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Addressing Disengagement in Text Through An Increase in Autonomy, Access, and Relevant Text Selection

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**Addressing Disengagement in Text Through An Increase in
Autonomy, Access, and Relevant Text Selection**

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Grand Valley State University

EDR 693 01


Master Project

Dr. Elizabeth Stolle

Spring/Summer 2022



The signature of the individual below indicates that the individual has read and approved the project of **Amanda Saffian** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Literacy Studies.




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Accepted and approved on behalf of the
Literacy Studies Program

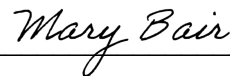


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Amanda Saffian

Abstract

This project proposal employs a broad range of research to design a plan of implementation that would address the effectiveness of increased permanent exposure to more diverse text sets. The essential components of this design are to investigate the efficacy of increasing access to multimodal, high-interest, and responsive texts in closing educational equity gaps as a substantive conceptual model of educational effectiveness and theory-based approaches to increase engagement in literacy and learning. This work would include developing a comprehensive catalog of texts which would allow for the most significant impact on student engagement. The literature used to justify design includes applicable models, references, the authenticity of voice regarding perspective and experience, and shifts in pedagogy, allowing for ease of deployment. This project is designed with the expectation of discovering direct positive correlations between students who can self-select from this catalog as having academic growth and a more positive outlook toward literacy. From this perspective, the importance of conceptual and theoretical approaches helps build more dynamic educational effectiveness schematics. Exercising best practice frameworks in using benchmarks such as state standardized testing scores, then comparing those as growth scores for both students participating in this program with those who are not, with the expectation of finding a positive correlation between the affordances above and student success. This project will directly impact teaching strategies moving forward as an educator, encompassing the benefits and hindrances I have found in the hopes of enacting improvement in closing educational equity gaps.

Keywords

Assessment (Formative, Interim and Summative), Critical Literacy, Engagement, High-interest text, Metacognition, Multicultural Response Theory, Multimodal, Reader Response Theory, Schema, Science of Reading, Simple View of Reading and Texts as Windows, Mirrors and Sliding glass doors.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement

Students have become disengaged readers and have developed a lack of interest in literature with adverse transdisciplinary effects (Arya & Maul, 2021; Hattan & Lupo, 2020; Kucan & Beck, 1997; Ravitch, 2010). Even with our best efforts to produce students with positive relationships with text, we have lost a large subset of our student population (Diehl, 2005). These are rooted in three major societal factors inhibiting growth: student autonomy in-text choice, lack of relevant text as reflections of self and others, and access to text throughout their daily lives. Although there has been a push in recent years to increase the diversity in text offerings by publishers and educational institutions, there has also been a swift resistance (Gladstone et al., 2022). They result in a universal disservice to all stakeholders as it reduces the development of empathy, understanding, and reflection of self and representation (Ladson-Billings, 2018; Muhammad, 2021; Sims-Bishop, 1990). As we work to imbed interactions with literacy throughout the school day and assign additional engagement outside of school, teachers must examine what that means for each child and whether there is access to relevant and meaningful text outside the classroom. Affording students the autonomy to select what they read furthers their voice in their education journey and their investment in the process (Seaver, 2019; Wolpert-Gawron, 2018).

Importance of the Project

Designing adequate educational equity would have global repercussions and would work to reverse the current level of oppression and shift the power dynamic (Freire, 1972). This is to say that each of us has equal responsibility and share of the profits (student success) from sewing these seeds of change. There are several common themes in examining the term “gap,” which is frequently applied when assessing the distance between the lowest-performing students with the highest-performing students. Three predominant themes are socioeconomic status, neurodivergence, and race (specifically Black, Indigenous, and persons of color

henceforth, they are referred to as [BIPOC]). In addressing these above themes, educators can help narrow, or in an ideal setting, close these equity gaps altogether. However, we must remember that these themes intersected with long-standing systematic forms of societal oppression against marginalized populations and the BIPOC population (Milner, 2020; Milner, 2007; Muhammad, 2020). We must investigate how racism, and ableism oppression, further perpetuate the discriminatory status quo in educational settings (Milner, 2020; Milner, 2007; Noguera, 2008).

In most educational settings, the bulk of student reading and response is designed with institutional curricular assignment alignment at the forefront (Ravitch, 2010). This “machine” teaching style is a disservice to student growth, meta-cognitive development, and schema acquisition or showcasing (Acosta et al., 2020). When given choice or autonomy in the process, students often take on the role of the learner as they showcase their knowledge skills beyond educator expectations (Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Seaver, 2019). Educators who refuse to apply differentiation to their practice are providing a disservice. This is seen as a move back to the concept of only one way to learn, counterproductive to growth, reinforcing the “do as I say, not as I do” mentality that is exclusionary. If we expect students to grow and change as learners and members of society, we need to teach them that learning is not linear and that pacing is not universal (Parsons, 2022). When we give students autonomy, we begin restructuring these foundational skills and expectations.

In examining the long-term effects of building students with strong literacy skills and relationships with literature, it is evident that those who have these more developed abilities have tremendous academic success (Arya & Maul, 2021; Hattan & Lupo, 2020; Kucan & Beck, 1997; Ravitch, 2010). Research indicates increased graduation rates, continuing education, participation in politics, and further development of societal structures (Sparks, 2020). Students who “get it” often report a more positive relationship with school and educators (López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2017). A solid educational foundation propels people to build engagement,

which usually correlates with higher socioeconomic status and overall life contentment (Freire, 1972).

Background

The ability to interact with text in a productive and meaningful way is an essential life skill and a human right. Educators have a moral and ethical obligation to teach children the importance of effectively interacting with text and to do so critically (Milner, 2007; Milner, 2020). This responsibility to foster a healthy relationship with literacy is an essential foundational structure that all students should have, as there is no instance where individuals will not utilize these skills (Polizzi, 2019; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978). With public school funding being perpetually placed on the chopping block, we see a lack of access to high-quality, high-interest texts essential to “hooking” a reader in these early years. This can be observed within classroom libraries, which teachers typically fund, with cost factor in necessary text updating (Chokshi, 2018; Walker, 2019). As previously mentioned, another inhibitor to diversifying available classroom text is the recent surge in book bannings brought on by the societal shift in educational interference, especially in more conservative areas. These bans have been far less common in more liberally educated areas indicating a societal change that has far-reaching implications (Gladstone et al., 2022).

Additionally, policies like No Child Left Behind [NCLB], which began in 2002, were designed to support these “gap” students. There has been little long-term evidence of these policies increasing student growth, with some evidence to suggest they often exacerbate these problems (Ravitch, 2010). This effectively “others” children without examining the underlying root causes and systematic protocols that reinforce cycles of educational oppression. Since the introduction of NCLB, we have had little evidence to support the imposed policy (Acosta et al., 2020; Carter, 2018;). Furthermore, the implementation of standardized tests as measures of knowledge has furthered the strong constraints of institutionalized interactions with education or teaching to a test (Acosta et al., 2020). These measures do not track comprehension beyond

those questions or curricular units, misrepresenting our understanding of student skills. Students can often share intimate details of beloved texts, yet many cannot retell in order or detail a text they have interacted with from their classroom library from the previous day. Students lack the technical ability of analysis and insight, which seems to be related to prolonged exposure (Kucan & Beck, 1997). These are not linked to students' inability, unwillingness, or lack of interest; they just did not feel engaged or connected within their classrooms.

During the introduction and initial implementation of NCLB, the educational world saw the wide release of *The Science of Reading (SoR)*, the compilation of three decades worth of research on literacy skill acquisition. The layman's summary of the study discusses how and why we acquire language and literacy skills, focusing on decoding, allowing us to map sounds to letter groups (Snowling & Hulme, 2005). Previously, we had seen teaching from textbooks and loosely connected classroom read-aloud. We saw the shift toward more deliberate text selection aligned with the redesigned curriculums to meet the needs supported by this new evidence (Dee, 2013; Gentry & Ouellette, 2019).

Most reading difficulties can be prevented in young, at-risk students. In other grades, studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of intensive phonemic awareness training, intensive phonic decoding training, and opportunities for repeated practice with reading controlled text. Intervention in these skills leads to efficient orthographic mapping and the highest degree of success. (Ordetx, 2021)

This was surmountable through the development of skills in three main areas; (1) learning letters and their sounds, (2) decoding, also known as sounding out, and (3) orthographic development, which is the ability of students to break down complex words to be retained as sight words. The *Simple View of Reading (SVoR)* was influenced by the 1986 work of Gough and Tunmer, which showcased the essential need for decoding skill development combined with language comprehension to obtain the desired result of meaning-making. SoR was also

propelled by the 2001 work of Dr. Hollis Scarborough, which furthered the work of Gough and Tunmer outlining the complexity of reading development. Scarborough compared literacy skill acquisition to a structurally sound rope, which means that many intricate layers are involved in the complexity of learning to read (Catts, 2018; Scarborough, 2001, Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2012).

SOR caused a seismic shift in teaching; thus, there should be ongoing research into the “who” and “the what” compiled and released this work. It is evident that the common occurrence (reflected in other areas of academia) is that white heterosexual people (mostly male) are tasking themselves with broadly investigating, compiling, and releasing what it means to engage with and become educated (Ladson-Billings, 2018; Milner, 2007; Milner, 2020a; Milner, 2020b; Schwartz & Stephens, 2021). The change in direction to include a more diverse body of researchers, practitioners and text is the most essential and urgent issue facing education today. If students do not see themselves or others portrayed positively and significantly within literature and power roles, how can they further develop those proper societal functions and understandings? These have the potential to change the power dynamics through representation and empathy development breaking generational cycles of oppression and re-writing the power dynamic through education (Arya & Maul, 2021; Azano, 2013; Carter, 2018; Freire, 1972; Sims-Bishop, 1990).

Finally, it is also important to note that since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have shifted towards a more digital format. As this happened, the access to multimodal forms of text increased exponentially for those with access to the proper tools (i.e., internet, devices). As libraries and bookstores were forced into necessary closures, this furthered the divide for those lacking these affordances and the essential access to the text (Gilpin, 2021). As we transition back to the physical classroom, we see this reintroduction to text. Still, it works as almost a starting point, where educators and students have to rebuild connections. This reset also addresses the role that educational settings play in the functionalist society of teaching and

learning how to function as members of our community (i.e., patients, stamina, and budgeting time and materials) (Feinberg & Soltis, 2009). These matters further compound all of the previously mentioned repercussions and work as another starting point of foundational skill development, which both educators and students must tackle.

Statement of Purpose

This project aims to provide students with high-quality, high-interest, relevant texts to increase positive relationships with literacy and universal access to literature. Elementary students from four classrooms in a Third through Fifth-grade building will be selected initially based on Tier II and Tier III qualifications. Parent/caregiver and participant consent will be required to establish a tone of autonomy from the beginning. This project is informed by Critical Literacy Theory, Multicultural Literacy Theory, and Reader-Response Theory. There will be a well-established and meticulously maintained diverse group of stakeholders, including but not limited to: teachers (tier I-III), administrators, parents, students, and community members. This program will be deliberate in all functions and design, from building bookstore experiences to allowing students full autonomy in selection and response format. The relevance of the text will work to facilitate each participant's relationship with literacy further.

