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Engaging Elementary Students of Color in Culturally Relevant Teaching

by

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Abstract

The United States population has and is continuing to become more diverse. This is evident in our country's schools as there is an increasing number of students of color in our classrooms. The problem is that national standardized assessment data shows students of color perform significantly lower than their white peers across all content areas. Numerous factors have been studied as possible reasons for the persisting gap. This project focuses on some of the in-school contributing factors, such as teacher diversity, inadequate curriculum, and the lack of diversity found in curriculum and children's literature. As the gap in achievement has been studied for decades, researchers have also focused on studying the mismatch between school and students' home culture. While researchers have coined varying terms, the theory of 'culturally relevant teaching' from Gloria Ladson-Billings is the backbone of this project. Culturally relevant teaching stands on three principles--- academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. This project aims to engage elementary students of color in daily lessons that will connect to their identity, as well as having them critically think about the ways in which oppression and racism are present in our society, all while teaching academic skills. A professional development, in the format of a learning lab, will take place as lessons are being taught. This professional development will grow teachers' knowledge and experience in implementing culturally relevant teaching. Children of color deserve an education that values and empowers them, while preparing them for better opportunities to be successful in life.

Keywords: culturally relevant, pedagogy, students of color, elementary

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Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement

Children of color score significantly lower in literacy than their white peers. Reardon, Valentino, and Shores found that, "Black and Hispanic students enter high school with average literacy skills three years behind those of White and Asian students" (2012). While the literacy gap has not widened since the 1960s it has not closed either (Hanushek, Peterson, Talpey, Woessmann, 2019). There are many factors, found inside and outside of school, that are contributing to the gap in literacy scores. However, one possible solution that is realistic and viable is teachers being more aware of their students home culture and engaging in culturally relevant instruction on a daily basis (Brown-Jeffy and Cooper, 2011). Unless we work to close the literacy achievement gap, students of color will continue to lose out on opportunities that may be inherent for their more successful white peers.

Importance and Rationale of the Project

Literacy is an essential part of not only school but life in general. The ability to read and write is needed in everyday activities. Success in literacy in school is especially important because reading and writing is needed across all content areas. Being proficient in literacy skills involves much more complexity than being able to read a word (Reardon, et al. 2012). Almost all United States students can "read" by the time they reach third grade (Reardon, et al. 2012). When assessing students on reading for comprehension, it has been found that, "only about a third of U.S. students in middle school possess the knowledge-based competencies to 'read' in this more comprehensive sense" (Reardon, et al. 2012, p.17). One of the main purposes of reading is to understand the text. Children attend school to learn and practice the complex skills of literacy, which gives them the opportunity to become educated on a multitude of topics and skills so when they become adults they can enter society and be successful. Being literate is essential in having higher education and career success. Reardon, et al. (2012) states,

"Literacy--- the ability to access, evaluate, and integrate information from a wide range of textual sources--- is a prerequisite not only for individual educational success but for upward mobility both socially and economically" (p.18).

People started paying attention to the difference in white and Black students school achievement after James Coleman's *Equality of Educational Opportunity* in 1966. Over fifty years later, the gap still persists (Hanushek, et al. 2019). There has been attempts to narrow the gap, like, No Child Left Behind Act, which was intended to better support students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities and students living in poverty. But the fact of the matter is that students of color are still performing well below their white peers. Narrowing, or better yet eliminating, the gap in literacy achievement would give diverse students better opportunities in higher education, jobs, and careers, which will allow for economic growth, social mobility and active participation in society (Reardon, et al., 2012).

Background of the Project

A research project from the 1960s was the first extensive study to establish that Black students were scoring lower than white students in United States schools (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). The 1964 Civil Rights Act required a study that would look at the inequality of opportunity in schools (Kahlenberg, 2001). Researcher James Coleman and his colleagues studied 600,000 children in 4,000 schools across the country (Kahlenberg, 2001). In 1966, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (also known as the Coleman Report) was published (Kahlenberg, 2001). The report contained many findings involving school funding, family income, and school peers. Coleman found that there was not as large inequalities in school funding between schools racial makeup as once thought (Kahlenberg, 2001). In addition, the amount of school funding did not show a close relation to student's achievement (Kahlenberg, 2001). However, the socioeconomic status of a child's family was predicative of their achievement level (Kahlenberg, 2001). The main takeaway from the public was that family and home life was the main reasoning behind the differences in achievement levels. But Coleman's

report found more than that as to why achievement levels differed. Coleman found that students of color start first grade behind their white peers in reading and they "have an even more serious deficiency at the end of school, which is obviously in part a result of the school" (Kahlenberg, 2001, p. 56).

In the fall of 1994, Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray released their book, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. This highly controversial book argued that childhood socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, or gender plays a more important role in social status than one's IQ (Braden, 1995). More specifically, Herrnstein and Murray argue that the difference in IQ between African Americans and whites is, "(a) real…; (b) intractable…; (c) genetic; that is, it is not due to environmental differences between Blacks and whites" (Braden, 1995, para. 6). This hypothesis is often rejected because it is rooted in racism and hinders a quality education for Black students (Braden, 1995).

In 1995, Gloria Ladson-Billings coined the term "culturally relevant pedagogy" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) state, "culturally relevant pedagogy is a way for schools to acknowledge the home-community culture of students, and through sensitivity to cultural nuances integrate these cultural experiences, values and understandings into their teaching and learning environment" (p. 67). This was not a new concept from Ladson-Billings. Throughout the 1980s, various researchers studied the concept but coined different terms. In 1981, Au and Jordan coined "culturally appropriate," and Mohatt and Erickson called this concept, "culturally congruent" (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Cazden and Leggett and Erickson and Mohatt used the term "culturally responsive" (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Later in 1985, Jordan as well as Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp in 1987, started to use the term "culturally compatible" (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Each of these studies, in their own way, focused on the discrepancies between teaching styles and the home culture of students (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). For the purpose of this project, the terms "culturally responsive" and "culturally relevant" will be used.

