Get Lit!: A Literature Club for Students of Color Feeling Disconnected to Schools due to Underrepresentation in Books and Teachers

by
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Abstract

Students of color continue to feel disconnected in schools despite national efforts due to a lack of diversity in the texts students read as well as teachers of color in schools. This project explores the depth of the problem regarding the disconnect students of color have in schools due to underrepresentation. It is framed under the Reader Response Theory and Critical Race Theory to explore representation as mirrored texts, representation as mentors, and literature clubs. Book clubs and literature clubs are an effective way to challenge the systemic norms and to provide students of color with a safe environment where they can engage in rich conversation surrounding issues of race, school, belonging, and identity. The project is intended for a diverse elementary school and combines elements that will assist teachers, book club leaders, and administrators in implementing a mentoring book club for students of color.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement

The persistent racial achievement gap and disconnect minority students continue to face counter to nonminority students continue to be an issue in the United States education (Dee, 2005). This is stemmed by the lack of texts that act as mirrors for students of color, and the underrepresentation of minority teachers that look like them. Despite the increase of diverse children's and young adult literature within the past decade, there is still a lack of representation in the world of literature (Bickmore, Xu, & Sheridan, 2017). Stemming from the lack of diverse representation in children's literature, students are missing the process of seeing themselves in the pages they read, in learning who they are, and believing that they matter (Johnson & Koss, 2016). Based on this reality, there is vast division amongst these students and their white counterparts from more accessible districts in their involvement in co-curricular activities such as Book Clubs or Writer's Clubs (Atkins, Fertig, & Wilkins, 2013). Additionally, schools in the United States are staffed by "primarily White teachers," albeit the continued growth in population of minority students (Hyland, 2005).

Importance of the Project

Students should be exposed to literature that reflects their experiences as a member of society and read books with characters and stories that mirror the ones of the readers'. In a nation that prides on democracy and a voice for all, it is important that students be given a safe space to freely engage in the literary acts with diverse

books and leaders to "create a more equitable and democratic world for everyone" (Mabbott, 2017, p. 508). To counter systemic racism manifested in the classroom, teachers must lead and provide students with active literacy efforts that foster conversations centered around social justice, racism, and privilege (Kaczmarczyk, et al., 2018).

Studies have shown that the presence of minority teachers have increased minority students' attitudes and connectivity to their schools and future (Atkins et al., 2014). Increased representation of teachers of color that reflects the racial makeup of students is associated with higher expectations of college graduation for minority students (Atkins et al., 2014). The critical foundation skills such as building confidence and enhancing self-efficacy through collaborate learning and engaging opportunities many marginalized students lacked during their schooling experience follows them to their college and university experiences as well as their societal roles (Kezar & Eckel, 2007). Marginalized students—particularly students of color—gain the confidence and commitment they need to become successful and impactful leaders in their communities through diverse, committed, and passionate group of teachers.

The mentoring literature club intends to provide marginalized students of color with opportunities to engage in rich conversations surrounding their experiences, led by someone that reflects and understands the students' backgrounds who will serve as the mentors. A space for students of color to converse and participate in the act of literacy through the use of quality diverse literature and

facilitation of leaders are crucial to tackling the hidden biases in texts, school, and further, society. It is an effort to challenge systemic racism using the students' voices and stories introduced in the context of a mentored literature club.

Background of the Project

Racial diversity in the world of literature is crucial in eliminating a sense of other-ness and instead developing a holistic understanding of identity and belonging (Adam, Barratt-Pugh, & Haig, 2017). A decade ago, McNair (2008) examined the book selections made available to students and teachers to be significantly lacking in representation of diverse authors and illustrators. Among the diverse books that students were introduced to in the classroom, stereotypical stories that belittled people of color and minorities were prevalent, thus hindering minority students from forming positive and healthy sense of identity. McNair (2008) points out these books that are to serve as powerful lenses through which to view and understand the world became a tool of racism, a "permanent fixture in American society…so much that many Americans perceive it as natural and ordinary instead of abnormal or deviant" (p. 195). Readers missing the opportunity to see themselves mirrored in the stories they are engaging with thus fail to validate their value, worth, and voice.

Furthermore, students of color are disproportionately represented in their schools by teachers (Egalite, et al., 2015). It is suggested that there are intricate correlations between student achievement, college readiness, and how connected a student feels in his or her community (Atkins et al., 2014). Villegas, Strom, and Lucas (2012) suggests that teachers of color serve as role model for *all* students,

playing a key role in students' recognition of a "powerful socialization function of schools." They further suggest that when students see minority adults

> "...overrepresented in the ranks of non-professional workers, they implicitly learn that white people are better suited than people of color to hold positions of authority in society." (Villegas et al., 2012)

The representation of adults of color in the teacher workforce serves as an empowering phenomenon that helps students of color feel less alienated and disconnected from schools, leading to more positive outlooks on school itself. The role of teachers of color have a critical role in bolstering student self-esteem, motivation for success, and envision of a careered future (Villegas et al., 2012).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide students of color with a safe environment where they can have honest conversations about race, personal experiences, and culture in the context of a Literature/Book Club. Elementary students of color from grades one to six will be selected by the teacher with parent permission. The project will be supported by Reader Response Theory and Critical Race Theory. The Literature Club, namely *Get Lit!* will be facilitated by adults in the community that come from similar backgrounds of the students' who will also take on the role of mentoring. The texts being discussed in *Get Lit!* will act as the mirrors of their unique perspectives and backgrounds where students will be able to see their stories reflected in the text. The books are the socializing agent.

With the support of the *Get Lit!* facilitators, students participate in ongoing reflection of their own experiences through the texts they've read. The meeting will ideally continue for at least a semester, if not longer depending on the school context in which it is implemented. The project draws on data from the classroom in the form of teacher and student interviews, student work, and continued discussions with the facilitators. They will be provided with objectives and materials for each session that correspond with the texts being explored, and will be required to record a brief synopsis of each session. Published authors and illustrators of color will also be sought out in order to provide a more authentic learning experience for the participants. The ultimate goal of *Get Lit!* is to empower young students with meaningful and authentic learning communities outside the classroom, yet within the school, and instill a stronger sense of self-identity and self-efficacy through various literacy experiences.

Objectives of the Project

The overarching objective of the project is to connect young students of color to quality literature that act as mirrors and with mentors that have similar backgrounds. Underlying that, the project will be able to: (1) guide students toward meaningful understandings on race, (2) help students build relationships that inform a cooperative learning community in school, (3) develop a more positive outlook on the act of literacy and school, and (4) encourage teachers to become stronger advocates and supporters for diverse literacy experiences and practices. The project will outline objectives for each lesson and ways by which similar collaboration and engagement

to occur within the classroom as well. The hope is that this project will empower students to use literature as a means of sharing their own stories and voice and believe that they do indeed matter.

Definition of Terms

*Book Club (*used inter-changeably with *Literature Club)*: n. a "literature-based instructional program" that allows students to participate in the reading and writing of literature (Kong & Fitch, 2003).

Culturally Responsive Instruction: n. Used to define instruction that incorporates culturally appropriate texts, engagement of students' voices, and incorporates students' funds of knowledge (Bell & Clark, 1998).

Critical Race Theory (CRT): n. A theory that is constructed around explaining how "traditional aspects of education and structures supporting educational systems perpetuate racism…" ("Critical Race Theory in Higher Education," 2015, p.16).

Reader Response Theory (RRT): n. A reader-centered framework and approach to reading where the reader plays an active role in meaning making through one's feelings and understandings (Rosenblatt, 1938).

Lit: v. adv. To get lit. In urban slang, it means "the state of being intoxicated (regardless of the intoxicating agent) that all the person can do is smile, so that they look lit up like a light" and/or an exciting event, or "general awesomeness" (Anwar, 2015). In the context of this project, it is the shortened way of saying 'Lit(erature) Club' and means participation in the Lit Club that sparks joy.

Literature circles: n. An instructional approach that engages students in "authentic conversations about racial inequality" (Kaczmarczyk et al., 2018).

People (students and teachers) of color: n. A minority people group that do not identify with the white majority race.

Facilitator: n. A person who leads a small group throughout a series of meetings and helps a group of people come to an understanding of a certain topic.

Mentor: n. One who plays the role of a "trusted adviser" built on trust and confidence (Chan, 2018).

Scope of the Project

The project is designed to be implemented in a diverse elementary setting for students grades one to six. The project will be an accumulation of guiding questions for each literature club meeting, parent and/or guardian permission form, supplemental materials, diverse book lists, interviews, student work, and suggested extension activities to be implemented in a classroom setting. The project includes guidelines to facilitate a safe and quality Literature Club, but will not provide guidelines for funding and sustaining the meeting itself. The project is not designed for adolescent students. Although the project can be altered to be used in a high school setting, this particular project is designed for younger students. The main audience of the project is students of color , therefore it is not recommended that it be used for white students. However, a teacher using this approach is highly encouraged to implement it in a classroom setting to create a more culturally aware and safe environment for *all* students.