Facilitators will populate a relevant library based on compiled data from interest inventories and responses to text completion exit surveys. The initial purpose of this program is to track three years (beginning with the incoming Third graders) of weekly virtual check-ins and monthly in-person conferring sessions to track engagement. The design supports this by allowing students to select and keep thirty-six new texts of their choosing from a library of high-quality, high-interest, and relevant texts. Participants will be afforded the opportunity for drop-in sessions and book swaps if they sample a title and decide it is not the right fit. This program would pair students with authors for book talks and open forum discussions to increase engagement. The overarching goal of this program is to allow students to interact with a plethora of texts to see if this improves their attention and self-reported enjoyment of literacy.

The program also can track any potential positive correlation between increased engagement and academic growth.

Objectives of the Project

The primary objective of this thesis project is to increase student engagement with relevant text. Additionally, the project would: (1) Increase the size and diversity of participants' home libraries, (2) afford students the ability to self-select their monthly text, and (3) expose them to texts with diverse voices that are both familiar and unknown. We will create virtual and in-person, no-cost "book store" shopping experiences. A brief description of each text and genre will be displayed, and a suggested text list will be included based on the initial interest inventory and their previous shopping selections. Assessing project effectiveness will be done in the three-step process (summative, formative, and interim) throughout the project. By utilizing exit tickets and interest inventories, facilitators can track in qualitative terms any potential correlations. The diversity of the participant pool will likely have telling signs of effectiveness, or lack thereof, on many levels.

Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms will be featured frequently throughout this proposal:

- *Assessments* (Samuels et al., 2011)
 - *Formative assessment* - In-process assessments of student understanding and needs. These are performed frequently and have a high indication of student understanding.
 - *Interim assessment* - Used between formative and summative to understand whole learning progression. These are used at the end of units to develop progression.
 - *Summative assessment*- The final review of the outcome or effectiveness of a program or curriculum.

- *Critical Literacy*- The ability to analyze the power dynamic in social constructs presented in the literature (Vasquez, 2020).
- *Engagement* - A psychological investment in learning; this typically looks like increased participation with a drive toward achievement and inclusion on a more emotional level than formal grades but in direct correlation to their lives (Sabbott, 2016).
- *High-interest Text* - Those types of texts easily hold the interest of their intended audience and leave a more lasting impact on the retention of the information presented (Moore, 2018).
- *Metacognitive/Metacognition* - awareness of one's thought process and the ability to deliberately apply these to their educational journey. In this instance, it pertains to how readers store, process, and categorize information they take in (Owen & Vista, 2022).
- *Multicultural Response Theory* - Uncovering the assumptions of knowledge from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives and using knowledge. This is designed to guide action to create a humane and just world (Ortiz, 2012).
- *Multimodal* - Characterized by several different modes of activity or occurrence. In this instance, it pertains to students learning through components like visual, audio, reading, writing, and various other forms (Litonjua, 2021).
- *Reader Response Theory*- An approach to teaching reading centered around the reader as the essential meaning maker through personal experiences (Rosenblatt, 1938).
- *Schema* - An understanding that thought and behavior organize and categorize information, experiences, and how they intersect; this pertains to how people connect their experiences to texts (Pankin, 2013).
- *Science of Reading* - A comprehensive reading analysis is based on longitudinal studies of essential aspects required to teach literacy effectively and comprehensively. Focusing on how and why we acquire language and literacy skills and focusing on decoding

allows for more significant mapping of sounds to letter groups (Snowling & Hulme, 2005).

- Simple View of Reading (SVoR)- Theory outline the essential need for decoding skill development combined with language comprehension to obtain the desired result of meaning-making (Catts, 2018)
- *Texts as Windows, Mirrors and Sliding glass doors* (Sims-Bishop, 1990)
 - *Windows*- Are texts that allow the audience to look out onto experiences different from their own as observers.
 - *Mirrors*-Are texts that allow the audience to see themselves and their experiences in the text in authentic representations?
 - *Sliding glass doors*- These texts invite the audience to step inside experiences beyond themselves, enveloping themselves in the content.

Project Scope

This project is designed for initial implementation for Third-grade students from a diverse building, and the objectives mentioned earlier focused on increasing participant text engagement. Additionally, the project seeks to broaden access to more varied titles and develop home libraries through student self-selection. Through execution, all participants will have permanent access to at least twelve new self-selected, high-interest, and high-quality texts per year for three years. This project does not offer any additional intervention; it allows them to have a say in how and what they interact with in terms of their home literacy library. Participation in this project does not qualify, exclude them from, or have any direct connection to intervention services or providers other than potential volunteer credentialing. The project affords each stakeholder a voice and provides explicit guidelines to help facilitate. This project has the potential to be expanded beyond the Third through Fifth-grade setting; initial implementation was intentionally applied based on the designer's access to students on caseload in this setting.

The participant pool for this project is students who have outlined the need for increased foundational literacy skill development, limited access to text, and lack of text engagement. If this project has positive longitudinal correlations, it could be expanded to a complete building, grade, and age level.

One limitation of this project is the sampling size and location, which will take place in one elementary school in one city within the United States. Thus, this project is not generalizable. Although there is a fairly diverse student population within this sample, this does not include all, or even most, potential diversity markers. A hurdle to implementation will be the program's cost (i.e., books and other associated materials). This will likely be addressed through grant funding, district funds, and building initiatives. It has the potential to become complicated as funding is typically highly competitive, so budgeting is an essential component. This project is being designed and facilitated by a Literacy Specialist and Title One Teacher to help track academic implications and ensure high-quality resources are used accordingly. Finally, this project does not force participants to execute every aspect of the program; it will only be requested. Facilitators cannot track with complete fidelity those aspects like how, when, and where students interact with these texts, but connecting with caregivers and students could remove some of these barriers.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Literacy has been at the forefront of the educational curriculum in the United States for many years. However, there seems to be an increase in disengagement from text in recent years. There are a variety of potential culprits, and investigating ways to overcome these hurdles is essential to building more effective and engaged learners (Arya & Maul, 2021; Hattan & Lupo, 2020; Kucan & Beck, 1997; Ravitch, 2010). This literature review reflects a succinct review of the research on helping facilitate educational growth and outlining the societal cycles of oppressive forces that explicitly and implicitly hinder growth. This literature review will be presented through four core areas of focus: (1) Theoretical framework behind the research examined through the lens of critical literacy theory, multicultural literacy theory, and reader-response theory; (2) Research analysis is subcategorized into the following headings: Autonomy of Text Selection, Relevance Pertaining to Reflection of Self and Others, and Access to Text; (3) Summary, which provides a concise synopsis of the analyzed literature; and (4) Conclusion that will outline how the research informs and guides the implementation of the project.

Those within the field of academia have a moral and ethical obligation to foster learning that allows students to develop within their abilities through expanded context and differentiated learning. Knowing that each student brings a level of analysis and insight to the proverbial table that is unique and has the potential to intersect with their peers, these are essential pieces of the learning environment (Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Seaver, 2019). Beginning this process by designing it with diversification in mind works to expose students to a multitude of experiences and perspectives. All of the work presented is underpinned by the concept that access to liberal education is a foundational structure to quality education and thus is a human right. Only through this intensive work can we hope to break cycles of oppression and build more inclusive cities of learning (Friere, 1972; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2020).

Theory/Rationale

The rationale for this research revolves around the effects on student engagement through increased access to high-quality, high-interest, and relevant text through self-selection. Historically classroom texts have portrayed and perpetuated the white able-bodied and wealthy experience. Typically, when other racial or cultural groups are represented, it is done in a less than desirable light with derogatory implications (Hattan & Lupo, 2020; Ravitch, 2010). For years the assessment of skills, knowledge and the capacity to learn from these students has been seen as insurmountable and lacking the need for proper exploration.

This project is informed by the following theoretical frameworks: critical literacy theory, multicultural theory, and reader-response theory. These overlapping and intersecting theories are underpinned by the revolutionary work of Paulo Friere (1972) and his design of liberal education as an essential pedagogical foundation for freeing ourselves from societal oppression and better understanding the forces perpetuating these offenses.

Critical Literacy Theory

Critical literacy theory is defined as a learning approach where students are expected to examine various texts to understand the relationship between language and the power it can hold. Students critically analyze and evaluate the meaning of texts as they relate to topics on equity, power, and social justice. Associated implications and applications are developing more democratically inclined citizens who hold the ability to apply research and knowledge to make informed decisions that reduce the possibility of reinforcing current cycles of oppression. Key theorists/contributors within critical theory research: Paulo Freire, Richard Milner, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Bell Hooks, and Antonia Darder.

Applicable Research Related to the Theory

In examining Critical Literacy theory, it is essential to examine the influential research of Richard Milner. Engaging with his research, notably his 2020 article titled *Disrupting Racism and Whiteness in Researching a Science of Reading*, is particularly well connected to this

project. Milners' research showcases the need for diversity in educational research and site of learning (i.e., schools). Finding a solution through funding research proposed and performed by a more diverse subset of the population. It also outlines increasing comprehension by showcasing more diverse text and having more dynamic conversations that work, as Dr. Sims Bishop called mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors (Sims-Bishop, 1990). Milner argues that by adding in the more diverse text, repercussions will involve seeing an increase in readership and overall student comprehension. Milner (2020) argues that "Black students, similar to other racialized groups of students, develop complex and intricate motivations and interests in narratives as they emerge in the literature" (Milner, p.251). Thus they become more successful readers, writers, mathematicians, and overall better students when they are shown mirrors within the halls of academia. In a more Macro lens, he argues that when more diverse bodies drive research teams and topics, we will see an increase in stakeholder engagement, understanding, and overall growth.

Echoing much of the previous article but going further to help readers navigate the implementation of change is Milners 2010 book *Start Where You Are, But Don't Stay There: Understanding Diversity, Opportunity Gaps, and Teaching in Today's Classroom*. Throughout the text, he discusses several essential components to shifting toward the change-centered mindset. However, these three are interconnected with this project: (1) understanding the complexity of diversity along with the associated implications, and (2) how gaps in opportunity remove essential foundational experiences and potential growth for those from specific subsets of the general population and (3) building relationships is the essential foundational piece.

Building relationships means that teachers develop knowledge and understanding about students to enhance both present learning and future opportunities. Teachers need to establish a strong relationship with students as a way to "plant seeds" that will enable the teaching and learning relationship to grow over time. (Milner, 2010. P. 64)

His robust explanation, outline, and process place each reader in a solid position to continue the work he and his predecessors have begun.

If educators lack the professional knowledge, training, or ability to integrate these aspects or are even prohibited from sharing these, there will be constraints. Also, the contextual shift needs to move beyond racial text exposure and training and toward a realistic, all-encompassing form of exposure. In no way does Milner (2007) say that integrating a more diverse set of text and classroom exposure removes all barriers to grade-level skill and knowledge acquisition. He simply represents that we need to make this shift to improve the science of reading and student comprehension. “Communities that have been oppressed tend to understand that their scholarship has the potential to help people” (Milner, 2007). Applying research and understanding to developing the text catalog will be essential. His comments regarding the work ahead on building student “buy-in” are necessary both within this project and beyond.

Over the last two decades, we have become an increasingly digital society which inevitably has carried over into education. Though there is much debate about the appropriateness of this shift, there is no denying that it has the potential to increase access to multimodal text. Critics have made it clear that some of the potential dangers like misinformation and social and emotional damage may outweigh those benefits. However, in 2019 Polizzi wrote on how to combat these valid and dangerous associations in his work *Information Literacy in the Digital Age: Why Critical Digital Literacy Matters for Democracy*. He discusses in depth the benefit of digital literacy. He compels all members of society to become more critical consumers, developing a more trained eye to combat the previously mentioned concerns and effectively allowing consumers to apply social concepts and clues to disseminate information and produce information that they would encourage (of course) to be valid and with merit. In the discussion around political literacy, which has been argued as a critical component of effective democracy, there are various points for digestion, including accurate historical knowledge. This knowledge

is a basis for being a critical consumer of literature. It is a structural setting for understanding the repercussions of the production and dissemination of any work.