In 2002, The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into law by President George W. Bush (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Darling-Hammond (2007) states that the bill was "to improve education for those children traditionally left behind in American schools--- in particular, students of color and those living in poverty, new English learners and students with disabilities" (p. 245). Part of the Act intended to improve standardized test scores and have better-qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2007). NCLB has received anger and confusion from most of the country because the Act has done the opposite of what it was intended to do (Darling-Hammond, 2007). NCLB sets goals annually for test scores for each school and subgroups within the school (Darling-Hammond, 2007). If schools do not meet those goals then the schools are declared in need of improvement and then, ultimately, failing (Darling-Hammond, 2007). One of the main problems is that the target is for 100% of students to score proficient on state tests by the year 2014 (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This would mean low performing schools would have to make the biggest gains, even though those schools are less funded and have a high percentage of English language learners and children with disabilities (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This makes it impossible for a school to attain 100% proficiency because the majority of those students cannot meet the standards (Darling-Hammond, 2007). A consequence of NCLB has been high rates of retention and drop out (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Schools were being rewarded to hold back low scoring students or even encouraging them to leave the school or drop out (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Another aspect of the Act was to ensure highly qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Qualified teachers are a key factor in student achievement (Hanushek et al., 2019). However, the unrealistic test score expectations, low salaries, poor working conditions, and lack of support are contributing to teachers leaving the field (Darling-Hammond, 2007). In addition, teachers are choosing to leave low income schools for better off school districts, which are leaving disadvantaged students to less-effective and less experienced teachers (Hanushek et al., 2019).

Presently, there is an expanding movement for social justice teaching (Styslinger, Stowe, Walker, Hyatt Hostetler, 2019). Styslinger, et al. (2019) explain, "critical consciousness, the core of social justice teaching, is a heightened awareness of the world and the power structures that shape it" (p. 1). The push for teaching social justice comes at a time where the country is working to make positive and substantial changes for marginalized groups of people. Teaching with the focus on people of color, systemic racism, books with diverse characters and topics, and empowering students to embrace their culture is creating culturally relevant classrooms.

Statement of Purpose

One purpose of this project is to engage students of color in lessons that are culturally relevant to them. By teaching in a culturally relevant way, students will be engaged and motivated in daily lessons. The interest and motivation will support higher level thinking. The goal is that over time students of color will score higher on standardized assessments.

Another purpose of this project is a year-long professional development for elementary teachers on culturally relevant teaching. The professional development will include informing teachers the principles of culturally relevant teaching, the importance of being culturally relevant, and a framework for creating culturally relevant lessons. The project will not include new or rewritten curriculum, but more so ideas on how to improve and/or revise curriculum in the already developed daily lesson plans. This project will address improving the literacy scores of students of color because students will be engaged and motivated along with teachers becoming better informed and aware of teaching with a culturally relevant lens, which overtime will give children of color better opportunities to succeed.

Objectives of the Project

To increase the literacy achievement for students of color, there needs to be a change in how they are being taught. Teachers can implement culturally relevant teaching, which will

engage and motivate students, and in turn raise literacy achievement level— the ultimate goal of this project. The objectives include:

1. Teacher will gain knowledge on the principles of culturally relevant pedagogy.
2. Teacher will implement culturally relevant teaching in daily lessons.
3. Students' will show engagement and motivation during culturally relevant lessons.
4. Students' will demonstrate critical thinking skills.

Definition of Terms

Culturally relevant teaching (CRT): utilizing a pedagogy that is inclusive of the students' culture in order to demonstrate utility of the content and to improve academic success (Kelley et al., 2015)

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): a federal government bill with the goal to raise achievement levels of all students to and to close the achievement gap that parallels race and class distinctions that was signed into law by President George W. Bush (Darling-Hammond, 2007)

Pedagogy: the instructional approach implemented in the classroom

Proficient: documented evidence that a student has met the required level of skill and knowledge set by benchmarks

Scope of Project

The ultimate goal of this project is for students of color to increase their literacy achievement. Teachers play a key role in reaching this goal. The major focus will be on culturally relevant teaching. School staff will learn how this specific pedagogy will engage students at higher levels, build positive relationships between students, teachers and families, and provide children the opportunities to have higher academic success. Through this professional development, teachers will gain knowledge in how to implement culturally relevant

instruction in their daily lesson plans. Although curriculum will be discussed, new or rewritten curriculum will not be provided. There are many factors that would contribute to the success of this project, which could be out of the author's control. One factor is teacher buy-in. The only way culturally relevant teaching will work is if teachers are actually implementing the strategies in their classroom consistently. Furthermore, implementing this teaching practice would most likely require additional resources, which of course would require money. These factors would affect the possible outcomes of this project but cannot necessarily be controlled through this project.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Students of color consistently score below their white peers on standardized assessments. This review of literature will explore research that shows the difference in literacy achievement for students of color and their white peers, explain possible factors contributing to this gap, and how culturally relevant teaching provides higher engagement and motivation, which in turn raises the achievement of students of color. This literature review will begin with an explanation of the theory that is the basis of this project. This chapter will end with a summary and conclusion section, which briefly reviews the major findings and takeaways from the research.

Theory and Rationale

Students come to school each day with life experiences that impacts their daily learning. The knowledge that children gain from their home culture should be used to support their learning in the classroom. This knowledge is considered a child's funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Teachers recognizing and activating students funds of knowledge is part of the process of bridging the gap between school and a student's home culture. Researchers have focused on bridging the gap between school and home for students of diverse backgrounds for over the last 30 years. Numerous terms have been used by researchers, but their work is similar in the fact that they have studied the connection between a student's culture and their school experience. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) states:

> Early works that advocated connections between home-community and school cultures
> in developing viable teaching and learning environments described this phenomenon in
> a variety of ways: (a) *culturally appropriate* (Au & Jordan, 1981); (b) *culturally congruent*
> (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981); (c) *mitigating cultural discontinuity* (Macias, 1987); (d)

culturally responsive (Cazden & Leggett, 1981; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982); and (e)

culturally compatible (Jordan, 1985; Vogt, Jordan, Tharp, 1987). (p.67)

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) coined the term *culturally relevant teaching (CRT)*. She defines

CRT as, "a pedagogy of opposition not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to

collective, not merely individual, empowerment." (p. 160). Likewise, Geneva Gay's (2002) work

focuses on the mismatch of school and home, in which she uses the term, *culturally responsive*

teaching. Gay (2002) states, "…when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the

lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful,

have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly " (p. 106). There are

subtle differences between the researchers but the backbone is the same. Whether the term

culturally relevant teaching or culturally responsive teaching is being used, the attention is on

using the student's culture and life experiences to bridge the gap between school and home.