A limitation could be the number of adults that would be willing to act as a mentor and facilitator of the literature clubs. The project does not account for the number of willing adults that represent the students' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds who would be able to facilitate the meetings. Another limitation could be the students' linguistic and reading abilities upon entering the literature club. The literature club is not designed to improve a student's reading score, but to spark an interest for reading through participation in literacy-rich conversations. Cost of ordering multiple copies of books may be a hinderance. In this case, it is recommended that the conductor and facilitators utilize local libraries and bookstores. The project is not meant to take factors such as administrative support and financial settings into consideration. It is also assumed that the Reading Specialist or the teacher who supports the implementation of *Get Lit!* be one that supports ways to provide students of color with alternative spaces to tackle issues of race and identity beyond the classroom. Finally, the project does not take into account the various home life variables of the students and their sensitivities to issues being discussed. Parents will be informed and students may only participate under parent or guardian consent.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Despite nation-wide efforts in reducing the racial achievement gap and disconnect minority students feel in counter to nonminority students, students of color continue to feel disconnected from schools due to underrepresentation in the literature that they read as well as from minority teachers that reflect their own background (Dee, 2005). This literature review will provide a backbone for understanding the depth of the problem regarding the disconnect students of color have in schools due to underrepresentation, from the lack of diversity in children's literature, to minority teachers in schools thus preventing students of color from seeing positive role models that reflect their own backgrounds. An explanation of this chapter's organization follows. First, the theoretical framework behind the research, using critical race theory and reader response theory, is explored. Then, the chapter analyzes the literature that informs the following subcategories: Representation as Mirrored Texts, Representation as Mentors, and Literature Clubs. Next, a summary provides a broad synopsis of the literature analyzed and key research findings. Finally, a conclusion explains how the research findings reviewed in this chapter informs and supports the project implementation laid out in the next chapter.

Theory/Rationale

In March 2016, former Education Secretary John B. King, Jr. stressed that it is crucial we understand that "all students benefit from teacher diversity" (*The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce*, 2016). Minority teachers who have been

placed in schools that reflect the demographic diversity of the students improved the performance of minority students by serving as mentors, positive role models, "advocates, or cultural translators" (Egalite et al., 2015). Students of color feel represented, validated, and heard from the presence of teachers that look like them. Any efforts made in schools to disrupt the counter-narrative and over-representation of a majority race must be rooted in theory.

The Critical Race Theory (CRT) seeks to address the inequitable practices and challenges the white norm that is present in our education, and further, society. Students of color need to see themselves reflected in the texts that are being explored at schools; this creates a "mirroring" effect that encourages people of color to feel validated, seen, and heard (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). In the use of texts and literature as a means to disrupt the single story narrative and ethnocentrism, Louise Rosenblatt's Reader Response Theory (1938) also supports the use of texts as a window of exploration and meaning-making.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) originated in the 1970s as a legal activist movement through the efforts of Bell, Freeman, Delgado, and others as a means to not only understand the societal structures, but challenge and transform them (Delgado et al., 2001, p. 26). According to Lazos Vargas (2003), the main tenants of CRT are: challenging what has been considered as a societal norm, a storytelling approach, and "interest convergence." In essence, Bell et al. (2001) constitutes the CRT movement as one that is:

> …a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. (p. 25)

Since its origin, the CRT has spread across disciplines such as education, to understand the issue of race and its complexities in hierarchical systems, discipline, and equity (Delgato, et al., 2001).

A crux of the CRT is the feature of ordinariness, which suggests that because racism is not addressed explicitly and overtly and inherent in the United States, it is difficult to cure it wholly (Delgato, et al., 2001). As a result, a majority of the American society has been sold into the notion of 'colorblindness' where one does not see another person's race. CRT is critical of this stance as it holds to analyze how racism is created and maintained "via a system of norms rooted in whiteness" (Blaisdell, 2005, p.37) so the effects of racism do not maintain the same effect on people's lives. Going back to Vargas' unpacking of CRT, colorblindness works against the efforts of CRT in uncovering and highlighting the "whiteness" that has covered multiple areas of our society.

CRT has been adopted as a socializing framework that allows for transformation through dialogue and promoting a structural approach to diversity (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Delgado, Stefancic and Harris (2001) have claimed that critical race theorists have investigated the power of stories towards understanding race. Rudine Sims Bishop (1982), a professor of education at Ohio State University, introduces this storytelling as the concept of windows and mirrors. In challenging the white norms and silence of people of colors' stories, experts and scholars such as

Christopher Myers, Rudine Sims Bishop, and Walter Dean Myers present a counter-narrative. To a nonwhite audience, these counternarratives become a window to grasp what it is like to be nonwhite. It presents a divergence and clash in the stories that have been accepted as the norm and, in certain cases, as history itself (Delgado et al., 2001, p. 63). To another audience, the counter-narratives may act as a mirror, which implies that readers see themselves and their stories reflected in the texts (Tschida et al., 2014). When the once-silenced readers see themselves and their stories mirrored in the texts they see, there is an acknowledged validation of one's experiences and world.

The historic *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case of 1954 that ruled the racial segregation of children in public schools instigated another precedent in civil rights and education that *separate but equal* did not equate to being truly equal. Bell (1995) uses the Brown decision as an example of interest convergence. Interest convergence suggests that whites only allow decisions that benefit people of color if they are ones that are in the interest of the whites themselves (Blaisdell, 2005).

These molds of CRT play out critically in schools that are still predominantly white. Alas, students of color in the same system are, in many cases, covertly struggling against racism and the dominant white who hold onto the ideals and practices that are of interest to the whites. Within schools, students of color therefore need advocates, cultural translators, and allies whom can share and participate in the discussion of race openly, and whom students can relate to and view as "symbolic

representation" (Atkins et al., 2014). As Chapman (2013) says, "you can't erase race!" In order for the Literature Club facilitators, student participants, and teachers to understand the complex issue of race and identity in one's development and sense of belonging and connectivity in schools, CRT is a fitting theoretical frame for a mentoring literature club.

Reader Response Theory

Reader Response Theory (RRT) is a reader-centered framework and approach to reading. In her book *Literature as Exploration,* Louise Rosenblatt (1938) suggested:

> A novel or poem or play remains merely inkspots on a paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols. The literary work exists in the live circuit set up between reader and the text: the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the patterns of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel his thoughts and feelings. Out of this complex process emerges a more or less organized imaginative experience. (p. 25)

Rosenblatt further distinguishes reading into two kinds: efferent reading and aesthetic reading. Efferent reading has to do with reading to gain new information and solving problems, whereas aesthetic reading spark abstract imagery, feelings, and ideas that are connected to "one's lived experiences" (Leung, Bennett, & Gunn, 2017).

Likewise, theorists of reader response claim that meaning making occurs when the reader is *responding* to a text and there is a transaction of knowledge, experiences, and meaning as an interaction. In doing so, the "entire context of the

reader" such as one's culture and past experiences, is acknowledged in the transaction (Davis, 1992, p. 71).

RRT scholars imply that children, or students, have an active role as the reader of the text. Individual interpretations and modes of constructing the meaning are crucial points of enacting the reader response theory. Among theorists of reader response themselves, there is a broad spectrum of how meaning is constructed in the process. On one end of the continuum are those who are most attentive to the literary conventions that an author uses to arouse meaning and interpretation. Theorists in the middle depict reading as "a negotiation between both the text and the person engaging in the literary interpretation" (Brooks & Browne, 2012, p.77). Those on the opposite side of the continuum suggest that literary interpretation is "largely a result of someone's personality/psychology" (Brooks & Browne, 2012, p.76) where each reader creates unique understandings of stories and texts, regardless of the material itself.

Rosenblatt's Reader Response Theory is originated as a pedagogy and thus suggests that the way we "teach reading are identical to the ways that we read texts" (Davis, 1992, p.74). Based on this assumption, RRT does not expect students to read a passage and understanding to happen immediately, as it is by no means a linear process. It is, like Davis (1992) metaphorizes, "much like a sculptor works a piece of clay" (p. 73). In basing a project on RRT, Leung, Bennett, and Gunn (2017) suggest that the social and spoken language in the context of its exchange is principal in eliciting a collaborative and responsive interpretation of the texts.

In considering Reader Response Theory as a framework that views reading as a complex, non-linear, and building-up process, theorists anticipate students—the readers—too will empower themselves while reading. As a mentoring literature club where students of color and facilitators engage with diverse literature, the Reader Response Theory is a critical framework for the project to be successful.

Research/Evaluation

The research analyzed in this section begins with representation as texts that act as mirrors, representation in the form of mentors, and the studies behind literature and book clubs.

Representation as Mirrored Texts

In an interview, Rudine Sims Bishop, a professor of education at The Ohio State University, discusses the purposefulness of diverse literature for young children. In discussing her African American poetry, Bishop (2008) emphasizes that the purpose is more so called authenticating the world of children of color, particularly Black children. There is a process of making a seemingly ordinary life of a person of color seem extraordinary by it being written about and talked about. Many writers of color, particularly African American writers, reflect the void and absence of representation in the texts they were exposed to (Horning, 2008).

In 1990, Cox and Galda pushed for multicultural literature and its importance as the awareness of rich diversity grows. The need for books that reflect the diverse needs and traditions that are reflected in our society are more desperate as the students representing the schools become increasingly diverse and multicultural. For

non-white students, these texts can become windows as to which a different, and what can be an unfamiliar world, becomes a familiar one. As a result, racial stereotypes and a sense of otherness can be addressed, challenged, and decreased. For students of color, these books become mirrors; they see themselves in the words they read, their worlds represented, their families and cultures being validated.

Scholars of children's literature have long advocated for the need to turn a critical eye on the "stories we tell, who is doing the telling, and who gets left out" (Tschida et al., 2014, p.28). Despite these efforts, however, diverse literature that delineate from the white norm continue to be left out of classrooms. Furthermore, some books that are multicultural by content, may be written from an outsider perspective, thus disrupting and possibly silencing the voice of the ones who are able to represent a reality of the groups' lived experiences (Reese, 2007). This means that students of color are faced with books with characters that do not look like them, talk like them, and ultimately relate to them.

