JOURNAL OF LITERACY INNOVATION

RETHINKING LITERACY INSTRUCTION

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CO-EDITORS' INTRODUCTION
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE FIELD OF LITERACY
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During the pandemic in 2020, the country witnessed the spread of COVID-19 to become one of the biggest threats to an already crumbling educational infrastructure within the United States. Due to historical defunding or underfunded Pre-K-12 public schools, many districts did not have safeguards in place to ensure that children were able to easily transition to either fully online spaces or hybrid spaces for stability of educational experiences and safety. This exacerbated other issues such as teacher turnover, instability of student lessons, increased COVID cases and school shutdowns, and the digital divide.

Many literacy researchers who focus on community engagement, activism, action research, community-based projects, and literacy clinics saw an immediate increase in the need for their expertise and work in this area. This special theme issue which focuses on community engagement in the field of literacy captures a moment in time where literacy leaders, educators, and researchers reached out to the field to focus their efforts over a 3–4-year period to engage in projects which went beyond the confines of the university community.

Within this special theme issue, the authors reinvigorate work in community engagement in literacy and education by answering previous calls to service of scholars in this area. This includes home-school-community collaborations (McMillon, 2016); grassroots community engagement initiatives (Flowers, 2020); social action (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008); parent engagement models (Comer, 1991); communities of writers (Schultz, 2016); public libraries (Velasquez, 2019); literacy camps (Gao, Gilbert, & Woods, 2016); youth participatory action research (Mirra, Garcia, & Morell, 2016); summer reading programs (Kim, 2004); and dialogic reading (Beschorner & Hutchison, 2016).

The research projects and voices from the field in this special theme issue includes a variety of research approaches and critical paradigms in literacy. Within higher education classrooms, this special theme issue features "*Partnering for Practice: Authentic Writing Engagements Within the Community as Teacher Preparation of K-6 Teachers*," which focuses on teacher educators' authentic writing engagements and the impact of writing methods courses. With a focus on spotlighting mobile libraries, the study "*When Schools and Public Libraries Come Together: How a Teacher's Role in a Research Practice Partnership Manifests During a Mobile Library Experience*" looks at how researchers and a classroom teacher worked together to use mobile libraries to increase students' access to books. Scholars using online approaches to community engagement in the study "*READ & STRIKE & Have a Good Night: STRIKE at Night Virtual Literacy Camp*" focus on equitable reading experiences by reaching children through online reading. Within classrooms, the study "*When Third Graders Peer Conference on their Writing: An Action Research Study*" focuses on the features and benefits of effective peer conferences in the writing classroom. Finally, spotlighting work with families and communities, "*Together We*

Can Do So Much: A Community Approach to Summer Reading During Turbulent Times";
"*Youth-Led Research for Social Action: A Community Collaborates*"; and "*Coaching Chinese Mothers to Ask Higher-level Questions in Dialogic Reading*" includes projects focused on direct contact with young children and families.

The scholars included in this special theme issue worked during the pandemic to produce scholarship which can be replicated during and beyond the pandemic. We recognize the loss of academic learning time and the loss of social connections within the community. We strongly believe literacy professionals must work on ways to connect communities through and beyond the pandemic. Our hope is that this special theme issue work will be used to help foster new initiatives across school districts and communities within the United States.

This special theme issue on community engagement in literacy is a collaboration between the Journal of Literacy Innovation and the *Literacy Research Association Ethnicity, Race, and Multilingualism committee Mentoring through Publication program.*

Special Theme Issue Editor Biographies

Dr. Tiffany A. Flowers is an associate professor of education at Georgia State University Perimeter College in the department of cultural and behavioral sciences. She has authored publications focused on her research interests in African American literacy development, family literacy, urban education, children's and young adult literature, field experience, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Dr. Sean Ruday is an associate professor and program coordinator of English education at Longwood University. He has written fourteen books on literacy instruction, all published by Routledge Eye on Education. Sean is a co-president of NCTE's Assembly on the Teaching of English Grammar and is particularly interested in inclusive and equitable writing and grammar instruction.

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PARTNERING FOR PRACTICE: AUTHENTIC WRITING ENGAGEMENTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AS TEACHER PREPARATION OF K–6 TEACHERS

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Abstract

This article details the findings of a qualitative case study exploring the authentic writing engagements six teacher educators of elementary writing methods courses utilize to support elementary teacher candidates' development of pedagogical content knowledge of writing (PCKW). PCKW encompasses candidates' understanding of the subject matter of writing content and how to teach writing through effective strategies. Authentic writing engagements are opportunities for teacher candidates to apply their PCKW within contexts conducive to effective writing instruction to transfer to their future in-service teaching experiences. Descriptive coding of data—surveys, transcribed interviews, syllabi, course descriptions, and authentic writing engagement content—revealed the following three themes regarding how authentic writing engagements (a) create opportunities for candidates to apply PCKW taught throughout course content; (b) require effective relationship building within the community, K–6 schools, and university; and (c) extend across a continuum of authenticity. The data highlight the need for teacher preparation programs to require writing methods courses for teacher candidates. This article suggests important implications regarding the impact of writing methods courses with embedded authentic writing engagements.

Partnering for Practice: Authentic Writing Engagements Within the Community as Teacher Preparation of K–6 Teachers

Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world.

~Malala Yousafzai

As teacher educators, we are responsible for teaching others how to write and how to teach writing. Although a huge responsibility, as Malala Yousafzai reminds us, teaching one more

child to write and one more teacher to teach writing casts ripples of change into our world. Such change cannot occur if teachers do not learn how to teach writing well (Graham, 2019). Teacher educators (TEs) need to support teacher candidates' application of pedagogical content knowledge of writing (PCKW) within authentic writing engagements (DeFauw, 2020). Authentic writing engagements are opportunities for teacher candidates to apply their PCKW within contexts conducive to effective writing instruction to transfer to their future in-service teaching experiences. Such engagements are deemed authentic when they provide opportunities for the types of decision-making candidates must experience to construct their own understanding of how pedagogy, content, and context interact to support student learning (Cochran et al., 1993; Sharp et al., 2019; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). PCKW is learned when candidates apply writing content and strategies to develop their competence within teaching contexts that mirror in-service teaching requirements (ILA & NCTE, 2017). Such contexts also support candidates to "begin to develop a personal image of themselves as teachers" (Stockinger, 2007, p. 221).

To build upon the literature regarding authentic writing engagements TEs utilize to support candidates' PCKW development (DeFauw, 2020; Myers et al., 2019), we designed this qualitative case study to survey TEs of elementary writing methods courses; conduct one-on-one interviews; and analyze documents describing TEs' authentic writing engagements. In this article, we highlight six TEs' experiences of authentic writing engagements within their literacy methods courses. The following themes emerged from the data regarding how authentic writing engagements in teacher education (a) create opportunities for candidates to apply PCKW taught throughout course content; (b) require effective relationship building within the community, K–6 schools, and university; and (c) extend across a continuum of authenticity. To situate these themes, we discuss the literature related to PCKW, contextualization of practice through community and school partnerships, and examinations of authenticity.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Preparing candidates to be effective teachers of writing requires more than equipping candidates with content knowledge or a set of teaching strategies (Kennedy, 1998) and, instead, must facilitate candidates' acquisition of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Pedagogical content knowledge is defined as follows:

> The interaction of subject matter and effective teaching strategies to help students learn the subject matter. It requires a thorough understanding of the content to teach it in multiple ways, drawing on the cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge and experiences of the students. (ILA, 2018, p. 143)

Writing teachers must understand how to teach writing and how to write. Writers who understand writer's craft "can't walk into a room and work with students unless there is some understanding of the craft of teaching. Neither can teachers who have not wrestled with writing, effectively teach the writer's craft" (Graves, 1983, p. 56).

Cochran et al. (1993) suggest pedagogical content *knowing* more accurately reflects the "dynamic nature" of the learning candidates undergo as they actively construct knowledge through their experiences (p. 266). In supporting pedagogical content knowing of writing, TEs

must go beyond a focus solely on content knowledge to create situations where candidates simultaneously integrate the multiple aspects of teaching (Cochran et al., 1993). Within contexts, candidates need to learn when and how to enact pedagogical content knowledge (Kennedy, 1999; Shulman & Shulman, 2004).

Pedagogical Framework for Teacher Education

Historically, TEs teach candidates theories and strategies for teaching content areas within divided foundational and methods courses; such university-based teacher education contributes to a well-known divide between the theories and strategies learned within the university setting and the practices of in-service teachers. Although TEs often incorporate modeling, case studies, and video examples of how theories impact classroom teaching, candidates often struggle to transfer what they learn from university coursework to in-service teaching (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009). The research centered on core teaching practices attempts to break the divide as candidates learn to practice complex teaching in components that transfer to the teaching context. Grossman, Hammerness, and McDonald (2009) suggest "novices' experiment with enacting such [core teaching] practices [so that] the practices help elaborate their understanding of what it means to act as a teacher" (p. 278).

McDonald et al. (2013) developed a learning cycle to delineate the stages of engaging candidates in learning core teaching practices. The learning cycle framework includes four quadrants: (a) representation, TEs introduce and model the teaching strategy; (b) rehearsal, candidates prepare and practice using the strategy in the university setting; (c) enactment, candidates use the teaching strategy with PK–12 students; and (d) analysis, candidates analyze their teaching results to determine next steps for their own professional and students' learning growth. Although TEs may begin a learning engagement in any quadrant, McDonald et al. (2013) argue progressing through the stages affords TEs the opportunity to "offer guided assistance to candidates to learn particular practices as they come to life in meaningful units of instruction" (p. 382). While Quadrants 1 and 2 may be accomplished within the context of the university context, Quadrant 3 requires candidates enact teaching with students; thus, university methods courses are often linked to clinical field partnerships.

Contextualization of Practice through Partnerships

Educator preparation programs rely on clinical field partnerships to contextualize the theory and methodology candidates learn through their coursework (CAEP, 2018). While partnerships may differ from one setting to another, dependent on multiple factors, partnerships offer candidates the opportunity to become familiar with students' developmental needs, observe professional teaching, and enact their own developing practice with support (Hollins, 2015; Task Force on Field Experience Standards in Teacher Education, 2016).

The CAEP (2018) K–6 Elementary standards emphasize integration of the following five standards within field experiences so candidates (a) address students' learning needs; (b) apply pedagogical content knowledge; (c) assess, plan, and design contexts for learning; (d) support students' learning using effective instruction; and (e) develop as professionals. Meeting these standards bolsters candidates' self-efficacy as candidates effect positive change within students

in varied contexts (Hoy & Spero, 2005). Self-efficacy may affect the likelihood candidates will transfer the PCKW methods from their coursework into their in-service teaching contexts (Canrinus et al., 2019). Thus, within teacher preparation programs, these standards need to be "fully grounded in clinical practice and interwoven with academic content and professional courses" (NCATE, 2010, p. ii).

The ILA (2018) recommends field experience coordinators facilitate collaborations between partners and TEs to place "preservice literacy professionals . . . [within] schools. . . . . and ensure that the preservice literacy professional is supervised and is making a positive contribution to the school's literacy program" (p. 111). Due to federal policies related to literacy instruction, school partners experience pressure to focus heavily on reading instruction, often neglecting writing instruction (Graham & Harris, 2015). Candidates experience difficulties in completing assignments and meeting course requirements within placements not specifically aligned to writing methods course standards. TEs may have more control over candidates' experiences when co-designing embedded field experiences, especially opportunities scheduled during the course timeframe (Thompson, 2020). TEs may seek classroom teachers willing to provide candidates time to practice writing instruction, and/or TEs may design field experiences with community partners (Brayko, 2013; Sharp et al., 2019). Since community partners do not operate under the same federal policies as schools, non-school partners may have more flexibility in offering embedded authentic writing engagements that align with writing methods course standards.

To understand how community and K–6 partnerships with universities create authentic writing engagements to support candidates' learning, we designed this qualitative study to explore the following research questions: (a) What types of authentic writing engagements do teacher educators offer through community and/or K–6 partnerships? (b) How do these engagements support the development of teacher candidates as effective writing teachers?

Method

Procedures and Participants

We adapted a ten-item survey from Tulley's (2013) undergraduate writing methods course survey. While Tulley's dataset focused, at least in part, on secondary writing methods in Ohio, we surveyed TEs of K–6 writing methodology courses in Illinois (42), Indiana (37), Michigan (27), and Ohio (45). The initial survey dataset included 15 completed surveys that evolved into six interviews. The small sample size supports this study's qualitative-research goals to focus on details through identification of specific themes and cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2013).

We selected four participants for interviews and included our own data. Engaging in hermeneutic practices (Moustakas, 1990), we chose to include ourselves in the dataset to share our reflections of our lived experiences as teacher educators of writing. Because one interviewee completed two surveys, one for each writing methods course taught, the survey dataset shared in this article includes 7 survey responses. Table 1 details participants' demographic information.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	State	Position	Students' Majors	Course Content
*Susan	IN	Associate	Elementary Education	Language Arts
Katherine Higgs-Coulthard	IN	Assistant	Elementary Education	Language Arts
*Kevin	MI	Associate	Course A: Elementary Education; Course B: English Language Arts	Course A: Language Arts Course B: Writing Methods
Danielle DeFauw	MI	Associate	Elementary Education; English Language Arts	Writing Methods
*Gabriella	OH	Adjunct	Elementary Education	Writing Methods
Terry Higgins	OH	Adjunct	Elementary Education; Middle Childhood / Middle School	Language Arts

*Pseudonym

Data Sources and Analysis

Data sources gathered Summer 2021 include the following:

- ten-item survey responses (Tulley, 2013) collected via email correspondence and a Google Form link;

- transcribed semi-structured interviews, collected via Zoom, asking TEs to discuss their writing methodology course(s) while adhering to an open-ended nature of questioning (Patton, 2015);

- syllabi; and

- university website documents: (a) course descriptions, (b) teacher preparation program details, and (c) authentic writing engagement content.

We analyzed these data using descriptive coding and analytic memoing through Dedoose to identify themes across the data (Saldaña, 2013).

Discussion of Findings

This study's design explored the authentic writing engagements TEs use in their elementary writing methods courses to support candidates' development of PCKW. Three themes emerged through the data analysis and revealed that, within constraints, TEs (a) create opportunities for candidates to apply PCKW; (b) build effective relationships within the community, K–6 schools, and university; and (c) extend writing engagements across a continuum of authenticity.

Opportunities for Candidates to Apply PCKW

Five out of six participants experienced time constraints that impeded PCKW instruction due to no required writing methods course in their teacher preparation programs. Although the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2003) identified a need for increased writing instruction and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (2010) require instruction on specific writing genres, many in-service teachers received their training from teacher education programs that do not require writing methods courses (Myers et al., 2016).

All six participants teach writing methods to undergraduate K–6 candidates within literacy courses. Danielle teaches a required writing methods course for all elementary education candidates. Kevin teaches a required writing methods course for English Language Arts majors and another literacy-focused methods courses for all candidates. Thus, five of the seven courses address language arts, as illustrated in Susan's survey response: "This course also covers other areas of literacy including early literacy, phonics, phonemic awareness, and speaking and listening." Susan's course emphasizes the morphological aspects of writing included in ILA's (2018) standard for curriculum and instruction, including "studies in such areas as phonology, morphology, syntax, parts of speech, semantics, etymologies, and pragmatics" (p. 12). Other participants' courses incorporate reading methods focused on fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary instruction. Reading methods are crucial in preparing literacy educators; however, writing methods are extensive. Lumping literacy standards in one course forces TEs to struggle to incorporate the writing standards necessary to facilitate candidates' learning of PCKW and transfer to future practice.

For Kevin and Danielle, the focused writing methods courses facilitate candidates' participation in authentic writing engagements within community and school contexts. Candidates focus their observations and practices on writing pedagogy. The data show course parameters impact the possible enactment of PCKW. To ensure high-quality opportunities to enact PCKW within authentic writing engagements with students, TEs need to build relationships with stakeholders and expect candidates to build high-quality relationships with their students.

Effective Relationship Building with Partners

Relationship building through authentic writing engagements, per the data, are evident within community and/or K–6 contexts with universities and between candidates and the students they teach. Four participants created authentic writing engagements designed to help candidates develop relationships with students through candidates' authentic teaching of writing while the other two participants, Gabriella and Susan, hope to create such collaborations.

Although Terry's course is "not specifically designed as a writing methods course [but] is . . . [an] ELA methods course . . . divided into three parts - methods that are specifically reading, . . . writing, and methods that integrate the two (i.e., writing about reading)," the course is designed to create opportunities for candidates to implement PCKW through collaboration with an elementary school. He stated:

> Prior to COVID, the course was taught off campus and was housed in an elementary school. As such, a partnership with teachers allowed candidates to 'leave' our classroom and teach mini lessons on reading and writing, teach guided reading and writing lessons, and conduct conferences with students. To extend this, teachers often came to our 'class' to provide insights and feedback. We conducted class for 10 weeks - three hours per class. Candidates were in classrooms teaching or observing/providing feedback in approximately six of the ten classes.

Susan feels "when you collaborate you have to figure out what you see as important." She stated, "It's not that I do everything the same as other people I've collaborated with, but we take nuggets from each other, and we develop it."

Developing such contexts requires time because creating authentic writing engagement requires relationship building. Katherine collaborates with a second-grade teacher through a pen-pal writing engagement (three years). Danielle collaborates with an elementary school through an after-school writing clinic (five years). Kevin collaborates with a lab school for the literacy methods course and the writing methods course. For the literacy course, students spend a month during "class time" embedded in the elementary classroom. Kevin stated the following:

> The teacher in that classroom gives them an opportunity to work with students who they would identify as struggling readers or writers. So, it might be individuals. It might be small groups. We leave it really open and flexible based on the classroom situation and what the teacher feels might be the most beneficial for their students. We really try to keep it focused on the elementary students in the classroom rather than my university students' need to go in and teach a lesson on this topic. . . We want it to be authentic and for candidates to have that opportunity to be involved in that process as they're working with the students, trying to figure out what their struggles are and how they can help them through various activities and strategies.

Within the same school for the writing methods course, Kevin's candidates majoring in English Language Arts plan, implement, and reflect upon a Writer's Workshop After School Club. These authentic writing engagements fall along a continuum of authenticity.

Continuum of Authenticity of Writing Pedagogy in Teacher Education

In the education field, authenticity addresses task alignment with real-world practice. The participants in this study involved candidates in myriad writing engagements to support effective implementation of PCKW, which varied along McDonald et al.'s (2013) learning cycle stages for supporting candidates to learn pedagogy. Although McDonald et al. argue TEs should guide candidates through the learning cycle's four quadrants, course contexts may inhibit such

opportunities. Representation (Quadrant 1) and rehearsal (Quadrant 2) are possible in the university context; however, enactment (Quadrant 3) requires candidates to use the strategy with PK–12 students. If the course design does not include clinical experience and/or the TE is unable to build a partnership, minimal opportunity exists for candidates to enact PCKW aside from one-on-one instruction in various contexts (e.g., tutoring a child the candidate knows, teaching content to a peer). If candidates cannot enact PCKW, analysis of their enactment is unachievable (Quadrant 4). Susan stated:

> Authentic application is really key. So how are we having students apply authentically in their own writing experiences? And how is it applied into the field? . . . Ideally you would want both pieces, very tightly woven, and this piece of that authentic application over time is really powerful. It's just not always achievable until student teaching. . .. I mean yes, you want all the solid content pieces. You know things about writing and how you teach writing, but you need that application piece.

Clinical experiences increase the authenticity of writing engagements and facilitate enactment. Kevin's candidates guide elementary students through writing tasks to support students' growth as writers through the Writers' Workshop After School Club. Danielle's candidates plan, implement, and reflect upon a Young Authors' Festival in which they teach writing to elementary students. These authentic writing engagements occur outside of the school, creating more flexibility.

Enactment in the K–6 classroom context depends on the cooperating teacher's willingness to permit authentic application. Representation (Grossman, Compton, et al., 2009) or approximation (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009) may be the only level of learning teacher educators can achieve if well-designed partnerships with community or K–6 stakeholders are limited. Terry stated, "That still bothers me . . . the authenticity. Because even though they go to the field, even though they go to the practicum, it's without each other and it's without me and sometimes it's not with a teacher who is subscribing to authentic research-based instructional practices." Thus, even when embedded, authentic writing engagements may only approximate practice.

Approximation of PCKW through Authentic Writing Engagements

Approximation of PCKW occurs in various ways across the continuum of authenticity within writing methods courses. Per the data, approximation is evident in writing engagements when candidates develop as writers personally and professionally and analyze students' writing development.

Some writing engagements increase in authenticity as candidates engage in authentic writing personally. For example, Danielle's and Gabriella's candidates create their own children's books. Gabriella requires candidates to write a children's book through online resources to provide candidates an "opportunity to use a [web]site they may use in the classroom as well as understanding what students go through when they step out of their comfort zone to use their expressive language and research skills." Similarly, Danielle requires candidates to write an informational children's picture book on a content-area topic candidates may use with their

future upper-elementary students. Gabriella and Danielle hope candidates experiencing such writing opportunities will implement the authentic writing engagements with their future students.

Many TEs model their own PCKW to support their candidates as writers and to model how candidates should teach writing in their future classrooms, especially revision. Revision is emphasized in three of the seven courses to ensure candidates, per their own experiences, revise their own writing and teach students how to revise. Danielle stated, "I emphasize revision, because . . . if you can teach revision well, you can teach anything in writing well, because that is the heart of writing." Candidates need to learn to revise because, as Susan stated, "They're so used to just jumping into editing and not actually revising and taking the time to go through and clearly articulate the ideas . . . [T]hey tend to see [editing and revising] as all mashed as one and [they're] not." To support her candidates' development, Susan models revision: "I had a piece of my writing, and I modeled a think-aloud lesson with revising, the different ways you would revise a text and the general moves we teach, like subtracting and adding and rearranging." Katherine stated:

> Playing with revision is really important . . . And you do that through playing with language and moving things around and changing it. And not just going through and changing your spelling but moving chunks and playing with the order of things.

Playing with revision as writers helps candidates experience the revision process and understand how they may support students' revision as Susan stated, "We look at teacher conferencing with students, and how you can guide students to do revision. And then the peer conferencing part— they give some feedback to each other about revision and how to do that positively." Although candidates may not be conferencing with students yet, candidates' experiences as writers being taught through PCKW approximate the practices candidates will implement as in-service teachers.

The data show approximation occurs as candidates develop understanding about students' writing development. Susan stated, "My students gather writing samples and determine a possible stage of writing development and . . . how they might respond with instruction to the next needs of that student as a writer." Students' writing samples illustrate a range of writing stages. Terry uses Lucy Calkins' writing samples as the anchors and then moves into students' writing samples, choosing to emphasize "developmental progression and developmental indicators and development of markers across writing stages," not grade level. For her candidates, Gabriella models sample analysis and provides candidates students' writing samples to analyze along a writing development continuum; candidates determine next steps for instructional focus. Katherine requires candidates to analyze pen-pal letters received from second-grade students across the semester. Danielle requires candidates to analyze writing contest entries submitted for the Young Authors' Festival.

Candidates must understand the range of writing development beginning with evidence of emergent literacy. Terry stated:

> Having them come to the realization that these kiddos can write without ever using one single letter or word. . ... Understanding how writing evolves over time from scratches and scribbles, to letter-like, to some very familiar sight words, then to other words. Understanding what that progression is of writing and not to expect perfection, but to expect a student to reveal who they are and where they are on that continuum. And understand even with that process, you're going to be surprised, and you're going to see things that you can't be prepared for but celebrate those because that allows you to see more into the student.

Susan confirmed the need for candidates to identify students' strengths:

> I show them a few of those writing samples, including one that's a letter string. And they often look at that and say that the student doesn't know how to write. And then we talk about, well they know a lot of things. They know the symbols we use in writing and the letters. Their letters are actually formed pretty well. They know that these communicate something. They don't have the phonetic piece yet, but they know that. And they're actually writing left to right; it's going the right way. And if they would read it aloud to us . . . if they have several lines, they are pointing down the page as they are reading.

Exploring students' intentions is important for candidates to understand how students use writing to create meaning. Terry stated:

> I always like putting BASKDY on the board to have them figure out. And then I put WRMS on there. Because BASKDY looks like WRMS. . . [T]hey finally understand that it is spaghetti, and they look like worms. Those expressions say to me there's a chance that they're going to celebrate student writing, instead of suppressing it.

Candidates need to analyze writing samples to understand the developmental stages of writing (Roser et al., 2014). Gabriella and Terry emphasize the writing development stages and require candidates to determine next steps for instruction, regardless of whether or not they enact PCKW.

Practical Considerations

We argue TEs of writing need to prepare candidates for writing instruction within authentic writing engagements where candidates enact PCKW with students in schools and community contexts. We recommend teacher preparation programs partner with school and community stakeholders to create mutually beneficial, authentic writing engagements to motivate students to write and to provide candidates authentic opportunities to enact PCKW. Candidates should envision enacting the PCKW in their future teaching (Kennedy, 1999). Shulman (1998) stated, "It is not *professional* knowledge unless and until it is enacted in the crucible of the 'field.' Professions are ultimately about *practice*" (p. 518, emphasis in original). Practice is key to ensuring candidates acquire the PCKW along a continuum of authentic writing engagement. Certainly, practice makes possible (ILA, 2018), but opportunities for practice may be limited.

A severe limitation is that too many elementary teacher candidates do not complete a required writing methods course (Brenner & McQuirk, 2019; Collier et al., 2015; Myers et al., 2016). The

data highlight reading methods are intricately connected to five courses whereas two focus on writing methods entirely. In addressing the literacy-focused course required for all candidates, Kevin stated, "One of the biggest challenges in this course is that it is intended for both reading and writing instruction. Reading instruction gets the majority of the classroom content, and the field experience also focuses on teaching reading." Candidates majoring in the English Language Arts complete the required writing methods course Kevin teaches, but all elementary teachers need to be prepared to teach writing. Susan stated, "I think writing is often neglected in teacher ed. And that's why we see teachers not feeling comfortable teaching it." We argue every elementary candidate, regardless of major, must be required to complete a writing methods course; thus, TEs of writing must advocate for the addition of such a course to candidates' programs of study.