Further evidence in Polizzi's work indicates the importance of equal access and opportunity across the board. In increasing equitable access, there is potential for a seismic shift in the power dynamic. They noted one limitation of critical literacy theory: a personal ability to evaluate what they have experienced and appropriately retained. How can substantiality or accurate portrayal be produced if there is no powerful metacognitive pull back to accurate or prior knowledge? A structure of democratic theory should apply a more critical lens to all information dissemination.

Critical digital literacy does not just involve the ability to critically evaluate information, which is central to the notion of information literacy. Since digital media are not neutral but embedded within broader power structures, A critical reading of different traditions relevant to media studies allows us to revisit how we approach critical digital literacy. It enables us to conceive of it as incorporating knowledge and values about the internet in relation to how it operates socio-economically and how its democratizing potentials and structural constraints characterize the digital environment where information circulates.

(p.12)

With longstanding and more recent surges in distrust of politics and the media, coupled with mainstream access to information via the internet, there has been an increase in political participation (David, 2021). The internet has become another piece in the power struggle and is sometimes being used to contribute to reinforcing long-standing cycles of power and oppression. Polizzi (2019) implores media consumers to understand bias, evaluate the content and be cautious in our consumption.

Although Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968,1972) is more than fifty years old, its significance is timeless and essential for the design of this project. His philosophy-based pedagogy has contributed significantly to educational settings and the development of the

theoretical lens of Critical Literacy. This was developed as a pedagogic method that strived to support impoverished populations. For this purpose, the oppressors are the dominant class, like policy-makers, while the oppressed are those on the inverse of this power spectrum. He studied the effects of teaching impoverished farmworkers how to read so that they could develop a more critical lens. His work outlining the importance of literacy as a human right propels pedagogy for many educators.

He found that cultivating a high-quality understanding of texts was the biggest problem in their education and creating a change plan. Freire says that "dialogue is the essence of revolutionary action" (p. 84), dedicating a substantial portion of the text to developing and understanding the key traits for authentic dialogue: humility about one's knowledge, faith in the power, a better understanding of the power dynamics to envision a new world, with hope for a new future, critical thinking to inform one's actions, and most importantly, love. One of the most intersected ideas that Freire emphasizes is building constructive dialogue for problem-solving. Affording each stakeholder these valuable lessons designate all the roles of the advocate. Educators need to root our work in understanding the experiences of the oppressed, helping to facilitate change, building a culture of humanity, and working to create a future that is neither created by the dominant elites nor limited by ideology. The *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* encourages education to challenge entrenched 'Truths' and giving participants this increased access to texts arms them with knowledge and ability.

Multicultural Literacy Theory

Multicultural Literacy Theory is a learning approach that involves developing the skills and ability to identify the creators of knowledge and their interests. —exposing the assumption of knowledge, viewing it from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives, while using it to guide action that will create a humane and just world. Associated implications and applications involve developing a more comprehensive understanding of perspectives that afford each citizen the skills to advocate for themselves and others more meaningfully. Critical theorists/contributors

within Multicultural Literary Theory are James A. Banks, Rudine Sims Bishop, Geneva Gay, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Gholdy Muhammad, and Eric Hirsch.

Applicable Multicultural Literacy Theory Research

Gholdy Muhammad (2020), in her book, *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*, outlined her research and designed a response framework to become an educator who embodies best practice. Muhammad highlights how essential the cultivation of high-quality texts is, noting that being literate with various texts and genres is the key to meeting learning goals. She contends that educational settings should be designed around libraries and not a secondary consideration. She proposes moving away from those constraints around what constitutes text—and developing the knowledge that everything has value. Her work surmised that students do not feel connected to text for all of the aforementioned reasons and because of the “unclear purpose of the pursuit of reading” (p.139). The case for this being common among pupils is evident as she continues to explore her research and historical research connected to the subject.

Among the many takeaways from this work is the knowledge that the all-encompassing nature of interactions encourages engagement in increasing access to multimodal text and physical ones, including virtual text from all genres and formats, in considering this work's applicability and consistently applying the fifteen cognitive development questions linked on page 145. Speaking specifically to number five: How will this text advance students' learning identity of themselves or other people/cultures? As others outlined here have imparted the essential component of seeing variations of content and experiences (Azano, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2020; Sims-Bishop, 1990).

Alongside Muhammad's work, the 2020 book *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom* by Bettina L. Love. This text examines critical and multicultural literacy with a more attentive focus on the latter. Through this, she terms those in the audience to become co-conspirators of change moving into action to

make a true impact. She perfectly captures the reality that many people who comprise the education system are not free from toxic ideals, begging the question of who and what they are there to teach. She argues that many schools function as places of suffering due to this profound seeded toxicity that has stymied academic growth. Love discusses another critical piece in the work of successful abolitionist teaching: generational healing from societal inflicted wounds, which happens in part through wellness in schools. She cites years of personal experiences with educational settings trying to control BIPOC students and that this is a component needing a quick check. The only viable solution she states is immediate action of taking up the role of abolitionists outlined in this text (p.162).

James Banks' 1998 work *The lives and values of researchers: Implications for educating citizens in a multicultural society* embodies the core influences of multicultural literacy theory. He outlines the misrepresentation and inaccurate portrayal of oppressed persons and a lack of diverse representation and simultaneously questions who would work to shift this narrative. This falls partially on the social scientist researching and presenting this information. "The hearts of social scientists exercise a cogent influence on research questions, findings, concepts, generalizations, and theories" (p. 4-5). The article uncovers the necessary work associated with MCLT. The core is that these perspectives, thought to have been objective for a year, have shaped societal trajectories and educational information. This oppression disproportionately affects historically marginalized groups and pushes researchers to strive for explicit accurate portrayals of events and experiences related to the population.

In utilizing the benefits of authentic voices, researchers should speak from a perspective they know and seek out the same of others who can speak on other experiences. Consider these concepts:

debates of questions such as: Who should speak for whom? Whose voice is legitimate? Who speaks with moral authority and legitimacy? Can the outsider ever understand the cultures and experiences of insiders or speak with moral authority

about them? (p.6)

The answers lie at the heart of comprehending how to approach research, representation, documentation, and portrayal, with applicability to race, gender, economic status, and other hot topic subjects. He addresses this diverse make-up by suggesting a more diverse set of stakeholders to comprise research, academia, and political fields. Moving beyond MCLT and into those CLT areas, people are asked to examine and discuss what they and others bring to the table and why this is significant. Additionally, he recognizes that this will have resistance, which indicates how vital this work is.

Gloria Ladson-Billings's research regarding culturally responsive teaching, "But That is Just Good Teaching!" (1995 & 2018), provides evidence of the overarching outline of the effectiveness of teachers with the basis and understanding. Celebrating and welcoming various cultural experiences in the classroom is *not* a painful integration process but a simple shift of understanding that humans are more than a single-sided entity. The qualitative longitudinal analysis of this work allowed her to track these findings deeper. The study followed the teaching cycles of successful teachers of African American studies and what she thought might be the key to a successful transition of practice. Her observations that the learning seemed to emerge organically from student suggestions and that there should be a look deeper than surface-level folly to understand the impact and connection of success. This work, like that of Dr. Sims-Bishop, is directly connected to the design of this project due to her findings regarding the significance of representation and students' voices.

Carrying this review into the work of Dr. Rudine Sims-Bishops, who outlined the significance of representation in literature and classroom settings through her work in developing the concepts of "Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors" (1990). Although the work is over thirty years old, the relevance and skeptical design withstood the test of time. This research outlines the lack of diversity and representation in texts within classrooms and also those published in the preceding years. Her research outlined the effects on pupils and how it

shaped their relationship with literature and education in general. This revealed that when students are not represented in the books they read or described in derogatory or distorted ways, they are told their existence as a one-sided story and devalued in society and educational settings. In addition, she argues that children from dominant groups are frequently featured from the mirror perspective; they also suffer from the lack of diverse text. All students benefit from the variety of valuable text that she outlines. As a society, there is a need for texts that showcase the proper subset of the student population, and their experiences will build stronger connections through this. Literature offers readers with limited outside expertise the ability to better understand the world from other perspectives. How can individuals grow without moving beyond exclusive self-reflective texts? Educators should strive to build learning communities where all children from every culture are valued and represented.

Reader Response Theory

Reader Response Theory focuses on the importance of the reader's role in constructing meaning within a text. RRT suggests that there is a transaction that takes place between the reader and the text. During this, the reader interprets the inferred meaning of the text through their background knowledge and personal experiences. Thus, the interpretation of a text is situated in a particular manner that includes factors such as ability, culture, gender, and overall experiences. Critical theorists/contributors within Reader Response Theory are Louise Rosenblatt and Wolfgang Iser.

Applicable Research Related to Reader Response Theory

The final theory driving this work is Reader Response Theory (RRT) which Louise Rosenblatt termed. RRT focuses on the reader and how they interpret the text based on their prior knowledge and experiences. Two main categories distinguish learning in the context of RRT aesthetic and efferent. When a reader is utilizing aesthetic reading, we expect to see those acts of personal connection to text in a detailed and emotionally evocative way, compared to efferent reading, which happens when learners obtain new knowledge, build inferences, and

hone essential problem-solving skills. The former is a very individualized experience unique to each learner compared with the latter, which can be more of a collaborative process. Rosenblatt says that during aesthetic interactions,

[W]e not only bring about the "happening" by responding to the verbal symbols that make up the text but also focus on the qualities of the very happening that we are bringing to pass. We are directly involved. We are active participants in the "happening." experience that occurs during reading. When taking an efferent stance, the reader seeks information and focuses on an accumulation of what is to be carried away at the end of the reading. When taking an aesthetic stance, the reader focuses on what is being created during the actual reading, the experience itself--the happening. (p. #)

This theory is considered a transactional model where the text lent itself to the reader and the reader to the text in which this meaning is made. This extends beyond the simplicity of transactional mathematical modeling and builds further understanding not only for the learner but also for the educator into a more dynamic relationship through conferring with a student and better work to facilitate learning. Additionally, this further understanding lends itself to differentiating lessons and materials while helping better gauge text comprehension because there is a more detailed explanation of their connections.

Agley and Wood's (2022) piece *Disruptive Education and Its Non-linear Form* has outlined the understanding that learning is not a linear process and that as people learn and grow, the meaning will change similarly. Each reader in this process takes on the active participant role, as what they bring to the text and what they take away from it is their own. One example of linear modeling within educational settings is categorizing students into grades built on the archaic ideological stance that all people progress and develop at the same rate (Agley & Wood, 2022). RRT supports shifting this narrative through building a more comprehensive understanding of the human condition and knowledge that learning and growth are nonlinear. When students are allowed the opportunity to grow at their own pace with differentiated

instruction and redesigned assessment (formative, summative, and interim), there is a shift in how to best measure knowledge, pushing education towards best practice with each pupil's needs in mind.