In 2017, the Cooperative Children's Book Center of University of Wisconsin Madison, presented that thirty-seven percent of the U.S. population are people of color, yet only thirteen percent of children's books published in the past 24 years contain multicultural content (*The Diversity Gap in Children's Books*, 2016). In 2016, illustrator David Huyck released an infographic depicting the number of diverse children's literature by percentage of main characters of color, 0.9% depicted American Indians (Native Americans), 2.4% of Latinx characters, 3.3% of them depicted Asian American (or Asian) characters, 7.6% with Black/African American

(or African), yet 12.5% had animals and trucks as main characters (Wilson, 2016). The rest, taking up a large number of 73.3%, were white characters.

Christopher Meyers (2014), a children's book illustrator, defines this lack as an "apartheid" on children's literature. Meyers further explains that characters of color are limited to the occasional historical books, but are never given the pass to traverse into unknown adventures, the unfamiliar fields. He further reflects that during his years as an illustrator making children's books, the empty reassurances of a commitment to diversity stand in contrast to the numbers and businesses of children's literature. This led to a campaign movement on social media called We Need Diverse Books (WNDB), which targets diversifying children's literature. The campaign provides resources and tools for students and educators seeking to diversify the field of children's and young adult's literature.

Gangi (2008) laments the children's books present in classrooms and further, the market, as being to the advantage of white children and the disadvantage of children of color. Because a white narrative has been a norm, white children and their experiences are depicted in books which lead to more authentic and rich connections between the text and the reader, the text itself, and the world than can children of color (Gangi, 2008). She further introduces an incident where a child from the Philippines, Bebot, saw himself in a book for the first time, and embraced the text that represented a character that looked like him. Bell and Clark (1998) showed that when African-American children were given culturally relevant reading material, their reading comprehension showed tremendous gain. This activates schema—prior

knowledge—which enhances the process of meaning making whilst reading (Bell & Clark, 1998).

However, due to the lack of this platform that introduces students of color to a plethora of creativity and potential, their dysconnectivity towards school becomes increasingly problematic. This is reflected in the persistent and ever-wide achievement gap presented in standardized achievement reading test scores nation-wide (Pizzolato et al., 2008). Furthermore, students of color are not seeing their silent and ongoing struggles mirrored in role models, which inhibits self-efficacy.

Representation as Mentors

Minority teachers—particularly teachers of color—are underrepresented in the American schools (Egalite et al., 2015). Educators and policymakers have initiated efforts to match student to teacher race to improve student achievement. Critiques have pointed out flaws in Dee's (2004) research in the connection between own-race teachers and student achievement, claiming that the methodology Dee used to approach the problem was limited (Howsen & Trawick, 2007). However, it is suggested that minority teachers may influence students in a more passive way such as improving student motivation and connectivity to their future, rather than directly through student achievement (Egalite et al., 2015). Similarly, this kind of role-model effect may reduce the threat students of color face due to stereotyping and systemic bias.

It is projected that by 2050, 36% of the population of U.S. children will be Hispanic, 36% White, non-Hispanic, and 28% African American, Asian and Native

American (Federal Interagency Forum on Children and Family Statistics, 2013). In contrast, the most recent U.S. Department of Education Schools and Staffing Survey revealed that 82 percent of the public school teachers identify as white (*The State of Racial Diversity in the Education Workforce*, 2016). This growing trend of diversity and gap should be critically seen. Research shows that minority teachers who have been placed in schools that reflect the demographic diversity of the students improved the performance of minority students by serving as mentors, positive role models, advocates, or "cultural translators" (Egalite et al., 2015). Furthermore, scholars recently concluded that the presence of minority teachers have increased minority students' attitudes and connectivity to their schools and future (Atkins et al., 2014). In addition, teachers of color serve as a "symbolic representation" (Atkins et al., 2014) where their presence itself in positions of power can lead to changes in behavior and perceptions of the subgroup(s). When students of color miss seeing positive role models that reflect their own backgrounds, they feel less connected to their learning community.

A sense of belonging or connectivity to school is a complex structure. Murphy and Zirkel (2015) claim that the feeling is one that is socially constructed, which is to say, it is informed by the child's personal experiences in the settings. Connectivity and a sense of belonging is known to spur motivation and persistence, which leads to higher academic engagement (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007). Albeit its importance, students of color who may be linked with negative stereotypes, such as African American, Latinx, Native American, and Asian American, the essence of

belonging and feeling connected in schools is much more difficult (Murphy & Zirkel, 2015). Murphy and Zirkel (2015) highlight that, "Those feelings of belonging are derived from our social representations of a setting and the degree to which we see ourselves represented there" (p. 7). Simply put, students of color feel more connected to schools and in places where they see themselves represented; in this case, as teachers and mentors.

Feelings of belonging and connectivity in identity are important factors for everyone's education (Quinlan & Curtin, 2017). This phenomenon is of greater importance for students of color, who are tinged by stigma and stereotypes because they are not equipped with the role models that become their advocates and cultural translators, as mentioned earlier. Researchers have demonstrated that there is considerable difference in expectations of behavior and achievement based on the race(s) of the teachers and the students, which affects teacher-student relationships (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). When teachers and students are racially *similar,* not only is there a more accurate and positive view related to children's adjustments, but "their shared cultural experiences may give rise to educational inputs better-suited to the child's learning needs" (Downer et al., 2016, p.27). Gershenson, Holt, and Papageorge (2016) challenge this division of diversity and representation by posing the question students of color ask, "Who believes in me?"

Literature and Book Clubs

Sociologists often view books as a socially constructed product (Childress & Friedkin, 2012). Because books are a cultural object, it is subject to "different

interpretations" based on the audience that is receiving it. Likewise, a book can be used as a socializing tool to tie in issues about race and gender (Childress & Friedkin, 2012). Therefore, a text can be conveyed and made into meaning that contrasts the intentions created by the author. In a diverse literature club, participants are given the space and agency to unpack the meanings, intentions, and messages of a book collaboratively.

Harvey Daniels (2001) defines literature circles, or book clubs, as "small, peer-led discussion groups whose members have chosen to read" the same text, be it poems, articles, or books (p. 2). Furthermore, the National Council of Teachers of English (2001) and the International Literacy Association (2018) identified this kind of reading and writing instruction as one of the best classroom practices. In her book on successfully planning and implementing book clubs for young people, Carol Littlejohn (2011) pinpoints key factors such as choice, the overuse of extrinsic motivation and rewards, encouraging reluctant readers, and access to reading materials, in the research behind book clubs. Daniels (2001) also stresses the importance of providing students with: adequate choice in the environment, reading material, and activity; predictability; and opportunities for discussion as a small group. These are pivotal points for a rich literature club.

Theorist Vygotsky (1978) demonstrates how "talk in classrooms play important roles as mediators of learning and knowledge" (p. 4). Book clubs are designed for this purpose; to support students' reading and response to literature. Jocius and Shealy (2017) suggest that oftentimes book clubs limit student-led

conversation, or can become overly teacher-led and facilitated. Instead of undermining the students' voices and experiences as powerful meaning-makers, Jocius and Shealy (2017) discuss the power book clubs have to empower readers and writers to view their world and the systems in a more critical way, and become advocates for social change, as empathetic human beings.

Drawing on the reader response theory, literature clubs focus on the transaction between the text and the readers. No two readings of the same text is ever the same; neither are two readers' of the same text. Research has also supported that literature reading in a group setting like these can support students' abilities to "imagine and empathize with thoughts, feelings, and intentions of others" (Jocius & Shealy, 2017, p.692). However, in order to do so successfully, students of color must begin to question and advocate what the books actually say between the lines. In literature clubs, students work together to wonder, critique, and to interrogate the text.

To engage culturally and linguistically diverse learners, Kong and Fitch (2003) recommend scaffolding content based on the needs of the students. This means the facilitators provide students with adequate guidance until students are able to independently respond and interact with the text and with one another. In book clubs, students may improve in social and communication skills as they engage the diverse literature and discuss the implications it has on the students' lives. Kong and Fitch (2003) identify these factors as essential to the success of their book club study: high expectations for all students; an environment and community where everyone's

ideas and thoughts were welcome and valued; adequate time and space to read, write, and talk about books; and scaffolding towards students' zones of comfort.

Different groups read different books. The importance of the text itself cannot be diminished from the equation of a literature club. The "fabric" within the stories are constructed upon, the features "embedded in ethnically diverse books" should not be ignored when respecting the reader's role in the construction of meaning (Brooks & Browne, 2012, p.79). To an ethnically and racially diverse audience, single stories limit the opportunities for deeper meaning beyond the ink.

Summary

Students of color are feeling disconnected from schools due to underrepresentation in the books they read and from the lack of minority teachers in schools, thus preventing students of color from seeing positive role models that reflect their own background (Tschida et al., 2014 & Egalite et al., 2015). There is urgency in the disruption of single stories about people of color. White students can utilize diverse literature as a window into the unfamiliar, and move them away from the ethnocentrism of their worlds (Tschida et al., 2014). For marginalized students, books with multicultural content provides a mirror and reflection of the realities of their world being validated, seen, and heard (Mabbott, 2017).

Critical Race Theory, which started as a legal movement, is the foundational theory this project is based on. It seeks to explore how power and race play into the systems such as education (Delgato et al., 2001). It promotes a structural approach to diversity through conversation and dialogue (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Delgado, Stefanie

and Harris (2001) claimed that critical race theorists have investigated the power of stories to unpack and understand the complexities of race. Author and professor Rudine Sims Bishop (1982), along with children's book author and activist Walter Dean Meyers and his son Christopher Meyers, have long advocated for the diversification of children's literature. In response to CRT, movements across social media such as We Need Diverse Books (WNDB) have fueled on to support texts acting as mirrors for students of color (Mabbott, 2017).