Through a required writing methods course, we believe candidates need to experience effective PCKW as writers to effectively teach writing in the future. Susan stated, "Candidates . . . are writers but [they show] hesitancy with writing themselves because of what they've experienced . . . as a learner in K–12 settings. They've seen teachers mostly assign writing and not teach them how to write." Through modeling effective PCKW, TEs need to prepare candidates to be effective writers and writing teachers. Susan stated, "And so if we want to change that cycle, we have to start with our preservice teachers and supporting them in how do you teach writing, not just assign it."

In-service teachers fulfill an irreplaceable role in preparing candidates to teach PCKW. Without such practitioners as partners, TEs cannot require authentic writing engagements within K–6 classrooms as part of their writing methods courses. We encourage practitioners to share their expertise and experiences with teaching writing as they open their classrooms to create spaces for candidates to enact and apply PCKW with students (McDonald et al., 2013). Candidates need opportunities to practice teaching through one-on-one, small-group, or whole-group instruction. As candidates conference with students, teach guided writing lessons, and analyze students' writing development to determine next steps, we believe such opportunities will support K–6 students' writing development.

Finally, as TEs and practitioners work together within school and community contexts to develop authentic writing engagements within elementary writing methods courses, the data show timing of the clinical experience should be considered. Terry and Kevin require candidates to participate in authentic writing engagements mid-semester to enact PCKW or other areas of literacy. In these TEs' courses, divided in thirds, candidates prepare for the clinical experience, implement instruction, and debrief next steps (McDonald et al., 2013). Overall, teacher preparation programs should require elementary writing methods courses to apply PCKW through embedded authentic writing engagements in partnership with K–6 and community stakeholders.

Future Recommendations

Research needs to identify amounts of time required for effective clinical experiences. In this study, time candidates spent in the field varied. Gabriella hoped for 10 hours. Danielle and Kevin provide six to ten one-hour sessions, depending on schools' schedules, while Katherine's

candidates complete five hours per week focused on literacy. A quandary of quantity versus quality, Katherine stated:

> My students complain that five hours a week feels like a lot on top of their coursework, but I also notice only going five hours a week does not allow them to see the continuity of teaching in terms of how teachers build upon students' evolving understandings through interconnected lessons. Instead, they see lessons as 'one-offs.' Having release time from class could allow students to observe more interconnected lessons.

We believe quality of experience is more important than quantity of time in the field. Central to quality experience, researchers should explore how to develop effective partnerships that create opportunities for candidates to enact PCKW across contexts.

Future research needs to explore transfer of learning from teacher preparation approximation, enactment, and analysis to in-service teaching (Bomer et al., 2019; McDonald et al., 2013). Sanders et al. (2020) provide a curriculum for TEs of writing; research should explore the PCKW candidates learn through such curriculum and how well candidates transfer their learning to in-service teaching.

Finally, we encourage TEs of writing to share their experiences as we agree with the ILA's (2018) sentiment:

> We see the future of literacy teacher preparation as less about finding a model for a perfect program and trying to clone that model into other spaces, and more about literacy TEs using their radical imaginations and their research to build programs in specific contexts that we can all learn from together. (p. 7)

Susan stated she joined this study because "it would be so great to talk with somebody from another university, to help me to grow the course." Grossman, Compton, et al. (2009) address "relational practice" (p. 2057), which promotes exploration of "how other educators have responded to the challenges of preparing novices to create relationships that are crucial to the success of professional work" (p. 2095). The more we, as TEs of elementary writing methods, share our own experiences regarding how we teach PCKW within authentic writing engagements, the more we support one another, our candidates, and all our future students.

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Together We Can Do So Much: A Community Approach to Summer Reading During Turbulent Times

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Abstract

Much of 2020 posed unprecedented challenges to schools, families, and communities. This essay describes how a university reading clinic, a neighborhood community center, a local public library, and a commercial education publisher banded together during Summer 2020 in response to these challenges. The result was a vibrant, engaging, online summer reading program for local youth experiencing poverty. This literacy-based partnership developed based on a profound sense of social responsibility in a time of a global pandemic, the belief in the power of literacy, and a deep respect and appreciation for each other's expertise. This community approach to the partnership led to 1) developing a common mission around a love of reading, (2) creating a culture of inclusion and trust, and (3) leveraging resources for tangible results.

Keywords: reciprocity, equity-minded partners, collaboration, cooperation

Together We Can Do So Much: A Community Approach to Summer Reading During Turbulent Times

"Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much"

-Helen Keller

The positive effects of a community approach to education are well supported in the literature (Sanders, 2003). Initiatives that foster connections among schools, businesses, formal and nonformal community organizations, and institutions can enhance student achievement and the health of their families and communities (Casto, 2016; Compton-Lilly et al. 2016; Sanders 2003). The literature on universities as partners in the community describes a diversity of roles and projects. In her review of this literature, Sanders (2003) summarizes that the most successful

examples of university partnerships establish a shared vision, and emphasize open communication, structures for joint decision making, and reflective evaluation. We believe that the student-centered approach taken in this project is a unique and fresh approach to community engagement as it brought together many partners around a collective goal: supporting the literacy lives of children during a time of unprecedented challenge in education. *The Ready, Set, Read! Dig Deeper* summer reading program was a collaboration among the Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center (HMC) at California State University Fullerton, The Center for Healthy Neighborhoods (CHN), Fullerton Public Library (FPL), and Teacher Created Materials (TCM). The success of this program is attributed to a shared sense of social responsibility and to the mutuality, reciprocity, and trust engendered by each of these community partners. We believe our community approach to literacy serves as a model for university reading clinics to activate and leverage rich resources and develop partnerships in response to the educational needs in the communities we serve.

Summer Reading with the Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center

The Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center (HMC), located on the campus of California State University, Fullerton, has long engaged in partnerships with the local community to promote and support children's literacy. For over 50 years, HMC, staffed by faculty of the Department of Literacy and Reading Education, has been the vital center of the graduate program in reading and literacy, serving as both a training ground for literacy specialist candidates and a reading clinic where local schools and families can connect with highly skilled literacy professionals. In partnership with a local community center, CHN, offers a summer reading camp to local elementary grade students. We understand from our own experiences and from the existing literature that summer reading programs are an effective way to maintain student literacy achievement in the summer months.

For many children, reading over summer break is a critical part of maintaining academic gains and preparing for the school year. The number of books children read, the amount of independent leisure reading, and frequency of library visits have shown a consistent, positive correlation to sustaining children's reading gains over the summer, while the loss of academic skills when school is not in session can be largely attributed to a lack of reading (Allington et al., 2010; Allington, McGill-Franzen et al., 2018). Research suggests that students may lose the equivalent of at least one month and up to three months of instruction over the summer months, accumulating large gaps by the time they enter high school (Cooper et.al, 1996; Alexander et al., 2007), though more recent analysis suggests it may be worth reexamining the growth of these skills gaps (von Hippel & Hamrock, 2019). Evidence suggests, however, that achievement gains and/or losses over the summer months disproportionately impacts students in poverty, English learners and students of color (Alexander et al., 2007; Kim & Guryan, 2010). Summer reading programs can be a crucial tool in stemming this "summer slide," particularly for the aforementioned students (Beach, et al., 2018; Beach & Traga Philippakos, 2020; Contesse, et al., 2021; Lara-Cinisomo, et al., 2020).

In March 2020, HMC was in the process of finalizing the plans for the 2-week summer program when the pandemic closed its doors. The COVID-19 pandemic presented educators with

unprecedented challenges as many places in the world shifted abruptly to remote instruction. Few models existed on how to best move entire schools online, and many students experienced significant disruptions to their education. The gaps and inequities in education and in society at large quickly bubbled to the surface as communities disproportionately dealt with the effects of the digital divide, teachers' varied skills, and efficacy in relation to online instruction, housing, job, and food insecurity, and the harsh realities of a deadly virus.

Preliminary data available on literacy achievement during the 2019/2020 school year suggested students would end the year with approximately 87% of the gains they would make in a typical school year; for reading that translates to a month and a half of learning loss due to school closures (Dorn et.al., 2020). Later studies investigating the 2020-2021 school year suggest that even with the return to school, student reading data pointed to late elementary and early middle school students performing "about 6–10 weeks behind expectations" by late winter of 2021 (U.S. Department of Education 2021). This incomplete learning underscored the importance of providing community children an enriched summer literacy program.

These realities would influence the direction of, and goals for, the summer reading program. In thinking of the needs of students and families in the surrounding community, the program goals became clear: (1) increasing summer reading and building positive attitudes towards reading, (2) mitigating the effects of "summer slide" which were likely compounded by "Covid slide", and (3) using literacy to encourage and engage students, their families (and ourselves) during a time of isolation and uncertainty. In thinking of how to make this happen, it became increasingly apparent that taking a community approach to summer reading would be critical.

The first step was to transform the *Ready, Set, Read!* (RSR) program from a traditional face-to-face model to a virtual learning experience. The literature on summer reading programs describes a wide variety of programming such as book distribution, reading incentive programs, or tutoring and intervention (Beach, et al., 2018; Kim & Quinn, 2013; McDaniel, et al., 2017; Nueman & Knapczyk, 2020). Much of this research demonstrates the effectiveness of combining approaches (Beach, et al., 2018; McDaniel, et al., 2017;) yet only a handful focus on virtual programs (Keisler et.al., 2021; Smith, 2019). As graduates of the Department of Literacy and Reading Education's online master's program, the literacy specialists of HMC were experienced with online teaching and learning and confident they could recreate *Ready, Set, Read!* for Summer 2020. Drawing from experience, knowledge of effective summer reading programs, and previous partnerships within the community, HMC created a summer learning infrastructure by tapping into the community.

Ready, Set, Read! Dig Deeper 2020: A Partnership in Action

The result, *Ready, Set, Read! Dig Deeper,* was an 8-week virtual summer reading incentive program to serve 59 local students, at no cost to families. Students were grouped into by age/grade level: K/1, 2/3, 4/5, and 6-11. Students met via Zoom once a week for 45 minutes but could also connect to each other and their instructors digitally throughout the week by engaging in program activities utilizing ClassDojo, Padlet, Scholastic Core Clicks and Nearpod. RSR was intended to be fun and different from the remote experience students had just completed in their

schools. Students exercised agency over their summer reading experiences, choosing reading materials and activities, earning points towards donated prizes. More than half, (61%) of students were regular, active participants over the course of the summer; the upper elementary and middle/high school groups were often the best attended. Our experience, and the research, informed us of the importance of bringing in families as partners (Borman, et al., 2005; Pagan & Senechal, 2014; Parker & Reid, 2017). Families were engaged in the entire process. Students were given books and taught reading strategies and tips virtually on Zoom to inspire them to "dig deeper." The program created a friendly environment of genuine care for students, generated excitement for independent summer reading, while honoring the students' lived experiences during the pandemic (Please see Keisler et.al., 2021 for a discussion of program curriculum and outcomes).

This partnership of mutual collaboration allowed us to draw on the strengths and resources of each individual partner to create a successful summer reading program. Tapping into our individual and collective strengths fostered an approach that enhanced the work of all to the mutual benefit of each partner. The following section describes our partnership in action.

Partnering with a Local Community Center

Nestled in a neighborhood with complex needs, the Center for Healthy Neighborhoods (CHN) is supported by CSUF's College of Health and Human Development. Families involved with CHN typically have an annual income of less than $25,000 and nearly 40% of neighborhood residents have no regular source of medical care. The Center's mission is to work with stakeholders who are committed to alleviating educational and health disparities, revitalizing vulnerable neighborhoods, and reducing the cycle of poverty in these neighborhoods. With a generous grant provided by the Tarsadia Foundation, the Center offers free, culturally, and linguistically sustaining programs and services targeted to the community. Weeks of collaborative planning meetings between staff at HMC and CHN were held to identify and recruit families to join RSR, assess technology challenges, develop, and deliver bilingual programs for parents, and adapt program resources and activities to a virtual platform. CHN primarily recruited families from their existing tutoring program, the Academic Success Program. Remaining spots were filled with students who already had a relationship with the Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center. CHN was also a critical physical nexus for the program. For example, backpacks of program materials and books were distributed to participating families in conjunction with a large food drive they had organized.

Partnering with a Public Library

The mission of the Fullerton Public Library (FPL) is to provide free and equal access to information, knowledge, and ideas, promote personal enrichment and life-long learning, encourage literacy and the love of reading in all age groups, and foster cultural and educational programs and partnerships. During Covid closures, the library responded by offering drive-by book checkouts and an incentive prize program for community children. Summer reading has been an integral component of the FPL programming since 1942. The library's original theme for

2020 was "Dig Deeper." When the library joined the partnership, this theme was incorporated into the summer program. Janine Jacobs, FPL Children's Librarian, reported:

> "In a difficult year, reaching members of the community and following our mission of promoting literacy, personal enrichment, and a love of reading was extremely difficult. Reaching people, we had not previously had contact with was almost impossible. Through the HMC reading program we were able to reach more people and continue the library's mission throughout the summer and into the following months."

Partnering with the library's existing program provided the pipeline to connect CHN families to their local library. This partnership allowed students access to books beyond those provided by the program, though the library's summer reading and distribution program. When a second book pick up was necessary midway through the program, FPL provided a safe place for families to connect. The partnership between FPL and the RSR program brought new visitors to the FPL, and many transitioned to become regular library users.

Partnering with a Publisher

With an awareness that our students and families had limited access to books due to school and library closures, the longstanding partnership between Teacher Created Materials (TCM) and HMC was pivotal in providing material resources. TCM is a women-owned and women-led, educational publishing company. The company created and donated materials for the program. These materials were used to create backpacks specifically for at-home learning with families and included 2-4 hard copies of TMC's Kids Learn readers (number of books was decided by grade levels of students), parent tip cards, and an activity book to advance skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, using items commonly found in the home. TCM provided both digital and hard copies of the texts for the program. Having access to a variety of texts is a critical part of the success of a summer reading program and this allowed students and teachers to have identical books, hard copy and digital, at their fingertips for use in Zoom lessons and for independent work.

Partnering with Families

Parents or other family members were an integral part of program success. They helped their children connect, access digital and hard copy books, assisted with the posting of students' work to ClassDojo and Padlet, and communicated with summer teachers on live Zoom class sessions. Though most students still had access to their district/school issued computers, some parents aided students in logging onto Zoom via their cellphones and iPads/tablets. There were several touchpoints with parents or other family members that made the program possible by obtaining critical feedback: A pre/post survey, a Zoom dual language family orientation, and a bilingual roundtable discussion meeting called *La Mesa Redonda*. This meeting proved to be instrumental for instructors to ascertain vital information for program improvement as family feedback and concerns were honored and addressed. Together with their children, parents were engaged weekly with the multimodal literacies, helping their child record their video/photo posts.

As family units, parents and the students bonded over literacy activities and shared learning. Many parents commented on learning new ways to ask their children questions about reading and how to support critical thinking skills because of the program. Families were indispensable partners as at-home teachers, encouraging their children to read at home while providing valuable perspectives that enhanced the overall program.

A Community Approach to Summer Reading: Lessons to Share

Finding common ground in our social responsibility and collective commitment to community literacy, this partnership revealed the possibilities of developing mutually beneficial and sustaining programs that filled a need at a critical time in history. In reflecting on our work, some of our lessons learned may be useful for other institutions seeking to forge university-community collaborative endeavors. These lessons serve to underscore the importance and the power of working together.

Developing a Common Mission: A Love of Reading

Key to our successful partnership was the articulation of a shared vision that included social responsibility, an emphasis on equity, an unwavering belief in the power of literacy, and a strong commitment to developing children's love of reading. Deanne Mendoza, EVP of Community Partnerships at TCM, shared, "At TCM, we take our role in education seriously because we realize the impact it has on teachers, students, authors, employees, and our community...no matter what we do, our vision stays at the heart of it: to create a world in which children love to learn. Social responsibility is woven into the very fabric of all we do. We are dedicated to giving back to the communities where we live, work, and play." Similarly, Janine Jacobs, FPL Librarian shared, "Reaching underserved members of our community and promoting personal growth has always been of paramount importance to the library. Partnering with HMC has allowed community connections which can potentially be strengthened and expanded. As we reopen the library building, we hope that families will feel comfortable coming into the library and will take advantage of what it has to offer to increase the entire family's love of reading, expand their personal growth, and embrace the love of learning." These institutional perspectives aligned with the University's commitment to civic engagement and service to the region and helped HMC deliver on a commitment to creating readers through just, equitable and inclusive literacy instruction.

Together, these institutions partnered to create a virtual summer reading program that engaged students, fostered a love of reading and personal growth, and provided a much-needed resource for families by creating a virtual space for children and teens to connect and interact in a time of heightened social isolation. Through a carefully planned literacy curriculum and the inclusion of rich and varied reading experiences, the program instilled literacy habits that were shown to help combat the typical summer slide (Keisler et al., 2021).

Creating a Culture of Inclusion and Trust

Another important aspect of our university-community partnership was the establishment of trusting and mutually beneficial relationships. Representatives from HMC, FPL, CHN, and

TCM met for planning purposes, mostly over Zoom, sharing perspectives about the scope of work, and contributions of each partner. Frequent calls and emails filled in the space between meetings in the weeks and days running up to the start of the program and throughout as we worked to schedule distributions and keep families connected and well stocked for the program. As a result of these frequent, honest, and transparent conversations, pedagogy and curricula were enriched, community outreach/recruitment efforts were enhanced, resources were secured, and program goals were met. Interpersonal relationship-building and trust became a core element of these conversations: Trust in each institution's expertise, trust that one will be heard, and trust in the overall mission of the summer reading project.

Critical to this partnership were parents and families. As mentioned earlier, families were centered as necessary and critical collaborators. Through *Mesa Redonda*, pre-and post-surveys, and one-on-one conversations, both CHN and HMC staff worked to gain the trust of the families it aimed to serve. The families most in need of resources and support - undocumented, historically under-served immigrant families - had developed trusting relations with CHN, who was already established as a long-standing bilingual and bicultural service provider in the community. Partnering with CHN allowed both HMC and FPL to expand their reach into the community by brokering relations, ultimately allowing the other partners to gain the trust of families as well. We learned from this project that successful community partnerships ultimately resided at the individual level, guided by trust and reciprocity, and influenced by initial expectations for the partnership.

Leveraging Resources for Tangible Results

Designing university-community partnerships requires detailed planning and adequate allocation of resources. Conversations centered around how the partnership could deliver a high-quality summer literacy program with existing resources and expertise. Each partner had critical contributions to make to this endeavor. HMC brought over 50 years of experience in providing successful summer reading programs. The HMC literacy specialists, also faculty in and graduates of the online graduate program at CSUF, brought knowledge of best practices related to online teaching and learning. This expertise, coupled with the expertise CHN staff gained while transitioning their own Academic Success Program online that past spring, served as a valuable resource in the planning and implementation of the online component of the program. Guided by the desire to provide greater access to literacy learning, much-needed resources were leveraged by both CHN and TCM allowing the program to be offered free of charge for families. TCM provided in-kind donations such as reading books, activity books, and other crucial supplies. The CHN donated a portion of a grant from the Tarsadia Foundation to help control costs by covering salaries for the literacy specialists and CHN staff who developed, taught, and managed Ready, Set, Read: Dig Deeper. CSUF's Department of Literacy and Reading Education donated iPads to use as incentives in the program. The FPL enhanced students' free voluntary summer reading by connecting it to the academic lessons and incentives in RSR. The library also provided small incentive prizes to students, bags for their books, and printed timesheets and reading logs for students to track their progress.

Despite a time of economic uncertainty, resource sharing among the partners was central to the mission to provide a quality summer reading program that was accessible to families experiencing poverty. Reflecting on the mission of TCM, Deanne Mendoza shared, "we donate in ways that will have a positive impact... in-kind donations are often easier in times of uncertainty than monetary donations are. This was especially true during Covid 19 when we were uncertain how our company would fare through all the changes." Key to our successful collaboration was understanding the availability of resources, identifying those that best match the mission and scope of the program, engaging in transparent and ongoing dialogue about resource expectations and allocations, and creatively leveraging resources to have greater reach with documented gains.

Conclusion

The literacy-based partnership examined in this study was established based on the deep awareness that each partner institution developed about its responsibility to society, particularly in a time of a global pandemic. Our mutual commitment to the power of literacy in the lives of students in our local communities, as well as profound respect and appreciation for each participants' expertise, made our successful partnership possible. During this unprecedented time, each participant organization journeyed through their need to redefine their traditional roles to develop creative and pragmatic solutions during a time of crisis. And while collectively developing a community-based approach to reading, these literacy partner organizations also chronicled how university-community collaborations can maximize talents, resources, and efforts. Together we uncovered the potential of developing stronger relationships with the community as we reached out to more families. Ultimately, for the participating students, a love of reading was promoted and developed during an unprecedented time in which disrupted learning affected so many diverse communities.

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WHEN SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES COME TOGETHER: HOW A TEACHER'S ROLE IN A RESEARCH PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP MANIFESTS DURING A MOBILE LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This study examines the success and struggle of a Research Practice Partnership (RPP) between a classroom teacher and researchers as they implement a mobile library program intervention to increase student access to books. This study reveals the importance of teachers taking on a curriculum specialist role, which may be incompatible with teachers' own perceptions of their profession. Using a RPP framework and Schwab's (1979) curricular commonplaces, we examine the ways educators' perceptions and roles may impact the planning, process, and execution of a partnered intervention. Data collection included teacher interviews and mobile library program observations. Through qualitative analysis, findings indicate teachers' roles in a RPP may need to extend beyond establishing expectations by uncovering hidden perceptions and implicit goals. These findings support those of larger RPP structures (Resnick & Kazemi, 2019), but currently, there is scant research on how teachers act in their own role within a RPP framework in order to collaborate, mitigate common outcomes, and participate in long term partnerships with researchers (Turley & Stevens, 2015). Researchers can be more cognizant of the pitfalls that impact collaboration and communication with teachers by considering researcher and teacher positionalities, co-constructing shared language, and reinforcing teacher's agency.

Keywords: Research Practice Partnership, Curriculum Specialist, Mobile Book Library, Teacher Agency, Literacy

When Schools and Public Libraries Come Together: How a Teacher's Role in a Research Practice Partnership Manifests During a Mobile Library Experience

Supporting and solving educational issues within research communities has been a focus within school districts and university communities. While many attempts aim to provide interventions, support services, or resolve issues of equity to make improvements to schools, what is often not understood are the roles, perceptions, and experiences of the teachers involved in these

cooperative relationships. When researchers aim to support schools and classrooms with a specific intent or outcome, hidden perceptions or understandings can often reveal avoidable pitfalls. We examine the success and struggle of a Research Practice Partnership (RPP) between a classroom teacher and research team who implemented a mobile library program intervention to increase student access to books. This study reveals the necessity of collaboration with classroom teachers throughout a RPP and how one teacher's role manifested over the course of a mobile library intervention.

The Need for Change - Understanding the Context

Ms. Early (all names are pseudonyms), an eager English Language Arts (ELA) teacher at Koster Middle School, met with Sarah, author and a Ph.D. candidate at a nearby university, after a brief classroom observation. When asked about her classroom needs, Ms. Early was quick to say, "My kids need books. They don't have access to books that are their reading level, that represent their backgrounds or are of good quality." Ms. Early explained that her school, which is located in the 2nd poorest zip code in the city, does not have a school library for students to check out books. "It's just used for meetings. My kids have never gotten a chance to check out a book," she explained. Furthermore, the nearest public library has been closed for almost three years due to hurricane damage. Marginalized communities that lack book access are described as "book deserts" (Neuman & Moland, 2019) where books or printed materials are inadequately distributed within a community. Students living in book deserts have been shown to have significant long-term impacts on student literacy achievement (Miller, Sharp, Minnich, & Sokolowski, 2018; Neuman & Celano, 2012; Neuman & Moland, 2019). As Ms. Early and Sarah talked, it became evident that a partnership was needed to take place to support the students in Ms. Early's class and the larger school community.

A RPP was proposed by Sarah and suggested to implement mobile library programs that included classroom supplements with a library-staff bookmobile that would come to the school for book check out. Many public library systems have transitioned to include outreach opportunities where they go directly into communities to provide resources, classes, and book access. Bookmobiles have become more common as vans and buses are refashioned to house and deliver books, technology, and classes to underserved or underrepresented communities (Snow, 2017; Velasquez, 2019). In this RPP framework, both Ms. Early and Sarah collaborated on their mutual goals to create book access opportunities for students through library programming to increase student engagement as readers. Sarah took on a researcher role, communicated with the public library, included Ms. Early on all emailed written communication and organized and requested intervention program components. As this study took shape, a shift in Ms. Early's understanding of her role within the partnership manifested, revealing possible considerations for future RPP frameworks and how research collaborations need to take shape with schools of marginalized communities.

Koster Middle School is located in a southwestern city in the United States and serves a predominantly African American and Hispanic student body where 95.5% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged. Koster Middle School has been identified to receive targeted support from the state's department of education due to low performance on state

mandated assessments and 22% of students met grade level requirements based on the most recent assessment data. A component of the support structure includes a set of mandated curricula, with some scripted content. Ms. Early had often shared during impromptu conversations how the school's culture and community was really important to her. Ms. Early identifies as an African American female and shared that she grew up in a similar neighborhood as her students. She often noted, "I understand their struggles". In many ways, this intervention and RPP was not only a professional opportunity, but a personal one. Ms. Early shared how important books were to her and when she found a book that resonated with her, reading became a door of opportunities. At the same time, Ms. Early also shared the pressure and stress she was under to make sure her students not only had opportunities but were making significant progress in their academic and assessment scores.

Literature Review

Research Practice Partnership (RPP) is a framework of intentional collaboration between schools and researchers that include methods "which are organized to investigate problems of practice and generate solutions for improving [school] district outcomes" (Coburn et al., 2013). What distinguishes RPP from traditional university-community outreach programs are key constructs that include long-term relationships that mutually benefit participants and researchers, research-based interventions, and solutions resolving a school or practitioner's concerns (Cooper, Shewchuk, & MacGregor, 2020; Wentworth, Mazzeo, & Connolly, 2017). Penuel (2017) suggests that RPPs play an important role to shift the traditional top-down research approach with focused interventions that often "promote the agency of educators and learners…[while also] challenge historically shaped inequities" in school communities (p. 520).