The research *Reader Response in Secondary Settings: Increasing Meaningful Interactions With Literacy*, a 2017 piece by Woodruff and Griffin, forces readers to perform an in-depth examination of shortcomings. Critical analysis of reader response requires addressing the associated limitations before applying appropriately. Examining first a foundational concern with the aesthetic experience, which is that through the investment in self and personal experiences, the author's intended meaning can be misconstrued or even missed altogether. If the reader only gleans meaning from their own experiences, they miss potential perspectives and personal growth or furthered learning (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017). Interpretation of text is subjective; understanding this is essential as an educator because this works to support further the concept that there is more than one correct response. Address this through further evaluation of student response and more dynamic teacher-pupil relationship development. Roen and Karolides (2005) noted that RRT educators and caregivers should never be considered the authority on meaning but rather facilitators of collaborative conversations that explore each individual's interpretations which further understand and encourage personal growth (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017).

Finally, when discussing RRT, there should be mention of the importance of Vygotsky's Zones, which have some critical overlap. The 2005 article by Diehl, *Snapshots of our journey to thoughtful literacy*, showcases some of that overlap. The main talking points of the article outline better comprehension of the problems facing educators and students when it comes to literacy. She pulls from Vygotsky to explain the importance of social interactions when it comes to being active participants in the academic journey (p. 57). The codependency to transaction relationship between our peers and learning is evident in his explanation and her argument. These, in any way, mirror the concepts of RRT transactions knowing each role gives and gets

something; through these experiences, there is growth. Knowing that each participant has varied strengths and utilizing these to elicit growth in areas of deficiency is the pinnacle of growth potential activation.

This type of growth can activate in well-designed small groups where students seek learning opportunities and gauge their intentionality. Diehl (2005) suggests this is best implemented in three phases during a breakfast club to track potential benefits; "activating metacognition, comprehension strategies, and fostering literature discussions" (pp. 59-67). The results indicated notable positive behavior and attitude shifts as it was initially perceived as a punishment, and then a sense of community began to develop as they collaborated. There were also academic implications as Diehl noted that students began applying strategies more often, and self-monitoring for understanding increased participation in small and whole groups (pp. 67-68). This research is a strong indicator of the applicability of Vygotsky's work and indicates a relationship between RRT and his work, which reinforces the intersectionality of this theoretical lens.

Research Evaluation

Research Regarding Shifts in Instructional Practice

Educators should review effective instructional practices to support student learning to better process the relationship between engagement, literacy, and pedagogy. Encouraging learning, which showcases the relationship between social and emotional learning (SEL) and academic success, is the summit for solid pedagogy—increasing access to text, time with the text, and conversing about interactions with text increase the ability to comprehend and develop inferential skills (Parsons, 2022). Developing skilled readers involves developing educators who can design and implement solid curricula and lesson plans. Additionally, investing in relevant and high-interest texts should be considered a priority. This work allows for more in-depth interactions and, subsequently, more in-depth conferring and collaborating opportunities. Teachers should utilize small group collaboration combined with diligent and deliberate whole

group work. Understanding these to be solid foundational aspects to engaging and developing active learners embeds these concepts into the design of this project (Parsons, 2022; Scarborough, 2001).

Integrating Writing

With all the components of becoming more active participants in the educational journey, striving to extend this work beyond reading and into other areas such as writing is essential. Essential Pedagogy to dissect and process traumatic and complex experiences helps all stakeholders grow (Wrenn & Christianson, 2018). Educators should embrace the practice of self-reflection and analysis of traumatic experiences of others and themselves in age-appropriate manners, with healing at the forefront of this work. Students work alongside their teachers to learn together through student-driven conversations around various genres of study texts. Topics revolve around central themes such as social justice, development, socioeconomic status, social norms, pressure, and race to facilitate more liberal educational experiences. Focus on better understanding the effects of pedagogical practices beyond ELA courses (Wrenn & Christianson, 2018). Observing and collaborating alongside peers means classroom teachers, special areas educators, and interventionists shape more intentional approaches to supporting each other and their students. Students may be more prone to participate when prompted when they see collaboration. Building collaboration skills benefit students in producing personal narratives/memoirs, leaning on their peers for feedback, and requiring them to be active listeners. There should be varying degrees of educational engagement around these subjects that illuminate how well-designed learning communities increase student response, indicating the overall effectiveness of these practices (Wrenn & Christianson, 2018).

Practice needs to become more collaborative, with each stakeholder sharing the responsibility of each role (facilitator, presenter, audience member) to better grasp the importance associated with each. There is great significance in allowing the students to play

each role in these small group settings as they become more comprehensive learners (Vygotsky, 1978). When questioned (educators, researchers, and students), each indicated increased constructive and meaningful conversations when the time was spent sharing responsibilities and doing so in small group settings. Teachers can find students more apt to write and speak about a broad range of topics. There may be some intrigue surrounding these topics that will likely encourage participation, with a feeling that exercising their voice was critical in a “circle of testimony and witness” (Wrenn & Christianson, 2018. p. 123). Through these, students can organically find their voice through specific content as active participants in their learning environment. In these more complex conversations, teacher participation is essential only to steer away from harsher aspects. For the most part, the educator's role should be to moderate, keeping the environment safe and open for each student. Evidence suggests that when participants write in these environments, extraordinary forms of expression take place with verbally sharing and designing learning environments that become communities of openness. Declaring that there is no one size fits all and that what is effective may differ from year to year and class to class but knowing to shift utilizes a design that shapes a more accurate analysis and synthesis.

Attention to Social and Emotional Learning

There should be a continued analysis of how these pedagogical shifts affect a person's ability to learn, assuming the ability to actively participate in learning from all people within the constraints of emotional constraints and outside contributing factors. When discussing the social and emotional approach to teaching and learning, stakeholders should always consider the key contributors. Approaching these discussions increases buy-in and gives each person a voice to convey their view on success points and areas that need further consideration (Lopez-Perez & Fernandez-Castilla, 2017). Research should showcase the voice from the perspectives of children and adolescents as their concept of success both academically and socially especially on happiness. Examinations of the perception of happiness might use terms such as praise,

helping and being helped, and structure of school time. These are often terms related to what adults conceptualize as potential happiness triggers. Children often report academic success as being more closely tied to the concept of happiness (Lopez-Perez & Fernandez-Castilla, 2017). Understanding what shapes these varied perspectives requires further discussion to make the distinction, knowing that conceptual and actual happiness may vary considerably. Additional research suggests a connection between self-reported happiness and academic performance, indicating a reciprocal relationship between these two pieces.

Pedagogy should encompass these aspects; learning, academic performance, and associated praise increase self-reported happiness to enhance positive relationships both on personal and professional levels. There are parallels between increasing autonomy, skill development, and achievement that educators, peers, and caregivers reinforced as praise increased in many facets of their lives (Lopez-Perez & Fernandez-Castilla, 2017). In striving to foster these relationships, happiness can further develop a more informed understanding of cycles and how to dismantle unhealthy ones, build healthier ones and reinforce the healthiest (Murphy, 1998; Noguera, 2008). There is ample discussion on the limitations of this work, particularly the need to continue and broaden the sample; the initial findings conclude academic success and emotional balance, which works to foster structures within the design of this project.

Inquiry-Based Learning Focus

Examining shifts in instructional practices implore researchers to understand the effects across diverse populations and locations. One classification that has direct implications on this research and the project design includes comparing data and instructional practice in a descriptive summary and comparison of methods in Title One and non-Title elementary schools. Designing critical questions is the key to building understanding on a more specific level.

Effective instructional practices include strategies that maximize the amount of time spent on instruction, student engagement, and opportunities to respond and those that

minimize negative student behavior, transition time, interruptions, and time spent talking about unrelated topics. (Stichter, Stormont, & Lewis, 2009. p.172)

It is directly investigating this allowed researchers to draw correlations that indicated the effectiveness of time management and instructional focus when supporting students to learn and retain educational content. This work adds to the field by developing a greater understanding of the impact of allocated literacy time, instructional groupings, and exploration.

Teacher and student behavior trends related to instructional grouping and time breakdown during reading instruction and approach can guide said instruction(Stichter, Stormont, & Lewis, 2009. p.172). Some concerning observations were non-instructional talk and negative feedback to students. Students should be discouraged from leaving their classroom during group discussions. Additionally, some are associated with undesirable teacher behavior and derogatory student responses, which affect classroom engagement. These findings will help navigate the application of this project and the overall design.

Assessments

One component of this Project Framework involves utilizing the benefits of formative assessments. As pupils explore text, much can be gleaned from having conversations with peers and teachers. Using varied approaches to assessment like Kucan and Beck's "Thinking Aloud " (1997) can be a more meaningful understanding of comprehension. Thinking Aloud is a more organic approach to navigating understanding by allowing a teacher to ask deliberate questions and see where students take them. These do not pull directly from a preordained list of questions and answers. Kucan and Beck's work relies on historical research and the various applications and analysis of educational scholars before them. The method of "thinking aloud" suggests we should transfer conversations on comprehension to be less structured (removing those formal questioning tacks) and begin with a baseline prompt like "Did you make any personal connections to this story?" This allows a better understanding of their connections and comprehension, in general, going beyond a predetermined response. Transitioning to this

method of comprehension tracking could be a game-changer for outlining comprehension concerning students and set the stage for more meaningful relationships (Kucan & Beck, 1997). This is due to understanding them and those experiences that have shaped their interpretations.

Another shift in assessment pedagogy is using reciprocal teaching techniques proclaimed to monitor and foster comprehension through design (Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

This cognitive approach utilizes four tested methods of comprehension measurement: (1) summarizing, (2) questioning, (3) clarifying, and (4) predicting. The reciprocal method, which alternates the directing role between teacher and student, has a very high success rate. The findings supported the reciprocal teaching model featured in study one as being “One of the most powerful tools of applied cognitive teaching” (Palincsar & Brown, 1984, p.127).

Approaching the in-person conferring sessions in this reciprocal styling during the research will likely support participant growth.

Autonomy of Text Selection

Autonomy in this context refers to a student's ability to self-govern and select the text of interest to them without the interference of educators or facilitators. Autonomy is beneficial because no one understands an individual's experiences or interests better than they do, meaning there is a greater likelihood of potential increased engagement in this design. A 2021 paper by Paige et al. discusses how reading is more than what is on the surface. Although the Science of Reading (SOR) creates a robust foundational baseline due to the extensive research and analysis that went into creating it, this does not preclude it from a critical eye. They draw from SOR but take it further by showcasing potential growth associated with adding differentiation in more artistic approaches like ribbons of performances. Through this, they discuss the importance of repeated interaction with text to build automaticity with language to increase fluency and comprehension. This structure leans on the strength of the teaching approach called readers theater. Reader theater gives students autonomy while allowing teachers the opportunity to design rubrics and associated scoring intact. The autonomy in their

ability to select text and how they will perform or present their selection. This design promotes prosody, which they have deemed essential to becoming balanced learners; prosody characterizes and builds meaning and meaning-making through the reader's tone. Another influential concept presented in this work is transfer. The transfer is similar to the transactional relationship presented in RRT, where some might say this of this scaffolded learning. This research quotes the work of Broudy (1977), calling on his three kinds of knowledge.

Replicative knowledge is command of the facts, applicative knowledge is the ability to apply existing knowledge to solve new problems, and interpretive knowledge reflects the meaning given by the individual to his or her existing schemata that serve as starting points for problem-solving. (p.344)

The ability to utilize schema is due to the strong indication that interesting knowledge is the most difficult, and applying this manner can reduce some of this difficulty. Repetition of interaction with text, autonomy in choice, and differentiation in teaching leads to meaningful relationships, and being able to do this effectively is an art that should be transdisciplinary.

