Kansas English

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Kansas Association of Teachers of English

Sun Seeker by Jenni Bader

In this issue ...

Kansas English

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Kansas English Author Guide

Kansas English is the peer-reviewed journal of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English (KATE). It publishes articles and materials on subjects of interest to English and literacy teachers at all levels, including practitioner pieces, scholarly articles, reflective essays, interviews, book reviews, teaching tips, and creative works. *Kansas English* publishes about 75 percent of the manuscripts it receives each year. Specifically, consider submitting the following types of manuscripts:

1. **Practitioner Pieces** describing how you teach a particular text, skill, or concept in your English language arts and/or literacy classroom.
2. **Scholarly Articles**, including research studies and academic arguments supported by research in English and/or literacy education.
3. **Reflective Essays** about teaching English language arts and/or literacy.
4. **Creative Works** (e.g., poetry, vignettes) related to teaching English and/or literacy.
5. **Interviews** with authors (children's, YA, and adult) and experts in the field of English language arts and/or literacy.
6. **Book Reviews** of recently published English/literacy pedagogy texts.
7. **Conversation Pieces** in response to previously published work in *Kansas English*.
8. **Kansas-Specific Articles** that would be of interest to English and/or literacy teachers in Kansas.

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DEADLINE for submissions for the 2024 issue of *Kansas English*: January 15, 2024

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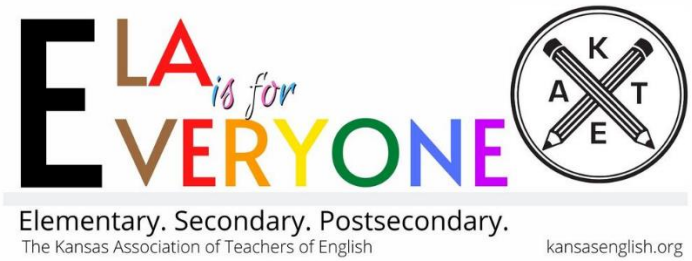
Book Reviews

Teaching Tips Column

Young Adult (YA) Book Reviews

Photography

Classroom Library Photos from Wichita West High School
Mary Harrison, featured on pages 6, 29, 42, 70, 77



FROM THE EDITOR: CHALLENGING MISCONCEPTIONS AND LOCATING JOY IN OUR TEACHING

Katherine Mason Cramer, *Kansas English* Editor in Chief
Wichita State University

Abstract
Kansas English Editor in Chief Katie Cramer challenges misconceptions about teaching and urges educators at all levels to celebrate the joy in our work.

Keywords: teaching profession, job satisfaction, misconceptions, joy

For one of my professional presentations this summer I was invited to Wichita Public Schools' College and Career Boot Camp to lead three breakout sessions for incoming high school seniors on what it takes to become a teacher. In addition to sharing information about university course work and field experiences, I also wanted to interrogate misleading narratives about the profession. Many of my teacher candidates report that when people ask them what they are studying and they respond with their plans to become middle or high school English teachers, their conversation partner usually has one of two responses: (1) over-the-top admiration/self-deprecation (e.g., *Oh wow, you are a hero. I could never do that; I don't have the patience.*), or (2) verbal and nonverbal expressions of horror (e.g., *Oh, you poor thing. How could you choose to go into that line of work? Bad pay. No respect. The kids these days. Good luck with that.*). The common perception is that teaching is joyless drudgery in which teachers are undervalued, undercompensated, and unhappy.

This makes recruitment and retention of teacher candidates and teachers challenging, to say the least; however, my colleague and WSU math education program chair Dr. Aubrey Neihaus recently shared the website Get the Facts Out (GFO) in our ongoing dialogue about growing the profession. GFO is a collaborative effort of four national societies, including the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators, funded by the National Science Foundation, with the stated mission of changing the narrative around teaching by addressing common misconceptions and celebrating the positives in the profession (GFO, n.d.).

So, I and my "boot camp" co-presenters (current Core 3 teacher interns Avery Byard and Amanda Hatfield and 2023 graduate Allison Detrick, who also presented at the 2022 KATE Conference!) set out to do just that in our presentations. And thankfully, we were prepared to do

this because most of our attendees were either on the fence about (or decidedly against) teaching when they arrived at our sessions (e.g., "Teaching is my Plan C if pediatric nursing or being a dental hygienist don't work out," and "The main reason I wouldn't choose teaching is because of the bad pay."). We were ready to resist misleading narratives and share the joys of teaching—from our own experiences and with data to back it up. Using GFO as a resource, we shared that …

- The #1 reason people choose to teach is to make a difference in the lives of their students.
- Teachers in the United States rate their lives better than all other occupation groups, except physicians, citing student and colleague relationships; lifelong learning; creative freedom and autonomy in the classroom; flexible summers and known calendar, including intermittent breaks throughout year; and financial stability.
- Teacher salaries are competitive with other jobs you can get with the same degree—but with better retirement benefits.
- Eighty-seven percent of teachers report they are treated with respect by students and students' families.
- Eighty-five percent report they are treated with respect by supervisors, and 95% by co-workers.

Yes, we all know that teaching is demanding work. But there is so much joy in that work. We know this in our classrooms as we plan, teach, assess, and build relationships with our students. We know this when we collaborate with colleagues to design meaningful learning experiences for ourselves and our students. We know this when we engage in KATE's Annual Conference each fall and KATE Camp each summer. We know this when we participate in KATE socials and executive board meetings.

We know that there is joy in lifelong learning, and joy in applying that learning to our instructional design and teaching. There is joy in sharing ideas with one another and collaborating to improve our craft. The authors featured in this issue of *Kansas English* also know this, and they joyfully tackle a variety of topics important to ELA and literacy educators at all levels.

In "Perspectives from the President," **KATE President Nathan G. Whitman** shares his take on the 2022-2023 academic year in Kansas with his typical wisdom, wit, and hope—and, this time, several football metaphors.

In their practitioner piece "Universal Design for Learning as a Pathway for Accessible Narrative Writing Practices for Diverse Adolescents," **Reagan Murnan**, **Heidi Cornell**, and **Angela Beeler** advocate convincingly for ELA and literacy teachers to employ the UDL framework in their instructional design for narrative writing, sharing an illustrative vignette as well as digital tools to enhance accessibility.

In her practitioner piece "Being *Born a Crime* Didn't Only Happen to Trevor Noah: A Student Inquiry Project on Criminalized Identities," **Amanda Durnal** describes how she inspired student inquiry that resulted in a non-traditional research project in response to Noah's memoir.

In his reflective essay "Knowing the Rules," **Darren DeFrain** shares his experiences encouraging graduate teaching assistants to approach grammar instruction in first-year composition with humility and humor, alongside a sense of inquiry and wonder.

In his reflective essay "Draft Dodging: Learning the Art of Revision," **Caleb K. Thornton** playfully examines and shares the story of his composing process, in particular his experiences with late revision, and considers applications to his writing instruction as he prepares for his first year of teaching English language arts.

Jessica Marston tackles a timely topic in her scholarly article "'Pleasure to Burn:' A Comprehensive Look into the History of Censoring Literature in School Environments," providing

a detailed retrospective on book burning and book bans, as well as resources to respond to censorship.

In their scholarly article "Strengthening Teacher Preparation: Addressing Perceptions of Behavior Management and Bilingual Learners during Field Experiences," **Victoria N. Seeger** and **Madeline S. Sherman** reveal how and why behavior management overshadowed an intended focus on literacy instruction for teacher candidates during a day-long literacy field experience and offer recommendations for teacher preparation programs.

In her scholarly article "Supporting New Teachers with Literacy Instruction: Small Changes to Graduate Literacy Programs that Can Have a Big Impact," **Elizabeth A. Morphis** describes changes she made to her graduate literacy course content to deepen in-service teachers' understanding of science of reading curriculum design and instruction.

Jennifer S. Dail reviews Brett Pierce's 2022 book *Expanding Literacy: Bringing Digital Storytelling into Your Classroom* and highlights the ways in which this text supports teachers in appreciating students' existing (digital) literacies and cultivating equitable classrooms and curriculums.

In their review of Natalie Goldberg's *Three Simple Lines: A Writer's Pilgrimage Into the Heart and Homeland of Haiku*, **Nathan G. Whitman**, **Beth Gulley**, and **Lori Muntz** enlighten us with Goldberg's exploration of haiku's history, traditions, and appeal while also offering a convincing argument and strategies for its thoughtful integration into ELA curricula.

Teaching Tips Column Editor Beth Gulley brings us pedagogical strategies from four author-educators' classrooms that will "delight and inspire" readers of this issue. Column authors include **Curtis Becker**, **Carolyn Nelson**, **Jeremy M. Gulley**, and **Marianne Kunkel**.

Young adult (YA) book reviews from **Mackenzie Decker** and **YA Book Review Editor John Franklin** provide us with two middle grades books to add to our to-read list and (classroom) libraries.

We also find joy in photos of **Mary Harrison**'s classroom library at Wichita West High School interspersed throughout this issue. It's impossible not to crack a smile when confronted with shelves and shelves of high-interest, high-quality books.

Wishing you joyful reading, friends!

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Author Biography

Katherine (Katie) Mason Cramer, Ph.D. (she/her) is starting her 14th year as Program Chair and Professor of English Education in Wichita State University's School of Education. Prior to earning her doctorate, Katie was a middle school English teacher in Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools, and she has maintained her Kansas teaching licenses (ELA 5-8 and 6-12) so that a joyful return to the middle or high school ELA classroom is always possible. She has been a member of KATE and on the Executive Board since moving back to Kansas (from Arizona and Georgia) in 2010, and she has served as Editor of *Kansas English* since 2017. Under her leadership, *Kansas English* has been honored with NCTE's Affiliate Journal of Excellence Award in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Katie's research and publications center the use of young adult literature to recognize, affirm, and teach diverse genders and sexualities in ELA classrooms and curricula. She can be reached at Katie.Cramer@wichita.edu.

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Nathan G. Whitman
Derby High School, WSU Tech, Hutchinson Community College

Abstract
KATE President Nathan Whitman, who doesn't watch football, provides an analogy to the 2022-2023 school year using football terminology in an attempt to reflect on the state of education in Kansas. Will it be a touchdown or a fumble? Read on and find out.

Keywords: education, politics, Kansas, LGBT, vouchers, inspiration, motivation, reflection, teaching, awards, appreciation, perseverance, artificial intelligence, advocacy

As much as I would like to start on a hopeful note and say that the state of education in Kansas has improved since 2022, I would be woefully ignorant to declare it is the case. It's no coincidence that more educators than ever are leaving the profession. Last year, there were approximately 1,700 education vacancies in the state of Kansas (Educate Kansas, 2022); this year, there are 1,800 (Educate Kansas, 2023). Education continues to be a political football on our hyper partisan turf, and in our football-loving state, teachers are tired of being sidelined by legislators who continue to refuse to fully fund special education, who promote vouchers under the guise of ESAs and tax credits (Carpenter, 2023), and who stoke the fires of rivalry between communities and schools through baseless claims of indoctrination and predation (Mipro, 2023). Our most vulnerable students are being targeted by anti-LGBT legislation that affects them both in and outside of the classroom (Hanna, 2023). It's hard not to see the writing like a slur on the locker room wall. It's easy to see all this and lose hope. However, we're only at halftime.

Like any team facing a defeat, we need a pep talk. What are we doing well? Where are our victories? For one, Kansas educators are still doing wonderful things in their classrooms and are being honored for their contributions to the profession. Case in point, the Kansas Exemplary Educators Network welcomed more than 32 new members into its ranks at the first in-person KEEN Conference since the pandemic began, recognizing Horizon Award recipients and Milken Educators, and Presidential Awards for Excellence in Math and Science. KATE member Aaron Miller was one such recipient of a Horizon Award (Kansas State Department of Education, 2023). Additionally, KATE's *Kansas English* editor Dr. Katie Cramer received Wichita State's CAS Research Award (College of Applied Sciences, 2022). Finally, Wichita East High School teachers Stacy Chestnut (KATE Conference Chair) and Kiara Suarez-Sosa (KATE Graphic Designer) both received Distinguished Classroom Teacher Awards (*2023 Distinguished Classroom Teachers,* 2023). I'm sure that there are many other success stories that I did not know about to highlight. Unfortunately, it's not enough to be doing well, especially in a metaphorical football game.

One has to fight.

The only way to win a game is to fight back and persevere. During the tail end of the legislative session, grassroots efforts to voice opposition to harmful school bills had some effect in

combatting them, such as Senate Bill 83 (Bahl & Tidd, 2023). It's easy to forget that lawmakers need to hear educators' voices because it's equally hard to find time to craft a well-written letter of opposition or advocacy, especially when we're in the middle of grading, projects, and test prep. Even if you can eke fifteen minutes out once a week, take the time to communicate with lawmakers. You can find your representatives at Openstates.org. There are plenty of templates you can find to help ease this, online communities for support, and even artificial intelligence can take some of the bite out of this added burden: ChatGPT is very skilled at writing basic form letters, and Resist.Bot can easily send your letter wherever it needs to go—just be sure to use your personal email address.