RPPs are particularly significant within districts that serve marginalized communities in how the framework specifically intends to address opportunity gaps, inequities, and systematic racism (Barton, & Bevan, 2016; Penuel, 2017). Within a RPP framework there is more emphasis on the development of relationships between school communities and researchers that lead to achieving commonly identified goals and outcomes (Turley & Stevens, 2015). These partnerships can take many forms, including larger district-university partnerships, and in our case, a focused teacher-researcher partnership.

Curriculum as a Specialist

Teachers' knowledge, enactment of curriculum, and understanding of their own roles as educators do not exist in a vacuum. A multitude of external and internal factors affect their curricular decision-making on a daily basis. Stein, Remillard, and Smith (2007) present a framework on the four temporal phases of curriculum use (see Figure 1) that detail the factors that impact curriculum use starting from its written form to enactment, resulting in student learning. Internal factors include educators' beliefs about teaching, their own agency, and their conception of curriculum-making, as well as personal experiences. External factors outside of teachers' control, such as federal, state, and local policy decisions, further complicate their roles in curriculum development and delivery. Despite this, teachers play an inextricable part in articulating classroom needs and informing education research studies, and increasingly, in

RPPs. However, there is scant research on how teachers act in their own role in a RPP framework in order to collaborate, mitigate common outcomes, and participate in long term partnerships with researchers (Turley & Stevens, 2015).

Figure 1

Temporal Phases in Curriculum Use
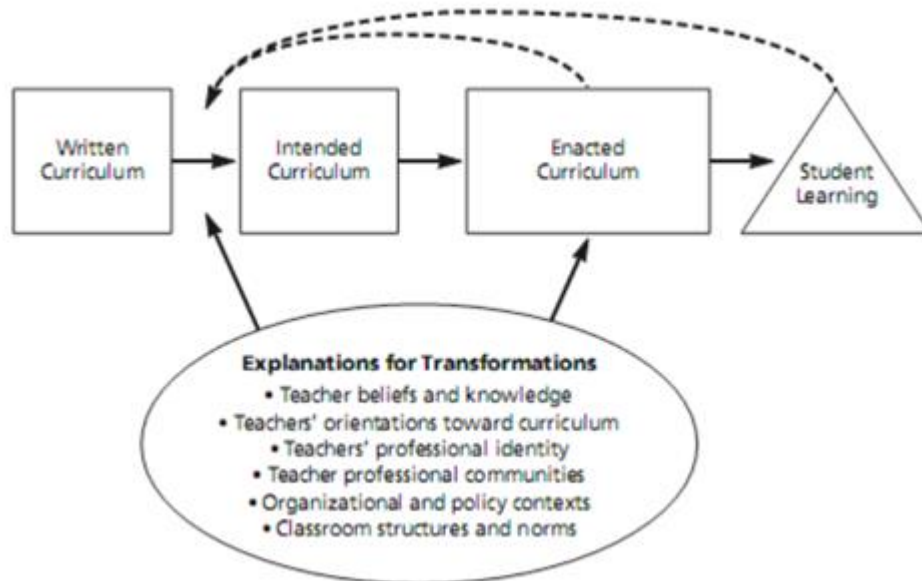
Schwab (1973) presents five curriculum commonplaces to make sense of these landscapes: subject matter, learners, milieus, teachers, and the curriculum-making process. He asserts that each aspect has a unique influence on curriculum writing and revision and requires collaboration between all constituents to create curricula that appropriately serves students (Schwab, 1973). However, these commonplaces are currently splintered. Of particular interest to our study, the curriculum-making process is guided by a curriculum specialist, while teachers, community members, and families have little voice in this process (Schwab, 1973, as cited in Bolotin, 2011). This, in turn, alters the teacher's role in their profession and feeling of ownership over their practice. For instance, Diezmann and Watters (2015) observed a teacher with a Ph.D. in microbiology who attained a diploma in education through a one-year program. While the researchers found the teacher leveraged her biology background in her classroom and offered sustained student-centered inquiry, she was unable to offer students moments to summarize and reflect on the objectives of the lesson.

Through this lens, teachers do not hold any significant authority over the curriculum that is written and enacted in their own classrooms, as seen through local adoption of prescriptive curricula (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015; Timberlake, Thomas, & Barrett, 2017; Fitz & Nikolaidis, 2020). The increased use of prescriptive curricula in the United States is a result of the accountability movement; where districts and schools regulate the types of lessons and materials used in classrooms in an attempt to improve scores on annual standardized exams (Fitz & Nikolaidis, 2020). Therefore, it is unsurprising that prescriptive material use is more

pronounced in under-served and low-income areas, where the focus of instruction often centers around assessment data and high-stakes accountability (Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015).

A reliance on prescriptive material results in teachers relinquishing their curricular and pedagogical agency and seeing curriculum as "rigid," as opposed to "flexible" (Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015). Timberlake, Thomas, and Barrett (2017) argue that over time, teachers "fears about the impact of the scripts on pedagogy appear to be replaced by a belief in the power and expertise of the scripts" (p. 47). Additionally, the use of prescriptive curricula impedes teachers' abilities to make thoughtful planning and instructional decisions to engage and teach their students and shifts their decision-making agency over to an external curriculum specialist.

This study examines the following research questions:

1) How does one educator's perceptions and roles impact the planning, process, and execution of interventions within a RPP framework?

2) How do researchers identify and navigate a teacher's hidden roles and perceptions?

Methodology & Data Collection

Background and Research Design

This qualitative case study (Yin, 2009) took place over the spring semester of the 2020 academic school year. The original intent of the study was to take place over the course of the spring semester of 2020 with 10 planned mobile library program visits in all of Ms. Early's sixth grade ELA classrooms. However, due to COVID-19 closures, this study was cut short, limiting the study to only two mobile library visits: an in-class reading program and a book mobile library check-out. This disruption shifted the focus of our study to examine the teacher's perceived role within the RPP framework during these mobile library program visits.

The RPP Intervention Program

The mobile library program was planned to take place over the course of 10 classroom visits alternating between two key programs offered by the city's local public library; mobile library programming and book mobile library check-out. The research team, through communication with the library staff, requested modifications to the mobile library program to meet the students' academic needs. The mobile library program at Koster Middle School would include a 30-minute, whole class read-aloud book selected by the library staff, followed by a writing or drawing activity to connect the theme of the book. The city's public library bookmobile featured a repurposed van lined with books that intended to offer students an opportunity to check out books using their student school ID.

The Researchers

Ms. Early was recruited for this study based on her first-hand knowledge of the school and community where the RPP was taking place. The researcher, Sarah, previously worked with Ms. Early as a creative writing coach where she provided writing instruction in Ms. Early's classroom during the previous academic year. This prior relationship permitted a transparent line

of communication between Sarah and Ms. Early for data collection and collaboration of RPP goals. Honest discussions took place where goals were identified, student demographics and academic struggles were determined, and potential solutions using the mobile library program were brainstormed. While Sarah shifted into a new position from writing coach to researcher, it is likely that Ms. Early may have viewed Sarah in her previous role. This prior relationship had the potential to benefit the RPP framework in that an established rapport existed. At the start of the RPP, Sarah orally stated her role as mediator between teacher and mobile public library program during preliminary planning meetings.

Our positionality as researchers aligns to our research interests on equity and access for students. Sarah identifies as a white female yet as a former classroom teacher, she has spent much of her career aiming to resolve inequitable literacy access and understanding literacy teachers' perspectives. As a researcher in this study, Sarah purposefully used open ended questions to understand rather than criticize her participant's responses and perceptions.

Anita joined the research team after the data had been collected to offer a different perspective on the bookmobile intervention. Her background is in high school mathematics education but is currently enrolled in a doctoral program on curriculum and instruction. As a researcher, she understands that her various identities shape her perspectives on education, and teachers' perspectives and identities also have an impact on their classroom interactions and the roles they choose to take on.

Data Collection

Over a course of three months in one academic year, authors interviewed Ms. Early four times and conducted one observation of the mobile library visit, totaling 180 minutes. The objective of the initial interview was to establish a collaborative relationship by determining Ms. Early's hopes and outcomes for the project. Subsequent interviews took place for Ms. Early to reflect on her reactions from the mobile library program, consider student reactions, and establish next steps for upcoming visits (see Table 1). All interviews were audio recorded for accuracy. Our final interview took place four months after the last mobile library visit and focused on the overall experience from the mobile library program and considerations should the mobile library program return to the school again. Sarah attended one book mobile library visit to observe public library staff interactions with students and Ms. Early, student and teacher participant's actions and overall responses to the programming experience.

Table 1

Participant Follow-up Interview Questions Post Mobile Library Program

What did you notice during and after the library program this week?
How many books did students check out in each class period?

How are your students talking about books with you?

How are your students talking about books with each other?

What changes have you observed about your classroom? Lessons? Approach with students?

What has stayed the same in your classroom? Lessons? Approach with students?

How have students' interactions with each other changed?

What are the next steps?

Data Analysis

Analysis of data took place approximately four months after the last mobile library visit. All audio recordings of interviews were transcribed and coded for emerging themes (Richards, 2015). Coding included categories for teacher's expectations, the actions by the RPP team (i.e., researcher or mobile library program), teacher's stated next steps, teacher's reactions, and student reactions which reflect the RPP framework of mutual benefits across partnership and long-term relationships. We the researchers, Sarah and Anita chose to separate the teacher from the RPP actions in order to discern roles, responses, expectations, and actions. Authors coded to capture student reactions since they were the direct recipients of the programming events. Sarah used transcribed audio recordings to code while Anita examined the coded transcriptions to examine for patterns around teacher experience, expectations, and responses from RPP mobile library programming.

Table 2

Coding for Research Practice Partnership

Code	Description	Example
RPP Ex	Research Practice Partnership Teacher Expectations	I really want the mobile library programming to look like this...
RPP A	Research Practice Partnership Action	The mobile library program read a book.
RPP TR	Teacher Response / Next steps	Next time I'll do ....

RPP +	Teacher's positive experience with RPP	I really liked that they did that.
RPP -	Teacher's negative experience with RPP	I was disappointed or upset.
StRe	Student Reactions	Students said, did, reacted in this way.

Anita reviewed the coded data to find patterns in the teacher's understanding of her role in the RPP, as well as their perceptions of the mobile library experience. Utilizing Stein, Remillard, and Smith's (2007) curriculum use framework and Schwab's (1973) commonplaces of curricular deliberation, both authors explored the teacher's beliefs about curriculum and how Ms. Early negotiated her role and approached each commonplace. Following this individual analysis, the research team calibrated their responses and framings for understanding.

Findings

Educator's Perceptions and Roles

Planning the Intervention

Prior to the start of the study, the participating teacher expressed her expectations and hopes for the outcome of the mobile library project. Like many RPP protocols, establishing common goals and expectations is common (Wentworth, Mazzeo, Connolly, 2017) and useful for both researcher and educators to mutually benefit from the outcome of the RPP. Together, Sarah and Ms. Early discussed their mutual goal to increase book access for the students in the class. As evidenced by the initial interview, the participating teacher expressed a desire to take on a minimal role in the planning stage of the experience. Preliminary conversations with the teacher centered around confirming schedules and determining requests for books that highlighted equity and culturally responsive pedagogy but did not translate to an active role with the book mobile library staff.

Ms. Early did, however, have a definitive perspective on her role as a teacher in her classroom setting. When asked about her students' access to books, she often labeled herself as the "librarian" or the "bookkeeper," describing how students will come to her to get their books despite having a minimal and limited classroom library. Stating, "I'm the only [book] access they have. We don't have a librarian. The library up the street is closed. I'm the bookkeeper, I'm the librarian, I'm the purchaser." In this way, Ms. Early expressed a particular role of protector for her students, conveying that without her, students would have minimal access to books.

In addition to increasing book access through the mobile library program and book mobile experiences, the participating teacher indicated a goal of having targeted books that reflected her students' reading levels. As noted in a preliminary interview, the teacher participant described her students' reading habits and abilities as "low". On average, the teacher participant's sixth grade ELA students ranged in reading levels between first and fifth grade, including English Language Learners (ELL) and students in the Pre-Advanced Placement (PreAP) class. One identified problem was that the books many of her students wanted to read were too challenging for their reading levels.

Ms. Early shared during one interview that she grew up in a similar low-income neighborhood as her students. As a self-identified African American female, she expressed concern around her students' inequitable literacy access and felt they deserved more. The participating teacher communicated that her experience with reading was considered an opportunity, allowing her to broaden her access to academics in a significant way. It was noted that much of the reason Ms. Early identified as a reader is due to reading books with characters and authors that looked like her. She stated, "I think kids can start loving to read like I did cause when I first started reading, I didn't see any people like me in books. Once I got into middle school, I was introduced to you know 'inappropriate books.' " To the participating teacher, the inclusion of diverse texts and authors of color was considered a necessity as an intentional tool to engage her students as readers. "My students need more novels that represent their demographic...there's not necessarily a lot of 'good books' that my kids can see within themselves," noting the lack of available published texts that include BIPOC characters, authors, or stories across all reading levels.

Executing the Intervention

Even though Ms. Early had envisioned very specific outcomes for the mobile library programming, she had a hands-off response during the experience and post-experience. Frequently throughout the planning sessions, Ms. Early would mention to Sarah "it would be nice if…" or "I'd like to see…" suggesting the duty and responsibility to carry out the intervention solely rested on the shoulders of the mobile library staff or the researchers. During both mobile library and bookmobile check-out experiences, Ms. Early stood back and engaged very little with the public library staff. Despite having been involved in all communication with the public library, Ms. Early only communicated her frustrations through Sarah and not directly with the public library staff.

During her post-intervention interview, Ms. Early expressed disappointment and concern around the setup and quality of books made available for students. While the public library staff responded to the initial request to include sets of text that ranged in genre interest (according to a reading interest inventory given to Ms. Early's students) and appropriate reading level of students, her initial reaction was frustration and disappointment. According to Ms. Early, she struggled to see books that she felt she had requested that represented her students' culture, race, and ethnic backgrounds. She stated, "They [book mobile] had books about *Donald Trump,* I'm sitting here like, ' I teach at a minority school, with Hispanic kids and African American kids.

Why is there a book about Trump in here? I think that it felt like some of those books were just pulled and just slapped up there without considering my demographic of students".

Ms. Early appeared very aware of the aesthetics and the message some of the books may have sent to her students. "When they brought a whole cart of flat, small books, I was like, 'okay so where are these graphic novels at?' Where is what I was asking for?". Even though a wide range of books were provided that included shorter, lower-level texts, Ms. Early appeared very aware of her students' perceptions and their own reading identities. She mentioned in one interview, "I just want my kids to feel important, not dismissed." suggesting a protective stance for the benefit of her students. Ms. Early explained as a result of the book selection, she did not bring her most advanced readers in her PreAP class to the book mobile stating "I didn't even bring my PreAP kids down because I felt like it was not worth it for them. I did not want their intelligence to be insulted [by] bringing out a full cart of small thin books. That's not how I operate."

After two mobile library experiences, Ms. Early reflected on, not just her own experience and expectations, but the actions and responses of her students. While she expressed disappointment and frustration by the materials and programs supplied by the mobile library staff, these reactions appeared to contrast to the observed student experience. During the bookmobile library check out, it was revealed that for many of the students, this event was their first time checking out a book from a library. When asked to reflect on her students' experiences Ms. Early noted, "I think it was a different and new experience for them" and described the ways students discussed their chosen books, showing off titles, and making predictions on what their book would be about. It was evident that while the selection of books on the bookmobile did not match the participating teacher's expectations, there was enough selection for students to find 2-3 books to check out that matched their interests on topic, genre, or author. The participating teacher noted, ""I think that also there were some gems that my students were able to find that kind of fit them." and shared the ways she helped guide students towards making book selection choices that reflected their reading abilities.

Navigating Teacher's Hidden Roles and Perceptions

The planning stage of the RPP provided an opportunity for the researcher and the participating teacher to exchange ideas of what could potentially take shape within the mobile library program experience. Sarah held preliminary meetings with Ms. Early and her administrators to discuss potential program outcomes and school-wide goals with the public library. While the overarching goal of the RPP was to provide book access and reading experiences directly for Ms. Early's students, it was also revealed the teacher's explicit goals were accompanied by implicit idealized aims which became clear during post-interviews.

Ms. Early viewed this mobile library experience as a truly unique and special opportunity for her students. Early on in the process, Sarah spent time collaborating with Ms. Early asking specific questions to address students' needs. Ms. Early described some of the inequities of services dispersed across the school district, explaining, "People talk about the academic gaps, but they fail to talk openly about the wealth gaps that we have within the district as well. You can see the different gaps at schools. We do not have the same resources." During communication with the

public library staff, Sarah communicated some of the specific resource gaps and Ms. Early's specific requests for diverse texts within her students' reading levels. To Ms. Early and her school administrator, this RPP aimed to establish a long-term relationship between the school and the public library to provide continuous and ongoing literacy services.

As a result, Ms. Early expressed she wanted to get the most out of this experience, to make it as special as possible for the benefit of her students despite desiring an unlikely outcome. An example of this was her explicit request to bring in an author of color to speak to the students about writing and reading. During planning meetings, Sarah shared the public library's catalog of program offerings to help determine how the bookmobile might best provide classroom support; these offerings did not have the capacity to provide experiences with authors. The participating teacher explained, "It'd be cool if they brought in an author...And then the author could read or read a selection from there or an excerpt from their book and the kids could have a conversation about it and ask the author questions." Ms. Early's idea suggested she had idealized and hopeful expectations for the mobile library program beyond our agreed RPP goals, although Sarah suggested these requests might be challenging to meet. These implicit expectations also skewed Ms. Early's response and reaction to the mobile library experiences. After the bookmobile arrived at the school, Ms. Early expressed disappointment in the vehicle that arrived stating, "I was a little underwhelmed...you know when you say a bus is going to come, you expect a BUS. I didn't expect the actual van, but a little van". During Sarah's observations, the public library provided the services, materials, and staff that were agreed upon during planning and communication.

During the bookmobile visit, Sarah observed and took extensive field notes on Ms. Early's interactions, student responses, and bookmobile offerings. Students displayed excitement as they jumped into the bookmobile and selected stacks of books to check out. When students were not on the bookmobile, they clustered together in circles sharing their checked-out titles saying, "I wonder what this will be about?". Ms. Early acknowledged that her expectations and students' experiences differed. "Although it was not up to my expectations, it was up to theirs. I guess they don't see the bigger picture, they see what they like, they get it, they go." She further explained, "I am a bigger picture person and I always think if things could happen a lot better, but I think my kids are always just satisfied with what they have. And I don't want them to just be satisfied, I want them to want more....They are always just happy to have something. I want more for them. I just want it to be better because I know they deserve better." Ms. Early's comments revealed the disconnect between her implicit hopes for her students and her students' experiences during the bookmobile visit.

Discussion

Participant's Perceptions of Teacher Role

An analysis of the teacher's account of the day shows a mismatch between her expectations and the "curriculum" she received. Throughout her reflection of the day, she used emotive words to describe how her students felt, despite evidence showing something different. For instance, the teacher asserted that her students felt dismissed, but the library representatives helped her

students check out multiple books that day. She also stated phrases like, "Where is what I was asking for?" suggesting that she may have been the one who felt dismissed.

After the experience, the teacher expressed that she felt this was a "good lesson gone to waste" and took away from the students' learning time because the library representatives did not communicate to her what they would be doing with the students. When probed about what she could have done to help improve the experience, the teacher could not articulate exactly what she did not appreciate about the mobile library days or what she could do to help the experience align with her expectations but did point to many things she wished the library had done differently.

Although the teacher began the RPP with the desire to provide her students with richer experiences with books, she had trouble articulating what she wanted that experience to look like; however, she was able to identify that the services provided did not meet her expectations. It also appears that the teacher wanted to exert some level of control over the experience but struggled to pinpoint how her role could be leveraged to make the experience more meaningful for her students. Instead, she continued to offer ways that other members of the partnership could improve their participation in the process. Taking a step back from content creation, collaboration, and implementation is indicative of a larger culture that removes teachers out of the curriculum making process and relinquishes their agency (Timberlake, et. al. 2017).

Power Dynamics Beyond Mutual Expectations

Simply agreeing on mutual goals or outcomes is not enough to carry a sustaining and working relationship between researchers and participating teachers. It was found that mutually stated goals need to be explicitly communicated and revisited throughout the partnership. Varied beliefs, priorities, and access points of knowledge can all affect the roles, expectations, and agency for the RPP. Our findings suggest that while the RPP framework centers on establishing a long-term relationship between researchers and educators, there also needs to be a consideration of the power dynamics at play within the relationship. While researchers and educators may not be aware these dynamics exist and impact the way interactions take place within RPP, it is important that educators are given agency and lateral access to advocate and problem solve throughout an RPP project.

While power dynamics were not explicitly expressed, they emerged in the ways Ms. Early expressed her expectations for the mobile library project in contrast to her reaction after the first mobile library visit. The RPP provided an opportunity for Ms. Early to create an experience-based curriculum and to actualize the common goal of increased book access for students. Once that goal was established, Sarah and the library representatives received limited input from the teacher during the planning stages. Ms. Early's choice to take on a minimal role in the planning stage of the experience may provide evidence that she did not see herself as the maker of curriculum and instead, treated Sarah as her curriculum specialist, relegating herself to the role of receiver of the curriculum (Schwab, 1979). Ms. Early was able to articulate requests that embody culturally responsive pedagogy, but only did so through Sarah. It is important to note that this may have been a consequence of the researcher's prior role as the participant's writing coach.

Many of the expectations for Ms. Early were quite personal and reflected her own personal experiences, backgrounds, and dedication to providing what is best for her students.

Effect on Teacher Agency: Making Idealized Goals Realities

Goals and outcomes within RPPs need to reflect a problem or situation of a school or educational environment directly (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013). Including educators intentionally for the planning and development of a RPP is one way to mitigate idealized assumptions or expectations. In this way, all parties within a RPP can be informed contributors towards the goals of the project. This often requires more time and energy; however, part of relationship building is to make the language of expectations common and known across discourses. This includes defining terms by what they mean and look like in commonly understood language. Along with building relationships, leveraging this type of inclusive approach subdues power dynamics, making understanding, processes, and goals more accessible.

On the day of the first mobile library visit, Ms. Early expressed that she felt underwhelmed by the book mobile, stating that she expected a bus, not a van; bigger texts; and books that reflected the cultural backgrounds of her students. Her expectation that the experience would represent a polished and fully aligned curriculum left the teacher wanting more from external agents and did not translate to self-reflection and adaptations. Ms. Early ultimately had difficulty adapting her perception of what would be provided to the reality of what was possible. This was evidenced in the ways she attempted to control how her students engaged with the books provided by the library as Ms. Early removed books from students that she deemed too difficult, assumed others were below their reading level, expressed that the selection was at odds with her students' racial identities, and did not speak with the library representatives to ask for the types of books she was looking for. Had these idealized goals been expressed and language for expectations been more clearly defined, Ms. Early's idealized goals could be more realistically realized or more clearly understood by others.

In this way, communication with RPP becomes less about informing and more about a dialogue in order to co-construct expectations and actions. The use of education jargon within schools can be interpreted differently and therefore, researchers need to make sure that language across the RPP is agreed and co-constructed. During this study, Sarah took on a mediating role to schedule and coordinate mobile library programming and book mobile visits with the school. While Ms. Early was included on all written forms of communication, a consistent message was not always conveyed due to a rotating public library staff coverage. This resulted in misunderstandings and unclear directives especially when it came to book selection and availability for bookmobile checkout for students.

Building a relationship between researchers and educators only *begins* with finding mutual expectations and also needs to continue throughout a RPP by openly inviting educators and schools in the communication, planning, execution, and reflective components in order to neutralize power dynamic present (Penuel, 2017). Identifying positionality should not only take place from the researcher's perspective, but teachers also need to be invited to consider their

positionality within a RPP as a key way to make perceptions, assumptions, and hidden expectations clearer.

Further Considerations

Findings from this study is a call for researchers to take seriously the considerations for planning and executing a RPP with schools or educators. Due to the hierarchy found within schools, educators are often left to view themselves as having very little power or expertise to challenge or question policy plans or intervention programs. As a result, it is common for educators to rely on the expertise and knowledge of others to provide what they need rather than advocating their own agency and autonomy. In order for RPPs to establish long term relationships between researchers and educators, considerations for communication, agency, and co-construction throughout the project need to be included.

By situating educators as curriculum makers, lateral positions and roles within RPPs can be established. What still remains unknown is how relationships and roles ebb and flow throughout the duration of a study. Further considerations might be needed to examine the impact of how the beginning planning stages of a RPP can take shape when both researchers and educators approach a potential project with equal ownership for problems, solutions, and expectations.

Conclusion and Implications

A RPP requires the teacher to take on a curriculum specialist role, which may be incompatible with teachers' own perceptions of their profession. Therefore, it becomes important to note what impacts these perceptions, including their teacher preparation, district and school environments, and teaching beliefs. In the present study, the researchers found that while the teacher was eager to initiate the RPP mobile library program she was hesitant to take on ownership for the activities or outcomes. Establishing a successful RPP means establishing not just common goals or outcomes but creating shared language, expectations, and roles. In this way, it is vital that researchers are cognizant of the socio-political structures that often impact collaboration and communication with teachers in order to successfully address the educational issues they are attempting to resolve.

Currently, most RPPs take on more formal affiliations, through more complex funding structures and larger entities at play (e.g., universities, citywide institutions, districts). Even within this format, Resnick and Kazemi (2019) argue that RPPs involve negotiating new forms of participation, for which there are "no scripts to follow" (p. 2). While there are examples of successful RPPs within this structure, we, the researchers, argue that there needs to be additional work done within smaller, more personable relationships with individual teachers. To date, there are few RPPs that align in this way and additional studies need to address how relationships, connections, and mutual objectives can take place within smaller RPPs. To this aim, future research would involve exploring and creating a framework for how researchers can identify and navigate teachers' hidden roles and perceptions. Using critical approaches to engage dialogue between researchers and educators can help future RPP to be more mindful to offer lateral roles and address bias or positionality.

