical steps before and during the interview by obtaining professional approval from the Xavier University of Louisiana and obtaining the CITI certification before the commencement of the research. The researcher built rapport and gathered more information on the interviewee's motivation to acquire higher education. All four participants in the study received and signed the consent form, including video and audio recordings. The participants signed the consent form, scanned it, and emailed the consent form to the researcher. For confidentiality, the researcher made provisions by informing participants concerning pseudonyms for direct quotes of their

narratives. Notification about the freedom of participants' withdrawal from the study offered them the choice to decide whether or not to engage in the different stages of the study.

The participants were women from United States, Sudan, Nigeria, and South Africa, and following, a semi-structured question guide the interviews conducted. The researchers' communication allows a free information flow during the Zoom and phone session. There was a phone backup due to internet disruption and network failure. The key feature was to combine structure with the flexibility (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) to elicit the needed data from the participants while at the same time making it comfortable for them to express themselves. The researcher downloaded a recorder from Google Play, which simultaneously transcribes while recording the Zoom interview. The researcher employs the Delve software and in Vivo for the coding.

A purposeful selection based on criterion sampling was employed because all participants needed to experience the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). The decision to recruit participants from the north and north-central of Nigeria was to gain insight across religious, geographical, social, cultural, and socio-economic factors that helped women gain access to education or in-access. Identifying these factors that confront women as they access education offers a variegated viewpoint that would enrich the studied phenomenon. The age range of participants helps track the educational trends across generations of women.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

The study used a purposeful selection based on criterion sampling to discuss the phenomenon to show that all women who participated in higher education experienced marginalization (Creswell, 2016). The study recruited four women which included three working-class women and one graduate student whose ages are between 20 to 40 years. The women were knowledgeable and experienced participants with the most significant potential to yield good data to enhance the study's credibility (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Van Oorschot et al., 2022).

The participants' age, language, background, and socioeconomic information were based on specific demographics and characteristics to have a diverse sample. Their experience offered a variegated viewpoint, which enriched the phenomenon. The preliminary recruitment process includes contacting the potential participant's phone calls, emails, and text messages. The researcher did not encounter any problem establishing rapport with potential participants because she belongs to the culture and understands the relationship skills required to engage in dialogue with the study participants in Nigeria. In the United States, there was no difficulty because the study created time for rapport before the interview.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed using a qualitative, thematic, feminist education theoretical framework, focusing on recognizing gender through cultural practices and exclusion. This process aimed to provide an understanding and description of the studied phenomena (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). The themes emerged from the content of the study materials.

Creswell (2016) holds that the "rationale for the phenomenological study is to understand individuals by entering into their field of perception to see life as they see it" (p. 275). Advocating that the first

Table 1. Participants demographic information

Participants	Race	Sex	Age	Education	Religion	Marital status
1	African American	Female	67	Professor	Christian	Married
2	South Sudanese	Female	37	Undergraduate	Christian	Single
3	Nigerian (North central)	Female	33	Master's	Christian	Married
4	South African	Female	30	Doctoral candidate	Christian	Single

Table 2. Participant's process setting

Participants	Virtual Platform	Interview mode	Session time	Length of interview
1	Zoom	Video & Audio	Weekday pm	42
2	Zoom	Video & Audio	Weekday pm	30
3	Zoom	Video & Audio	Weekday pm	43
4	Zoom	Video & Audio	Weekday pm	35

step in data analysis is setting aside all preconceived experiences best to understand the participants' experiences in the study as humanly possible. The study used an in-depth qualitative interview, assessment, data categorization, theme development, and coding (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 111). The interviews were transcribed verbatim from zoom to protect the participants' identity, assigning numbers to identify participants.

Data reduction techniques involved listing all the significant statements, keywords, and phrases as variables and constructs. Meanings were formulated from the actual words and coded (Singleton & Straits, 2005). The study followed the process of developing means of an aggregate and organizing them into categories, analyzing them into clusters and themes to seek the textual description of the data, eliminating repetitive, overlapping, or unnecessary information. Finally, a summary of detailed illustrations that captured the essence of the participants' experiences and viewpoints on women's education emerged.

The study developed interpretations using member-checking and peer-review procedures to verify the credibility. Participants reviewed and critiqued the transcriptions. The researcher shared the interpretations of the data with the participants to ensure accuracy.

RESULTS

All the participants reported that family background, the family of birth and marriage, was instrumental to having access to education. The education of either father or mother plays a significant role in determining their educational access. Overall, the participants reported that more mothers and fathers were strong family figures that supported their education. In the family of marriage, most husbands were supportive of the women in graduate-level studies. Personal determination to succeed, hard work, and perseverance were prominent in all the participants, stories, and academic circumstances.

Areas of support ranged from financial assistance to emotional and moral support. They generally claimed that their mothers' parents helped them cultivate relationship dynamics and discipline that facilitated their interaction with peers, teachers, and staff, which enabled them to achieve their academic

goals. In one of the participants' words, my education career's story cannot be complete without my mother's positive role.

The participant's conviction that they had achieved the status of role models themselves. Some confessed that role models inspired them. Others say that they were admirers of role models. According to some participants, how these role models presented themselves in public was a source of inspiration. Some of the women in this study felt that higher education had offered their role models many opportunities. They expressed that higher education becomes a vital tool for participation in a dynamic society.

All the participants affirm that life would be more difficult without attaining higher education, confirming future economic security, the desire to earn a higher income, job market requirements, insurance against the turbulent future, and other financial reasons. For this reason, education thus was one of the significant factors in their motivation. The academic programs and institutional fame were considered essential motives for the women in this study. The courses offered, academic reputation and general good moral standard in the institutions motivated some participants.

According to the participants, costs were critical to women's lack of access to education SSA countries. They assert that role orientation, cultural expectation, and social status may have contributed to women's limited access to education in general. That expectation will include preparation for marriage and belief or reasoning that the woman would be married to another family, investing in the education of girls/women not worthwhile.

Role conflict tends to emerge with an increase in the number of activities a woman participates in, especially outside the home. Thus, in traditional societies, such as SSA, her role expectations are essentially homebound, and any activity outside the home may introduce a new element of conflict. For example, McGivney (1993) suggests that some male partners and other family members tend to resent a woman's participation in any activity unrelated to her domestic role or involves changes to the household routine. The participants reported that they experienced challenges that threatened their educational careers, but none was significant enough to frustrate their academic goals. According to the participants, their educated parents provided some protective measures for them.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do first-generation Idoma girls in Benue explain the experiences, supports, and sociocultural, socioeconomic, and gender factors that influence their decision to pursue a university degree?
2. What factors motivate South African and Sudanese girls in Sub-Saharan Africa to participate in higher education, and to what extent are their efforts successful?
3. How do factors such as peers, extended family, and parental residence location influence girls' decision to pursue higher education in Nigeria?
4. How do African American girls who attain higher education navigate obstacles such as inequality, and what supports and programs aid their success?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender Disparity Impedes Girls' Higher Education

The lack of a proper educational system places most young girls at a severe disadvantage, and gender disparity deprives girls of higher education in Central Nigeria. Efang (2011) revealed that 62% of 7.2 million out-of-school children in Nigeria were girls. This study indicates that nearly twice as many boys' graduate from primary school and attend secondary school compared to girls. The dropout rate for girls is 6.5% over the 3% rate dropout rate for boys. Okafor et al. (2015) maintained that it is pertinent to increase understanding of girls' education value.

Moreover, education is an instrument of parity for excellence in national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria 9FRN, 2004) and an indispensable means of realizing human rights (Daramola, 2010 cited in Okafor et al., 2015). Education is a fundamental strategy for growth and development in every nation Dauda (2007). It improves women's status, and no sustainable development is possible if women are uneducated. Discrimination disenfranchises girls and limits their potential. Thus, closing the gap to accessing education accelerates higher education's social and economic advancement for girls (Ombati & Ombati, 2012; Themane, 2017).

BARRIERS TO GIRL'S HIGHER EDUCATION

Sociocultural Barriers

The institutional discrimination against girls impacts their acquiring formal education. The enrolment of girls in school is minimal due to obvious sociocultural factors such as patriarchy in Nigeria and South Sudan, which also have male-dominated in most spheres of society (Buchanan, 2019). Makama (2013) argues that girls' discrimination and oppression result from systemic conditioning, roots in the family and community. The patriarchal structures in society are rooted in tradition and religion, which continue to enhance male superiority.

Discrimination against girls and women is still palpable despite the intervention towards bridging the gender gap by CEDAW and the Beijing Platform. Cultural beliefs also constrain the South Sudanese government's interventions towards girls' higher education (Bior, 2019). According to UNICEF (2007), the prevailing cultural practices in Northern Nigeria deny girls the right to higher education because of early marriage, and they become teenage mothers. Elliot (2010) reminds us that a collaborative group or individual's culture relies on the society to which they belong. Hence, gender inequality in Nigeria creates cultural influence, a practice that enshrines women's subjugation (Oluyemi & Yinusa, 2016). This traditional conceptualization of women's position in society promotes negative values and images of the female gender. One could argue that some cultures are tools of oppression to preserve inequality and gender injustice in this context.

It is crucial to examine Africa's cultural impact on girls' educational process. The concept and spreading of sexism are deeply rooted in women's negative representation in African culture and textbooks. Most school girls internalize women's portrayal as only mothers, wives, homemakers, traders, and low-status workers. These stereotypes are evident in their culture and books. These girls never question the unequal gender division of labor at home, nor the concept of the so-called gender-appropriate jobs.

According to (Hines-Datiri, 2017; Epstein et al. 2017; Jayaweera, 1999), girls' misrepresentation in books and media forms a stereotype contributing to Black girls' high dropout rates in the United States and African countries.

Boy's education is also highly prioritized over girls. When girls approach maturity 13-25, they are often married into other families, and most birth families are not interested in girls' education because it is considered a loss on investment (Obasi, 2000, p. 198). Dynamics in marriage also determine the educational future of girls. Some studies found that marriage and childbearing can play a decisive role in girls' enrollment, especially where betrothal takes place at a very young age. Similarly, Davis (2006) posits that marrying young is common in developing countries, and girls often have no say concerning when and to whom they marry.

Socioeconomic Barriers

In Africa, poverty is often a social attitude and structure. Women manifest poverty according to cultural context more so than men. Poverty in Nigeria requires a concerted effort to understand the cultural mechanisms that create uncertainties and dependency. Unequal relationships between men and women create high dependency and low self-esteem among women who lack the power to make decisions (Howard White et al., 2001). For example, economic hardship often forces families to give up their daughters to early marriage, which leaves the girls vulnerable to abuse and limits their educational opportunities.

Lloyd and Hewett (2003) supported White et al. and maintained that education is a human right and a vital part of an individual's capacity to lead lives they value. Improving girls' education is key to Nigeria's economic development because it affords various opportunities. According to Fataar et al. (2012), the World Bank in 2015 emphasized the significance of education to the internal communities by eliminating gender disparity in schools. In South Sudan and South Africa, poverty does not deprive girls of schooling at the primary level.

In South Africa, the government's commitment made food feeding schemes and non-payment of fees in poor communities possible. These factors contribute to keeping young children in school. In South Africa, dropout was experienced at the secondary level owing to the high teenage pregnancy rate and parents' financial difficulties where they had to pay school fees.

Education empowers first-generation female students to explore their capabilities and agency. Educated girls and women can challenge structures and institutions, other women. The voice of women and their experiences in education contribute to the transformation in their lives. This positive change impacts the global scholarship of the phenomenon under review. A holistic and in-depth understanding concerning equal opportunities is paramount to this study by denying girls access to higher education impacts their lives and the community because of missed opportunities. In Nigeria, their fathers were vital decision-makers and influencers of girls' education. Sometimes women's education experiences provide insight into government gender policies and other developing nations (Ebubedike, 2018).

South Africa and South Sudan

The international community considers girls' and women's education one of the highest priorities worldwide (Coulibaly, 2020). The research concerning girls' higher education in South Africa and Sudan is pertinent to this study. These two countries' experiences of apartheid in South Africa and war in Sudan could provide a learning experience to girls in central Nigerian because of the shared experiences of

violence, racial oppression, and curtailment of civil liberties (Hale, 2009). Girls and women are disadvantaged in many ways; as evidenced by South Sudan's statistics, about 17% of girls marry before they are 15, resulting in an abrupt halt in their education and ultimately leading to low educational attainment (Berke & Sell 2018; Birchall, 2018). In Sudan, marriage is often imposed, which defines a girl. This attitude makes girls' preparation for an early marriage becomes the most valued education. Therefore, to bridge the gap and fully develop women's potential to actively promote gender equity and women empowerment to curb excessive poverty deprives them of education access (Bedri, 2018).

Early marriage is also a common practice in North and Central Nigeria. However, in South Africa, girls' access to formal higher education haven been prioritized despite other educational challenges experienced by girls at school, such as sexual harassment.

The experience of Sudanese girls and women is similar to Idoma girls. Thus, girls attending domestic chores by the Idoma's in Nigeria is similar to the Ombada locality Omdurman in Sudan (Bedri, 2018). Research reveals that the majority of these marriages are for economic reasons. For example, the payment of bride price in terms of cows is attributed to girls' early marriage and limited enrollment or dropping out of school because it serves as a means of income to assist families living in poverty. (Dixson, 2016; Hudson & Matfess, 2017). However, in recent times, educating girls and women seems to be emphasized in South Sudan to empower girls and women to equip them to contribute to the development of their families' communities and nation (Joseph, 2017).

The end of colonialism in many African countries and apartheid in South Africa have not gained much change in access to the higher education of women (Heleta, 2016). Access to education in this study refers to enrollment rate and physical entry, linked with the concept of means of entry and school outcomes (Gamede 2005; Ghandani et al., 2007; Motola et al. 2009; Shindler & Fleisch, 2007). According to Alabi et al. (2019), education in South Africa emphasizes the right to primary education. However, it also recognizes the right to further education (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Alabi et al. assert that inclusive higher education is vital. South African educational system provides access to higher institutions to historically marginalized people (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

UNESCO (2004) necessitates upholding higher education access with an unbiased inclusion built on excellence, competence, effort, and fortitude. Coetzee's (2001) arguments on South African education and patriarchy's ideology provide a relevant empirical framework for studying and understanding gender inclusion in higher institutions in South Africa, especially women's progression into postgraduate education. Coetzee's (2001) arguments highlight the attempts at gender inclusion in education in South Africa have only accommodated women at the surface because of deep-rooted patriarchal ideologies embedded and (re) produced across different social structures. Thus, women experience male supremacy, disempowerment, disrespect, and patriarchy impact their intellectual, emotional well-being and upward mobility, depriving their promotions in academic institutions (Dlamini & Adams, 2014). Although South African women academics have achieved notable success in higher education, much remains to be done to address the challenges that still hinder their full participation in higher education (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2017).

These patriarchal ideologies often relegate women to the background for domestic roles and create a norm that puts men in a privileged position at the detriment of women. According to Coetzee (2001), patriarchy is exclusionary and feeds on asymmetric power relations between genders. Its focus on hyperpower and continual domination over girls and women includes strategies that perpetuate domestic roles and formal education norms because they should be wives, mothers, nurturers, and caregivers. This

South African ideology is very similar to the Nigerian one; although it contrasts with the constitution, efforts to overcome it are very limited.

According to Enang (2018), the “socialization process influences people’s way of life and the belief system that shapes their thought, actions, and response to issues within and outside the community” (p. 86). The concept of the socializing of women to acknowledge that men are superior through the patriarchal system gives an advantage to the men while placing severe restraints on the duties and responsibilities of females (AKpotor, 2016). Thus, women must conform to males in their family of orientation, husbands, and family members (Uyang et al., 2016). For this reason, women who have attained higher education and high position in Nigerian society might not outrightly be able to eliminate the culture of female subservience to challenge traditional practices (Undelikwo et al., 2019).

Alao (1998) argues that cultural and traditional practices promoting gender stereotypes have produced competition between men and women. Most societies across Africa are patriarchal, which implies that a woman’s role is domestic, requiring little or no formal education. (Aluko, 2005; Makama, 2013). It is often argued that traditional responsibilities placed on women as wives and mothers limit their chances of attaining higher education. In addition, discriminatory employment policies restrict women directly or indirectly to lower-paying jobs. In South Africa, women in postgraduate education face imminent challenges that impede their careers. Morley et al. (2009) argued that education is a platform for acquiring information, critiquing dominant knowledge, and developing an individual’s capacity. It is crucial to address gender disparity at all levels of education as a serious debate to promote inclusiveness and genuine transformation in post-apartheid South Africa.

Sociocultural factors in education were evident in the participation and retention of learners in school. The school system reinforced and reproduced culturally conceived gender stereotypes, which, according to Prinsloo (2006), are invisible forms of exclusion. In both countries, girls were vulnerable and were victims of sexual violence reported in schools, indicating participation is not a simple enrollment and retention process and changing traditional practices (Meer 1992). None of these experiences are new in Nigeria; therefore, this study affirmed that if cultural practices are changed, the result will be a liberating effect that benefits Nigerian girls. In developing countries where poverty and high unemployment rate prevails and developed economies where entrepreneurship is considered a driver of accelerated economic growth, girls in SSA need help towards motivation and support that will empower them. Encouragement, motivation, and empowerment are three crucial factors that can impact girls’ lives for the better. Thus, investment in female education and encouragement towards entrepreneurship development and support could potentially be one of the most efficient ways to promote sustainable economic growth (Meyer, 2018).

Motivation of Women and Family Support

Although patriarchal, sociocultural, and socio-economic factors remain significant elements limiting girls’ academic pursuit in higher education, self-motivation, extended family, friends, peers, teachers, and career women also encourage girls in literary pursuits (Yamundow, 2001). Family background and support from relatives are essential, and when one or both parents are literate, this also adds to the encouragement they give to their daughters. Family members and individual motivation are sources of support (Samuels, 2005). In South Africa and South Sudan, peers and teachers with higher education continue to serve as role models for students, influencing their academic progress and careers all through their education journey, and serving as an inspiration to motivate girls to pursue higher education (Bior, 2019, Abe & Chikoko, 2020).

Behol, Chohan, and Laila (2016) assert that parents are the unchallenged stakeholders in the lives of Nigerian girls. They play a crucial role in socializing their children and teaching them essential information and life skills. Parents also decide their children's future, especially concerning their educational careers. In Nigeria, parental support in terms of material assistance is one of the primary motivating factors in women's pursuit of higher education. The parents' level of support for their daughters may depend on many factors, including but are not limited to their level of education, their experience of urban lifestyle, and the possibility of the daughters supporting them later in their old age. Research suggests that the more educated the parents, the more likely they are to give their daughters material support, and literate parents tend to offer more support to their daughters' higher education (Bourdieu, 1990; Mayanja, 1998).

The children of educated parents tend to receive more support from their parents in their education, which encourages and shapes their careers. They serve as essential role models and are a source of motivation (Bhalalusesa, 1998, Hassan 1992, & Perkin, 1993). Browne (1998) states that positive peer influence provides identity, security, and guidance. Women with higher education appear to directly or indirectly influence other women's decisions to enroll in higher education. Most women in third world countries either continue higher education or not based on the availability of financial support as a fundamental deciding factor for their choice Bhalalusesa (1998). Although the Nigerian government has women's units in the Federal and State Ministries of Education, these commissions do not adequately cater to girls' education, increasing the dearth of gender equality in higher education levels in Nigeria, particularly in Northern and North Central Nigeria.

African American Women and Higher Education

According to Jewell (2012), there was oppression in United States society which revealed the exclusion of African American women from equal participation in education before and after slavery. Even in the 21st century, one may not complacently believe that the United States is already practicing equality because of experiences of racism and sexism, which is a daily fact of life. African Americans have experienced positive changes in the field of education Crawford (2016). Duster (2009) attributes the changes in the twentieth century to significant progress for diversity in higher education. However, although the differences in the increasing number of African Americans enrolled in two-and four-year educational institutions, the college enrollment rate is lower for Blacks than for other racial and ethnic groups in the United States (United States Department of Education, 2014). Further, some studies reveal a disparity across cultures, showing that the most significant enrollment difference exists among Black student population Crawford (2016). Black female students significantly outnumber males at higher education levels (Strayhorn, 2010; Kuykendall, 2012; & Hargrove, 2013). For instance, the number of Black females who earned baccalaureate degrees in 2010 was approximately twice that of Black males, 66% vs. 34% respectively, a gap not reflected in other racial groups (United States Department of Education, 2012). This disparity prompts the understanding concerning the issues surrounding Black males' enrollment in higher education in the United States compared to the female experience of higher education in Sub-Saharan African countries where males have a unique population in higher education than female students. Harper and Kuykendall (2012) reveal the disparity of Black males as the most disadvantaged group in the United States and attribute their experience as under-preparedness and disengagement as explanations for the challenge they face in college.

In 1989-90, African Americans were 10.2 percent of undergraduate students in the United States. This population increased slightly to 12.7 percent in 1999-2000 (Zamani, 2003). This increase illustrates

growth in the participation of women's enrollment in higher education. The attendance patterns indicate that there has been significant growth in women's enrollment in higher education at a faster rate than men for the past thirty years. Women account for 56.3 percent of undergraduates (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Although there is an increase in enrollment, recurrent struggle for racial equity persists despite the number of policies that have been enacted to close the higher education opportunity gaps between African Americans and their white counterparts still exist (Hanson et al. 2020; Harper et al., 2009). It seems evident that those policies created to increase access and ensure equity for African American students in higher education do not always lead to sustainable progress or a college degree (Perna et al. 2006).

Although Black women at historically White Institution's HWIs navigate the higher education process as both Black and women, which comes with a unique and complex set of challenges. Studies have revealed that Black women feel pressure to prove themselves as they combat negative stereotypes associated with their race and gender, particularly when pursuing degrees at HWIs (Bertrand Jones et al., 2013; Patterson-Stephen et al., 2017). As a result, sometimes, they feel isolated and alienated on the campuses. These feelings seem to be responsible for the historical transgressions, cultural insensitivity, and realities of encountering racism and sexism within the institution (Brower & Ketterhagen, 2004; Phelps-Ward et al., 2017). Black women view this as an institutional mismatch. Students at HWIs who previously attended HBCU have discussed historical and contemporary differences (Alexander & Bodenhorn, 2015; Borum & Walker, 2012; Matthews, 2020; Rosa & Mensay, 2016; Williams et al., 2005). Several scholars have noted HBCUs' significant impact on Black women's educational achievements. In addition to their influential role, they contribute to their future pursuits of degree attainment beyond the bachelor's degree by providing women with financial support, encouragement, a friendly learning environment, and many engaging, challenging academic opportunities (Gasman, 2007; Guy-Sheftall, 1982; Perna et al., Strayhorn, 2016; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019).

It is noteworthy to highlight Black students' experiences in navigating systems permeated with racial and gender oppression. Black women have several stereotypes, including a presumed deficiency in their academic abilities compared to White women (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019). These characterizations misrepresent the successes and challenges of Black women as they navigate the academy. Black women in America are remarkable in overcoming societal oppressors and outperforming their Black male counterparts (Lee & Freeman, 2012).

Some of the contributing factors to the success of Black women seem to come from relationships within Black communities because Africans believe in parents and the community's responsibility for a child's formation. This mindset portrays the communal spirit shared among those within the Black diaspora and the resulting sense of kinship created (Darell et al., 2016). It is not uncommon in Black families for extended family members, friends, or neighbors to play an active role in children's socialization within the family unit (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019; Winkle-Wagner & McCoy, 2018).

In career development, although representation for Black women in leadership positions has increased in academia, they must often navigate both sexism and racism throughout their career journey (Scott, 2022). African American women use personal experience, wisdom, strength, and resilience to face social, political, and historical barriers for their transformation and gain higher education (O'Bryant, 2015). Most African American women described how the intersection of race and gender affected their leadership development and career trajectories. Despite the barriers they encountered, these women perform skillfully in an environment where inequities, negative assumptions, and doubts are prevalent. Even through adversity, they carry out their responsibilities but often in an atmosphere where they constantly have to

prove themselves. Yet, these African American female leaders have persevered and demonstrated their ability to rise above and perform with tenacity (Davis and Maldonado, 2015).

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The curtailing of gender discrimination can only be possible through widespread community massive awareness Tuwor and Sossou (2008). Gender-sensitive policies, curricula, and pedagogies are needed to build safe, inclusive learning environments for girls and young women. This study recommends inclusive government policies that will eliminate hindrances to higher education and encourage scholarship schemes by Nigeria's federal government for girls to aid low-income families. This effort could curb the problem of disparity, thereby facilitating equal access for girls' higher education. Therefore, this study highlights the importance and advantages of female education and economic development.

This study calls for the rights of girls and women and the attitude change of both women and men in Nigeria and other SSA countries to uphold the mindset toward the importance of female education as paramount (Wollstonecraft, 2014). This process should involve mass adult education programs and mass dissemination of information geared toward educating the general West African populations about the importance and advantages of female education and economic development, for example, discussing cultural and societal practices with boys and men. Besides, ensuring gender-sensitive curricula and pedagogies, hiring and training female teachers, and building safe, inclusive learning environments for girls and young women will improve their education and wellbeing. Scholarship awards could curb girls' higher educational challenges. Besides, building more schools for the teeming population and reducing the distance to access schools might minimize child marriage and address violence against girls and women who marry very tenderly (Tuwor & Sossou, 2008; Siddiqi & Greene, 2022).

Discussion of Findings

Participants' responses to the essence of higher education yielded a significant finding, acknowledging the value of higher education in a fast-changing world and emphasizing the need for higher education for women's development in SSA (Bracey, 2017; Carr-Hill, 2020). A significant finding of this study is the self-motivation of women and the family support that helped them achieve their academic goals. This result validates creating favorable conditions for women's education at all levels. According Nguyen (2000), employment provides opportunities and enables women to achieve their educational potential. Also, the findings in this study suggested that urban parents tend to give more support to their children than rural parents in SSA (Tarricone et al., 2021; Niles, 1989). Therefore, location is a contributing factor in the education of women.