In addition to writing to lawmakers, talk to your immediate relatives and community members. If we're ever to dispel misinformation and disinformation, we have to tap into the local ethos. Remember, it's a lot harder for people to stigmatize educators when face-to-face in civil conversation. Oftentimes, these concerned citizens only know what their news sources have told them, and an educator functioning as a primary source of information may make them think twice about any anti-education rhetoric or propaganda they may have encountered.

Finally, the best way to win the game without having to punt this problem to future generations of educators is to teach your students to be critical thinkers and engaged citizens. If at all possible, stay in the classroom. The best defensive line is in our students who will be the next generation of voters. Effect change one pupil at a time, one class at a time, one year at a time. Our situation will not improve with one play, but through a long-form strategy. If you must take yourself out of the game, I'll reiterate with how I ended my previous letter: run for office, run for school board, advocate for education in any way you know how. Just like we need fair referees, we need elected officials who understand and support K-12 education. That could be you.

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Author Biography

Nathan G. Whitman (he/him), M.A. English, B.A. Secondary English Education & Creative Writing, is the current Kansas Association of Teachers of English President and the NCTE Standing Committee On Affiliates Region 5 Representative. He teaches English at Derby High School USD 260 and is also an adjunct professor at Hutchinson Community College and WSU Tech. He is a recipient of the 2014 Kansas Cable Telecommunications Horizon Award and a member of the Kansas Exemplary Educators Network. He can be reached at nwhitman@usd260.com and on Twitter @writerwhitman.

Mary Harrison's classroom library at Wichita West High School

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING AS A PATHWAY FOR ACCESSIBLE NARRATIVE WRITING PRACTICES FOR DIVERSE ADOLESCENTS

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Heidi Cornell
Wichita State University

Angela Beeler
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Abstract
Equitable learning opportunities are critical for students to meet writing standards. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a scientifically based framework for planning and implementing instruction that supports a broad range of diverse learners. In this article, the UDL framework is briefly described, including its principles and guidelines. Vignettes are shared throughout to illustrate how one teacher applied the UDL framework to plan a narrative writing unit for a diverse group of adolescent learners. Adopting the use of the UDL framework during the instructional planning process ensures that instructional practices are centered on student strengths and offer avenues for accessible and equitable learning experiences for all students. This article closes with digital tools that promote 21st century learning and offer a pathway to accessibility.

Keywords: accessibility, diverse learners, narrative writing, Universal Design for Learning

Mrs. Gerri has a diverse group of 6th grade students in her Language Arts class. The students in her class have a wide range of abilities, come from various ethnic and racial groups, and have distinct experiences and background knowledge. In particular, Mrs. Gerri notices that once her students enter her classroom and see a writing objective on the board or hear of a lesson objective that involves writing, there is a unanimous sigh with accompanying

shoulder slumps. She has heard about Universal Design for Learning in a previous professional development session and wonders if she can apply the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to her upcoming unit on narrative writing. She is hopeful that by applying the UDL framework she will be able to motivate and engage her students in writing practices while simultaneously meeting the diverse needs of her students.

The pervasiveness of literacy in academic, professional, artistic, and social realms makes the development of strong writing skills paramount to students' success across a lifetime (Bazerman et al., 2017). However, instructional writing practices have historically ignored or minimized the role of culture, linguistics, exceptionality, and/or promoted practices centered around Eurocentric and Western ways of knowing, learning, and writing (Paris, 2021). Traditional classroom writing practices are often ineffective for culturally and exceptionally diverse students, creating increased literacy achievement gaps for minority and exceptional students (Cho et al., 2022). Students entering today's classrooms are becoming ever more diverse and encounter several obstacles and barriers to literacy before even entering the classroom. Thus, creating writing instruction based on equitable and accessible practices is critical. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework is an empirically-based approach for making curriculum accessible to diverse learners, regardless of ability, language, culture, or learning preference (UDL; CAST, 1998; Spooner et al., 2007). In this article, the UDL framework will be briefly reviewed, including its principles and accompanying guidelines. As such, this article aims to bring awareness to how teachers can apply the UDL framework to work towards more equitable and accessible teaching practices.

Universal Design for Learning Framework

The UDL framework is an empirically-based approach for developing equitable and accessible curricula that helps minimize the need for individual accommodations (Black et al, 2014; Rao & Tanners, 2011). As such, the UDL framework provides many affordances that aim to mitigate barriers to learning. These affordances are centered around three overarching principles: (a) multiple means of engagement, (b) multiple means of representation, and (c) multiple means of action and expression (see Table 1). Offering multiple means of engagement aims to support students by stimulating their interest and motivation to learn. Providing multiple means of representation involves presenting information and content in a variety of ways and modalities. Affording multiple means of action and expression consists of offering students multiple ways to demonstrate their understanding. The employment of the UDL framework intentionally, proactively, and reflectively addresses the learning requirements of all individuals, including diverse and exceptional learners (CAST, 2018). Consequently, by ensuring accessible curricula, this framework is designed to prepare all students to become expert learners. As a result, the expert learners will become aware of their learning desires and will be able to pursue ways that ensure those desires are met. The three UDL principles (multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression) are supported by a set of nine guidelines (see Table 1). These guidelines can be used when considering how to align instruction to each of the principles of the framework.

Table 1: *UDL Framework Principles and Guidelines* (Rose & Meyer, 2022)

Principle 1: Multiple Means of Engagement
• Recruiting Interest: Spark excitement and curiosity for learning • Sustaining Effort & Persistence: Tackle challenges with focus and determination • Self-Regulation: Harness the power of emotions and motivation in learning

Principle 2: Multiple Means of Representation • Perception: Interact with flexible content that doesn't depend on a single sense like sight, hearing, movement, or touch • Language & Symbols: Communicate through languages that create a shared understanding • Comprehension: Construct meaning and generate new understandings
Principle 3: Multiple Means of Action and Expression • Physical Action: Interact with accessible materials and tools • Expression & Communication: Compose and share ideas using tools that help attain learning goals • Executive Functions: Develop and act on plans to make the most out of learning

Note. Adopted from the CAST UDL Guidelines (https://udlguidelines.cast.org/)

Before Mrs. Gerri begins her unit on narrative writing, she is going to keep the principles and guidelines of UDL at her fingertips as she plans for an accessible and equitable unit. Her plan is to use a backward design approach, by first beginning with what her students should know, and from there, considering essential lessons and learning goals. This will help her to ensure that she is providing access to all areas of learning and assessment throughout the unit while concurrently reducing "on the fly" modifications and/or accommodations.

Backward Planning

As education policy has evolved, teachers have been required to differentiate instruction (Strickland, 2008). The most common approach to differentiating instruction is retrofitting. This strategy is typically enacted when a teacher notices that a student or students are experiencing challenges and/or are lacking engagement. The teacher's response to student challenges and disengagement is to differentiate within an existing curriculum. Backward planning is also known as "backward design" and is a method of curriculum planning that starts with clearly identifying learning objectives, then working backward to achieve the objectives (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Backward planning consists of three stages: (a) identify desired learning results, (b) determine acceptable evidence, and (c) plan learning experiences and instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). The UDL framework integrates backward planning (planning that begins with the end goal) by starting with what students should know and be able to do and working backward from there when creating individual lessons. The UDL framework requires that teachers embrace and prioritize a backward planning approach to ensure that alternatives to meet the needs of all students are created before the instructional unit begins. While flexibility is inherently intertwined within this framework, backward planning seeks to mitigate modifications of instruction and materials during instruction or at the last minute (Rose & Meyer, 2022). In this way, educators can meet the needs of diverse learners at the outset of the unit, rather than engaging in ongoing adjustments for individual students (Pisha & Coyne, 2001).

After meeting several times with her 6th grade language arts team to discuss a backward planning approach to the narrative writing unit, Mrs. Gerri and the other language arts teachers decide that allowing students to create a narrative writing portfolio would be a great way to assess what students know and are able to do throughout and at the end of the unit. Additionally, the 6th grade language arts team considers this unit assessment portfolio a vehicle for engaging in the three principles of UDL. As she and the team generate the lesson objectives for the unit, they consider any potential barriers that students may experience, such as lack of interest, English language skills, proficiency in digital literacy, and the organizational skills required to create a portfolio of narrative work. Engaging in backward

planning also allows for the team to consider the guidelines of the UDL framework to ensure the UDL principles are embedded throughout the instructional planning of the entire unit.

Multiple Means of Engagement

The UDL principle of multiple means of engagement centers around student motivation and engagement with the curriculum. In other words, educators who employ this principle will strategically plan "from the beginning" more than one way to 1) pique and sustain students' interest in the content, 2) sustain student effort and persistence in learning the content, and 3) promote self-regulation. The checkpoints of the UDL Framework (see Table 1) offer teachers a place to start when planning for upcoming units.

There are a variety of strategies that can be used to pique and sustain student interest in the content. Educators can begin by listing or providing the learning outcomes for students in "kid friendly" language. Learning objectives should be posted in a place that is easily accessed and visually available to students. Students can be motivated when learning objectives are clearly and continually presented within and across lessons to determine the actions that must be done to achieve the objectives (Widyawulandari & Indriayu, 2019). Additionally, learning objectives can also be used to frame learning goals for students. Engagement and goal setting are theoretically linked (Siegert & Taylor, 2004), and therefore, goal setting can provide an avenue for achieving the UDL principle of multiple means of engagement. Teachers can consider individual, small group, and/or whole class goals. Goals that surround learning objectives should be attainable and individualized. When students accomplish goals, it can lead to satisfaction and further motivation. Contrastingly, when goals are too difficult to achieve, students can experience frustration and lower motivation (Siegert & Taylor, 2004). Teachers can provide each student with a checklist of learning goals. These checklists can be placed in sheet protectors for daily use for students to note their progress using a dry erase marker. Some students who require closer progress monitoring can be provided with short, individual "check ins" to monitor student progress formally or informally towards more individualized learning goals.

Relatedly, learning objectives and learning goals can provide a catalyst for sustained self-regulation, as students learn to self-monitor and self-evaluate their progress towards learning goals and objectives. Teachers should be intentional about having the learning goals checklists serve as a way for students to communicate and self-monitor their progress with peers and/or teachers. Lastly, because students are continually self-monitoring and self-evaluating, teachers will be more actively aware of student progress and will be able to proactively make any necessary arrangements to sustain student effort and engagement.

Educators can elicit student engagement by providing students with choice. When student autonomy is promoted using personally relevant choices, students become more motivated and learning outcomes improve (Evans & Boucher, 2015). There is strong empirical support for the use of "edgy" texts (i.e., those that contain moral dilemmas about race, gangs, drugs, suicide, sexual exploitation, or teen pregnancy; Ivey & Johnston, 2018) to engage and motivate students to read. Knowing this, teachers can provide students with a variety of different "edgy" narratives, including (a) dystopian narratives, (b) "tense" historical narratives such as the real story of Pocahontas, (c) popular songs that can be described as narratives, including "Evermore" by Taylor Swift, and (d) poems, such as those by Edgar Allan Poe and "Paul Revere's Ride." In addition to providing a variety of choices that students can explore to add to their personal narrative portfolios, teachers can also consider how providing multiple viewpoints within related narratives can evoke student engagement.

Narratives, especially historical narratives, are often provided from the dominant perspective. When considering multiple means of engagement for a narrative writing unit, educators

are encouraged to be thoughtful about including diverse perspectives and representations in the resources that are provided. While this often takes more time, it is vital that educators commit to providing students with narratives that include perspectives of individuals that are most often silenced or forgotten. As such, by showcasing different narratives, classroom teachers create entry points for each student while providing a hook to keep them engaged throughout the entire unit. Lastly, by offering diverse perspectives and viewpoints, students are likely to be inspired to find and write narratives that speak to *them* and showcase *their* voice.

Providing multiple opportunities for students to engage in both individual and group assignments is also a mechanism for sustaining interest. As students explore and create personal narratives, they can be encouraged to exchange dialogue and experiences. Providing a space for dialogue can propel students' cultural competence and provide access to the richness of various cultures, languages, and abilities (Zoch, 2017). Additionally, teachers can organize the layout of their classroom in a way that promotes choice, collaboration, and access. The layout of classrooms can also be set up in a way that has space for collaboration, such as round tables and the ability to rearrange furniture for spontaneous collaborations. Teachers can also offer flexible seating options for students. To illustrate, in addition to traditional classroom chairs, teachers can also include yoga mats, bean bags, stools, cushions, and milk crates that provide students with the ability to choose where and how they want to sit. Finally, classrooms can provide multiple means of engagement, by creating accessible materials. Classroom supplies should be plentiful and within reach for students. The students in the class should know where to find supplies that can be used for the creation of their narrative writing portfolios. By providing students with tremendous avenues for creativity, choice, and mechanisms for self-regulation, teachers are likely to recruit and sustain the engagement of their diverse group of students.