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YOUTH-LED RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL ACTION: A COMMUNITY COLLABORATES

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Abstract

This article offers a school-based Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) project as a case study for examining community engagement in the field of literacy. This telling case reflects the shared commitments of a school, a university, and a community organization to partner with the community through a participatory action research project. Drawing on the authors' individual and collective experiences with this project, we share what we learned about literacy in and through this community engagement. The authors found that community-engaged and community-focused projects like the one presented in this article create a dynamic platform for enhancing and developing participants' literacies. The authors share three of the key characteristics—collaborative, real, and messy—of the literacies that surfaced in this work.

Keywords: Youth Participatory Action Research, community engagement, literacy, civic engagement, school-university partnership

Youth-Led Research for Social Action: A Community Collaborates

It started, as many things do in this era, with social media. I saw a request for someone to lead a book club at the Norma Herr Women's Shelter in Cleveland. I was curious. This shelter was close to the new high school where I would be a founding teacher, and across the street from the newly redesigned K-8 campus of our school. When I start at a new school, I look to learn about the school community and, as an English teacher, a book club seemed like the perfect opportunity. I was also learning about Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) from Molly, our new school's professor-in-residence. Although I was excited about the potential of YPAR for

high school students and it resonated with my pedagogical beliefs, I didn't have a firm grasp of it at this point. —Charles, Campus International High School

It was the summer of 2017, and I just started as professor-in-residence at Campus International High School, a partner school with my university. Given my interest in action research and youth civic engagement, I proposed a YPAR project for incoming 9th graders. Although I didn't have extensive experience designing school based YPAR or facilitating YPAR with 100 adolescents at a time, I had support from the administration and enthusiasm from the teachers. I was not sure how this project would unfold or how the community at large would respond, but when Charles contacted me, curious to see if there was a YPAR connection with this local organization and women's shelter, I was reassured about the potential of this work. --Molly, Cleveland State University

In 2017, Campus District was interested in the highly trafficked area of Payne Avenue. Cleveland State University students traverse it to get to their classes, apartments and athletic fields, hundreds of shelter residents travel the street every day, and hundreds of children from the new PK-8 school on the street walk the street as well. Despite this, the urban landscape left a lot to be desired. At the time, there were no places for people to comfortably sit and there was little that felt welcoming about the street. At Campus District, we saw these challenges as opportunities for members of our community to create place, meet new people, and bring some vibrancy to the area. We imagined a project where neighbors would come together to plan, design, and implement ways to use cultivate a sense of vibrancy along Payne Avenue. This process aimed to build meaningful connections between members of our community and the result will add a sense of identity, an element of comfort, and fun to the neighborhood. --Rachel, Campus District

Engaging the Community through Youth Participatory Action Research

As our local and global communities continue to face deep-rooted and pervasive social inequities and injustices, we, an Associate Professor of Adolescent & Young Adult English Education (Molly), a teacher of high school Language & Literature (Charles), and the Director of Programming and Community Engagement for a community organization (Rachel), approached this work with the belief that educators and community leaders have a responsibility to support young people as they develop their capacity for community and civic engagement and create pathways to confront pressing social issues. In response to far too many incidents related to police brutality, gun violence, deportation, climate change, COVID-19 and more, we have witnessed the power of youth civic participation and the potential of young people's voices to initiate social action. We are committed to making school a place that deliberately fosters student agency around issues in their communities. We believe that this work is most impactful when it takes place in the context of students' local contexts and in collaboration with community stakeholders. In keeping with the theme of this special issue, this article offers a school based YPAR project as a case study for community engagement. This case reflects the shared commitments of a high school, a university, and a community organization who partnered with the community through a participatory action research project. Drawing on our individual and

collective experiences with this project, we will share what we learned about literacy in and through this community engagement.

In the fall of 2017, two of us (Molly & Charles) were part of a school team at Campus International High School (CIHS) that allowed us to put our hopes for youth community engagement into practice. This school team designed and implemented a collection of learning opportunities during the school day that aimed to support youth to raise their voices for social action and change. Drawing on our own pedagogical beliefs and YPAR traditions, this project recognized the significance of working *with* youth and honoring them as knowledge generators. We engaged in this work with the belief that YPAR is a compelling way to support youth agency. In this article we share what happened with the project we hinted at in the opening vignettes to illustrate the potential of YPAR to serve as a vehicle for youth activism and community engagement. This project, referred to as the "Payne Avenue Project", was one of 24 total YPAR projects conducted by 9th graders at CIHS in 2017-2018. The Payne Avenue Project surfaced as a telling case (Mitchell, 1981) of YPAR-in-action because it reflected the kind of active learning and engagement that is possible when young people, teachers, community members, and university researchers commit to community-based, action-oriented work in real-time.

Background and Conceptual Framework

Given our intent to expand youth civic participation in meaningful ways and connect students with their community, we saw YPAR as one way to develop student agency. Given our long-term goal of situating young people as researchers and knowledge generators, our school also saw this YPAR project as year one of what we envisioned as a 4-year progression of research courses. Although there is a growing body of research on YPAR in school settings (Cammarata, 2016; Ozer & Wright 2012; Rubin, Ayala, & Zaal, 2017; Voight & Velez, 2018), we hoped that this work would extend existing frameworks for YPAR in the context of the everyday curriculum for students in urban, public schools.

Consistent with YPAR traditions, the project at the center of this article was grounded in the belief that young people have the capacity to generate knowledge that can generate social change (Cammarata & Fine, 2008; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Mirra et al., 2016). YPAR is grounded in the idea that youth are capable of conducting research and creating new knowledge. YPAR positions young people as deliberate and agentive members of the community. YPAR pedagogies aim to position students as co-researchers and center the perspectives of young people (Irizarry & Brown, 2014) as they examine pressing community issues and discover possible outcomes for improvement (Ozer, Newlan, Douglas & Hubbard, 2013).

Youth-led research in young people's local communities allows them to direct their own learning There is a growing body of the research that documents the ways in which YPAR fosters youth civic engagement, student voice, and research skills (Ozer & Wright, 2012). This work has been documented to increase youth's social, emotional, and cognitive outcomes, foster critical thinking and academic success, and encourage civic participation (Voight & Velez, 2018; Diemer, Voight, & Mark, 2011). Although the growing body of research is helpful for

understanding the value of YPAR and for developing YPAR projects, it does not always tend to the nuances of enacting this work within the institutional context of school.

Drawing on our understandings of YPAR and our knowledge of the long-standing requirement of the high school "research paper," we saw youth-led action research as an alternative to high school research as we typically know it. For the two of us working in the high school, YPAR, as a method and a framework, could refresh the time-honored high school research project and paper (Buckley-Marudas & Ellenbogen, 2017). Typically, the high school research paper requires students to demonstrate their research and writing skills. The most common outcome is a written paper that is submitted to the teacher. We were interested in expanding the ways in which the research could be conducted and the range of formats for the final outcomes. Central elements of YPAR, whether in-school or out-of-school, are *research* and *action*. As a result, we hoped to see fewer students focus on some of the typical topics (e.g., medical marijuana, the death penalty, using animals for product testing) for YPAR projects. Given the explicit focus on engaging all steps of the action research cycle, we hoped that we would avoid the common framing of research as a kind of "reporting back" on students' reading and review of existing literature and previously published reports.

This project was also grounded in a commitment to the democratization of the urban planning process and conceptualizations of space and place. Specifically, our work was informed by the concept of "creative placemaking" (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). Place has a unique capacity to bring people together, yet it also has a unique capacity to divide people. A challenge to improving community engagement is creating a sense of belonging within a space, both in terms of the physical characteristics as well as the kinds of habitual practices and routines that are associated with or provided by a space. Creative placemaking is a process that brings together a range and variation of community members and stakeholders to strategically and thoughtfully redesign a neighborhood, street or other physical space. According to Markusen and Gadwa (2010), "Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired." For Campus District, a core principle of the Payne Avenue Project was the democratization of the urban planning process. We hoped that by helping students understand how our built environment is created, we could embolden them to have a say in creating inclusive places that reflect their ideas. A key to this was learning the language of cities—what is the story of a vacant building? A broken sidewalk? A street with no trees? Conversely, what is the story of a public mural? A well-lit roadway? A park bench? Learning and reflecting on the language of cities and the stories that existing built environments tell about cities would be part of this project.

This project was guided by several questions. We wondered: 1. What happens when adolescents are asked to conduct research for action in their communities? 2. What literacies are developed and/or expanded in the process? 3. What are the limitations and possibilities of YPAR in school?

Method

The Research Context

This inquiry took place in multiple physical contexts, including the high school and local community centers and was built around an existing school curriculum based on Youth Participatory Action Research.

School Context: Campus International High School

Campus International High School, a public, open admission high school in Cleveland, opened its doors in the fall of 2017 to a class of 100 9th graders. CIHS was designed as an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. A key component of all IB schools is an action-oriented project, referred to as the Community Project. Motivated by a growing body of research that documents the value of Youth Participatory Action Research for fostering youth civic engagement, research skill development, and voice (Cammarata & Fine, 2008; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Mirra, Garcia, Morrell, 2016; Ozer & Wright 2012), Molly proposed the idea of a school-based YPAR project to the incoming CIHS principal in May 2017. Molly proposed the project to extend youth action beyond the required Community Project and as a way to build a strong culture of research in the new school. The principal offered a resounding "yes."

The Community Context: Campus District & Payne Avenue

A core principle of the Payne Avenue Project for Campus District was the democratization of the urban planning process. Thus, a goal of this project for both Campus District and CIHS was to engage young people in thinking about the built environments that we use and that surround us and to create room for them to contribute to the development of the existing built environment on Payne Avenue. Of course, the stories of the built environment are only one part of the language of cities. The other part is the stories of the people. From an organizational perspective we had a K-8th grade school, serving over 700 students daily, sitting across the street from the largest women's homeless shelter in Ohio, serving 250 women daily. A center of education and a center of healing, separated by Payne Avenue. From an urban planning lens, youth and individuals experiencing homelessness share similar traits—transient populations whose voices are often overlooked when it comes to designing and creating spaces they utilize. We felt that not only could they learn a lot from one another but that by simply creating the occasion to meet and talk, we could reinforce the humanity and value of each person's opinions. And this learning—uncovering how we are more similar than we are different—was crucial to the success of the project. The idea to conclude the first major phase of this project with film production and video editing felt like icing on the cake—a way to create multiple entry points for students interested in the project and expand their storytelling toolkit. In addition to the excitement and satisfaction that came with producing and editing the film, storying this space forced us to engage in yet another "reading" of Payne Avenue.

The Curricular Context: School-based YPAR

In the summer of 2017, Molly developed a basic framework and overarching timeline for what the YPAR curriculum would look like at CIHS. Building on her existing commitments to critical literacy, critical inquiry, and adolescent literacies, Molly aimed to design a curriculum that was structured enough for teachers and students who were new to this research tradition, yet flexible enough to accommodate the range of topics students would identity and the various possible

actions that would surface from students' research. Molly borrowed heavily from the resources developed and shared online by the YPAR Hub at University of California Berkeley (http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/).

Working in small groups of two to five students, 9th graders would conduct original research to address a specific community issue that they identified as important. To be successful, students needed to complete all steps of the action research process from developing research questions to collecting and analyzing original data and presenting research findings to taking steps to address their issue. Given the explicit focus on community issues, this work would naturally include some investigation of power, class, and/or bias.

During the first quarter of the school year, students developed research questions to address an issue they identified. By the end of the first quarter, students started to conduct research on the questions they had developed. Several groups pursued questions about bullying and school lunch. Other groups pursued questions related to violence, stress factors for teens, teens' understandings of suicide, and the relationships between teaching styles and interest in school. The group at the center of this article began with the question, "How does homelessness affect children in Cleveland?" They had a specific interest in understanding the experiences of displaced youth who are in high school. As a community, all members or the school community were responsible for thinking about connections that might open avenues for action for students. When learning of this group's interest, Charles connected this group to Rachel. Like many YPAR projects, the group's focus and research question evolved as they became more closely connected to community members and stakeholders, as well as the nuances of the immediate community issue. During the month of February, Campus District and CIHS students worked together with shelter residents to talk about design principles and improvements that could be made on Payne Avenue. The final product of this phase would be a fundraising video about what they learned to raise funds for the desired changes. A local Cleveland film company, Purple Films (https://www.purple-films.com/), agreed to support students, Campus District, and the school to produce the final video. Five distinct meetings with youth and different stakeholders took place. We will draw on some of the interactions, experiences, and learnings from the meetings in the following sections. Briefly, the meetings stretched from late January through March and took place at various locations including the high school campus, lower school campus, and a local community center.

Results

Exploring the Literacies of Community Engagement through YPAR

As we reflected on our experiences in implementing school-based YPAR, generally, and the Payne Avenue Project, specifically, several ideas emerged that helped us characterize the literacies that were required and/or developed during this community-engaged work. What we found deepened our understandings of literacy as it relates to meaningful and impactful community engagement and illuminated the ways in which different kinds of community partnerships and interactions with different stakeholder groups extended all participants' evolving literacy practices. Ultimately, our work builds on the idea that community partnership

work is a dynamic platform for literacy learning. Given our focus on thinking about the role and possibility of community-engaged work as part of the everyday work and curriculum in schools, this dynamic platform dramatically revised what most educators have come to see or define as "typical" high school research and the "research paper". The literacies we found were not linear and they did not map perfectly onto a specific, pre-determined set of standards.

We came to characterize the literacies we observed as *collaborative*, *real*, and *messy*. As we looked back on the project, we recognized how this kind of community engagement and partnership expanded traditional notions of *who* facilitates literacy teaching and *where* literacy teaching takes place. Contrary to the idea that literacy learning is something that happens strictly in school, this case revealed literacy learning as a series of conversations, meetings, and experiences with various people. Literacy learning took place in both in-school and out-of-school spaces, and it unfolded with people of different ages, backgrounds, roles, and social positions. This collection of literacies helped us develop a clearer understanding of the potential of community engagement in the field of literacy but also a more expansive framework for our evolving school based YPAR pedagogy.

Collaborative

Although it was not necessarily surprising to find that community-engaged literacies were collaborative, this work illuminated some of the nuances of what collaborative literacies looked like in the context of this community-school-university partnership project. Furthermore, we gained new insight on was required to cultivate, support, and sustain literacies that were collaborative. One component of this collaborative element of literacy was that it was rooted in and emerged from deliberate and thoughtful connections between people and groups with some shared interest. At times this connection was tied to the Payne Avenue project, yet at other times it was tied to broader shared interests in the community.

For example, in the case of the Payne Avenue project, the collaboration started well before the actual project launched when Rachel, representing Campus District, guided Charles on a tour of the CIHS neighborhood. Campus District, a local community organization in Cleveland is described as a "connecting agent." Later, Rachel contacted Charles and asked if some members of the school community wanted to participate in what was called a visioning project for Payne Avenue, particularly the section of this street that houses the shelter for women, where Charles volunteered, and the site of the high school's K-8 campus. Molly and Charles learned that one of Campus District's end goals with this project was to produce a fundraising video to raise money to support the costs associated with the future beautification of this section of the street. Charles agreed on one condition: he didn't want our students used as cute props to help raise money, but then cast aside once the work began. Rachel agreed.

Although Molly and Charles were connected to the high school, it made sense to include students from the lower school. The K-8 building is located right on Payne Avenue and across from the shelter. We also hoped that any 8th graders involved in the project would become YPAR leaders when they arrived at the high school. Charles reached out to the lower school campus and learned that several 8th graders had shown interest in neighborhood improvement projects.

Rachel connected with the women's shelter to invite interested residents to join the project. From there, a series of different meetings were arranged.

The first meeting was scheduled for late January of 2018. This meeting took place early one morning at the high school. Participants included members from the lower school, upper school, CIHS, CSU, and Campus District. This meeting was designed to talk through many of the logistical details of the project, the goals of the upcoming meetings with students and residents from the shelter, permissions that were required for the field trips and media release, and preliminary visioning for the fundraising video.

The second meeting also took place in late January 2018. This second meeting brought together high school students and teachers, lower school students and teachers, CSU professors- in-residence and Campus District. Image 1 shows the written agenda for this second meeting.

Image 1

Agenda for January 25 meeting

Agenda for Thursday, 1/25 session with CIS students

"Everyone has the right to live in a great place, more importantly everyone has the right to make the place where they already live great." -Fred Kent, Project for Public Spaces

8:30am-10:45am
Introductions (8:30 am)
- Share with us a space you like to go that is outside?
- Explain that Campus District is an organization whose purpose to make our neighborhood the best it can possibly be
  - Through businesses
  - Residents
  - Changing streets
  - Helping neighbors meet one another and understand one another

Design
What is the project?
- We are creating a short video about Payne Avenue and how we can make it a more fun, comfortable, safe, and exciting place to live/work/study. And why it is important to do so.
  - We'll get together twice. Today is a planning session. We'll spend the first hour or so today discussing how we feel about Payne Ave and spending some time exploring Payne. We'll also capture some footage today!
  - During our next session we will interview and discuss Payne avenue with several women who live at the Norma Herr women's homeless shelter. Just like you have a unique perspective on the neighborhood/ they will too! We'll spend the second hour today brainstorming the questions we can ask our interviewees and what kind of footage we will need.
- *How can a street be comfortable? How can it be fun? How can a street be safe?*
- **Exercise:** Identify things you like and don't like about Denver Street and Carnegie (in small groups)

Walking Tour of Payne (9:15-9:45)
- Hand out clip boards with maps and have students take notes about things they like/ don't like. Why that might be. What a space makes them feel. Who uses Payne Ave.

Reflection (9:45- 10:15) as a full group
- What did everyone notice?
- How can we improve?

Questions (10:15-10:45)
- What questions can we ask the Norma Herr residents? (perhaps short brainstorming in small groups)
- What questions do students have for me about the shelter/homelessness. Talk about how all people who use the street should contribute to how it looks.

The students received training on how to use video equipment from the CSU professor-in-residence at the lower school, learned strategies for conducting focus groups and interviews, and brainstormed ideas that could serve as a core message for this project, all of which are key skills for any YPAR project. During this meeting, Rachel facilitated a series of conversations with the

students and teachers that were designed to get all of us thinking about what kinds of features characterize places that we find comfortable, inviting, or welcoming. Together, we generated a long list of key elements.

During this meeting, all of us went outside to conduct field observations of Payne Avenue. In small groups, we walked up and down both sides of the street, with clipboards and pens, stopping to talk about and document what we noticed. What did we see? What activities were taking place? Who was on the street? We also took note of things we did not notice. To support students' skill development with videography, three students practiced using the camera with a faculty member. Image 2 and Image 3 offer two pictures that were taken as students, teachers, and professors conducted field observations on Payne Avenue.

Image 2

Students, teachers, and professors explore Payne Avenue, taking notes on what they observed

This second in-person meeting was a critical step for creating room to build a spirit of collaboration between different groups. Rachel deliberately made space during this meeting to engage all of us, students, teachers, professors-in-residence, to start learning and using the language of cities. In order to co-create a future space, we had to find ways to talk about what we did see. The field observations would allow us to share and talk about our observations and what sense we made of the physical environment. As Rachel reflected, an illustrative memory was during our second meeting when we took a walk through the neighborhood. Rachel shared:

> My group stopped in front of the Norma Herr Women's Center (the women's shelter opposite the lower school campus) as one student noted there was a lot of trash. I prompted the students to think about why there might be a lot of trash in this area. One

offered 'maybe the women at the shelter don't care,' another 'maybe people are throwing trash out of their car windows,' and finally someone shouted—looking side to side, searching the street—'there are no trash cans!'

Image 3

Students stop and observe the front entrance of the women's shelter.

The collaborative was strengthened by Rachel's knowledge of urban planning approaches, especially her capacity to engage in asset-based urban planning and design. In and through the process of engaging, collaboratively, in assessing the physical environment, we were able to consider some new perspectives and alternative ways of seeing. This involves creating spaces where individuals with different social identities and different ways of reading the world are able to share different points of view. As illustrated in the example above, the time built in for collaborative work and sharing observations allowed the observation about the absence of any trash cans to be voiced.

After the focus group and observation experiences, we came back together as a whole group. We took turns sharing our impressions of the street and ideas for ways to improve it. As illustrated in Image 4, we collected a list of things that we might add to the built environment.

Image 4

The collaboratively generated list of ideas about what might be added to this physical environment
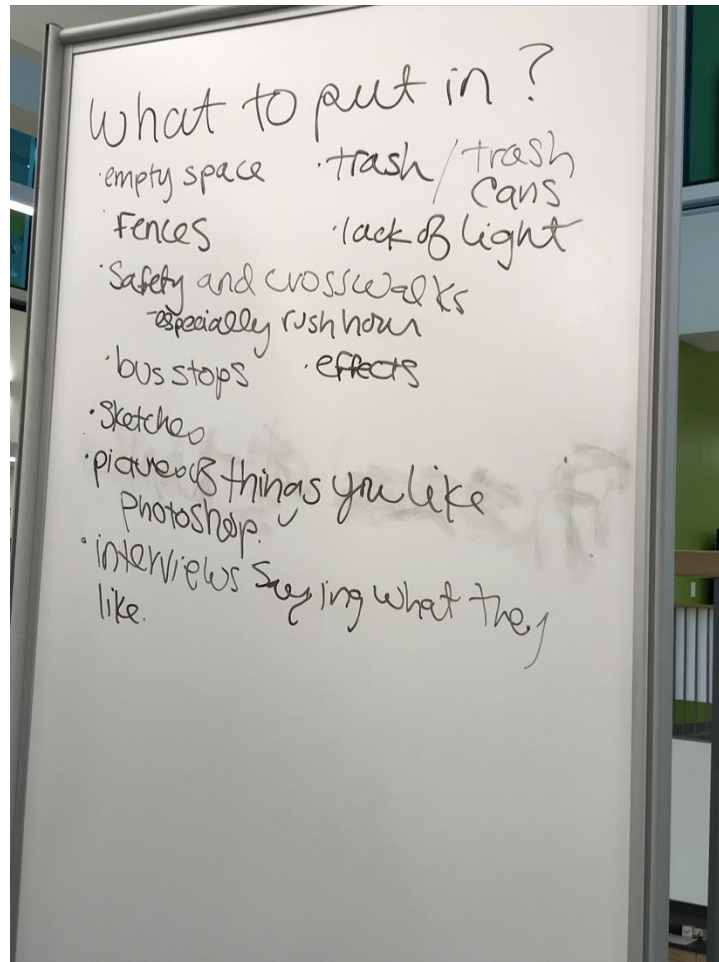
Together, we developed questions for the interviews and focus groups focused on vision and preferences for the street that would happen in the upcoming meeting with shelter guests. We also refined our project's core focus and brainstormed what kind of material we needed to capture in order to represent this project in video format. Although the project had evolved from their initial question, the high schoolers had become more invested as a result of the ongoing collaboration and developing relationships to other Payne Avenue stakeholders. One high school student shared his excitement. "I want to hear their stories," he said. This student, along with his peers, brought a sincere interest in understanding shelter guests' stories. It was important to hear his interest in stories, because news media outlets often report information by the numbers, thereby removing the human stories and the lived experiences. Charles's existing relationships and connections contributed to the project because he encouraged one of the women who came to his book club to be involved. Charles's personal invitation and connection made a potentially generic invitation much more personal. She joined the project.

Real

The literacies that surfaced in and through this kind of community-engagement could also be characterized as "real." In contrast to the idea of "doing" research by analyzing material from the library or online sources, students gathered original data by engaging with people in the

community. This work happened in real time and addressed current and immediate problems in our community. The email referenced in the opening vignette was a catalyst for this project, but it was born out of actual issues in our community that everyone in the project identified with and/or cared about in some way. In the same email exchange that is referenced in the opening vignette, Charles wrote the following to Molly:
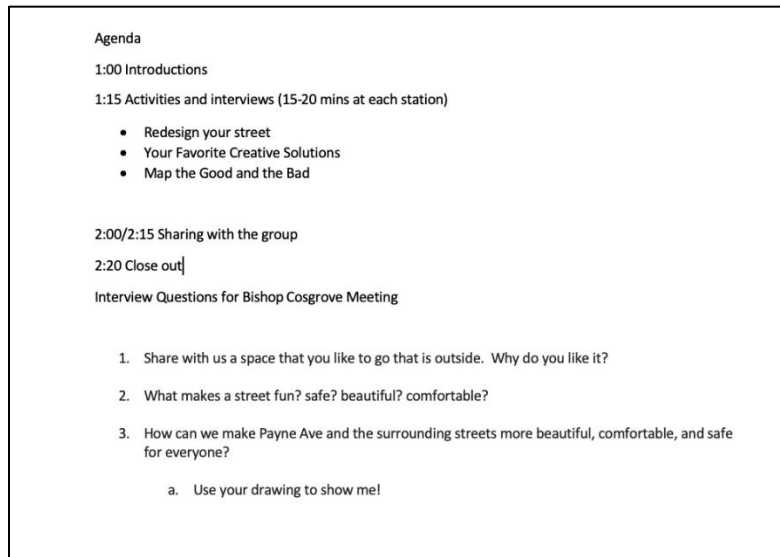
> Here's what I learned ---There are two homeless shelters in our district. (The women's shelter is right across from the new K-8 building.) It will be a challenge to do any work with them because there are sexual offenders among the residents. That said, Bobbi [then the director of Campus District] said, there are possibly some opportunities for students while the residents are out of the building, including landscaping, etc. This did raise an issue that the district is struggling with, one that could be a topic for our students: What options are there for the homeless during the day? There has been talk of a park, but it hasn't gone far. (Personal communication, July 4, 2017).

This project responded to an authentic question facing displaced residents in Cleveland: "What options are there for the homeless during the day?" Before students could answer this question, they needed to understand the existing options and they needed to talk directly with residents about desirable options. Students conducted their own observations of the street and designed interview questions for shelter residents. It was determined that if we wanted to improve Payne Avenue, we needed to meet in person. It was also determined that we needed input from all the residents on the street, especially residents who are there after the school day ends. In the process of information gathering and analysis, the research came to life: numbers and statistics were no longer disconnected or anonymous.

In response to the sense of urgency of the issues and what was understood to be a real and immediate need, this group agreed on a next meeting. This meeting took place at a neutral site. On a usual winter day in Cleveland (cold, gray, and snowy), an unusual combination of people (Norma Herr residents, CIHS students and teachers, CSU faculty, and Campus District employees) gathered at a local community center after lunch. The goal was to have a collaborative conversation about how to improve the street we shared. Image 5 illustrates the agenda that was planned for the meeting.