Much of this sentiment outlined and elaborated by Seavers 2019 article *Student Choice Equals Student Engagement* is a strong example of student autonomy's benefits for engagement and retention. She argues that by building on this autonomy, students activate the theoretical application of reader response theory while developing critical literacy skills and engagement. A teacher's role is to facilitate a safe and equitable learning environment while providing differentiated instruction that makes content accessible to all students. The role of the students is to choose an applicable text (multimodal range) that is appealing to the students and engage with it in an enriching manner to meet the needs of the desired rubric. Seaver discusses using interest inventories to meet the curriculum's constraints and the students' desires, narrowing down her district requirement of historical text and project. There is success in this model through satire, phenomenon, Socratic seminar, and extensive self-reflection. "They love all of the topics we talk about, and this approach is a welcome change from the typical

read-a-chapter-and-take-a-test pattern they have experienced in other classroom settings” (p.112). The takeaway from this piece is that when given autonomy and differentiation, there is buy-in, leading to engagement and academic success.

Relevance Pertaining to Reflection of Self and Others

Personal experiences shape our knowledge and work to foster our reading process. Knowing that each student is a stakeholder whose knowledge and experiences matter has been will likely be a key to most of the increased engagement (Muhammad, 2020; Sims-Bishop, 1990). Facilitators will work to address the lack of diversity and inclusion in texts provided for students in various settings, including in the classroom and their everyday lives. Knowing how readers’ knowledge is activated, applied, and reinforces learning allows one to see the ability to offer more practical support (Azano, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Cultivating student success and positive learning requires educators to stop showcasing only dominant perspectives because this results in a distorted view of reality that reinforces toxic oppressors vs. oppressed relationships resulting in a severe disservice to society (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Children on the opposite end of the norm spectrum, either socioeconomically, culturally, racially, or of varied abilities, are often outside those mainstream consideration zones. For years we have heard the echoing call for more diverse texts in the hands of readers, many attributing this initial request to the definitive work by Dr. Sims-Bishop (1990). All students need mirrors, which are texts that reflect their language practices, histories, and values, as text reading is part of the socialization process. Bishop argues that this alone is not enough, as students must also be exposed to texts that provide windows into other cultures to develop their socialization. This development needs to include reading texts with language practices, traditions, and values that are not similar to their own, particularly for students from dominant backgrounds who are not typically exposed to non-dominant perspectives and cultures (Bishop, 1990).

Literacy Communities

The need to build a literacy community within our classrooms should be at the forefront of our pedagogy as it encourages crucial conversations and student buy-in. Growth germinates into real conversation and answers when students feel comfortable questioning and exploring learning (Parsons, 2022; Wolpert-Gawron, 2018). These are those that mean something beyond surface-level “because” responses. Building space for those crucial times of self-reflection, peer-reflection, and societal reflection in the micro, macro, and mezzo approach to investigating the world in which we live. Although this may seem like a radicalized approach (and in some ways, it is), this design disrupts the norm and develops further understanding and a more positive relationship with learning. Understanding how knowledge and personal experience are essential foundational considerations when gauging how literate a child is (Hattan & Lupo, 2020). There is multi-tiered growth when there is a greater understanding of knowledge and how each person interacts with literacy from an individual perspective. Knowing what impact, if any, sociocultural and cognitivist perspectives have on processing is relevant. Uncovering the importance of diverse and authentic portrayals across the board activates their prior knowledge, i.e., seeing familiar characters and situations, and develops new knowledge, i.e., unfamiliar circumstances or traits.

Teaching strategies like K-W-L (Know-want to know-learned) invite conversations that can create and reinforce more dynamic relationships as stakeholders develop a better idea of each other. Fostering these interactions can take place in a whole group or small group setting and pulls on the importance of knowledge and experiences to grow personal and group knowledge. There needs to be an additional focus on cultural knowledge like values, traditions, and language, encompassing whole class learning, especially the non-dominant class (Azano, 2014; Hattan & Lupo, 2020). There should be a push to Expand feelings of community within the classroom, engagement in learning experiences, and increasing understanding and

empathy for groups with dissimilar backgrounds—ascertaining that teachers must incorporate diverse experiences and differences into their classroom settings and invite students to facilitate this type of sharing (Love, 2020). Discovering and celebrating experiences that reflect the non-dominant class is essential in literacy development (Banks, 1998; Milner, 2020).

There are intersecting themes of design and concern in the qualitative research exploring how society understands and showcases “places” and communities. There are several critical (and applicable) questions that need to be explicit when deciding on what literature is most beneficial (Azano, 2014);

- What does it mean to be part of the collective consciousness of my place?
- What does it mean to be a citizen here?
- What are the issues, assets, and challenges facing my community?
- How do I engage with my place?
- Am I an agent of change?
- What questions do I need to explore to become critically engaged now and in the future?

Finding the answers to these builds knowledge that the varied perspectives are valid and worthy of further examination and firmly knowing that misinformation should permanently be excluded. Text written by persons unfamiliar with connected experiences should be critically examined. Individuals need to develop these critical examinations of worlds vastly different from ours to grow beyond ourselves. These themes directly apply to this intensive work outlined in chapter three, showing us that students...

are left with dominant and deficiently positioned narratives...and we must provide counter and critical narratives for student readers to consider their sense of place.

(Azano, 2014, p.65)

Building more dynamic literacy communities through libraries that provide critical carryover from these book store experiences makes strides in creating ideal settings for potential text

engagement—effectively making anywhere an excellent place to interact with stories and experiences beyond ourselves. This should allow students to question the validity of those societally applied images and hopefully replace them with their own learned and authentic narratives of the world around them.

Authentic Self

There has been extensive conversation thus far on the relevance of authentic and diverse representation in text. Through examinations into authenticity, socio-cultural context is a vital aspect of being sure to incorporate. Combining this revelation with the work for the Science of Reading, evidence suggests the transdisciplinary application moves beyond the ELA classroom (Arya & Maul, 2021). As students interact with narratives versus traditional expository formats, experts have found that these narrative representations were more effective at engaging learners due to their highlighting of cultural context as a foregrounding tool that dramatically benefits interest levels and retention. The increased conversation between students suggested they had a foundational understanding or connection to the text. If there was some personal connection or reflection of personal experience or knowledge set, students were more likely to be engaged and comprehend a text (Arya & Maul, 2021). Viewing material in various manners often conveys more text investment and empathy towards the person or information presented. In speaking to the importance of finding text that envelopes the reader, educators should invest themselves in engaging male students, specifically male BIPOC students. This work should focus on the numerous studies pulled from diverse data, including essential ethnographic studies with a greater focus on increasing diversity of researchers and subjects, including BIPOC, Neurodivergence, and socioeconomically disadvantaged youth and representations (Kirkland, 2011; Milner, 2020). Extensive evidence indicated that refusing to participate in the text is based on a lack of relevance to one's life experience and does not project an authentic representation of the nondominant class (Kirkland, 2011; Sims-Bishop, 1990).

In an examination of assigned classroom text, there are pieces that (without extensive investigation) offer a tiny reflection of a modern student. This lack of representation or perceived inauthenticity reduces students' immediate buy-in and long-term investment in reading. "I am sayin', Who...is Beowulf? I'm not going to need [to know] Beowulf to get a job. Nobody I know...knows [Beowulf] ({Derrick}" (Kirkland, 2011. p.199). This matter-of-fact reflection forces a reevaluation of what literature needs to do beyond extending the pallet. Begging the question: What is the relationship between ideology, literacy, motive, and drive? Is there hope of increasing readership in answering these? By veering away from the typical deficit thought processes linked to disengaged youth, there is evidence to suggest that text choice might be one of the foundational missteps.

The dissection of ideologies ("interests, expectations, and actions" Kirkland, 2011. p. 200), relationship to self, and the subsequent effects on literacy engagement elaborate on the previous research from a seemingly fresh perspective. Educators who work to differentiate across the board with application, design, and materials by including metacognitive activation use critical components of reader response theory. They will increase student buy-in, and their practice will become ideology-based. An additional component is building interest, which often looks like differentiating text, assignments, and conversations to showcase these more complex themes reflected in students' lives. Highly effective educators know students individually, understanding that they do not have universal experiences but work to invest themselves in encouraging students to seek out their voices and provide them the tools to share and grow on their terms. When students either do not feel confident or do not know how to find and display their authentic form of self, there develop an oppositional sense of self which work to build a further divide between them and the classroom (Kirkland, 2011; Muhammad, 2020; Noguera, 2008).

The lynchpin of this work intersects with much of the foreground of this project. Differentiation does not mean a difference in expectation but rather a different approach to

facilitating our students' learning. The use of self-guided small group analysis layered with autonomy and interwoven self-reflective texts (comics, graphic novels, cross-genres, and multimodal formats) help facilitate differentiation and, in turn, facilitate student growth. The work shifts from being “soulless” to reflective and connected, which came about through the shift in approach, design, and implementation.

What they want us to read in school is for brainwashing you. You know. I mean I can read, but I don't read in [Mr. Kegler's class] because it's like he's trying to change me, change the way I see myself and the way I think. I don't like... how things get set up. Why do we have to read Beowulf? Why can't we just read... something that I want to read? (Derrick Kirkland, 2011. p. 204)

These shared experiences implore educators to understand that reading should involve texts that are seen as a reflection of self and not just a reflection of others—noting that this is a two-part process of changing curriculum and pedagogy and that any text should be shared authentically. Expect pushback as these shifts happen (which can be seen now in the increase in book banning) but note that this should not stop the cause. Through this work, each student needs to be in a classroom that offers equitable opportunities through meaningful text and practice.

Increasing Access

The practice of assigning reading beyond educational settings is nearly universal, beginning as most practices and policies do, with knowledge acquisition at the forefront; however, there is often limited access to text outside the classroom (Arya & Maul, 2021; Paige et al., 2021). How can students be penalized for not having access to literature at home, transportation to libraries, or caregiver investment in education? Furthermore, deeming those high-interest texts (i.e., graphic novels or picture books) inappropriate or inapplicable to this task continues to limit these interactions (Wolpert-Gawron, 2018). Increasing access to the literature of interest can increase students' stamina, comprehension, and engagement. However, that

knowledge rarely extends beyond that point. As previously mentioned, many children have little to no access to physical texts outside school. Reporting that those with a home library lack appeal because they have become familiar.

There should be open discussions regarding the importance of representation in working towards solutions. Extensive evidence intersects various aspects of this project and its applicability to each facet. There seems to be a decades-old facade that suggests that society has moved toward closing the equity gap illuminates a grim reality; that this is the highest point of separation on record (Carter, 2018. p.1). In examining these inequalities through three lenses; Meso (global impact), Macro (community and local impact), and Micro (individual impact), there is a more comprehensive understanding of the repercussions. During the Meso discussion, there is a demand to act as individuals to bring about societal change towards this attitude of helplessness. When discussing the macro, there are connections to inequitable distribution like GI funding, political disenfranchisement, and distortion of human rights, reinforcing these cycles. When the paper arrives at the micro level, we see the significance of complex and accurate portrayals of self and others.

Disproportionate Limitations

Each researcher who discusses access as a limitation to growth showcases the hurdles the BIPOC population faces regarding access. Access to financial resources, educational opportunities, generational structures, and tools all equates to a vast portion of the population lacking essential access to the ability to make any accurate social movement. Carter (2018) speaks of the educational hurdles throughout the piece but mentions educational resources like quality teachers, supplies, and curriculums that seem automatics to some and utterly unattainable to others (Banks, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 2018). This work offers hope and historical context for our ability to move in the direction of being a more civil and just society. The project's significance lies in the potential to reduce barriers by increasing resources.