Reader Response Theory has been foundational for the structure and backbone of the book clubs. Reader Response Theory (RRT), introduced by Louise Rosenblatt (1938), claims a reader-centered mode of reading, where the reader activates his/her experiences and feelings to interact with the text and thus make meaning of it. Scholars of the theory imply that the reader—be it children or adults—have an active role in the reading process. Furthermore, Rosenblatt distinguishes reading into two kinds: efferent reading and aesthetic reading. Efferent reading is mainly reading for the purpose of gaining information and constructing meaning that way, whereas aesthetic reading triggers and activates one's prior knowledge, experience, feelings, emotions, and therefore encourages a more abstract and complex interpretation of the text (Leung, Bennett, & Gunn, 2017).

Students of color need more diverse literature that will act as mirrors, where they see themselves represented and gain validation from their worlds being shown and presented in an authentic way in text. Furthermore, they need spaces to interact with these texts, thus using Reader Response theory to find meaning and Critical

Race Theory to unpack the silenced stories. Many writers of color, particularly African American writers, reflect the void and absence of representation in the texts they were exposed to (Horning, 2008). Illustrator Christopher Meyers claim this problem to be an "apartheid" of children's literature (Meyer, 2014), and suggest a counter-narrative to disrupt the danger of a single story and normalize diversity (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014).

Moreover, there is a lack of minority teachers in schools which prevents students of color from seeing positive role models that reflect their own background. In what is called a role-model effect, students of color may face less threat of negative stereotyping and bias from teachers that are close to the demographic diversity of the students (Egalite et al., 2015). Although there are limitations to narrowing down the persistent racial achievement gap in schools (Dee, 2004 & Howsen & Trawick, 2007), scholars have argued that the presence of minority teachers itself can lead to changes in attitude and behavior in schools for students of color (Atkins et al., 2014). The teachers of color serve as a "symbolic representation" where students see people that reflect their background in positions of power, which can spark an intrinsic desire to do better (Atkins et al., 2014).

To provide these students of color an opportunity to engage with text and connect with mentors, book clubs may be a powerful instructional approach to meet those needs. Vygotsky (1978) suggests that conversations and student talk, with each other and the teacher, play a critical role in the transmission of knowledge and meaning. Jocius and Shealy (2017) suggest a student-focused book club where

students' voices are encouraged and heard. Furthermore, literature circles facilitated in a safe environment may provide an opportunity for students to transcend bias by responding to a text. This kind of engagement in a safe space is critical because it leads to empowering readers and writers to view their world and the systems in a more critical way, and become advocates for social change, as "empathetic readers, writers, and human beings" (Jocius & Shealy, 2017). The mirroring books and mentors can become a fabric in the telling of their own stories to share to the world.

Conclusion

Stemmed from the lack of diversity in the texts students read and positive role models in schools that reflect their own backgrounds, students of color are feeling disconnected from schools. As a result of the lack of connectivity, the racial achievement gap remains persistent in the American schools (Dee, 2005). Students of color are seeking for the texts that will act as mirrors where they can see themselves reflected accurately and therefore validated, seen and heard. In addition to the texts, positive role-models within the school serve as cultural advocates and translators for many marginalized students (Egalite et al., 2015).

This literature review has examined the research on students of colors' dysconnectivity in schools, an apartheid on diverse children's literature, and a lack of teachers of color in schools. The results indicate that students of color need more representation in the texts they read as well as the adults they interact with at schools, thus having positive role models that reflect their background. Taking these factors into consideration, a safe environment where students of color can be exposed to

diverse texts and mentor adults and synthesize their world in the form of rich conversation is extremely important. Therefore, a mentored book club like *Get Lit!* where students from various racial groups meet together to read, understand, and personalize the books so that it applies to their lives is crucial in providing a platform for students of color to feel more connected to schools.

In Chapter 3 that follows, a project description will outline the details of the book club. A more synthesized description and guide of all the texts that will be used in the book clubs will be presented, organized by three ethnic groups: Black/African Americans, Asian Americans, Middle Eastern Americans, and Latinx. All these groups embody biracial or mixed race students as well. Furthermore, a list of discussion prompts and topics divided by books will be laid out in the Appendix as a guide for the book club organizer, Reading Specialist, mentor facilitators, students, and parents who seek them. A list of opening activities and response activities that the facilitators can use for sessions are given in the Appendix as well.

Chapter Three: Project Description

Introduction

Despite efforts to minimize the racial achievement gap in the United States, minority students—particularly students of color—continue to feel disconnected in schools due to the lack of texts that act as mirrors and the underrepresentation of minority teachers that look like them (Bickmore, Xu, & Sheridan, 2017 & Dee, 2005). Stemming from the lack of diverse representation in children's literature, students are missing the process of seeing themselves reflected in the texts they read, in learning who they are, and ultimately that they matter (Johnson & Koss, 2016). Likewise, students of color are lacking positive role models in schools that look like them and reflect the students' background. Based on this reality, there is a vast division amongst these students and their white counterparts from more accessible districts in their involvement in activities such as Book Clubs or Writer's Club (Atkins, Fertig, & Wilkins, 2013). As a solution, the project *Get Lit!* was proposed to provide students of color with positive role models that reflect their racial backgrounds enacting as facilitators of a mentored book club, where students are given the opportunity to interact with diverse texts that will act as the mirrors where students can see themselves validated and honored.

In the project description, the project components are clarified, where a brief historical context and desired objectives as well as rational of the project are stated. Second, the project evaluation will contain criteria to determine success of the project, such as student, teacher, facilitator, and parent interviews and surveys. Third,

anticipated project conclusions will be shared in reference to the previous chapters that outline the problem and interpretations of the issue based on literature. Additional questions that remain unanswered will be addressed in the conclusion. Lastly, the plans for implantation are presented with clear guidance on how the information will be used, shared, and implemented.

Project Components

Literature clubs, or book clubs, are "small, peer-led discussion groups whose members have chosen to read" the same text, be it poems, articles, or books (Daniels, 2001, p. 2). This kind of literacy instruction has been identified as one of the "best classroom practices" (Daniels, 2001, p.3) where conversation and talk based on the selected texts play pivotal roles as mediators of learning and knowledge (Vygostky, 1978). This project aims to provide students of color with the platform of conversation and exchange of knowledge, facilitated by mentors who reflect the students' backgrounds and therefore understand the students' experiences on a deeper level. The books have been carefully and mindfully chosen to act as mirrors (Bishop, 1982) to provide a divergence of stories that have been accepted as the norm, and in certain cases, as history itself (Delgado et al., 2001, p. 63) and feel their experiences and world validated and acknowledged.

This project provides diverse book titles for students from grades K through five. Its main objective is to invite students of color to feel more connected to schools through the interaction with positive role models and books that share their stories as a person of color. Although the project itself is to be used as a guide for the book club

facilitators, teachers that implement small-group reading groups in their classrooms may use it as a tool and reference to a wide array of diverse texts.

This book club guide includes 40 diverse book titles (Appendix D), ranging from children's picture books to middle-grade novels, with a list of prompts and questions for the 10 bi-weekly meetings to foster conversation and deeper construction of meaning (Appendix E). The book club groups are divided by these four racial and ethnic groups: Asian/Asian American and/or mixed race, African/African American and/or mixed race, Latinx/Hispanic and/or mixed race, and Middle Eastern/Arab and/or mixed race. Participants are given the freedom to choose the group that they most identify with. The 10 bi-weekly meeting window allows for K-2nd groups to read about 8-10 books, and 4th-5th grade groups to read 5-7 titles. The informed parental permission forms that includes all the book titles will be received before the first meeting (Appendix C). Furthermore, all facilitators will be required to submit a formal background check before meeting with the general education teacher and the coordinator to discuss student goals as well as guidelines for meetings. A brief outline of ideas for opening, wrap-up, and reflection activities for the session will be shared with the mentor facilitators along with discussion prompts to utilize throughout the facilitation of each meeting. A handbook comprised of the activity ideas (Appendix F), calendar (Appendix B), book summaries (Appendix D), prompts (Appendix E), and summary snapshot (Appendix H) will be included in the Appendices. Each mentor facilitator will spend the first book club discussing expectations and create a Community Agreement where each student signs his/her

name (Appendix I). After each book club meeting, mentor facilitators are expected to turn in a brief summary of how the meeting went, topics discussed, and members present in the summary snapshot (Appendix H). The calendar of the meetings will be distributed to the students, but are mainly for the use of the mentor facilitators and parents to help follow the timeline and due dates.

Project Evaluation

The questionnaire and interview transcript template will be administered to the mentor facilitators, parents, and the general education classroom teachers. A student questionnaire and interview will be given to all students; K-2nd students will be verbally interviewed using the same questions. The texts selected for this book club have been pre-read and chosen because of the themes and issues the texts present which align with the objectives of the diverse book club. Most of these texts are culturally relevant contemporary texts that have been recommended and suggested by the We Need Diverse Books campaign. A more comprehensive list of where to find diverse books can be found at their website (weneeddiversebooks.org). If a parent were to express concern about a certain topic or book, the student will be excused from that particular session.

The main component for evaluating the project's success will rely largely on the participants' and the facilitators' interview responses. The post-interviews (Appendix G) will be conducted by the mentor facilitators, either individually or in a large-group. The interviews will be audio-recorded and shared with the coordinator. Parents and the general classroom teachers may be consulted to provide feedback on

whether they noticed differences or changes in the students' attitudes or connectivity towards school and the act of literacy.