Studies on women's education in SSA have revealed that the patriarchal family system that encourages male children's preference over female children has contributed to more educational opportunities for boys than girls. The findings of previous researchers like Yamundow, 2001; Obasi, 2000; King and Hill, 1993; Soetan et al. 2019) highlight poverty, gender bias, tradition, religion, subordinate roles of women, early marriage, and parental attitude account for the disparity in education to the disadvantage of women. Several global agencies (UNESCO, 2002; World Bank Group, 2003; Khan, 2016; Unterhalter et al. 2020) reported on SSA, indicating women's productivity and potential by widespread inequality in education and access to essential services and skills between males and females.

The findings in this study have identified religion as a determinant factor for girls' higher education in Northern Nigeria (Ozowuba, 2021). Themes on the marginalization of girls and women are inexhaustive. A world of equity, sustainability, and justice is only possible if women are empowered, which requires equal access to education, safety, income, and representation.

CONCLUSION

The rise of the threat of terrorism and war and the seeming increase in violence in Sub-Saharan African countries, especially the attack on education, girls, and women, shows the reign of incessant insecurity. The challenges these developments pose for societies and educational institutions have grown and are complex. Perhaps it is time to emphasize and practically implement international educational policies to protect girls and women and enhance a safe learning environment. Highlights on promoting equitable social and academic relations are essential to curb the violence in the school environment.

Higher education is essential and valuable in liberating girls and women and, evidently, the foundation of their emancipation. It also provides girls access to multiple informed life choices, which allows them to live lives that they have cause to value. However, girls' access to higher education is limited, especially in North Central Nigeria and rural areas. For this reason, girls are vulnerable to continuous cultural exploitation. Therefore, this study could lead to designing interventions targeted at reducing the gender gap in higher education access, attainment, and achievement in Nigeria. It also offers an overview of some strategies to promote girls' educational participation and reviews relevant literature focused on how gender disparity, poverty, and sociocultural factors affect the situation. This study revealed that women's higher education could reposition women's sociocultural conditioning in society in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan African nations. The study seeks to promote equity as a social justice issue recognizing that society has become more diverse. As such, the underrepresentation of any group should be eliminated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

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Chapter 12

Motivating and Supporting Academic Achievement in STEM Through Culturally Relevant Literacy Practices: A Theoretical Framework

A. Dean Franks

The University of Southern Mississippi, USA

Anna Wan

The University of Southern Mississippi, USA

ABSTRACT

Motivation and support for academic achievement within STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education is essential as the related fields expand to include more and more jobs. This chapter aims to provide a new theoretical framework for STEM education focused on UDL, student motivation, and culturally relevant literacy practices as a way to increase diversity in STEM fields that expands to include people of color, people with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Authors explain a new theoretical framework that will enhance STEM motivation and support academic achievement through the use of culturally responsive literacy practices and provide examples of how to engage students using the new theoretical framework in the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation and support for academic achievement within STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education is essential as the related fields expand to include more and more jobs (Franks & Capraro, 2019). However, there is an issue of diversity within STEM education that results in a pronounced lack of diversity in STEM jobs (Alfred et al. 2019, Cantor et al. 2014, Kuschel et al. 2020, Malcom et al.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch012

1976). One way to ensure more diversity within STEM education is through the incorporation of culturally relevant literacy practices (Brown et al., 2019). Together with culturally relevant literacy practices, the authors suggest linking Universal Design for Learning and enhancing student motivation in STEM. Here, the authors propose a new theoretical framework designed to ensure students are motivated and supported in their academic achievement in STEM through culturally relevant literacy practices with an aim to increase the diversity of people in STEM fields. Specifically, the goals of the authors are to:

- Describe the need for diversity in STEM fields that expands to include people of color, people with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community
- Explain a new theoretical framework that will enhance STEM motivation and support academic achievement through the use of culturally responsive literacy practices
- Provide examples of how to engage students using the new theoretical framework in the classroom

Understanding the current lack of diversity in STEM education and fields will help provide a backdrop for understanding the importance of recruiting more diverse learners into STEM education. Considering the limited research on diversity in STEM, authors will discuss the expansion of diversity to include more than race, ethnicity, and binary genders. In fact, most research in this area focuses primarily on race and gender (Alfred et al., 2019). Additionally, very little work has been completed in the area of the intersectionality between race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and disability. People with disabilities have been largely overlooked in the research related to diversity in STEM (Hawley et al., 2013).

Explaining a new theoretical framework that enhances STEM motivation and supports academic achievement through the use of culturally responsive literacy practices will provide educators and researchers a clear idea of a way to move forward in the endeavor to enhance STEM learning and increase the diversity of students pursuing STEM education. The new theoretical framework proposed below consists of three elements: Culturally relevant literacy practices, UDL as support for academic achievement, and STEM motivation. Each of the elements are discussed in detail below.

Finally, providing examples of how to engage students using the new theoretical framework in the classroom will give educators clear ideas of activities or lessons they can incorporate to cover content specific to educational standards while also ensuring students are engaged in ways that enhance motivation and support academic achievement. The examples provided below are based on researched methods of including STEM activities to meet students' needs and incorporate established standards for grade level proficiency. Many of the activities offered as examples come from the Maker Movement (Martin, 2015, p. 31). The idea is that students need to be engaged in creating, or making, in order to fully develop a working knowledge of STEM information. Conceptual knowledge can be solidified through student engagement in the real-world making allowed through the Maker Movement. In this way, students are learning concepts, vocabulary, and applying the new knowledge to develop and create.

In the following sections, the authors will discuss why culturally relevant practices are essential in STEM education; issues of diversity in STEM; the framework components of culturally relevant literacy practices, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and motivation for STEM education; and what the framework looks like inside the classroom. Examples of activities will be provided to help illustrate how each of the framework's components is incorporated. The conclusion will provide a recap of the information covered and discuss possible future outlets for related work such as continued research in the area.

WHY CULTURALLY RELEVANT PRACTICES ARE ESSENTIAL

Culturally relevant literacy practices have long been established as essential in English/Language Arts classrooms (Brown et al., 2019; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002); however, as suggested by Brown et al. (2019), STEM has not embraced culturally relevant practices so far. By incorporating culturally relevant literacy practices into the STEM curriculum, teachers allow for conversations about bias within scientific research (Adams & Laughter, 2012), students to feel empowered to construct scientific knowledge of their communities (Rodriguez et al., 2004), and students to engage in meaningful project-based learning activities that encourage community involvement and participation (Dimmick, 2012). Practices like the ones discussed below can ensure students see themselves as important parts of the STEM community and empower students to feel that they add value to STEM knowledge (Brown et al., 2019).

Additionally, in literacy and reading pedagogy, emphasis on culturally responsive practices has been shown to increase students' ability to critically discuss literature. Wood and Jocius (2013) focused their study on the theory of critical literacy; they define it as a theory that includes "social, political, and historical contexts and allow students to examine the influence of institutions on their everyday lives" (p. 663). Furthermore, the article is focused on culturally relevant texts, collaboration, and critical conversations. Applying a culturally responsive approach to STEM would, likewise, make information accessible and relevant and allow students to engage in deep critical thinking. Deep critical thinking is essential in STEM fields if advancements are to take place.

In fact, when students can apply their already acquired background knowledge of the world to new information, such as STEM content, they are better able to focus on the STEM content rather than worrying about lacking background information. For instance, if students are learning to do math word problems and focused on how many trains are headed to a station and how fast they are going but the students have never experienced trains or, in fact, have no knowledge of public transportation, at least some of their cognitive energy is spent on worrying about trains and how fast a train can travel. They may be distracted by thinking of trains as they are portrayed in movies or other media without really understanding that trains are a regular part of some people's lived experiences. The trains become the focus of attention rather than the math needed to answer the question, so the lack of background knowledge prohibits learning from occurring.

In summation, culturally relevant practices are essential in STEM classrooms because it ties the content to the students' lived experiences in meaningful ways. By allowing students to feel a deep connection to the content, they begin to see STEM information as relevant to their lives, they see themselves as active participants in the development of STEM content, and they are better able to discuss and find relevance to the material when they are able to apply their already acquired background knowledge. This is true for the overall classroom population, but it is also true on an individual level. Names used within the scenarios or stories should represent names from the students' cultures. For instance, it would make sense to include names such as Guadalupe or Mateo when working with students who are Hispanic or Latinx.

DIVERSITY IN STEM

Literature on diversity in STEM fields often addresses gender and race/ethnicity. Many attribute the early identification of the disparity of minority women of color in STEM fields to Shirley Malcolm,

Paula Hall, and Janet Brown in 1976 with their book, *The Double Bind: The Price of Being a Minority Woman in Science*. Literature like Alfred et al. (2019) continues to expose the lack of minority women in STEM. However, much of the body of literature discussing the gender gap recognizes only two genders; Haverkamp (2018) furthers the conversation by addressing some of the complexities in being inclusive with regards to sexuality in the context of engineering, but this hardly seems to cover all the issues with diversity related to gender and sexuality within STEM fields. More research is needed to address the experiences of the trans community in STEM fields, people who are non-binary, and those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Additionally, people with disabilities are another area of diversity that is lacking in STEM fields and the intersectionality with other underrepresented groups compound the problem further (Hawley et al., 2013). When considering disability, it is important to consider the inherent value of diverse abilities (Franks, et al., 2021). As Franks, et al. (2021) suggest, teachers should recognize students' "differing abilities and interests, enhancing the learning experience" (p. 139). While the authors above were discussing early childhood education, teachers at all levels of education should be doing the same in their classroom. In fact, teachers of all levels and content areas should be considering how to enhance the learning experience for all students by considering their abilities and interests. Why is considering students' abilities and interests so important? Because student self-efficacy, students' beliefs about being able to understand and be successful, is related to success and self-efficacy is tied to motivation. Motivation, in turn, is about wanting to pursue a particular activity and finding it interesting (Franks & Capraro, 2019).

Students with disabilities have traditionally been underrepresented in the advanced science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) classes and/or enrichment programs in primary, secondary, and postsecondary education. Numerous reasons have been proposed for the underrepresentation such as low expectations for these students in general, limited or no availability of prerequisite courses, limited interest in STEM fields, lack of role models, and limited individualized supports and accommodations (Dunn, et al, 2012; Lee, 2020). Through the last two reauthorizations of the Perkins Act in 2006 and 2018, access to career and technical assistance education programming was emphasized for students with disabilities. In particular, a focus was placed on increasing STEM opportunities for these students in general (Gottfried, et al., 2021). Subsequently, as the number of STEM classrooms increases in STEM education overall, the number of inclusive STEM classrooms has been increasing and will continue to rise (Williams, et al., 2018).

Historically, students with disabilities were "pulled" out of regular classroom settings to receive the majority, if not all, of their classroom instruction. By the 1980s, approximately 30% of students with disabilities were in general education classrooms more than 80% of the time (Bakken, 2016). By 2016, the percentage of students spending more than 80% of their time in general education classrooms more than doubled to 64% (de Brey, et al., 2021). Teacher certification, in this case targeting STEM and special education, is a vital component to effective service delivery. In a study completed in 2018, only a small percentage of teachers, general education and special education, who provided STEM education had cross-credentialing. In other words, the general education STEM teachers did not have special education certification and the special education teachers did not have STEM certification. Teacher preparedness in inclusive STEM classrooms is imperative and appropriate credentialing in STEM and special education can assist with instructional preparedness (Williams, et al., 2018).

One way to enhance student self-efficacy in STEM is through informal STEM engagement. Student beliefs about being able to understand, pursue, and attain a career in STEM largely determine their decision to pursue the STEM pathway (Allen, et al., 2019). Exposure to informal STEM affects student

engagement in STEM topics and eventually STEM careers (Allen et al., 2019; Morgan, et al., 2016). However, students with disabilities often have physical barriers to participate in informal STEM activities. Renken et al. (2021) discusses 3 main barriers for students of racially underrepresented groups that also have a disability: limited exposure to mentors that represent the student population, connection of STEM curriculum to real world applications, and the function of language. Mentors are critical for students as they develop their identity, especially mentors that are similar to their intersectionality (Renken et al., 2021). For the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) community, use of words like “hear” in relation scientific experiments is a barrier to students who are DHH. Teacher preparation and professional development help with teachers’ use of language that serve as a barrier to student access to STEM. Within the confines of discipline specific formal curriculum, the connections between STEM curriculum and real-world applications are often lost. Informal STEM often is the area where student interest is increased (Allen et al., 2019).

The pandemic in 2020 opened the doors for remote work in technology heavy jobs where workers previously had to have an office presence. One of the accommodations that people with disabilities frequently ask for in the workplace is the ability to work remotely. With new opportunities to work remotely, preparing students with disabilities with the knowledge and skills to fill those remote jobs is now more essential than ever. In 2017 Fayer, Lacey, and Watson published “STEM Occupations: Past, Present, And Future” with data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics that showed that the fastest growing area of jobs was STEM related jobs, and nearly half of the STEM jobs were computer related. Primary and secondary teachers are preparing students for a future where a large portion of jobs do not yet exist and most of those jobs are in STEM areas (Fayer, Lacey, & Watson, 2017).

However, the issue of diversity is not only about single identifiers represented within STEM education and STEM fields. As Renken et al. (2021) suggest, the intersection between identities of race and ethnicity and disability compound students’ ability to find a place in STEM fields. It is essential to consider the intersectionality of identity labels each individual possesses (Franks, et al., 2021). Intersectionality can be defined as, “the interaction of multiple identities and experiences of [inclusion and] exclusion and [dominance and] subordination” (Davis, 2008, p. 67). When intersectionality is considered, teachers can better assess the needs, interests, motivations, and background knowledge of students within their classrooms. By doing so, teachers ensure all students will feel included and see themselves as able to be successful in STEM education.

FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

The proposed framework consists of three components: Culturally relevant literacy practices, UDL as support for academic achievement, and STEM motivation. In the sections below, the authors discuss each of the three framework components as it pertains to engagement in STEM education for all students. In each of the following sections, authors define the framework component, discuss how it pertains to engagement in STEM, and discuss how it enhances the experiences of all learners regardless of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, or disability.

Work like Kieran and Anderson (2019) connected UDL with culturally responsive teaching (CRT) by using UDL principles keeping in mind that educators need “to design instruction from the perspective of students’ diversity as strengths rather than deficits” (p. 1202). To be considerate of students’ diversity, teachers need to be aware of how cultural, language development, and socioeconomic status

differences and perspectives affect learning (Kieran & Anderson, 2019). One of the fundamental shifts that need to occur is to look at opportunity gaps rather than achievement gaps (Flores, 2007; Gutiérrez & Dixon-Román, 2010). Some examples of Kieran and Anderson's (2019) explicit connections to CRT to the three UDL principles are listed below:

- UDL: Multiple means of representation provide options for perception, language and symbols, and comprehension.
 - CRT: Draw on primary resources from multiple perspectives
 - CRT: Visual, auditory, and multimedia representations to reduce barriers to print
 - CRT: Collective and collaborative learning to discuss new content, opportunities to hear and use vocabulary, and learn from peers
- UDL: Multiple means of action and expression provide options for physical action, expressive skills and fluency, and executive functions.
 - CRT: Provide opportunities for collaboration and reciprocal teaching, to increase students' oral language usage, and fluency (Doran, 2015; Piazza et al., 2015)
 - CRT: Use metacognitive strategies to change students' negative thought processes when they encounter learning challenges
- UDL: Multiple means of engagement provide options for recruiting interest, sustaining effort and persistence, and self-regulation
 - CRT: Designs assignments that allow students to construct knowledge and make meaning of their world
 - CRT: Engaged in sustained thought with critical material (p. 1211-1212)

Kieran and Anderson's (2019) table of the CRT connections to UDL "focus teachers on potential barriers within instruction, assessment, and materials rather than the view of student-centered deficits" (p. 1210). They propose that both CRT and UDL call for teachers to know their "students' strengths and abilities; backgrounds, skills, cultures, and preferences" (p. 1213) to support their individual learning needs as well as their own personal views and attitudes to maintain high expectations for their students.

Culturally Relevant Literacy Practices

Culturally relevant teaching should incorporate the cultural background of the learner and create a link between the learner's home-culture and academic setting (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 2000). Therefore, culturally relevant literacy practices are meant to take into consideration the home-culture of the learner to support academic learning as it relates to literacy. When considering what is culturally relevant, teachers should think about the intersectionality of identities they and their students encompass.

When culturally relevant literacy practices are incorporated into STEM courses, students can more easily make connections between home-culture and their academic work. As Brown et al. (2019) suggest, students in STEM courses are better able to see themselves in the coursework when they make meaningful community-to-academic connections. By making use of culturally relevant literacy practices in STEM courses, teachers can ensure their students see STEM information as accessible and relevant to their everyday lives. Consider, for instance, the success of scientists such as Neil deGrasse Tyson, who focuses on bringing science into the mainstream by ensuring it is accessible and relevant to his audience.

Additionally, teachers need to consider intersectionality when thinking about cultural relevance. Intersectionality is about acknowledging that humans have more than a single identity (Franks, et al., 2021). People's experiences in the world are shaped by the interplay between all of their identity markers, rather than being focused on a single identity marker such as race or gender. How can, for instance, a Black woman parse out what it is to be Black without also acknowledging that she is female. If she is also heterosexual, that will additionally add to her experiences in ways that would be different if she were homosexual. There is no clear way for individuals to divide themselves to see what identity markers are more, or less, essential to their experiences.

When teachers take intersectionality into account, they are better able to ensure all students feel seen and heard. Teachers can impact STEM success by ensuring that students are fully engaged because the information is relevant to their students' lived experiences. Additionally, it is important to remember that often society establishes the importance of particular identity markers (Franks, et al., 2021). Considering intersectionality within STEM can ensure students better understand the importance society places on particular markers and why other markers may be less focused on within society. It can also help students develop ideas to advance the importance they feel is missing in regard to particular identity markers they would like to bring forward as also important to their identities. In this way, considering intersectionality allows teachers to foster students' ability to advocate for themselves.

Specifically, in STEM courses, culturally relevant literacy practices would include bringing in sources from a wide range of diverse perspectives. For instance, discussing that, in English, we use Arabic numbers to express mathematics. Students could be giving information on how that evolved and how the use of a zero came into common practice. Likewise, concepts considered European or Western in many STEM fields have their roots in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. This is because discovery of math and science concepts does not happen in a single instance; they are developed over many generations and build on ideas and understandings that came before. Teachers should also consider asking students to examine their thoughts about indigenous peoples of the Americas and Australia.

Likewise, STEM courses should consider that many advances in science and mathematics came from women and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. We have a few names that constantly get attention: Ada Lovelace, Marie Curie, Alan Turing. More recently, women of color have been included such as Katherine Johnson. However, these are hardly the only names students should know. Additionally, there is the issue of including STEM field achievements and contributions made by people with disabilities. Most people will know the name Stephen Hawking, but is he the only person with a disability who has contributed to STEM? There is a lack of role models for people with disabilities in STEM fields (Daehn & Croxson, 2021). This lack of role models further hinders their ability to enter the workforce due to employers' lack understanding for what people with disabilities need. Enhancing STEM instruction for students in special populations so there is diversity in the STEM workforce is a critical need (Guzman-Orth et al. 2021).

Finally, STEM courses should look to contributions made by diverse people that are not necessarily famous for anything specific. Students need to see every-day STEM specialists who represent a wide range of diverse perspectives including people from many races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, abilities, and other groups. Students should be provided with examples of people who look and experience the world in similar ways to themselves can be a part of the STEM community.

For example, a summer camp experience called Hackability Camp is for high school students who are wheelchair users but also interested in technology. The two lead instructors of the camp work in the technology industry as web developers and have used wheelchairs since childhood. These instructors

were the first wheelchair users in their workplace – modeling and mentoring students like Daehn and Croxson (2021) suggested it was needed. Topics are similar to other STEM camps with 3D modeling, 3D printing, web development, coding, and other STEM activities. However, this camp additionally had sessions focused on hacking the wheelchair with 3D modeling and printing, computer accessibility with alternative input devices, and sessions from the state department of rehabilitation for parents and students for post secondary support. These activities not only accommodated for student disabilities but also were attuned to students' backgrounds in what their computer set-ups were and let them be the creators of what they needed. This shifts the focus from a deficit-based approach to emphasizing an asset-based perspective (Daehn & Croxson, 2021; Guzman-Orth et al., 2021). The two lead instructors were present for all accessibility portions as well as the web development portions of the camp.

UDL and Support for Academic Achievement

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that ensures classroom content is accessible to all students (Franks, et al., 2021). While UDL is most often associated with special education, it is important to remember that good universal design supports the academic achievement and inclusion of all learners in the classroom.

According to the Edyburn (2010), the ten propositions for new directions for UDL after a decade of research since 2000 are:

1. *Universal design in education is fundamentally different from universal design in the built environment.* The suggestion in 2010 was to shift from focusing on the original seven principles of Universal Design in architecture to “complex interactions between learning objectives, learner characteristics, performance support strategies, technology, and outcome” (p. 36).
2. *UDL is fundamentally about proactively valuing diversity.* The observation in 2010 was that school personnel were claiming to be implementing UDL by using technology without understanding student diverse backgrounds and needs. The suggestion was to shift towards considering student input for accessibility and usability needs of all students.
3. *UDL is ultimately about design.* This statement is based on the observation that “UDL is about design. Design is fundamentally about problem solving” and then asserted that “instructional design is about the efficacy of learning” (p. 37). The observation from this is that school personnel are using technology as the delivery system. The suggestion was to pose the question of whether or not teachers can “function effectively as instructional designers” (p. 37) given the daily demands of a teacher.
4. *UDL is not just good teaching.* Good teaching rests on historical measures of success for specific target populations of students while potentially negating contributions and needs of a boarder diverse population of students. The suggestion for shift is to leave the “just good teaching” phrase out of discussions of UDL as it promotes the status quo and hinders change.
5. *UDL does not occur naturally.* To address the idea that teachers are already using UDL principles without knowing it, they suggested a shift is to recognize that UDL needs to be learned prior to assessing whether or not it is integrated in the classroom.
6. *Technology is essential for implementing UDL.* Widely observed school tradition at the tie is that although technology can be beneficial, not all students need to access it. The shift that is needed is that technology needs to be seen as essential for all students. This was realized in 2020 during

the pandemic when there was a pivot to online instruction and suddenly all students needed to be on computers.

7. *UDL is not assistive technology.* Although due to the original of UDL in architecture to make spaces for accessible for people with disabilities, and UDL has been associated with learning design for students with disabilities; just because a student needs assistive technology and is given that assistive technology, it does not mean that the learning experience now follows UDL.
8. *It is necessary to measure the primary and secondary impact of UDL.* The primary impact of UDL would be desired gains for the target audience, like students with fine motor disabilities using Computer Aided Design (CAD) to create 3D modeled and printed objects instead of manipulating objects like the other students to show spatial ability. The secondary impact would be if the teacher eventually had all students use CAD to create something in class and the other students who were not the target audience used what could be considered the assistive technology for the target audience.
9. *Claims of UDL must be evaluated on the basis of enhanced student performance.* Evaluating based on student performance negates other benefits UDL provides for students like providing accommodations that benefits the entire class, actively engaging and keeping the engagement of students, and supporting the process of deep learning.
10. *UDL is much more complex than we originally thought.* UDL at its initial transition from architectural roots to learning for the classroom seemed simple. Edyburn suggested that in the second decade of research on UDL be based on knowledge for teaching and learning.

As stated in the above ten propositions from Edyburn (2010), UDL is about providing enhanced learning experiences to meet the needs of all students. CAST (2018) provides a clear UDL framework for educators focused on engagement, representation, and action or expression. Engagement is directly tied to motivating students and finding ways to interest them in the learning in ways that build sustained effort and persistence so that students develop an internalized pattern of self-regulation. Representation focuses on ensuring multisensory ways of engaging in materials to enhance comprehension. Finally, students should be given multiple ways to express their understanding and use the material presented in ways that enhance the learner's understanding of goal-setting and strategic planning.

UDL in the classroom is not about adding assistive technologies or, in fact, adding any one thing. It is about reimagining what education in the classroom should look like and how it should impact the experiences of all students. While this is true for all content areas, the present discussion is focused specifically on the application of UDL in STEM. By ensuring STEM content is accessible and courses are focused on lessons that enhance student understanding and engagement, teachers can be sure that all students in the classroom have access in a meaningful way. This includes things like ensuring the classroom or learning environment is accessible for students who are able bodied or who have various physical disabilities. It also means that information should be presented in multiple ways so all students are able to comprehend the information in ways that foster understanding for a wide range of neurodiverse learners.

As with culturally relevant literacy practices, the importance here is to ensure students feel seen and understand they are an integral part of the STEM experience. This includes the learning process and the creating process. Often activities that include students with disabilities make the activity specifically about helping the student with disabilities, like the object of the activity, rather than an integral process of the activity just like the other students are. Specifically, in STEM courses, UDL would include student centered pedagogy like content rich activities with multiple points of entry to the activity and assessments

aligned to content standards. For example, multiple points of entry would be like in Algebra 1 where students are introduced to the concept of solving systems of equations with only integers and then adding complexity like decimals and fractions later once students understood the concept. An example of assessments aligned to content standards would be an activity where students create a physical diorama of an ecosystem and students getting graded on the plant and animal life in that ecosystem and not the quality of the diorama. In addition, 3D modeling and 3D printing can allow for students who cannot create these physical dioramas by hand to create them in other ways that cater to their needs.

STEM Motivation

Students who can see themselves as producers of STEM information are more likely to be motivated in STEM coursework and to continue in STEM fields (Franks & Capraro, 2019). In fact, Franks and Capraro (2019) show that highly motivated and successful STEM students often have a self-concept based in seeing science as an integral part of who they are. This suggests that teachers who wish to foster learning in STEM courses should make its relevance to students' lives outside of the classroom clear. In this way, STEM motivation and culturally relevant practices are tied together so that the intersectionality between the two components cannot easily be detangled. Motivation in STEM requires that students see the coursework as more than just assignments for a class. Those assignments must connect to the students' lives outside the classroom.