For the purpose of this project, culturally relevant teaching (CRT) will be the theoretical

framework. Ladson-Billings (1995) states that there are three principles that are the basis of

CRT. The first principle is that students must have academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

To be active members in our society, a person must have literacy, numeracy, social, and

technological skills (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Getting to that point, requires that children have

teachers that will meet the needs of their students and demand academic excellence (Ladson-

Billings, 1995). The second principle is that students must develop and sustain cultural

competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This done by bringing students home culture into the daily

workings of the classroom. For example, African American students in elementary school

studied poetry by analyzing rap lyrics (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In another classroom, the teacher

allowed students to write in their home language then translated it to standard English form.

This led students to better use of each of their languages as well as the ability to code-switch

(Ladson-Billings, 1995). The third principle is that students must acquire a critical consciousness

through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Ladson-Billings (1995) explains, "…students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, morals, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequalities." (p.162). School prepares students to be successful in our society so it is important that they can critically examine the society they are in. As research on this pedagogy continued, Ladson-Billings (2014) saw that teachers implementing this type of instruction were leaving out the third criteria. There was no discussions on topics, such as incarceration rates, gun laws or simpler things, like school uniforms (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Students in urban schools are directly impacted by society's racial inequalities and systematic racism, therefore, analyzing and critiquing our society is essential for students of color.

Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) closely studied the work of Genevie Gay, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Sonia Nieto. They found five common themes in their principles of CRT. Those major themes are: identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child, and student-teacher relationships (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). Identity is reflected in the students and teachers. Students should see that their voice, contributions, and presence is important and valued in the school and in the world (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). Teachers identity is also significant in CRT. Teachers need to be aware of their own biases as well as the systemic racism in American education (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). Equity involves supporting students in what they need. A prime example of this would be differentiated instruction. Equity in the classroom is also through inclusion of all cultures (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). Inclusion should be ingrained in academic learning throughout the entire year, not just during specific months (i.e. Black History Month) (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). Developmental appropriateness includes students learning styles, teaching style, and motivation to learn (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). As stated earlier, teachers need to utilized the knowledge and experiences that each student brings to the classroom. When teachers are mindful of their teaching style, their students' learning style, and what is

culturally relevant to them, they create an environment where students want to engage in their learning (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). Teaching the whole child goes beyond the classroom. Like developmental appropriateness, funds of knowledge are essential in teaching the whole child. Students' learning from their home culture and community needs to be used to scaffold the learning at school (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). In addition, teachers must see their students as individuals, as having beliefs about the whole group may be stereotypical (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). The last theme, student-teacher relationships, incorporates teachers being connected to their students in the classroom and outside the classroom. Furthermore, students are connected to one another. Students and the teacher should work to create a safe community that supports inclusion of each child's identity (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011).These major themes found throughout researchers work on CRT provide a framework for educators serving culturally diverse students.

<div align="center">**Research/Evaluation**</div>

Disparity in Achievement

The gap in achievement, for literacy and math, between students of color and white students has been consistent for decades. Since 1966 when James Coleman wrote his groundbreaking report that showed the country the large difference in achievement based on race, the gap persists (Hanushek, et al. 2019). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses students in fourth, eighth and twelfth grade from schools all across the United States. Assessments are given for all major content areas. In 2019, NAEP fourth grade math data showed that white students scored an average of 249, which is considered "proficient." This means students can consistently apply procedural knowledge as well as conceptual knowledge in math concepts (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). On the other hand, Black students scored 224, which is just above NAEP basic achievement level (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Students show some understanding of mathematical concepts and procedures. The 2019 NAEP reading data shows an average white fourth grader scored a

230. However, an average score for a Black student was 204 (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). A reading score of 238 is considered "proficient." For NAEP, this means students are able to show an understanding of the text, make more complex inferences and connections between the text and themselves (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). For a score of 208, this means students are performing at a "basic" level. Students scoring at a basic level are able to understanding the overall meaning of what they read and can make obvious self-to-text connections. Interpreting 2019 scores shows that white students are able to understand the text in deeper ways, which allows them to engage with the text in a more complex way. Students performing at a basic level are engaging with the text in a more surface level way, which hinders them from reading at a higher level. The current data reiterates what we already know---students of color are performing well behind their white peers in two content areas that are crucial for academic success.

Possible Contributing Factors

There are various factors that are almost certainly contributing to the persisting gap in literacy achievement between white students and students of color. For the purpose of this project, in-school factors will be the focus. Specifically, the difference in culture between students of color and their white teacher, which in turn affects teachers' authentic knowledge about the culture of the students they serve, instructional practices and lessons that will engage and motivate their students, and access resources that reflect the faces of their students.

Teacher diversity. The United States population of students is becoming more racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse. Between 2000-2017, the population of all racial/ethnic groups have increased by double percentage points (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The majority of teachers are white (Banerjee, 2018). In the 2015-16 school year, data shows that eighty percent of teachers identified as white, while seven percent were Black and nine percent as Hispanic (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). It is important that schools and teachers recognize the limited knowledge and experience they have in their students home culture(s).