Image 5

Agenda for Meeting #3 at a neutral site with shelter residents, students, teachers, and professors

Agenda

1:00 Introductions

1:15 Activities and interviews (15-20 mins at each station)

- Redesign your street
- Your Favorite Creative Solutions
- Map the Good and the Bad

2:00/2:15 Sharing with the group

2:20 Close out

Interview Questions for Bishop Cosgrove Meeting

1. Share with us a space that you like to go to that is outside. Why do you like it?

2. What makes a street fun? safe? beautiful? comfortable?

3. How can we make Payne Ave and the surrounding streets more beautiful, comfortable, and safe for everyone?

   a. Use your drawing to show me!

Not surprisingly, given each group's inexperience with each other, the presence of video cameras, and a few adults in the background, things started slowly. The interviews that students led with shelter residents took place on one side of the room. Although the interviews generated some important individual ideas, more dynamic interactions happened, as they often do, in the more informal conversations at the focus group tables as the women and students arranged, discussed, rearranged, and debated ways in which Payne Avenue could be more attractive and more useful for the residents of the shelter, CIHS students, and the CSU students who all use it on a regular basis. Drawing on her urban planning experience and offering a vision of data collection for YPAR projects, Rachel brought tangible props. She had enlarged photographs of Payne Avenue as it currently stands, from different angles. She also had printed images of things like a coffee shop or a park bench that she thought people might like to see on the street to facilitate the focus group work. There were markers, crayons, scissors, and pencils available at every table to imagine and craft a new vision for the street. The students and the women had a clear task: work together to create images of their ideal or preferred street. That broke the ice.

The task not only generated substantive, in-the-moment conversations around the topic of street improvement, but also in-depth dialogue about one another's lives. What we think about dogs and other animals, favorite school subjects, and hobbies all came up naturally during the conversation at one table. Opinions on the need for bike lanes, trees, parking lots, and street signs shed insight on participants' perspectives on community. As seen in Image 6, "Students and shelter guests participate in a working focus group," tables produced several visual diagrams of their ideal streets by the end of the focus group session. The once blank images of the street were now enhanced by benches, trash cans, streetlights, bike lanes, pedestrian crossing signs, trees, clearly defined parks and more. Students were engaged in the work. Whether talking in the small groups, facilitating the interviews, or managing the video cameras, we observed that students took ownership over the material and felt responsible for the results.

Image 6

Students and shelter guests participate in a working focus group

In addition to the focus groups, students conducted the formal interviews during this meeting. Drawing on the collection of semi-structured questions, two students facilitated the interviews, and two students managed the video cameras. After the interviews, the entire group gathered for a whole group conversation. During this time, some shared the most interesting ideas that had surfaced during the working focus group, and others talked about their enthusiasm for this project. One shelter resident took a few minutes to share her opinions on the topic of street improvement and beautification, some of which stood in stark contrast to the ideas that had come earlier from other residents.

After the large group meeting, there were two final meetings, one at the upper school and one at the lower school, which focused on film production and editing. The final two meetings were facilitated by a local film studio, Purple Films, in Cleveland that agreed to help produce the piece. Part of this meeting involved an introduction to film production, including a mini lesson on the stages of pre-production, production, and post-production. The primary part of this meeting was workshopping and editing what would become the published fundraising video. We talked through the message and the extent to which it was clearly communicated. We talked about layout, tone, and music and image placement. What was nearly 6 hours of tape was ultimately reduced to three minutes. Students had many opinions about the music that was used and writing a storyline that started with a more depressed tone and became lighter as the video progressed towards an improved street. The film studio shared all the raw material with us so we could practice editing film and crafting a storyline. We all quickly understood how much effort it takes to move from hours of footage to a coherent, powerful video of roughly two minutes. Students also understood how media, including the images and videos we see on social media and cable channels, narrate and create the stories that we see. They understood the power of film production and video editing in a new way as they decided what tone to set, what words to use, and what images to choose. Ultimately, a final video, filmed entirely by CIHS students, was produced and distributed in order to raise funds for this street improvement project. The video, available through this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrsSfnE2apE was distributed on YouTube, ioby and other social media platforms.

Messy

This work was complex and messy. It was evident that the literacies required for this kind of community-engagement were flexible, responsive, and in-the-moment. Consistent with nearly any participatory action research project or grass roots community organizing, the Payne Avenue project did not proceed in a straight line. From the technical, yet essential, elements of scheduling dates when students and shelter guests could both be present and teaching students some basic skills of interviewing and videotaping to developing a shared understanding of the project's aims and agreeing on goals, this project took a great deal of time and coordination. Dates were rescheduled and some participants missed some sessions. The group had to hear, process, and come to decisions on different ideas and hopes for the space. There was agreement and disagreement on top priorities. Learning how to navigate the non-linear nature of the research process and persevering through setbacks and rescheduled dates was a significant part of this experience. We believe that this is a literacy practice that is essential for nearly all community-engaged, civic-oriented projects.

From the organization of data and identifying research participants to analyzing results, all of us learned first-hand that there is not *one* way to do participatory action research. In our experience, every YPAR project—like Payne Avenue—had a trajectory all its own and students and teachers had to be willing to embrace that trajectory and find ways to support students' projects and cultivate community connections that would be meaningful and authentic to the goals of the project. YPAR cultivated student agency related to civic engagement, but also helped to build specific skills needed to do activist work. The early work to establish a message and a shared vision for the work was critical to this community engagement in that it grounded the group as we navigated the complex, nonlinear pathway. Image 7 shows a picture of the whiteboard with the message that was generated during one of the group brainstorms about the story we hoped to tell and the goals we had for this work.

Image 7

Ideas generated during a group brainstorm about a message that would anchor the project
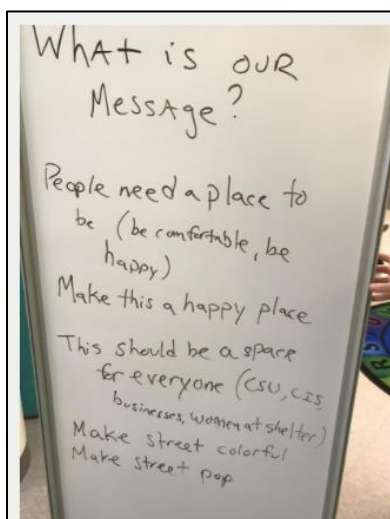
In keeping with one of the central tenets of the action research process, this work was iterative. Although most schools in the United States are not well-suited to embrace the iterative process that is common to YPAR, we housed this work in a formally scheduled class period that functioned as an interdisciplinary research class and advisory period. Although we hope that most of the activities and classes during the school day support students' academic learning *and* social and emotional learning, we found it useful to facilitate YPAR during this research and advisory period because it was not tied to a specific high-stakes test or external measure of accountability. One of the great elements about this project being year 1 of a 4-year research sequence, is that students are free to continue with their topic and project in later grades if they are interested.

Consistent with the iterative nature of action research, YPAR generates new questions and new projects. As such, this project and related work was far from complete when the school year ended, and students moved to the next grade. In summer of 2018, the conversation continued. Rachel engaged in planning conversations with various community members about the vision for the improvement of the street and worked to develop a plan of priorities for using the funds raised. As Rachel shared in an email with Molly and Charles in July 2019, "The plan moving forward is for these three elements to incorporate design and artwork created by guests at the shelter and the students." (Personal communication, July 17, 2018). By August 2018, the conversations led to a targeted list of three ways to use the funds: 1. A planter in the circular part of the area outside of the shelter. That would incorporate some seating, 2. Colorful/artistic trash cans, 3. A mural to go on the front-facing wall of the shelter and possibly a companion one on the CIS side of the street. Rachel coordinated the recruitment of shelter guests who were interested in the project, the arts, and creative expression and team members from UH would coordinate the recruitment of additional students to work on this new phase of the project. The summer 2018 sessions with shelter residents had been so popular that additional sessions were created. In September, the students and shelter residents will come together again to begin to create the artwork that will go on the planter, mural, and waste receptacles. In Image 8 we share an overview of the project plan and timeline, as outlined by Campus District.

Image 8: Project Plan and Timeline Outlined by Campus District

June 2018-Ongoing: CDI Works with Across the Lines, a community arts space located in the ArtCraft building to begin offering arts classes to Norma Herr guests. Fine artist, Guy-Vincent, co-leads the workshops with Jane Finley.
August 2018-November 2018: Campus District team in partnership with Across the Lines and Guy-Vincent develop landscape improvements and public art interventions for outside the Norma Herr Women's Center that is inspired by the works created in the Norma Herr art classes
January-February 2019: ATL, CDI, and Guy-Vincent host joint workshops for Campus International School 5th graders and women from the Norma Herr art classes (at ATL) to create a joint piece of artwork that will be placed on the Campus International School--a companion piece to the one in front of the shelter.
May 2019: All benches, waste receptacles, planters, and public art pieces will be installed on East 22nd and Payne Ave.
May 2019: Celebrate our new community connections and newly beautified intersection!

Discussion

Integrating YPAR in Other Contexts: Thoughts for Practitioners

As we shared above, this work supports the idea that there is not one "right" way to implement YPAR. A critical part of the Payne Avenue project was a commitment to the iterative and non-liner nature of the work. That said, we want to offer some advice and recommendations for practitioners who are interested in doing similar work in their classrooms, schools, and/or local communities. We think one of the most important aspects of this work is local support. Whether this support comes primarily from administrators, department colleagues, and/or community members, this work requires local support. Support is necessary for having the instructional space and agency to implement and adapt the program as you see fit. Support is also critical in the process of making community connections and building relationships that could collaborate and co-lead projects with young people.

A first technical recommendation is to think about and identify where this project could live in your classroom and/or school. Is there a specific thematic unit that aligns well with the goals or aims of YPAR? Is there an existing project or outcome, like the high school research paper or a senior capstone, which could accommodate a YPAR project? Where and when could this fit into your class or your school? In our case, we created a research class that was on all 9th grade students' schedules. The class was approved and integrated because it was aligned with the school's IB framework and vision. Our YPAR class was on students' schedule for the entire academic year and was taught by teachers of different content areas.

YPAR projects, however, could be integrated as part of a content area class, an elective class, or a seminar or specialized capstone class. YPAR can be integrated with English, Social Studies, Math and/or Science content areas. There are a growing number of examples of YPAR in school. The following two articles offer examples of how YPAR can be aligned with core content classes: 1) Youth Participatory Action Research as an Approach to Sociopolitical Development and the New Academic Standards: Considerations for Educators: https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1082403 and 2) Participatory Action Research: A Powerful Model for Youth Climate Literacy in PK-12 classrooms: https://tenstrands.org/place-based-learning/youth-participatory-action-research-a-powerful-model-for-youth-climate-literacy-in-pk-12-classrooms/. In addition, here is an article that offers a closer look at the overarching school-based YPAR project at CIHS from which the Payne Avenue project surfaced: https://library.ncte.org/journals/ELQ/issues/v41-2/29839.

Although a semester or a whole year allow for sustained engagement over time, YPAR projects could be conducted with as little as six weeks if when time is a constraint. Once a practitioner identifies the time available for the project, we recommend dividing the action research process, reserving a little more time for the topic identification and data analysis phases. Additional time spent on topic identification supports students in selecting a topic that is truly meaningful to them and one that is researchable, and the data analysis phase is a time intensive step in the process. For our yearlong project, the action research process was divided by academic quarters. Specifically, Quarter 1 focused on *topic identification*. During this phase, YPAR was introduced

as a research methodology, students defined community and identified community issues. By the end of this quarter, students would have identified a topic and a research question. The 2nd quarter revolved around *research methods*, introducing students to field observations and surveys. By the end of this quarter, students had initiated their data collection. In the 3rd quarter, attention turned to *data analysis and presentation of findings*. The last quarter was dedicated to support the *action step*. We have learned that young people may need additional guidance with the action step. The Payne Avenue project's action step was successful because of the number of co-leaders and community partners invested in the project. The more connections that can be made along the way will increase the likelihood for a meaningful action step. We strongly recommend a clear and simple tracking tool to help track and gauge the progress of the student groups as they make their way through all phases of the project.

We strongly recommend that anyone who adopts YPAR in their practice should create a dedicated space for youth to share their work with an interested audience. For us, we organized a research conference at CSU. At this special event, all students had the opportunity to share what they learned and what action steps they took or would take to address the issue with community members, university faculty, and more. For any practitioners interested in seeing what a culminating event could look like, we will share documentation from two of our youth-led research conferences. In addition to the specific audience for doing the work on Payne Avenue, the group was able to present their findings at this conference. The first link is to Campus Conference 2018 (https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/Page/13199) and the second to Campus Conference 2019 (https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/domain/5414). We suggest you visit the site to see one possible approach to showcasing youth work. We also recommend the conference sites because you can scroll through the entire list of student topics and research questions as well as visual images of our conference layout. During the conference, all youth participated as presenters and audience members and all presenters received feedback on their project from their peers and community members.

For practitioners interested in lesson plans and other resources for introducing and implementing YPAR, we strongly recommend the following two resources: 1) The YPAR Hub (http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/) and 2) Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning (YELL): https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj11216/f/YELL%20Handbook.pdf. For those interested in hearing recorded conversations and interviews with individuals and groups who have led YPAR projects, listen to "The whyPAR" podcast (https://youthresearchlab.org/whypar). Based out of the Youth Research Lab at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, this podcast focuses on the ethical dimensions of YPAR. There are currently ten episodes available, with each one showcasing different projects and different challenges.

Thoughts Moving Forward

This project was the birth of a long-standing relationship between Charles (representing CIHS), Molly (representing CSU and CIHS), and Rachel (representing Campus District) as well as other US educators at the K-8th grade. In the years that followed the launch and year one of the project, we built on the findings and video work of the Payne Avenue Project students to access

funding to create public art at the intersection of East 22nd and Payne Avenue. As of this writing, there are major works on both the Norma Herr Shelter and the lower school campus that were co-created by students, artists, and shelter guests. The work on the school is a piece called "Making Your Mark", shared in Image 9. Campus District convened a group of 5th graders, shelter guests, and two artists, who over five sessions, discussed what it means to make your mark on the community. The final work reflects each person's personal symbol or "tag" that represents their personality, arranged together over the blueprints of the school building.

Image 9

The co-created piece, "Making Your Mark," installed on the lower school campus

Since the high school designed YPAR to be year one of a four-year research sequence, there is room in the curriculum for students to continue to follow the topic and follow their questions. Importantly, students are learning the skills to do meaningful research about issues in their community that matter to them. Change often (almost always) happens more slowly than any of us would like, but by inviting 9th graders to commit to this kind of work as part of their lives in school, young people can learn how to make change happen. The opportunity to participate in work that invites young people to engage with adult community members and leaders and exercise their leadership with the project, allows young people to take control of their education and their world. YPAR helped to develop young people's everyday literacies, but also, importantly, their critical consciousness and critical literacies.

We hope this case has offered new insights from an urban school-based setting, on the potential of YPAR to expand adolescents' literacies, position students as researchers and community leaders, and revitalize what we typically see as high school research. YPAR offers youth a meaningful way to leverage and amplify youth voices for social change and develop their abilities as researchers, writers, and civic leaders. In short, students are learning, inspired by Gandhi, how to be the change they wish to see in the world. Findings have implications for educational practitioners and researchers who want to design more meaningful opportunities for *all* students in our schools.

In the short term, YPAR helps to enhance student engagement in their community. By integrating this work in school, it also has potential to increase students' engagement in their own schooling. YPAR creates room in the school-sanctioned curriculum for youth to participate in social justice work that resonates with the youth movements that have erupted around #Black Lives Matter, climate change, gun violence, and more. Instead of seeing the young people who are advocating for change in those movements as an exception, this approach supports youth to see themselves as change agents and fosters capabilities for creating that change. Young people who are invited to engage YPAR have the chance to leave high school having experienced the concept of shared ownership for and responsibility to their community and that, on a fundamental level, changes in a community cannot come strictly from outside the community. Rather, community members must play a role in trying to understand the problem and develop ways to mitigate the problem.

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COACHING CHINESE MOTHERS TO ASK HIGHER-LEVEL QUESTIONS IN DIALOGIC READING

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Abstract

During a community reading program with Chinese mothers, the researcher in this study helped the mothers with higher-level questions to promote young children's abstract and critical thinking. With a multiple baseline design, the researcher of the current study coached five mothers of young children on how to ask Higher-level questions during dialogic reading. With timely feedback and collaborative work with the coach, the coachees significantly increased their number of higher-level questions. The children participating in this study also improved greatly in their expressive vocabulary. The results of the study indicate that these parents need explicit instruction on higher-level questions and coaching in a one-on-one format was effective in improving the critical thinking skills of children.

Keywords: coaching, Higher-level questions, multiple baseline across participants, dialogic reading, mother-child dyads

Coaching Chinese Mothers to Ask Higher-level Questions in Dialogic Reading

Numerous studies have been conducted to replicate the effectiveness of dialogic reading interventions (e.g., Arnold et al., 1994; Blom-Hoffman et al., 2007; Brannon & Dauksas, 2012; Chacko et al., 2018; Huebner 2000a, 2000b; Huebner & Payne, 2010, LaCour et al., 2013; Sim et al., 2014). This trend in the research has been noticeable since Whitehurst, Falco, et al. (1988) published the findings of their first study. In dialogic reading, the roles of adult-child are reversed so that children are prompted to actively talk about the pictures and learn to become the storytellers (Beschorner & Hutchison, 2016; Lonigan et al., 2011). DialoLagic reading has been proved of its efficacy for enhancing young children's language development, in particular children's expressive language (e.g., Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000; Lonigan et al., 1999; NELP, 2008; Wasik & Bond, 2001, Wasik et al., 2006).

Though dialogic reading studies have been expanded to speakers of other languages than English (e.g., Aram, 2006; Levin & Aram, 2012; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992; Kotaman, 2013), there is a paucity for studies focusing on only Mandarin Chinese American parents and children. Studies conducted by Lam et al. (2013) and Chow and colleagues (2003, 2008, 2010)

were with Cantonese children in Hong Kong, which is a different language than Mandarin. Two dialogic reading studies (Beschorner, 2013; Lever & Sénéchal, 2011) in the U.S. reported to have Chinese participants but provide little information of them.

Besides the dearth of research exploring the literacy practices of Mandarin Chinese American families, there is a demographic imperative. United States Census of Bureau reported in May 2021 that the Chinese (except Taiwanese) was the largest Asian group in the U.S. with an estimated number of 5.2 million (https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2021/asian-american-pacific-islander.html). However, Frey (2015) reported that 45% of Chinese (ages 5 and older) did not speak English very well. This calls for the need of more literacy research on Chinese American families in the U.S.

CROWD in Dialogic Reading

The CROWD prompt encourages adults to engage adult-child talk in dialogic reading by asking five types of questions, Completion, Recall, Open-ended, *Wh*-questions, and Distancing. Lonigan et al. (2007) categorized these five types of questions of CROWD into three levels, with the low order Level 1 question (i.e., Completion, Recall, *Wh*-), to a higher order Level 2 (Open-ended) and Level 3 (Distancing) question. Distancing (Sigel, 1982) refers to a hierarchy of information processing levels "moving from concrete, immediately available information" (De Temple & Snow, 1996, p 54) to higher cognitive or abstraction processes (Korat & Segal-Drori, 2016). With the CROWD prompt, adults may increase the quality and quantity of children's talk, allowing them to retrieve and use new words during book reading (Kertoy, 1994). According to the descriptions of the levels distancing strategies (Sigel, 2002), completion, recall, and *Wh*-questions belong to the low-level distancing; open-ended questions are parallel to the medium level, and distancing (related to the child's personal experiences) belongs to the high-level distancing.

However, Zevenbergen and Whitehurst (2003) found that few teachers in their intervention study asked open-ended questions though this type of question may offer the best opportunity for children to practice the language. Their finding raises the concern of the adult's relative ability to adhere to dialogic reading intervention in the home and classrooms. Indeed, among the large body of dialogic reading research focus on the child's outcomes in emergent literacy, only four studies (Briesch et al., 2008; Blom-Hoffman et al., 2007; Huebner & Payne, 2010; Strouse et al., 2013) reported how parents used the CROWD prompts to ask questions. The results of their research showed that adults asked far fewer open-ended and distancing questions than labeling or simple *Wh*-questions even after being trained by dialogic reading. Towson et al. (2017) analyzed 30 published dialogic reading studies in early childhood settings, and they found a wide variance in the dialogic reading training protocol and fidelity. Only 10 studies reported providing training for all five types of questions in the CROWD prompt.

These few studies imply that adults do not engage in Level 2 or 3 questions of the dialogic reading strategies spontaneously. Therefore, coaching adults to increase their complexity of questions asked as prescribed is much needed to strengthen the efficacy of dialogic reading and explain the described outcome of the child. These studies also indicate that parents need

guidance on how to ask Higher-level questions in dialogic reading (Huebner & Payne, 2010) though most of them realize the importance of book reading. Since parents are said to be the first teachers of their children (Britto et al., 2006) and they hold primary responsibility for their children's well-being, coaching parents in guiding their children's early language and literacy learning can be beneficial.

Coaching Higher-Level Questions

Coaching in this study is defined as the coach, a more knowledge one, supports building the capacity of a mother to improve existing question-asking skills and gain a deeper understanding of the dialogic reading practices. During coaching, the coach and the mother are working collaboratively. The sequences of the interactions between the coach and mother are built upon the everyday literacy practices in the home (practice on-site). The coaching process allows the mother to choose the specific prompt she wants to practice first (goal setting and collaborative planning). It involves the mother in observing the coach modeling the dialogic reading (modeling). It also engages the mother in collaborative problem-solving to increase her use of Higher-level questions during dialogic reading (observation, collaborative reflection, and immediate feedback). Some empirical research suggests that interactive coaching strategies such as modeling, co-teaching, conferencing, and immediate feedback are important for successful coaching outcomes (Bean et al., 2010; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010).

Chinese American Family Literacy Practices in the U.S.

Few studies on shared reading or dialogic reading had Chinese bilingual families in the U.S. as their major and/or sole participants. Anderson et al. (2002) initially explored Chinese children classroom shared reading in mainland China and Taiwan. Studies followed with Chinese populations in shared book reading focus on heritage maintenance (e.g., Koda et al., 2008; Li, 2006; Li & Fleer, 2015; Li & Tan, 2016), bilingual language learning (e.g., Hu & Commeyras, 2008; Hu et al., 2018; Kuo & Kim, 2014; Pu, 2008) or Chinese as English language learners (e.g., Han & Ernst-Slavit, 1999; Li et al., 2012; Li et al., 2018; Townsend & Fu, 1998; Wan, 2000; author, 2021). Chow and colleagues (2003, 2008, 2010) recruited parents of Hong Kong preschoolers and provided brief training in reading Chinese books (Chow et al., 2003, 2008) and English books (Chow et al., 2010). Lam et al. (2013) conducted a paired reading program with 195 Hong Kong preschoolers, in which how, what, where, when, why, and who questions from dialogic reading were modeled and practiced by the parents. It is worth to note that these dialogic reading studies with Chinese were conducted in Hong Kong with parents and children who speak Cantonese, a completely different language from Mandarin.

The Current Study

In this study, the researcher coached five Chinese mothers to increase their number of Higher-level questions after they were introduced to dialogic reading by watching the *Reading Together, Talk Together* video (*RTTT*, Pearson Early Learning, 2002). A multiple baseline across participants design (Gast et al., 2018; Kazdin, 2011) was used to investigate the unique coaching effect on increasing the number of Higher-level questions asked by the mothers.

The following research questions were addressed:

(1) How will dialogic reading change the number of Higher-level questions asked by a mother during book reading?

(2) How will coaching change the number of Higher-level questions asked by a mother during book reading compared with dialogic reading?

Methods

Participants

The current study was conducted in a Midwestern city in the U.S, in which Chinese was the largest group in the Asian population in the city. The participants were five mother-child dyads. Their demographic information were reported in Table 1 with pseudonyms. The five mothers were from Mainland China and Mandarin was their native language. All the child participants were born in the U.S., and they were at the age of four at the phase of data collection. The mother participants were recruited from the local Chinese church and Chinese schools.

The mother-child book readings were audio-recorded at each participant's home. The time for the home visit was scheduled according to the participants' typical time reading with their children at home.

Materials

Picture Books for the Study

The researcher provided books for the five mother-child dyads. The books came from two resources. One was from *The Read Together, Talk Together Trade Book Collection* Kit B (Pearson Learning Group, 2006), which contained 18 books designed specifically for dialogic reading with children aged 4- to 5-year-olds by Whitehurst and colleagues (1988, 1994). The second resource for the books was from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library 2018 Book List for children of 4-year-old (https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/book-list/). The participants read *The Read Together, Talk Together Trade Book Collection* Kit B books first. When they finished those books, they continued to read books from the Dolly Parton Library as needed. All books were new to the five mother-child dyads.

Read Together, Talk Together Video

The video *Read Together, Talk Together* (*RTTT*, Pearson Early Learning, 2002) was developed by Whitehurst and Pearson Early Learning Publishing company. It is available free online.

CROWD Bookmark and Higher-Level Question Prompts Bookmark

The researcher made bookmarks for CROWD and Higher-level questions for each mother. The CROWD bookmark was listed with question examples developed by the researcher from *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963).

Measures

Level 1 Questions & Higher-Level Questions

In this study, Level 1 questions included five types of questions (Table 2), Completion, Recall, Yes/no, Specified-alternative, and simple *Wh*-questions. Higher-level questions included two levels of questions: Level 2 (Open-ended questions) and Level 3 (Distancing) questions.

The numbers of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 questions in each reading session were recorded and coded for frequency. The number of Higher-level questions was the sum of Level 2 and Level 3 questions recorded for a reading session.

Level 1 and Higher-level questions were coded and measured repeatedly in each reading session for each participant based on the question checklist (Table 2). The checklist was adapted from the categorization of CROWD prompts (Whitehurst, Falco, et al., 1988; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003, p. 173). The questions were grouped into three levels according to Lonigan et al. (2007). The researcher added yes/no and specified-alternative questions to the Level 1 questions and developed the examples with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle.

Expressive Vocabulary Test

The researcher administered the Expressive Vocabulary Test, Second Edition (EVT-2) to the participant children before the study and at the end of coaching. EVT-2 (Williams, 2007) assesses expressive vocabulary and word retrieval skills for individuals.