Project Conclusions

Despite the rapid growth of a diverse student population in schools, the racial achievement gap and disconnect minority students face remain persistent (Dee, 2005). This stems from students of color missing themselves from the texts they are exposed to and from the underrepresentation of minority teachers in schools. Students of color are disproportionately represented in their schools. Teachers are recognized as a "powerful solmization function of schools" by Villegas et al, yet because of the overrepresentation of the counter-race in professional roles, students of color implicitly learn that "white people are better suited than people of color to hold positions of authority in society" (2012, p. 285). Schools in the United Sates continue to be staffed by "primarily White teachers," albeit the continued growth in population of minority students (Hyland, 2005).

Sociologists often view books as socially constructed products (Childress & Friedkin, 2012), and race as a social construct of one's identity that you cannot erase (Chapman, 2013). This suggests that the products validate identity. McNair (2008) conducted a study on book selections that were made available to students and concluded that there is a significant lack in representation of diverse authors and illustrators. He critiques that these books that are to serve as powerful lenses through which to view and understand the world became a tool of racism (McNair, 2008). As a result, readers are missing the opportunity to not only see themselves mirrored in

the stories they are engaging with, but using the texts as a window to learn more about what students may conclude as "the other." Christopher Meyer (2014), an acclaimed children's book illustrator, defines this as an "apartheid on children's literature." Gangi (2008) laments the lack of diversity in books that are present in the classrooms as well as the market. A white narrative has been set as a norm, where white children's experiences and stories have been created to provide greater opportunity for richer connections to be made in the classrooms.

The importance and value of diversity in the texts students read and teachers represented cannot be understated. Studies show that minority teachers who have been placed in schools that reflect the demographic diversity of the students improved the performance of minority students by serving as mentors, positive role models, "advocates, or cultural translators" (Egalite et al., 2015). Stripping students of this representation in the leaders of their education equates to stripping students of color from feeling represented, validated, and heard. Feelings of belonging and connectivity are critical factors for success, especially in one's education. When teachers and students share a similar identity, not only is there a more accurate and positive view related to a child's learning, but it the ties may "give rise to educational inputs better-suited to children's learning needs" (Downer et al., 2016). It simmers down to a question that people are color have been asking from the sidelines, "Who believes in me?"

This project seeks to answer that question, and invite members that have been asking that question to come together to explore the complexity of race, identity, and

its interconnectedness with education within the safe environment of a mentored book club. However, some questions remain unanswered. This project does not answer the questions of a student's reading level, disability/ability, home environment, or continued attendance and participation. To target a wider range of students, this project can be further developed for other marginalized racial groups within schools across gender and age. Alas, this project does not seek to solve or answer the fundamental question and issue of one's identity. The deeper issue of identity is one that tints our daily lives and one that challenges us to question the larger systemic issues. It is highly likely that these issues be explored and brought up during discussions, but it may be a starting point rather than a destination.

Plans for Implementation

This project is intended to be used by Reading Specialists who will be coordinators and mentor facilitators to lead, facilitate, and foster a mentoring book club for students of color in grades K through 5th. General education classroom teachers may use the project as a guide to help facilitate small group discussions within the classroom using the suggested book titles. The selection process of mentor facilitators will begin by a general announcement to the school community, in the form of an email or open house volunteer opportunities in the beginning of the school year. Not all book club groups may be represented based on the racial make-up of the school. The volunteers will show intent for leading by submitting a Volunteer Agreement Form as well as the ICHAT and background check results. Once all mentor facilitators have been selected for the appropriate book club groups, the

Reading Specialist/coordinator will conduct a Professional Development or orientation meeting with the general education classroom teachers and the facilitators.

The mentor facilitators and the coordinator will consult with the classroom teacher to ask for recommendations on students who may benefit from and enjoy the book club. The book club does not discriminate members by their reading levels or abilities; it is a communal learning environment based on deeper discussion, synthesis, and comprehension rather than one's English fluency or ability. The classroom teachers will be communicated to that the book club is not designed to target students' test scores or academic success, but instead an overall attitude and connectivity towards learning and school. Each group is designed for four to six students from grades K-2, and 4th to 5th. In weeks prior to starting *Get Lit!*, parent/guardian consent forms will be sent home before students are allowed to fully participate. Once permission forms have been submitted, students from grades 4th to 5th will be sent home with the appropriate books to begin independently reading. Book clubs for students in grades K-2 will participate in reading with the mentor facilitators during the meetings. At the conclusion of the 10 meetings, the mentor facilitators will conduct individual interviews of the participants, either with or without the presence of the coordinator (Reading Specialist). In the absence of the coordinator, all interviews must be audio recorded with appropriate training. Parent interview requests will be sent out simultaneously, and with consent, the coordinator will conduct the parent post-interviews. Finally, the mentor facilitators will submit the questionnaire on the overall book club meetings.

Once all these evaluative measures have been collected and gathered, the coordinator will analyze the outcomes. The results will then be shared with administrators, parents or guardian of the participants, and school staff. This information not only highlights the effectiveness of the book club, but the importance of more minority teacher representation and the diversification of the school or classroom libraries.

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Appendix A

Get Lit! Club Volunteer Agreement Form

Get Lit! Club Volunteer Agreement Form

Please print.
Name _____ Date _____
Address _____
City _____ Zip Code _____
Phone _____
Email _____
Preferred way of communication: Email / text / phone call (circle one)

Please read thoroughly and sign your name. We are so grateful for your time and commitment!

- All Get Lit! mentor facilitator volunteers must attend the orientation with the Reading Specialist/coordinator and general classroom teachers before starting.
- Volunteers must fill out and submit a Summary Snapshot (attached) of each session; either emailed or hard copy to the coordinator.
- Volunteers MUST either go through a background check or submit background check result(s).
- Volunteers must read the books ahead of time before each session.
- If the volunteer cannot make it to a Get Lit! meeting date, this must be communicated at least 2 weeks in advance. In the case of an emergency or illness, let the general classroom teacher and the coordinator know ASAP.

My signature below indicates that I have read the guidelines and understand that in the course of my volunteer time with Get Lit!, I may become aware of confidential and sensitive information about specific students. I understand and agree that I will not disclose such information except to school employees and the coordinator who have a need to know.

_____ _____
Signature of Volunteer Date

*Please submit background check as well.

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Appendix B

Calendar of *Get Lit!* Meetings

Calendar of Get Lit! Meetings (K-3)

African American/Black and/or Biracial

Meeting 1: Introductions, forming Get Lit! Community Agreement, sharing expectations.

Facilitator reads first book: *All Are Welcome*

Meeting 2: *Those Shoes*

Meeting 3: *Last Stop on Market Street*

Meeting 4: *Firebird*

Meeting 5: *We Shall Overcome*

Meeting 6: *In Our Mothers' House*

Meeting 7: *Dancing in the Wings*

Meeting 8: *The Other Side*

Meeting 6: *Hey Black Child*

Meeting 7: *Mixed Me!* & Celebration

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Calendar of Get Lit! Meetings (4-5)

African American/Black and/or Biracial

Meeting 1: Introductions, forming Get Lit! Community Agreement, sharing expectations.

Facilitator reads first book: *All Are Welcome*

Meeting 2: *Brown Girl Dreaming*

Meeting 3: *Monster: A Graphic Novel*

Meeting 4: *Monster: A Graphic Novel*

Meeting 4: *Come on, Rain & Hey, Black Child*

Meeting 5: *Ghost*

Meeting 6: *Ghost*

Meeting 7: *Ghost*

Meeting 8: *Ghost* wrap-up

Meeting 9: Response Day

Meeting 10: *We Can Overcome* – closure

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Calendar of Get Lit! Meetings (K-2)

Asian American/Pacific Islander and/or Biracial

Meeting 1: Introductions, forming Get Lit! Community Agreement, sharing expectations.

Facilitator reads first book: *All Are Welcome*

Meeting 2: *Name Jar*

Meeting 3: *A Piece of Home*

Meeting 4: *Drawn Together*

Meeting 5: *Cora Cooks Pancit*

Meeting 6: *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea*

Meeting 7: *Year of the Dog,* pt. 1

Meeting 8: *Year of the Dog,* pt. 2

Meeting 9: *Year of the Dog,* pt. 3

Meeting 10: Wrap up & Celebration

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Calendar of Get Lit! Meetings (4-5)

Asian American/Pacific Islander and/or Biracial

Meeting 1: Introductions, forming Get Lit! Community Agreement, sharing expectations.

Facilitator reads first book: *Drawn Together*

Meeting 2: *American Born Chinese*

Meeting 3: *American Born Chinese*

Meeting 4: *Kira-Kira*

Meeting 5: *Kira-Kira*

Meeting 6: *Kira-Kira*

Meeting 7: *Inside Out and Back Again*

Meeting 8: *Inside Out and Back Again*

Meeting 9: *Inside Out and Back Again*

Meeting 10: Wrap up & Celebration

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Calendar of Get Lit! Meetings (K-2)

Middle Eastern and/or Biracial

Meeting 1: Introductions, forming Get Lit! Community Agreement, sharing expectations.

Facilitator reads first book: *All Are Welcome*

Meeting 2: *One Green Apple*

Meeting 3: *Sandwich Swap*

Meeting 4: *The White Nights of Ramadan*

Meeting 5: *Layla's Head Scarf*

Meeting 6: *Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words*

Meeting 7: *The Breadwinner*

Meeting 8: *The Breadwinner*

Meeting 9: *The Breadwinner*

Meeting 10: Wrap up & Celebration

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Calendar of Get Lit! Meetings (4-5)

Middle Eastern and/or Biracial

Meeting 1: Introductions, forming Get Lit! Community Agreement, sharing expectations.