Alaca and Pyle (2018) studied the methods of kindergarten teachers in relation to cultural

diversity in their classrooms. All but one of the teachers stated that culturally responsive

teaching should be present in kindergarten classrooms (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). However, the

teachers found challenges in access to physical resources as well as a lack of knowledge on

certain topics. An example one of the teachers provided was that because of her lack of

knowledge surrounding Kwanzaa, she did not incorporate the holiday into her teaching for fear

of doing an inaccurate job (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). Another challenge teachers were facing were

culturally responsive teaching professional developments (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). The

professional development were one-day sessions, which did not allow for participants to follow-

up after they implemented the strategies (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). Cruz, Manchanda, Firestone,

Rodl (2020) focused on teachers self-efficacy in terms of culturally responsive teaching.

Teachers rated aspects like, building positive relationships, understanding student preferences,

and building trust the highest (Cruz et al., 2020). Whereas, the lowest ratings involved specific

cultural knowledge and building home to school connections (Cruz et al., 2020). Another finding

from Cruz et al. (2020) is that teachers rated themselves low in using students' cultural

knowledge to build background knowledge during lessons. The diversity of teachers is not

something that can be changed or fixed. But, work can be done in properly educating and

supporting teachers as they implement culturally relevant education.

  Curriculum gap. The signing of NCLB caused a rise in commercially developed

curriculum being used in schools (Wyatt 2014). This type of scripted curriculum can be

beneficial for the consistency they provide across grade levels as well as support new teachers

(Wyatt 2014). However, it takes away teachers ability to make decisions based on their

students' needs (Wyatt 2014). In addition, students of color need to be taught in a way that has

personal meaning and cultural relevance (Wyatt 2014). Wynter-Hoyte and Smith (2020)

highlights that curriculum, "overwhelming featured white characters, white-dominated events,

and white-centric texts" (p. 410). Commercially developed curriculum is written in a way that

sees children as all the same, ignoring different racial backgrounds (Wyatt 2014). Furthermore, the curriculum used in schools with high percentages of student of color is less challenging (Hammond, 2015). The curriculum focuses on skills involving repetition and memorization and does not include rigorous content (Hammond, 2015). Students of color receive less instruction that demands higher order thinking skills, which is necessary for success in higher education and well-paying jobs (Hammond, 2015).

   Lack of diverse books. Just as curriculum lacks representation, so does children's literature. People of color make up thirty-seven percent of the United States, yet, only thirteen percent of children's books published in the last two decades have a diverse context (Henderson, Warren, Whitmore, Flint, Laman, Jaggers, 2020). Crisp, Knezek, Quinn, Bingham, Giradeau, and Starks (2016) conducted an examination of classroom libraries. Out of 1,169 books in twenty-one classrooms, there were only thirty books that expressed experiences of marginalized groups of people (Crisp, et al., 2016).

   When children see themselves in their learning, they are more motivated, interested, and engaged (Fleming, Catapano, Thompson, Carrillo, 2016). Specifically in regards to literacy, students are more interested in books that allow for personal connections (Fleming, et al., 2016). Students who can make text-to-self connections while reading make deeper meaning of the text, which supports them in becoming a proficient reader (Gangi, 2008). Students of color have difficulty making text-to-self connections when they do not see themselves in the text. This is one reason it is important to have diverse books available to students of color. Gangi (2008) states, "…white children whose experiences are depicted in books can make many more text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections than can children of color" (p.30). Including texts that mirror the students and their community shows them that their experiences outside of school are valued and incorporate opportunities for learning in school (Wood & Jocius, 2013). Tatum (2015) argues that effective reading strategies nor literacy instruction reform will close

the gap in achievement unless meaningful texts for students of color are fundamental in the curriculum.

Engaging Students in Culturally Relevant Instruction

Researchers have spent decades studying the mismatch between school and students' home culture (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Since then, researchers have turned their attention to studying culturally relevant pedagogy in schools, community centers, summer camps, etc. Much of the research takes place in middle and high schools. While studies are discussed below, there is still a need for more research to be done involving elementary students and CRT. This would allow for a more complete understanding of what CRT looks like at an elementary level as well as its effects on younger students.

Effects of diverse literature. Publishing data shows there is a lack of diverse books (Henderson, et al., 2020). But when children have access to diverse literature for academic work and choice reading can improve engagement, reading proficiency, and comprehension. Bui and Fagan (2013) studied a group of fifth graders in a Northern California school. In the study group a little over half of the students identified as Hispanic and eighteen percent identified as Black (Bui & Fagan, 2013). The children were split into two groups. Both groups were taught a set of reading strategies (story map, activating prior knowledge, predicting, and word webs) but one of the groups used diverse literature in the lessons and had the chance to work with peers (Bui & Fagan, 2013). The other group used mainstream texts during the lessons and had to work independently afterwards (Bui & Fagan, 2013). Results showed that the group with diverse texts showed growth in comprehension (Bui & Fagan, 2013). Bui and Fagan (2013) also saw that those students inferred the literature's theme in a more positive and affirming way compared to the mainstream group responses were general and in a literal sense.

Research has shown a long pattern of reading fluency impacting comprehension of the text (Bennett, Gardner, Cartledge, Ramnath, Council, 2017). Many researchers have been interested in how students of color reading fluency may be affected by culturally relevant stories.