Research Design

In the present study, there were four phases: Baseline, Dialogic Reading Intervention, Coaching, and Maintenance phase. During the baseline phase, the researcher. Every mother was told to read the books as usual (i.e., read as they usually do) when the researcher audio-recorded the readings. The dialogic reading intervention phase began with the first participant whose baseline reading reached stability with little variance. Intervention for dialogic reading was staggered for each of the following participant. The coaching phase began with the first mother participant when her performance in Higher-level questions remained stable during the dialogic reading intervention. The researcher revisited each mother-child dyad 8 weeks later after they had finished the readings in their coaching phase.

Coaching Procedures

The duration of the first coaching was about one hour, starting with goal setting (10-12-minutes), then modeling (10-minutes), collaborative reflection (8-10-minutes), practice on-site (8-10-minutes), and finally, immediate feedback (8-10-minutes).

Goal Setting

At the beginning of the coaching, the researcher showed each mother two graphs of her performances in level 1 and Higher-level questions from her previous readings. The researcher and the mother discussed the CROWD prompts in dialogic reading and the importance of Higher-level questions. The mother and the researcher then agreed to steer the focus of the following book readings on asking more Higher-level questions.

Modeling

The researcher modeled a dialogic reading of the book with the child while the mother was observing. The mother was asked to pay attention to the questions and answers between the coach and the child.

Collaborative Reflection & Practice On-Site

The mother and the researcher together went through the book to discuss what questions had been asked, which ones were Higher-level questions, and how the child replied to different levels of questions. The researcher gave suggestions to the mother on how to turn a Level 1 question into a Higher-level question. The mother then practiced with her child reading the same book once more while the researcher took down notes.

Immediate Feedback

After the mother and child finished reading, the researcher showed the mother the notes which recorded her Higher-level questions. The mother and the researcher would produce a few Higher-level questions together for the book. At the end of the coaching session, the mother was reminded that the goal for the upcoming readings was to focus on asking more Higher-level questions in the book reading.

For the following reading sessions in each mother's coaching phase, the researcher coached the mother on her performance in Higher-level questions as needed. Instead of going through every step in the coaching procedures, the coach asked the mother what she needed most in support.

Data Analysis

The two coders, trained by the researcher, independently coded 50% of the number of the audio recordings randomly chosen from baseline, dialogic reading, coaching, and maintenance phases. Visual inspection on the line graphs of data display was administered for the outcome variables for each mother participant and across participants. Excel was used to plot the data, in which the x-axis represented the number of reading sessions (1-30), and the y-axis represented the number of Level 1 (dotted line) and Higher-level questions (solid line).

Results

Visual Analysis Across Mother Participants

The five mother-child dyads began with the same book sequence throughout the study. The researcher decided the first mother participant to begin with the interventions based on the stability of her performance at the baseline. In this study, Song demonstrated the most stability in her three reading sessions in the baseline, so she was the first participant introduced to the intervention. Hui followed as the second, then Xia, and finally, Ping and Lei.

The multiple baselines across participants design allows the intervention effects to be replicated across participants. The consistency of the stability of the baselines across participants until interventions were introduced is demonstrated in Figure 1. The immediate change of the

mothers' performance in level and trend right after the participants received the interventions is also shown in Figure 1.

Level 1 Questions

Song, the first participant, had a stable baseline for three reading sessions. When dialogic reading was introduced to Song, her performance in Level 1 questions had an immediate change in level and trend while all the baselines of the other four participants remained stable. When Hui, the second mother participant, began the dialogic reading intervention, her performance in Level 1 questions had an immediate change in level and trend. At the same time, Song's performance in Level 1 questions was maintained in her coaching phase while the baselines of the other three mothers remained stable. The intervention effect of dialogic reading was replicated in Xia when she was introduced to dialogic reading. Both Song and Hui maintained their performance in Level 1 questions. Ping and Lei began the dialogic reading intervention at the same data point. Both had an immediate increase in their level and trend in their performance at the introduction of dialogic reading. Dialogic reading with training increased the number of Level 1 questions significantly and the results were replicated and repeated across the five mother participants.

Higher-Level Questions

When Song was introduced to dialogic reading, she had a small level and trend change in her performance in Higher-level questions (see Figure 1). When coaching intervention began, her performance had a significant effect. When Song's performance in Higher-level questions manifested an immediate change in level and trend in dialogic reading and coaching phases, the performance of the other four mother participants remained stable at their respective baselines. For Higher-level questions, the greatest immediacy of the effect was between phases of dialogic reading and coaching.

Expressive Vocabulary Test (EVT-2)

The researcher conducted EVT-2 to the participant children at the beginning of the study and at the end of the coaching. Their results (Table 5) suggest that all the five participant children increased their expressive vocabulary at the end of the coaching phase.

Discussion

This present study examined the effectiveness of coaching in increasing the number of Higher-level questions after the five Mandarin Chinese American mothers self-trained dialogic reading. The visual analyses (Figure 1) indicated that dialogic reading had a positive effect on the number of Higher-level questions, but coaching had a more substantial effect on the levels and trend of the participants' performance in Higher-level questions. Coaching helped these mothers ask many more Higher-level questions than they did in dialogic reading. These results were consistently repeated and replicated across the five mother participants.

The Effect of Dialogic Reading on the Number of Higher-Level Questions

The visual analyses (Figure 1) display the performance of the mother participants on Higher-level questions during the baseline and dialogic reading phases, in which there was an increase in

the number of Higher-level questions across participants when dialogic reading was introduced. However, the baselines across participants were all floor effects, leaving these significant effect sizes in doubt. The percentage of Higher-level questions in the dialogic reading phase (Table 3) provides us some insights that on average, the mothers ask one Higher-level question out of 10 questions in total. The results answer the research question that dialogic reading has a positive effect on increasing the number of Higher-level questions.

The current study found out that dialogic reading has increased the number of Higher-level questions to 10% out of the total questions. This result is congruent with two out of the four previous studies examining the use of CROWD prompts (i.e., Briesch et al., 2008; Huebner & Payne, 2010), which reported that open-ended questions were infrequently used even after the adults were trained dialogic reading. For distancing questions, the finding of this current study is aligned with the results of three studies (i.e., Blom-Hoffman et al., 2007; Huebner & Payne, 2010; Strouse et al., 2013) in that the distancing questions were used less frequently in the book reading even after the dialogic reading training. The results contradicted the findings of Zibulsky et al. (2019) that parents asked Open-ended and Distancing questions at their baseline.

The Effect of Coaching on the Number of Higher-Level Questions

The coaching effect on Higher-level questions within and across participants shows that coaching was more effective in increasing the number of Higher-level questions than the dialogic reading intervention alone. The percentage of Higher-level questions out of the total number of questions for each reading session during coaching across participants was 38% on average (Table 4), suggesting that more Higher-level questions were asked during the coaching phase across participants compared with the dialogic reading phase. Further, after the coaching intervention ended, the performance on Higher-level questions was maintained across participants at levels higher than those observed during the dialogic reading phase. These results support that coaching is more effective in increasing the number of Higher-level questions asked by the mothers compared with their performances with video training only.

The percentage of Higher-level questions out of the total number of questions during coaching phases ranged from 31-48% on average across participants. The result is congruent with the results of the previous studies on parents' (e.g., McGinty et al., 2012; van Kleeck et al., 1997) and preschool teachers' (e.g., Massey et al., 2008; Zucker et al., 2010) inferential talk or cognitive challenging questions in shared reading, in which adults posed 70% literal and 30% inferential questions. The ratio, 70% to 30% as low-to-high questions, is also consistent with the guidelines Blank et al. (1978) suggested for preschool teachers that 70% of the conversations should provide children chances to successfully use the language, while the other 30% should be more cognitively and linguistically demanding (Hammett et al., 2003).

The results of this study suggest that coaching helps these five Mandarin Chinese American mothers improve their questioning to meet the needs of their children's language and literacy development via book reading. Coaching substantially increases the mothers' understanding and use of Higher-level questions. The book reading practices in the Chinese community were rich and lend thoughts for working with multilingual learners and families.

Implications for Practice

The results of the current study imply that it would be important for classroom teachers to understand the multilingual learners' family literacy practices in their cultures so as to provide corresponding scaffold and resources to meet the needs of their students.

Family Read Aloud Classroom Visit

The mothers in the study seldom asked questions during book readings prior to dialogic reading or coaching interventions. In the Chinese community, it is a traditional belief that mothers take care of the family and children's schooling (Sheng, 2012). Chinese mothers therefore are important supporters and reading partners with their children. The findings of the study suggest that these mothers need explicit instructions on how to ask Higher-level questions.

Classroom teachers may need to share the importance of questioning during read aloud with their children from these Mandarin families. It may be helpful to invite these caregivers for a 15-minute book reading visit while the teachers demonstrate explicitly how to ask Higher-level questions. This classroom visit may extend to all families to build book reading and community building.

Children's Books for Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers may send children's picture books home to encourage the caregivers to read with their children. The 30 books used in this study (Appendix A) can be good resources with four to five years old both in the classrooms and in the home.

Higher-Level Question Prompts

To make it convenient for the caregivers, classroom teachers may attach lists of questions in the books so that the caregivers can refer to., The classroom teacher may adapt the following Higher-level questions prompts for most of the book readings.

Open-Ended Questions: How do you think/feel if you are_____?

How do you know?

Why do you think so?

Tell me what's happening in this page.

Distancing Questions: What happened to you when you last _____?

How did it remind you of your _____?

Producing Higher-Level Questioning

Teachers may also help caregivers understand how to rephrase their questions to Higher level questions. If a caregiver asks a question beginning with, "Do you know why he did that?" the teacher may train the caregiver to start right with "Why did he do that?" The latter will encourage children to respond with more words instead of a yes/no answer. Another similar

example can be: Asking children "How do you think so?" rather than "Can you tell me how you think so?"

Educational Implications

The results of this study also provides some implications for teacher educators. The findings of the study suggest that adults do not spontaneously generate Higher-level questions. They need explicit instruction and guidance. Teacher educators thus need to provide explicit instructions to pre-service teachers on how to ask Higher-level questions. The coaching procedures used with mothers in the study can be applied to pre-service teachers to improve their Higher-level questioning in book reading. Additionally, it is essential for preservice teachers to understand the importance of building relationships with families and communities to promote their students' academic growth.

Community Engagement

Parents and other primary caregivers are instrumental in cultivating young children's language and literacy development from an early age. Promoting parental involvement in reading is crucial but involving families from diverse cultures can be challenging because literacy practices vary across and within cultural groups (Heath, 1982, 1983). Caregivers from different cultural backgrounds may have different ways to interact with their children during book readings. On the other hand, classroom teachers should not view caregivers from the same cultural groups as homogenous entities (Dantas & Manyak, 2010; Kuo, 2016). Instead, classroom teachers can draw on culturally relevant pedagogy (Paris & Aim, 2017) to foster a safe environment where each family is viewed as an individual entity with its own identity. Under the safe environment, educators, caregivers, and school administrators can collaborate and develop an inviting culture to promote parental involvement and community engagement.

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Table 1

Demographic Information of the Participants

Name	Age	Years in the U.S.	Highest Education	Mother Employment	No. of Children	Name_Child
Song	38	5.5	Master	Home	2	Abby (1st born)
Xia	34	5	Unmarried Person	Home	2	Sarah (2nd born)
Ping	34	9	Master	Data programmer	1	Katie
Lei	29	0.5	Ph.D.	Home	1	Tony
Hui	37	12	Master	System Admin	2	Elaine (1st born)

Table 2

Question Checklist

Category		Definition	Examples
Level 1	Completion	Fill-in-the-blank	The caterpillar is still very _____.
	Yes/no	Expected answer is yes/no	Do you think the caterpillar is still hungry?
	Recall	Ask the child to remember details of the book	Can you remember how many apples did the caterpillar eat?
	Specified-alternative	The child was provided an alternative answer to the question	Did the caterpillar eat three apples or three blueberries that day?
	Simple Wh-	What, When, Where for labeling & recall	What happened when the caterpillar ate so much that day? When was the caterpillar born?
Level 2	Open-ended	The child responds to the book in his or her own words	Tell me what you see on this page. What if you were the caterpillar? How did the caterpillar make his cocoon? How did the butterfly come out? Why do you think so?
Level 3	Distancing	The adult relates the occurrences of the book to the child's own experiences outside of the book	What happened to you when you ate 3 ice cream cones in a row last time?

Table 3

Percentage of Higher-Level Questions in the Dialogic Reading Phase

	Song	Hui	Xia	Ping	Lei
Percentage out of	0	10%	8%	6%	10%
Total Questions in	20%	15%	4.5%	10%	10%
Each Reading	8%	13%	3.7%	4%	12%
Session in the	7.7%	0	5.6%	25%	12%
Dialogic Reading	20%	5%	13%	17%	10%
Phase	7.7%	11%	7%		
		10%			
		13%			
Average	10%	9.6%	8.3%	12%	10.8%

Table 4

Percentage of Higher-Level Questions out of the Total in the Coaching Phase

	Song	Hui	Xia	Ping	Lei
Percentage out of Total Questions in Each Reading Session in the Coaching Phase	39%	34%	29%	36%	38%
	37%	44%	33%	50%	41%
	41%	36%	33%	37%	33%
	53%	22%	38%	62%	42%
	26%	25%	26%	56%	33%
	58%	26%	33%		
Average	42.3%	31.2%	32%	48.2%	37.4%

Table 5

Pre- and Post-tests of EVT-2

	Pre-test			Post-test		
	Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile (%)	Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile (%)
Abby	16	73	4	33	82	12
Elaine	45	90	35	56	97	42
Sarah	45	101	53	48	100	50
Katie	43	89	23	60	100	50
Tony	41	95	37	58	106	66

Figure 1

Number of Level 1 and Higher-level Questions Asked across Mother Participants
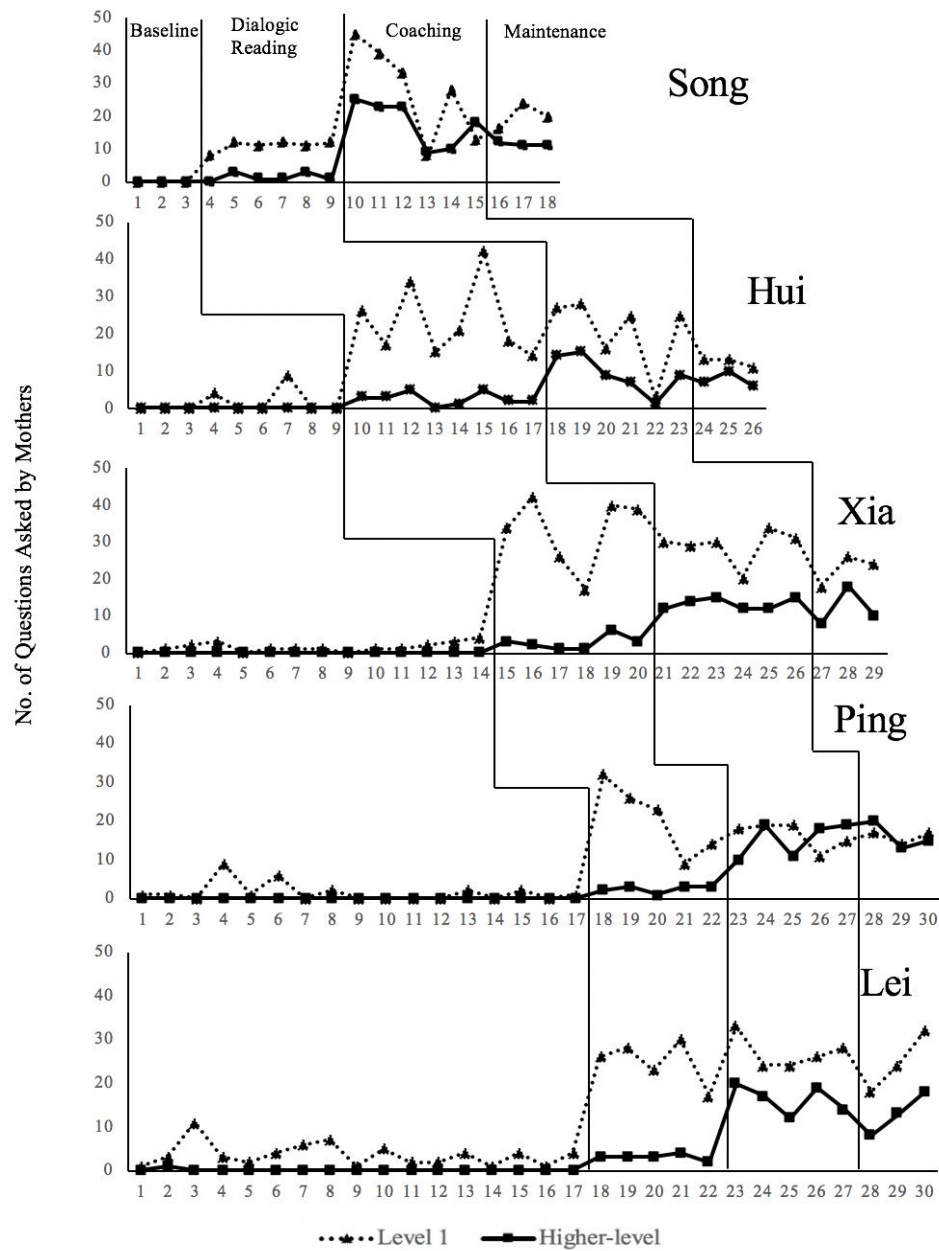
Appendix A

Books Read by Mother-Child Dyads

	Title	Author and Illustrator
1	*Peanut Butter & Cupcake*	Terry Border, 2014
2	*Spike in the City*	Paulette Bogan, 2000
3	*I Took My Frog to the Library*	Eric Kimmel & Blanche Sims, 1992
4	*Cows Can't Fly*	David Milgrim, 2000
5	*The Adventures of the Taxi Dog*	Debra Barracca & Sal Barracca, 1990
6	*The Dinosaur Who Lived in My Backyard*	B. G. Hennessy & Susan Davis, 1990
7	*Bunny Cakes*	Rosemary Wells, 2000
8	*A Pocket for Corduroy*	Don Freeman, 1978
9	*Whistle for Willie*	Ezra Keats, 1998
10	*Can I Keep Him?*	Steven Kellogg, 1976
11	*The Quilt Story*	Tony Johnston & Tomie dePaola, 1996
12	*Hooray, A Piñata!*	Elisa Kleven, 2000
13	*Monkeys*	DK Publishing
14	*Blueberries for Sal*	Robert McCloskey, 1976
15	*The Goldilocks and the Three Bears*	James Marshall, 1998
16	*Excellent Ed*	Stacy McAnulty & Julia Sarcone-Roach, 2016
17	*Miss Maple's Seeds*	Eliza Wheeler, 2013
18	*Lion Lessons*	Jon Agee, 2016
19	*Bunny's Book Club*	Annie Silvestro & Tatjana Mai-Wyss, 2017
20	*Ten Thank You Letters*	Daniel Kirk, 2014
21	*Pup and Bear*	Kate Banks & Naoko Stoop, 2017
22	*Coat of Many Colors*	Dolly Parton & Brooke Hughes, 2016
23	*The Gruffalo*	Julia Donaldson, 2005
24	*Lily's Cat Mask*	Julie Fortenberry, 2017
25	*The First Strawberries*	Joseph Bruchac & Anna Vojtech, 1998
26	*As an Oak Tree Grows*	G. Brian Karas, 2014
27	*Owl Moon*	Jane Yolen & John Schoenherr, 1987
28	*Otis and the Kittens*	Loren Long, 2016
29	*The Ring Bearer*	Floyd Cooper, 2017
30	*Fly Butterfly*	Bonnie Bader, 2014

Author Bio

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WHEN THIRD GRADERS PEER CONFERENCE ON THEIR WRITING: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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Abstract

This qualitative action research study examines the nature and effect of peer conferences with twelve students in a third-grade classroom. Through the constant comparison of peer conference observations, student reflections, interviews, and work samples, I describe the attributes of peer conferences and identify outcomes of embedding peer conferences into my classroom writing workshop model. Findings show third-grade students are motivated to write more often when they engage in peer conferences. Students engage in meaningful and supportive discourses when they confer with their classmates. And finally, students grow audience awareness and become better writers when working collaboratively with their peers. These findings, along with their implications, are discussed in this study.

When Third Graders Peer Conference on their Writing: An Action Research Study

Teaching the writing process is a common practice among writing teachers. The writing workshop model, developed by Lucy Calkins and heavily influenced by Donald Graves, focuses on writing as a process (Calkins, 2020). The workshop includes a short lesson at the beginning of the writing session, called a mini-lesson, time for writing, conferring, and eventually, publishing. Each action built into the workshop stages is intended to grow the writer's skill and proficiency in authoring. Choice in writing topic and conferring, or talking about writing, are two distinctive practices of the writing workshop model (Kissel, 2017).

Writing workshops are a vital component of the literacy experience in my third-grade classroom. However, during one writing workshop session, I noticed several students wanted to confer with me at the same time. Students were attempting to fill their wait time by reading back over their writing, writing more, and making independent revisions. Feeling outnumbered and conscious of time, conferring switched from relaxed conversations about authorship to stifled editing of student work. I hurried each student along, marking changes and edits, attempting to reach each writer as quickly as possible. Later, it occurred to me that I was missing the primary intention of my writing conferences: to engage my students as authors and guide them in "telling" their stories. I had to admit this was becoming a pattern during our writing workshop. My meaningful

conferring conversations had become the quality control of written products. At the end of our writing time, everyone was depleted of writing energy.

Something needed adjusting in my writer's workshop. I wanted to pull my students deeper into the writing process, invite them to become actively engaged authors. I wondered if my students could turn to one another for peer conferencing, collaborating, and thinking critically about writing. It would be a risk; I had doubts about their writing maturity and knowledge. Embedding peer conferences into my writer's workshop meant I would transfer some conferring responsibility to my students. It was worth investigating. This led to my research question: *What happens when third graders peer conference on their writing?*

While research shows that students who confer with their teachers become better writers, it is clear that students benefit from conferring with their peers as well. Research is fairly abundant when teachers want to understand the discourse and effect of teacher-student interactions in conferences, but research is blurred when we seek to understand the intricacies of peer conferences.

Literature Discussion

Sociocultural Theory of Writing

Emerging from the work of Lev Vygotsky, the process and collaborative approaches to writing instruction are steeped in the sociocultural theory of writing. Vygotsky asserted that children learn best when they are active members of a supportive social atmosphere. In a Vygotskian setting, children learn new skills from "more knowledgeable others" while being scaffolded within a "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978 as cited in Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006, p. 214; Hodges, 2017, p. 141). From this vantage, language researchers posited that developing writers could be scaffolded, or intentionally guided and supported, through a process-driven approach to writing (Bakhtin, 1986, as cited in Schultz, 2016). Teachers, acting as the more knowledgeable writers, model the steps of the writing process. They position themselves as mentors, inviting students into their writing process through conversation, story rehearsal, and instruction. Students then work through the writing process themselves, with teachers and peers responding to one another's writing through conversations, or what is called conferring in the writing workshop model. Conferring provides engaging discourses where teachers and students provide specific ideas or feedback, supporting the writer's growth (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006). Conferring can occur between teacher and student, student and student, or within a small group of students. In essence, teachers and students become co-participants in authoring (Hodges, 2017).

Students are met as individuals through the sociocultural approach to writing. As conferring dialogue is exchanged between the writer and audience, the author must confront their intended meaning, the realized meaning, conventions, as well as listener responses to their writing. In turn, the writer may also correct, clarify, or confirm their writing practices (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006). Sociocultural theory shifts writing instruction from an individual activity of mastery to a process-driven and collaborative opportunity for students to grow their writing ability (Hodges, 2017).

The intentional convergence of the writing process with conferencing between teacher and student, as well as between peers, is the fruition of the sociocultural theory of writing (Beach & Friedrich, 2006). Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore (2006) wrote, "In such classrooms, students learn to use their texts and ideas as thinking devices that can be questioned and extended to create an elaborated knowledge reflective of the contributions of the group" (p. 214).

Peer Conferences

In a study of peer responses to writing, Dix & Cawkwell (2011) found that time spent on the process of composition, revision, as well as the social and cognitive engagement of others, provided intrinsic rewards for students. Jasmine, the focal teacher of the Dix & Cawkwell (2011) case study, wrote, "I valued more the responses of the children and what they saw in their classmates' writing," and later she added, "It wasn't that it was just coming from me, what the teacher said. They took on board what their peer group said because it was coming from them" (p. 54). This study affirmed that peer responses fostered a community of practice as students were able to collaboratively mentor their peers in authoring.

Another facet of peer conferencing to be considered is peer tutoring. Medcalf, Glynn, & Moore (2004) found that peer tutors benefited from their involvement with growth in all areas of writing. The tutees made even greater gains than their tutors in all areas measured. The tutee's progress contrasted sharply with the control group, who made little to no gains. Gains made for both tutors and tutees were maintained over time as evidenced in follow-up sessions. Both tutors and tutees reported favoring peer tutoring procedures, recognizing collaborative writing enjoyment as their primary gain.

Peer conferencing and response, along with peer tutoring are supportive and engaging components of the writing process. However, there is a gap in the literature that investigates and describes the nature of conversations and writing actions during peer conferences.

Collaboration in Writing

While collaborative writing has traditionally been defined as a group of authors writing one piece to co-author, Hodges (2012) wrote, "Collaboration can take on many forms" (p.141). For example, a teacher and the class may collaborate and compose one piece of classroom writing. Students may work in writing partnerships to co-author one story or individual stories. Another method of student collaboration during writing is composing individual pieces while sitting together, conferring, and sharing throughout the writing process (Schultz, 2016).

Regardless of the approach, collaboration means working together to achieve a goal. When students work together on their writing, they participate in collaborative writing. Routman (2005) found, "Informal conversations among students as they write influences the amount and quality of revisions students are willing to make. Conversations with others help students express their ideas more fully and make them their own" (p. 184). Schultz (2016) found that student responses to collaborative writing developed student writer voice and improved social relationships in classmates of different cultures.