Facilitator reads first book: *All Are Welcome*

Meeting 2: *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*

Meeting 3: *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*

Meeting 4: *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*

Meeting 5: *The Princess and the Foal*

Meeting 6: *The Princess and the Foal*

Meeting 7: *The Princess and the Foal*

Meeting 8: *One Green Apple*

Meeting 9: Response Day

Meeting 10: Wrap up & Celebration

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Calendar of Get Lit! Meetings (K-2)

Latinx and/or Mixed Race/Biracial

Meeting 1: Introductions, forming Get Lit! Community Agreement, sharing expectations.

Facilitator reads first book: *All Are Welcome*

Meeting 2: *Yes! We Are Latinos: Poems and Prose About the Latino Experience*

Meeting 3: *Yes! We Are Latinos: Poems and Prose About the Latino Experience*

Meeting 4: *Too Many Tamales*

Meeting 5: *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/Marisol MacDonald no combina*

Meeting 6: *Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx/La Juez Que Creció en el Bronx*

Meeting 7: *I Love Saturdays y Domingos*

Meeting 8: *Mango, Abuela, and Me*

Meeting 9: Response Day

Meeting 10: Wrap up & Celebration

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Calendar of Get Lit! Meetings (4-5)

Latinx and/or Mixed Race/Biracial

Meeting 1: Introductions, forming Get Lit! Community Agreement, sharing expectations.

Facilitator reads first book: *All Are Welcome*

Meeting 2: *Yes! We Are Latinos: Poems and Prose About the Latino Experience*

Meeting 3: *Yes! We Are Latinos: Poems and Prose About the Latino Experience*

Meeting 4: *Yes! We Are Latinos: Poems and Prose About the Latino Experience*

Meeting 5: *Lucky Broken Girl*

Meeting 6: *Lucky Broken Girl*

Meeting 7: *Flying Lessons & Other Stories*

Meeting 8: *Flying Lessons & Other Stories*

Meeting 9: Response Day

Meeting 10: Wrap up & Celebration

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Appendix C

Parent/Guardian Letter

Parent/Guardian Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

_____ (student's name) has expressed interest in joining the *Get Lit!* Book Club at _____. This book club will be conducted as a small group mentoring experience, led by a facilitator that reflects the racial and ethnic background of your child. There will be 10 meetings in the span of the school year, each meeting last 45 minutes to an hour long. We will meet on _____ from ____ to ____.

The purpose of this book club is to provide students with an opportunity to explore the complexity of race, culture, ethnicity in a child-appropriate way. _____ will facilitate the group. We will maintain your child's confidentiality, except in the case of something that is threatening or what we find crucial that it is shared with other personnel. In such case, it will be communicated with you in a time-sensitive manner. Participation in this group is voluntary and does not affect your child's grade.

We will read the following books over the course of the Book Club:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please fill out and return the portion below if you choose for your child to participate in the *Get Lit!* book club. Please don't hesitate to let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
General Education Teacher
Date

I, _____, give _____ permission to participate in the book club.

Grade: _____

_____

Parent/Guardian Name (printed) Parent/Guardian Signature

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Appendix D

List of Books & Brief Summaries

List of Books & Brief Summaries

All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold, illustrated by Suzanne Kaufman. Published in 2018. 44 pages. Ages 4-8 (but all ages). A heartwarming picture book that welcomes all students and celebrates diversity.
(Used as an introductory book for all Get Lit! groups)

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones. Published in 2007. 40 pages. Grades K-3. All Jeremy wants are these pair of shoes that everyone has and not his thrifted shoes…until he sees another friend who could use a pair of new shoes.

Last Stop on Market Street by Matt De La Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson. Published in 2015. Winner of the 2016 Newbery Medal, 2016 Caldecott Honor Book, 2016 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book. 32 pages. Ages 3-5. Join CJ and his grandma on their trip on the bus, seeing the world as they see it.

Firebird by Misty Copeland, illustrated by Christopher Meyers. Published in 2014. 40 pages. Age range 5-8. American Ballet Theatre Misty Copeland encourages her young girls to pursue their dreams as a graceful and beautiful ballerina despite obstacles and hardships.

We Shall Overcome: A Story of a Song, by Debbie Levy, illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton. Published in 2013. 32 pages. A book from the roots of the song, "We Shall Overcome" that introduces children to the meaning of the words and the significance behind the civil rights movement.

In Our Mother's House by Patricia Polacco. Published in 2009. 48 pages. Grades 1-3. Marmee and Meema's house is full of love, children, and joy…no matter how many dads, how many moms, or how different their family is.

Dancing in the Wings by Debbie Allen, illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Published in 2000. 32 pages. Grades K-2. Sassy is a long-legged and talkative girl who wants to be a ballerina. Will she be able to achieve her dreams despite her feet, legs, and mouth that could be too big for her dreams?

The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis. Published in 2001. 32 pages. Grades K-3. A beautiful and heartwarming story about familiarizing the "other side" as *our* side.

Hey Black Child by Useni Eugene Perkins, illustrated by Bryan Collier. Published in 2017. 40 pages. Age range 4-8. An empowering poem that celebrates the beauty of a black child.

Mixed Me! by Taye Diggs, illustrated by Shane W. Evans. Published in 2015. 40 pages. Age range 4-8. A fun and energetic picture book about a child who is the perfect blend of both worlds of mom's and dad's.

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson. Published in 2016. Winner of National Book Award and Newbery Honor. 368 pages. Age range 10-14 years. Lyrical poetry about Jacqueline Woodson herself and her stories as a young writer and reader.

Monster: A Graphic Novel by Walter Dean Meyers, Guy A. Sims, illustrated by Dawud Anyabwile. Published in 2015. 153 pages. Age range 13-17; Grades 9 and up. Steve Marmon is awaiting a trial for murder and robbery. The book is played out as if Steve's sentencing was on-screen.

Come On, Rain by Karen Hesse, illustrated by John J. Muth. Published in 2016. 32 pages. Age range 4-8. A book about the power of nature, a relationship between a daughter and mother, and the rejuvenating rain on a hot day.

Ghost by Jason Reynolds. Published in 2016. National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature, nominated as one of America's best-loved novels by PBS's *The Great American Read*. 191 pages. Grades 5-6. The first book in a series about 4 very different students that come together to compete in the Junior Olympics against all odds.

The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi. Published in 2013. 40 pages. Age range 3-7. A story about the power of names and its ties to one's identity.

A Piece of Home by Jeri Watts, illustrated by Hyewon Yum. Published in 2016. Ezra Jack Keats Book Award. 32 pages. Age range 5-8. From Barnes and Noble: Hee Jun moved from Korea to West Virginia and is trying to adjust to his new life and atmosphere while trying to keep a piece of home, and bring it to a special someone.

Drawn Together by Minh Lê, illustratd by Dan Santrat. Published in 2018. Age range 3-5 (and up). A beautifully illustrated and written book that follows the stories of a

young boy and his grandfather's efforts in building a relationship and connection despite language barriers.

Cora Cooks Pancit by Dorina Lazo Gilmore, illustrated by Kristi Valiant. Published in 2012. 32 pages. Follow Cora as she tries to make her favorite Filipino dish, the pancit, and is anxious for her friends and family to try it!

From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea by Kai Cheng Thom and Kai Yun Ching, illustrated by Wai-Yant Li. Published in 2017. Age range 40 pages. Miu Lan is a child who can change into whatever she wants to be…a girl or a boy. But the problem is, what does she want to be?

Year of the Dog by Grace Lin. Published in 2008. 193 pages. Age range 3-8. The year of the dog is one to find yourself and build relationships…will this year be the year for Pacy to find herself?

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang. Published in 2006. 2006 National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Liteature, 2007 Eisner Award for Best Graphic Album. 240 pages. Grade level 6-9. A back-and-forth from the present to the legendary story of the Monkey King as Jin Wang tries to find answers to who he is in his identity as a Chinese American.

Kira-Kira by Cynthia Kadohata. Published in 2008. Winner of the Newbery Medal. 263 pages. Grade level 5-9. **kira-kira** (kee' ra kee' ra): glittering; shining. The glittering story of the value of family, love, and culture as a Japanese family moves to the Deep South and encounters hardships and difficulties that will test them all.

Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai. Published in 2013. Newbery Honor Book and winner of the National Book Award. 262 pages. Grade level 3-7. Inspired by the author's experiences as a refugee from Vietnam after the Fall of Saigon to Alabama. This book is about 10-year-old Hà who flees Vietnam with her mother and brother in hopes for a better life.

One Green Apple by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ted Lewin. Published in 2006. 32 pages. Grade level K-3. A story about Farah, a Muslim immigrant, as she joins her classmates on a field trip to the apple orchard to find out that there are some parts of her new home that reminds her of her home as she tries to find where she belongs.

The Sandwich Swap by Queen Rania of Jordan Al Abdullah and Kelly DiPucchio, illustrated by Tricia Tusa. Published in 2010. 32 pages. Grade level PK-2. Lily and Salma are best friends, but they have a hard time with each other's lunches. Will they be able to find a solution to overcome the differences and celebrate their differences in their friendship?

The White Nights of Ramadan by Maha Addasi, illustrated by Ned Gannon. Published in 2008. Grades 1-4. Follow a young girl in Kuwait named Noor and her family as they prepare for mid-Ramadan.

Layla's Head Scarf by Miriam Cohen, illustrated by Ronald Himler. Published in 2009. 32 pages. Age level 4-8. Layla, a new first grader, wears a head scarf and it does not take long for her classmates to notice. A story set place in a multicultural first grade classroom, highlighting the beauty of diversity.

Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words by Karen Leggett Abouraya, illustrated by L.C. Wheatley. Published in 2014. 36 pages. Grades 2-5. A true story of 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Malala Yousafzai, a young Pakistani girl who stood up and fought for every child's right to education.

The Breadwinner by Deborah Ellis. Published in 2000. 177 pages. Grades 4-9. A story about eleven-year-old Parvana whose circumstances in Kabul, Afghanistan's capital during the rule of the Taliban, lead her to becoming a "boy" so she could become the family's breadwinner.

Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood by Marjane Satrapi. Published in 2003. 153 pages. Grades 5 and up. Satrapi's memoir growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. A black-and-white graphic novel illustrating the historic events from the eyes of a child.

The Princess and the Foal by Stacy Gregg. Published in 2014. 272 pages. Grades 4-6. A true story about equestrienne Haya of Jordan and her foal that her father, King Hussein, gave to her as a present after the Queen's passing.

Yes! We Are Latinos: Poems and Prose About the Latino Experience by Alma Flor Ada and F. Isabel Campoy, illustrated by David Diaz. Published in 2016. 99 pages. Grades 4 and up. Thirteen young Latino and Latina's stories are represented in this book, talking about the Latino/a experience in the United States and celebrating the rich heritage of the Latin American experiences.

Too Many Tamales by Gary Soto, illustrated by Ed Martinez. Published in 1996. 32 pages. Grades PK-3. A heartwarming and funny story about Maria's family during Christmas as she tries to find a diamond ring in the middle of the tamales…

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/Marisol MacDonald no combina by Monica Brown, illustrated by Sara Palacios. Published in 2011. 32 pages. Grades PK-3. Marisol McDonald is a unique girl with a unique taste in life and thoughts outside of the box, and people tell her she doesn't "match." A story about a young biracial girl as she tries to keep her identity and heritage.

Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx/La Juez Que Creció en el Bronx by Jonah Winter, illustrated by Edel Rodriguez. Published in 2011. 40 pages. Grade level PK-3. The true story of the first Latina Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor as she tells her story to young readers.

I Love Saturdays y Domingos by Alma Flor Ada, illustrated by Elvia Savadier. Published in 2002. 32 pages. A peek into a child's weekend venture as she visits two sets of very different grandparents—one from a European-American background and one Mexican-American.

Mango, Abuela, and Me by Meg Medina, illustrated by Angela Dominguez. Published in 2015. 2016 Pura Belpré Author Award & Illustrator Honor Book. 32 pages. Grades PK-3. An endearing book about a love that transcends language barriers in family.

Lucky Broken Girl by Ruth Behar. Published in 2017. 246 pages. Grades 4-6. 2018 Pura Belpre Award. Based on true stories of the author, this book is about a young Jewish immigrant girl's new life in New York City set in the 1960s, when she suddenly gets into an accident that causes her body to be confined in a cast.

Flying Lessons & Other Stories by Ellen Oh (editor). Published in 2017. 232 pages. Grades 3-7. A collection of short stories about friendship, family, dreams, and our every-days written by acclaimed diverse authors.

Total books: 40

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Appendix E

Discussion Prompts & Topics by Book

Discussion Prompts & Topics by Book

Note: These questions and prompts are simply suggestions and do not have to be followed strictly. The facilitator is given flexibility to alter, change, add, or remove questions and prompts based on the group climate and flow. These are briefly guidelines, and the depth of the conversation may vary by grade level(s).

***All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold, illustrated by Suzanne Kaufman**

- Key topics: acceptance, diversity
- What is diversity? Do you feel accepted and celebrated at the school in you're in or the community you are a part of?

***Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones**

- Key words/topics: thrift-store, school environment, belonging in school
- What can we infer or learn about Jeremy? About the other characters?
- When is a time when you felt like you needed something to feel like you belong, or liked?

***Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt De La Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson**

- Key words/topics: neighborhood, setting and its story
- What can we infer or learn about the characters?
- What do we notice about the bus stops?
- Take a close look at each of the people that are illustrated. What do you notice? What are you thinking about?

***We Shall Overcome: A Story of a Song* by Debbie Levy, illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton**

- Key words/topics: overcome, change, equality, fighting?, freedom
- What does it mean to be free?
- What does equality mean?
- What does it mean to overcome? What did the author—or the people—want to overcome?
- What do we want to overcome?
- What do you think the words to these songs mean to people of color? To white people? To *Americans*?

- Play the song "We Shall Overcome" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfKtyertvKM

In Our Mother's House **by Patricia Polacco**

- Key words/topics: family, difference
- What do you notice about their house and the family?
- What can we learn about the family?
- What do you think it'd be like growing up in this family as a child?

Dancing in the Wings **by Debbie Allen**

- Key words/topics: dreams, individuality
- Why is Sassy worried?
- What are your dreams?
- Like Sassy, do you think there are things that are getting in the way of your dreams? Or things that you think may make achieving your dream difficult? Why?

The Other Side **by Jacqueline Woodson**

- Key words/topics: separation, segregation, safety
- What do you notice about the surroundings? The setting?
- Why are the girls separated?
- Do you think a lot has changed since then? Why or why not/how so?
- Are we still separated?

Hey Black Child **by Useni Eugene Perkins**

- Key words/topics: blackness, dream
- What does it mean to be black? Why do you think the label 'African American' is used?
- How can or how do we celebrate blackness or black people?

Mixed Me! **by Taye Diggs, illustrated by Shane W. Evans**

- Key words/topics: mixed-race, interracial, biracial
- What does it mean for the character to be a mixture/mixed?
- What do you think it's like/what is it like for those of us who are "mixed"?
- Older students: Can we be truly both?

Brown Girl Dreaming **by Jacqueline Woodson**

- Key words/topics: Jim Crow, Civil Rights, belonging
- What is home? Where is home for you?
- Why do you think Woodson used 'brown girl' to describe herself? What does that mean?
- What parts of Woodson's story still relates to our stories?

***Monster: A Graphic Novel* by Walter Dean Meyers, Guy A. Sims, illustrated by Dawud Anyabwile**

Note: contains some mature content

- Key words/topics: endurance, justice
- Why and how is the word 'monster' used?
- What do you think the character's race or background had to do with the prosecution process?
- Would you change the ending? Why or why not?
- Do you think this is reflective of what is going on in our society?

***Come On, Rain* by Karen Hesse, illustrated by John J. Muth**

- Key words/topics: neighborhood, atmosphere, relationships
- Where does the story take place? What can we know about the setting?
- What does rain have to do with hope?
- What kind of environment or atmosphere is the story taking place?
- What do you notice about the characters who are celebrating the rain?

***Ghost* by Jason Reynolds**

- Key words/topics: prejudice, overcoming hardship
- What do we know about the characters? Why do you think the authors selected these 4 characters?
- The author describes Ghost as someone who is running *from* something or running *for* his life. What is the significance behind that description?
- What kind of message might the author be trying to convey?
- What is the significance behind the characters *running*?
- Why are the characters trying to prove themselves? To whom are they trying to prove themselves—or what is it they are trying to prove?

***The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi**

- Key words/topics: identity, name
- What is your name(s)? What do they mean?

- Why are names so important?
- What do names have to do with who we are?
- Are you happy or proud of your name? Why or why not?

***A Piece of Home* by Jeri Watts, illustrated by Hyewon Yum**

- Key words/topics: home, generational difference
- Where is home for you? What makes a place home?
- What are some pieces of *your* home? Your parents' home? Your grandparents'?
- Do you feel like you are at home here?

***Drawn Together* by Minh Lê, illustratd by Dan Santrat**

- Key words/topics: difference, commonality, bonding
- Do you have an experience like this?
- What worlds are the characters creating?
- Why do you think the title of the book is 'Drawn Together'?

***Cora Cooks Pancit* by Dorina Lazo Gilmore, illustrated by Kristi Valiant.**

- Key words/topics: family gathering, traditions, food
- What does your family gathering look like?
- What kind of family traditions might you have?
- What do you think is the importance behind food in culture and who we are?
- Do you think food can tell stories? Why or why not?

***From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea* by Kai Cheng Thom and Kai Yun Ching, illustrated by Wai-Yant Li**

Note: This book is often used to explain 'transgender' or intersexuality. In this context, it will be used to discuss inter-belonging.

- Key words/topics: identity, inter-belonging
- What do you notice about the character?
- Do you ever feel like this? How? When?
- How can we, like the character, be both?

***Year of the Dog* by Grace Lin**

- Key words/topics: traditions, culture, talent
- What is talent? What is your talent?
- What can we infer about the characters or their family?

***American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang**

- Key words/topics: belonging, identity
- Why do you think the author decided to use the Monkey King as a character?
- Do you think it symbolizes something?
- What is the main problem of the story? What is the solution? Is there a solution?
- Do you see yourself in any of the characters at all? Why or why not?

***Kira-Kira* by Cynthia Kadohata**

- Key words/topics: ancestry, history, illness
- Why are people staring? Have you ever had a similar experience?
- What is the significance behind the diary?
- What are some ways the family still holds and values their Japanese heritage?
- Do you ever feel like your family has to "work harder" to keep the family together? How so?
- Have you ever had a sick family member? What happened, and what are the effects it had on your family?
- Did the book end in a way you thought it would? Why or why not?
- What is/are kira-kira?

***Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai**

- Key words/topics: refugee, refuge, home, history, family
- What is a refugee?
- Is this still relevant to today? How so?
- What is the significance behind the papaya tree?
- What do you think is the significance behind the title of the book?

***One Green Apple* by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ted Lewin**

- Key words/topics: immigration, language
- What does it mean to be an immigrant? What is immigration?
- What is the significance behind the title?
- What do you think the other characters are feeing or thinking as they get to know Farah?
- Why do you think they went to the apple orchard for a field trip? What is the significance behind the *making* of the apple cider?