Bennett et al. (2017) implemented an intervention with seven second graders in an inner-city school that is made up of a Black majority. Students worked on improving their fluency through a computer program, which read the passage to them and the students had to record themselves reading the same passage multiple times. The passages were considered culturally relevant. The computer program also had the children work on a comprehension component. Every student increased their fluency (words per minute and accuracy) on the culturally relevant readings (Bennett, et al., 2017). Additionally, the children showed growth on the comprehension section (Bennett et al., 2017). Cartledge, Bennett, Gallant, Ramnath, and Keesey (2015a) worked with eight second graders who all identified as African American and who were considered struggling readers. The children read culturally relevant passages, which were created by the researchers, as well as nonculturally relevant passages. Students were assessed on correct words per minute, number of errors, number of words retold, main idea, and then rated how they felt about each story (Cartledge, et al., 2015a). The culturally relevant passages were written after interviewing parents, teachers, and students, reviewing children's literature with Black characters, and observing students throughout the school day (Cartledge et al., 2015a). Each of the eight students had more correct words per minute in the culturally relevant passages but struggled with comprehending the text no matter the relevance of the story (Cartledge et al., 2015a). Similarly, Cartledge, Keesey, Bennett, Ramnath, Council (2015b) had fifty Black first and second graders, who were identified as strong readers, read a variety of culturally relevant passages. These passages were used from the previous study and topics included soul food, riding the city bus, Rosa Parks, dancing, being at the beauty shop, Arthur Ashe, etc. (Cartledge et al., 2015b). Data was collected based on correct words per minute and the student's rating of the text. Overwhelming, the passages that were rated "good" or "very good" was because students made a personal connection to the text (Cartledge et al., 2015b). Christ, Chiu, Rider, Kitson, Hanser, McConnell, Dipzinski, Mayernik (2018) had fifty students ranging from grades second through eighth participate in reading culturally relevant

texts. Christ et al. (2018) developed five elements for culturally relevant texts: characters are like the reader, places the reader has experienced, familiar time period, characters talk like the reader, and story experiences are like the readers' experiences. After reading the text and answering comprehension questions, the students rated the passage based on its cultural relevance. Teachers rated the passages as well. Data showed that students judge texts on multiple elements (i.e. characters, place, experience, etc) and those impact their connections and critical evaluations (Christ et al., 2018). On the other hand, teacher ratings were based on word recognition meaning maintenance, miscues, retellings, inferential responses. Overall, teachers rated the texts more culturally relevant than the students did (Christ et al., 2018). Researchers suggest one possible reason for the difference in ratings could be because the teachers were white and middle class, whereas the students in the study were low-income African Americans (Christ et al., 2018). Various research has made it clear that students of color benefit from engaging in culturally relevant literature.

Sociopolitical consciousness. The third principle of Ladson-Billings CRT framework includes students engaging in social justice learning. Souto-Manning (2009) used children's literature in her first grade classroom to teach about racism to her young students. After reading *The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.*, the students engaged in a conversation on their understanding of segregated schools. A few of the students shared that the school for the white students was newer and the Black students school was older (Souto-Manning, 2009). The students attributed preference as the reason for that (Souto-Manning, 2009). However, another student did state that it was because they [whites] had more money (Souto-Manning, 2009). For this part of the discussion, the researcher saw that she needed to explore the historical underpinnings of segregation with her students (Souto-Manning, 2009). The researcher continued to read books to her first graders that centered around segregation and specifically how it affected children (Souto-Manning, 2009). Brownell (2020) worked with four African American third grade girls during the 2016 presidential election. The students learned about

immigration and the political policies suggested by the Republican party. Multiple forms of literacy, like picture books, print and video news stories, and a virtual conversation with a man who has been studying Mexico to U.S. immigration, was used to learn about who, how and why people cross the border into the United States (Brownell, 2020). The four girls collaborated to show their learning in various ways. The students wrote and created skits, scripts, and video recordings (Brownell, 2020). Through analyzing the girls' work, the researcher found multiple ways the girls used ideas from CRT. One way was through identity. The girls portrayed mothers and sisters in the skits (Brownell, 2020). Secondly, the girls performed songs, which Black women have done through history when calling for justice (Brownell, 2020). In addition, the students showed intellect in their knowledge on immigration as well as criticality in immigration policy (Brownell, 2020). Being aware of social injustices in students community, country and world is an essential aspect of CRT. The classroom should be a place where students are learning and discussing social injustices that are affecting themselves and those around them.

Literacy across content areas. CRT is a pedagogy that teachers should be practicing across all content areas they teach. Literacy is essential in the success of all other subjects. In a third grade classroom with majority African American students, the teacher implemented culturally relevant books that involve mathematical concepts into math lessons (Corp, 2017). The lessons were sequenced as follows--- read the story, have a math discussion, problem solving/math activity (Corp, 2017). Students also completed a reflection after each lesson. Part of the reflection asked students to rate if the story supported their thinking about math and how it made them think about math outside of school (Corp, 2017). The researcher also collected data from observation during the lessons. Corp (2017) found students were more engaged (based on eye contact and commenting during the story) during the read aloud. Students were also able to share their noticing about math concepts found throughout the various stories (Corp, 2017). In the reflections, students said the stories did make them think about math in their life and all stories were rated as "interesting" or "awesome" (Corp, 2017). In a study by

Jackson (2013), she examined how math teachers implemented CRT. Many of the themes found from Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) were present. Teachers who participated in this study used differentiated instruction, built a positive classroom community, and established relationships beyond the classroom (Jackson, 2013). But they also were conscious of cultural needs and interests, which are a must in CRT. Movement, rhythm, and songs were integrated into daily math lessons (Jackson, 2013). Another teacher related math lessons to her students' lives by having them create a cookbook and then using the recipes to develop students' understanding of fractions (Jackson, 2013).

Reworking district mandated curriculum. Wynter-Hoyte and Smith (2020) highlights that curriculum is overwhelming white-washed. While teachers may not be able to control the curriculum required by their school, they do have the ability to tweak, substitute, or add in aspects to a lesson that are better suited for their class of diverse learners.

Wynter-Hoyte and Smith (2020) worked together in a first grade classroom that consisted of ninety-seven percent Black students. The purpose behind their work was, "…decentering whiteness and centering the voices of Black knowledge, stories, histories, experiences, and joy" (Wynter-Hoyte & Smith, p. 408). As they developed their plans, they found the district provided mentor texts contained a high percentage of white characters or featured animals as the characters (Wynter-Hoyte & Smith 2020). Researchers chose texts with Black characters while still focusing on the reading skills set forth by the district curriculum. In addition, Wynter-Hoyte and Smith (2020) focused instruction on African history, African royalty and the history of African American language, which was something still prevalent in the way the students spoke. Through their study they found that shifting to an African focus promoted, "positive racial and gender identities, community, and positive linguistic identities in the work to help children love themselves, their histories, and their peoples" (Wynter-Hoyte & Smith 2020, p. 421). Students still received instruction on grade level skills, but they learned in a way that fostered empowerment and love for themselves and their culture.