Schultz (2016) discovered writing collaboratively included offering a range of ways for students to participate in writing together. Students' responses to collaboration shaped both writing processes and products. Students who were resistant to the teacher's instruction were often receptive to peer suggestions and corrections. Schultz (2016) concluded, "This study adds to the sociocultural perspective that not only is writing a social process, but also that there are writing practices that are specific to particular cultures. It makes clear the importance of establishing a classroom, even a school culture, which supports students who work together to collaborate" (p.282).

Methodology

Participants

Serving as the capstone graduate project for my master's degree in Elementary Education at Western Carolina University, this literacy research study was conducted in my third-grade classroom in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The classroom was made up of six boys and six girls, averaging nine years old. All students were performing at or above grade level. I acted as a participant-observer throughout the study. At the conclusion, parents were provided the final research study, posing valuable parent-teacher discussions about the findings.

Throughout this culminating research project, I was mentored in becoming a teacher-researcher. Stepping into this role was empowering! I was given agency to ask real questions about my practice, activate change, observe results, and draw conclusions. Most importantly, I was encouraged to share my experiences through writing and speaking.

During the study, I was most interested in my classroom practice and completing a robust graduate project. After reflection, I became aware that the third-grade community of writers that developed in my classroom was nested inside the larger realm of university researchers and writers I was part of. My graduate colleagues and I became a community of practicing teacher-researchers-listening, offering feedback, and responding to one another. The similarities traced between the cooperative practices of third-grade peer conferencing and graduate-level research and writing confirmed that communities of practice are critical to literacy learning, research, and instruction.

Method

To understand the nature and outcomes of peer conferences, a qualitative constant comparison methodology was used to examine the following research question: *What happens when third graders peer conference on their writing?* With this research question, I hoped to understand peer conferences holistically. A constant comparison approach required the use of multiple forms of data to identify themes and common threads in peer conference practice.

Data Collection

I collected data from the following sources: a) student self-reflections, b) observations and field notes, c) peer conference evaluations, d) interviews, and e) work samples.

Student Self-Reflections. Students were given simple questionnaires to express their attitudes toward writing. They also evaluated their writing self-efficacy before and after the implementation of peer conferences.

Observations of Peer Conferences and Field Notes. A field note journal was utilized to record key moments, words, and conversations overheard in peer conferences. Writing actions, such as revision work, were also noted.

Peer Conference Evaluations. Students were given peer conference evaluations to rate the helpfulness of their peer conferences three times throughout the study.

Interviews. Focused teacher-student conferences were scheduled twice a week per the normal classroom routine. During this time, I talked with students about their writing and peer conferences while identifying changes, if any, to student stories. Unstructured interviews were conducted to gather more insight from conference observations, work samples, and peer conference evaluations as well.

Work Samples. Select student work samples were collected that reflected peer conference effect and influence. Work samples were matched and compared with relevant observations and interviews.

Preparing for Peer Conferences

Before the onset of the study, I modeled dialogical writing conferences with my students. Our teacher-student conferences were relaxed conversational exchanges about personal writing projects. Next, we practiced conferencing as a group. Through modeled writing and personal story sharing, I coached my students in how to listen deeply to my in-process stories, without interruption. Then, I invited them into my writing process, and they came right in! They were free to ask questions or suggest changes to my work. Finally, we practiced conferencing in small groups of four. I supported groups at this time, encouraging them to listen carefully and ask questions when needed. This phase was challenging; the opportunity for off-task behavior seemed to sky-rocket with groups of four.

Just before I began data collection, students began sharing stories with a partner of choice, offering compliments, and asking questions. We established sharing stories, shoulder to shoulder, so both partners could see the text. We practiced reading along and listening attentively. We practiced transitions from individual quiet writing into peer conference stance.

Believing I had adequately modeled and coached effective peer conferring practices, I partnered students of mixed-writing ability. Peer partners were reassigned bi-weekly. I chose not to provide them with a peer conferencing guide sheet. I wanted students to focus their attention on stories and partner conversations rather than a task list. Keri Franklin's (2010) study on developing social skills within peer conferences affirmed that "peer conferences should look more like a conversation than a review of a checklist" (p.83).

Findings

Each finding was supported by multiple sources of data collected throughout the study. I have included a sampling of the evidential data within each larger finding. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the findings to ensure student confidentiality. In some cases, I have generalized quotes and dialogue to protect the identity of the student.

What Happens When Third Graders Peer Conference on their Writing?

After examining observations of peer conferences alongside reflections, journal entries, interviews, and work samples, three major themes surfaced from the cumulative data: Third-grade peer conferences motivated my students to write. They engaged in conversations that supported their writing process. And finally, my third-grade students demonstrated audience awareness, prompting investment into writing quality.

Motivation to Write

The first theme that emerged from the data was a surge in student motivation to share stories, write stories, and collaborate on writing. The classroom writing time shifted from lagging silence to energetic chatter, a back-and-forth banter about writing topics, ideas, corrections, and encouragement. Stories begot stories and unplanned writing partnerships were formed. Writing morphed into a type of science, something to be explored and tampered with; excitement was just as evident in the morning writing session as the afternoon magnetism lesson.

> *Teacher Researcher Reflection*
>
> *Wow! My classroom came ALIVE during writing. There was a complete shift in atmosphere from the teacher-student conference. Every single child was talking and happy and engaged. Chattering! No awkward silence. I was happy. I watched my teaching and mini lessons come forth. But this was hard too. I wanted to step in and fix things. You know, quiet down a little. Get to work! Now, it felt weird that writing was so noisy. Can writing be noisy? It was today.*

Preliminary student self-reflections revealed that 42% of my class enjoyed writing. From additional written comments on the self-reflection forms, I learned my students desire plenty of time and space to write creatively, without time limits or topics. At the end of the study, 83% of my class reported that writing was something they loved to do. Additionally, students wrote about how their view of writing had changed. One student said, "I have changed in a good way with my writing. I've improved also, and I write a lot more now than in second grade." Another student wrote, "It really helps to do writing with friends like the time we did the 'Morning-to-Evening' stories. I used to like writing okay, but now it is great!" When writing became an interactive social experience, students liked writing more, and they saw growth in their writing.

Peer conferences became the launching point for new stories; stories were written in free time, lunch, and recess. Notes were passed (Appendix A) as invitations to create stories outside the writing workshop. Students continually asked for time and opportunities to meet and write with their friends. The collaboration of peer conferences ignited a contagious desire to write, and an underground network of writing projects and partners was born. Writing occurred in every nook and cranny of the classroom.

Supportive Conversations About Writing

Topics of conversation between students during peer conferences presented keen insight into the nature of peer conferences. The observation and transcription of peer conference conversations revealed a significant level of writing skill, development, and metacognitive practice. While transcribing student dialogues, I noted classroom mini-lessons taught aloud, echoes of teacher-student conference talk, and imaginative stories coming together.

In thirty observed conferences, discussions about story content were most commonly noted. However, no conferring topic existed in isolation from the other topics. Just behind talks about content, students used their conferences to make mechanical corrections and solve problems in their writing. Throughout the study, I observed a surprisingly low number of off-task behaviors; student participants were thoroughly engaged in the peer conference sessions. Off-task behaviors presented only a few seconds and were best described as age-appropriate. Two conference sessions revealed a stall in conversation and a one-way conversation, with at least one of the participants reluctant to share. Students did not discuss organizational aspects of writing in isolation very often, however verbal rehearsals supported the writer as an organizational map for writing their stories.

Peer conferences were best understood as a natural and flowing exchange of conversation between writers. Each peer conference session was an eclectic compilation of several topics, addressing several writing aspects specific to the piece being shared. The interconnectedness of the conference conversational flow can be visualized in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1
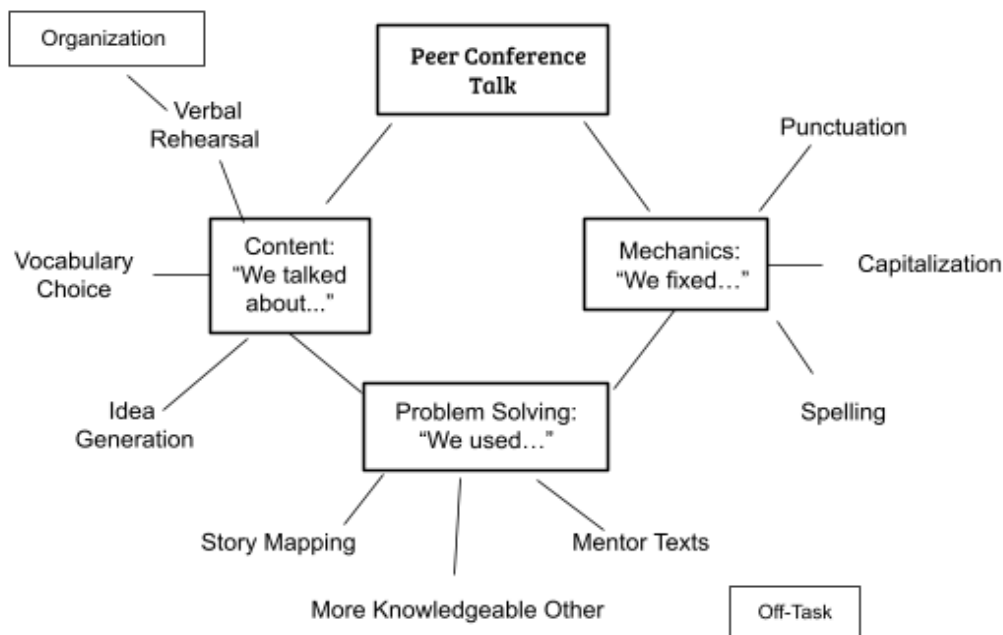
The peer conference observation below demonstrated how students helped solve problems with their writing. Problem-solving conversations were connected to both content and mechanical

correction types of conversations. Often, if one partner stalled, the other partner suggested a resourceful way to move the writing process forward.

> *Peer Conference: Logan and Andrew*
>
> Logan: *You have "supper" spelled "super." It doesn't matter. I know what to do.*
>
> Andrew: *What?*
>
> Logan: *Supper has "pp" in it.* (Lots of giggling.) *Super supper.*
>
> Andrew changes the spelling.
>
> Logan: *Okay, what do we add to the story now?*
>
> Andrew: *Hmmm, let's think. I don't know. Let's just talk about it. Or we could look at our story maps.*

Each peer conference shifted between several writing topics, no matter what stage of the writing process. While brainstorming, students helped one another with spelling on story maps. While story mapping, students verbally organized their stories. When drafting or sharing, students used mentor texts to help them spell. When students read back their drafted stories, they made corrections, added omitted words, or stopped to talk about what they planned to write next.

Conversations about story writing flowed naturally for students, requiring minimal support from me, the teacher.

Audience Awareness = Better Writers

Through peer conferences, my third graders grew into better writers. When asked about revisions to student writing after peer conferral, the most common explanation was, "It sounded better this way." The more I investigated this statement through teacher-student conferences, work samples, and interviews, the more I understood audience awareness elevated through the act of peer conferencing. In response to audience awareness, students made meaningful changes and improvements to their writing.

Students wanted to write with organizational flow and clarity. Through collaborative sharing and conferral, student writers sought to improve organization and clarity in their writing as evidenced below.

> *Work Sample:* (Appendix B)
>
> After a peer conference session, I met with a student who made an organizational revision to her report on beavers. In our conference, I asked her to explain the arrows and "P2" on her draft page.
>
> *Teacher-Student Interview: Amy*
>
> Me: *Tell me about this arrow.*

Amy: *Well, I had a conference with my partner. When I read it to her, I thought it would sound better if I told about the beaver's body first, so I drew an arrow to where I wanted that part to go. When I publish it, I will write this part first.*

Me: *What did your partner think?*

Amy: *She liked it better. It sounded more like it made sense when I read it to her this way.*

Students were prompted by their partners to use descriptive language when they wrote in collaboration. The use of vivid vocabulary evolved as a thematic discussion among the writing partnerships.

Peer Conference: Brandon and Riley

Riley: *Hey, listen to this, "He was a fat burly soldier with a sweet potato for a nose."*

Brandon: *I like that. That sounds like the book. Where are you going?*

Riley: *To get my book to spell "Elizabeth."*

Riley leaves to get the book we have been reading from.

Brandon: *I am going to say, "He hoisted me over the side of the boat."*

Riley: *No, you should write, "Over the side of the **sloop.**"*

Brandon: *Yeah, that's a better word.*

Peer conferences allowed students the opportunity to find and fix mechanical errors as they shared. Through their partnerships, students produced writing with better conventional quality and readability.

Teacher Researcher Observation Journal

While sharing stories, two girls identified their mistakes, but they didn't have their pencils with them. One of the girls remarked, "Hey, let's just fix these now." They both hopped to their chairs to get pencils. One grabbed a spell-helper card to correct her spelling. The other knew her mistake and corrected it without help. When both were finished correcting their mistakes, each shared the corrected portion again.

My third graders were motivated to write when they were invited to confer or collaborate with a peer partner. They talked about their writing processes through a natural flow of conversation, responsive to the story they were sharing. Finally, audience awareness guided my students in becoming better writers. Peer conference sharing and collaboration grew students in their authorship.

Considerations and Implications

This study aimed to investigate peer conferences holistically, describing both the nature and outcomes of peer conferring in a third-grade writer's workshop. By pairing my findings

alongside previous study findings, discussion and implications for peer conferring were determined.

Sociocultural Theory in Practice

Through peer conferencing, our writing workshop became a social learning experience reaching beyond story sharing, offering compliments, and asking questions. When students were invited to be participants in the writing process, the priority of the workshop turned from products to processes. Interactions between student participants became a meaningful component of the writing workshop (Hodges, 2017).

Cathy Hsu (2009) described her attempt to introduce writing partnerships in her fourth-grade classroom. She wrote, "Students were turning to their partners, initiating lively conversations. They were thinking hard and were reexamining their drafts. Shy writers were speaking up. The room buzzed with fruitful talk. I circulated, observed, and joined in when necessary. A simple change yielded a big difference" (p. 153). As I read this teacher's experience, I was reminded of my observation journal. The buzz of student chatter and engagement took the focus off me as the primary knower of writing. The pressured feeling of being outnumbered during writing diminished significantly as peer partners turned to one another and not toward me.

My class and I developed a collaborative view of writing. By embracing the idea that writing could include working with a friend to collaborate and co-author, the motivation for writing increased dramatically. When students shared the experience of developing their writing skills through oral and written language, they formed a community of practice, as described in the sociocultural theory of writing (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006).

Motivation

Calkins (2020) asserted when students leave writing conferences, they should want to write more. The desire to write increased just more than 40% when I embedded peer conferring into our writing workshop. Schutz (1997) described this in her study as well, "Through collaborative interactions, students gained power and authority for their writing. It was these relationships that engaged the students, motivated them to write, and guided and supported them as they became writers" (p.279). Schulz's study suggested when teachers entrust conferences to students, they allowed student agency in writing. Just the same, when my students conferred on their writing, they took ownership of their writing processes. In turn, they wanted to invest more time into their writing. The writing became theirs, not mine.

With peer conferences in place, my students not only enjoyed our writing workshop time, but they formed writing partnerships outside the scheduled writing time. They made plans for times and places they could find to write together: lunch, free time, recess, and read-to-self time. When writing collaboratively with a friend became a possibility to them, their desire to write together was unchartable. Schultz (1997) posited that students should be allowed to form a variety of writing partnerships and arrangements, allowing for the networking of stories and texts among students themselves.

Implications for Practice

Teachers who have kept conferring confined to teacher and students in their writing workshops can consider embedding peer conferences into their writing time. Allowing students to confer provides engaging and valuable participation in the writing process.

For this study, I reassigned writing partners bi-weekly. Hsu's (2009) suggestion to implement longer-lasting writing partner relationships is spot on. With quick and abrupt partner changes, my students endured an initial warm-up of awkward introductory talk. This impacted valuable writing conference time and conversation flow. Dix and Cawkwell (2011) wrote, "Consistent grouping provided a community of practice, where security and trust developed for all the writers" (p. 52).

When students wrote in collaboration and formed writing partnerships, they needed more time to write. They asked for time and space outside the classroom schedule for writing. Kissel (2017) suggested students have thirty to sixty minutes of writing time five days a week. Embedding time to write is an area that teachers must negotiate in their planning. Limited writing time presents a realistic barrier for motivated writers in the classroom.

For Further Research. An area for further research is the role self-efficacy plays in the atmosphere and conversation flow of peer conferences. My observations revealed confident student writers were more likely to lead conversations during peer conferences. They also asked for more peer conferral time. Students considered less enthusiastic about writing had a harder time conferring. These students appeared quiet, embarrassed, and shy, possibly reluctant to engage in conversation.

This same behavior was observed and described in Bayraktar's (2013) research on the nature and dynamics of teacher-student conferences. Students with lower self-efficacy initiated or participated in conversations far less than those students with higher self-efficacy. Self-efficacy in teacher-student writing conferences has been described in previous research; however, the role self-efficacy plays in peer conferences is an area to be further investigated.

Engaging Supportive Discourses

Through peer conferences, my students engaged in meaningful discourses about their writing. No peer conference topic existed in isolation, as the conference conversation flowed alongside the story being shared. Hawkins (2019) discovered this same trend in her observations of teacher-student dialogic conferences. As students shared their writing with their teacher, they engaged in varied types of conversations in response to the writing stage, story, and student needs.

Third graders in this study engaged in content discussions most often and reported these conversations most helpful to them. Hawkins' (2019) study found this to be true in her study of teacher-student conference discourses. Students spoke of content and practiced verbal rehearsals of their stories most often; these types of conversations supported student writers best in writing content and quality. Third-grade participants in this study engaged in much less dialogue when they were editing or drafting. The more knowledgeable student led the conversation, correcting and making changes to mechanical problems in their peer's stories. This same pattern of minimal discourse during transcription and edits was described in Hawkins' (2019) study; teachers led

these conversations as students needed teacher scaffolding in this area of their writing development.

Implications for Practice

By comparing the results of this study with Hawkins' (2019) findings, teachers can infer that peer conferences have the potential of mirroring teacher-student conferences in topic and nature. When teachers model interactive and engaging dialogue in teacher-student conferences, students can have supportive and meaningful discourses about writing amongst themselves. While peer conferences should not be substitutionary for teacher-student conferences, they can certainly enhance the writing workshop conferring practice.

Student conferrers were balanced in the back-and-forth exchange of constructive conversation. Drawing from their conference observations, I was challenged to talk less and listen more during my teacher-student conferences. I made an intentional effort to correct less, and I allowed students opportunities to study their writing practices without prodding them in the direction I determined. The simple act of talking less made teacher-student conferences more enjoyable on both sides of the conversation. Hawkins (2019) urged teachers to "consciously enact conferences in ways that are best suited to their intended instructional purposes for each unique conference interaction and also responsive to students' needs in the moment" (p.42). Hawkins' implication was exactly what I observed students doing in their peer conferences: students responding at the moment to the writing need.

For Further Research. An area of research inquiry that emerged in this study was the value of verbal rehearsal. Verbal rehearsals before writing became a monumental addition to our writing workshop process that had been missing. With the verbal rehearsal, students organized their stories, bounced around ideas, and got immediate feedback on the direction of their stories. Karen Gallas (2011) brought this idea to light for me when she wrote, "When children's interactions with texts, props, and cultural tools are created with the awareness that they will have a more public viewing, their work moves into the realm of what I am calling authoring" (p.476).

Authoring stories started with the verbal rehearsal, the acting out, or the initial drawing and explaining of ideas in our workshop conference times. Young authors need verbal rehearsals embedded in their writing process. Moving the story outside the imagination needs an oral foundation before the pencil marks the page. Knowing that oral language is the hub to writing and reading development (Bear, et al., 2016), we must value verbal expression and practice as a vital part of the reading and writing process.

Audience Awareness and Better Writing

Franklin (2010) believed the cornerstone components of the writing classroom include: Writing for a variety of audiences, responding to writing in a variety of ways, and allowing students time to talk about their writing. As my third graders became aware of their audience, they immediately began to invest more time and thought into improving the quality of their writing. As they shared their stories, they evaluated their intended meaning and the listener's realized

meaning. Their peer partners asked questions for clarity and story organization. Students noticed and corrected mistakes in mechanical and spelling conventions. They added more details to stories in response to listener feedback. Dix and Cawkwell (2011) described a motivational surge and investment in the quality of student writing in a study on peer-group responses. When students provided listening audiences for one another, "their interactive feedback sustained the writer." (p.54). When students worked with partners, they became aware of the listener as their audience and elevated their writing "to a higher plane" (Koshewa, 2011, p.50).

Implications for Practice

The broader benefits of children sharing their writing with their peers and beyond should become a priority for teachers. Unless students write for an audience, their writing stays personal. Karen Gallas (2001) wrote,

> In writing workshops, the public sharing of texts by student authors with peers is considered essential to the development of young writers. While the author's work is created apart from the world, it is also created with an awareness of a future audience and eventually comes in contact with a listener or reader (p. 477).

Teachers, let children share their stories! Let them share them in all their silliness, messiness, and beauty. If our students are willing to share their stories with friends and classmates, put their imaginations and knowledge out there, go public with their creations, shouldn't we let them? As they do, they will become better authors, designing their work, not only for themselves but for their audiences.

For Further Research. Are we allowing our children to write creatively and collaboratively in a writer's workshop model, being inspired by both literature and imagination? Much research is to be done on the effects of silencing the imaginative student author who is being trained to take tests and make gains. If the fullness of literacy includes both writing and reading, it is worth investigating where we are as teachers in developing young authors in our classrooms.

Conclusion

My desire to pull third graders deeper into the writing process prompted an investigation into my classroom writer's workshop. I identified frustration with conferring specifically, as it was nearly impossible to have relaxed dialogical conferences with all my students weekly. I transferred conferring to my students throughout the week. What happened when my third graders peer conferenced on their writing? They became enthusiastic authors who enjoyed talking about their writing, and they grew into better writers! Writing workshops can be a buzzing chatter of cooperative writing development, shaping both writing processes and products.

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Do you want to start
writing a story? Hopefully it will
be one hundred pages.

Respond: One Hundred Pages! that seems

vealy long yes but now do you want

to do our X game.

Beavers

*Beavers are very interesting,

When they are old anough to have kits,
P2 2
they pick a mate for life. It usaly takes

a beaver a couple of weeks to build

a lodge, when there is a hole in their
lodge
beavers do not show their faces
This means they can stay under
while they fix it. A beavers lodge close to
15 minutes.
is 20 ft wide and 11 ft with.
larger than you might guess.
Beavers are very big, they are 42 inches long.

Author Bio

Krystal Keener holds her master's degree in Elementary Education. She has been teaching in some capacity for 24 years and currently teaches third grade in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She enjoys reviewing, evaluating, and developing the language arts curriculum at her school as well as teacher research. While Krystal appreciates collaborating with colleagues, her favorite place is the classroom. There is nothing quite like watching an eight-year-old discover the joy of learning!

READ & STRIKE & HAVE A GOOD NIGHT: STRIKE AT NIGHT VIRTUAL LITERACY CAMP

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine the pilot program, STRIKE (Sustaining Technology- and Reading-Infused Kid-Friendly Education) at Night Literacy Camp, a week-long bedtime read-aloud camp held virtually on Facebook and YouTube Live platforms. The online program aims to increase access to culturally relevant, high-quality literature, include multiliteracies via read-alouds and address potential summer loss while children are typically away from their structured academic settings. STRIKE at Night is founded upon five pillars: the science of reading, family involvement, read-alouds, combating summer reading loss, and culturally responsive literature. The purpose of this article is to discuss how grant writing, community partnerships, and strategic online marketing led to increased viewership, total registrations, and ultimately, program impact outside of the target market in Florida. Further, the authors consider the challenges faced when launching a grassroots literacy campaign.

READ & STRIKE & Have a Good Night: STRIKE at Night Virtual Literacy Camp

We READ, and we STRIKE, and we have a good NIGHT!

New York Giants wide receiver Darius Slayton is a great sport—no pun intended. A fifth-round draft pick from Auburn University, he already has 98 receptions for 1,491 yards and 11 touchdowns, leading his team in receiving yards and touchdowns in each of his first two seasons in the NFL. In 2019, Slayton finished top 15 overall in touchdowns–tied for first among all rookie receivers. Tonight, he is about a week away from beginning his third season and has agreed to participate as a celebrity guest reader for an online literacy camp. "I need to pay my barber a visit right now so that he can mold me like a lump of clay so that they'll want to put me in a museum," he laughs as he finishes an engaging, exciting reading of Derrick Barnes's *Crown: Ode to the Fresh Cut.* Barnes's *Crown* is an eloquent, rhythmic ode to how a trip to the barbershop develops confidence in Black boys worldwide. Darius *knows* this experience. He *lives* it. And he is talking about it with children and adults who are tuned in to this episode of STRIKE at Night (SAN) Literacy Camp. Then, without flinching, this NFL superstar closes the way STRIKE Camp Counselors Cheron and Jhaneil open and close each night, complete with

dramatically animated childish gestures and movements--- *We READ, and we STRIKE, and we have a good NIGHT!*

STRIKE (Sustaining Technology- and Reading-Infused Kid-Friendly Education) at Night Literacy Camp is a week-long bedtime read-aloud camp, held virtually on Facebook and YouTube Live platforms. STRIKE at Night was founded upon five pillars: the science of reading, family involvement, read-alouds, summer reading, and culturally responsive, high-quality literature. This program's purpose is twofold: to promote literacy activities that align with multiliteracies and increase access to multicultural, culturally relevant literature. Prior research indicates that read-alouds are beneficial for language and literacy development, necessary for successful schooling (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Sipe, 2002). SAN also provides caregivers with supplemental literacy activities, allowing parents and adults to actively engage with their child(ren) to acquire the different components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). This program promotes increased read-alouds using easily accessible social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Due to the target population, it was also essential to the researchers to provide this opportunity for children and families at no cost, and these platforms made that possible. Additionally, this program allows literacy professionals to engage in advocacy by emphasizing the importance of multicultural literature while marketing and promoting the SAN Summer Camp in their school and community networks.

Critical Review of the Research

The culture of standardized assessment and, consequently, narrow curricula in education often disincentivizes the innovative, creative ways teachers can implement literary practices in classrooms. Children's reading becomes a laborious effort based on points and token systems that do not encourage self-motivation but rather competition. Thus, literacy is reduced to a skill set that includes decoding written symbols (letters) and stringing them together. Moreover, it is redundant and restrictive due to its inability to engage children, particularly those from differing racial and lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Fernald et al., 2013, Hart & Risely, 2003; Snow, 2013). As teachers (and teacher educators), it is our job to examine and challenge these exclusive notions.