Motivation tied to STEM, in particular, should focus on engaging students with content in ways that are creative while also teaching skills, concepts, and meeting state specific standards. Two ways this can be achieved are through the use of project-based (Demmick, 2012) and problem-based instruction and learning. Within mathematics and science teacher preparation, project-based and problem-based instruction are how the teacher sets up for classroom instruction, and project-based and problem-based learning centers the instruction based on students' diverse needs for learning (Bell, 2010). Projects build over time in a classroom often culminating in assessments like portfolios to showcase student learning (Bell, 2010). Alternatively, problem-based learning involves engaging content-rich authentic problems for students to solve. These problems can take more than a class period to solve, like a problem of the week, but are not as involved as a project.

Teachers should also encourage autonomous choices in how to engage in the learning process; this does not mean that students need no boundaries. Limited autonomy, or limiting the number of options available to students, can be beneficial in allowing teachers to target specific content and skills while also allowing students to feel like they have say in the process. For example, providing students with a prompt that asks them to solve a problem, but limiting their options to creating thermoformed structures would be a good example of limiting autonomy while still providing students with a plethora of options in how to solve the problem. This allows the teacher to focus on a specific technique or machine and gives students practice on that one technique or machine.

Motivation is about giving students an engaging and fun experience designed to teach but also to ensure students have the ability to be successful. Learners typically do not stick with subjects when they feel they are not able to be successful in those classes or with that content. Specifically, in STEM courses, UDL would include activities that build in opportunities to celebrate success for students to build their self-efficacy and content-based activities with attention to multiple levels of complexity.

While many educators focus on the need to ensure students are willing and able to work through tough material and use terms like "grit" to explain the concept of endurance, there are a few inherent

issues with the idea (Christopoulou et al., 2018). The problem with “grit” is that many students have plenty of endurance to struggle through difficult situations, but humans can only take on so much at one time. The concept of “grit” implies that students do not have difficult situations outside of school, specifically STEM content area courses, that they are managing. Students struggling with life situations are often asked to overextend their ability to work through difficulties by an educational system that assumes school and learning are the only concerns students face.

Literature on diversity in STEM often points to lack of representation for racial diversity. Further investigation into representation of racial diversity leads to literature on achievement gaps. Although STEM achievement gaps persist in literature before Flores’ (2007) article on the need to shift the conversation from achievement gap to opportunity gap, equally many still focus on the achievement gap since 2007. Uniform measures of achievement rarely measure content area mastery and are often measure of a students’ ability to answer the question that determines their achievement level. Students who have had more opportunities to learn show higher levels of achievement and therefore are perceived to be more capable. This manner of examining achievement gaps without taking into consideration opportunity gaps highlights “deficit models to ‘explain’ low performance in terms of factors such as cultural differences, poverty, low levels of parental education, and so on” (Flores, 2007, p. 40). “African American and Latino students are less likely than White students to have teachers who emphasize high quality mathematics instruction, and appropriate use of resources” (Flores, 2007, p. 32). Teachers of students of color generally have lower expectations of them and would not use all the resources available, including technology. STEM engagement and motivation requires that teachers meet students where they are with their content understanding to help them grow in content knowledge (Hill, et al. 2008), give students opportunities to experience success to build belongingness in STEM (Hoffman et al. 2020), and engage students in content-rich meaningful tasks. To reach all students, all their diverse needs and backgrounds need to be considered through Culturally Relevant Literacy Practices, Universal Design for Learning, and STEM Motivation best practices.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN THE CLASSROOM

In the classroom, teachers who focus on culturally relevant literacy practices (Brown et al., 2019; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002), UDL to support academic achievement (CAST, 2018; Edyburn, 2010), and STEM motivation (Hoffman, et al. 2020, Hill, et al., 2008) have the potential to foster a true connection to the content of their courses that enables students to see themselves and their communities as agents of knowledge. However, examples of what this looks like in the classroom may be difficult for teachers, especially when addressing content standards is the primary concern. When students feel connected and engaged with the course material being covered, their grades and ultimately scores for mathematics and science improves (Watt, et al., 2019). This section provides examples of an elementary and middle school activity that is aligned to content standards illustrating culturally relevant practices, UDL to support student achievement, and STEM motivation.

For instance, teachers who take a Maker Approach to teaching STEM content can incorporate culturally relevant literacy practices that lead to enhanced buy-in from students. By creating lesson plans using the UDL framework, these teachers can ensure all learners have access to the activities and information. Finally, by fully engaging students in the process of creating projects in Maker agency, students can

begin to see themselves as active participants within STEM fields, and this will lead to more motivation within STEM courses (Lindstrom, et al., 2017).

Making is “a class of activities focused on designing, building, modifying, and/or repurposing material objects, for playful or useful ends, oriented toward making a ‘product’ of some sort that can be used, interacted with, or demonstrated” (Martin, 2015, p. 31). The disconnect between industries behind the Maker Movement and teachers in the classroom is that some teachers already use Making as a way for students to learn but may not use the term “Making”. Even though research on Making in education is relatively new, it is based on a well-established theory in education known as constructivism. In the early 20th century, two notable proponents of children building and making as a part of their learning process were John Dewey and Maria Montessori (Martin, 2015). The constructivist approach to learning became less popular as computers were introduced into the classroom and high stakes testing became key to accreditation for schools (Becker & Riel, 2000). In recent years, however, many educators have realized that students need to interact with the physical world to become better critical thinkers and problem solvers. The rise of the Maker Movement which combines digital creation with the corresponding physical object has fostered a natural reintroduction of constructivist education principles into the classroom.

An elementary school example of this in the classroom would be for a teacher to address 5th grade fraction multiplication and division in problem solving, students bring a recipe from home and students complete the mathematical task of either scaling up or down the ingredients in the recipe based on the number of students in the class. This is an example of a multiple entry activity where students can choose measurements that avoid fractions or decimals if the recipe is big enough. Teachers then can take those students that avoided fractions or decimals into extension activities where fractions and decimals are addressed. As an extension to this activity, teachers can lead students to use different systems of measurement that they did not use in the recipe such as conventional to metric or vice versa. Even with the extension activity, this is an example of a problem-based activity where it can span several days but touches on a few core content concepts (Dimmick, 2012). This is a culturally relevant literacy practice as students bring recipes from home. This celebrates the diversity within a class even if students are from a similar region there is still diversity in how things are made.

A middle school example of this in the classroom would be engineering a floating boat activity addressing sixth through eighth grade science standards. The original activity involves students creating a boat out of a sheet of aluminum foil and testing how much weight, usually marbles, it can hold before sinking. Students have multiple opportunities to test and improve upon the design. This activity, therefore, provides multiple opportunities to learn and points of entry depending on student previous knowledge about this engineering task. In addition, with 3D modeling and printing and a thermoforming machine, this activity can be transformed to include students with fine motor difficulties to modify so that the engineering mindset is not assessed on a students’ ability to physically manipulate a piece of aluminum foil. Students writing in their engineering journal can keep track of their various iterations, and if photos are allowed, students are not limited by their drawing capabilities to capture what each iteration of the boat design looked like. The freedom at the beginning to approach the problem from different perspectives paired with the teacher’s ability to facilitate meaningful discourse will be crucial to incorporating UDL (CAST, 2018; Edyburn, 2010) and CRT principles (Brown et al., 2019; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002). This would be an example of a project-based (Demmick, 2012; Bell, 2010) learning activity where it starts simple but can build to multiple days with multiple iterations of design, build, test, reflect, modify and repeat. With the added change from pandemic teaching, this activity can

be conducted remotely where students 3D model on their computers and submit the designs to teachers electronically, or even in person but minimizing common touch surfaces.

CONCLUSION

When teachers focus attention on culturally relevant literacy practices, UDL to support academic achievement, and STEM motivation, they can ensure their students see themselves as essential parts of the STEM community. Students need to see how STEM courses are relevant to their lives outside the classroom. By utilizing the framework described above, STEM educators can work to ensure more diversity in STEM fields. The more diversity of students who see themselves as agents of knowledge within STEM education, the more likely it is that an increase of diverse learners will continue into STEM fields in the future.

Diversity in STEM should be expanded beyond the common gender gap narrative and focus on race (Alfred et al., 2019) to include more conversations about the intersectionality between race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and disability. While people with disabilities have been largely overlooked in the research related to diversity in STEM (Hawley et al., 2013), the time has come for attention to be given to this demographic. In fact, disability is one demographic that, while often overlooked in research in many fields, any person can become a member of at any point. Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic has ensured that educators and industries are prepared to create working environments that can accommodate a wide range of workers.

Additionally, as researchers consider diversity in STEM, the focus on “grit,” or endurance, (Christopoulou et al., 2018) should be minimized. Understanding that many students are extremely capable of enduring challenges also should include understanding that many students are already facing an abundance of challenges outside the classroom. Students who are primary caregivers to younger siblings, who are hungry, who are working to help support families, who are worried about where they will sleep, or who are worried about if they will be safe from danger do not need the additional strain of proving to teachers they are willing and able to endure. In fact, no students who are willing to learn need to prove themselves by displaying “grit.”

Similarly, students with disabilities should not be dissuaded from attempting STEM coursework. If STEM fields are about innovation and improving lives, why would it be acceptable to exclude students with disabilities from STEM activities? It is time for educators to acknowledge all learners have a place within the STEM classroom. When instruction is focused on engagement, representation, and action or expression (CAST, 2018), UDL guidelines ensure all students will be welcome and provided with engaging interactions to help make learning manageable, relevant, and enlightening.

Finally, it is essential that educators be provided with opportunities to grow their understanding of the three components: culturally relevant literacy practices, UDL to support academic achievement, and STEM motivation. It is also important that educators be provided clear examples of research-based classroom activities that incorporate STEM knowledge in a variety of ways. Educators should be encouraged to take part in summer enrichment programs, professional development seminars, and maker space events to ensure they are exposed to the most current information about engaging students in STEM environments. Seeking partnerships with local maker spaces and universities should be encouraged by district administrators. In building strong partnerships, educators, industry leaders, and researchers can develop ways to ensure all students develop an appreciation and knowledge base for STEM.

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Section 4

Preservice and Practicing Educator Development

Chapter 13

The Intersection of Disciplinary Literacy, Academic Engagement, and Teaching Diverse Students: Uncertainties of New Alternative Certification Educators

Larkin Page

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3131-4697>

Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the understandings of informational text of new, in-service, alternatively certified seeking educators, as they teach and engage their students. It is significant to grasp what these teachers knew about informational text, specifically the characteristics, structures, purpose, and types, as well as if these teachers were comfortable using informational text as a teaching resource and what reading comprehension strategies were used with informational text in their classrooms. This study offers implications for these teachers, alternative certification program improvement, and the instructors/professors teaching disciplinary literacy in alternative certification programs.

INTRODUCTION

Alternative certification seeking educators can be challenged with the instruction of disciplinary literacy, including effective academic engagement with the culturally diverse students they teach. As novice teachers, many do not always fully grasp that pedagogy across disciplines and grade levels should include relevant, effective informational text to assist students gain greater depth of academic and social understandings (Page, 2021). This gained knowledge from informational text can utilize all forms of

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch013

engaging, analyzing, examining, and evaluating through reading, speaking, listening, and writing activities (Evans, 2018; National Council of Teachers of English, 2013). These experiences can help students ascertain the multifaceted content knowledge appropriate to a specific discipline. Informational text discernments can expand people's learnedness of the people, situations, and society around them and provide the skills for accomplishment in the progressing world (Ness, 2011). Guaranteeing students gain applicable connections with informational text across all disciplines can contribute to these skills. Yet, for some educators, informational text pedagogy and student engagement actions may be easier said than done. Teachers should have effective pedagogy and resourceful academic engagement to assist students gain this knowledge. Teachers must know and use effectual disciplinary literacy instructional techniques, strategies, and activities (Page, 2021). Shanahan and Shanahan (2012) indicate disciplinary literacy includes advanced literacy instruction embedded within content-area classes such as math, science, and social studies. This instruction, including reading comprehension strategies, is paramount for teachers to know and use with their students. This teaching approach is germane as student populations come to classrooms with differing racial/ethnic, cultural, linguistic, economic, and learning style backgrounds and experiences. New teachers, especially those that have changed careers to become educators, may have limited proficiencies to effectively institute this instruction to enhance student knowledge of informational text.

This study offers data from new, in-service, alternatively certified seeking educators and their knowledge of informational text, specifically characteristics, structures, purpose, and types. Data also reveals teachers' comfort level using informational text as a teaching resource as well as reading comprehension strategies used with informational text in their classrooms. The data has implications for educational stakeholders, particularly alternatively certified seeking educators, instructors/professors in alternative certification programs, and those that assist these teachers within the schools they teach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is assumed that teachers understand the attributes of disciplinary literacy across the content being taught in their classrooms. Correlated to this understanding is effective instruction and active engagement with students. This intersection can be challenging especially as educators are faced with incorporating informational text (Hoffman, et al., 2015; Ness, 2011). Informational text is found across state education standards and is a foundational resource within content area disciplines among grade levels. Many educators, including new, in-service, alternatively certified seeking educators, can labor when asked to offer an informational text explanation, that can comprise structures, purposes, and types and what reading comprehension strategies to teach with informational text (Ness, 2011; Page, 2021).

Alternative Certified Educators

Teacher Certification Degrees (2022) state that as alternative routes to teaching certification have become more popular, all states and the District of Columbia have developed various types of alternative certification programs. These programs offer those who have not taken the traditional path of education coursework the prospect to successfully intersect the required educator standards and licenses to teach. The typical alternative route to teaching includes that each person must have the prerequisite of a bachelor's degree, as well as complete an approved teacher preparation program, which is often approved and

overseen by state education agencies. These teacher preparation programs are an accelerated route to teaching for the individual and can be completed in one to two years, depending on the program. Many of these programs also grant a transitional or provisional teaching certificate. This certificate enables individuals to teach while simultaneously completing their teacher preparation program. These programs likewise can lead to a post-graduate teaching certificate(s) or a master's degree.

According to data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2018) in 2015-2016 approximately 18% of teachers earned their teaching license through an alternative certification program. In their most recent report which collected data on the 2017-2018 school year, NCES (2021) provided that the percentage of public middle and high school mathematics, natural science, and other teachers who entered teaching through an alternative certification program included 23.5% of math teachers, 30.1% teach the natural sciences, and 22.4% teach other disciplines

Reading Assessment Data

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2020), the average reading score for twelfth-grade students was lower in 2019 compared to the last assessment in 2015. The 2019 average reading score for twelfth-grade students was lower than the 2009 reading scores, was not significantly different from 2002 reading scores, and was lower in scores than in 1992 reading scores, which was the first assessment year of NAEP. This NAEP data also indicated there was a higher percentage of twelfth-grade students below the *NAEP Basic Level* as compared to 2015. According to the NAEP (2019), there are three achievement levels which are performance-standards based and depict what content students should know and be able to apply. The achievement levels are *NAEP Basic*, *NAEP Proficient*, and *NAEP Advanced*. For students to receive a proficient level on NAEP, each assessment must exhibit sound academic proficiency of subject matter. Specifically, compared to the first reading assessment given in 1992, the average 2019 reading scores at twelfth-grade were lower for several student groups. The NAEP (2021b) provides that the 2019 scores decreased for White and Black students, male and female students, public school students, and students across parental education levels. Falling scores for these student groups were mostly among lower-performing twelfth-graders at the 10th and 25th percentiles.

NAEP (2020b) reading assessments for fourth-grade and eighth-grade students in 2017 and 2019 had lower reading scores at both grades than in previous years. Based on these same scores, the NAEP noted it was troubling that approximately one-third of students in fourth and eighth grades reported that they *definitely can* explain the meaning of something they have read and about another one-third of students in fourth and eighth grades reported they *can probably* explain the meaning of something they have read. On an affirmative note, these students were also asked about their confidence in doing a variety of reading-related tasks and a larger percentage of higher-performing students reported more confidence in their ability to do reading-related tasks compared to lower-performing students.

According to NAEP (2020) an estimated 37% of twelfth-grade students were equipped, including knowledge and skills, for college in reading success, based on research funded by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). Beginning in 2008 the NAGB became a NAEP sponsored research program. The NAGB examined the potential of NAEP at twelfth-grade to function as a gage of scholastic preparedness for college. NAGB indicated students who were considered ready for college were expected to be academically prepared for entry-level college coursework, without the need for remedial courses (NAEP, 2020). Venezia and Jaeger (2013) denoted educational stakeholders, including education

policy makers and school reformers, used NAEP information to promote improved pedagogy especially as students moved from twelfth-grade to attend college or begin careers.

Disciplinary Literacy

NAEP scores are often viewed as a reflection of educational success for the United States (Center for Education Reform, 2018). Contributing to this success can include national and state education standards, teacher recruitment and training, classroom instruction, and student scores on state and national assessments, including NAEP. In the context of national and state standards, a more focused approach to the rigorous examinations of complex text found in content disciplines has occurred. Within the standards these explorations are often literacy-based and can include teaching students to:

- Locate, integrate, and analyze the meaning and the form of text
- Provide complete, explicit, and precise text support for analyses with specific examples that could include inferences, interpretative statements, and comparisons within and across texts
- Read across multiple texts for a variety of purposes (NAEP, 2020a).

The intersection of national and state standards that promote of disciplinary literacy skills and reading achievement scores, such as NAEP, have steered many exchanges between educational stakeholders about how to advance student success across disciplines (Draper & Siebert, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

Disciplinary literacy has been defined as the use of reading, reasoning, investigating, speaking, and writing required to learn and form complex content knowledge appropriate to a particular discipline (McConachie & Petrosky, 2010). The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2021) conveyed disciplinary literacy as the confluence of content knowledge, experiences, and skills merged with the ability to read, write, listen, speak, think critically, and perform in a way that is meaningful within the context of a given field. Shanahan and Shanahan (2012) indicate the goal of disciplinary literacy is to discover the germane reading and writing characteristics within the disciplines. This goal can be supported by educators creating instruction to assist students effectively navigate learning within disciplines.

Pedagogy and Engagement Across Disciplines with Culturally Diverse Students

Many educators create classroom instruction that fosters the development of critical thinking (Muraski, 2014). Critical thinking is a competency which is required, via national and state education standards across all disciplines. Understanding and utilizing critical thinking has the potential to benefit student's academic, professional, and personal lives (Bezanilla, et al., 2019). According to Murawski (2014), the pedagogical challenge for some teachers is to establish learning settings that stimulate critical thinking both in the classroom and beyond. Critical thinking moments provide students with opportunities to learn, experience, and reflect in powerful ways while encouraging students to ask and seek more stimulating queries at a deeper level.

Educators should be mindful that students in United States are significantly different to those from the past (Bonner, et al., 2018), as classrooms include a more diverse student population. As teachers approach instruction and student engagement, considering racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and economic signifiers of students is paramount. While many educators accomplish these variations, not all

have successfully responded to diverse student population in methods that are authentic academic and social fundamentals for a strong quality and equitable education (Nevarez, et al., 2019).

Effective instructional methods can vary to meet the needs of all students in culturally diverse classrooms. One method includes teaching that incorporates culturally diverse informational text in disciplinary instruction while encouraging students to expand their literacy encounters with these texts (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Informational text that is written by a cross section of culturally diverse authors and include the understanding of culturally diverse situations and cultures has the potential to increase interest in academic and social literacy of students, especially culturally diverse students. These actions can assist students be more culturally cognizant of their place in an evolving world.

As indicated, to empower all students as effective readers, teachers need to provide them with culturally relevant texts in which they can see themselves, relate, and engage (Ouimet, 2011). In the context of culturally relevant informational text, educators first need to enhance their knowledge of and pedagogy with these texts. This learning contributes to increasing the availability of informational texts to students while also using these texts in innovative and effective ways during instruction to improve academic engagement across content areas.

What are Informational Texts?

Alexander and Jarman (2018) denote, there are two types of texts, fiction and non-fiction. Fiction is narrative literature that is invented or imagined, often referred to as a made-up story. Nonfiction is a type of literature offering opinions or conjectures in the context of facts and reality. There are several subcategories of fiction and nonfiction. Informational text is one of these subcategories of nonfiction (Common Core State Standards, 2010; Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). Informational text understandings, skills, and experiences have the potential to broaden people's erudition of the world and provide analytical skills necessary for success in the constant evolving information age (Wright, 2014). Ensuring students gain effective interactions with informational text across all disciplines can contribute to these attainments.

What are the Types of Informational Text?

Texts are divided into two categories: fiction and nonfiction (Klvacek, et al., 2019). Within fiction and nonfiction there are differing types. Some nonfiction types in the field of education are referenced as *non-fiction*, *expository*, *explanatory*, and *informational text*. Within disciplinary texts, articles and curriculums, the types are often used interchangeably. The texts provide facts and information, explanations, and why or how things happen. They are purposeful and intended to educate.

Depending on sources referenced, informational texts also vary (Beth & Bonner, 2013). Informational texts include nonfiction books, newspapers, magazines, atlases, and other reference materials. Informational texts also can also include newspaper and magazine articles, digital information, nonfiction trade books, textbooks, and reference materials. The National Assessment of Educational Progress 2009 Framework (2008) includes expository text, persuasive text, and procedural text as informational text. Common Core State Standards (2010) designate literary nonfiction, expository, argument or persuasion, and procedural as informational texts. As indicated the numerous types and names can be perplexing to educators and especially new, in-service alternative certification teachers as they interact with curriculums, textbooks, and research articles.

Informational Text Instructional Strategies and Instructional Activities

Informational texts can be strong resources in classrooms leading to enhance student success, but if not employed more and with greater purpose, students can suffer in subsequent grades, career, and life (White, 2016). Efforts to increase informational text interactions require teachers to appreciate and use informational text instructional strategies and activities to enhance student experiences and understandings. There are a multitude of reading comprehension strategies and activities that can be employed. Reading comprehension strategy examples include, but are not limited to, ascertaining text structure, activating prior knowledge, thinking aloud, re-reading, understanding text features, monitoring comprehension, paraphrasing, retelling, evaluating, summarizing, synthesizing, and using graphic organizers (Hedin & Condermam, 2011; Liebfreund, 2015; Oczkus, 2014; White, 2016). In the context of using reading comprehension strategies with informational text, teachers should also engross students in pertinent, appealing activities to assist in learning and application of the depth of knowledge gained. These learned skills can expand a student's understanding of society and further the skills necessary for success beyond a school-based setting.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a qualitative approach including triangulated data of an open-ended questionnaire from participants identified as new in-service alternatively certified seeking educators in their first year of teaching disciplines across grades (kindergarten-twelfth). The educators worked in a large metropolitan area in the southern United States. Interviews were audio-taped from 10% of randomly selected participants, which was six educators. Research questions guiding this study included: (1) What are informational text, including what are the characteristics, structures, and purpose? (2) What are the various types of informational text? (3) Are you comfortable using informational text as a teaching resource in your classroom? Why or why not? (4) What reading comprehension strategies do you use with informational text in your classroom?

The sixty participants were a convenience sample and included new in-service alternative certification seeking educators in their first or second year of teaching in kindergarten-twelfth grade public school settings. Each participant sought a Master of Teaching graduate degree at a private university setting. The questionnaire was given in a graduate foundational reading course to those that agreed to participate. This course was the first of four graduate reading courses taken as the alternative certified students pursue their degree. Six students, which was 10% of participants, had one open-ended interview with researcher one-two weeks after the questionnaire. The researcher began each interview with a set of basic interview questions to initially guide the interview, but also realized participant answers would steer additional questions to garner in-depth understandings. These interviews were recorded. Interviewer notes were taken. Characteristics of the six interview participants are listed in Table 1.

The specific data analysis process of the questionnaires, recorded interviews, and notes taken by interviewer included the creation of a coding system to assign units of meaning to the information compiled. Data from open ended questionnaires offered insight into how the participants understood and used informational text. Each of the six interviews generated data through open-ended questions which allowed participants to discuss in depth knowledge and the use of informational texts in their classrooms. During each taped interview the researcher took notes documenting visual dynamics of interviewees that

Table 1. Six interview participants

	Of the 2-Year Alternative Certification program, what year are you in?	Gender	Age	Prior career before being accepted into Alternative Certification Program	Grade(s) Level Taught	Discipline(s)/Content Area(s) Taught
Interview Participant One	First Year	Female	25	Social Services	2 nd grade	Self-Contained Classroom (Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies)
Interview Participant Two	First Year	Female	32	City Services	2 nd grade	Self-Contained Classroom (Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies)
Interview Participant Three	First Year	Female	26	Retail	3 rd grade	Self-Contained Classroom (Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies)
Interview Participant Four	First Year	Female	30	Social Services	4 th grade	Reading and Social Studies
Interview Participant Five	Second Year	Male	37	Education Non-Profit	9 th grade	Science
Interview Participant Six	Second Year	Female	41	Parish/County Services	7 th grade	Math and Science

may not be captured auditorily. The researcher then examined the notes, interviews and questionnaires looking for units of meaning. This process of examination included generating initial codes (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The codes grounded in data were consequential concerning the phenomenon being studied (Deterding & Waters 2021). When data was initially coded the researcher had a broad catalogue of assorted codes that were detected across the data set. The next phase involved sorting the different codes into prospective, discernable themes. Themes were analyzed, defined, and labeled to provide a clarifying description of phenomena. The descriptions lead to written documentation.

RESULTS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the understanding and usage of informational text by new in-service alternative certification seeking educators that teach disciplines across kindergarten-twelfth grades. Data from surveys and interviews indicated the educators often struggled with an informational text definition, identifying the types of informational text, and what disciplinary literacy strategies and activities to utilize in teaching the culturally diverse students in classroom. Four survey questions guided the study to determine an in-depth insight of these new educators and what was occurring in these classrooms. Six participants, which was 10% of participants, were randomly selected for a follow-up, one-on-one interview to garner additional insight to each question.

Findings from Question One are listed in Table 2.

The evidence grounded in the data collected concerning question one indicated 83% of survey respondents were (1) unable to define/explain their understanding of informational text in the context of characteristics, structures, and purpose, (2) answered somewhat correct answers were but were vague and/

Table 2.