Historically responsive literacy framework. Dr. Gholnecsar "Gholdy" Muhammad is an award-winning researcher, who focuses her research on studying the social and historical foundations of education in African Americans students and how literacies can be present in today's classrooms. In her most recent work, Muhammad (2020) provides a framework for educators to teach in a culturally and historically responsive way. There are five parts to the model--- identity, skills, intellect, criticality, and joy (Muhammad, 2020). Muhammad (2020) provides questions teachers should ask themselves for the first four elements:

"Identity: How will my instruction help students to learn something about themselves and/or about others?

Skills: How will my instruction build students' skills for the content area?

Intellect: How will my instruction build students' knowledge and mental powers?

Criticality: How will my instruction engage students' thinking about power and equity and the disruption of oppression?" (p.58)

As previously explained, students need to see themselves in their learning. A person's identity includes who they are, who others say they are (in positive and negative lights), and who they want to be (Muhammad, 2020). Skills are the learning standards that drives high-stakes testing. Skills do need to be taught, but teaching only skills and ignoring identity, intellect, and criticality becomes problematic for students of color (Muhammad, 2020). Historically, Black people have been seen as unintelligent (Muhammad, 2020). This can be damaging for African American students, if their teachers believe this. Cultivating intellect in students prepares them to think deeply and have the ability to reason about issues affecting their community as well as the global world (Muhammad, 2020). Intellect is not only about students becoming smarter in topics, but also gives students opportunities to apply their learning in realistic ways (Muhammad, 2020). Muhammad (2020) defines criticality as, "the capacity to read, write, and think in ways of understanding power, privilege, social justice, and oppression, particularity for populations who have been historically marginalized in the world" (p. 120). Teaching students this way gives

them chances to learn how systematic racism affects the oppressed. Additionally, students learn to analyze the world with a critical eye (Muhammad, 2020). The last element is joy, which involves students finding happiness within the lesson topic. Muhammad (2020) makes it clear that although she refers to this as a literacy model, the five parts of the framework can and should be applied to all content areas. Everything that encompasses literacy is absolutely necessary to succeed in all other subjects. Muhammad (2020) offers a clear model for teachers to follow when lesson planning. Identity, skills, intellect and criticality are all important pieces of a child's education.

Summary

When comparing the achievement of standardized tests of students of color and white students there is a large discrepancy (Kelley, et al., 2015). Looking closely at reading tests, the gap is just as clear. Researchers have studied possible contributing factors. Factors such as, teacher diversity, teacher awareness or experience teaching students of color (Wyatt, 2014; Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Cruz et al., 2020), the lack of diverse books (Henderson et al., 2020; Crisp et al., 2016), and the whitewashed curriculum (Wyatt, 2014; Wynter-Hoyte & Smith, 2020).

Through culturally relevant teaching, these factors can be addressed. Studies show the effects of students reading culturally relevant texts (Bui & Fagan, 2013; Bennet et al., 2017; Cartledge et al., 2015a; Cartledge et al., 2015b; Christ et al., 2018), engaging in social justice learning, which is a principle of CRT (Souto-Manning, 2009; Brownell, 2020), using CRT across content areas (Jackson, 2013; Corp, 2017), and how teachers can revise their mandated curriculum to reflect the students in their classroom (Wynter-Hoyte & Smith, 2020). Gholdy Muhammad (2020) provides a framework for teachers to follow when implementing CRT in their daily lesson plans.

Conclusion

There is no denying that students of color are performing well below their white peers. There is a plethora of research that works to determine contributing factors as well as possible solutions in hopes of the gap disappearing. It is not going to happen in one school year, however, the work of teachers, specifically who focus on culturally relevant teaching, can make a difference. Students who are taught in ways that acknowledge and celebrate not only their home culture but all cultures become more engaged and motivated, which raises their academic success. This will give children of color better opportunities to be successful in the world.

Chapter 3: Project

Introduction

Based on national assessments, there is a gap in achievement between white students and their non-white peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Teacher diversity and deficiency of cultural representation in curriculum are part of the contributing causes to the persisting gap (Wyatt, 2014; Crisp et al., 2016; Banerjee, 2018; Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Cruz et al., 2020; Henderson et al., 2020; Wynter-Hoyte & Smith, 2020). Ladson-Billings (1995a) provides a theory, called culturally relevant teaching, which addresses the need for school to mirror student's home culture. Teachers who serve students of color should teach with cultural relevance, which will motivate and engage students at a higher level. This project proposes for the author to pilot culturally relevant teaching in their classroom for an extended period of time. During this period of implementation, the author will meet with other educators to analyze lessons and student data. After multiple culturally relevant lessons have been taught, the teachers participating in the professional development will begin to implement CRT into their own classrooms.

The goals for this project are as followed:

1. Teacher will gain knowledge on the principles of culturally relevant pedagogy.
2. Teacher will implement culturally relevant teaching in daily lessons.
3. Students' will show engagement and motivation during culturally relevant lessons.
4. Students' will demonstrate critical thinking skills.

This chapter contains an explanation of all that is included within the project, including appendices. Following the components section, the evaluation of the project will be described. Thereafter, the plans of implementation will be explained. Lastly, the chapter will end with concluding thoughts.