Tackling many of the issues presented in this work and echoed in the work of Milner, Muhammad, and Ladson-Billings, educators need to seek out relationships with students to meet their needs, from social-emotional to academic. Connections to building equity of access, not just to text, as this heading suggests, but to other essential components like healthcare, housing, and food. Furthermore, these relate to assumptions around the ability of black youth, specifically male black youth:

Assumptions held toward Black males that allow them to be mainly regarded as a problem, pathologize their needs, and deny them the opportunity to learn must be thoroughly discussed, debated, and challenged. (Noguera, 2008. p. 21)

Understanding and designing access to education is critical to dismantling these systematic forms of oppression. Due to the imbalance of money and power within the United States and other nations, overcoming these barriers often feel insurmountable (Love, 2020; Noguera, 2008). A possible cure to academic engagement and subsequent performance lies in access. Increasing academic services and support but not lambasting students into these categories based on behaviors or a teacher's inability to grow to support said students (Milner, 2020; Noguera, 2008). In increasing all avenues of access, there is a shift in the culture and overall conditions within schools and the lives of those stakeholders, i.e., teachers, students, caregivers, and future generations.

Growth Potential

Through the dissection of the relationship between accessibility and potential growth, the concepts of excellence through equity find keys to redeveloping what it means for each stakeholder to be an advocate, taking on leadership roles. The proposed considerations for the design and implementation of this project to produce sustainable results note that equity comes through expanding learning time which holds direct relevance to accessibility. There is also a request to be more deliberate in how we deliver and how much time we take for each cycle to maximize potential engagement in root learning.

Evidence suggests that five key aspects are required to increase access and unlock exponential potential (Blankstein, Noguera, Kelly, & Tutu, 2015). There needs to be (1) Increased instructional time that is deliberate and works to scaffold off of prior knowledge and facilitates understanding through the teacher's knowledge of students' needs. (2) Expanding the support systems that schools offer, like partnering with community centers to offer tutors, providing no-cost before and after school care, and enrichment programs that expand the knowledge base and diversify experiences. (3) Redesign school culture, which calls for a shift in how education systems value their students and educators; this shift might look like supporting teachers in meaningful ways and building student-centered learning institutions. (4) Allowing for more transparency and redistribution in funding would likely reinforce the previously discussed aspects and provide explicit allocations for stakeholders. (5) Finally, being more strategic in the design removes those unnecessary aspects that stymie change and growth. Often, this transformation looks like streamlining curriculum, practice, and funding to reach the best practice.

Assembling a wide range of stakeholders tasked with designing and implementing the necessary changes adds to the validity of the potential impact of this project. Additionally, when the stakeholder pool is diversified, there is a more comprehensive understanding of knowledge, challenges, solutions, and associated repercussions, likely resulting in a universal request for equity. Blankstein, Noguera, Kelly, & Tutu propose a timeline for success in these change cycles to better understand longitudinal growth, that being fifteen years, which is relatively expedient given that it is approximately the cycle of schools from preschool through high school graduation. If this is accurate, this could transcend the classroom in the hopes that the next generation would apply this as second nature, bringing healing, motivation, and processing, and design increasing access universally (Blankstein, Noguera, Kelly, & Tutu, 2015).

Summary

In summary, this thesis project is perpetuated by the conceptual design, research, and historical context of a multitude of advocates in the field of education and beyond. The highlighted research offers a broad range of viewpoints, collectively helping to push the area past primitive and divisive thinking regarding best practices, literacy practice, and education as a whole and toward broader recognition of the need for explicit and careful consideration of socio-cultural considerations (e.g., Alexander, 2020). Through a thoroughly examining subject material that ventures beyond curriculum limits and the idea of being the know-all be-all answer. This deliberate drive to better understand how to make students feel more valued and acknowledge the trials they have experienced and how they may be well beyond the scope of our knowledge. These push us to recognize how increased access to text through a critical and multicultural lens benefits all stakeholders, enriching the reading and educational experience crucial. This critical lens of advocating for students to use all of their knowledge to learn from texts is what will promote development (e.g., Tighe et al., 2019). This explicit exploration of whose knowledge matters must be a foundational aspect of pedagogical approaches teachers utilize to support learners in using the knowledge portrayed in academic settings (Milner, 2007).

Educators and stakeholders emphasize that everyone interested in the text uses an extensive, intersecting cache of knowledge; these personal connections include cultural and linguistic aspects shaped by their prior experiences and concepts of intercultural representations. Building new expertise and, in essence, learning from texts is best practice, and each of these work reinforces positive cycles of educational growth (Wolpert-Gawron, 2018). These theoretical proclamations build significant evidence about the importance of showcasing schema that is diverse in development from both classroom experiences and their personal lives. The underlying influence shapes what is considered relevant and where additional consideration might be necessary. They offer summaries and inferences before,

during, and after interacting with text. This research illuminates the significance of these perspectives, experiences, and tensions that may arise when we engage in this critical work.

Conclusion

While increasing access to relevant and diverse text is not the solution to this complex systematic problem of building engagement and education growth; it is an essential component. There could be substantial headway between those mentioned above and the forthcoming framework in restructuring design and removing some of these longstanding barriers to literacy and educational equity. Addressing literal and figurative narratives that expose students to varying social identities, cultural practices, and historically accurate context affords this (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Machado & Hartman, 2019). Transitions to include texts that feature neurodivergence and physical limitations to support the inclusion initiative. Each person grows when they can better understand perspectives beyond their own, from increasing empathy to developing more explicit understandings. This work further builds upon the previous research and will help clarify any connections or lack between this framework and inciting change for intended engagement and academic growth.

Chapter Three: Project Description

Introduction

The lack of consistent access to diverse and culturally relevant text negatively affects students. This deep-rooted issue affects engagement, inhibits a sense of belonging, and perpetuates cycles of societal oppression. This problem has far-reaching negative correlations on a societal and human level (Milner, 2020; Milner, 2007; Muhammad, 2020). An essential aspect of this project involves building a dynamic book store of high-interest, high-quality, and responsive texts. This should be seen as a reflection of the failing systems in educational settings worldwide and is a far greater indicator of those constraints than any implication of the student's ability. If we move toward the realization that learning and skill sets are developed longitudinally and organically and cannot be developed by force or sheer, will we change some of these constructs? Following the directive of Dr. Sims-Bishops, we must make a place for each student to ensure we have created a haven for every student (1990). As educators and humanity stakeholders, we must facilitate and foster these transformative learning environments. It is not enough to simply talk about best practices; it must be created, implemented, and embodied in all practice areas. In response to the outlined problems and research, this project seeks to increase text engagement by deliberately designing access to relevant, self-selected literature by providing each participant with a monthly book.

This project description is divided into four main subsections and formatted in the proceeding manner: (1) project components with evidentiary justification, including significant historical support, rationale of the design, and desired objectives; (2) implementation of the project, which will outline the plans in a detailed format; (3) project evaluation which will set benchmarks to measure success, these will include feedback request from all stakeholders; and (4) any potential conclusions that could be discerned from work based from the previous chapters.

Project Components

The first project component includes sourcing volunteers to help facilitate the project for at least the first full year and would be required to sign a consent form. Due to the nature of pulling from building educator pools, there will be no additional background check requirements. All facilitators/volunteers will be required to participate in two interviews and fill out and submit two participant profiles, which will be kept anonymous. These are to be completed once at the beginning and once after the project. A parent/caregiver informational letter will be sent home with each potential participant to request permission to participate. Students will be required to fill out participant interest inventories and personal learning profiles that students would complete, which would help in outlining their relationship with literature (Azano, 2013; Banks,1998).

Next, participants will participate in a book tasting event that will allow them to sample various texts across genres to expose them to new or beloved texts. During the event, they must fill out a sampling list to track initial reactions to texts. During the program cycle, participants can make text selections from a virtual or in-person book store of carefully curated high-quality, high-interest, and responsive titles. They will have complete control over their text selection, and these will be theirs to keep. At the end of each month, participants will fill out exit tickets indicative of engagement, comprehension, and summarizing skills (Seaver,2019). These will include a comprehension question, a rating of the text, and a personal connection they may have made. We will also work to include multimodal text like the aforementioned physical text, audiobooks, and digitized texts which will be a working list of titles and resources.

The conferring sessions are the main focus of the project components and would utilize many key components discussed previously in this proposal. Kucan and Beck's Thinking aloud process with starting base prompts for the facilitator of the meeting. Students would complete written responses from questions based on various story elements such as initial predictions {beginning}, shifts in storyline {during}, and takeaways {the end}, Which is a micro version of the

K-W-L. (3) simple story conversations with either B, M, E or S, W, B, S, T created by MacOn, Bewell & Vogt in 1991 and then shaped in 2003 by Beers. These will be vital in conveying critical points during small group discussions.

Additionally, facilitators should recap what responses they notated to further student participation and buy-in. These should all be facilitated in the most organic way possible to track responses' comprehension, engagement, and authenticity. The potential positive shift in increased engagement, representation, and inclusiveness is the underpinning goal of this project; the aforementioned would be the proverbial icing on the cake.

Project Evaluation

In examining the effectiveness pertaining to the quantitative aspect, there would be an inspection of interim, formative, and summative assessment markers. These assessments would be administered and tracked by the lead facilitators of the project. They would be members of the building support team (BST), which includes the Title One teacher, English Learner teacher, Building Literacy expert, and the building admin. There will also be a point throughout the years-long process where tier I (classroom teachers) and tier III (student intervention support services) would be asked to consult on student needs and engagement. Each of these stakeholders would be trained on the project details, implementation, and evaluation to help reduce biases and create intentionality in the implementation. Any growth would indicate a positive correlation between increasing this access and increasing student knowledge, skillset, and performance and would be notated in a data hub. The initial design is a convenience-based implementation connected to the designer's role, including access to a data hub.

Using the data point of tracking responses and ratings of text from students for assessment of the project effectiveness purposes will take place for the duration and does have practical implications. This project is currently only designed for students in grades third through Fifth but could be easily adapted for expansion. The quantitative aspect of the mixed-evaluation

approach to this project will provide data indicating a possible correlation (positive or negative) between increased access to these more diverse texts and increased engagement. The qualitative aspect would be the self-reporting of the interest inventories, responses on exit tickets, and conferring sessions for the project duration. Students would be able to rate text as they finish them in a 1 through 5 rating system where they could also include a small summary or endorsement of the text. They would then be displayed during the book shop experiences for other participants to consider and used to decide future texts.

In examining the effectiveness of this project's qualitative aspect, one could carefully evaluate the progressions of the interest inventories, exit tickets, and personal learning profiles. These should include caregiver and educator surveys allowing them to showcase increased or varied interactions with texts. The objective is to increase literacy profiles and interaction with literacy. This project's immediate initial goal with pre and post-surveys for each participant would be the ability to track this. Facilitators will compare responses recorded in previously mentioned surveys and track responses in the data hub. Thus, an increase in positive outcomes would directly correlate to the project's positive causation, which means this will be the ultimate indicator of program effectiveness. Each facilitating stakeholder must take, retain and submit extensive notes throughout the process.

Additionally, the entrance and exit interviews would be conducted by the lead facilitator (the Title One teacher) would conduct entrance and exit interviews to track potential growth for said stakeholders while gauging their interest and future participation. The interviews would be styled in the aforementioned talk-aloud styling with a few general prompts and then organic conversations about connections to a text.