Findings from Question One: <i>What are informational texts, including what are the characteristics, structures, and purpose?</i>	Comments from Participants
17% of participants were able to define/explain their understanding of informational text in the context of characteristics, structures, and purpose.	• “My understanding of informational text is to inform individuals with information for the purpose of gained knowledge.” • “Non-fiction text that conveys information on a real-world subject or concept.”
17% of participants were unable to define/explain their understanding of informational text in the context of characteristics, structures, and purpose.	“I have no knowledge on informational text.” “I am unfamiliar with the specifics of informational texts.” “I don’t know.”
52% of participants answered with somewhat correct information but answers were vague and/or incomplete answers.	“Informational text is non-fiction text? It should be used in all courses and there are some unique strategies associated with reading it.” “Informational text is pulling the important information out of the text. Something that informs you about a person, place, thing. How something works.”
14% of participants answered with incorrect information	“Supporting texts that complement the primary text.” “Words that give a clue to what the rest of the context may be about.”

or incomplete in answering the question, (3) or signified incorrect information to the question. Examples of information written on surveys are listed in Figure 2. The high percentage of study participants that struggled with a definition of informational text including characteristics, structures, and purpose can serve as valuable insight. The follow-up interview with each of the six teachers validated these findings.

Interview Participant One and Five each indicated in their interview they did not fully know what informational texts were and had not heard the phrase informational text. Interview Participant Two indicated she was embarrassed that she left the answer blank on the survey but has since “looked up some information on Google because she should have known.” Interview Participant Three shared she “guessed the answer to the first question and figured it was wrong, especially since it asked about the characteristics.” Interview Participant Four stated the survey “caught me off-guard and did not answer any of the questions about informational text. because I did not know anything what was being asked.” Interview Participant Six declared she “remembers reading about informational text in the curriculum” that she did not know what the texts were initially but asked her mentor teacher about these texts and how they are used in the social studies curriculum and with students. She specified her mentor teacher helped her understand informational text addressed on the science state standards, at a deeper level.

Findings from Question Two are listed in Table 3

Survey data collected from question two indicated a majority of participants were unable to give or missed one or more answers to the question. During the interviews, the participants offered greater insight into the answers offered to question two. Interviewees One, Two, and Five revealed as they did not know what information texts were, as asked on Question One, they guessed or left the question blank on Question Two. Interview Participant Two indicated she “now knows what information texts are, because I went and looked it up after the form we filled out” and verbally listed “newspapers, textbooks,

Table 3.

Findings from Question Two: <i>What are the various types of informational text?</i>	Comments from Participants
43% of participants were able to give one or more answers to the question.	“Books used in coursework-biology book on microbiology. Public health notice or article about a current outbreak.” “Textbooks, Educational Website, Newspaper articles, Journal Articles, ReadingRockets.com, Educational Psych Today, NY Times, Classroom Management book”
57% of participants were unable to give or missed one or more answers to the question	“Fiction, Non-Fiction, Fables” “I have no idea.” “IDK [I don’t know]” “???” “Words, books, websites, search engines, or prefixes and suffixes”

curriculums, websites like CNN.” Interview Participant Three shared that she once again “guessed the answers to Question Two and hoped my two answers were right.” Interviewee Four indicated she did not answer any of the questions on the survey. The researcher asked the interviewee a subsequent question to garner more information. When asked “Why didn’t you answer anything on the survey? The teacher signified she was extremely overwhelmed with teaching all day and coming to courses at night, all the while being expected to be an effective teacher. She indicated she “sometimes feels so frustrated” and “shuts down.” She went on to say, “Not knowing the answers on the questionnaire you gave us made me once again wonder, as I do every day, if I am in the right job.” Interview Participant Four stated, “There is so much to learn; I want to be a good teacher, but there is so much to learn.” Interview Participant Six affirmed, “I listed six informational text examples on the questionnaire thanks to my mentor helping me understand when I first started teaching a few weeks ago.” She expressed, “Although while new to teaching, I try to specifically use current informational texts several times a week. These texts are everywhere in the standards we have to teach, and I like to supplement my science curriculum with them.”

Findings from Question Three are listed in Table 4

The survey data collected concerning question three revealed 96% of survey participants indicated they were not sure, left this question blank, or specified a yes answer but gave vague and/or incomplete answer. This high percentage offered insight into the discomfort level of these teachers with informational text. Based on survey comments from participants, it is evident many lacked a comprehensive understanding of informational text which, they revealed, influenced their comfort. Interviews with participants also signaled this discomfort negatively influenced the teacher’s usage of informational text in their classrooms.

Interview Participant One was asked during the interview about their comfort level using informational text in their classroom. She stated, “As I don’t really know what these texts are, I am not sure if I am uncomfortable or not. I figure when I figure it out, I will be good.” A follow up question was queried concerning what instruction with informational text, per the state standards, would be accomplished in the time between now and when the teacher does learn more about the text. Participant One answered, “I’m trying my best, but I don’t know.” Interview Participant Two stated, “Now that I went and researched what informational texts are I would answer that question differently. It’s interesting. Now that I know what they are I am realizing how many informational texts are out there. I had just never thought about different types of texts. I guess I knew this in school but forgot. I’m ready to use them in my class more.” When asked about their comfort level in using informational text with their students Interviewee Three

Table 4.

Findings from Question Three: <i>Are you comfortable using informational text as a teaching resource in your classroom? Why or why not?</i>	Comments from Participants
4% of participants indicate “yes” and give explicit and correct information to why or why not	“Yes. Many students are curious about specific things. Finding informational texts on their reading level about things they want to know more about increases student engagement.”
39% of participants indicate “I am not sure.” or left this question blank	“I am unsure.” “Unsure. Depends on situation.” “I’m not sure what exactly is informational text, I am just taking a guess; With that being said, no I am not comfortable.”
57% of participants indicate “yes” but gives vague and/or incomplete answers	“Yes, because it contains information but I’m not sure how to use different forms. Never used in my classroom.” “I think so. I’m not exactly sure what it is in it’s entirety.” “I am when the text is on grade level reading. Any kind of text can be used as a text as a tool to further the reading of students.”

stated, “I don’t feel comfortable at all, because there is more I feel I have to learn.” She went on to say, “I do think I remember seeing the term (informational text) in my curriculum or something at work but I skimmed over it because I didn’t know what it was.” As Interview Participant Four indicated she left her survey blank she asserted in her interview, “I just follow my curriculum and assume it is right. Our school is very focused on making sure we get everything covered by the end of the week. We cannot fall behind. So, I just do what they tell me.” When questioned about her effective instruction and engagement with students she declared, “I assume my teaching is good because I am trying to follow the curriculum. The curriculum is ‘word for word’ and I read it to the kids. I do the stories in the curriculum.” The researcher probed, “When you work with the text in your curriculum how do you help students understand the difference in types of text?” She answered, “I really just follow my curriculum. I don’t do anything different. They (school administration) are always on us to use the curriculum, follow it, stay on schedule. After a moment the interviewee looked at the interviewer and stated, “I just read what the curriculum says. If it talks about different texts, I read that to the kids.”

Interviewee Five, again during his interview, verified he left this answer blank on the survey. The researcher asked why he did not answer. The teacher discussed his lack of knowledge about informational text. He stated, “I teach middle school science and don’t know where to use informational text in my class. I assume it is text that offers information and I guess some of the stuff I use in my classes is informational and what you are asking about.” He went on to say, “I get some guidance with my textbook and lesson plans from my mentor. I guess what I am doing is class is ok.” A subsequent question from the researcher included, “Are you comfortable using the texts in your science textbook with your students and ensuring your students fully understand these texts?” “Yes, I am comfortable. Either I read aloud to the students about the topics in the textbook or have them read the stories. Sometimes I let the students work together, read the stories, and do their assignments.”

Interview Participant Six affirmed, “I know informational text is used a lot in upper grades and is on the VESTA test (pseudonym for state mandated assessment) so I try to find extra non-fiction books and articles beyond the curriculum. I supplement my science with a lot of informational texts. I don’t do it nearly as much with my math lessons.” A subsequent question from the researcher included, “Why

Table 5.

Findings from Question Four: <i>What reading comprehension strategies do you use with informational text in your classroom?</i>	Examples of Reading Comprehension Strategies from Participants
• 48% of participants offer no strategy used	
• 26% of participants offer one strategy used	Determine Main Idea, Determine Supporting Details, Sequence Text, Make Predictions, Read Aloud (to teacher or peer), Use Context Clues, Construct Meaning by Visualization
• 4% of participants offer two strategies used	Determine Main Idea, Determine Supporting Details, Make Predictions, Utilize Prior Knowledge, Re-read, Use Context Clues,
• 9% of participants offer three strategies used	Determine Main Idea, Determine Supporting Details, Utilize Prior Knowledge, Analyze Text, Re-read, Use Context Clues,
• 0% of participants offer four strategies used	
• 13% of participants offer five or more strategies used	Discover Text Features, Make Connections to Text (Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World), Make Predictions, Ascertain Purpose of Text, Uncover Cause and Effect, Underline and/or Highlight Important Information, Re-read, Paraphrase Text, Chunk Text to Annotate and/or Summarize, Use Context Clues, Ask Questions to Self about Text to Clarify Understanding, Make Inferences, Synthesize Information, and Create Annotated Notes for Entire Text

don't you use more informative texts with Math?" The Interviewee stated, "I never thought of using them with Math, plus our curriculum doesn't give much of a chance deviate from what is expected. But now that you have asked about it, I could use more informational texts, especially with word problems."

Findings from Question Four are listed in Table 5

Data from the survey indicated, 48% of participants offered no strategy usage. Additional data revealed only 13% of participants used four or more reading comprehension strategies as they teach students to interact with informational text in the classroom. This low percentage can provide awareness of the challenges teachers face as they attempt to move students forward in grasping and efficaciously using informational texts to garner knowledge.

As revealed on the survey, the various reading comprehension strategies used in the classroom to assist students to understand informational text include: determine text features, main idea, and supporting details, make connections that include text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world, utilize prior knowledge, make predictions, analyze information in text, sequence text, ascertain purpose of text, uncover cause and effect, read aloud to teacher or peer, underline and/or highlight important information, re-read, paraphrase text, chunk text to summarize and/or annotate, use context clues, ask questions about text to self, construct meaning by visualization make inferences, synthesize information, and create annotated notes of text.

Interview Participants One and Five revealed they struggled to complete question four because each also struggled in defining informational text. To acquire supplementary information during the interview Participant One and Participant Five were asked,

What sort of reading comprehension strategies are taught and/or used in their classroom to ensure comprehension of what is read, especially in the context of non-fiction text, keeping in mind that informational text are non-fiction texts that are used across all disciplines/content?

In her interview Participant One stated, "I have them sound out the words. I also tell them to re-read it." Participant Five in their interview explained, "I tell them to think about 'what is being said in the textbook' and to slow down their reading. I also tell them to figure out the main idea of what they are reading." An additional question asked to Participant Five by the researcher included, "What specific instruction do you offer students if they do not fully know or use reading comprehension strategies while reading, especially text that could perhaps be more difficult to understand like informational texts?" Interviewee Five responded,

As they are older I assume they should know how to understand what they read but if they don't I will help them read it or read it to them. As I said I tell them figure out the main idea and slow down.

The researcher asked Interview Participant Two, "Now that you have sought out some information on informational texts since you completed your questionnaire, would you now answer Question Four differently?" She stated,

Yes, what it made me realize is I am not really adding any informational text to my lessons or lesson plans. Learning more about the texts also made me realize I need to teach more reading strategies to help them understand what they are reading because the school tells us all the time we have to get them ready for third grade and the reading exam from the state.

She continued,

I talked to another teacher in my grade level and she told me to add more reading strategies to my lessons. She said she could help me too. I have also heard that we learn a lot about strategies in the reading courses here at Wintergreen University (pseudonym).

While Interview Participant Three admitted she struggled with questions on the survey, the researcher wanted to investigate deeper. The researcher asked, "What reading comprehension strategies do you use when you have to read an article or website for your graduate courses? Texts like articles or websites, or information in textbooks are considered Informational Text." She answered, "I guess I skim the reading. I take notes. I try not to get distracted while I read." The researcher then asked, "What specific instruction do you offer your students if they do not understand what they are reading, especially if they are reading a non-fiction text like informational text?" The participant offered, "I think about how I learned to read and I tell them to sound out the words. I also tell them to think about the characters in the story, the setting, the plot."

During the interview with Participant Four the researcher inquired, "You acknowledge that you follow your curriculum in reading and social studies. When using these curriculums are there times when reading comprehension strategies are addressed and you explicitly teach them to your students?" Interviewee Four retorted,

I don't remember seeing any in the Reading Teacher's Manual. I know there is not for Social Studies because we don't have a curriculum. We look at the standards and go from there, which makes it hard and time consuming to try to do that.

The researcher asked, “What specific instruction do you offer your students if they do not understand what they are reading, especially if they are reading a non-fiction text like informational text that can be in both Social Studies and Reading?” She answered, “I tell them to ask their partner. My mentor told me to set up partners in my class.” A follow-up question from the researcher to gather further information was asked, “What if the partner cannot effectively assist their peer, do you offer specific reading comprehension strategies to guide the student?” She indicated, “I go to the student and help them read the text. I ask them questions about what they read to see if they can figure it out. But I end up going to every student because they all want my help.”

Interview Participant Six indicated she listed “about eight strategies” on her survey. She said, “I consistently use these eight with my students as ‘foundational reading strategies’ and have them listed in my classroom for all students to reference.” She continued,

My mentor teacher helped me think about these strategies and put them on several posters as a way to help them read, but also as a way to assist with classroom management. She told me, ‘You’ve got to get the students to be in charge of their own learning because they will want you to give them the answer as long as you let them.’

The researcher asked, “Are there any other there any other reading comprehension strategies you teach your students to use, especially those that help with informational text?” Interviewee Six stated,

I try to introduce more strategies, especially for Science, but I know I don’t do it enough. I need to continue to discover more strategies to use with my students but many days I run out of time. I know that is an excuse, but it is true. I will say though that the questionnaire we filled out has encouraged me to teach more strategies because my kids do struggle with the reading and comprehending in Science.

The researcher inquired, “What about reading comprehension strategies used in Math? Are your students challenged with comprehension when they read math word problems?” Interviewee Six responded, “I’ve never thought about that. Math is so numbers driven I didn’t think about them not comprehending with word problems.”

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Conclusions and discussions for this study are based on a completed questionnaire from sixty in-service, alternative certification seeking educators that taught disciplines across kindergarten through twelfth grades, interviews with six of these teachers that were randomly chosen, and researcher notes taken during each interview. Data revealed a large number of participants frequently grappled with informational text, including the characteristics, structures, and purposes. A majority of the new, in-service teachers also struggled to distinguish between the types of informational text. A considerable number of participants revealed they wrestle to identify and teach appropriate disciplinary literacy reading comprehension strategies as they work with students using informational texts in classrooms. Relative to this struggle, many of the participants indicated a pedagogical discomfort using informational text as a teaching resource. With the disciplinary literacy challenges using informational text, conclusions signified there also was limited productive academic engagement with the culturally diverse students the educators in

the study teach. The United States has long been a nation of cultural and linguistic diversity. According to the Vespa, et., al (2020) in a report for the United States Census Bureau, the current trends of ethnic and racial population diversity in the United States will continue and is projected to grow through the year 2060. These projections will continue to influence how students are educated. Students arrive to classrooms with a wealth of culturally diverse interests and experiences. The intersection between these interests, experiences, and academic instruction, including disciplinary literacy using informational text, can be challenging for some educators.

Written responses indicated 83% of questionnaire respondents were (1) unable to define/explain their understanding of informational text in the context of characteristics, structures, and purpose, (2) answered somewhat correct answers were but were vague and/or incomplete in answering the question, (3) or signified incorrect information to the question. While the participants are seeking an alternative certification and are not fully certified, they do teach in classrooms each day. The high percentage of participants that struggled with a definition of informational text, including characteristics, structures, and purpose was troubling. As noted, state standards across the nation and NAEP endorse and encourage the use of informational text in classrooms across grade levels (NCES, 2021; Oregon Department of Education, 2022).

According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2010) 50% of the text used for learning should be informational, in grade four, 55% in grade eight, and 70% in grade twelve. For a teacher to not fully be able to define/explain their understanding of informational text in the context of characteristics, structures, and purpose is of concern, especially in the context of the expected informational text usage as students proceed to advanced grade levels (Page, 2021). The high percentage in the data is corroborated with evidence from the individual interviews. Five of the six participants interviewed revealed they did not fully know about or understand informational text. This deficiency adversely influenced their instruction, as well as student use of informational text and the dynamic engagement with the texts. On a constructive note, one interviewee acknowledged her teaching mentor helped her recognize and use informational text in her classroom. The same interviewee stated, with this mentor support, her informational text instruction and student engagement has benefited.

The majority of study participants, in written and verbal replies, indicated they were unable to give an answer, guessed for the answer, or missed one or more answers when asked about the various types of informational text on question two. As discussed, state education standards in numerous disciplines require teachers to use of informational text in classrooms (Idaho State Department of Education, 2022; Louisiana Department of Education, 2019). Having a lack of knowledge to the types of informational text seemed problematic for the teachers in meeting this requirement. Interview data supported this supposition. Interviewees One, Two, Three, Four, and Five revealed they either did not know the types of informational texts, guessed, or left the question blank. This lack of knowledge negatively affected how comfortable these teachers are using informational text in classrooms, disciplinary instruction, and student engagement with disciplinary content.

Data about the comfort level of using informational text in the classroom as a teaching resource offered noteworthy insight. Ninety six percent of participants revealed they were not sure if they were comfortable, left this question blank, or denoted “yes” but gave a vague and/or incomplete answer to the question. Interviews with the participants gave more insight into this high percentage. Several interviewees acknowledged their lack of informational text knowledge influenced their comfort level in using these texts as a teaching resource. In this context, participants admitted they have more to learn. One interviewee conceded this knowledge will happen but did not offer insight into what informational

text instruction is presently happening in the classroom. Several interviewees also revealed they heavily rely on curriculums, discipline-based textbooks, mentor lesson plans, mentor guidance, or a discipline-specific scope and sequence. While this reliance is understandable for new teachers, some interviewee answers revealed specific challenges while using these resources in the context of pedagogy and student engagement. Some insight from interviewees revealed they follow the textbook and/or curriculum with trust and assumptions that the learning needs of all students are being met with no or minimum supplementation of the teaching.

In the context of question four, 48% of study participants revealed they use or teach no reading comprehension strategies when informational text is used in the classroom. Twenty six percent of participants acknowledged they use or teach only one strategy. Combined percentages show a staggering 74% of respondents are very limited in the use or teaching of reading comprehension strategies with informational text in classrooms. Follow up interview questions garnered additional understanding. Several interviewees shared they try to assist students with the comprehension of texts used in the classroom. Based on what was shared, minimal instruction was given. When this instruction occurred, some teachers told students to reread, skim, or determine the main idea. While these strategies can be effective in reading, they are also basic comprehension strategies. Some teachers also performed actions that were assumed to be reading comprehension strategies such as ask a partner, slow down, sound out the words. One interviewee shared they encouraged students to determine the characters, setting, and plot in a story. This statement suggested the teacher was unsure of the difference between informational text that is non-fiction and a story that is often fiction and have characters, setting, and plot. Other interesting details during the interviews conveyed some teachers get ensnared in a cycle of reading the text to a student/ helping them to read, then all students want help with the reading. In this same context, some teachers shared comments indicating they teach the way they were taught. These comments specified a lack of effective pedagogy, including instructional techniques and instructional strategies to accomplish reading expectations. A content area teacher of ninth grade students shared that his students are older and should already understand and know the appropriate reading comprehension strategies to use while reading.

Questionnaire answers and interview comments disclosed in the study are illuminating, especially in the context of acknowledging that the in-service, new alternative certification seeking educators have a significant deficient understanding of informational text. Alternative certification programs can be accomplished in many forms (Grossman & Loeb, 2021; Koehler, et.al., 2013; Ludlow, 2013). Three popular methods include Practitioner Teacher Programs, Master's Degree Programs, or Certification-Only Programs. These programs can be online, in person, or can be in hybrid-form which includes a combination of online and in person classes. The programs can be accomplished at universities with alternative certification programs, school district-based working in conjunction with a university or operators outside institutes of higher education, or certification-only operators which many of these operators are for-profit. Practitioner teacher programs are streamlined routes to teacher certification that merge intensive coursework and full-time teaching. Master's degree programs comprise a concentrated path to a master's degree as well as alternative education certification in a specific area or areas of interest and/or need often with the student full-time teaching but not always. Certification-only programs are for persons focused on the alternative certification only and not seeking a master's degree. These students may work full-time as a teacher or perhaps an education para-professional, depending on the state education agency guidelines. Those teaching alternative teaching programs cannot make assumptions of the informational text knowledge level of the alternative certification-seeking teacher (Page, 2021). It is accepted these educators come to teaching from another career and there can be a significant learning,

yet state education standards across the nation require teachers at the commencement of their teaching to understand, successfully teach, and engage students. This expectation is very relevant to the study as standards stress utilizing informational text fully (Page, 2021).

Discussions, based on this investigation data, could embrace certain actions to enhance the informational text understandings of educators that teach across all disciplines. Data uncovered a majority of teachers struggled to distinguish the types, characteristics, and strategy usage with informational text. One action to assist this struggle could include alternative certification program instructors and professors assess their own knowledge of informational text, including types, characteristics, and strategy usage. Data from this assessment can serve to drive pedagogy by instructors and professors in all courses within alternative certification programs. If instructors and professors are unclear of the features of informational text a professional development session can occur. It is also suggested that the instructors/professors across all disciplines informally assess program participants in their fiction and non-fiction text awareness with a specific focus on informational text knowledge. This is typically accomplished only by a reading/literacy instructor/professor that teaches the required reading/literacy courses within the alternative certification program. This action by all program educators is pertinent because many teacher preparation program accreditation entities, as authorized by state education agencies, stress that course disciplines create effective opportunities for content mastery and application of that knowledge. It is also suggested for all instructors and professors that teach these courses to understand the ability to read is the foundational success in all disciplines.

Simple informal assessing in all discipline courses can inform the instructors/professors to the level of understanding of non-fiction text, including informational text used in program courses. This data can drive more specific non-fiction and informational text instruction in these courses. Informal assessment data can also indicate the comfort level of these teachers when using informational text with students in their own classrooms. Instructors and professors could also informally assess what reading comprehension strategies the certification seeking educators use themselves with informational text and what comprehension strategies, or lack thereof, these teachers use in their own teaching of informational text. As instructors and professors discover, through assessment, what informational text knowledge is known, they can then adjust their disciplinary literacy instruction in all courses to offer greater discernment of the dynamics of informational text. These adjustments could include communicating more explicit foundational content knowledge, including the utilization of the various types, characteristics, structures, and purpose of informational texts. Modifications to coursework could also include more overt application of knowledge instructional activities with a focus on informational text reading comprehension strategies. Consistent informational text pedagogy across all courses would not only promote increased erudition but could also foster a greater sense of comfort using informational text as a learning tool and resource in classrooms.

In the context of an effective classroom, teachers must have effective pedagogy and skilled academic engagement to assist students gain compulsory knowledge. Teachers must know and use effectual disciplinary literacy instructional techniques, instructional strategies, and engaging instructional activities. As noted by Shannon and Shannon (2012), disciplinary literacy includes literacy instruction that comprises teacher understandings and effective usage of the methods of reading comprehension including strategies of all types of texts. This worthwhile teaching is significant for all students, including those with varied learning styles and from diverse communities. Based on data from this study, these new teachers have limited learning and proficiencies to effectively institute reading comprehension strategy instruction while meeting the diverse needs of those in their classrooms.

If alternative certification program instructors and professors extend their disciplinary literacy instruction to include explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction in all courses the new, in-service teachers will enhance their own understanding and usage. This insight can then be shared with the students these educators teach. While meeting these demands may seem challenging for all disciplinary instructors/professors, accreditation entities that evaluate Teacher preparation programs are stressing that all discipline courses embrace disciplinary literacy. This requirement should bring about discussions across all disciplines within alternative certification programs. An extension of these discussions should incorporate instructor/professor reflections and development of specific goals for content mastery instruction of informational text, including the creation of engaging informational text activities that demonstrate application of this knowledge. This triangulated connection between discussions, reflections, and goals offer opportunities for instructors/professors teaching within alternative certification programs to enhance their teaching while increasing the depth of knowledge and comfort levels of the teachers in these programs. This deliberate contemplation is vital to program advancement, enhanced erudition for teachers within these programs, and the students these teachers educate (Page, 2021).

While generalizations from this study cannot be made, the study can offer a contextualized insight to enhance educational practices. This study offers insight for educational stakeholders, especially new, in-service, alternatively certified educators and those who teach these educators in certification programs. It is significant to grasp what these teachers know about informational text, including their knowledge of the characteristics, structures, purpose, and types, as well as, if teachers are comfortable using informational text as a teaching resource, and what reading comprehension strategies are used with informational text in their classrooms. It is also suggested other researchers expand on this investigation to continue the discernment of informational text in the context of new in-service alternative certification seeking teachers, alternative certification programs, and disciplinary literacy taught in discipline-based courses within these programs.

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Chapter 14

The Red Bandanna: A Curriculum as Racialized Text Experiment for Pre-Service Teachers

Cristina Worley
Texas A&M University, USA

ABSTRACT

Teachers often think of curriculum as a static set of written content. However, in college level multicultural education (ME) classes, this kind of curriculum rarely provides the student input necessary for authentic transformation. As a result, pre-service teachers lack the ability to understand how their biases and assumptions negatively impact their students. This phenomenon coupled with pre-service teachers' negative associations with terms like "white privilege" and "deficit perspective" beg the question: How can White educators provide positive experiences that result in high levels of cultural competence among White teachers, who make up the workforce majority? With this question in mind, the author set out to create the "red bandanna experiment," a lived curriculum-as-racialized-text experience in present time that relies on both teacher and student input. Ultimately, the experiment allowed for her own critical engagement with curriculum artifacts and also gave students a positive outlet for engaging with their own biases and assumptions.