Mrs. Gerri knows that if she can recruit and sustain the interest of her students, then they will be more likely to engage in the content. She wants to acknowledge how students can utilize their strengths, identities, abilities, and background knowledge to craft their narrative writing portfolios. She will examine a variety of methods, such as clearly stated learning objectives and goals, student choice and representation, and collaborative learning opportunities and dialogue to provide her 6th grade students with multiple means of engagement.

Multiple Means of Representation

The principle of multiple means of representation involves the ability for students to learn according to their preferred learning method. This can be as simple as providing students with a visual image to go along with a text. Said differently, multiple means of representation involves the presentation of content in a variety of ways and modalities. While multiple means of representation concerns the physical and cognitive nature of representation, such as visual, audio, tactile, and level of rigor, for Mrs. Gerri and her students it also involves the provision of multiple sources, resources, and multiple perspectives. In essence, students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness—especially for adolescents—is a mechanism for increasing student motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which can be achieved when teachers offer choice in the classroom.

To begin a unit, teachers can offer students a survey to inquire about student preferences, such as if they prefer (a) information presented in a video, audio, or text-based format, (b) writing by typing, handwriting, or voice-to-text, (c) flexible or structured assignment guidelines, and (d) individual or group assignments. All this information can be studied as teachers prepare for their upcoming lessons and as a tool for supporting students throughout the unit. Throughout the course of the unit, teachers can offer students with guidance on various assistive technology supports, such as an online thesaurus and an online dictionary, and translation tools, such as text-to-speech and speech-to-text options for enabling readability of narrative texts found online. General education

teachers, along with the help of supporting special education teachers, can prepare instructional materials that are accessible to all their students, regardless of language or ability.

Throughout the narrative writing unit, teachers can explain to students that narratives are boundless and created in a variety of ways, including songs, autobiographies, biographies, documentaries, poems, movies, books, folklore, visual narratives, storytelling, speeches, including TED talks, and so much more. Teachers are encouraged to provide students with explicit instruction on the genre elements of narrative writing and model how these elements are present within a variety of formats. After providing students with adequate instruction regarding the genre elements of narrative writing, teachers can allow students to explore, within a structured environment, different resources that offer narratives and encourage students to collect and draft narratives in a way that speaks to them or is representative of them. Teachers should intentionally pull several resources for a select number of students, provide the class with a plethora of articles, video and audio clips, pictures, newspapers, and videos and articles from selected resources provided by the school's library database. To further bolster the diverse nature and perspectives inherent of narrative writing, teachers can also enlist in the community or parents to provide oral retellings, newspaper clippings, etc. of narratives, such as those who are veterans, immigrants, adoptive parents, personal conversion stories, or "slices" of life that may speak to or represent a variety of students in the class. These multiple narratives provide information from diverse perspectives and represent content standards in a variety of ways.

Mrs. Gerri deliberately offers the narrative writing content in a variety of methods. She explicitly models for students the narrative elements that are fundamental to the genre. She pairs her instruction with visuals and models for students how they can construct their own narratives. Mrs. Gerri uses think alouds to increase her students' conceptual understanding of the genre and the various styles and presentations of narratives. She considers how she can provide her students with narratives in a variety of formats, including those in multiple languages and even graphic novels.

Multiple Means of Action and Expression

Providing students with multiple means of action and expression affords students a variety of modalities for demonstrating mastery (CAST, 2018). The portfolio assessment allows students to compile narratives from a variety of sources (e.g., documentaries, oral presentations, poems, speeches). In addition, students can compose a portfolio in a manner that is aligned with their strengths or that was significant for them. For example, some students can a create portfolio that is entirely digital, including websites and digital compilations of their written work through iMovie, while other students can create a portfolio that is completely paper-based. Moreover, other students could potentially craft a portfolio that mirrors a poster or a "Pinterest" board. In this way, students can compose a product that is most relevant and purposeful for *them.*

Teachers can introduce many different means of engagement, representation, and action and expression to students that are likely new and different. As a result, teachers can provide students with opportunities to reflect on particular strategies. Therefore, as a daily assignment, students can reflect either in writing or through dialogue with small groups or partners what strategies they have tried, and which have worked best so far. Students can also be encouraged to discuss their willingness to try different strategies. This reflective practice also helps to propel one of the main ideas of UDL by creating expert learners (Hartmann, 2015).

By offering multiple means of action and expression, a portfolio assessment contributes positively to the identity development of students (Chardin et al., 2020). This particular portfolio assessment allows students to apply and understand the elements of the narrative genre through *their* perspectives, fictional stories that are representative of *their* lives, to express narratives in *their* format, and to replicate narratives that speak to *them.* Students are also able to share their work in *their* first language and then in English—giving value to their culture and heritage. Consequently, through a

portfolio assessment not only are students able to connect with themselves and their own identities, but they are also able to connect with their peers—recognizing and appreciating the "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez et al., 2005) that their peers possess and the value of their experiences.

Traditionally, Mrs. Gerri has provided a multiple-choice assessment on the genre elements of narrative writing and graded an independently written personal narrative essay to assess what students know and were able to do at the end of the unit. Now that she is more familiar with the UDL framework, she decides that assessing students on their construction of a narrative writing portfolio is a great way to offer students multiple means of action and expression. Additionally, since Mrs. Gerri engaged in backward planning practices, she can provide her portfolio assessment rubric to students at the beginning of the unit, which can give students options for self-regulation and choices to spark and sustain engagement. Mrs. Gerri also offers multiple checkpoints using the rubric throughout the unit to allow students to self-assess their narrative writing portfolios and for her to give feedback and guidance. Providing multiple check-ins throughout the unit also invites students to sustain effort.

Tools as a 21st Century Learner

The use of 21st century tools is often used as a retrofitting technique for creating accessibility (Foley & Ferri, 2012). In other words, lessons are planned and delivered, and those students who require assistance with accessing content are provided with assistive technology (AT). The Individuals with Disabilities Act (2004 §300.5) defines assistive technology as "any item, piece of equipment, or product whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, and improve the functional capacities of individuals with disabilities." In the case for Mrs. Gerri, the curriculum surrounding narrative writing is unchanged, but rather, the students have the option of using digital tools to help them access the narrative writing unit. The use of technology, such as those provided in Table 2, not only offer an avenue for developing 21st century skills but are also a way to provide accessibility through multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression.

Table 2

System Preferences and Extensions to Support Diverse 21st Century Learners

Customizable Operating Systems	Ease of access - narrator, magnifier, high contrast, mouse and keyboard adjustments Additional accessibility features - Speech-to-text, text-to-speech, word processors, spell check
Add-Ons & Extensions	Read&Write https://www.texthelp.com/products/read-and-write-education/ Postlight Reader https://reader.postlight.com/

System preferences can be customized for students for increased accessibility (see Table 2). For example, students can locate accessibility settings, such as Ease of Access on Windows devices to customize the narrator, magnifier, contrast, and mouse and keyboard adjustments. Narrator settings can be adjusted for students to select voices that have different pitches, speed, and accents. The magnifier preference can be used to increase or magnify a display screen. This can allow students who have visual impairments or low vision to read smaller text on the screen. Additionally, increments for enlargement options can potentially alleviate anxiety for some students who may benefit from viewing only a small portion of text at a time. Contrast adjustments, such as using warm background colors (e.g., peach, orange, yellow) can significantly improve readability for

students with and without dyslexia (Rello & Bigham, 2017). Mouse and keyboard adjustments can also be customized. Mouse adjustments include size and color. Additionally, the system preferences also allow for customizable cursors. As such, the thickness and color of the cursor can be adjusted, and a cursor indicator can be added as well.

Text-to-speech and speech-to-text are also readily available within system preferences. Text-to-speech can serve as a screen reader to provide students with accessible texts. Speech-to-text allows students to translate their spoken language to writing, which can improve writing and spelling performance (Cullen et al., 2008). Additionally, speech-to-text options can allow for students to quickly and effortlessly brainstorm through verbal "brain dumps" or "idea explosions." For example, by using the speech-to-text accessibility feature, students can verbalize or verbally "dump" several ideas on a blank document without becoming bogged down or frustrated with spelling errors and/or the physical demands of writing. This accessibility feature has been documented as helpful for students who struggle with spelling and can support some students with drafting text (Ok et al., 2022).

The use of extensions or apps are ATs that can also provide students with accessible and engaging writing practices. Word prediction software, such as Read&Write (see Table 2) can help to improve spelling and vocabulary usage, especially for students with dyslexia (Evmenova et al., 2010). Created in alignment with UDL, Read&Write is a discrete toolbar that allows users to select from several options, such as read aloud, a dictionary, word prediction, language translation, built-in research assistance, etc. The use of translation, vocabulary, and word prediction features are especially helpful for linguistically diverse students (Martin & Conatser, 2017). Additionally, the Postlight Reader extension removes ads and distracting pop ups from web pages. As such, the extension works to "clean up" webpages to only display the important information, allowing students to focus on only the content. Postlight Reader also allows students to customize the font, text size, and color contrast of most web pages.

It would be impossible to create an exhaustive list of ATs to alleviate the specific barriers faced by students in everyday classrooms, however, Table 2 provides options for some of the most common and widely accessible ATs that can be used to support academically and culturally diverse students. Providing students with multiple opportunities to explore the accessibility features within operating systems can be advantageous, especially within a one-to-one digital environment when students are always accessing the same device.

Mrs. Gerri's school district is a one-to-one district, meaning each student has their own laptop. In addition to writing competency standards, her state standards also mandate that students gain proficiency in and produce and publish written products using digital tools. The use of digital tools within the writing environment can also serve as a medium for accessibility for Mrs. Gerri's diverse classroom. Mrs. Gerri is somewhat unfamiliar with the accessibility options and applications that her students can use to help them successfully complete their writing portfolios. She consults with her special education colleagues and her school-based instructional technology facilitator.

Conclusion

Educators must be prepared to embrace and teach all students, including those from diverse backgrounds and those with exceptionalities. This preparation is most impactful from the outset of lesson planning, rather than a retrofitted approach. For example, teachers are encouraged to consider potential barriers within units, lesson objectives, and learning targets before instruction occurs instead of making spontaneous curriculum changes or modifications as difficulties arise. While the primary intention of the UDL framework was to provide accessible learning opportunities for exceptional students, it can be used to provide equitable learning opportunities to students from a variety of cultures, religions, and experiences (Chita-Tegmark et al., 2012). The UDL framework

along with 21st century tools, can be applied to any lesson and across content areas. Adopting the use of the framework during the instructional planning process ensures that instructional practices are centered on student strengths and offer avenues for accessible and equitable learning experiences for all students.

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BEING *BORN A CRIME* DIDN'T ONLY HAPPEN TO TREVOR NOAH: A STUDENT INQUIRY PROJECT ON CRIMINALIZED IDENTITIES

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Abstract
Born A Crime, a memoir by Trevor Noah, has been a common addition to high school curricula in recent years. This paper addresses how to effectively teach this complex text and incorporates a research project that allows students to personalize chosen topics. The students who completed the focus work were on-level 10th grade ELA students and the unit took eight instructional weeks. This class met three times a week for two 88-minute blocks and one 44-minute class. The unit was engaging, and the rigor was appropriate for normally developing or advanced 10th grade students. Modifications were made for support-seeking students and those notes are included in this paper. The focus standards for this unit are Common Core W.10.9, RL.10.6, and RI 10.6. Students had access to a variety of academic databases for the research project, their own school-issued computers, and a copy of the memoir.

Keywords: race, discrimination, *Born A Crime*, Trevor Noah, memoir, research, identity, writing, reading, ELA, high school

Introduction

Integrating authentic, relevant, and diverse voices into the classroom is at the core of what many literacy educators care most about. Our district adopted Trevor Noah's memoir *Born A Crime* to represent one of these voices within our 10th grade curriculum. This memoir is realistic and raw, yet still a comical collection of stories that serve as a window into Noah's childhood in South Africa. Each chapter opens with a few pages of historically accurate information aimed at an audience who did not experience Apartheid, followed by a personal experience Noah had as a mixed-race person during (or shortly after) Apartheid. It is honest, funny, and engaging in a relatable way for 10th grade readers.

The first year my on-level 10th grade colleagues and I tried literature circles to promote personal connection and peer conversations about the topics presented in the text. Each week students would read one chapter, take annotation notes, and meet with reading groups. We did not

assign the full memoir to all students, hoping that reducing the amount of reading might help them dive a little deeper, but it was not fruitful. These literature circles were an epic fail. We noticed students struggling with the dense reading and even when prepared, the fact they were reading chapters out of order was confusing to them. Year two with this text demanded a new approach.