***The Sandwich Swap* by Queen Rania of Jordan Al Abdullah and Kelly DiPucchio, illustrated by Tricia Tusa**

- Key words/topics: food, culture, acceptance
- How does this book (or the beginning) make you feel? Why?
- Have you ever felt this way because of the food you ate or language you spoke?
- Do you think there are ways we can be proud of the food we eat, or what we are at home?

***Layla's Head Scarf* by Miriam Cohen, illustrated by Ronald Himler**

- Key words/topics: multiculturalism, acceptance
- What is a head scarf? Why is that important?
- Are there times you wonder about how someone looks like, or what they wear, eat, or say?
- Do you think your class is like Layla's class? Why or why not?

***Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words* by Karen Leggett Abouraya, illustrated by L.C. Wheatley**

Note: contains more mature content, so be cautious with explaining the significance of these events and people groups (i.e. Taliban) in a child-friendly language

- Key words/topics: endurance, justice, education, segregation
- Show pictures of Malala
- What does it mean to be a warrior with words?
- Why do you think the Taliban banned schooling for girls?
- What does an activist mean? What are ways you can be an activist?

***The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis**

- Key words/topics: family, endurance
- What is a breadwinner?
- Why do you think women are persecuted in such ways?
- Why can't Parvana's father not work anymore?
- What is the significance behind Parvana becoming a "boy" for the family?
- What is a nomad? Do you think nomads still exist?

***Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi**

Note: contains some graphic and more mature content, such as death and terrorism. Introduce strategically.

- Key words/topics: history, persecution
- What does equality mean?
- What does it mean to resist something? Do you think it's a right thing? Why or why not?
- The character is obviously very furious with her home country and what has happened there. Is this always the case for immigrants? Why or why not?

The Princess and the Foal **by Stacy Gregg**

- Key words/topics: loss, friendship, perseverance
- What is your idea of a princess? What comes to your mind when you realized this is about a princess?
- Has your idea about a princess or being a "girl" changed while reading?
- What are your thoughts about Haya being part of the King's Cup?
- What kind of person is Haya, and what can we learn from her?

Yes! We Are Latinos: Poems and Prose About the Latino Experience **by Alma Flor Ada and F. Isabel Campoy, illustrated by David Diaz**

- Key words/topics: pride, heritage, experiences
- All Latino/a have different experiences and stories. Which one do you relate with?
- What does it mean to be Latino/a?
- What part of your culture are you most proud of?
- How are these stories celebrating the Latina/o experience and heritage?

Too Many Tamales **by Gary Soto, illustrated by Ed Martinez**

- Key words/topics: tradition, family, food
- What is the significance behind the tamales? The ring?
- What traditions do you have in your family?

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/Marisol MacDonald no combina **by Monica Brown, illustrated by Sara Palacios**

- Key words/topics: biracial, boxed identity, identity
- What does it mean to be biracial?
- Why does Marisol not "match"?
- Do you ever feel/have you ever felt this way?
- What does it mean when people are trying to box you in?
- Is it possible to be fully both?

***Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx/La Juez Que Creció en el Bronx* by Jonah Winter, illustrated by Edel Rodriguez**

- Key words/topics: history, legacy
- Why was it so hard for Sonia to become a judge?
- Why do you think there were no judges of Latin American descent in the past?
- What can we learn from Sonia?
- Why were things so hard for Sonia's mom?
- *If possible, please read the book in Spanish as well*.

***I Love Saturdays y Domingos* by Alma Flor Ada, illustrated by Elvia Savadier**

- Key words/topics: two worlds as one, diversity in family
- Part of culture is how people live. What does your culture look like? What does the girls' culture look like?
- How is the girl's weekend different based on who she's with?
- What is the significance between the balloon and the kite?
- How does the girl feel at the end?

***Mango, Abuela, and Me* by Meg Medina, illustrated by Angela Dominguez**

- Key words/topics: intergenerational relationship and diversity, crossing identity
- Have you ever had a similar experience to Mia and her abuela?
- What does it mean to be bilingual?
- Why is the parrot an important part of the story?
- How do Mia and Abuela connect?

***Lucky Broken Girl* by Ruth Behar**

- Key words/topics: immigration, hardships, resilience
- How does Ruti first feel about her move to America?
- Ruti shares how she's smart, but she's treated like she's "dumb." What does she mean? Have you had similar experiences?
- What kind of difficulties is Ruti faced with (before the accident) as an immigrant family? What about after the accident? Does and did that change who Ruti is?
- Why does the family car have an important part of the story?

***Flying Lessons & Other Stories* by Ellen Oh (editor)**

- Key words/topics: diversity, gender, family makeup, friendship

- What does diversity really mean?
- Some stories may be familiar to you and some might not be. Share your thoughts on this.
- Spend time exchanging messages with some of these active diverse authors.

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Appendix F

Response Ideas for Inside and Outside *Get Lit!*

Response Ideas for Inside and Outside *Get Lit!*

These are ideas for response days, or topics that students can spend time sharing throughout the sessions, or as extension options in the classroom.

- Defining "diverse." The selected texts are intended to be a diverse list of books that talk about diversity in some way, shape, or form. However, it could be a powerful exchange to allow students to share what their thoughts are on diversity and what they think it means before and after participation of *Get Lit!*.
- Author study. Most of the books have been written by diverse authors. Students can choose to learn more about the authors, their stories, and how they came to write the book(s).
- Checking the Mirror. These texts were chosen in hopes that they could act as mirrors for some of the students that participate. Spend time talking with students how they saw themselves or could relate to some of the books and stories. Who did they relate the most with? Where did they see their stories reflected the most? Have discussions with students about how and why having books that act as those mirrors are important to them.
- Cleaning the Windows. These books can also serve as windows into the unfamiliar, where students could learn from the possibly-uncomfortable stories. Spend time talking with students about what parts of a book, or which book acted as a window to them and why. When were they faced with discomfort? Have discussions with students about why these books may have been selected, and why having these windowing experiences are important as well. How does having these window moments change or shift some of their thoughts about certain issues or topics?
- Write. Provide students with opportunities to not only verbally discuss the text, but respond in a more interpersonal way by journaling or writing down their thoughts, questions, or feelings. These don't have to be shared if students don't feel comfortable sharing them. Writing as a response can also take form as letters, notes, or tweeting authors, writing to teachers, policymakers, or others. Encourage those platforms and opportunities for students to be activists and use their voices. Allow students to meddle with writing *their* stories and share it to the larger community outside of the book club setting.

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Appendix G

Questionnaire & Interview Questions

Questionnaire & Interview Questions

1. I am a Mentor Facilitator / Student / Parent/family (circle one) of *Get Lit!*
2. This is why I participated (or allowed my child to participate) in *Get Lit!*

3. Before *Get Lit!,* how did you (your child/your book club members) feel about your (their) identity?

4. Before *Get Lit!,* how did you (your child/book club members) feel about school?

5. What were some goals you had before starting or participating in *Get Lit!*?

6. Since being a part of *Get Lit!,* have your (your child's) thoughts or perspectives on identity changed? If so, how? If not, why?

7. Since being a part of *Get Lit!,* have your (your child's/your members') feelings or attitude towards school changed? If so, how? If not, why do you think it hasn't?

8. Facilitators and students: If you could do this again, what would you do differently? Parents: Would you let your child participate again? Why or why not?

9. What suggestions might you have for other facilitators, students, and for the book club in general?

10. Describe your *Get Lit!* experience in one sentence.

Appendix H

Summary Snapshot

Summary Snapshot

All mentor facilitators are required to submit a summary snapshot for each session. This can be given to the Reading Specialist via email or hard copy.

Date: _____
Time(s) met: _____ Location: _____
Book Discussed/Read: _____
Members present:

Topics discussed:

Special considerations regarding students:

Notes for next session:

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

Appendix I

Community Agreement (Sample)

Community Agreement (Sample)

As members of *Get Lit!,* we will:

- Be respectful of others and myself
- Be responsible for our materials and assignments
- Keep things within the room. What is shared in the room stays in the room
- Participate to the best of our abilities
- Let the mentor facilitator know if there issues that are concerning for me
- Have fun and get lit! ☺

Signed,

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Created by Joy Sohee Oh, 2019

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
ED 693/695 Data Form

NAME: Joy Sohee Oh

MAJOR: (Choose only1)

____ Adult & Higher Education	____ Educational Differentiation	____ Library Media
____ Advanced Content Specialization	____ Education Leadership	____ Middle Level Education
____ Cognitive Impairment	____ Educational Technology	__x__ Reading
____ College Student Affairs Leadership	____ Elementary Education	____ School Counseling
____ Early Childhood Education	____ Emotional Impairment	____ Secondary Level Education
____ Early Childhood Developmental Delay	____ Learning Disabilities	____ Special Education Administration
____ TESOL		

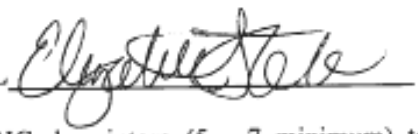
TITLE: Get Lit!: A Literature Club for Students of Color Feeling Disconnected to Schools due to Underrepresentation in Books and Teachers

PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1)

__x__ Project

____ Thesis

SEM/YR COMPLETED: Winter/2019

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL 

Using key words or phrases, choose several ERIC descriptors (5 - 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your project. ERIC descriptors can be found online at:
http://eric.ed.gov/?ti=all

1. Literacy
2. School Experience
3. Social Problems
4. Critical Literacy
5. Reading Programs
6. Elementary Students
7. Minority Group Students
8. Small Group Instruction