INTRODUCTION

On an ordinary Tuesday night, a qualitative methods professor at a southern university asked her doctoral-level class to describe the images conjured in their minds from the brand "Coca Cola." Answers varied from "America" to "those polar bear commercials" to "freedom and childhood." In Qatar where the professor frequently conducted research, this exercise resulted in wildly different reactions. Women in Qatar responded angrily to the Coca Cola symbol and discussed oppression and war, a vision of the United States that would make any patriotic person cringe, despite their understanding that these things have been part of United States history as well.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch014

The following Tuesday night, a teacher educator from the qualitative methods class interviewed a regional manager of custodial services at the same university, who mentioned near the interview's end that people's perceptions of others are static and cannot be changed. The teacher educator disagreed: Her job as an instructor for a multicultural education class was to help students identify negative perceptions and beliefs they possessed about students of color and reject their previously held deficit perspectives. "That's a societal issue though, right? That's pretty much how we've all been raised," the regional manager replied (Anonymous, personal communication, March 31, 2020).

He was right about one thing: From their first years in formal schooling, children have already begun to develop stereotypes and biases regarding gender, race, and ableness (Bigler & Wright, 2014; Skinner & Meltzoff, 2019). Yet daily objects they take for granted can have significant meaning when analyzed through a lens other than the worldview they have adopted either through training or self-selection; daily objects act as curricular artifacts when infused with the values and decisions of the person analyzing them (Remillard & Kim, 2020). Based on the concept of lived curriculum (Aoki, 2005), this positioning of commonplace curriculum materials as historic artifacts has the potential to reinforce the teacher educator's belief that societal issues can be improved through education. Scholars used to think of curriculum as static and unchanging (Pinar et al., 1995), but a shift in the last decade toward using curriculum as a dynamic tool for equity acknowledges authentic contexts that students embody, propelling them toward deeper self-reflection and understanding of others (Tilley & Taylor, 2013).

It was the fusion of these ideas that resulted in this teacher educator's focus on creating an experience in her classroom, made up of mostly White preservice teachers and herself, around stories of K-12 (kindergarten through 12th grade secondary school) students and the symbolism surrounding a red bandanna. Brown et al. (2015) suggests that "teaching and curriculum are situated in sociocultural contexts that operate inequitably and differently value the knowledge, experiences, values, and identities possessed by students and the communities and families in which they exist" (p. 2). She wanted to create a lived experience to understand the complexities that contribute to her preservice teachers' resistance to equity topics and motivate them to be educators who care about racial justice in their classrooms. This chapter 1) outlines the background of multicultural education as a discipline; 2) synthesizes curriculum as racialized text embedded within multicultural education; 3) provides an analysis of the vignette the teacher educator wrote to capture the lived curriculum around the cultural artifact of the red bandanna; 4) suggests a definition of curriculum based on these components, and 5) offers a practical application for teacher educators of preservice teachers to enact lived curriculum and increase multicultural literacy in their own classrooms.

BACKGROUND

Consensus of multicultural education as a discipline and the literacy necessary for educators at all levels to effectively use its principles has improved since its conception, but the discipline continues to lack agreement in its boundaries and aims in the new millenia (Banks & McGee Banks, 2004). Richards (1982) explained that "multicultural" as a term "tends to be used by teachers who wish to minimize conflict and maximize sharing" (p. 222). Although written forty years ago, conceptualizing "multiculturalism" as a proxy for "colorblindness" is still a popular practice among United States K-12 teachers (Castagno, 2013). "Multicultural education" is defined as "a set of beliefs and explanations that recognize and value the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping lifestyles; social experiences;

personal identities; and educational opportunities of individuals, groups, and nations” (Gay, 2004, p. 33). Those who adopt a colorblind mentality attempt to ignore the social constructs of identity and view all students “equally.” However, superficially extricating a student in one’s mind from their race and cultural context is counterintuitive to the humanizing forces of multicultural education. Nieto (2002) describes multicultural education as “antiracist”; for a curriculum to be antiracist, it must acknowledge the social construct of race.

This reality is a sticking point for many White preservice teachers whose views about non-White students are often not as neutral as they believe (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti (2005) concluded from their study of preservice teacher beliefs that a multicultural education class as a requirement within teacher preparation is necessary but not sufficient for disciplinary literacy. Without specific training in antiracist practices such as culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014), scholars and teacher educators will continue to see the resurgence of the cultural deprivation paradigm within the discipline of multicultural education (Banks & McGee Banks, 2004). Preservice teachers operating within this paradigm view students as disadvantaged and their culture as negative, often blaming parent values for what they perceive as students’ disinterest in educational pursuits (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005).

Teacher educators’ attempts at ameliorating deficit perspectives in their preservice teachers and preparing them to provide an equitable education for their non-White students has proved difficult (Gallavan, 2000) but promising (Whiting & Cutri, 2015). Forcing students to read seminal work within a multicultural education class without the disciplinary literacy to critically dissect these texts can result in student resistance and anger (Gallavan, 2000; LaDuke, 2009). Thus, teacher educators have begun to include more experiential elements into their curriculum in order to catalyze critical self-reflection in their primarily White, female preservice teachers (Dunn et al., 2014). While conversations about culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) (Ladson-Billings, 2014) have centered on K-12 students, concepts from this pedagogy contain important underlying principles for multicultural education classes at the post-secondary level. For example, Ladson-Billings (2014) describes sociopolitical consciousness as “the ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom using school knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems” (p. 75). The sociopolitical consciousness of CRP in particular lends itself to teacher educators utilizing lived curriculum to accomplish CRP goals.

Yet it is important to understand what lived curriculum is and what it is not. In *Corridor Cultures*, Maryann Dickar (2008) discussed the cultural milieu of hallways in an urban school created by students as they navigated what often felt like an oppressive space. Students admitted asking to use the restroom to escape class, partially as a way for them to push back against policies that kept them from expressing the fullness of their identities as Black students. Sizer and Sizer (1999) argued that school is inherently moral, meaning that administrators, teachers, and the physical building itself communicate implicit messages to students about what the school values and believes about students. For example, when K-12 teachers fail to develop high expectations and a demanding curriculum, they disallow students to “grapple” with content, which Sizer and Sizer explain “presumes that the student has something to add to the story” (p. 25). Black and Latinx students receive the brunt of low expectations from teachers who have not been trained in multicultural education (Liou & Rotheram-Fuller, 2019). These types of experiences and environments impact student learning and are therefore part of their lived curriculum, though not necessarily an intentional part of a teacher’s lesson plans (Sizer & Sizer, 1999). Furthermore, the imprint of these interactions teaches K-12 students as much about their place in the world, especially in educational contexts, as the more formal curriculum of academic subjects (Small, 2020).

Lived curriculum exists for every student on a daily basis, but it frequently lives alongside the curriculum created by external professionals “condemned to plan for faceless people” (Aoki, 2005, p. 160). In multicultural education classes at the post-secondary level, awareness of lived curriculum and its explicit use by teacher educators increases students’ experiential knowledge and exposure to multiple perspectives rather than relying on static information that contributes to the unexamined racism, biases, and assumptions, resulting in eventual burnout and damage to Black and Latinx students in their classrooms (LaDuke, 2009; Liou & Rotheram-Fuller, 2019; Love, 2016). According to Castagno (2013), preservice teachers must somehow confront their Whiteness for multicultural education classes to be effective. Lawyer (2018) stated that “how the content and topics are approached [in a multicultural education class], and how student engagement with the topics is facilitated, should be given as much consideration as what is taught” (p. 87).

Aoki (1993) described the concept of lived curriculum by explaining that “this lived curriculum, of course, is not the curriculum as laid out in a plan, but a plan more or less lived out” (p. 257). Traditionally, curriculum consists of the structured plans made by a teacher before a class period that guide students through a series of instructional activities to accomplish a set of learning objectives. Aoki flipped this concept on its head by shifting focus from information to live meaning-making as a new form of knowing.

Using only a curriculum-as-plan model for teaching is somewhat counterintuitive to the goals of culturally relevant pedagogy. Curriculum-as-plan fails to “bring an appreciation of ... students’ assets” to a classroom because its creation can take place without particular students in mind (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 74). Teachers who have developed the skill of flexibility can take curriculum-as-plan and adapt it to a specific group of students, but this model of curriculum fails to see teachers as humans with their own experiences that inform instruction (Aoki, 2005).

Secondly, curriculum-as-plan does not start with student context or leave room for live reactions from students during class (Aoki, 2005). According to Emdin (2011), researchers “do not pay enough attention to deficits within teachers, educational systems, and approaches to pedagogy” (p. 284). In the research literature, culturally relevant pedagogy is discussed as a method to be used by teachers within K-12 settings (Ladson-Billings, 1995b) but is not used by teacher educators as a curricular approach in multicultural education classes. If teacher educators do not model lived curriculum in college classes while also teaching *about* lived curriculum, they leave preservice teachers with a half-baked, head knowledge of conceptualizing curriculum as lived without understanding how to transfer this into practice.

Lived curriculum looks different for each teacher and classroom, but its philosophical underpinnings are consistent across teachers. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1995a) made a distinction between teaching strategies and how teachers think about themselves and their students to explain that CRP is a pedagogy in process; culturally relevant teachers in her study used disparate teaching strategies but thought about their curriculum and students in similar ways, thereby allowing students to experience a “retextured landscape, populated by a multiplicity of curricula, disturbing the traditional landscape, with its single privileged curriculum-as-plan awaiting implementation” (Aoki, 1993, p. 258-59).

THE RED BANDANNA EXPERIMENT

For the red bandanna curriculum experiment, the teacher educator brought a red bandanna to class for her preservice teachers to analyze as a curriculum artifact. She chose a red bandanna due to its potentially duplicitous and racialized meanings. For example, if shown to K-12 classrooms in the United States,

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students from an urban Black community where gang activity is rampant would likely think about their neighborhood whereas students from a rural White community where farmers work all day would likely think about the fields. Then, the teacher educator asked preservice teachers to tell her what the red bandanna symbolized to them based on their experiences. This resulted in a class discussion and a critical reflection about how one seemingly neutral daily object could hold deep meaning for students in a classroom based on their cultural and racial background; two students sitting right next to each other could have entirely different experiences of the same object. After this class meeting, the teacher educator conducted her own self-reflection by creating a vignette of the red bandanna experiment. This vignette took the teacher educator's use of lived curriculum as CRP and turned it into curriculum as racialized text (Pinar et al., 1995). The idea of "curriculum as racialized text" includes race and identity as social constructs and text as both physical writing and a social reality (Tatum, 1999). The purpose of creating the vignette was for the teacher educator to engage in critical self-reflection but also for preservice teachers to see an example of the continued work that White educators must engage in to effectively teach non-White populations without creating classroom inequities for Black and Latinx students. The next section contains this vignette.

Teacher Educator-Made Vignette Used for Curriculum as Racialized Text

In this section, the teacher educator has included the vignette she wrote in reflection of the lived curriculum that she titled "the red bandanna experiment" used within her undergraduate multicultural education course. This vignette was written in the style of creative writing as a personal reflection piece for the teacher educator but could be shared with preservice teachers as an artifact for teaching critical race identity reflection. Other forms of creative writing could be used by teacher educators in lieu of a vignette, such as free writing, poetry, or even a series of drawings. The vignette is infused with the teacher educator's personal cultural context in terms of television shows and summer experiences. Although not necessarily evident within the vignette itself, the teacher educator did not know what direction conversation would take or what connections preservice teachers would make with the red bandanna as artifact.

The Red Bandanna Vignette

The red bandanna hung on the arm of the class document camera, an alien-looking technology that I had not used once for this class of pre-service teachers: it seemed as dated as a typewriter or CD player in light of the high tech automatic projector system that came down over the white board like curtains over a stage.

College students' voices mixed together, syncopated and concordant. For a second, I could almost slip into a reverie of the white noise they created, transporting me to the idyllic town of Stars Hollow in *Gilmore Girls* or the Upper East Side, *Gossip Girl* high fashion style, minus the pretense.

"We're going to start class by looking at this red bandanna that I rolled into a headband." Thirty-two chairs swiveled back toward me, the reverie broken. "I want you to tell me what you think about when you look at this bandanna. What does it symbolize to you?"

Before I had done my few years in urban schools, I would have said summer days, 4th of July, Christian camp counselors with their ugly chacos to match. These were the answers I expected. After all, these girls shared my past: tank tops and too short shorts, assortments of popsicle colors with an aftertaste of

unrecognized White privilege, sunglasses too big for their faces, straight white teeth, smiling. Tanned summer skin from time spent lounging on cute puppy face towels.

No hands shot up; we were past conventions. Then a thought from a girl in the second row with Warby Parker glasses: “It makes me think of my high school’s policy banning students from wearing bandannas, because of gang affiliation or something.” A few others nodded their heads, hummingbirds’ wings in slow motion. Other girls mentioned summer camp. “Sororities!” I think came from one of my many students with straightened blonde hair.

Rain-soaked street. News reels pulling a crying car bent in half away from the tree it had been hugging. “When an 8th grader at my school died after a tragic car accident, his sister was driving and she hydroplaned on one of those back country roads, we all wore bandannas in our pockets in memoriam since this particular 8th grader had always done that,” I said. The projector and the energy from their laptops hummed as if connecting in our shared silent space. “Or the autistic student I taught who all of a sudden was told he couldn’t wear his bandanna to school anymore. He said it was part of his identity as a black man, that he would allow himself to be expelled before he shed his pride...when is it a school’s place to make policies that affect students’ ability to express their collective grief or cultural identity?”

I clicked around on my Macbook Air to pull up the next slide of our Powerpoint. Thirty-two pairs of pre-service teacher eyes watched me, seemingly waiting for me to answer the unanswerable.

“That’s the question I’ll leave you with. Let’s move on with class.”

Analysis of Curriculum as Racialized Text

Historical Context of the Red Bandanna Experiment

The vignette written around the red bandanna experiment highlights both the teacher educator’s background and her students’ backgrounds. Within the span of one year teaching sophomore English in an urban setting several years prior, the teacher educator had gone from Banks’ Stage 2: Cultural Encapsulation to Stage 5: Multiculturalism and Reflective Nationalism (Banks, 2015) before ever having taught a multicultural education class at the post-secondary level. Banks (2015) marks people at Stage 5 as those who are culturally aware, reflective, empathetic, and show care for other cultural groups, specifically in terms of justice and dignity. Despite having “arrived” at Stage 5, reflecting on one’s racist ideologies, biases, and prejudices is a lifelong process and one that the teacher educator wanted to instill in her preservice teachers. As a White woman, she was surprised to realize upon reading and reflecting on her vignette that she had begun to harbor negative views of her preservice teachers, which impacted her ability to relate to them and thereby create curriculum that authentically engaged them in social justice.

While her normal attitude toward White females who are culturally ignorant is empathy, patience, and understanding considering that she once fit that description, that did not seem to be true as she wrote this vignette. Instead, her words fell harshly and judgmentally onto her students, who ended up proving her wrong. Many of them mentioned their schools’ policies against bandannas. Although many preservice teachers came to the university from affluent areas, the state was speckled by cities with intense levels of diversity that had allowed a handful of her students a view into another world right in their backyard. While she had assumed that all of them had attended private or suburban public schools, some of them talked at the beginning of the semester about their parents’ money struggles or that they had gone to an urban school.

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As the semester progressed, the teacher educator's frustration with some of their cultural ignorance had turned them into a homogenized group in her mind. If she could do this so easily with her own race and gender, how much more easily could educators marginalize cultural groups they deem "other" when not exposed to their stories?

The Teacher Educator's Investigation into the Red Bandanna Experiment

The vignette used for the red bandanna experiment explores the important cultural significance of hair in the Black community that may be unfamiliar to White preservice teachers in addition to alternative cultural meanings from a rural setting and personal perspective. Together, these perspectives create a paradox. In the story of urban schools who have banned bandannas in the name of safety, they are attempting to negate bandannas as a form of identity and strip them of their power to incite violence (Deabler, 2018); however, by banning them, stakeholders are creating what many deem oppressive spaces in place of centers for learning (Mbilishaka et al., 2020). In the story at the old rural high school where students wore bandannas as a form of solidarity, they reinforce the inherent power that the paradox reveals in urban settings. Bruner (2004) explained that "in a failed paradox one truth becomes evident, one voice predominates. But in a true paradox one meaning must always be taken 'with respect to the other,' so that paradox produces meanings in dialogue" (p. 177). Curriculum as racialized text such as the vignette created for the teacher educator's self-reflection, grounded in multiculturalism, does not attempt to tell one-sided stories but to uncover the other side to reveal these paradoxes that have always existed.

To deepen her understanding of using a red bandanna as a cultural artifact, the teacher educator contacted her old principal, a Black male, who now works at a high school in Memphis with metal detectors at the front door, a history of violence, and a policy that bans all bandanna colors. When the teacher educator first asked him during their phone conversation what he thought about these kinds of policies, he simply told her that his school had them. She pressed harder and asked what he thought about them personally. He told the teacher educator that at first he did not like the policies for common reasons like criminalizing students or stripping them of cultural expression, but his opinion has since changed. He has seen other high schools plagued with shootings due to their decision not to add metal detectors and bandanna bans on their campuses. At his school, he says the metal detectors make kids and families feel safe and that students still attempt to bring weapons regularly. Because of strong gang affiliations, even non-gang members are in danger because of accusations of false claiming. He explained that the original blue and red to show the Blood and Crips has expanded to include purple, orange, and potentially other colors as well. Ironically, he said that even with the bandanna bans, students find other ways to externalize their gang allegiance, whether that is through an earring on a particular ear, a raised pant leg with a colored sock, or a solidly colored shirt (Anonymous, personal communication, April 13, 2020).

From the Red Bandanna Experiment to a Vignette as Racialized Text

Analyzing this vignette as racialized text begs questions about the origins of gang formation and violence in Black communities: How are White people implicated in present phenomenological truth with origins stemming from a historical context that is shared with Black people as United States citizens? This question is one many preservice teachers would not think to ask without prompting because the depth of historical knowledge about Black history that presupposes a question like this requires more than content knowledge. King (2019) stated that "being historically conscious is more than knowledge acquisition.

Historical consciousness encompasses epistemological, ontological, and axiological concerns that recognize that history is not solely about the past but how we view the present” (p. 389). Thus, the teacher educator knew that if she could create experiences that left her White preservice teachers with more questions than answers and an awareness of their collective history with Black and Latinx people, then she would have provided a solid multicultural foundation from which teachers could build in the present.

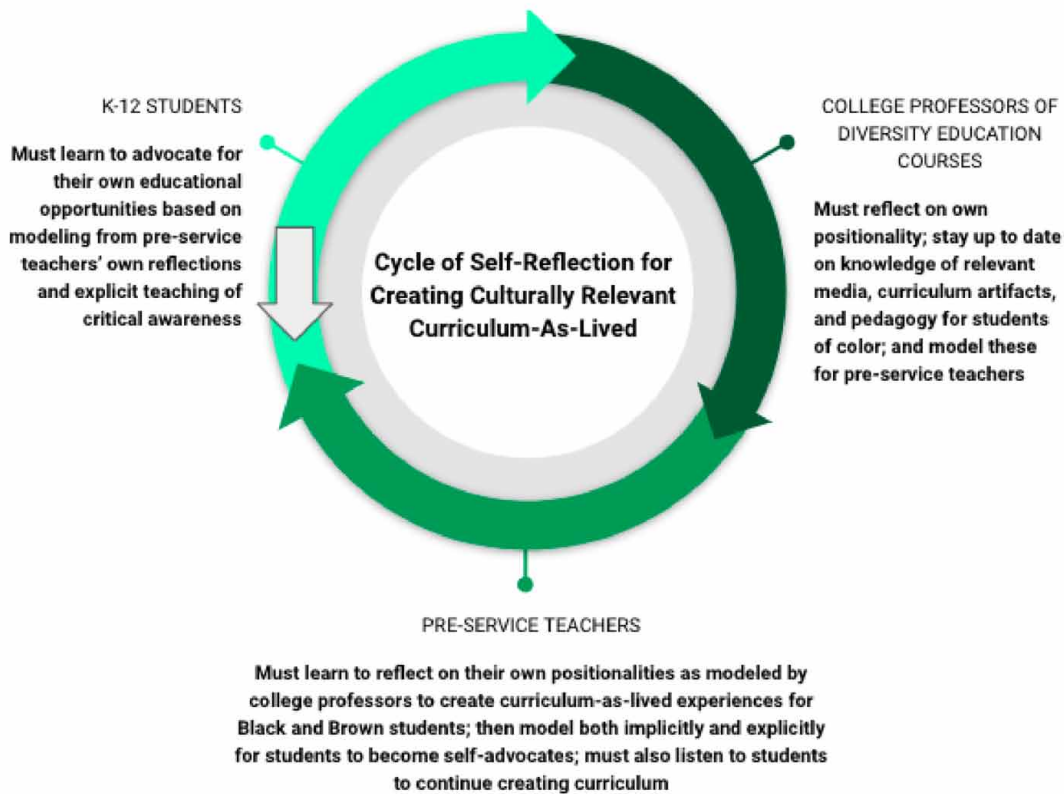
The vignette included within this chapter captures the experience of using lived curriculum with preservice teachers as a point of illustration, but vignettes can also be used as lived curriculum within a classroom and will be discussed in the practical application section. A vignette is a short piece of writing that leaves readers with an evocative impression of the author’s feelings and experience of one particular event. Using vignettes as a component of lived curriculum has the potential to fall within the tradition of both counternarratives which stem from critical race theory (Bell et al., 1989) and culturally responsive teaching. Although historically critical race theory has foregrounded the stories of students of color in its use of counterstories, the vignette for the red bandanna experiment is told from the perspective of a White woman but aims to disrupt racial stereotypes and critique dialogue often centered in classrooms of majority White, female preservice teachers. Because our system of education has been centered on White norms, counterstories attempt to de-center dominant voices and highlight those on the margins. According to DeCuir and Dixon (2004), counterstories act as a “means of exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes ... and giving voice to marginalized groups” (p. 27). Furthermore, the vignette’s focus on developing social consciousness among both teacher educators and preservice teachers themselves is an evident element of its inclusion.

The teacher educator wrote the preceding vignette to capture newly created knowledge between her preservice teachers and herself as she exposed them to narratives that brought the political nature of school policies to a personal level. In their research, Milner and Howard (2013) discussed the power of providing counternarratives by placing greater value on experiential knowledge. They cited both Clandinin and Huber (2002) and Connelly and Clandinin (1990) when explaining that “narratives are both the object of investigation and the actual method of naming what is being investigated” (p. 540). Ultimately, the teacher educator’s goal in providing these narratives around the red bandanna was to expose preservice teachers to the constant tensions surrounding identity formation for their future Black and Latinx students as they navigate schools built on the dominant culture; they also uncover their own positionality in the process. According to Milner and Howard (2013), these narratives can act as pedagogical tools that allow students to connect with those who have vastly different experiences than they do. These narratives also help them understand their place in relationship to those unfamiliar perspectives.

LIVED CURRICULUM AS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Through the red bandanna experiment, the teacher educator attempted to not just explain the importance of multiple perspectives and self-reflection in preservice teachers’ curriculum building process but to help them transform their conceptualizations that then lead to changed practice. By viewing curriculum as dynamic, the impetus falls back on teacher educators to build relationships with preservice teachers rather than auto-piloting a curriculum-as-plan. To illustrate this idea, Watson and Bradley (2009) asked this question: “What better way to teach secondary instructional strategies to pre-service teachers than by modeling these strategies using teacher education content?” (p. 3). Culturally relevant pedagogy has been discussed extensively for use in K-12 classrooms with models for teachers to employ (Borrero et

Figure 1. Cycle of self-reflection for creating culturally relevant curriculum-as-lived



al., 2016; Martell & Stevens, 2019; Morrison et al., 2008; Paris, 2012), but much less literature exists on how *teacher educators* can model this pedagogy in their own multicultural education classes. Figure 1 provides a model for job demands of teacher educators who want to use and model CRP for preservice teachers.

While Gay (2004) concluded that multicultural education contains descriptive, prescriptive, and critical theories, Pinar et al. (1995) contended that multiculturalism first appears non-threatening, but controversy resides in its transformative nature. For the purposes of the red bandanna experiment, curriculum as racialized text falls in line with Pinar's consideration and culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), acting primarily critical in nature with the goal of "human emancipation" (Gay, 2004, p. 31). This freedom comes out of its focus on unveiling the inequities created by traditional curriculum and humanizing all students rather than treating any one cultural group as homogenous (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014). Experiencing curriculum through this lens should result in action and personal/social life changes among those who encounter it (Gay, 2004; Howard, 2021; Morales-Doyle, 2017). Even with transformation as its goal, change is slow. Yvanna Lincoln, one of the leading researchers in qualitative research methods, explained that although most researchers believe quantitative data is the driving force behind policy change, cultural change happens one person at a time (Y. Lincoln, personal communication, April 7, 2020).

Curriculum Redefined and Reimagined

According to Merriam-Webster (2022), curriculum is “the courses offered by an educational institution” or “a set of courses constituting an area of specialization.” As the dictionary definition illuminates, curriculum has been traditionally defined by United States school districts by a set of materials, content, and instructions for particular lessons with its own historical and cultural underpinnings despite a shift over the last two centuries from *what* content is taught to *how* content is taught within the discipline of curriculum theory (Egan, 1978). This teacher educator would argue that it is not practically useful to think of curriculum this way because it diverts attention away from how that curriculum is *lived out and experienced*. Below is a thought experiment to illustrate the point:

Suppose a radically liberal professor existed who taught United States politics. This professor decided that for her class, she would use only Fox news articles as the curriculum for the class and use various lenses of political theory with which to analyze these articles. If she were to show this curriculum to a conservative college dean, he might approve the curriculum without much of a second glance. The liberal professor then proceeds with her class to discuss the evils of capitalism and talk about revolutionaries like Karl Marx, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Hugo Chavez.

However, what if the class was full of students who offered counter articles, creating a dialogue with the professor about their opposing views? Emergent from this class would be an environment of deep analysis, critical thinking, and civil discourse orchestrated by the professor who was aware of the difference between curricular materials and curriculum-as-lived, the latter of which requires student response to curricular materials. In this hypothetical illustration, the specific individuals interacting in this classroom to create this experience would leave having experienced an entirely different curriculum than what the dean would have expected or even what the radically liberal professor had planned, despite having seen or prepared the curricular artifacts.