In order to better support our students, reading *Born A Crime* in year two took on a somewhat traditional, whole-class read approach, and it was effective. This approach allowed us to scaffold the way Noah pairs information and experience to reveal his purpose to the reader. My students are Noah's target audience in many ways but needed help noticing that. We spent a few weeks reading much of Part I (Chapters 1-8) together. We journaled about connecting Noah's curated background information with his real-life stories. I spent much of this time feeling like a part-time history teacher and part-time ELA teacher, but it worked. By the end of Part I, many students were reading more independently, and the broader understanding of Noah's text was taking shape.

With Part I reading done, we began layering the research project into our reading of Parts II and III. This project was divided into the following activities and modified to meet the needs of all learners along the way.

Research Project Activities

Activity #1: Brainstorming

This first step, and the foundation for the project, was modified from Inclusive Teaching materials found online through the University of Michigan (pabdoo). Based on this content, I found it essential to begin with some ground rules, including revisiting the expectation of being kind and compassionate at all times. We then returned to a passage from chapter two in which Noah describes how he was truly "born a crime." We then expanded our ideas to brainstorm about other times when leaders or other people criminalized the identities of others, like they had for Noah and other mixed-race individuals in South Africa. Students were offered key topics like gender, race, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation (pabdoo). Students then completed a gallery walk in which they identified examples of other times when people were considered criminals just for being born. I got them thinking with examples like being female made it illegal to vote in America at one point in time or how being Jewish made it illegal to exist in parts of Europe during World War II, and soon, ideas started cropping up around the classroom. Before we left for the day, I had students explore topics around the room and start making a list of ideas they connected to or wanted to know more about.

Activity #2: Topic Selection

After letting the gallery walk ideas simmer for a few days, I asked students to try narrowing to a single idea. Using my own thoughts as a model, I shared an example of what topic exploration might sound like. General guidelines asked students to write what they knew about an idea, but also start to ask questions about the topic as a whole. Table 1 features some excerpts of student submissions from this part of the project:

Table 1. Student Excerpts

Student A	The topic that I chose for this project is the LGBTQIA+ community because I have a personal connection to it seeing as that I am gay… As I got older I learned from society that being homosexual was many things but easy was not one of them…The subtopics that I want to go more in depth into are the stigma and misconceptions about my community and how those beliefs have

	detrimental effects on people specifically young people who are still trying to navigate the ins and outs of their own brain.
Student B	My starter idea is being born African American. Growing up as an African came with many struggles. These would relate to being put into unfair stereotypes. Growing up many people assumed that I would be troubled because of the way I looked so I think I could research on how many African Americans are criminalized by the way they look. Some frequent problems with being African American is you are always being seen as a villain and a threat rather than an actually human being. Instead of people speaking when they see you most of them get wide eyes and clutch their belongings
Student C	The topic I started off with was gender inequality, specifically opportunities. For as long as I can remember, men and women have been getting paid differently. Focusing on sports, men get paid a lot more than women do. As for me, I am thinking about playing tennis in the future and I'm aware of the difference in revenue.

I also feature final products from Students A and B later in this article. While race was a focal point for many of the conversations based on Noah's text, now students were thinking about discrimination in a more complex and individualized way.

Activity #3: Text Connections

Before we went into more research, I wanted my students to find one page in Noah's memoir that would connect with the developing topics. Surprisingly, together, we were able to connect all topics in a meaningful way. If they were looking at gender issues, students focused on passages about Trevor's mother or the absent or abusive male figures he writes about. Race topics had lots of choices, but students were challenged to narrow to a meaningful passage they could connect to. At this step they merely stuck a post-it note in their books and described the connection to their topic on the post-it note.

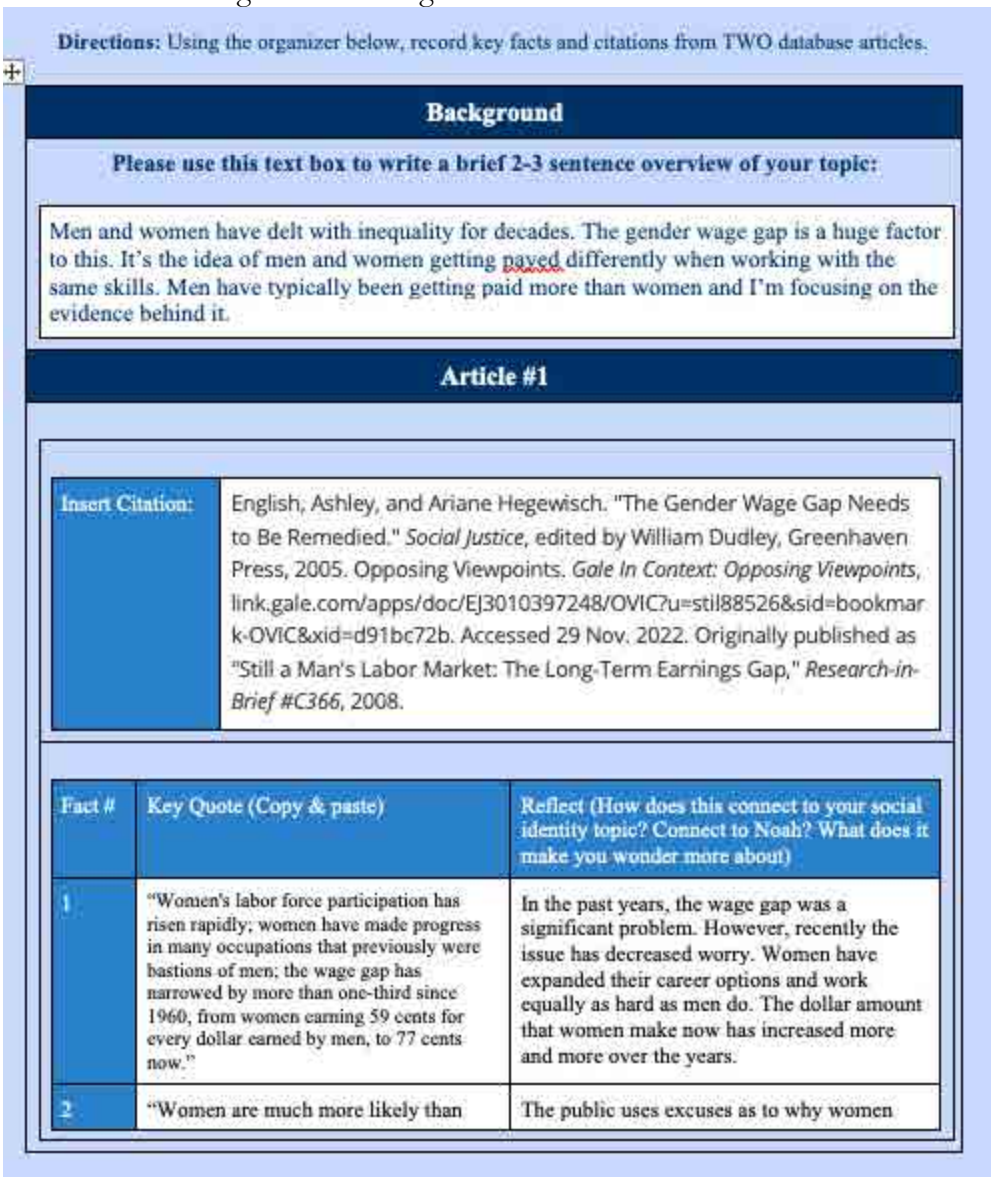
Activity #4: Research

I have the luxury of amazing database support within the district as well as our school library. The bulk of the work for this project had students working through databases for more information on their topics. Students struggled to find what they wanted and had to pivot along the way. For example, the topic of female athletes earning equal pay was tricky, so we had to use some general research and make connections to more current events for that topic. Having done a variety of research projects in the past, this one was the perfect balance of direction-based work, like "complete these notes by the end of the week" and actual self-guided research. It can be so tempting to really spell it out for kids and set them up to easily find the right information, but this project forced many of them to grapple with their topics and expand or contract them along the way.

Students had access to a blank version of Assigned Notes Pages, and they added their research throughout the week (see Figure 1 for a screenshot of the assigned notes page from the topic shared by Student C in Table 1). Before students started, I showed them example notes I had done and walked them through my thinking process as I moved from one article to another. These notes allowed students to copy and paste key facts, yet also challenged them to paraphrase and connect to the information they found. At this stage, I asked for two sources and four facts from

each source. I chose to modify the number of facts for students needing support, but required all students to have more than one source for their projects.

Figure 1. Student "C" Assigned Notes Pages



Directions: Using the organizer below, record key facts and citations from TWO database articles.

Background

Please use this text box to write a brief 2-3 sentence overview of your topic:

Men and women have delt with inequality for decades. The gender wage gap is a huge factor to this. It's the idea of men and women getting paved differently when working with the same skills. Men have typically been getting paid more than women and I'm focusing on the evidence behind it.

Article #1

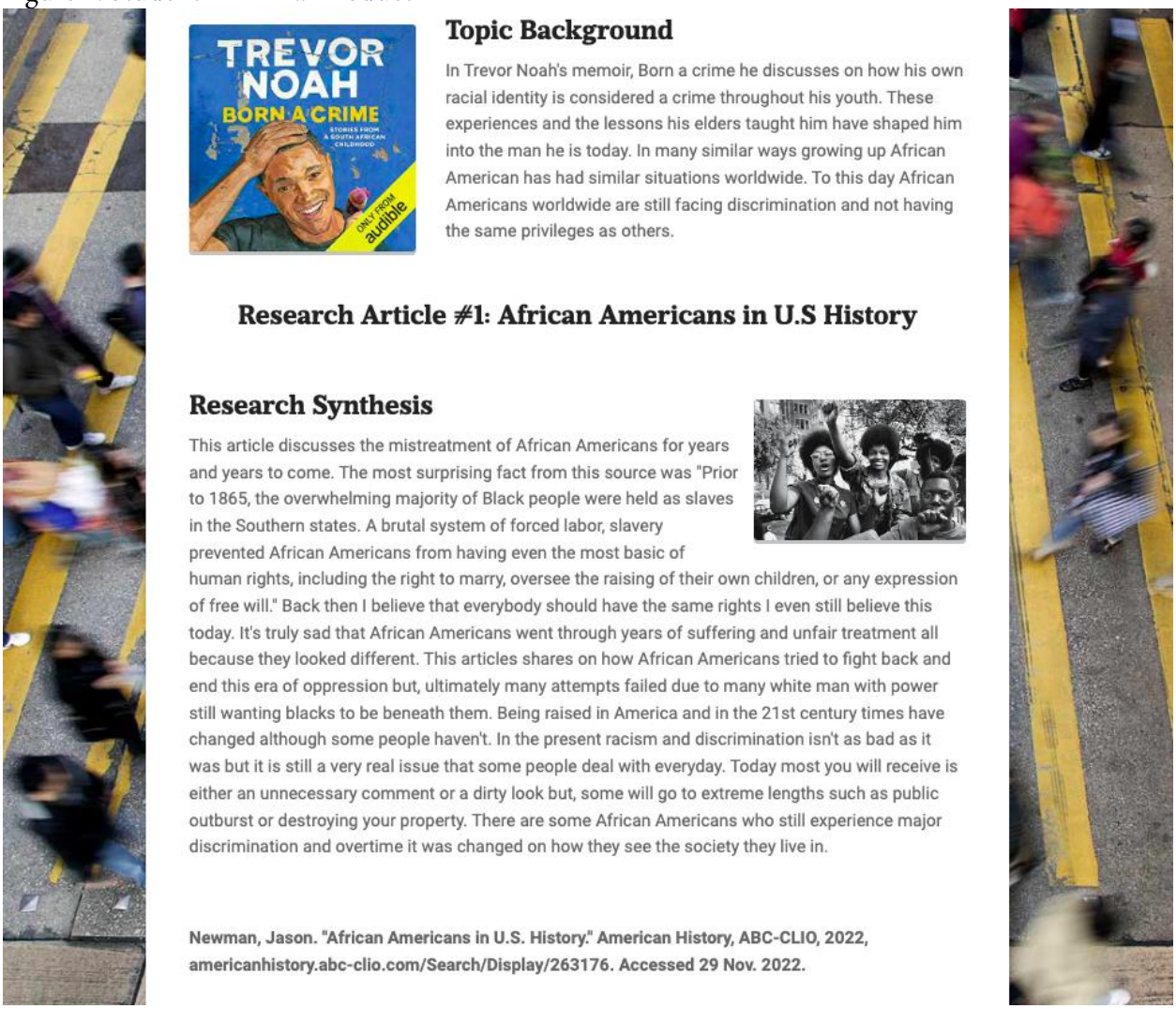
Insert Citation:	English, Ashley, and Ariane Hegewisch. "The Gender Wage Gap Needs to Be Remedied." *Social Justice*, edited by William Dudley, Greenhaven Press, 2005. Opposing Viewpoints. *Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/EJ3010397248/OVIC?u=stil88526&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=d91bc72b. Accessed 29 Nov. 2022. Originally published as "Still a Man's Labor Market: The Long-Term Earnings Gap," *Research-in-Brief #C366*, 2008.