Project Components

Plans for Teaching

There are essential principles in CRT that should be visible in lesson plans, such as identity, cultural congruency, academic rigor, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In Muhammad's (2020) recommended culturally responsive framework, these crucial principles are the foundation. A sample lesson plan, found in appendix A, follow Muhammad's (2020) model. The sample lesson plan, which is part of a multiple week unit, has been created by the author based on the students in their classroom. Muhammad's (2020) framework consists of five elements--- identity, skills, intellect, critically, and joy. Students should be able to identify with themselves in lessons. Plans should be made that will allow for students to make personal connections. In the sample lesson, the author chose a book that has characters that represents the students in the classroom. One of CRT principles is sustaining cultural competence. Students of color need to know that their culture is important and valued. The second element, skills, is the part of the lesson plan that teachers have the most familiarity. The standards that are required to be taught per grade level are the skills of the lesson. The third part of the model is intellect. Intellect is the opportunity for students to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. Ladson-Billing's (1995) CRT theory calls for academic rigor. The element of intellect is an area for students to engage in higher order thinking skills. The fourth element is critically, which aligns perfectly with the third principle from Ladson-Billing's (1995) of critical consciousness. Students, even as young as elementary age, need to be taught to critically think about how power, oppression, racism, equity, and social justice is in our society. The last element in Muhammad's (2020) framework is joy. This section is for students to think about what brings them happiness in relation to the lesson topic. The historically responsive framework was the main guide for the author in lesson planning. However, the author also used the lesson frame of Understanding by Design (UdB) (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). UdB follows the framework of

starting the planning by determining the end goal(s) first, learning in authentic ways, and transferring learning across content areas.

Students and Families Feedback

For lessons to be culturally relevant the teacher needs to survey the students and families so there is an understanding of what is culturally relevant for the specific class of students (Cartledge 2015a). For teachers of a different race than the students they teach, the survey provides one opportunity to learn about students home culture. A survey for the students and a separate one for parents or guardians can be found in appendix A. The intention for the surveys is for students and families to complete them within the first week of the school year. This sets up the teacher to plan lessons throughout the year that will be relevant for that group of students. For the author to gain an understanding of their students thoughts and feelings, students will complete a reflection survey after lessons (appendix D). This will be another way for the author to learn if and how lessons may be culturally relevant.

Diverse Literature

Students who see themselves, their family, and their community in texts are more interested and motivated to read (Gangi, 2008). Therefore, it is a must that diverse books are used in daily lessons and available for student access during choice reading time. Although there is a lack of diverse books (Henderson, et al. 2020), a list of some diverse literature (picture books and novels) is provided in appendix C. The book list is only a start. But it provides a starting point for teachers who lack diverse texts in their classrooms. The list of books can be used to find mentor texts to use in lessons and to find books to add to classroom libraries. As newly published diverse literature is released, the author plans to continue to update the list and inform colleagues, and other school staff, especially those in charge of purchasing new books.

Professional Development

The intention is for a professional development to take place to inform teachers about CRT and how they can implement the pedagogy themselves. The professional development would take place in the format of a learning lab. The author would invite colleagues to critic her lessons and the evidence of student learning, which would directly come from student artifacts. Those taking part in the learning lab would meet as a group and engage in robust conversations. The author would serve as the facilitator of the discussions. Some of the educators who would participate are teachers of color, specifically the race of the students the author teaches. Teachers of color would be able to provide insight into cultural relevance. As the group analyzes evidence of student learning as well as contributing and constraining factors affecting their learning, the author is gaining insight on where to go next with the students. To achieve the goal of informing teachers about culturally relevant teaching, the author would need to share research that supports this pedagogy. In addition, creating lesson plans using Muhammad's (2020) framework would be something new for the other educators. Therefore, before those participating in the learning lab can implement CRT, there needs to be opportunities for them to write lesson plans and receive feedback before teaching. The learning lab will give them this opportunity. Once participants have the chance to teach their lesson(s), they will bring student data to the lab to be analyzed. After receiving constructive feedback, the teacher would create the next lesson, teach, gather student data, and allow for those in the learning lab to analyze. The learning lab will allow the educators participating to think deeper about cultural relevance in lessons, evidence of student learning, and gain perspectives from colleagues.

Project Evaluation

The ultimate goal of this project is for students of color to increase literacy achievement on standardized tests. But another goal is for the students to be in classrooms that value them and their culture while also providing an education that gives them better opportunities for succeeding beyond school.

The project will be evaluated through multiple avenues. One evaluation will be student engagement. Student engagement will be tracked through reflection surveys after various lessons. Additionally, student work will be collected and analyzed.

Project Implementation

The author will be teaching in a third grade classroom. The majority of students identify as African American. The author will teach multiple lessons across content areas that include the principles of CRT from Ladson-Billings (1995) and Muhammad (2020). Some of the lessons will be developed at a later date. Student data from the lessons will be collected for analysis in the learning lab. After an extended period of time of the author's lessons being critiqued, other educators from the learning lab will provide their lessons and student data for analysis. This cycle will continue so all participants have the opportunity to share their work and their students work.

Project Conclusion

Students of color deserve an education that values them and their culture. This project was designed so teachers would write lesson plans that would incorporate children of color identities. In addition to lesson goals surrounding academic skills, the lessons would also include opportunities for students to gain deeper understandings of the topic and think critically about their world. Teachers will learn and grow as educators while they participate in a learning lab focused on implementing culturally relevant teaching. Students of color perform on national standardized assessments well below their white peers. For children of color to have more opportunities to be successful in life, it is necessary they are able to engage in higher order thinking and think critically. Being taught in a way that is culturally relevant for students of color is one, and very important, solution for closing the persisting gap in achievement.

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Appendix A: Sample Lesson Plan

3rd Grade Self-Identity Unit

Essential Question: How do I identity within myself, my school, my community, and my world?

Time length: Three to four weeks

Literacy lesson #1

Grade level: 3rd

Time: 30-40 minutes each day for two days

Lesson Goals:

- Identity: Students will be able to explain how they care for their own hair.

- Skills: Students will demonstrate how metaphors are used to enhance writing.

- Intellect: Students will learn the evolution of African American hairstyles as well as the history of prejudice and discrimination based on African American hair styles.

- Criticality: Students will learn how Black people have been discriminated against based on their hair style and what can be done to prevent it from continuing to happen.