Thus, a new definition of curriculum emerges from the red bandanna experiment. For the purposes of the teacher educator’s multicultural education course, curriculum became a fusion of historical context and present experience/phenomenological truth that converged in a social setting where new knowledge was created. “Historical context” is a complex component within this working definition. It does not necessarily just refer to the history of the material chosen but to the background knowledge, biases, and assumptions preservice teachers bring to the convergence and how those different contexts interact to create multiple perspectives (King, 1986; Levinson, 2018). Due to the experience/phenomenological truth component, the curriculum occurs within the convergence but could result in vastly different outcomes depending on the historical context of each student. For example, a Black student and a White student would most likely experience different curriculum despite being in the same class at the same time and exposed to the same materials.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking a multicultural education class does not necessarily result in positive outcomes despite the discipline’s inclusion in higher education for preservice teachers over the past several decades. In a qualitative study conducted by Boyle-Baise & Kilbane (2000), the researchers concluded that “there is certainly a ‘long way to go’ to create experiences that assist preservice teachers in becoming ‘better’ teachers for the natural constituents of multicultural education” (p. 63). Ten years later, Bowman (2010) conducted

a study that showed a shift toward greater diversity consciousness only after students took two or more diversity courses. More recently, Ndemanu (2018) documented resistance among preservice teachers to multicultural content. It is important that multicultural education classes are utilizing the most rigorous research to engage preservice teachers at their current level of knowledge rather than the level at which teacher educators expect, especially as the United States' K-12 student population continues to diversify (NCES, 2021).

One of the comments the teacher educator received from several students after her first semester teaching a multicultural education class was that they felt negatively about how she assumed they already had base-level knowledge of diversity topics. Expert blind spot is discussed in the literature mostly for K-12 math and science teachers (Petrosino & Shekhar, 2018), but this unexamined privilege often allows White teacher educators who do not practice regular self-reflection to live within White-only spaces, unaware of the experiences that affect people of color (Kincheloe, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Sleeter, 2001). For example, one of the teacher educator's assignments required students to visit a local Asian market. During her final presentation, one student laughed as she explained her decision to sit in her car for twenty minutes before entering the market due to nervousness and discomfort. In reflection, she realized a need for exposure to non-White people and spaces that had never occurred to her, especially within the context of teacher preparation. Her presentation and lack of exposure shocked the teacher educator, but other preservice teachers like this student who are inadequately prepared are being sent into the workforce to educate Black and Latinx children in the United States every day (Lehman, 2017; Mader, 2015).

For another of the teacher educator's classroom activities, preservice teachers were split into groups and asked to write down deficit views they had of K-12 students under major categories such as home life, clothing style, classroom behaviors, and language patterns. At first, preservice teachers said they were not aware of possessing any negative views of future Black and Latinx students based on these categories. When given more specific examples such as a student who wears a hoodie and baggy pants, they were able to fill entire poster boards. Once they had completed the activity, preservice teachers were more open to discussion using terms from multicultural education content such as White privilege, White supremacy, and racism, with a deeper and richer understanding of general diversity concepts such as culture.

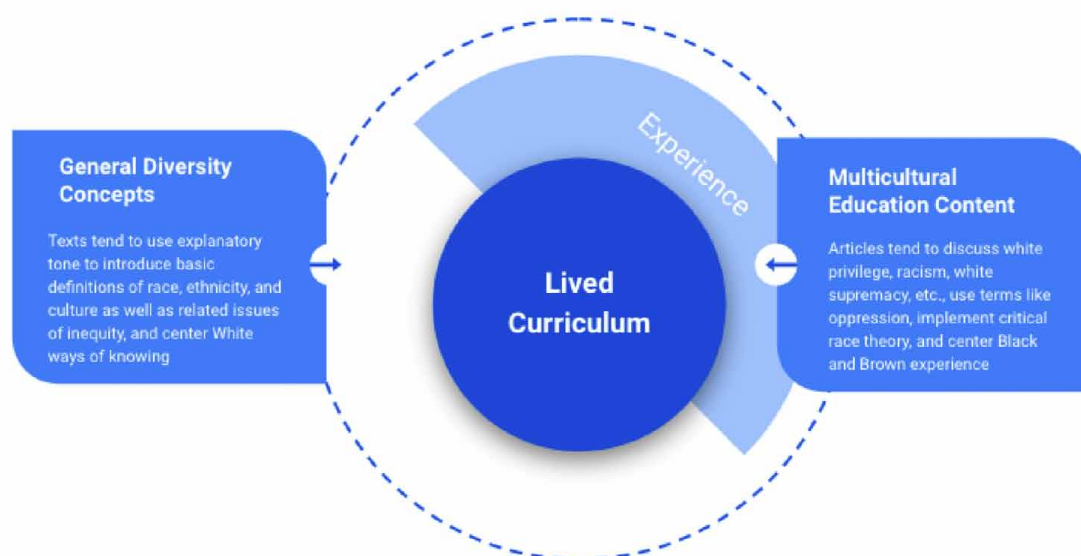
Without this self-awareness and ability to be critical of one's own positionality, it is easy for White preservice teachers to succumb to performative acts of equity that are not sustainable (Love, 2019). For educators who teach Black and Latinx students, identity awareness of one's own Whiteness is a prerequisite for culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Figure 2 provides a conceptual model for planning and implementing curriculum for post-secondary multicultural education courses:

These courses sometimes utilize textbooks such as *Diversity Consciousness: Opening Our Minds to People, Cultures, and Opportunities* by Bucher (2014) that introduce preservice teachers to concepts of which they already hold familiarity but have shallow definitions. Banks and Banks (1993) explain how teachers differ in their levels of integration surrounding these concepts, provided in Figure 3.

Although multicultural education courses may not reach Level 4 integration, some preservice teachers report a new urgency to participate in measures that increase equity due to their exposure and knowledge of injustice that had previously been absent from their working understanding of Black and Latinx children (Mills & Ballantyne, 2015). As evident in Figure 3, experience is not synonymous with curriculum-as-lived within the context of multicultural education, the latter of which includes elements of experience but infuses them with language from the field. To avoid centering Whiteness within mul-

multicultural education, it is important for White educators teaching these courses to acknowledge the roots and foundation on which current dialogue is built. For example, the term “White privilege” may have been made popular by a White woman named Peggy McIntosh, but its origins stem from the work of D.E.B. DuBois (Rothman, 2014).

Figure 2. Model of curriculum planning for post-secondary multicultural education courses



Exposure to Diverse Cultures, Both in Media and In-Person

As vital as it is to provide preservice teachers with diverse experiences where they become exposed to non-White cultures and people in the classroom, they also need to *maintain* exposure to diversity outside the classroom (Medina et al., 2015; Moore, 2018). Central to culturally relevant pedagogy is a working knowledge of another culture other than one’s own (Ladson-Billings, 2014). White educators at both the K-12 and post-secondary level who are not familiar with the cultural norms and ways of knowing brought by diverse groups of students cannot effectively teach them (Love, 2019). Many White educators believe staying “neutral” and incorporating elements from a variety of cultures makes them effective (Banks & Banks, 1993), but often these practices skim the surface of culture but still operate within a White racial framing (Feagin, 2020), resulting in stereotypical assumptions of Black and Latinx students and their behavior/language. For example, familiarity with Black volume and verve alone could help teachers lower their punitive discipline rates (Hamilton & DeThorne, 2021). If teacher educators could support preservice teachers in learning how to respect non-White cultures from the perspective of people of color, their new knowledge of complex cultural nuances could begin to turn the tide for Black and Latinx children (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018; Moll et al., 1992). *Gain Historical and Current Race*

Figure 3. Levels of integration of multicultural content into curriculum

Source: Adapted from Banks and Banks (1993)

LEVEL 4 THE SOCIAL ACTION APPROACH Students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them. Students become empowered to make meaningful contributions to the resolution of social issues and problems.
LEVEL 3 THE TRANSFORMATION APPROACH The structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse racial and cultural groups. An emphasis is placed on increasing students' empathy and acquiring multiple points of views on issues, events, topics, and people. Educators are active and proactive in seeking training and experience with racially and culturally diverse groups.
LEVEL 2 THE ADDITIVE APPROACH Content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its structure. Black History month is one example. The additions are temporary and discussions, topics, and issues are at a safe (less controversial) level. Students fail to understand how the predominant culture interacts with and is related to racially and culturally diverse groups.
LEVEL 1 THE CONTRIBUTIONS APPROACH Focuses on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements. Students acquire a superficial understanding of racially and culturally diverse groups; this approach may create or reinforce stereotypes in students.

Knowledge of Your Teaching Context

Many United States' students complete their education unaware of the realities experienced by Black, Latinx, and Native Americans throughout United States history (Belsha, 2021; King, 2017). They have learned about these histories in public schools, often through a White lens (Hawkman & Shear, 2020). Preservice teachers who leave their college preparation and receive certification to teach but who are not aware of their deficit ideologies, who do not believe students of color still experience racism, and who ignore the societal forces that create inequitable educational opportunities are much more likely to perpetuate inequities for these students in their classrooms (Feagin, 2020; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Love, 2016; Love, 2019). Culturally relevant pedagogy requires that teachers understand these inequities and engage students in the fight to reverse them. Ladson-Billings (1995b) describes teachers who use culturally relevant pedagogy this way:

Their common thread of caring was their concern for the implications their work had on their students' lives, the welfare of the community, and unjust social arrangements. Thus, rather than the idiosyncratic

caring for individual students (for whom they did seem to care), the teachers spoke of the import of their work for preparing the students for confronting inequitable and undemocratic social structures. (p. 474)

Here, Ladson-Billings decenters the White value of individualism to point out how culturally relevant teaching takes a critical lens toward systems that contribute to the gap between White and non-White students. Using a critical lens necessitates a knowledge of history. For example, one of the teacher educator's former preservice teachers once referred to Black people as "colored" during a presentation. The teacher educator explained that this was an inappropriate term to describe Black people due to its derogatory use for distinguishing areas where Black people were allowed to go during the Jim Crow era in the United States, a time of enforced racial segregation post-slavery. This particular preservice teacher's error showed that she had never been taught the gravity and trauma conjured in some Black people when the word "colored" is used by White people. White teacher educators should know these histories as well so they can model this knowledge to preservice teachers who will eventually be teachers of their own Black and Latinx students. Love (2019) explains that to teach Black students, educators have to *know* them, which includes knowing their cultural, ethnic, and racial histories.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Conceptual Development

Regarding disciplinary literacy within multicultural education, much more work needs to be done to develop curriculum that relates to diverse students but that also represents rigorous academic scholarship (Brown, 2021; Griffin & James, 2018). This requires testing curriculum with groups of students and gauging levels of motivation as well as student outcomes. Curriculum relevance will vary by context, but the more deep-seated axiology embedded within current curricular materials can be challenged to make material more inclusive for all groups. Currently operating within a social efficiency model of education, stakeholders continue to focus attention on student outcomes as measured by standardized tests, which many scholars have stated are not always an accurate measure of student growth or learning (Bach, 2020; Dianis et al., 2015; Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015; Koretz, 2017). According to Au (2016), standardized testing is often justified as a way to accomplish racial equality by holding schools accountable for student achievement. However, he argues that high-stakes testing "not only ... serve[s] to further racial inequality in education, it does so under the guise of forms of anti-racism that have been reconstituted as part of a larger neoliberal project for education reform" (p. 39). Current work has been started that fuses together culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum-as-lived (Adjapong & Emdin, 2015), but additional frameworks and models for both teacher educators and preservice teachers would help sustain engagement for Black and Latinx K-12 students.

Teacher Preparation for K-12 Education

With the majority of the teaching population continuing to be mostly White and female, preparing teachers to design culturally relevant curriculum is important for student growth and achievement, particularly among Black and Latinx students (Adjapong & Emdin, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2014). Eurocentric curriculum has disadvantaged students of color for decades in the United States (Swartz, 1993), who

benefit from windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors (Bishop, 1990) to develop academic orientations. According to Bishop (1990), windows provide students with curriculum that helps them see into others' lives that are unlike their own, mirrors show them who they are, and sliding glass doors allow them to step into the world of others. Practically, providing sliding glass doors would require teacher educators to create experiences for preservice teachers that require them to interact with rather than only gaze into the lives of people of color.

Furthermore, lived curriculum keeps teacher educators connected to the current culture of their students as it requires that they utilize students' specific home cultures, neighborhood assets, and relevant media in their lesson plans rather than relying on traditional curriculum that may not be as inclusive (Moll et al., 1992). Teacher educators need to explicitly model this type of lived curriculum so preservice teachers can also use a funds of knowledge framework with which to approach their own classrooms. For example, the teacher educator coupled the red bandanna experiment with homework that required preservice teachers to watch the FX show *Atlanta* (Glover, 2016) as part of her curriculum. Preservice teachers created their own questions and participated in curriculum-as-lived during small group discussions in class. In course evaluations after course completion, preservice teachers discussed how impactful the Black-centered show had been on their multicultural literacy and how they would continue watching the show on their own time.

CONCLUSION

Bruner (2004) claimed that "dialogic freedom creates in storytelling a field for the contesting of views and the play of power" (p.170). Instead of leaving power of analysis solely in the writings of curriculum theorists and field experts, the teacher educator decided to yield some of that power as the creator of this particular curriculum experiment. How do stakeholders help preservice teachers understand how integrated their identity is with the diversity of faces around them? How do teacher educators help preservice teachers through Banks' (2015) stages of cultural identity or make them advocates for social justice, and how do teacher educators integrate and model culturally relevant pedagogy in their own classrooms with fidelity? These are questions that the ongoing process of curriculum as racialized text seeks to explore.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Curriculum-as-Lived (Lived Curriculum): Teachable moments or lessons with intentional concepts but that are lived out in real time as real students affect the outcomes.

Curriculum-as-Plan: Structured plans made by a teacher before a class period that guide students through a series of instructional activities to accomplish a set of learning objectives.

Implicit Curriculum: Part of curriculum-as-lived that teachers do not intentionally add to their plans that can have both positive and negative impacts on student learning (i.e., the state of school upkeep that sends students the message their education is not worth investing in).

Metacognition: Ability to think through your own thought processes, resulting in both self-awareness of your creations and your own identity formation, biases, and assumptions.

Multicultural Education: Field of study that acknowledges the growing diversity of the United States and attempts to recognize and be more inclusive to people of color.

Pre-service Teachers: K-12 teachers in training who have graduated from high school and are in the certification process to become teachers.

Urban Education: Field of study historically focused on schools in dense, metropolitan areas but has more infamously been used as a proxy for schools where predominantly Black and Latinx students attend.

Vignette: A short piece of writing that leaves readers with an evocative impression of the author’s feelings and experience of one particular event.

White-Washed: Refers to curriculum that tells narratives from the perspective of White people without including perspectives from people of color or that centers White middle to upper class cultural norms.

Chapter 15

A Practitioner's Guide to Responsive School Leadership

Bethel E. Cager

Xavier University of Louisiana, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the role of culturally responsive school leadership and how it supports culturally responsive literacy instruction. A progressive and comprehensive approach called the 5Rs of Responsive Leadership is presented as a framework to guide school administrators on their culturally responsive journeys. The phases of the 5Rs of Responsive Leadership are reflect, relate, represent, respond, and revisit. Within this chapter, this leadership approach is supported by and aligned to the Professional Standards of Educational Leaders (PSEL) and the lived experiences of five school and district leaders. The 5Rs of Responsive Leadership can be utilized by school and district leaders across all grade levels and communities as a blueprint to the all-inclusive work required to improve instruction, student achievement, and school culture and climate in a manner that is sustainable and rewarding for all stakeholders.

A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO RESPONSIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

My foundation of literacy started with my mother. She was a proud elementary school teacher and spent much of her time teaching us songs, telling us stories passed down through the generations, reading storybooks, and teaching us how to read and write. Mother was like an intriguing griot from our motherland.

As my literacy skills developed, Mother worked with me to write stories and essays about our family traditions, foods, music, celebrations, losses, socio-political issues, and the uniquely Creole 7th Ward things my grandmother, Big Momma, used to say. Connecting my learning of literacy to what was relevant to my world was the basis for my love of literacy, and it is that same foundation of love and relevancy that I used to teach my child how to read and write. This underpinning is the essence of what should be present in literacy instruction in schools. Still, deliberate measures must be taken to establish a learning environment that can harness this connection with students. School leaders are ultimately responsible for supporting, guiding, and leading this process to fruition.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4215-9.ch015

According to the Wallace Foundation (2013), a major responsibility for school and district leaders is “improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn to their utmost” (p. 6). To fulfill this role, school leaders must actively engage, support, and monitor factors inside and outside the classroom and school, such as the selection and implementation of a standards-based curriculum, effective instructional strategies, professional development, family and community engagement, and political influences. This list is not exhaustive, but it presents some critical components required to improve student achievement for all students.

According to the United States Department of Education (2018), over the past 25 years, the reading achievement gap at the fourth-grade level between White and Black students closed by only six points, currently standing at a 26-point reading gap. The White and Latinx reading achievement gap did not close, currently at a 23-point gap. The United States Department of Education (2018) also shared 8th-grade data, finding that in 25 years, the reading achievement gap between White and Latinx students closed by seven points, currently standing at a 19-point reading gap. As for the White and Black 8th-grade reading achievement gap, it did not close, standing at 25-points. Griner and Stewart (2012) state that “culturally responsive practices in schools and classrooms have been shown to be an effective means of addressing the achievement gap” (p. 1).

This chapter serves as a blueprint for school leaders preparing to embark upon the culturally responsive journey. The process is presented utilizing the *5Rs of Responsive Leadership: reflect, relate, represent, respond, and revisit*. To support the structure of this approach, five school and district officials share their leadership lived experiences of implementing culturally responsive literacy instruction. Their voices are woven into the *5Rs Responsive Leadership* discussions. Each phase description aligns to quotes from the participating school and district leaders, contains support examples for literacy instruction, and correlates to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), formerly known as the ISLLC Standards, which is published by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 2015).

An Introduction of the School and District Leaders

Five school leaders are featured. Their lived experiences with implementing culturally responsive initiatives are highlighted to support the *5Rs of Responsive Leadership: reflect, relate, represent, respond, and revisit*. All participants and their schools or districts are assigned pseudonyms.

Superintendent A

You have to shift hearts and minds before you can shift curriculum. The events of this world have caused me to lead more with my heart (Superintendent A, personal communication, November 18, 2021). Superintendent A is at West Town School District in Illinois. Although Superintendent A has held various school and district-level positions in urban counties, West Town School District is a Black rural community within the state of Illinois.

Due to interruptions caused by Covid-19, West Town School District is in the early stages of implementing culturally responsive teaching. Despite being at the start of the journey, Superintendent A notices a groundswell of excitement among the staff and community. He shares these sentiments and allows his actions to demonstrate a sense of urgency.

Superintendent A believes in leading by example to instill respect for all students, races, and cultures. He wants students to experience a learning environment free of discrimination and disenfranchisement. This ideology is supported by a district strategic goal that focuses on educational equity.

West Town School District is a highly diverse school community. It comprises one elementary school of 163 students, Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grades. According to the Illinois Report Card (2021), the racial demographics of the student population are 70.6% Black, 20.2% Latinx, 4.9% White, and 4.3% Two or More Races.

Superintendent B

Taking the time to get to know students has led our school community to see the potential of students versus just categorizing them based on the color of their skin or the accent in their language (Superintendent B, personal communication, December 11, 2021). Superintendent B is at County School District in Wisconsin. He has held multiple school and district-level leadership positions within urban communities in the state of Wisconsin. Throughout his career, Superintendent B has demonstrated a commitment to culturally responsive leadership. His passion for equity and inclusion through culturally responsive leadership and instruction stems from his having the opportunity to work, serve, and lead in the same school district that he attended as a child. This deeply personal experience is where it all began for Superintendent B, and the connections and commitment were unbreakable. Superintendent B continues this devotion in his current school district, County School District.

With a layered and intense focus on equity and building relationships, the district is in the early middle stages of implementing its diversity and equity initiative. Superintendent B and his leadership team gather stakeholder input at specific intervals throughout the school year to ensure continuous improvement. These efforts support progress monitoring of the core values that align with culturally responsive leadership and instruction.

County School District comprises 31 campuses, including a state-recognized early learning program for literacy. Grade levels within the district range from 3-year-old Preschool through 12th. There are approximately 17,000 students within the district. According to the Wisconsin Department of Instruction (2021), the racial demographics of the student population are 0.3% Native American or Alaskan Native, 1% Asian, 25.2% Black, 29.3% Latinx, 37.5% White, and 6.7% Two or More Races.

Superintendent C

Be vulnerable, and use your power. You have to be willing to get up there and make it human (Superintendent C, personal communication, November 30, 2021). Superintendent C is the superintendent of the Mid-City School District. He is a veteran school and district administrator and has served in multiple Wisconsin communities. Superintendent C has been an advocate for diversity and equity throughout his career. Recognizing and embracing his responsibility to all students and the community of Mid-City, he possesses an unwavering moral compass that compels him to move forward with diversity, equity, and literacy.

With the completion of state testing, the *ESSA* report for Mid-City School District required efforts to improve student achievement for Black students and students with disabilities. The *ESSA* report prompted Superintendent C and his board of education to implement culturally responsive instruction to address

these concerns. The district has contracted with outside experts to guide and support the professional development and implementation processes.

Mid-City School District serves a diverse student population. According to the Wisconsin Department of Instruction (2021), there are 2,819 students in grades 4-year-old Kindergarten through 12th across six schools. The racial demographics of the student population are 0.5% Native American, 1.1% Asian, 5.8% Black, 24.7% Latinx, 61.4% White, and 6.4% Two or More Races.

Principal A

I became more intentional about asking parents about their cultures instead of making assumptions. I found that parents were very appreciative of that (Principal A, personal communication, December 28, 2021). Principal A is the Primary School principal in Texas. She is an experienced school leader with extensive service to diverse communities.

Implementing culturally responsive instruction resulted from a district-initiated school audit through an external party. Auditors reviewed and compared student demographic data to teacher demographic data. The curriculum and instructional strategies were also examined. Principal A welcomed the input from the auditors and led her school into the implementation of the recommendations.

There was no substitute for cultural competence. Leading by example for the faculty and staff, cultural sensitivity and awareness were her critical ingredients to getting it right. Principal A stressed her attention to not taking the cultures of families for granted and her openness to learn all that she can about the students and families of her school.

Principal A's school comprises early childhood-aged students and is part of a charter organization that has three schools. The charter organization serves students from Pre-Kindergarten through middle school grades. Principal A's leadership demonstrates a philosophy of respect for students and families.

Principal B

Students really were the ones who pushed it and made sure that the work kept going (Principal B, personal communication, December 28, 2021). Principal B is the principal of Southside High School in Louisiana. With leadership experience at the school and district levels, he has devoted his career to working in inner-city schools and diverse student populations.

Master and mentor teachers collaborate with classroom teachers weekly to support culturally responsive strategies aligned with standards-based instruction. The team recognizes that they are new to implementing culturally responsive practices and have much to learn. However, the foundation set through this process has ignited a quickening among students.

Principal B's commitment to students manifests through culturally responsive practices that strengthen student buy-in. Students are eager to provide input and feedback to teachers. Through their heightened engagement, the students, most of all, keep this initiative alive. Southside High School houses grades 9 through 12, and the student population is predominately Black. According to the Louisiana Department of Education (2021), the racial demographics of the student population are 1 Native American, 2 Asian, 698 Black, 35 Latinx, 1 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 6 White, and 1 Multiple Races, for a total of 744 students.

The Interviews

Each school and district leader participated in a 45 minute- to 1 hour-interview through Zoom. Questions were asked and followed up with probing questions when necessary. Participants' interviews were recorded and transcribed using Otter ai. The interview questions were as follows:

- How did you decide to engage your district in culturally responsive teaching?
- How did you implement culturally responsive teaching? Step-by-step, what things did you do?
- What has changed in your school or district since implementing culturally responsive teaching, especially in reading achievement (literacy)? What changes have you seen in students, teachers, and families?
- How has implementing culturally responsive teaching impacted the culture of your school?
- How has this changed you?
- What advice would you give to another school or district leader who wants to implement culturally responsive teaching in their school or district?

The lived experiences of the school and district leaders were used to validate the construct of this responsive leadership framework. Furthermore, participants' voices were used to make connections of culturally responsive practices to literacy instruction. Data collected were categorized and aligned to the individual phases of the *5Rs of Responsive Leadership: reflect, relate, represent, respond, and revisit*.

The 5Rs of Responsive Leadership: Reflect, Relate, Represent, Respond, and Revisit

Implementing culturally responsive literacy instruction can impact various groups of stakeholders. Teachers feel overwhelmed (Brackett & Cipriano, 2020). Parents want a better partnership (Eckart, 2017), and students can seem disconnected (Prothero, 2020). School and district administrators bear the responsibility to bring all factions together in the best interest of students. A methodological process can support this change, establish buy-in, and minimize confusion and uncertainty.

The *5Rs of Responsive Leadership* consists of the following phases: *reflect, relate, represent, respond, and revisit*. It is a framework to structure the thought processes and actions of school and district leaders as they transform literacy instruction through culturally responsive teaching practices. As school and district leaders progress through each phase, the framework scaffolds into a solid foundation that builds the entire implementation.

The *5Rs* are cyclical (see Figure 1). Furthermore, at any time throughout the *5Rs*, school and district leaders may redo a particular phase. However, to complete the final phase in the cycle, *revisit*, all take-aways and data from the *reflect, relate, represent, and respond* phases must be utilized (see Figure 2).