Fact #	Key Quote (Copy & paste)	Reflect (How does this connect to your social identity topic? Connect to Noah? What does it make you wonder more about)
1	"Women's labor force participation has risen rapidly; women have made progress in many occupations that previously were bastions of men; the wage gap has narrowed by more than one-third since 1960, from women earning 59 cents for every dollar earned by men, to 77 cents now."	In the past years, the wage gap was a significant problem. However, recently the issue has decreased worry. Women have expanded their career options and work equally as hard as men do. The dollar amount that women make now has increased more and more over the years.
2	"Women are much more likely than	The public uses excuses as to why women

Activity #5: Final Product

Students were challenged to design their own final projects using a tech tool of their choice. Final products included a topic introduction and rationale, synthesis of the information they found on the topic and a fleshed-out text connection. Students relied heavily on the notes taken during Activity #4 for the synthesis, and sticky notes from Activity #3 helped them develop the last part of the project. Figure 2 features a portion of the final product from Student B from Table 1. Student B chose to use a S'more template to design the work the way they wanted it.

Figure 2. Student "B" Final Product



In order to help students needing writing or organizing support, I also provided a template-based final product option. This was generated through Google Slides, but this allowed students to focus on producing strong writing rather than getting lost finding pretty pictures online. Figure 3 features most of the final product from Student A from Table 1. This student used the slides template to really develop writing the way they wanted without having to design the work.

Figure 3. Student "A" Final Product Excerpt

Outcomes

These were fun and engaging to read along the way and students shared they really enjoyed the adjusted format (rather than traditional research paper). I had great student buy-in with this project, and students were motivated to stay on task and complete their work in a timely manner. Topics ranged from Civil Rights Events in American history to gender role expectations for men and women. A few students addressed various facets of religious discrimination. I think framing the project with their own ideas first and then connecting to the memoir and research allowed for students to feel in control of their work along the way. While this unit was not without its hiccups

and there were times in which I was WAY outside of my own comfort zone, it was a great learning experience for me and my students. I will certainly revisit this project again and seek to use it in years to come.

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Author Biography

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KNOWING THE RULES: A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

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Abstract
Drawing on the author's 30-plus years of teaching experience and 18-plus years of directing the Writing Program at Wichita State University, this reflective essay examines some of the anxieties incoming graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) face concerning grammar instruction and how those are mitigated. While grammar instruction remains an important element of composition pedagogy, incoming GTAs often arrive to orientation with a lack of felicity with the rules, a sense of inadequacy knowing the rules, or both. The author postulates some reasons why this happens, but uses a gentle approach to poke some fun at the often over-seriousness of the entire endeavor.

Keywords: college, English, freshman, grammar, graduate teaching assistants, GTAs, heart, imposter syndrome, orientation, university, writing

"Teaching grammar takes heart," I tell my novice teachers. Increasingly, I find that the graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) under my supervision arrive with less and less confidence in their mastery of this root part of what they do. There are reasons for this. Increasingly over the years, the standardized tests that dictate high school curricula have moved away from things like identifying split infinitives and diagramming sentences. Simultaneously, technology has evolved exponentially to right-click errors and misspellings and even compose whole error-free essays. What need is there for knowing the rules when machines carry that burden?

Sure, there's a vigorous cult of grammarians at the edge of literate society, led by people like Mignon Fogarty, the Grammar Girl. Fogarty hosts a brilliant podcast and blog that seeks to elevate grammar from tedious, duty rule mastery into something hip and engaging. But such cultists exist largely in an esoteric world parallel to vintage baseball players or miniature goat enthusiasts.

"And more and more," I remind these novice teachers. "It takes heart from your students to *want* to learn that stuff." The heart has always been the lowest-hung fruit of metaphors. For teachers, this metaphor is deployed with any number of variations and nuance, as in "having a heart" when it comes to bumping a student's grade or easing off a pedantic grammar lesson; "having heart" to persevere in the face of a student's umpteenth-but-still-lacking draft or when contending with helicopter parents; or, simply recognizing "In this world, you will have trouble," as it says in John 16:33, so "Take heart!" and relish the importance and value of the work.

One of the favorite gifts I've received from a student over the years remains a hand-drawn and colored image of a disembodied human heart. Lucinda, who had just successfully completed her MA and two years of teaching freshman composition at Wichita State University under my supervision, presented this to me mounted and framed as a thank-you for helping shepherd her (and her peers) through the wilderness of first-time teaching. "I didn't think I could do this. You're the *heart* of this department," the inscription on the back reads.

Lucinda greatly overestimates my importance, but I keep the heart featured prominently in my office. The image is gruesome – just a bloody heart made to pop by its red-white-and black composition. This also serves a more subtle purpose in my daily prompting: first-time teaching is universally terrifying.

One of the main aspects of my job is to prepare GTAs for the freshman composition classroom; a job I've handled now since just before our "typical" entering freshmen have been alive. I try to impart to our new teachers that they need to approach the role of grammar in the college classroom as the shared language for writing success instead of attempting to master the arbitrary arcana. Grammar instruction may be at the root of effective composition teaching, but it certainly isn't *the* heart. Many of our new GTAs have openly expressed a sense of embarrassment that they don't know basic grammar rules (at least enough to articulate them). Holistically, I can assure them, they don't know less than their predecessors—they just know different things. Grammar has fallen off as a priority. They can typically learn it more quickly and better through their teaching prep than by mastering these concepts through their own writing and independent study.

Like many of them, most of what I learned about grammar and punctuation came to me intrinsically, from reading. If you've grown up liking to read, you can probably craft a decent, coherent sentence without much need of oversight. The things you get wrong will likely be venial sins that don't really inhibit your relationship with your readers.

Years before arriving here, when I had just turned 22 years old, I went through my own GTA experience. I think it was assumed that my BA degree in English meant I knew all I needed to know about grammar and mechanics and such. Poor vetting on someone's part. My degree checked a box, even though I hadn't had a class devoted to grammar since the eighth grade. Like most of our GTAs, I'd been moved ahead early in my schooling to Honors/AP/Gifted classes that glossed over grammar to spend more time on "bigger things." As a voracious reader, I probably made fewer grammar mistakes than my peers, but I couldn't explain the rules. Things just looked right or wrong on the page.

When I got to graduate school, the pattern sadly persisted; I was given a three-hour "orientation" to tell me what classes I would be teaching, to tell me not to sleep with my students, and to show me how to make copies on an old thermofax machine whose purple fumes students huffed with relish. As it had been for me, most of our GTAs arrive eager to begin their MA or MFA programs at Wichita State with little to no classroom experience. The fact that they'll be spending 16 weeks in front of two sections of college freshmen (as many as 25 in each class), tends to be an afterthought to their academic aspirations until orientation descends. I hold them captive for two weeks prior to the fall semester and dispense as much practical information and as many anecdotes as I can, knowing nothing will really suffice. Knowing nothing I can say will make someone have the heart to teach well or even enjoy the ride.

I recall two other GTAs from Lucinda's cohort: Aoki and Zora. The entire orientation Zora sat back confidently, shrugging off my tales of terror. I should say that I don't mean to simply terrorize new GTAs like some fraternity pledge master, but I want them to know the kinds of "class management" things they might encounter that they won't find in the MLA. One such example I share frequently is not from my own experience. My wife (who is also professing at Wichita State) had been teaching an otherwise excellent writing skills class for freshmen when the proctor showed up to administer the student evaluations. Melinda, my better half, left the room to wait in the hallway while the proctor handed out number 2 pencils and bubble sheets meant to gauge student perceptions of effective pedagogy. As she waited, a student who had seemed overly stressed by every assignment all semester (typically peppering Melinda with emails concerned with grammatical and punctuation minutia) came down the hall late to class. "I just found out my advisor messed up and I didn't even need to take this class in the first place," he said.

"You've done fine, though," Melinda responded. "You're clearly going to pass," she added. He seemed so visibly upset at the realization he'd spent nearly an entire semester fretting over improving his grammar and writing. She ushered him into the room and watched through the door window as the proctor handed him a pencil and bubble sheet.

A few moments later the same student burst out the door, blood streaming down his face. "*Oh my god*!" Melinda exclaimed. "What happened to you?"

"It's self-inflicted!" he said, and ran off out of the building. Melinda called the campus police and our student support offices, waiting anxiously for someone to emerge from the classroom to help explain what had transpired. But no one exited the room. She opened the door to see 20 students still busily filling out their evaluations, the disinterested proctor piddling with her phone. "*Does anyone mind telling me what just happened?*" she asked.

One student put down her pencil and whispered, "I don't know. He said something about how he wasn't supposed to be here and then walked back and started hitting his head against the wall." She pointed to a part of the room where Melinda could see blood running down the wall and then the student resumed filling in empty bubbles.

Let me interject here, as I did for Lucinda and Aoki and Zora, that Melinda's bloodied student was ultimately okay. He got the psychological help he needed through the university and eventually received his degree. I tell this story to illustrate that freshmen will often get so stuck on the "rules" – whether the rule is that you must complete your bubble sheet and turn it in before you do anything else or whether you should never allow your sentences to run on as I'm doing here and elsewhere in this essay—that they miss the bigger picture entirely. As such, good instructors should likewise be mindful of the importance of grammar to successful writing, while not getting too hung up on the rules for a subject so often inextricably subjective.

"Got it," Zora said.

Aoki, though, seemed triggered to the point of a panic attack by my story about Melinda's student. "I don't think I can do this. I don't think I can do this," she kept repeating.

"You can," I insisted. Aoki was possessed of an obviously ebullient spirit and seemed incredibly bright. All the other GTAs in her cohort took to her immediately. I knew her students would love her, too. She had a good heart, worn on her sleeve, that her students would immediately appreciate.

"You got this," Zora added, confidently. Zora had a good heart, too. But she was maybe a little cocky.

After the first day of classes I asked all the new GTAs to check in with me. Aoki, to my delight, came bounding down the hallway: "It went great! I love my students!" She gushed on and on about how manifest her fears had been before walking into that first classroom, but then the students' generalized shyness/excitement/fear/anticipation coalesced into a vibe Aoki felt ready to embrace. "I freaking *LOVE* my students!"

Zora, who had seemed so bored by my stories during orientation came crawling into my office later that day in literal tears. "I can't…I can't …I can't," she sniffled. "There's too many of them. I can't do this." As we discussed her situation it became clear that Zora suffered from Sudden-Onset-Imposter Syndrome. She was prepared to teach (as much as any of her peers at least), but undermined by a haunting sense all those students peering up at her were inwardly parsing everything she said, scrutinizing her verbiage, cannibalizing her look and demeanor and everything she said right down to her bones.

I was able to convince Zora to try again. With a little hand-holding she got more and more confident in the classroom to the point that she's now made it into a successful career teaching college. It's easy to dismiss the incapacitating feelings of Imposter Syndrome if one's never set foot in a freshman composition classroom, but they can be crippling. And for all but the psychopaths

among us, those feelings never really go away. Ours is a discipline with a truly impossible knowledge-base—grammar-syntax-punctuation-etymologies—everything written in English Literature and beyond for thousands of years.

I'm reminded of another thing I share with the new GTAs as we talk about grammar. Their fears are often "What if a student asks something I can't answer?" That's a legitimate fear. Think about standing in front of 25 freshman students and getting a question for which not only don't you know the answer, but something for which you know, in your heart, *you should know* the answer. For me it's usually something to do with comma usage. Given the amount of stuff I continue not to *know* after this many years in the business, it's no wonder I can't ever shake my Imposter Syndrome.

If you teach English in any of its many forms, you'll know this from that time at a family gathering or spouse's work party or some other event where non-academics congregate to make merry. One of these non-teachers will approach and ask the standard question: "And what do you do?"

"I teach English." This is universally met with a slight recoil, as though you announced you've got a communicable disease or need a loan. The person will then root around for something to say.

"Oh, I know. Have you read *Such-and-such*, by *So-and-so?* It's so good, isn't it?"

In my experience, the book referenced is usually something from a book club a couple years prior. I don't cast judgment on that, as someone reading anything is sort of splendid in my opinion. But the chances of me knowing the book itself let alone anything about the book they bring up or its author are incredibly rare. "I don't know it. Sorry." That response is always met with a silent, subtle reproach: Faker.

So, here's one last anecdote: A former professor of mine who I stayed in contact with moved to California with his wife who had never been to the ocean. To her delight, they'd found a place so close to the beach she could run out the front door to the ocean, which she did on their first day there. As she frolicked, a giant wave came in and slammed her into the surf. She came up sputtering and limped back inside, likely feeling a bit deflated by the whole ocean thing.

The next day she fell ill. They went to see a doctor who looked her over and said something to the effect of "You're just getting used to the new climate. You'll be fine."

She wasn't fine, though, and so a couple of days later, when dark circles appeared around her eyes and her fatigue and nausea worsened, they tried a different doctor. This doctor, too, looked her over and affirmed: "It's just the pollution out here. You get used to it."