Policies emanating from crises have produced systems of exclusion and racial subjugation. Narrow definitions of literacy can be traced back to the restrictive notion that only school-based literacy is authentic and valuable (Mahiri & Sablo, 1996). For example, the well-known report *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), issued by the Reagan administration over thirty years ago, declared education in the United States to be a failure. "Our nation is at risk," it began. The report narrowed the curriculum and proposed testing policies to foster segregation and inequity (Kendi, 2016a; Knoester & Au, 2017). It offered, as proof, the following "indicators of risk:"

- Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension

- About 13 percent of all 17-year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent (NCEE, 1983).

As the Reading Excellence Act (HR 2614) was being signed into law in 1998 under the guise of seemingly neutral concepts of rigor and achievement (Kendi, 2016a, 2016b; Riley, 2017), two key reports were commissioned by expert panels authorized by the US Congress: (1) *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) and (2) *Teaching Children to Read: A Report of the National Reading Panel* (National Reading Panel, 2000). No Child Left Behind legislation was directly informed and funded by recommendations from these documents.

Historically and systemically, minoritized students have been denied the rights to reading and writing based on narrow definitions of reading and writing employed by legislation. In this country, literacy definitions, materials, and measures suppress many students' right to read because they are unlikely to mirror their experiences and everyday lives. With a five-pillared approach (see Figure 1) to reaching students during non-tradition academic times of the day and year, SAN uses an evidence-based, culturally relevant approach to combat students' disinterest and potential reading loss. SAN's virtual read-aloud format brings reading into homes during the summer, a time when reading could wane. SAN contributes to a home library by distributing books to participants, increasing accessibility to multicultural, culturally relevant reading material.

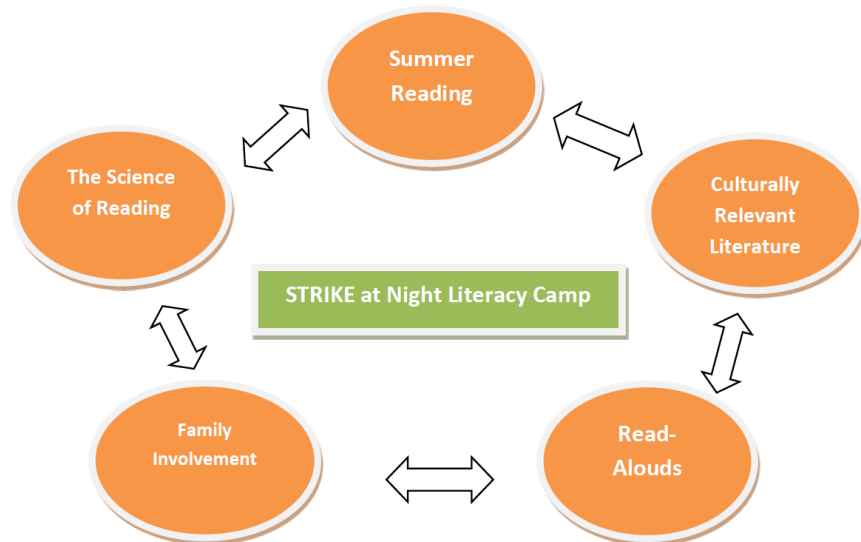Figure 1

Five Pillars of STRIKE at Night Literacy Camp

Figure 1: Details the five elements that are foundational to STRIKE at Night Literacy Camp programming.

Summer Reading Loss

Summer reading loss refers to the decline in children's reading development that can occur when children are away from the classroom and not participating in formal literacy programs (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). Research suggests that students can lose between one month and a few months of reading skills during the summer break from school (Bullard, 2020; Alexander et al., 2007; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Cooper et al., 1996; Entwisle et al., 1997; Entwisle et al., 2001). Like many other literacy challenges, summer reading loss presents as an issue of achievement, but more importantly, access. For example, Jackson and Howard (2014) noted that children experience summer reading loss when they lack access to books and reading instruction during summer break from school.

Thus, not all students experience summer reading loss; rather, economically disadvantaged students experience summer reading loss while reading skills continue to grow for more economically advantaged students during the summer break from school (Alexander et al., 2007; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). The results of a meta-analysis of 11 studies on summer reading loss suggest that the summer break from instruction results in a three-month reading gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged students (Cooper et al., 1996). In addition, Heyns' (1978) findings suggest that reading activity, which requires access to books and reading instruction, is the activity most strongly correlated to learning during the summer break from school. Approximately 55% of all Florida students (about 1.56 million students) were documented as eligible for free lunch in 2018/2019, indicating lower socioeconomic status and, consequently, higher risk of summer reading loss due to potential access issues (Department of Education, 2019).

Some studies suggest that improving book access during the summer break from school for children from economically disadvantaged households effectively reduces summer reading loss (Allington et al., 2010; Kim & Guryan, 2010). For example, Kim (2004) examined a district-wide, reading-focused summer program with fourth and sixth graders from four different ethnic groups. The results suggest that reading approximately five books during the summer break may prevent summer reading loss for children in intermediate grades. Additionally, Kim (2006) reported that a summer book distribution program had significant effects (p= .12) on the fall reading skills of all students, but the largest significant effect was for Black students. Therefore, book access positively correlated with the volume of summer reading and negatively correlated with summer reading loss.

Culturally Relevant, High-Quality Literature

According to Ladson-Billings (1992), culturally relevant pedagogy is a subfield of multicultural education (e.g., Gibson, 1976; Sleeter & Grant, 1987), which emphasizes that all students (regardless of gender, social class, ethnicity, race, or culture) should have equal opportunities to learn and succeed in schools (Banks, 1993). Culturally relevant pedagogy addresses academic achievement while fostering students' cultural identity development and the critical thinking skills to challenge the status quo (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 2009, 2014). Teachers utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy respond to the cultures of the specific students in the classroom by linking learning to understanding and appreciation of students' cultures (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper. 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009, 2014; Rychly & Graves, 2012).

One element of culturally relevant pedagogy is the curriculum. Researchers have studied the importance of using curricula that includes culturally reflective texts or books that allow readers to see themselves. Bishop (1990) first described participants as reading from insider or outsider perspectives, more commonly referred to as windows and mirrors. Books serve as windows when students are not represented in the text. Books function as mirrors when students can see themselves represented in the text. In their research with teacher educators of color, Suh and Hinton (2015) found that the participants engaged in discussions around the text that allowed them to share intimate cultural knowledge as both speaker and listener: This affirmed their identities and validated their ways of knowing. While window texts can be helpful when learning about other cultures, we chose mirror, or culturally reflective texts, as evidence shows that it correlates to increased reading interest (Suh & Hinton, 2015).

The implementation of the curriculum is also vitally important. SAN's is grounded in the science of reading, family involvement, read-alouds, combating summer reading loss, and culturally responsive literature. SAN read-alouds begin with a camp counselor introducing the text's theme before the guest reader begins reading. After the reading, the camp counselor engages the guest reader in the discussion, an activity intended to facilitate comprehension think-aloud strategies for children watching and parents or caretakers to implement at home. These higher-order questions encourage deeper critical thinking beyond rote memorization of facts such as characters or settings and allow students to think deeply about texts to make connections using comprehension strategies (discussed further in *The Science of Reading* section). Finally, the curriculum frequently provides follow-up activities and websites for registrants to visit for more information about the books read during the camp.

As a critical component of the program is to foster children's love of reading, books are selected based on the ability to implement activities derived from children's lived experiences (CDF, 2020; Chilcoat & Ligon, 1999; Jackson & Boutte, 2009; Jackson & Howard, 2014). To increase authenticity, the chosen authors are culturally diverse, like Black authors Matthew A. Cherry and Derrick Barnes. The books focus on topics of particular relevance/interest to students from non-dominant cultures (e.g., discrimination, racism, immigration, bullying, i.e., developing cultural competence).

The Case for Read-Alouds

Although the affective domains of education are often overlooked and undervalued, a vast body of research supports the benefits of reading aloud to young children (Lane & Wright, 2007; Roberts & Burchinal, 2002). Read-alouds are adult-mediated interactions during which teachers use intonation, gestures, prosody, and facial expressions to provide clues about word meanings. A report by Anderson and colleagues (1985) entitled *Becoming a Nation of Readers* found that the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children. For beginning readers, read-alouds serve as the gateway to language learning because children's listening comprehension is greater than their reading comprehension. When engaged in a read-aloud, children begin to understand more complex ideas, vocabulary, language patterns, and ultimately, the structure of books when they become independent readers (Fountas & Pinnell, 2020). While especially important for developing

readers, students of any age can benefit from hearing a fluent reading of excellent literature. Thus, SAN selects guest readers for read- alouds that represent various age groups, occupations, genders, and backgrounds. This intentional selection promotes excitement and engagement through perceived familiarity by the viewers with the readers during the read-aloud event.

Family Involvement

Parents, and other supportive adults, are children's first teachers, particularly in literacy development (Anderson, 2000; Cassidy et al., 2004). Family involvement is a complex and multidimensional construct, encompassing school-based involvement, adult-child interactions at home, and scheduling children's leisure time (Park, 2008). Family involvement mediates summer reading loss or creates the summer opportunities gap, especially in reading development. Students who perform at higher levels of achievement are more likely to report more familial support than students who perform at lower levels of achievement (Alfara et al., 2006). Researchers have found that family involvement can vary by racial identity and social class (Bodovski & Farkas, 2008; Cheadle, 2008; Lareau, 2002; Zhang et al., 2020). However, what is clear is that future reading achievement can be enhanced by family-child interactions in literacy-rich home environments (Fan, 2001; Park, 2008; Zhang et al., 2020). Taking this into consideration, access to programming like STRIKE at Night Literacy Camp is integral in creating literacy-rich, family events for home engagement.
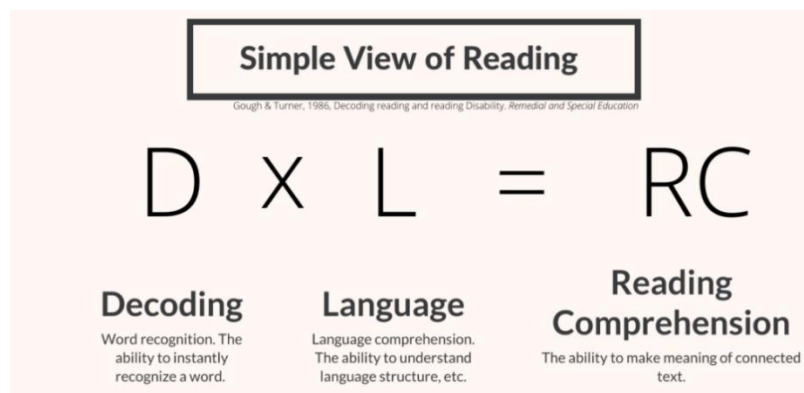
Building Strong Readers Through the Five and More

According to the National Reading Panel, effective reading instructions and programs are based on five solid pillars, which ultimately makes up the foundation of reading: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2002). With the inclusion of the five pillars and active read alouds, STRIKE at Night was able to successfully engage viewers in a three-night summer camp full of fluent and comprehensive guest readers. Repeated exposure to read-alouds with modeling of appropriate language and fluency encourages the love of reading (Marchessault & Larwin, 2014). The end goal for each night, was to leave each viewer with intrinsic motivation to not only read more during times when instructional schooling is out, but also for our older viewers to share their gift to fluently read by reading aloud when possible.

Learning to read transforms lives. Research has shown that the indirect costs to low literacy contribute to the likelihood of poor physical and mental health, lower socioeconomic status, and increased involvement in crime (World Literacy Federation, 2015). While many agree on the importance of reading, there is no consensus on how the task should be implemented. "Reading wars" continue a metaphorical tug-of-war between a *phonics* approach, in which sounds that letters make are taught explicitly (Chall, 1967; Flesch, 1955), versus a *whole-language approach,* which emphasizes the child's meaning discovery in a literacy-rich environment (Goodman, 1967). The debate around these approaches has resulted in extensive research in psychological science spanning several decades. As a result, a large and diverse body of research now documents reading development and the cognitive processes that skilled readers utilize to understand the text.

The Simple View of Reading, a model first presented by Gough and Tunmer (1986), states that only both decoding (*word recognition)* and language comprehension *(listening comprehension)* must be present for reading comprehension (see Figure 2). In other words, children must learn essential skills to understand the words of the page while also developing their understanding of literacy and the world. Although reading is inherently complex, this model demonstrates how the essential subskills of reading (phoneme awareness, phonics, fluency, word recognition, etc.) can be assigned to decoding and language, seen on the left side of their equation. With the combination of the five pillars of reading and the components of literacy, SAN read-alouds were designed to take the approach to achieve mathematical balance, the *listening comprehension* noted here as reading comprehension on the right side of the equation must also be optimal.

Figure 2

The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986)

Simple View of Reading

Gough & Turner, 1986. Decoding reading and reading Disability. *Remedial and Special Education*

$$D \times L = RC$$

Decoding
Word recognition. The ability to instantly recognize a word.

Language
Language comprehension. The ability to understand language structure, etc.

Reading Comprehension
The ability to make meaning of connected text.

In addition to orthographic, linguistic, and general knowledge as crucial sources to be acquired to understand text (Perfetti and Stafura, 2014), children need to have adequate background knowledge for comprehension. Through previewing, readers activate top-down processing for reading comprehension by making predictions about the text (Chia, 2001). In addition, easily accessible relevant background knowledge provides more coherent text representations and more salient reading experiences for children and read-alouds offer the opportunity for post-reading discussion. SAN Literacy Camp read-aloud events capitalize on those integrational opportunities by introducing guest readers with books talks, an inventive way of activating the background knowledge of the viewers (children).

Theoretical Framework

We utilize the faucet theory to demonstrate the importance of summer reading activities. Entwisle and colleagues (2001) developed the "faucet theory" to explain the phenomenon of summer reading loss. When the faucet is on (i.e., when students are receiving academic instruction in their schools), the reading skills of all children, regardless of economic background, develop. However, during the summer break from school (i.e., when the faucet is off), the reading skills of economically advantaged children continue to develop, whereas the reading skills of economically disadvantaged children do not develop and possibly decline (Allington et al., 2010; Entwisle et al., 2001).

The faucet metaphor originated from the Beginning School Study (BSS) findings that tracked students' learning patterns beginning in first grade through adulthood (Alexander et al., 2007). The BSS study revealed that the rich/poor achievement gap increases when students are not in school. Specifically, the study revealed that the achievement gaps are cumulative and that the disparities for some students are measured, not in months, but rather in years (e.g., Alexander et al., 2007). Critics of the faucet theory cite its overreliance on standardized testing as a measure of knowledge. Instead, critics advocated for more comprehensive strategies for measuring different "funds of knowledge" that minorities and other members of the non-dominant class possess (Moll et al., 1992).

To address the criticisms of faucet theory, we draw upon multiliteracies and critical literacy, more culturally sensitive lenses that consider multiple factors when analyzing bioecological data. The Multiliteracies Theory was formulated to address two related trends: increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of learners; and the changing landscape of literacy, including the rise of new technologies" (The New London Group, 1996 as cited in Simon, 2011). Similarly, Cope and Kalantzis (2000, as cited by Simon, 2011) state that multiliteracies include utilizing multiple communication channels for reading and comprehension. By representing reading as an oral, communal act and integrating social media into the reading and comprehension process, we hope to mitigate what is seen as reading loss. Multiliteracies also allow for the beginning of examining identity and privilege within literacy.

Critical literacy builds upon multiliteracies in that the goal is empowerment. According to Freire (2001), literacy is a tool to help understand the written word and the world around you. Thus, literacy examines the relationship between reader, writer, and the greater society. It also interrogates power dynamics and systems of oppression as the goal is empowerment. Students can decide whose voices are valued and disregarded by examining which texts teachers include in their curricula (Ryan & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2019). The books are chosen for SAN help to affirm the experiences and value of the target audience through a representation of authentic experiences and conversations.

Overview of the Project

STRIKE at Night Literacy Camp is an online read-aloud non-profit organization accessible to viewers through two virtual platforms: YouTube and Facebook Live. Readings for the first event aired simultaneously on both platforms. This camp took place on July 12-15, 2021, 8:00-8:30 EST. Guest readers engaged viewers with one of the specifically selected culturally relevant books. Guest readers included NFL wide receiver for the New York Giants, Darius Slayton, Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools National Director Dr. Kristal Moore Clemons, and author of *A Kids Book About Leadership and* founder of *Race to Kindness*, ten-year-old Orion Jean. Each night, ten children were randomly selected to receive $50 book gift certificates using an application called Spin the Wheel Random Picker. This app is a decision-making wheel where users can add custom labels. Using a Google form, participants were required to submit the children's names and parents' or guardians' email addresses to enter the drawing. Winners were announced and displayed on the screen to see the contest outcomes each night.

Advertising

For advertising, the researchers used social media, electronic mail, and local television network news. Social media support in the form of retweets and shares also contributed to increased viewership at a minimal cost. The researchers were also able to access local school districts and colleges of education to solicit participation in the literacy camp. Additionally, the local news station ran a promotional story on the 6 PM evening news five days before the event.

Funding

Researchers secured grant funding for the project from two organizations: The National Science Foundation and The Specialized Literacy Professionals. Grant funding was mainly used to support the purchase of books given away during the live events.

Literature

The celebrity guest readers elected to read culturally representative picture books that celebrate the experiences of children of color in literature. NFL wide receiver Darius Slayton read *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* by Derrick Barnes. This rhythmic, high-spirited text celebrates how boys feel when they leave the barber's chair. Dr. Kristal Moore Clemons dazzled audiences by reading Connie Schofield-Morrison's *I Got the Rhythm.* On a simple trip to the park, the joy of music overtakes this young Black girl and her mother. Readers are taken on a boogie through the streets as the little girl struts her stuff to the beat of her own drum. The book celebrates self-expression and full awareness of her senses. Finally, 10-year-old author and philanthropist Orion Jean chose to read the New York Times Best Seller and award-winning *The Word Collector* by Peter Reynolds, a natural choice for a voracious reader like himself. In the book, Jerome discovers the magic of words and celebrates the impact of sharing your words with the world. Each reader was generous in sharing their time and talent with the SAN viewers.

Evaluating Strengths and Challenges of Pilot SAN Program

Event registrants and attendees were asked to complete an online survey that consisted of 12 items, both Likert-scale and short answer questions. The survey was administered, and data was collected via Qualtrics. Participants were solicited via email and social media.

Demographic Information

Twenty-two participants responded and completed the post-event survey. The week-long event targeted audiences in Florida, specifically the Tallahassee tri-county area. Based on registration data, registrants from 26 different states signed up to attend the event, and viewers from 34 states and four countries (United States, Canada, Ireland, and Haiti) tuned in to the live broadcast.

Which of the following nights did you attend the live event? You may select more than one if you attended multiple nights.
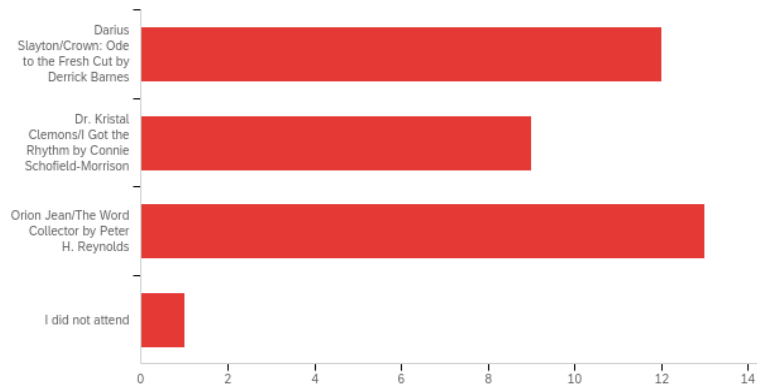
How did you hear about STRIKE at Night Literacy Camp?
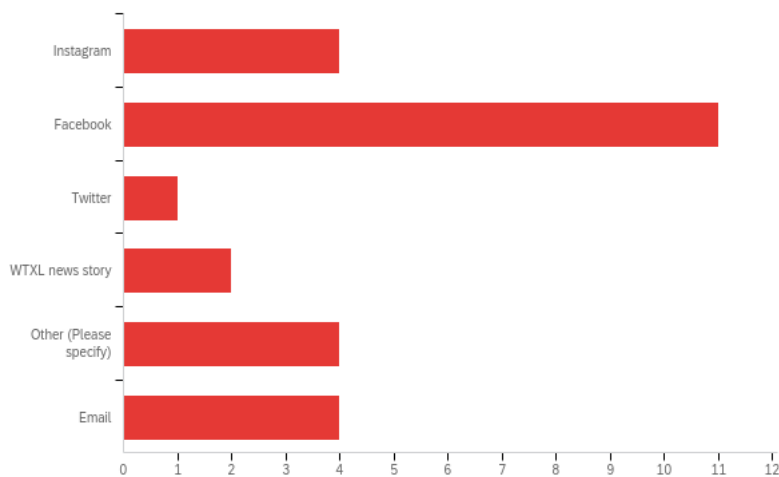
How likely are you to recommend this event to a friend or colleague? How likely are you to attend this event in the future?

Respondents used a Likert scale from 1 to 5, 1 meaning *I would not recommend this event to a friend or colleague* to 5 meaning *I would highly recommend this event to a friend or colleague,* overwhelmingly (90%) said they would highly recommend the event. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the respondents reported it was highly likely they would attend the event in the future.

What did you like most about the event? What did you like least about the event? Is there anything you would like to share with us?

Open-ended questions allowed researchers to gather data from participants to inform future strategic planning. What seemingly worked well was the interaction between the camp counselors and the guest readers. Feedback included: What seemingly worked well was the interaction between the camp counselors and the guest readers. Feedback included:

Enjoyed the interactivity between the facilitators and us despite it being virtual.

The interest my children had in the program due to the way it was organized to capture their attention

I loved the camp counselor's energy and enthusiasm for reading!

Participants also provided feedback for necessary for improvement. Suggestions varied; however, one theme was found was the presence of technical issues. While virtual programming does allow for an increase in reach, it invited the possibility of increased technical. Participants also noted that the time of the summer event was not ideal for considering programming during the school year. Thus, the time of the event has been changed to accommodate earlier bedtimes during school. Additionally, SAN is implementing more STEM-centered literature upon participant recommendations.

STRIKE at Night Literacy Camp will maintain and continue to expand its media presence. Currently, SAN Literacy Camp has an active social media presence, including over 750 Instagram followers. On September 19, 2021, SAN hosted Canadian-author and TedX speaker Noa Daniel. She read her wildly popular book *Strum and the Wild Turkeys*, using literature and music to teach inclusivity and comprehension skills to children and their families. For the future, SAN plans to host more authors and read-aloud events to share the joy and wonder of literacy with children and adults worldwide.

STRIKE AT NIGHT
Literacy Camp Week 1

THE CAMP YOU CAN ATTEND ANYWHERE BECAUSE LITERACY IS FOR EVERYONE!

BY THE NUMBERS:

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

13,447 Facebook Users Reached

279 FOLLOWERS

1,837 Instagram Users Reached

600+ FOLLOWERS

$1,500 IN NEW BOOKS GIVEN AWAY

REGISTRANTS REPRESENTING 20 STATES!

GLOBAL IMPACT

STRIKE at Night seen by audiences in:
- IRELAND (FB)
- ST. LUCIA (FB)
- UK (IG)
- CANADA (IG)
- INDIA (IG)
- NIGERIA (IG)

**126 ADULT REGISTRANTS
OVER 200 CHILDREN
1,000+ VIEWS OF LIVESTREAM!**

STRIKEatNight

STRIKE at Night Summer Camp

@STRIKEAtNightSC

strikeatnightsc

READ & STRIKE & HAVE A GOOD NIGHT!

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Appendix A

Books Read Aloud During STRIKE at Night Literacy Camp

All three multiliteracy books that were selected to be read aloud portrayed a sense of representation and familiarity within our targeted audience. This purposeful interaction with the multiliteracy books created an allowance for viewers to not only see themselves portrayed positively through illustrations and words, but also view community leaders actively engage with characters much like themselves.

The first multiliteracy read aloud book was *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* by Derrick Barnes and illustrated by Gordon C. James B. This rhythmic, high-spirited text celebrates how boys feel when they leave the barber's chair. Published in 2017, this pictorial and descriptive representational children's book has received a Newberry Honor, a Corretta Scott King Author Honor, the 2018 Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Award and the 2018 Kirkus Prize for Young Readers.

The second selected multiliteracy book read aloud at camp STRIKE at Night was Connie Schofield-Morrison's *I Got the Rhythm.* On a simple trip to the park, the joy of music overtakes this young Black girl and her mother. Presented by award-winning illustrator Frank Morrison and Connie Schofield-Morrison, uses a young Black girl to capture the beat of the street, to create a rollicking read that will get any kid in the mood to boogie. Readers are taken on a boogie through the streets as the little girl struts her stuff to the beat of her own drum. The book celebrates self-expression and full awareness of her senses.

Finally, the last book scheduled to be read aloud at STRIKE at Night was the New York Times Best Seller and award-winning *The Word Collector* by Peter Reynolds. In the book, A young Black boy, by the name of Jerome discovers the magic of words and celebrates the impact of sharing your words with the world. Throughout this book Jerome is able understand how much power words may hold and the importance of sharing positive and kind words.

Author Bios

Jhaneil O. Thompson is a first-year third-grade teacher in Gadsden County, Florida. Thompson graduated from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. Thompson is a former PURPOSE fellow, a research-bridged program founded through Florida State and Florida A&M Universities (Partners United for Research Pathways Oriented to Social Justice in Education- PURPOSE). Thompson is the co-creator of the non-profit organization S.T.R.I.K.E. at Night Literacy Camp (**S**ustaining **T**echnology- and **R**eading-**I**nfused **K**id-Friendly **E**ducation), a bedtime read-aloud program held virtually on Facebook and YouTube Live platforms. Thompson's research interests include the improvement of literacy pedagogies, reflective practices and self-efficacy of preservice teachers, and teacher preparation at historically Black colleges and universities.

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