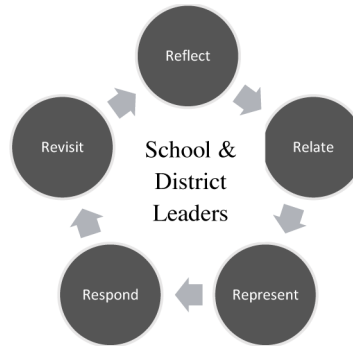
Reflect

The *reflect* phase aligns to PSEL 3, *Equity and Cultural Responsiveness*, and PSEL 6, *Professional Capacity of School Personnel*. PSEL 3 states, "Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 11). Additionally, PSEL 3 includes that "effective leaders confront and alter

A Practitioner's Guide to Responsive School Leadership

Figure 1. The 5Rs of responsive leadership

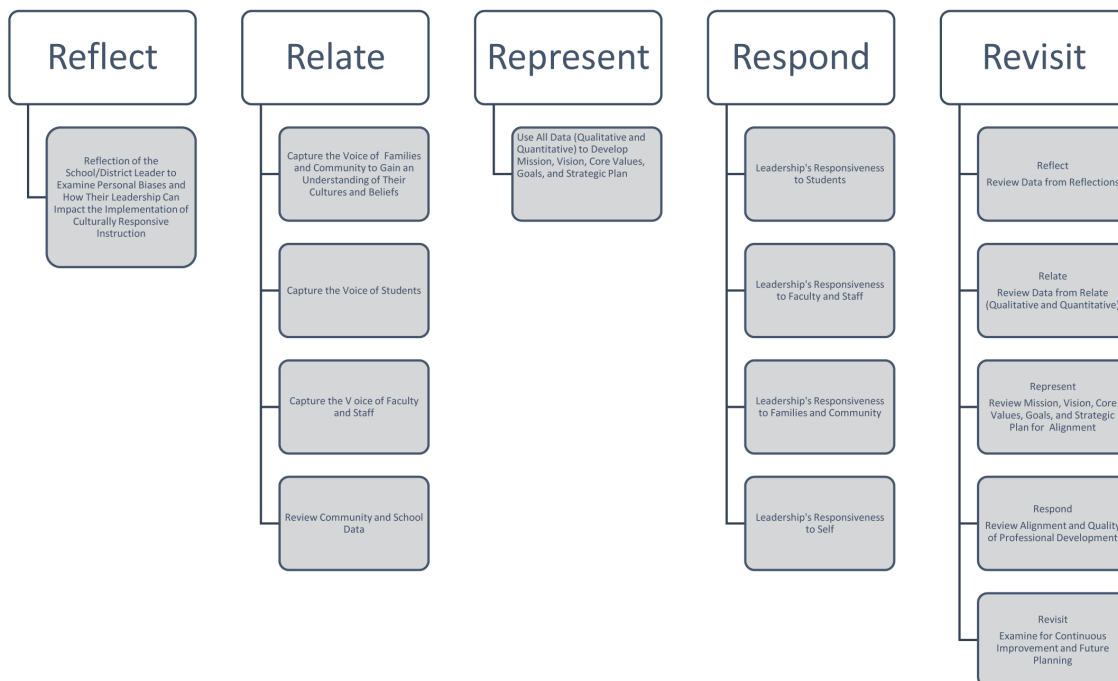
Note. The 5Rs of Responsive Leadership was created by Dr. Bethel E. Cager (2021).



institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status” (p.11). Furthermore, PSEL 6 states, “Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 14). The component of PSEL 6 that aligns with the *reflect phase* states that “effective leaders

Figure 2. Alignment of the 5Rs of responsive leadership

Note. Alignment of the 5Rs of Responsive Leadership was created by Dr. Bethel E. Cager (2021).



tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 14). These PSELs encapsulate the core of the purpose of the *reflect phase*.

According to Khalifa (2018), school leaders must critically reflect on establishing a clear understanding of how their positions can influence the academic and cultural landscapes of their schools and school districts. Khalifa posits that critical reflection “is a necessary first step because it is a process through which school leaders recognize and discover how their institutions and practices have been oppressive to minoritized students” (p. 74). Furthermore, Khalifa believes that school leaders should possess the following skills to demonstrate a commitment to critical self-reflection:

1. The ability to identify and understand the oppressive contexts that students and their communities face;
2. The willingness and humility to identify and vocalize one’s own personal background and privilege, which allows leaders to see how they are directly involved or complicit in oppressive contexts; and
3. The courage to push colleagues and staff to critically self-reflect upon their personal and professional role in oppression and anti-oppressive works and to eventually develop responsive school structures. (Khalifa, 2018, p. 61)

The *reflect phase* of the *5Rs of Responsive Leadership* embodies critical reflection. It allows school administrators to think, in a profound manner, about the state of cultural responsiveness in their schools and the roles they play in promoting or hindering the acceleration of culturally responsive instruction. The *reflect phase* gives school and district leaders the latitude to examine their cultures, biases, cultural competencies, and leadership actions. This phase also allows leaders to think about strengthening personal perceptions and creating an optimal culturally responsive learning environment for all students.

The following components can be used as guidance to fulfill the *reflect phase*:

- Release the fear of facing the truth
- Identify and process one difficulty at a time
- Ask pertinent questions
 - How has my culture impacted how I lead?
 - What biases do I have toward other cultures?
 - How well do I understand the culture of the families and students I serve?
 - How am I visible in the community of my students and their families?
 - How do I demonstrate that I am committed to creating a culturally responsive learning environment for all students?
 - How do I demonstrate my commitment to my students and the community in which they live?
 - What must I do differently to ensure my students are in a culturally responsive learning environment?
 - How do I ensure that socio-political awareness is reflected within instruction?
 - What is the desired outcome?
 - What will I do differently next time?
 - What is my next step, and why?

Table 1. 5Rs of responsive leadership: reflect phase

Leaders	Quotes	Literacy Connections School and district leaders can...
Superintendent A	"Release the bias. A lot of people just don't know, but do you not know because you choose not to know and live in a bubble."	Expose literacy teachers to reflection opportunities and courageous conversations.
Superintendent B	"What leverage points am I going to need to pull to make sure all of my students are reading by the third grade? How can I further use my leadership to ensure a culturally responsive approach to teaching students how to read and write?"	Engage literacy teachers in horizontal and vertical articulation to design a standards-based spiraling curriculum aligned to culturally responsive activities.
Superintendent C	"I wish I knew then what I know now. How do I avoid the unintended consequences?"	Reassure literacy teachers that the process involves growth for themselves and their students.
Principal A	"I want to make sure that I am culturally sound and aware. I don't want to offend anybody's culture."	Present literacy teachers with the opportunities to understand the value of students' native languages and customs through family and community interactions.
Principal B	"I don't want my students not to have a deeper understanding of their history, culture, and the real world. What more can I do?"	Demonstrate for literacy teachers how to build reading and writing instruction based on the history, real-life experiences, and background knowledge of students.

Furthermore, school and district leaders can utilize these steps to coach teachers through their own *reflect phase*. Upon completing the *reflect phase*, school and district leaders are ready to launch the *relate phase*.

Relate

The *relate phase* of the *5 Rs of Responsive Leadership* is aligned to PSEL 5, *Community of Care and Support for Students*, PSEL 7, *Professional Community for Teachers and Staff*, and PSEL 8, *Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community*. According to PSEL 5, "Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 13). Furthermore, PSEL 7 states, "Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 15). When considering the role of parents and community members, PSEL 8 asserts, "Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16). Together, these PSELs demonstrate the value of creating a school community where all stakeholders' voices are respected, heard, and valued, which is the foundation of the *relate phase*.

The *relate phase* is implemented in two parts. It consists of the collection and analysis of qualitative stakeholder voices and the examination of institutional quantitative data. Qualitative and quantitative data work together to tell the story and identify the cultural needs of the school or district while building solid relationships. It is a mixed-methods approach, as qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analyzed to design the foundation of the culturally responsive initiative.

Saldana (2011) defines a mixed-methods approach as follows:

Mixed methods research utilizes a strategic and purposeful combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis for its studies. It is assumed that the epistemological (i.e., ways of knowing) and methodological advantages of each paradigm can work in concert to corroborate or more robustly support the findings or to reveal complementary or even contradictory outcomes. (p. 10)

Part One. Part one focuses on utilizing the voices of the community, students, and staff. Voice is input. For students and families, Holquist and Porter (2020) define voice as “the ways in which students and/or families have opportunities to indirectly or directly participate in and influence education decisions that shape students’ learning” (p. 1). Through voice, school and district leaders can gain an understanding of the needs of the community and allow them to be an integral part of the work. According to Khalifa (2018), this process can provide leaders with “the ability to identify and understand the oppressive contexts that students and their communities face” (p. 61).

Qualitatively, the *relate phase* is imperative to establish buy-in and ownership among families, students, and staff to build relationships. Within the *relate phase*, school and district leaders get the ultimate opportunity to lead by example, showing that they care and value all groups of the school community. Invaluable qualitative data are gleaned through this process as the voices of stakeholders are captured.

There should be multiple data points used for triangulation. Rosman and Rallis (2017) define triangulation as follows:

Multiple sources of data, multiple points in time, or a variety of methods are used to build the picture that you are investigating. This helps ensure that you have not studied only a fraction of the complexity that you seek to understand. (p. 55)

The voices of stakeholders will provide the qualitative data needed. These data can be obtained through the following formats:

- Community Forums
- Townhall Meetings
- Roundtable Discussions
- Think Tanks
- Professional Conferences
- Stakeholder Surveys
- Informal Conversations

Each one of these interactive formats can take place virtually or face-to-face. Additionally, each format can gather the voice of multiple categories of stakeholders, such as families, students, staff, faith-based communities, local social justice organizations, elected officials, and community business owners. The Leadership Academy states:

Culturally responsive leaders affirm the cultures of students and adults through the learning opportunities they provide, the materials they use, the environment they build, and their skill in using cultural understandings to support learning. They build authentic rapport and trust with students, staff, families, and the community, affirming the multiple identities of individuals, and support and guide others in doing the same. (p. 3)

Additional qualitative data to review during the *relate phase* are work samples of students and portfolios. These items provide a visual to support the quantitative data.

Relate Phase for Teachers and Staff

Teachers are a critical part of the entire implementation and sustaining process. Incorporating teacher voice is crucial to the success of initiatives. “When teachers have a voice in decision-making, they are four times more likely to believe that they can make a difference and three times more likely to encourage students to be leaders and make decisions” (O’Brien, 2016, p. 3). This section of the *relate phase* gives teachers a seat at the table. It promotes teacher buy-in and trust. It is not the same as professional development. It is an opportunity to allow the views and beliefs of teachers to shape and mold the direction of the school or district.

Part Two. The *relate phase* is further actualized by part two, analyzing school and district quantitative data. Quantitatively, the *relate phase* offers the opportunity for school administrators to review and analyze pertinent numerically quantifiable data. Triangulation should take place on various forms of data (Rosman & Rallis, 2017). These data points should be compared before and after implementing culturally responsive practices. Below is a menu from which school and district leaders may select possible forms of data to triangulate:

- **Ds and Fs in reading and English language arts:** Use these data to determine if culturally responsive instruction positively impacts student achievement. An indication of success is a consistent reduction of Ds and Fs in reading or ELA. These data can also be used to identify needed teacher support.
- **Academic growth to mastery in reading and English language arts:** These numerical data describe how much academic progress students make within the instructional standards at certain intervals of the school year. Standards-aligned tests can capture growth to mastery data through weekly, unit, or benchmark assessments. These data can be used to determine if culturally responsive instruction supports academic growth for students.
- **Summative assessments in reading and English language arts:** Examples of these student data can include reading and ELA unit and chapter tests and state assessments administered at the end of the year or course. These assessments can also help determine if culturally responsive instruction is assisting students in meeting the desired academic outcomes. Success would be an increase in the attained reading and ELA scores.
- **Home language surveys:** According to the United States Department of Education, the Institute of Education Sciences, and the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2017), in the United States, it is required that school districts assess the language needs of students. Many school districts choose to conduct this language needs assessment in a Home Language Survey. A parent or guardian must complete the survey for each student registering for school. It typically asks questions about the primary language spoken in the student’s home and their first language. This information helps school leaders to determine if the student must take an English proficiency assessment and qualify for English Language Learner support. These data can inform the creation of language programs and linguistically responsive practices that can support entire families.

- **Student attendance:** These data can be used to determine attendance patterns of individual students and groups of students. Are there attendance trends that align with cultural traditions or holidays? If so, it can be a culturally responsive practice to recognize and prepare for students' upcoming absences due to cultural traditions or holidays.
- **Discipline referrals:** Discipline referral reports can be analyzed to see what types of student behaviors teachers report to the dean of students' or principal's office. Leaders should examine these data to determine if the reported behaviors are assigned to particular groups of students. Can any of these behaviors be due to a student's culture or even a socio-political issue? School leaders and staff can use these data to implement appropriate culturally responsive practices to support the social-emotional needs of students.
- **Disciplinary exclusion:** Suspension and expulsions are exclusionary punitive measures that disproportionately impact Black students. During the 2015-2016 school year, Black boys comprised 25% of all United States students suspended, and Black girls comprised 14% when they each are only 8% of the population (Blad & Mitchell, 2018). These disciplinary tactics take learning opportunities away from students and contribute to a decline in academic achievement. These data can reveal cultural insensitivity or discrimination within the school or district. Disciplinary exclusion data can be used to identify alternatives that are culturally responsive and replace exclusionary measures.
- **Family engagement:** Collecting family engagement data is critical to creating and sustaining a culturally responsive learning environment. School and district leaders can work with literacy teachers to track the number of times they contacted parents for positive conversations or the number of times they incorporated a family component into assignments. The teachers can also document the number of times and how they encouraged parental input in developing an instructional unit. By combining these culturally responsive practices, school and district leaders can strengthen the relationships with families and positively affect student achievement.
- **Teacher evaluation scores:** School and district leaders can collaborate with teachers to ensure a component within the evaluation system focuses on culturally responsive instructional characteristics. This information can be used to gauge needed implementation support for teachers. Leaders may utilize the numbers to identify culturally responsive professional development for individuals, groups, and overall faculty.

Represent

The *represent phase* of the *5Rs of Responsive Leadership* comprises creating the foundational elements of organizations: policies, vision, mission, core values, and strategic goals. These entities state how organizations operate and where they are headed. The *represent phase* aligns to PSEL 1, *Mission, Vision, and Core Values*. It states that "effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9). All data and experiences from the *reflect* and *relate phases* are utilized during the *represent phase* to carve out what schools or districts *represent*, which is evident through foundational aspects such as mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals.

The *represent phase* includes governance bodies and the hierarchal dimensions of school districts but collaboratively. School and district leaders must understand the communal institutional structure of

Table 2. 5Rs of responsive leadership: relate phase

Leaders	Quotes	Literacy Connections School and district leaders can...
Superintendent A	"One of the biggest parts that we missed as educators was that we wanted to push English language learning because that's our native language. In doing so, we're basically creating a rift between parents and students academically. So, I've always found it to be most effective when you're teaching an ELL/ESL student to honor and recognize their native language."	Collaborate with literacy teachers about creating dual language or two-way bilingual classrooms where English speakers and non-English speakers share a classroom and learn each other's language.
Superintendent B	"We do two different types of student surveys. One is a student satisfaction survey, and the other is a social-emotional survey. We engage the voice of families and community members through customer service satisfaction surveys. This provides useful feedback for us to create certain types of courses, professional development, and clubs."	Support and brainstorm with literacy teachers to create culturally responsive surveys for students and parents. These surveys can gather input on the canon of literature and instructional strategies.
Superintendent C	"We do annual equity audits where we look at attendance, discipline, course selection, and AP completion. What are we going to do? I want to make sure we don't create another marginalized system."	Work with literacy teachers to incorporate a social consciousness when developing lessons.
Principal A	"Ask parents - How can we strengthen our classrooms? How can we strengthen our curriculum? What advice would you give? Tell parents that we're doing this because we want to be more culturally sound. We want to be culturally aware."	Support literacy teachers in organizing the voices of grandparents into instruction to capture a deep meaning of students' cultures. The life experiences of students' grandparents will be different from that of their parents or even themselves.
Principal B	"I want to establish clear, open, and honest communications with our parents. Let's build that relationship."	Organize professional development for literacy teachers that demonstrates how the voice of families and students can positively influence literacy instruction.

school districts and the responsibility of cultural responsiveness to the community. In the United States, community members elect boards of education. Therefore, boards answer to their constituents, the members of their communities (NSBA, n.d.). Within the communities is where the surge of support and buy-in originates. The boards of education set policies that pave the way for cultural responsiveness. The superintendents collaborate with their boards on implementing policies that support and determine how to embed the voice of stakeholders into the mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals of the district.

The superintendents interviewed for this chapter stressed the importance and appreciation of the support they receive from their boards of education. The partnership, allocation of resources, and political maneuvering were expressed as invaluable. Also, the principals interviewed credited their district offices with the foresight to support the need to address diversity, equity, and culturally responsive practices within their schools.

With the support of their boards of education, superintendents collaborate with school leaders to ensure consistent messages are delivered and identification of needs established. With this step, principals are ready to work with school stakeholder groups to align their vision, mission, core values, and goals.

PSEL Standard One also states that “effective leaders develop shared understanding of and commitment to mission, vision, and core values within the school and community” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9). The work should consider short-term and long-term planning to ensure effective creation, implementation, and sustainability. Upon completing the *represent phase*, the organization is ready for the *respond phase*.

Respond

The *respond phase* of the *5Rs of Responsive Leadership* is the implementation process. It involves taking the blueprints created in the *represent phase* and putting those policies, visions, missions, goals, and plans into action. For instructional leaders, the *respond phase* embodies quadrants of responsiveness: 1) leadership’s responsiveness to students, 2) leadership’s responsiveness to faculty and staff, 3) leadership’s responsiveness to families and community, and 4) leadership’s responsiveness to self. The quadrants are further developed with pillars within each. The quadrants are not listed in order of priority and are equally important. However, depending on the need or circumstances, one quadrant may rise in priority over another (see Figure 3).

Quadrant 1: Leadership’s Responsiveness to Students. Quadrant One reinforces and reminds school and district leaders that students are first and foremost of all decisions. The one ingredient that students require in a culturally responsive classroom is represented in the pillar, Rigor and Representation in the Learning Environment. The responsibilities of Quadrant One are supported by PSEL 3, *Equity and Cultural Responsiveness*, and PSEL 5, *Community of Care and Support for Students*.

Pillar: Rigor and Representation in the Learning Environment

PSEL 3 states, “Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 11). Furthermore, PSEL 5 asserts, “Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 13). All students deserve an optimal learning environment grounded in rigorous academics, lived experiences, and culture. This quadrant of the *respond phase* focuses on how the learning environment looks, sounds, and feels to students.

The Leadership Academy (2020) states:

Culturally responsive leaders center student learning and academic rigor across every school, classroom, and learning environment in their system. They cultivate and value content expertise. They understand and apply college and career level standards and select high-quality instructional materials aligned to standards. They hold, model, and communicate consistently high and transparent expectations for all learners and develop the capacity of the system and the educators within it to know where each student is in relation to those expectations and use that knowledge to provide appropriate learning supports. (p. 3)

PSELs 3 and 5 reinforce the inclusion of the cultures and languages of the students and the community into the learning environment (NPBEA, 2015). To accomplish responsiveness, students must have the educational opportunities to immerse themselves into classroom instruction that is standards-aligned, challenging, and reverberates the essence of their cultures and socio-political issues. Therefore, school and district leaders owe it to students to use their power to bring learning to life in the most meaningful ways.

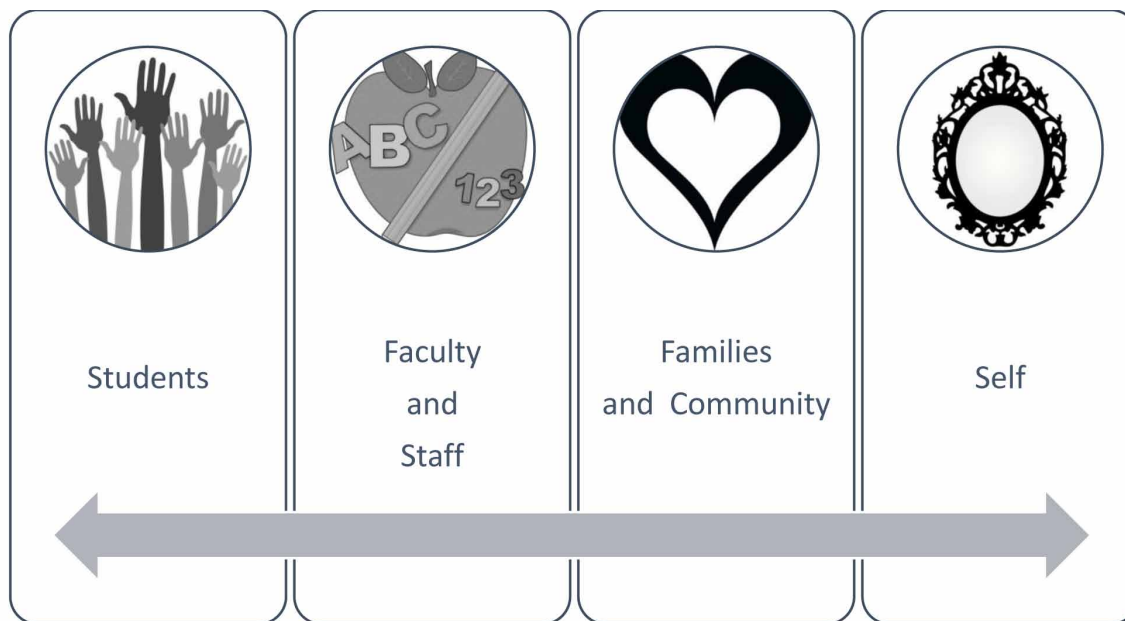
Table 3. 5Rs of responsive leadership: represent phase

Leaders	Quotes	Literacy Connections School and district leaders can...
Superintendent A	“The reality is that at the district level, you have to create a culture. Fixing the problems of racial discrimination and disenfranchisement does not start in the classroom. It starts at the system level. Equity issues are systematic and must be fixed at the structural and foundational levels. That’s your governance body, your board, or your superintendent. It starts at the top.”	Keep data at the forefront. Create a data wall with reading and ELA data at the district or school level to serve as visual references while designing goals.
Superintendent B	“It allows me, through ongoing efforts, to align, align, align. Everything must be in alignment. So, starting at the time the vision is set, the support is there. The coherence is there with the focus on equity. It’s embedded in the leadership, from the top all the way down to the teachers. We have alignment and a consistent message. It doesn’t become an overwhelming task. It becomes part of what we do every day. This is our culture.”	Provide board members with comprehensive data on literacy achievement in the district. These data can be in addition to the data wall. Accompany this process with in-person or video messages to the board members from parents, students, principals, and literacy teachers about their literacy needs, hopes, successes. Bring the numbers to life.
Superintendent C	“We did a board book study on Michael Fulton’s book, Governance Core, that talked about what school boards should be doing and what more is that school boards need to have a moral imperative. And our moral imperative that the board came up with was that we wanted all students to, and that’s all students, capital ALL, to learn to high degrees. This is what we are about. I have a very supportive board.”	Utilize the support of external coaches to guide the community efforts. Surveys and town hall meetings to discuss culturally responsive teaching of literacy can be practical formats to capture the voice of parents and solidify an inclusive process when developing goals.
Principal A	“We had to submit our school goals to the district office. Basically, we painted out what the school year would look like. I was able to include all of the different nuances that I picked up from some of my parents for budgeting purposes. I was able to plan better. That made it a lot easier when it came time because I knew exactly what was needed to strengthen the curriculum.”	Create a literacy stakeholder committee. Share the work of the school committee with the superintendent and board members through a concept mapping strategy to reinforce alignment.
Principal B	“This was a decision we made together. It was an easy decision because it’s our kids. We don’t want you to be blinded by what’s going on. We are meeting with the district. We want to make it part of our strategic plan and next year roll it out in a more formal way.”	At the school, use the biweekly virtual parent meetings as a platform to garner evidence of interest in culturally responsive literacy instruction. Make it a standing agenda item. Share this information with the district office.

Quadrant 2: Leadership’s Responsiveness to Faculty and Staff. This quadrant provides school and district leaders with an outline of how to structure their instructional leadership responsibilities. Quadrant Two comprises one pillar, Professional Learning and Support. The responsibilities of Quadrant Two are supported by PSELs 3, 4, 6, and 7.

Figure 3. Respond phase: quadrants of leadership responsiveness

Note. The Respond Phase: Quadrants of Leadership Responsiveness was created by Dr. Bethel E. Cager (2021).



Pillar: Professional Learning and Support

PSEL 3, *Equity and Cultural Responsiveness*, states, “Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 11). Additionally, PSEL 4, *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment*, presents, “Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 12). According to PSEL 6, *Professional Capacity of School Personnel*, “Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 14), and PSEL 7, *Professional Community for Teachers and Staff*, states, “Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 15). The four standards blend to support Quadrant Two, creating a foundation for school and district leaders on how to build the capacity of faculty and staff.

The professional learning structure can manifest as professional learning communities, grade-level team meetings, department cluster meetings, vertical articulation meetings, and individual sessions. School leaders should allow data to dictate the instructional learning topics and how professional learning occurs. Professional learning opportunities can be tailored to individual teacher needs. PSEL 6 also states that “effective leaders develop teachers’ and staff members’ professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth” (p. 14), and PSEL 7 develops an environment that is conducive to capacity building and job-embedded professional learning (NPBEA, 2015). To ensure the literacy teachers are prepared to implement culturally responsive instruction, three key areas must be addressed:

- **Rigor and relevancy of curriculum:** Rigor and relevancy are non-negotiables in the classroom. To build a comprehensive system, school leaders should collaborate with instructional coaches and master and mentor teachers to support reading and ELA faculty with professional development on the instructional standards, the curriculum of the school, and culturally responsive instruction (NPBEA, 2015). Work sessions and instructional modeling should be conducted to demonstrate and coach teachers through the alignment of state standards for reading and ELA to best practices for culturally responsive teaching.
- **Cultural competency and respect:** Leaders should find authentic ways to have reading and ELA teachers gain cultural competency, which translates to respect for the students and their cultures. PSEL 3 also includes that “effective leaders recognize, respect, and employ each student’s strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 11). To promote the development of cultural competence and respect, school and district leaders can
 - arrange a tour of the community with designated stops.
 - invite community members to lead the professional learning sessions on their culture.
 - collaborate with the faith-based community for a staff visit to their church.
 - think of opportunities for teachers to go into the community and opportunities for the community to come into the school.
 - encourage reading and ELA teachers to incorporate what they learn into daily classroom instruction.
- **Social consciousness:** These professional learning sessions can be developed around what is seen in today’s news. Social media is inundated with information about movements, such as Black Lives Matter, MeToo, and White Nationalists. PSEL 3 also incorporates that “effective leaders confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 11). Police brutality, poverty, hunger, and homelessness are just some of the inequities and injustices that students are faced with every day of their lives. In an interview with Fay (2019), Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings explains:

It means giving students the space to talk about an event like the killing of Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Missouri, and letting students choose to investigate problems that affect them rather than teachers setting their own social justice agendas in the classroom. (p. 1)

Leaders can also invite local social justice organizations to conduct learning sessions for reading and ELA faculty.