Project Conclusion

This design is student-centered and makes students equal participants in the process with many of the essential components they would require to increase literacy engagement. Notwithstanding the many hurdles they have had to overcome in the last three years, it should

give them the ability to take charge of their lives and give them a say. Despite the recent diversification in the genre, representation, and text availability, this downward trend of disengaged students persists. The evidence outlined in this paper indicates this stems from the lack of attention to three critical areas of buy-in; pupil autonomy, authentic representation in text, and a lack of access to necessary opportunities and resources. Due to the continued prevalence, educators and students are faced with the seemingly insurmountable task of deconstructing longstanding forms of educational and societal oppression and reconstructing more equitably (Love, 2020; Muhammad, 2021). This work will be tedious, exhausting, and often feel isolating; however, in these times of discouragement, the necessity of the work is evident. Each person is responsible for advocating for themselves and others, embodying the role of co-conspirators of change (Love, 2020).

Educational theorists have implored society to design schools to reflect the needs and desires of the entire population and to make these interactions as relevant and meaningful as possible (Banks, 1998; Carter, 2018). There is great relevance in seeing non-dominant perspectives showcased and valued in text and classroom settings. Allowing it to take place across subjects and in various facets, like reading, writing, and conversational in whole and small groups as well as in individual conferring sessions, embodies this work. This furthers meaning-making, welcomes others into personal experiences and perspectives, and increases the feelings of community in schools and classrooms (Murphy, 1998; Roan & Karolides, 2005). In structuring learning in this manner, role sharing and continued growth are again for all participants; this is a compelling form of growth. When this becomes the norm, the concept of the single-sided story becomes less typical, and thus the dynamic and multidimensional aspects become more evident (Adichie, 2014).

Every aspect of this project reinforces the desired and ideal reconstructed cycles of societal inclusion and growth. This project has the potential to draw direct positive correlations between increasing access to the various responsive texts as a way to increase student

engagement, inclusion, and equity (Azano, 2013, Banks, 1998). While also increasing comprehension, fluency, investment, and working to facilitate growth in all students, effectively closing (or significantly reducing) the so-called education gap (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milner, 2020). This straightforward approach to student-designed “buy-in” allows them to feel represented and in charge of their educational journey (Azano, 2013; Muhammad, 2020; Sims-Bishop, 1990). When students read books that showcase their life experiences and reflect on the lives they live, it becomes more meaningful.

This project seeks to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how educators can increase student engagement in reading and other areas of learning. The approach of addressing all three core areas simultaneously to resolve these problems has not been explored previously. This means potential implications could have far-reaching effects and applications while requesting an increased investigation. There will be additional questions after the completion of the first cycle of this project. For instance, what are the broader implications, and how does the design and implementation of the project need to be adjusted for a more significant subset of the population? As funding has the potential to limit the longitudinal application of this work, there would need to be further investigation into long-term funding options. The detrimental effects of the recent trend of disengagement from the text are an issue that affects everyone and is a vital concern that needs to be addressed. This project should be seen as a starting point and is by no means the linchpin and should be approached with this understanding.

Implementation

The project should be used as enrichment and not be considered an intervention. Elementary students from four classrooms in a Third through Fifth-grade building will be selected initially based on Tier II and Tier III qualifications. This project is informed by critical literacy theory, multicultural response theory, and reader-response theory. There will be a well-established and meticulously maintained diverse group of stakeholders, including but not

limited to: Teachers (tier I-III), Administrators, Parents, Students, and Community Members. This program will be deliberate in all functions and design, from building bookstore experiences to allowing students full autonomy in selection and response format. The relevance of the text will work to facilitate each participant's relationship with literacy further.

For implementation, first funding would need to be secured by applying for grant funding from multiple sites in the hopes of amassing enough funds to make the program viable for at least one year. The funds are necessary to purchase physical text and multimodal options such as memberships and access, along with print materials, book bags, and other assorted materials. Decide on enrollment cap to guarantee enough funding to ensure high-quality texts. Find and secure a location to house bookstore experience in a meaningful and organized way. Begin to compile a text list and quotes from vendors to be prepared for the proceeding steps.

Next, there will need to be a detailed information packet developed to be emailed and sent in physical format regarding the project to the community and building stakeholders. Allow time for registration and design of various components. Finalize the participation list, order materials, and set up the space. Then, the project can begin.

They are working alongside other educators within the building support team to keep evaluating texts through a virtual catalog with a suggestion and rating tab. Work closely with on-site classroom teachers to evaluate formative, interim and summative data markers. The collaborative efforts will be essential to success because the more ways we can encourage these text exposure, the more potential for success this project will have. There will be a presentation of the data given during a stakeholder meeting. At this time, the project's qualitative and quantitative aspects will be communicated, including any areas of self-reported increase in visibility or representation (Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2020; Sims-Bishop, 1990). These should be done in an open forum presentation to allow for in-depth conversations for all involved especially considering the school-wide applicability of this approach. This approach should

highlight the effects of the shift to more dynamic libraries, and we can hopefully increase educator buy-in and this project's impact.

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Appendix A

Volunteer Facilitator Agreement Form

Facilitator Agreement Form

Name	
Address	
Phone Number	
Availability	
Building Role	

Listed below are the expectations of facilitators (volunteers); please read thoroughly and then sign indicating your acceptance and agreement for participation. Please reach out with any questions; thank you for your participation.

- All volunteers must attend the information session and all subsequent training, which will be held in room A6 and coordinated with the building Title One Teacher coordinator.
- All volunteers will be required to participate in two interviews and fill out and submit two participant profiles. These are to be completed once at the beginning and once after the project.
- All volunteers must read student profiles, build relationships with participants, and collaborate with fellow facilitators.
- Each volunteer will be paired with a small group of students with whom they will meet and confer regarding texts and interests.
- If you cannot meet with your assigned students at a designated time, notify the coordinator.

Signing this document indicates that you have read and understood the expectations mentioned above and agree to the terms. Additionally, you will not share sensitive information regarding a specific student with anyone other than the coordinator, school administration, and/or the appropriate child welfare agency.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Created by Amanda Saffian, 2022

Appendix B

Volunteer Interview Questions (Entrance and Exit)

Volunteer Interview Questions (Entrance and Exit)

Entrance Questions

- 1.) What has drawn you to volunteer for this project?
- 2.) What are you hoping to share with your participation?
- 3.) What are you hoping to gain from your participation?
- 4.) How long of a commitment are you willing to make?
- 5.) What is the key to engaging students with literature?

Exit Questions

- 1.) Did you grow as an educator during this project?
 - a.) How can you apply this growth to your practice?
- 2.) Did you share more or different aspects of your skills with your pupils or peers than you had initially anticipated?
 - a.) If so, in what ways?
- 3.) Would you be interested in continuing this work?
- 4.) What worked for you regarding increasing engagement for the students you worked with?
- 5.) What did not work well for increasing engagement?
- 6.) Is there anything about the design of this project that you would change?
- 7.) What was the most enjoyable part of this project?
- 8.) What was the least enjoyable part of this project?

Appendix C

Anonymous Participant Profile Questionnaire (Entrance and Exit)

Anonymous Participant Profile Questionnaire (Entrance and Exit)

Participant Profile Questions (Entrance)

- 1.) What is your role within the building?
- 2.) How long have you held this role?
- 3.) How long have you worked at this building?
- 4.) What initially drew you to a position in education?
- 5.) What is the most fulfilling part of your role?
- 6.) What is the least fulfilling part of your role?
- 7.) Do you enjoy collaborating with your peers?
 - a.) How often do you collaborate with them?
 - b.) Is this by choice or organizational design/
- 8.) What do you find to be the culprit for disengagement in literacy?
- 9.) What have you done previously to build engagement?

Participant Profile Questions (Exit)

- 1.) In your opinion, did you build a strong understanding of the students that you worked with?
- 2.) Did you facilitate these conferring sessions in a welcoming manner?
 - a.) If yes, how so?
- 3.) Did you find these practices to be effective?
- 4.) How would you adjust this practice in the future?
- 5.) Were you able to find text that worked as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors for all your students?
- 6.) Did you find that your student's engagement level changed throughout the project?
 - a.) If so, what do you think inspired that change?
- 7.) What is the most significant aspect of this work?
- 8.) What, if anything, would you change?

Appendix D

Parent/Caregiver Permission Slip

Parent/Caregiver Permission Slip

Dear Caregiver,

Your child has been chosen to participate in a program that seeks to understand better how to encourage literacy engagement. It will take place over a year and will offer each participant the opportunity to self-select one text (per month) to keep. They will be required to meet with an assigned (volunteering) educator from our building to discuss text while also completing short surveys about each book and their experiences. This program will run from October 2022 through September 2023 with either virtual or in-person meetings over the summer months.

The purpose of this program is to increase students' permanent access to text that works to showcase a broader range of the human experience. They will have the opportunity to self-select each text and rate each in real-time. We will share the entire catalog of available text before we begin and offer various text formats such as audiobooks and podcasts to provide stimulating text for each student.

Please sign and submit the attached slip if you are interested in having your child participate in this program. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the program coordinator.

Sincerely,

The Program Coordinator

I grant participation permission for (print name, grade, and classroom teachers name).

My name is (print and sign).

Appendix E

Participant Interest Inventory

Participant Interest Inventory

These inventories will be presented and completed via a Google forms questionnaire.

Questions followed by potential response selections or written responses

- 1.) How do you feel about reading?
 - a.) I enjoy it.
 - b.) I like it sometimes.
 - c.) I do not enjoy it.
 - d.) other...
- 2.) I feel this way about reading because...
- 3.) What do you like to read?
- 4.) What kind of stories do you like to read?
 - a.) Fiction
 - i.) Realistic Fiction: stories that are about people like me
 - ii.) Fantasy Fiction: stories with magic and make-believe
 - iii.) Graphic novels in fiction format
 - b.) Non-fiction
 - i.) Actual events about people, places, or things
 - ii.) Books that inform you how to do something
 - iii.) Graphic novels in nonfiction format
 - c.) Other
 - i.) Poetry
 - ii.) Mysteries
 - iii.) Adventures
 - iv.) Horror (scary stories)
- 5.) How many books do you have at home?
 - a.) 0-5
 - b.) 6-10
 - c.) 11-25
 - d.) 25 or more
- 6.) What is your favorite book?

- 7.) Where do you usually read?
- 8.) Do you ever read for fun?
 - a.) Always
 - b.) Sometimes
 - c.) Rarely
 - d.) Never
- 9.) What do you like about reading?
- 10.) What do you dislike about reading?
- 11.) Do you have a favorite author?
 - If so, who is it?
- 12.) Have you ever read books from a series?
 - If so, which one?
 - Do you have a favorite?

Appendix F

Personal Learning Profiles

Personal Learning Profiles

These inventories will be presented and completed via a Google forms questionnaire.

Questions followed by potential response selections will be yes or no

- 1.) I like to share my ideas in
 - a.) Whole group
 - a.) Small group
 - b.) With my teacher
- 2.) I feel comfortable asking questions in
 - a.) Whole group
 - b.) Small group
 - c.) With my teacher
- 3.) I like to learn more about things I already know
- 4.) I like to learn new things
- 5.) I like to share my knowledge with others
- 6.) I like to listen to others share their knowledge
- 7.) I like to set goals
- 8.) I like school
- 9.) I am excited to participate in this project

Appendix G

Book Tasting, Sampling Selection

Book Tasting, Sampling Selection

Students will be asked to provide feedback on each text they interact with, which will help guide our understanding of their needs and ours.

Welcome to our Book Tasting			
Sampling Selection			
Guests Name:			
Fiction~Realistic Fiction~Fantasy~Mystery~Historical~Biography~Science~Nonfiction~Expository			
Number	Title	Author	Rating
Book Rating Guide: 1=Would Not Recommend 2=Might Recommend 3=Would Recommend			

Appendix H

Sample Exit Ticket

Sample Exit Ticket

These inventories will be presented and completed via a Google forms questionnaire.