Unconvinced, my former professor decided to go the Dr. Google route and discovered a condition called myocardial contusion: a bruised heart. They raced to a third doctor who confirmed the diagnosis. Left untreated, a bruised heart can prove fatal.

"That's really frightening," I said, upon hearing this story from my former mentor.

"You want to know what's really scary?" he said. "Your average MD knows about as much about the human body as you or I know about English. Let that sink in."

I tell my GTAs this story every fall. I want them to know as much as they can, but to understand "I don't know. Let's look it up!" is a perfectly acceptable response to even a simple question about grammar or punctuation or whatever that they think they really should know but don't. "You're never going to know *all* the rules by heart."

Author Biography

Darren DeFrain, Ph.D., is the Director of the Writing Program and Professor of English at Wichita State University. He is the author of the novel *The Salt Palace*, the story collection *Inside & Out,* and is currently at work, with Dr. Fran Connor, on a postpunk history of Kansas, *No Choice But Action*. You can learn more about this book at www.nochoicebutaction.com. DeFrain is also co-founder, with

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Mary Harrison's classroom library at Wichita West High School

DRAFT DODGING: LEARNING THE ART OF REVISION

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Abstract
While working towards a teaching degree in English language arts, I found myself reflecting on my own education in search of inspiration for how I will teach writing in my future classroom. Through a meta-dialogue, I engage with the idea(s) of being a writer who is also a lifelong learner and a newly converted defendant for the process of revision and how to share that with my students.

Keywords: writing, composition, developmental writing, writing process, drafting, editing, sharing literacies

It's the night before the deadline and I haven't written this submission yet.

Well, that's actually not true. I've written bits of it. I started it about four separate times, in three different physical locations (and one digital copy)—hoping that one of them could grant me a morsel of inspiration, a fragment of a beginning of a thought regarding how to *write* about the ways that I want my students to write in my classroom.

I was the kind of student who sat down to write a paper in middle and high school (and even my first few semesters in college) and do it all on the first try from beginning to end. I might assume that you, dear reader, have been a similar type of student. If not, stay with me, this gets good.

Why would I change what I said the first time about this prompt?

Plus, most of the time, I thought that I could hit the nail on the head pretty accurately—trust your gut, first thought's the best thought, right?

The teacher didn't assign due dates to tell me which evening I would spend busting out—what I thought was—a quasi-masterpiece of a five-paragraph essay. But no matter how far along I got in school, I disregarded any deadline.

I was a writing machine!!

Literally.

I would perform the input task of writing when the switch was flipped, demanding I do so and the output was what could have been considered writing (Bomer, 2011, p. 201).

As any teacher who's had me on their roster can tell you—I have things to say, so just imagine how long those body paragraphs were…

In my defense, I also didn't know how to edit, revise, or draft—let alone, write papers for different audiences. This is where you come in, reader!

My hard drive was wired to structure an essay—hamburger style. I have three points (plus, of course, the intro and conclusion paragraphs acting as the buns) and I will elaborate on them in this order. Beep boop bop, robot sounds.

If I could bring 7th grade me to into my classroom now, he would receive some lessons built upon Randy Bomer's idea of Late Revision—a way I'd describe my composing style now—which requires "writers [to] think even more deliberately about their audiences, bringing more clarity to their meanings and thinking moment by moment about the reader's experience" (2011, p. 214).

Picture a "we're doin' it live, folks!" moment, one that gives students a sneak peek behind the curtain as to how we—as veteran writers—compose. As much as I (still) wish I could craft award-winning work on the first attempt, that's not practical or doable for even the most experienced writers.

This brings us back to those four different starts of this reflection. There are digitally copied and pasted chunks that used to be highlighted in red so that I remember to "STOP" and not publish this for you all to see. Before they were digital, there were ideas, ramblings, trains of thoughts all on Post-It notes. I have all of these bits scattered throughout a Word document; now I need to start thinking about how they work together.

> "Nobody's gonna read this draft, dude. Fragment it up until you're ready to sew it back together like a quilt."

I see each of my paragraphs, *blurbs*, **bolded ideas**, highlighted trains of thought all as units of information. Some of these thoughts don't belong in this work. Some of these thoughts can be expanded upon. All of these facets work into that (wildly fluid stage of) late revision.

Essentially, if I could copy and paste the entirety of the Word document—comments to myself and all—it wouldn't (necessarily) be an altogether pleasurable experience for the reader. It wouldn't be writing—defined as a process of communication conveying a message to a reader (Lindemann, 2001, p. 10).

It would be disjointed, personal, revealing, unstructured, and quite frankly, it would not convey a cohesive and sound message—appearing as crappy writing. (It's not a self-put-down to call it crap, nor is it gloating to say that some of the things I tried ended up landing… and stuck!)

Here, in the privacy and safety of my draft (which is merely a state of existing at some point along the composition matrix), I'm in control to stretch my legs and play around with how I want to develop this manuscript into a whole entire thought.

Using Bomer's idea of a personal writer's notebook—a space for writing just for oneself—I can utilize a singular Word document as the private, beginning stages of a piece, which then allows me to have control over the image, the ways in which it is digested by the audience, and overall, use it as a springboard place—prior to publication—where this piece can exist as I consistently develop content with meaning attached (2011, p. 196).

That's those multiple starts, sentence fragments, notes to myself.

They're all little bricks that have been set aside by me, for me, to build some writing out of.

What we don't see, though, is the culmination of those assignments, essays, feedback, peer edits, etc. that existed between 7th grade writer, Caleb, and the writer, Caleb, who is writing this. Somewhere in between there and here, my writing life was revitalized, not by those assignments, and essays, and processes though.

But instead by how to develop my own texts as journeys with the reader in mind (I feel like that part from PBS that goes "this program was made possible by viewers like you"), or to be okay with starting the same assignment four times because I can (Bomer, 2011, p. 204). This list can go on.

Clearly, I'm not the best writer in the world—nor I don't think I am. I am learning to be a better writer though. Everyday. I want to share that aspect of myself with students. Almost like letting them in on a little secret.

"Psst. I'm still learning to write too. I've never stopped."

If I want to genuinely reach students in terms of getting their attention focused on something they're interested in writing about, I'm going to have to show them how to do all these seemingly scary things; brainstorming, drafting, editing, revising … crafting a mobius strip of writing creation.

I asked a friend recently what they wish their teachers would have done to help them establish better writing habits. Their response: "Let me write about what I want."

There's a lot of people to please, and even more people to teach, but hopefully, giving my students that freedom to write about what they want—how they want to do it—is going to benefit my practice of teaching writing to establish good writing habits for students to utilize beyond the classroom.

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Author Biography

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"PLEASURE TO BURN:" A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK INTO THE HISTORY OF CENSORING LITERATURE IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

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Abstract
The literature review below was done to investigate the history of censorship, specifically book burning and how it relates to the modern-day censorship that is seen in our country today. Using scholarly articles and books, news articles, professional organization websites, video documentaries, and data from prominent anti-censorship organizations, this article strives to tell the full story of the world's complicated history with the censorship of knowledge. This review of literature makes clear that contemporary and historical censorship is an attempt to gain power and suppress the voice of those under authority. As educators, students, and community members, it is vital to use this knowledge to protect students' right to read.

Keywords: censorship, historical approach, book burning, book banning

Introduction

The Flicker of the First Page

I remember the first book that I ever checked out of my elementary school library. On the first day of kindergarten, my small frame got lost in the shelves and shelves of books that towered over me. Finally, my hand grasped hold of a picture book: *Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans. I went home and read it every night before I went to bed for the next two weeks. I was hungry for the words.

However, one night I panicked when I spilled chocolate milk all over the colorful pages of the picture book, thinking I would be banned from the library forever. Luckily, the nightmare was over before it began thanks to my mom, armed with paper towels and a hair dryer. Heat.

Despite the mess, this first experience with the school library is what sparked my love of books and reading. It opened a world for me to learn about the lives of those both like and unlike me. Throughout elementary and middle school, I fell head over heels for books like *Junie B. Jones*, *Captain Underpants*, *Goosebumps*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, and *The Giver*. Years later, I would learn that while I was enjoying these books, they were being snuffed out in other schools ("Top 100 Banned/ Challenged Books for 2000-2009," 2020).

One of the many books that I fell in love with once I started junior high was *Maus* by Art Spiegelman. The first graphic novel that I had ever read, Spiegelman's depiction of his father's experience during the Holocaust was one that was both beautiful and sorrowful. I was enraptured by the words and drawings and, if I am being honest, I never would have picked it up had it not been assigned in class. Later during my sophomore year of college, I received my own copy of the book which I treasure to this day.

I was shocked in January of 2022, when I read that the McMinn County School District in Tennessee had banned *Maus* from its shelves. The reasoning for this removal from the district's eighth grade curriculum was the use of vulgar words such as "bitch" and "goddamn" (Kasakove, 2022, para. 11). This blatant act of censorship, which restricted an important book over such minute wording, fanned the flame of my interest into this topic.

The Momentum of *Maus*

The removal of *Maus* drove my curiosity into understanding the history of censorship and how it has led to the increase in book bans that are seen today. A quote that another educator in my life, Shelly Elliott, used to have written above her white board was "History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme," by Mark Twain. I believe this to be true and it can be seen in the censorship attempts in recent years. In the 2021-2022 school year, 1,648 books were banned from over 138 school districts in 32 states. Of these books the top reasons for the bans included LGBTQ+ themes, protagonists of color, and sexual content (Friedman & Johnson, 2022, para. 4-6). While the language around the removal of these books has changed, the mindset is reminiscent of the outdated book burnings that set ablaze books written by Ernest Hemingway, Helen Keller, Jack London, and many more (Rittenberg, 2022, para. 18).

With this in mind, I intend to dig into the past and understand why and how censorship has occurred. I will then use this information to contextualize the modern challenges that we see today. I believe that by looking at this history, it will be clear how censorship (especially in school environments) has evolved over time and in the digital age, and why it continues to persist today.

Literature Review

The erasure and destruction of knowledge is not a recent phenomenon. It is not even something that began under the reign of Hitler over the Nazi regime. Censorship is an idea that has existed as far back as our ancient civilizations, though it took on a different form. Book burning can be found as far back as 221 B.C. and its motives are like those who are trying to ban books in schools today. It is important, therefore, to understand this history of censoring and book burning if we are to recognize the issues with book banning in our country right now.

The Purification of the First Chinese Dynasty

The first recorded book burning was during the reign of the first Chinese emperor Qin Shi Huang. His name might sound familiar to some as he is the same leader who instigated the building of the Great Wall of China as well as the now infamous art piece: The Terracotta Army. Huang took control over China and was the first emperor to unify China in 221 B.C. (Ermerins, 2017, para. 1-3). This forceful unification was executed under the philosophy of legalism. Legalism is a way of thinking that puts laws and the rule of the land over all else. It creates a binary-thinking society that sees no room for gray areas. Legalism became prominent as a response to the chaos and lack of structure that existed between the many warring states in ancient China. However, this legalistic point of view can be difficult to maintain when controlling an entire nation of people, especially when there are many different philosophical views, histories, and other texts that contradict the law of the land. It was this weak point as well as pressure from his Grand Counselor Li Ssu that pushed

Huang to implement the first book burning in recorded history (Chan, 1972, p. 105). This act called for the burning of books that contained history, poetry, and philosophy. Scientific and medical books were spared from the inferno. In an attempt to not completely erase the history of pre-unified China, copies of these forbidden texts were spared from the initial flames in the imperial archives for a time. However, siege from neighboring people caused these copies to be lost forever (Chan, 1972, p. 107). It is important to recognize that this origin of book burning was rooted in political gain and control. Qin Shi Huang wanted his people to follow only what he believed to be true and, in an effort to control their actions as well as their thoughts, he burned anything that would make them believe differently. Book burning, from its spark of conception, is entrenched in politics.

The Siege of Baghdad

Moving from the East to the West of Asia, it is clear that Shi Huan's burning of literature was not an isolated offense. The Mongols, a group of nomadic conquerors and pillagers, ruled a large part of the world from 1206-1368 CE. Though most famously led by Genghis Khan, by January 29, 1258, Hulangu Khan, his grandson, was in control of this feared group. They were looking to continue to grow their empire and had their eyes set on a prize: Baghdad, a landmark city and in its prime during this time (History Dose, 2022). It was said to be beautiful and adorned with precious architecture. Within Baghdad, the arts and science flourished beyond measure. This included studies like "literature, music, calligraphy, philosophy, mathematics, chemistry, history" (Frazier, 2005, para. 15) and astronomy due to the very strict Muslim calendar, as well as the need for their mosques to face in the direction of Mecca. This intellectual surplus was aided because a new method for making paper began in China and it allowed neighboring places like Baghdad the chance to make copious amounts of books as well as other printed materials. All of these books were stored away in the libraries of Baghdad controlled by the caliph (the Muslim chief civil and religious leader) of the Abbasid dynasty: al-Musta'sim (Frazier, 2005, para. 14). It was this man who dared the Mongols to siege the city, and siege is exactly what they did. The Mongols breached the city walls and, for 10 days, they ravaged the city killing men, women, and children (History Dose, 2022). The river ran red with their blood. Most notably, the Mongols also destroyed all of the prized manuscripts that were housed within Baghdad. They burned what they could and, when the pages were not burning fast enough, they were thrown into the Tigris River. It was said that "the water ran black from the ink" (Westcott, 2018, para. 7). This destruction of books was done as a power move to show conquest and it was clear that "a golden age [was] laid to waste by the House of Genghis Khan" (History Dose, 2022). This Golden Age of Islam, which had seemed never ending, was supported by the knowledge contained in those books. So, on February 20, 1258, when the Siege of Baghdad was over and the caliph was killed, the Mongols solidified that the Golden Age of Islam was over.