Quadrant 3: Leadership’s Responsiveness to Families and Community. Implementing strategies to increase and improve family and community engagement in meaningful and impactful ways for the school community is the heart and soul of quadrant three, *families and community*. This quadrant comprises four pillars: 1) inclusive decision making, 2) consistent feedback and two-way communication, 3) cultural competence and respect, and 4) social consciousness. The pillars work together to incorporate family and community as integral parts of schools and school districts. Quadrant Three aligns to PSEL 8, *Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community*. Specifically, PSEL 8 states, “Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16).

Pillar: Inclusive Decision Making

PSEL 8 asserts that “effective leaders create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16). It benefits students for schools to embrace parents as partners (How parent involvement leads to student success, 2018). Parents participate in booster clubs, chaperones, room parents, concession stands, and other volunteer activities. “Those volunteer opportunities, however, not only reinforce the top-down power structure of schools but also cater to mostly white, privileged families, maintaining the institutionalized racism that marginalizes low-income families and families of color” (A. Ishamar, as cited in Eckart, 2017, p. 1). The most meaningful engagement is to include parents in decision-making.

Including parents on a decision-making team shows that leadership values their voices and welcomes their input. This inclusiveness promotes a sense of buy-in of the school community and transparency, ultimately building trust (Benner & Quirk, 2020). School leaders can utilize the PTA/PTO structure to find parent representatives to include on the following examples of planning teams: school leadership, school improvement, Title I, career and technology education, school safety, school budget, student attendance, and culturally responsive.

Pillar: Consistent Feedback and Communication

PSEL 8 includes that “effective leaders engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16). The amount and quality of family communication matter. Communication with families should be provided frequently and in multiple formats. Establishing a culture that prioritizes family communication demonstrates transparency and fosters partnerships that increase parental and family engagement (Benner & Quirk, 2020). School leaders must pay attention to the types and frequency of communication. However, there are instances where we fall short.

The nationally representative Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of more than 12,000 parents found that only 42 percent reported receiving a school-initiated phone call about their child in the 2015-2016 school year, and only 62 percent had received an individualized email about their child. (McQuiggan et al., 2020, as cited in Benner & Quirk, 2020, p. 2)

According to How two-way communication can boost parent engagement (2018), schools typically utilize newsletters, bulletins, and auto dialing to communicate with parents. These forms of one-way communication notify families but do not provide the opportunity for interactive and engaging conversations. On the other hand, two-way communication presents parents with opportunities to share their thoughts, give input, and let family voices be heard throughout the school year. Two-way communication can be accomplished through the following examples:

- telephone calls (person-to-person)
- parent conferences
- interactive surveys
- parent meetings

School and district leaders should frequently communicate with families. Weekly contact with families is recommended. The weekly contact can be an emailed newsletter or bulletin, which are one-way forms of communication. However, it is beneficial to have multiple two-way communication opportunities during the school year (How two-way communication can boost parent engagement, 2018). Consistency must be brought to this process to assure parents of what to expect and to demonstrate transparency and partnership.

Pillar: Cultural Competency and Respect

Within PSEL 8, it identifies that “effective leaders maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16). This pillar within Quadrant Three is paramount. School and district leaders cannot effectively serve their communities if they do not know them (Kladifko, 2013). The following are examples of questions to assist school administrators in building cultural competence:

- What are the various cultural groups within the community?
- Who are the leaders and advocates within the cultural groups?
- Where are the churches, and who are the pastors?
- What grocery stores cater to the cultural groups?
- What are the cuisines of the cultural groups?
- What can school leaders do, and where can they learn to speak and understand the conversational language of the cultural communities?
- What holidays and special events are celebrated by cultural groups, and how can the school incorporate recognitions of these celebrations within instruction and the overall culture of the school or district?
- Are school and district leaders visible in the community?

In the *respond phase*, school and district leaders must answer the above sample questions properly and deeply. As leaders answer these questions, they should link them to their cultural competency goals and create a completion timeline. This process will foster mutual respect between school administrators and community members (Kladifko, 2013).

Pillar: Social Consciousness

For leaders to establish a well-rounded view and understanding of the families they serve, they must possess a socially conscious lens and moral compass.

Culturally responsive leaders cultivate and support adults' and students' ability to question and critique social norms, values, practices, and systems that produce and maintain inequity. They facilitate adult and student talk about culture and identity and consistently look for and utilize opportunities to generate inquiry about inequity, oppression, and change. (The Leadership Academy, p. 3)

This position is further supported by a component of PSEL 8, “effective leaders understand, value, and employ the community’s cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16).

The social injustice and oppression endured by marginalized groups contribute to their levels of trauma. School and district leaders must possess a keen understanding of the inequities that members of their community face. Again, the *respond phase* requires action and implementation. Therefore, the critical question is what roles school leaders play to stop the inequities. “Leadership must be explicitly and actively anti-oppressive” (Khalifa, 2018, p. 191).

School and district leaders are in powerful positions to impact their communities. Below are examples of decisive steps that leaders can take to work toward ending the social injustices and inequities experienced within the school’s community:

- Conversations with the mayor and elected officials
- Discussions with the police chief
- Talks with the faith-based community
- Meetings with local social justice organizations
- Social media campaigns for social justice and equity

The above examples are also ways to show the community that you care and are committed to the well-being of students when they are inside and outside of the school.

Quadrant 4: Leadership’s Responsiveness to Self. This quadrant focuses on school and district leaders and contains one pillar, *reflect and respond*. To successfully fulfill this quadrant of the *respond phase*, leaders must consider their experiences as opportunities to grow (Mendez, 2021). Leaders must be honest with themselves to benefit from being responsive to themselves. Quadrant Four aligns with PSEL 6, *Professional Capacity of School Personnel*. Although this standard primarily addresses the leader’s responsibility to build the capacity of staff, there is a component that states that “effective leaders tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, student, and improvement, maintaining a healthy work-life balance” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 14).

Pillar: Reflect and Respond

The journey of this pillar begins with reflection, but this reflection is a bit different from the *reflect phase*. This round of reflection requires leaders to *respond*, a profoundly personal action that is critical to personal and professional growth and maximizing accomplishments. The *reflect and respond* pillar is connected to the following components:

- **Mind:** Serving in school or district-level administrative positions while facing the demands of personal life can be daunting on the mental health of leaders (Harper 2019). School and district leaders report to work early, leave work late, take work home, and even work on weekends. It is difficult, if not impossible, to effectively take care of everyone else if leaders do not take care of themselves. To aid in this process, the following are examples of reflective questions that leaders can utilize:
 - How often do I feel sad, anxious, or depressed?
 - When I feel sad, anxious, or depressed, what do I do to change these feelings?
 - What is the primary source of my anxiety or sadness?
 - Do I make time for my spouse and children?
 - How do I handle situations that require multi-tasking?

- How do I respond to faculty and staff who stop me in the corridors to ask questions?

Based on details revealed during the reflection process, leaders must *respond*. If needed, leaders should talk to loved ones, counselors, or physicians. “Learning to deal with this stress also allows school leaders to set an example for teachers, who also need to practice self-care techniques to maintain their own positive approach in the classroom” (Harper, 2019, p. 2). School and district leaders should not ignore feelings of distress.

- **Body:** According to Harper (2019), the stress of the job can also impact physical health. Therefore, just as it is essential to maintain a healthy mindset, it is also necessary to take care of physical health. Influential school leaders spend very little time seated in their offices. The job demands high visibility, classroom visits, cafeteria and yard duties, interacting with students and families inside and outside the building, monitoring facilities, and more (Harper, 2019). There is barely any time to eat lunch during the workday.

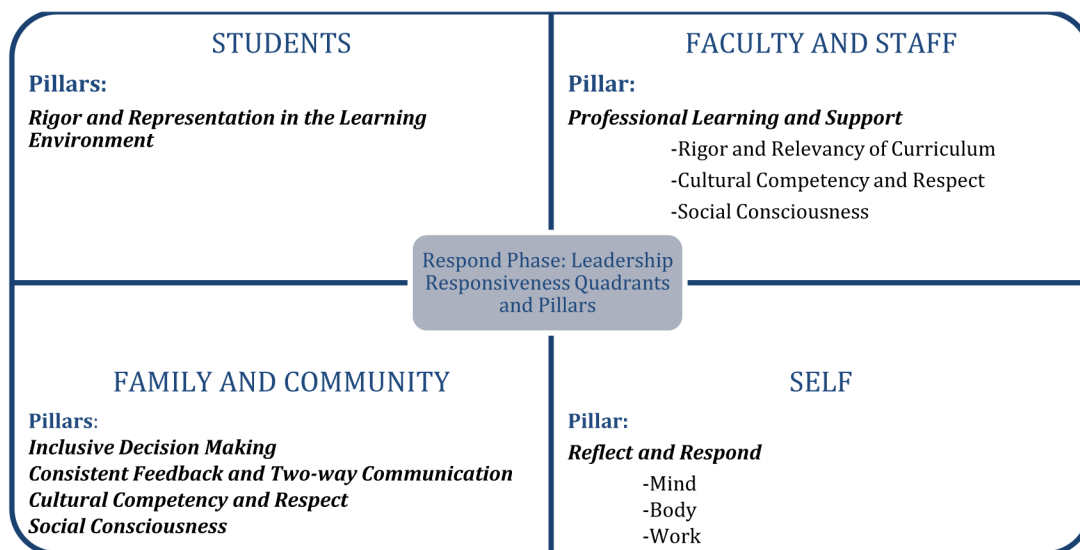
Harper (2019) posits that the role of school leaders can be demanding at times, as it comes with multiple responsibilities. Expected high visibility and human interaction are just a couple of duties that keep leaders on their feet, not to mention the unexpected events within a day. For these reasons, school leaders must take care of their physical health. Leaders must be deliberate to make the care happen because it can be easy to become sidetracked. School and district leaders must reflect on their physical health status, determine what factors contribute to their current situation, and *respond*. The following are suggestions for maintaining physical health:

- walking or jogging,
- riding a bike
- lifting weights
- eating healthy meals
- drinking water
- sleeping a full night
- keeping medical appointments
- **Work:** Within this component, leaders are to focus on the quality of their work. This section of the *reflect and respond* pillar forces leaders to examine their effectiveness internally. Leaders should allow all forms of data to drive this process: the numbers, what is seen, what is heard, and what is felt. A personal journal may be kept to capture thoughts and how these thoughts should be addressed. School and district leaders should design a personal, professional learning plan from this process.

The personal, professional learning plan may consist of a vision statement, goals, action items, topics for professional development, justification statements, and timelines. This plan is a living and breathing document, changing and adapting as circumstances dictate (Killion, 2013). This component becomes a deeply personal commitment to professional growth, focusing on critical reflection and action.

Figure 4. Respond phase: descriptors of the quadrants of leadership responsiveness

Note. The Respond Phase: Quadrants of Leadership Responsiveness and Pillars was created by Dr. Bethel E. Cager (2021).



Revisit

Revisit is the final phase of the *5Rs of Responsive Leadership*. The *revisit phase* focuses on progress monitoring and continuous improvement. It aligns with PSEL 10, *School Improvement*, “effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 18). Preparation for the *revisit phase* begins during the *respond phase* with progress monitoring. Data collected throughout the school year accumulates to tell a story at the end. As a result of tracking progress data throughout the school year, it is easy to focus on continuous improvement during the *revisit phase*. Leaders are to look at the outcomes and determine if the results place the school or district on the trajectory to continue implemented efforts into the upcoming school year. According to PSEL 10, meeting the needs of all stakeholders, aligning actions to the vision, mission, and core values, and making data-driven decisions are responsibilities of effective school leaders (NPBEA, 2015).

To fully complete the *revisit* phase of continuous improvement, school and district leaders must start at the beginning of this cyclical process and review data and information from the four preliminary phases: *reflect*, *relate*, *represent*, and *respond*. Each phase builds upon the other, and together they depict a holistic view of responsive leadership. The question is, does it all lineup?

Revisiting the first four phases allows instructional leaders to identify any misalignments that must be corrected or successes that must be kept. Based on these data, leaders could ask themselves the following examples of questions:

- Are the outcomes in the *respond phase* what were expected?
- Are there additional reflections that must take place regarding my cultural understanding of the students and community?

Table 4. 5Rs of responsive leadership: respond phase

Leaders	Quotes	Literacy Connections School and district leaders can...
Superintendent A	"So, as it relates to culturally responsive teaching, I think the biggest part of implementation is really just changing mindsets. Our professional development includes sensitivity training."	Provide reading and ELA teachers with the resources to build classroom libraries that represent the cultures, traditions, and even socio-political experiences of students.
Superintendent B	"We made sure that our curriculum was responsive. Using a diverse team, we reviewed the curriculum, making sure that through a cultural lens it met the standard of cultural relevance. We set criteria and examined the teaching framework and pedagogical practices that promote staff getting to know students. A new curriculum was adopted."	Provide training to literacy teachers on how to align culturally responsive instruction with the state standards.
Superintendent C	"So, this is what our training times are on. We're not going to be looking for time to do this. This is the time to do this."	Actively attend professional learning communities to show commitment to the implementation process and learn how best to support literacy teachers, collectively and individually.
Principal A	"We bought a library of books that reflected the different cultures of students for each classroom. These books helped to support literacy instruction and build home-school connections."	Implement a system that monitors and responds to the needs of the reading and ELA instructional coaches to ensure their effectiveness in working with literacy teachers.
Principal B	"Future professional development will focus on building great relationships with students and managing student behavior. We're losing them when we just kick them out."	Ask students to write their truth about exclusionary disciplinary measures and share these writings with the literacy teachers as part of the professional development.

- Is there a stakeholder group I need to *revisit* to gather additional information through their voice?
- Are there any adjustments that must be made in the vision, mission, core values, or goals of the strategic plan?
- How can implementation strategies be strengthened to meet the culturally responsive needs of the students?
- What successes do we see with students?

Schools and districts are prepared to set and refine goals for the upcoming school year to ensure alignment to the vision, mission, and core values upon completing the *revisit phase*.

CONCLUSION

According to Khalifa (2018), failure to implement cultural responsiveness "is a reproduction of oppression, despite the good intentions that some educational leaders may have" (p. 27). The *5Rs of Responsive Leadership* is presented in this chapter to depict the progression of leadership's role in creating and sustaining culturally responsive literacy instruction. However, this framework can be adapted to meet the

Table 5. The 5Rs of responsive leadership: revisit phase

Leaders	Quotes	Literacy Connection School and district leaders can...
Superintendent A	"Kids are now able to start having conversations and comprehend and synthesize what they've read based on their connection to the text."	Examine all forms of literacy data – benchmark, formative, anecdotal, and summative.
Superintendent B	"The last and most important piece of that is what are you doing for continuous improvement? I meet with every school principal to reinforce the continuous improvement cycle quarterly. I get them into a rhythm of understanding their own data. They, in turn, get into a rhythm with their teachers to review data, and the teachers should do the same thing with the students. We talk about those key indicators for evaluation purposes."	Review literacy instructional strategies for effectiveness based on student achievement and student engagement.
Superintendent C	"I think there's a greater understanding of what equity is and isn't. Just saying we'll work harder or get a bigger plate is not effective. So, I think it's a lot of dialogue."	Communicate with literacy teachers throughout in implementation of the <i>5Rs of Responsive Leadership</i> .
Principal A	"I saw an improvement with our literacy as it related to the reading piece. Some of our kids were starting to emerge more with reading and putting words together. We noticed that their sentence construction building was coming together more. We went from like 25 to 30% when we started to 60 to 65% growth."	Encourage literacy teachers to maintain portfolios of students' work.
Principal B	"I see students making eye contact with teachers and raising their hands. In cluster meetings, we review students' work samples. I can see that students are engaged."	Encourage literacy teachers to collect ongoing feedback from students regarding culturally responsive practices in the classroom.

needs of most educational leadership situations that require inclusivity. The *5Rs of Responsive leadership* is cyclical and collaborative. It challenges school and district leaders to look inward and outward to enhance their responsiveness and responsibility to creating outstanding learning opportunities for all students. During this process, if leaders feel compelled to go back to a phase and complete it again, that is permissible. The *5Rs of Responsive Leadership* is a practitioner's guide to inclusive development, implementation, and assessment.

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About the Contributors

Leslie Haas's teaching experiences include working with K-12, undergraduate, and graduate students. Additional experiences include instructional coaching, professional development, curriculum design, and department administration. Opportunities in highly diverse settings have acted as both a catalyst and foundation for her focus on integrating and connecting literacy across disciplines through culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices. Dr. Haas is particularly interested in technology-based literacy opportunities for underrepresented populations through engagement with popular culture, specifically gaming and fanfiction. She has been honored for her work in research, teaching, and technology through Buena Vista University, Fierce Education, The Texas A&M University System, and The Dallas Catholic Foundation.

Jill T. Tussey's career in literacy education has provided a variety of experiences in curriculum and instruction across K-12, undergraduate, and graduate courses. Her areas of interest include student engagement and motivation with targeted focus on digital literacy, poverty impacts, and social-emotional learning. Service leadership is important to Dr. Tussey and can be clearly seen in her current work as the Division Chair for Literacy, TESL, and Early Childhood at Buena Vista University. She has authored and edited books, chapters, and journal articles. Additionally, she has presented at local, state, national, and international settings over a variety of literacy topics.

* * *

William Bintz is Professor in Literacy Education in the Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Curriculum Studies at Kent State University. He has taught high school English/Language Arts in Chicago, Illinois, and middle school English/Language Arts in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico and Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. He earned his Ph.D. in reading education at Indiana University. Prior to joining the faculty at Kent State, he was a Visiting Lecturer at the Armidale College of Advanced Education in Armidale, Australia, as well as an assistant professor at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky, James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky. His personal experiences and professional interests include literacy across the curriculum, K-12, collaborative teacher research, interdisciplinary curriculum, and using award-winning literature as "Way-In" and "Stay-In" literature to create and sustain student interest in content area topics where no interest currently exists.

About the Contributors

Bethel E. Cager holds the position of Professor of Practice for Educational Leadership within the Division of Education and Counseling at Xavier University of Louisiana. As a veteran clinician of educational leadership, she comes to this position with the knowledge and expertise required to teach, guide, and support graduate and doctoral students through the successful completion of the master's degree and doctoral degree programs. Dr. Cager has Principal and Superintendent of Schools certifications in the states of Louisiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Her educational leadership experiences include coordinator of instruction, assistant principal, principal (elementary, middle, and high school levels), central office senior-level administrator (Executive Director/Associate Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent supervising principals at the elementary, middle, high, and alternative school levels), and Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Cager is a proud two-time alumna of Xavier University of Louisiana, receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education in 1987 and her Master of Arts in Education Administration in 1989. Dr. Cager graduated with her Doctor of Philosophy in Education Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1994. Dr. Cager's greatest joy in life is being a devoted mother to her beautiful daughter, who is a gifted creative writer and an incredible human being.

Rebecca Carpenter de Cortina is a Graduate Assistant at the University of Arkansas. Her areas of interest include languaging, bilingual education, and family engagement. Rebecca holds a master's in international educational development from Teachers College and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Curriculum & Instruction.

August Darbonne is a native of South Louisiana. His upbringing in a multicultural family has inspired his scholarship in history and culture. He has earned a B.A. and M.A. in History from the University of New Orleans and is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Education from the Xavier University of Louisiana. Darbonne works as an educator in Dallas, Texas.

Jason D. DeHart is an assistant professor of reading education at Appalachian State University. DeHart's research interests include multimodal literacy, including film and graphic novels, and literacy instruction with adolescents. His work has recently appeared in *SIGNAL Journal*, *English Journal*, and *The Social Studies*.

Katherine DeOliveira is currently enrolled in the College of New Jersey. Katherine De Oliveira is on track to receive a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Mathematics in 2023 and a Master's Degree in Urban Secondary Education in 2024. She is passionate about cultivating classrooms that support all students through equitable and culturally responsive practices.

A. Dean Franks is an Assistant Professor in SoE at USM. They received their PhD (2017) in Curriculum and Instruction from TAMU, MA (2008) in English from SFASU, and BA (2004) in English from UCA. Their areas of specialization are Social-Emotional Learning, Academic Self-Concept as Motivation, Cultural Self-Concept Related to Education, Inferential Comprehension through Character Perspective Taking, Reading for Diverse Perspectives, STEM Literacy, Content Area Literacy, Reading Motivation, STEM Motivation, and LGBTQ+ educational experiences.

Jessica Hadid is a third year PhD student at Temple University. Building on her background as an educator, her current research examines the interconnected roles of identity and motivation in literacy-focused settings. She is particularly interested in applying a complex systems approach to understand the development of students' agency to learn.

Rhonda Hylton is an Assistant Professor of Literacy in the School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies at Kent State University. She is a former middle school Language Arts teacher, adjunct English instructor, and English Language Arts content area coach. Dr. Hylton's primary research focuses on Black Women faculty and how their teaching experiences and positionality influence their perceptions of their literacy pedagogy. She is passionate about ensuring diverse voices are heard and valued through her work.

Jessica Manzone currently teaches in the MAT program at the University of Southern California. Jessica is a classroom teacher, instructional coach, and professional learning consultant. Her primary professional responsibilities throughout her career have been in Title I schools working with students of diversity. Dr. Manzone's research interests include non-traditional identification, early childhood education, and the expansion of differentiation to include culturally sustaining pedagogies.

Zwila Martinez is the co-founder of The Power of Colour Doctoral Network. She has a background in education with a specific focus in the areas of research, curriculum and instruction, literacy intervention, public speaking, and non-profit management. For 20 years Dr. Martinez has dedicated her time instructing students in Spanish and English, tutoring in reading, and researching how to improve reading with Black children.

Shabnam Moini Chaghervand is a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at Kent State University. Her current research interests include interdisciplinary curriculum, second-language learning, early literacy, multicultural literature, and diverse youth literature across the curriculum, K-12.

William Mosier is a Professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences and Graduate Education Institute at Istanbul Gelişim University in Istanbul, Turkey. He is also Director of Research at the Lynda A. Cohen Center for the Study of Child Development in Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Mosier completed a doctorate in education from the University of Southern California and a doctorate in medicine from the Universidad Central del Este in the Dominican Republic. He completed post-graduate training from the University of Nebraska - College of Medicine and is a diplomate in child psychology with the American Board of Disability Analysts. Dr. Mosier is the author of two books, over 90 peer-reviewed journal articles, and textbook chapters and has presented over 100 seminars at international and national conferences in both English and Spanish. Dr. Mosier served 20 years in the U.S. Military as an International Health Specialist on Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Missions throughout Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

About the Contributors

Ross Glen Chandler Nunamaker, who goes by Chad, is an Ohio licensed teacher, holds a bachelor's in Early Childhood Education, a master's in Early Childhood Leadership & Advocacy, and is a PhD candidate specializing in Early Childhood Education. Chad's research interests are at the intersection of parent & teacher education, adult-child interactions, early childhood mental health, and prevention science. He has worked in the field of early childhood since 2004 and currently holds several roles related to facilitating learning for parents and teachers, behavioral health, research, advocacy, and leadership. Chad was a Selected Scholar in the Society for Research in Child Development Teaching Mentorship Program, an example Early Childhood Leader in the Exchange Leadership Initiative, and was one of ten men selected nationally in 2020 for special recognition as an example of professional excellence among men in the field of early childhood by the Council for Professional Recognition.

Julia Nyberg is a Professor at Purdue University Global in the Department of Education. Dr. Nyberg was a K-6 classroom teacher and professional development expert before entering higher education. Dr. Nyberg's research focuses on curriculum and instructional design for diverse gifted and advanced students. Dr. Nyberg speaks at state and national conferences and provides demonstration lessons for school districts related to her expertise in curriculum design and differentiated instruction. Dr. Nyberg serves on numerous professional organizations, including as the Executive Director for the California Association for the Gifted.

Larkin Page is an Associate Professor at Xavier University of Louisiana. He holds a PhD in Reading. His research interests are in Literacy/Reading Education and Acquisition in the context of Urban and Minority Student Education; Teacher Education including Diversity and Inclusion; Early Childhood Education through Adult Education including English Learners, Diverse Learners, and Gifted Students, and Assessments. His experiences as a public school teacher, his presentations, and published research in these areas led to his appointments to two different Literacy Commissions from the Louisiana Department of Education.

Holly Sheppard Riesco is currently a doctoral student at the University of Arkansas in the Curriculum and Instruction program in English Education. Prior to entering the doctoral program, she taught secondary ELA for 15 years. Her research interest centers on the valuation of students' lived literacies through young adult literature, rhetoric, and composition. She has co-authored the book *Adolescent Realities: Engaging Students in SEL through Young Adult Literature* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).

Afton Schleiff is an assistant principal at Central Junior High School in Springdale, Arkansas. Her areas of interest include social-emotional learning, curriculum and instruction, and literacy. Afton holds a master's in teaching and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Curriculum & Instruction.

Anna Wan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mathematics and the Director of Eagle Maker Hub at the University of Southern Mississippi. Eagle Maker Hub is a university makerspace that grew out of her passion for research in integration of Making in content area classrooms — specifically mathematics. Eagle Maker Hub serves students at the University of Southern Mississippi as well as the community.

Cristina Worley is a doctoral student in the Multicultural Program in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture at Texas A&M University. Specifically, Cristina's research emphasis centers on the overlap between the underrepresentation of Black and Brown students in gifted education and their disproportionately high rates of discipline compared to White peers. Her research interests include gifted education, urban education, and teacher preparation for Black and Brown students. Her experiences include teaching high school English in Title 1 and majority African American charter schools, teaching gifted classes as a specialist in both affluent and poverty-stricken areas, and mentoring undergraduates in human subjects research. She has held a Graduate and Professional Student Government position at Texas A&M as the Diversity and International Affairs Co-Chair and is currently a member of Kappa Delta Pi. Upon graduate, she hopes to become a tenure-track professor and scholar.

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