Questions followed by potential response selections or written responses

- 1.) What is the name of the text you read this month?
- 2.) Who was the author of that text?
- 3.) What format is that text in?
- 4.) What genre is this text?
- 5.) Who are the main characters of the text?
- 6.) What is the plot or storyline of this text?
- 7.) What (if any) personal connections did you make with the text?
- 8.) Did you enjoy this text?
 - a.) Why?
- 9.) Did you enjoy this genre?
- 10.) Would you recommend this text?

Please rate the text 1-5, with 1 being the best book you have ever read and 5 being the worst book you have ever read.

Please write a brief review of the text (without spoilers)

Appendix I

Working List of Texts

Working List of Texts

<p>Title: A Chair For My Mother Author: Vera B. Williams Publisher/Year: 1982 Pages: 32 Suggested RL: L Awards: Caldecott Genre: Picture Theme: Family and Community working together to meet their needs. Personal Rating: 10/10</p>	<p>Title: New Kid Author: Jerry Craft Publisher/Year: 2019 Pages: 256 Suggested RL: P Awards: Newberry Genre: Realistic fiction/ Graphic Novel Theme: Everyday Racism Personal Rating: 10/10</p>
<p>Title: Apple in the Middle Author: Dawn Quigley Publisher/Year: 2018 Pages: 264 Suggested RL: U Awards: Independent Publisher Award Genre: Realistic Fiction Theme: What it mean find your place in the world Personal Rating: 10/10</p>	<p>Title: Ghost Boys Author: Jewell Parker Rhodes Publisher/Year: 2015 Pages: 240 Suggested RL: Y Awards: ALA Genre: Realistic Fiction Theme: Systemic Racism Personal Rating: 10/10</p>
<p>Title: Jannah Jewels (Series 1-12) Author: Umm Nura Publisher/Year: 2018 Pages: 70 Suggested RL: L Awards: Several Genre: Fantasy Fiction Theme: Good will triumph over Evil Personal Rating: 10/10</p>	<p>Title: Don't Let the Pigeon Drive The Bus Author: Mo Willems Publisher/Year: 2003 Pages: 36 Suggested RL: I Awards: Audie Award Genre: Fantasy Fiction/Picture Book Theme: avoiding persuasion to keep promises Personal Rating: 10/10</p>

<p>Title: Don't Let the Pigeon Drive The Bus Author: Mo Willecxdp3494ms Publisher/Year: 2003 Pages: 36 Suggested RL: I Awards: Audie Award Genre: Fantasy Fiction/Picture Book Theme: avoiding persuasion to keep promises Personal Rating: 9/10</p>	<p>Title: Leonardo the Terrible Monster Author: Mo Willams Publisher/Year: 2005 Pages: 44 Suggested RL: F Awards: Notable children award Genre: Fantasy Fiction/ Picture Book Theme: Fear and the role it plays in our lives Personal Rating: 8/10</p>
<p>Title: The Pigeon Will Ride the Roller Coaster Author: Mo Willams Publisher/Year: 2022 Pages: 40 Suggested RL: C Awards: None Genre: Fantasy Fiction/ Picture Book Theme: Persuasion Personal Rating: 8/10</p>	<p>Title: When the Beat was Born Author: Laban Carrick Hill Publisher/Year: 2021 Pages: 32 Suggested RL: K Awards: Coretta Scott King Genre: NF/Expository Theme: The transformative power of music Personal Rating: 10/10</p>
<p>Title: Young Trailblazers Author: M.J. Fievre Publisher/Year: 2021 Pages: 138 Suggested RL: P Awards: None Genre: NF Biography Theme: Black inventors and Scientists Personal Rating: 10/10</p>	<p>Title: Born on The Water Author: Nikole Hannah-Jones Publisher/Year: 2021 Pages: 48 Suggested RL: N Awards: None Genre: NF/Poetry Theme: Legacy of slavery and Black resistance Personal Rating: 10/10</p>

<p>Title: The ABC's of Black History Author: Rio Cortez Publisher/Year: 2021 Pages: 64 Suggested RL: G Awards: None Genre: NF Expository Theme: informational Personal Rating: 9/10</p>	<p>Title: Stuntboy in the Meantime Author: Jason Reynolds Publisher/Year: 2021 Pages: 267 Suggested RL: O Awards: None Genre: Fantasy Fiction Theme: Good triumphs over evil Personal Rating: 8/10</p>
<p>Title: Secret Signs Author: jacqueline Guest Publisher/Year: 2020 Pages: 320 Suggested RL: S Awards: none Genre: Historical Fiction Theme: Overcoming misfortune Personal Rating: 8/10</p>	<p>Title: I Got The Rhythm Author: Connie Schofield-Morrison Publisher/Year: 2014 Pages: 32 Suggested RL: K Awards: Coretta Scott King Genre: Realistic Fiction Theme: The importance of Being yourself Personal Rating: 9/10</p>
<p>Title: We Are Still Here Author: Tracy Sorell Publisher/Year: 2021 Pages: 40 Suggested RL: M Awards: Boston Globe-Horn book honor Genre: NF Expository Theme: Agency of Native Nations Personal Rating: 10/10</p>	<p>Title: A Sporting Chance Author: Lori Alexander Publisher/Year: 2020 Pages: 128 Suggested RL: TA grades 3-7 Awards: Genre: NF Informational Theme: The Power of Sports Personal Rating: 10/10</p>

There will be genre specific lists created similar to this

List of relevant texts for students who are interested in historical nonfiction and realistic fiction	
Any of the Who was, What was, and where was book that has connections to American history.	All American History Volume 2 Student Reader (All American History, Vol. 2)
Liberty for All?: 1820-1860 (A History of US, Book 5)	Indian life in pre-Columbian North America coloring book (Paperback)
Chains (Seeds of America, #1)	Fever 1793 (Paperback)
Native Americans (Discoveries Series)	Sarah, Plain and Tall (Sarah, Plain, and Tall)
The Life of Christopher Columbus	All American History Vol 1 Student Reader
They Dance in the Sky: Native American Star Myths	The First Americans: Prehistory-1600 (A History of US, Book One)
Attack of the Turtle	Native American Stories
Children of the Longhouse	North American Indians
Stowaway	Mutiny on the Bounty
Johnny Tremain	My Brother Sam Is Dead
Tornado	Encounter
Making Thirteen Colonies: 1600-1740 A History of US (A History of US #2)	History of US: Book 6: War, Terrible War 1855-1865 (Paperback)

Podcasts (that meet the multimodal design)	
<p>Title: Brains On Author: NPR Publisher/Year: Current Suggested Age: All Awards: various educational science awards Genre: Nonfiction Theme: educational Personal Rating: 10/10</p>	<p>Title: Circle Round Author: NPR Suggested Age: All Awards: Unknown Genre: Nonfiction Theme: The intersection of music and literature Personal Rating: 10/10</p>
<p>Title: The Past and The Curious Author: Mick Sullivan Publisher/Year: Current Suggested Age: All Awards: unknown Genre: Nonfiction Theme: Educational Personal Rating: 10/10</p>	<p>Title: Story pirates Author: Striking Viking Publisher/Year: current Suggested Age: All Awards: Unknown Genre: Fiction/various Theme: creativity Personal Rating: 9/10</p>
<p>Title: What If World Author: Eric and Karen O'Keeffe Publisher/Year: Current Suggested Age: All Awards: unknown Genre: Fantasy Fiction Theme: various Personal Rating: 10/10</p>	<p>Title: But Why? Author: Dr. Friendtastic (also known as Eileen Kennedy-Moore) Publisher/Year: Current Suggested Age: All Awards: unknown Genre: non-fiction Theme: truth seeking Personal Rating: 10/10</p>

Apps including those with Audio and full text	
Amazon Kindle Kids	Audible Kids
Epic	Hoopla
Kobo Kids	Libby
LibriVox	MyOn
Overdrive	Scribd
Storytime Online	Tales 2 Go
Voot	Youtube Kids

Facilitators will also utilize the wealth of research and databases that offer comprehensive book lists such as



Created by Amanda Saffian, 2022

Appendix J

Baseline Prompts for Conferring Sessions

Base Prompts for Conferring Sessions

Before Reading (Fiction)	
What do you think..... feels when.... happens?	Can you predict what is going to happen in this story?
Do you know anything about this book/character?	Have you read any other books or stories by this author?
What do you wonder?	What led you to choose this text?

During Reading (Fiction),	
What have you learned so far?	What questions do you still have?
What character is most like you?	Is the setting familiar to you?
How do you think the problem will be solved?	Why does..... happen?
What did the author mean by.....?	What do you think will happen next?
Which character do you like the least?	Does the text make sense? Why or why not?
What pictures have you developed while reading this text?	Who/what is the story about so far?
Has the setting changed throughout the text?	When does the story take place?

After Reading (fiction)	
After you finished this book, did it remind you of anything?	How was the problem solved, and what was the solution?
Why did happen?	What was the most surprising part of the story?
Summarize the key points of the story.	How did the main character change throughout the story?
What themes are present in the story?	Do you agree with the main character's actions? Why or why not?
How did the main character's actions affect the story?	What genre is this story? What makes it that?

Before Reading (Non-Fiction)	
What do you know about this topic?	What do you want to know about this topic?
What do you think the purpose of this text is?	How will it support our learning?

During Reading (Non-Fiction)	
How is this text organized?	Find an example of a caption, heading, and subheading.
What have you learned so far?	Has your learning grown through this text's diagrams, pictures, and tables?
How is this information relevant to me?	What (if any) personal connections have you made?

After Reading (Non-Fiction)	
Create a new Title.	How would you prioritize the facts?
What did you learn?	Summarize the information.
Did you learn any new terms?	Where else might you learn information about this topic?
What questions do you still have?	What type of passage is this? Support your claim.

Appendix K

K-W-L Form

K-W-L Sample form

Text: Secret Signs

Author: Jacqueline Guest

<p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <p>What do you already know?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">W</p> <p>What do you wonder?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <p>What did you learn?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I know that sometimes people create handshakes, signs, and codes to talk secretly. - I know that the great depression was a long time ago - I know that life was very different when this was all happening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I wonder what kind of secret codes they are talking about? - I wonder when the great depression was, and where it was? - I wonder what caused the great depression? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I learned that they used drawing of symbols to show other hobo's how important details about this place. - I learned that the great depression happened in thw 1930's.

Appendix L

Beginning, Middle, End Summary Sheet

Beginning, Middle, End Summary Sheet

Name: Suzie	Name of book: Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus
What happened at the beginning of the story?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
What happened in the middle of the story?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
What happened at the end of the story?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Appendix M

Somebody, Wanted, But, So, Then Summary Sheet

Somebody, Wanted, But, So, Then Summary Sheet

Please note that the designers of this project did not develop this summary strategy. It was created by.

Somebody (character, person, people)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Wanted (goal, dream, wish, motivator)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
But (problem, conflict, challenge	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
So (resolution, strategy)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Then (how did the story end)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Appendix N

Sample Data Hub (Student)

Sample Data Hub (Student)

ID #	First Name	Last Name	Grade/ Age	Inventory response in numerical order as follows, BR/ER				Start Reading Level	End Reading Level
				1	4	5	8		

Appendix O

Sample Response Hub (Volunteer)

Sample Response Hub (Volunteer)

Position	First Name	Last Name	Years of Service	Years at this building	Availability	Expectations	Suggestions