The Catholic Church and the Index Librorum Prohibitorum

Continuing west into Southern and Western Europe, a new advancement in technology proved to be a blessing for the people but a curse in the eyes of censorship. Johann Gutenberg created the printing press in 1448 and with it came a new, and unprecedented wave of knowledge sharing ("Johann Gutenberg", n.d., para. 1). Now, not only could common people have access to cheap books, but they could also express their own ideas within them. Though this seems like a step in the right direction, the Catholic Church thought otherwise. The Catholic Church became the main propagator of censorship from 1500 to 1700. Due to strict religious viewpoints, art of any form that either conflicted with or explicitly condemned the Catholic Church was considered immoral, earning it the title of living amongst the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, a list which was first

"printed in Venice in 1554" (Ovenden, 2022, p. 124). The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was the list of books, art, and people that were banned from the Catholic Church which, since there was no separation of Church and State, meant everyone within Southern and Western Europe. This lack of separation meant that if citizens began to question their beliefs in the Catholic Church, the Church's political power was at risk. It was also believed that if they read from any of the books on this list, that they were putting themselves at risk of living an eternity in Hell (Sarwark, 2018, para. 3). The fear that the list created caused many communities to host their own book burnings, censoring themselves. They truly believed that by burning these forbidden texts, they were cleansing themselves of sin.

The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was first published in 1554 and the Catholic Church released the last issue in 1966 (Sarwark, 2018, para. 4). The Catholic Church, specifically around the beginning years of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, had the same two reasons for encouraging censorship and book burning that the Mongols and Shi Huang had. These reasons were wanting to maintain their existing power and gaining more at the same time. Along with these reasons, new ones were born out of this act of censorship. Religious motivations as well as the fear of widespread knowledge made possible with the creation of the printing press become reasons for censorship. While fear of widespread knowledge was a reason before the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, this fear was held only by leaders who were afraid to have their power taken from them. Now, however, the fear of knowledge was being employed by those same leaders to influence the people to burn their access to knowledge.

North American Censorship Begins

Though there were some religious texts burned by small Puritan and Calvinists communities in the United States' beginnings, the first widespread banned book within the nation is no surprise given the history that surrounds it. It was Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was banned during the Civil War era (Brady, 2016, para. 6). *Uncle Tom's Cabin* depicts a critical and realistic portrayal of slavery within the American South through the fictional story of the titular character (Williams, 2020, para. 11-12). This book was created with the purpose of revealing the evil institution for what it was. With the Confederacy having already outlawed the expression of any anti-slavery sentiments, it is no surprise that the book was met with burnings as well as banning across the South. The fiery reaction to books like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was all due to the foothold that slavery held in the political and economic power within the South. An unfortunate example of the impact of the ban can be seen in the story of Sam Green, a freed Black minister who was incarcerated for 10 years in a state penitentiary for simply owning a copy of the book (Blakemore, 2022, para. 7).

After the Confederacy's loss of the Civil War, which is believed to have been sparked by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* along with other events, the South still wielded its power to suppress the truth from young people. As public schooling became more prominent throughout the United States, Southern states quickly acquired statewide adoption policies for all textbooks used within these new schools (Marquez, n.d., para. 4). These policies required all books to be approved by state textbook committees before being bought and used. Many required that these textbooks tell an appropriate version of Southern history and culture, which whitewashed and romanticized the Civil War as well as Reconstruction. This whitewashing included the narrative being that slaves were happy and content as well as the requirement that infamous Confederate Leaders like Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis be mentioned just as much as Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant (Marquez, 2021, para. 5). For fear of losing money, Northern textbook publishing houses began printing a Northern and Southern version of history textbooks to be given to appropriate schools. These were called "mint juleps" and it showed that "the nation was willing to sacrifice its historical memory (with particular emphasis on race) for the sake of reconciliation" (Miller, 2020, para. 7). Though not

as obvious, these tactics are still well entrenched in the publishing of textbooks today with McGraw-Hill and Pearson both stating that they create different versions for different states "customized to satisfy policymakers with different priorities" (Goldstein, 2020, para. 7).

The Infamous Nazi Book Burnings

In May of 1933, book burnings gained world media coverage when university students in Nazi Germany burned over 25,000 books in public bonfires ("Timeline of Events: Book Burning," n.d., para. 1), images of which likely fill the minds of most people when they think of book burnings. German students, having been raised and indoctrinated with Nazi rhetoric, wanted to purify themselves and their schools as well as unite Germany under Nazi rule. University leaders worked together with the propaganda ministry as well as booksellers to compile blacklists of authors who did not align with Nazi policy (Rittenberg, 2022, para. 17). These lists included any Jewish, Communist, and Socialist authors as well as any pornographic material or texts that advocated a bourgeois (characteristic of the middle class) lifestyle, much like many of the texts that appeared on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. It was from these lists that students as well as the Nazi police force began pulling books from libraries and homes to be burned.

The carnage began with the burning of the Institute of Sexology on May 6th, 1933, four days before the famous photographs were taken. This building housed over 20,000 texts about intersexuality, homosexuality, and transgender people (Rittenberg, 2022, para. 14). From here, in 34 university towns, citizens of Nazi Germany excitedly gathered to celebrate the burning of these "Un-German" texts. These texts included the works of authors like Brecht, Einstein, Freud, Mann, Remarque, Jack London, Oscar Wilde, Helen Keller, Heinrich Heine, and more (Rittenberg, 2022, para. 18). In a prophetic statement from 1821, over 110 prior to the Holocaust, Heine had written: "Where one burns books, one will soon burn people" (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2013). It was sentiments like these that fanned the flames of the book burnings. In Berlin, over 40,000 people attended the infamous burning and gathered to hear German Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda Joseph Goebbels praise the students for "[committing] to the flames the evil spirit of the past" ("Book Burnings in Germany", n.d., para. 1). This series of book burnings, which were publicized, sparked outrage in many people, including prominent figures in the United States like Sherwood Anderson, Faith Baldwin, and Sinclair Lewis; however, many people were unaware of the overwhelming scope of crimes that the Nazi party would go on to commit. One journalist for the *New York Herald Tribune* named Walter Lippmann was aware and stated:

> These acts symbolize the moral and intellectual character of the Nazi regime, … For these bonfires are not the work of schoolboys or mobs but of the present German Government … The ominous symbolism of [this act and] these bonfires are that there is a government in Germany which means to teach its people that their salvation lies in violence. ("Book Burnings in Germany", n.d., para. 3)

These burnings were just the beginning, and "it has been estimated that over 100 million books were destroyed during the Holocaust" (Ovenden, 2020, p. 119). This act of violence and of consolidating power under this vicious regime fundamentally changed the way the world viewed book burnings. To this day, the images of German citizens throwing books into bonfires is forever connected to the atrocities that occurred under Hitler's regime and was the inciting event that allowed for people to view this act for the sinister censorship that it was.

The United States from WWII to Now

The United States leaders, in the 1940's, having witnessed the publicized Nazi book burnings of the Holocaust and Second World War, were at a stalemate socially, especially with the arrival of the Cold War. Officials and citizens within the United States were engulfed in the Red Scare and

McCarthyism, with their paranoia at high alert. Book burnings were already beginning in response to the encroaching Communist viewpoint, and dispositions toward censorship were observable when the members of the Binghamton New York Board of Education wanted to burn "subverse" textbooks in 1940.

It was in the midst of growing censorship that author Ray Bradbury released his dystopian novel *Fahrenheit 451* in 1953 (Rothman, 2018, para. 13-14). This book foreshadowed the world without books and what society might look like if censorship continued to happen. Bradbury's harrowing tale solidified the public opinion when it came to book burnings. However, censorship still found a way to thrive. With the arrival of the Reagan administration, censorship within school districts rose dramatically with at least "700-800 challenges per year" (Brady, 2016, para. 12). Many believed that Reagan's election "encouraged challenges by people who were unhappy with books in schools and libraries that were increasingly realistic in their depiction of life" (Brady, 2016, para. 12). This line of thought is oddly familiar when considering the censorship occurring today. It was this rise in book banning within school systems that led to the arrival of Banned Books Week, hosted by the American Library Association (ALA), in 1982 (Fink, 2020, para. 4). The last week of September, Banned Books Week is a time intended to shed light on recent censorship incidents and provide resources for students as well as teachers to prevent future book challenges.

Since then, challenges and bannings of books within school districts have become increasingly common with multiple books being attacked at a time. In September 2022 in Oklahoma, the Owasso school district removed every graphic novel from its library in order to review each one individually for "pornographic" material (Woodcock, 2022, para. 2). This swift removal was done after a single complaint from the father of one child. In November 2022 in the state of Texas, the Frisco Independent School District uploaded a list with over 307 entries of books that have either been age restricted or removed entirely from their library's collection (Howerton, 2022, para. 7). Some of the titles on this list include *Looking for Alaska*, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*, and *Eleanor Roosevelt Fighter for Justice* (*Frisco ISD*, 2022).

New laws within Missouri and Utah have pushed school districts to remove books due to fear of jail time for educators if the titles are left on the shelves (Friedman & Johnson, 2022, para. 18). Within my own state of Arkansas, the Conway School District has reportedly removed two books, *Felix Ever After* by Kacen Callender and *Beyond Magenta* by Susan Kuklin, which depict the experiences of transgender youth, from their junior high school's library collection (Hale-Shelton, 2022, para. 2-5). It is important to note that in response to the decision made by the Conway School District, the American Civil Liberties Union has stated that they are "preparing to take possible legal action against the school district" (Horbacewicz, 2022, para. 6) due to the recent actions violating civil rights laws. In just the beginning of 2022, ALA reported that there had been "651 attempts to ban or restrict library resources and 1,651 unique titles were targeted" (Hines, 2022, para. 2).

These attacks on books within the classroom have led teachers to feel like there is a target on their back if they stand up for students' right to read. Teachers' fear of losing their license, which would be a result of the aforementioned legislation in Missouri and Utah, is coupled with the fear of public ridicule within their community. This was the reality faced by school librarian Martha Hickson at North Hunterdon High School in New Jersey. After fighting back against challenges on titles like *Gender Queer, Lawn Boy, Fun Home,* and more, Hickson received hate mail from angry community members and "[attempts] to file a criminal complaint with the local prosecutor's office" (Hickson, 2022, para. 6). All of the hate that she received for simply standing up for students' right to read led to severe stress-related health problems that resulted in "[her] physician [ordering her] to stop work" (Hickson, 2022, para. 9). Though this is the reality for educators today, there are still many ways that people can work to fight against censorship.

Discussion

Book burning has evolved throughout history. What used to be a show of power to most countries now exists as a mark of backwards ideology. This shift from burnings to bannings was motivated by book burning in the 1930's and 1940's by the Nazi regime. As the Nazi party encouraged all German citizens to burn the books of Jewish, Gypsy and queer authors, the world began to see how this "[purging] of undesirable books" was a deplorable mark on the freedom of information (Ovenden, 2020, p. 121). This attitude is reflected in the words of Helen Keller, whose work was a part of the famous burns: "You can burn my books and the books of the best minds in Europe, but the ideas in them have seeped through a million channels and will continue to quicken other minds" (Ovenden, 2020, p. 120).

After considering the historical timeline that has brought us to modern book banning, it is clear that book burnings and book banning all stem from the same idea of maintaining power and control over a specific group or groups of people. While in the past this desire for control was only over the conquered, today's situation has put students at the center of this power move. Educators have several options to promote students' right to read.

What Teachers Can Do

For teachers and educators who are entering this mine field of literature and book bannings, it is important to have a plan of action for when challenges arise. The aforementioned experience of Martha Hickson, whom I was able to meet and hear from during the *Fighting Censorship* webcast sponsored by the *School Library Journal*, gives great insight into the reality of what a challenge entails (Hickson, 2022). In an additional article that was linked to participants in the webcast, Hickson wrote that there are many steps to make the inevitable challenge easier to take on. She first encourages educators to pay attention to what is happening across the country when it comes to book bans and challenges. By keeping recent censorship news in mind, educators can be prepared for when a book within their collection is challenged. It is also important to strengthen the criteria to initiate a challenge, including requiring that the book be read in its entirety, that professional reviews be consulted, and that specific citations where state requirements were violated be provided. Putting these enhanced criteria in place should help diminish challenges based on feeling. Finally, it is important to consistently review and, as needed, revise/update the challenge policy (Hickson, 2022, para. 17-19).