Materials:

- *My Hair Is a Garden* by Cozbi A Cabrera

- NewsELA article titled, *Discrimination based on hair is not allowed in New York City*

- Youtube video titled, This is the story of Black hair

  (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0Ta0XKlisg&t=145s)

- Writing notebooks

Lesson Sequence:

Direct Instruction:

Text-based discussion--The lesson will begin with reading the picture book aloud. "*I am going to read a book to you called My Hair Is a Garden. As I am reading, you will most*

likely be able to make text-to-self connections and those are going to be important once we are done reading." Read the story aloud. During reading ask, *"Why does Miss Tillie show MacKenzie her garden?"* Depending on student responses to the previous question ask, *"Why does MacKenzie say that her hair is a garden?"* After collecting student comments , say, *"This is an example of a metaphor. A metaphor compares two things that are not alike but have something in common. Just like we have to take care of plants for them to grow, we have to take care of our hair too."*

Guided Practice:

Students will practice understanding metaphors (skill). Students will work in pairs to explain the meaning of given metaphors as well as create their own metaphors. Provided at the end of this lesson is the activity sheet students will be given.

Independent Practice:

Students will explain in writing what they do to take care of their hair (identity). After writing, students may share with partners or the whole class.

Direct Instruction (day two):

The second day of the lesson focuses on the history of Black hair and how African Americans have faced discrimination because of their hair (intellect and criticality). Students will watch a video that discussed the history of Black hair. Students will learn about Black hair as far back as slavery days and how Black hairstyles have evolved over the years.

Guided Practice:

Students will read as a whole group the NewsELA article about hair discrimination. While reading, students will annotate.

Independent Practice:

Students will then write a letter to their local government about the importance of having a law against hair discrimination.

Assessments (artifacts of student learning):

- Writings on how they take care of their own hair

- Annotated news articles

- Written letters to their local government

- Metaphor practice worksheets

Metaphor Assignment:

Name_____ Date_____

Metaphors!

Part A: In the following metaphors, describe the meaning. Hint: Think about what they have in common. The first one is from the book as we discussed but I want to see how you describe the meaning.

1. My hair is a garden.

   _____

   _____

2. His hair is a twisting tornado.

   _____

   _____

3. Her hair is silk.

   _____

   _____

Part B: Create your own metaphor using the words or topics below.

4. Your hair: _____

5. Getting your hair done/cut: _____

   _____

6. A family member's hair: _____

   _____

Appendix B: Student Interest Survey & Family Culture Survey

WHO ARE YOU?

Student Interest Survey

Name_____

1.   What is your nickname? _____

2.   Who do you live with? _____

3.   What sports or activities do you like to participate in?

_____

4.   What holidays do you celebrate?

_____

5.   What are your favorite foods that you/your family cooks?

_____

6.   What music do you like to listen to? Do you have a favorite artist or song?

_____

7.   What do you typically do on the weekend?

_____

8.   What do you like to do when you are with your friends?

_____

9.   What kind of job would you like to do when you are older?

_____

10. What do you like to do for fun? _____

Family Culture Survey

Greetings! Please complete this short survey to better inform me of your student's home culture. If there is anything else you want to include, feel free to do so.

1. What is your child's name?

   _____

2. Who all lives in your household?

   _____

3. What language(s) do you speak at home?

   _____

4. Do you celebrate holidays? If so, which ones?

   _____

5. What do you do for fun as a family?

   _____

6. Do you have any family traditions?

   _____

7. What do you hope for in your child's future?

   _____

   _____

   _____

8. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Appendix C: Student Lesson Reflection Survey

Name_____ Date_____

Reflecting on the Lesson

Please answer the following questions based on the lesson that was <u>just</u> taught.

1. Color in the face expression that best shows your feelings towards the lesson.

      Loved/liked   Okay   Did not like

2. Explain why you colored in the face you did.

_____

_____

_____

3. Did the lesson relate to your life outside of school? If yes, how?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D: List of Diverse Books

Picture Books	Novels
Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13 by Helaine Becker	*The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander
The Undefeated by Kwame Alexander	*Front Desk* by Kelly Yang
Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry	*Blended* by Sharon M. Draper
Sulwe by Lupita Nyong	*Before the Ever After* by Jacqueline Woodson
My Papi Has A Motorcycle by Isabel Quintero	*Clean Getaway* by Nic Stone
Evelyn Del Rey Is Moving Away by Meg Medina	*When Stars are Scattered* by Victoria Jamieson & Omar Mohamed
Last Stop on Market Street by Matt De La Pena	*New Kid* by Jerry Craft
Jabari Jumps by Gaia Cornwall	*Ways to Make Sunshine* by Renee Watson
Sofia Valdez, Future Prez by Andrea Beaty	*One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams- Garcia
Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut by Derrick Barnes	*Stargazing* by Jen Wang
I Promise by Lebron James	*A Good Kind of Trouble* by Lisa Moore Ramee
Our Favorite Day of the Year by A.E. Ali	*Marley Dias Gets It Done and So Can You!* by Marley Dias
When the Beat was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop by Laban Carrick Hill	*Amal Unbound* by Aisha Saeed
Fry Bread by Kevin Noble Maillard	*Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga
Not Quite Snow White by Ashley Franklin	*Simon B. Rhymin'* by Dwayne Reed
Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation by Duncan Tonatiuh	*Merci Suarez Changes Gears* by Meg Medina
The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson	*Measuring Up* by Lily LaMotte
Peeny Butter Fudge by Toni Morrison	*Genesis Begins Again* by Alicia D. Williams

Created by Hilary O'Neill, 2021

GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY

The signature of the individual below indicates that the individual has read and approved the project of Hilary O'Neill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

_____ 4-26-2021_____
Nancy DeFrance, Project Advisor   Date

Accepted and approved on behalf of the   Accepted and approved on behalf of the
Literacy Studies – Reading Program   Literacy & Technology Unit

_____   _____
Elizabeth Stolle, Graduate Program Director   Sean Lancaster, Unit Head

_____4-26-2021_____   _____4-26-2021_____
                Date   Date