Professional organizations also provide plenty of resources for teachers undergoing legal battles as well as those who simply want to be prepared in the classroom setting. The American Civil Liberties Union works with law and policy makers to continue work in federal advocacy as well as provide resources concerning rights and civil liberty issues (ACLU, 2023). Meanwhile, the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) works to provide support and consulting services for anyone experiencing a challenge. Along with these services, many of the OIF's resources encourage education about the issue including training for educators and promoting awareness through Banned Books Week (ALA). The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) published "The Students' Right to Read" position statement, which is often cited while discussing challenges (NCTE, "The Students' …"). The NCTE Intellectual Freedom Center has also established a hotline to aid those who are facing censorship challenges (NCTE, "IFC"). And the NCTE created a book rationale database in 2022, which provides teachers with rationales to defend the books in their curriculums and classroom libraries (NCTE, "Book Rationales"). Finally, the Freedom to Read Foundation works to provide legal aid as well as financial aid to support those who are willing to stand up to censorship within their schools (Freedom to Read Foundation, n.d.).

If a book challenge does occur, Lent and Pipkin (2012) make clear that one of the best things that can be done is to "reach out to your natural allies for support" (p. 65). By reaching out to

allies, which can include other educators, organizations, supportive community members, and more, we can help to diminish the loneliness and alienation that can occur for many educators like Martha Hickson.

The Power of Choice

Though the removal of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* was the spark for my research into book burning and censorship, it was not the spark for my love of knowledge and reading. That love started all the way back with my decision to reach for *Madeline* on the top shelf of the library at my elementary school. No matter if the book is *Madeline, Maus,* or *Beyond Magenta*, every student has the right to choose a book that sparks the same love for knowledge that I received. The NCTE's *The Student's Right to Read* position statement states: "But to deny the freedom of choice in fear that it may be unwisely used is to destroy the freedom itself" (2018). Whether someone is an advocate for students, an educator, or a student themselves, it is the responsibility of all to remember the fires of the past and make a commitment to stop the withholding of information or ideas from any group.

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Mary Harrison's classroom library at Wichita West High School

STRENGTHENING TEACHER PREPARATION:
ADDRESSING PERCEPTIONS OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND BILINGUAL LEARNERS DURING FIELD EXPERIENCES

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Abstract
A large body of literature recognizes the many challenges teachers experience in the classroom. The research and subsequent article bring to light the concerns identified by undergraduate teacher candidates during a day-long field experience. The intention of the experience was to focus on literacy instruction; however, that was often overshadowed by classroom and behavior management concerns and questions. Reflections and discussions after the experience were dominated by the identified behavior and classroom management issues and concerns the teacher candidates noticed. Their post-experience reflections were so focused on them that the candidates were unable to process the literacy behaviors, instruction, and resources.

Keywords: teacher preparation, behavior management, classroom management, bilingual learners, literacy instruction

Introduction

Teaching is by its nature a complex system that can befuddle even the most qualified educators at times. Behavior management surfaces as a concern of teacher candidates in multiple ways; they write about it in their reflections and coursework and, through discussion, teacher candidates speak to the challenges they are facing. Our initial research focused on candidates' responses to children, many of whom are bilingual learners, learning in a Title I school. However, a deeper analysis of artifacts collected for the research demonstrated candidates' focusing on classroom behaviors in the school setting.

The field experience for all elementary education and special education teacher candidates enrolled in specific courses—literacy and special education—consists of the candidates spending an

entire day in the setting. The candidates observed, taught in one classroom throughout the day, and participated in collaborative discussions with peers. Each teacher candidate worked with a small group of children in the school. The university supervisors required detailed reflections from each candidate about their individual observations focused on literacy learning. Those observations inevitably focused on behavior management rather than content area learning and instruction.

About the Study

Detailed Description of the Field Experience

The field experience attended by the teacher candidates takes place each semester at a K-5 elementary school in a very large, urban, diverse school district. The school setting has a high number of bilingual learners (Garcia, 2011; Chaparro et al., 2021), most of whom speak Spanish as their first language. The school district refers to these students as English learners. Most students attending the school live in the neighborhood surrounding the school. The field experience is required for all candidates enrolled in a literacy methods course from the main campus and remote campus settings, as well as candidates enrolled in a beginning special education methods course. Approximately 75-85 candidates attend the field experience each semester.

The candidates are immersed in the school setting for the entire day. They spend time observing the classroom teachers, teaching two sequential literacy lessons (morning and afternoon) with a small group of students, and collaborating with their special education peers. While teaching a morning lesson, the candidates identify a child who has not been successful in learning the content taught. They then collaborate with the special education majors and discuss simple strategies or modifications that could be made during the afternoon lesson to assist the child in learning the content. While in the school setting, the candidates are required to complete a classroom observation tool focused on literacy in the classroom. The graphic organizer asked candidates to observe the classroom setting, the classroom teacher, and a specific child through literacy-related questioning. During collaboration, the candidates completed another organizer designed to assist them in thinking about a student who was not succeeding during the lesson, the data supporting their thinking, and what strategy or modification will be implemented in the afternoon lesson. Finally, the candidates complete a reflection about the collaboration. The document drives post-experience discussions immediately following the experience and again back in the university setting.

The candidates from the remote campus were assigned to kindergarten classrooms. There were three sections of kindergarten in the school setting each having a skilled, experienced classroom teacher for candidates to observe. One of the classroom teachers identified as African American; the other two classroom teachers identified as White. Each candidate had four to five students in their small group during the literacy lessons.

There were 30 kindergarten students identifying as male and 18 kindergarten students identifying as female. At the time of the field experience, there were 351 students enrolled in the school setting, and 91.5% of the students were eligible for free/reduced lunches. The school had an 87.6% attendance rate. Ethnicity breakdown was 40.5% Latinx, 40.5% White, 10.8% Black, and 7.7% multiracial.

The Researchers

The first researcher was the professor for the literacy methods course and facilitator of the field experience for all teacher candidates that attended. Prior to the day of the field experience, the researcher assessed students' lesson plans and spent multiple class sessions preparing the teacher candidates for the experience. They observed all of the research participants in their assigned classrooms giving them feedback about their instruction throughout the day.

The second researcher was an instructor in the elementary education preparation program. They plan and facilitate field experiences for the teacher candidates. They are currently working on doctoral studies.

The two researchers frequently collaborate on research projects and on coursework related to the final year of preparation for teacher candidates.

The Research Participants

All of the research participants were teacher candidates in a cohort at a remote campus setting. This small campus is part of a larger university with a population of 6,000 students and is located approximately 88 miles away from the main campus setting in a large, metropolitan, Midwest city. The teacher candidates were all transfer students from a nearby community college and elementary education majors with the exception of one candidate double majoring in elementary education and special education. The study focuses on the 13 teacher candidates attending the remote campus. At the time of the field experience, the teacher candidates were in their first semester at the remote campus in a completion program to earn their elementary education degrees. Two of the candidates identified as male, and 11 of the candidates identified as female. Two candidates identified as Latinx, and one candidate identified as Filipino. Two teacher candidates were considered non-traditional students by university identification.

Case Study Design

A qualitative case study design was appropriate for and allowed an in-depth analysis of the data collected from the teacher candidates' responses to their classroom observations and reflections from their teaching small groups of students during the field experience. Both Creswell (2014) and Yin (1989) advocated for collection of artifacts in order to complete a detailed description of the participants' experiences and responses to those experiences.

Research Questions

As noted in the introduction, the research came about as a result of the reflections and discussions after the field experience that were dominated by the identified behavior and classroom management issues and concerns the teacher candidates noticed. Their post-experience reflections were focused on the issues and concerns; candidates were unable to process the literacy behaviors, instruction, and resources. A new set of research questions came to light including: 1) How do candidates perceive student behaviors when observing in the classroom? 2) What behavior management strategies are candidates focused on when observing in classrooms? 3) How are behaviors and behavior management interpreted by teacher candidates?

We also noted generalized statements about bilingual learners in the candidates' responses. They recognized that classrooms with bilingual learners can offer particular challenges. Communicating expectations, enforcing discipline, and even establishing simple classroom routines may pose special problems due to language barriers. These challenges prompted another question for us, namely: How are students learning English perceived by teacher candidates when a student may have limited English-speaking abilities but speak fluently in another language?

Literature Review

A review of the literature on classroom and behavior management having implications for teacher candidates revealed that management issues continue to be an ongoing concern for not only teacher candidates, but also early career teachers. Recent studies have indicated that challenging behavior is becoming an increasingly dominant issue in classrooms across all grade levels. Adverse behavior negatively impacts the learning environment and has a lasting impingement on students

and teachers. Challenging behavior also puts pressure on teacher-student relations, resulting in increasingly negative interactions, decreases in teacher praise statements and a decrease in instructional time (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016). Classroom management is often a major concern for beginning teachers as new teachers often worry about how they will uphold positive and engaging classroom management while also meeting the instructional needs of all the students. Because of this, classroom management strategies for teacher candidates can be useful and lead to more productive and successful learning experiences for students (Lavay, 2019).

It is critical that teacher candidates be adequately prepared to manage challenging behavior and use a variety of proactive strategies to prevent those behaviors from occurring. Studies have found that in coursework teacher candidates receive general information on behavior concepts such as antecedent, consequence, function, etc. but little if any strategies for the prevention and management of challenging behavior. Being prepared to manage behaviors requires effective interventions that are specific to the child and the behavior, an ability to analyze the behavior itself, and to have knowledge about a teacher's role in why the behavior occurred and how to de-escalate the behavior (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016). Children with tenacious or habitual behavior concerns are at greater risk for absolute discipline practices that interrupt their education leading to a pattern of falling behind, academically and socially.

Approaching problematic behavior needs to be intentional, practiced, and specific to the function of the behavior. Identifying the function of the behaviors makes preparing teachers for these types of challenges even more critical. In many cases when faced with a crisis, it is common to revert back to old habits or strategies that one has been exposed to in their own educational experiences (for example, counting down to give the student time to control the behavior). The teachers found to engage in effective teaching and management practices had drastically fewer disruptions in their classrooms. In contrast, educators are faced with mounting pressure of accountability for academic achievement of all students, especially subgroups of children who are considered at-risk for poor school outcomes (e.g., bilingual learners, ethnically diverse students, recipients of free or reduced lunch, students with disabilities) (Mitchell et al., 2017). Although academic achievement indicators, such as improved proficiency scores and increased graduation rates, often are at the forefront of public attention, educators are keenly aware of the relationship between academic and social behavioral success. That is, students who consistently demonstrate appropriate social skills in school are better positioned to benefit from academic instruction (Mitchell et al, 2017).

Up to two-thirds of U.S. children have experienced at least one type of serious childhood trauma, such as abuse, neglect, natural disaster, or experiencing or witnessing violence and trauma; and these traumas are considered to possibly be the largest public health issue facing our children today (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Sometimes these issues go unattended, and specific unpleasant behaviors surface. Traumatized students are especially vulnerable and often have difficulty in self-regulation, negative thinking, being on high alert, difficulty trusting adults, and unseemly social interactions (Minahan, 2019). These children have yet to learn to regulate their emotions and their distrust surfaces as shutting down, avoidance, and aggression. In these instances, classroom teachers are faced with a critical balance of self-regulating, processing the situation, continuing to provide a positive environment for the other students, and addressing the crisis. Balancing each of these can be a demanding and insurmountable undertaking even for the most experienced teachers and needs to be a priority in preparation programs to ensure teacher candidates have access to trauma-informed professional development that will in turn help them manage behaviors appropriately. Minahan (2019) suggests well established classroom guidelines, classroom organization and design, as well as physical proximity as just a few integral factors in building trust and establishing a safe learning environment conducive for all learners. Preparing teacher candidates

for this type of human interaction seems pertinent as Minahan (2019) notes, "When teachers are proactive and responsive to the needs of students suffering from traumatic stress and make small changes in the classroom that foster a feeling of safety, it makes a huge difference in their ability to learn" (p. 31).

Waiting to convey such cognitively demanding and vital information and practice can leave a new teacher feeling overwhelmed. A teacher's behavior and responses are also communication and by changing the way one responds to adverse behavior or providing positive direction we can reduce the problematic behavior, adding to the number of reasons teacher candidates need additional support in with behaviors and responses to them. As the literature indicates, effective classroom management is one of the most necessary skills for a productive learning environment and practices matter. As noted by Mitchell, et al (2017), "when teachers see evidence of improved student outcomes resulting from a new or changed practice, then their attitudes and beliefs about the practice, and their perceptions of their ability to improve behavior, shift" (p. 142). Teachers adopt individual classroom management styles while implementing their classroom activities but their style takes time and personal reflection.

In addition to effective classroom management competencies there also exists a critical need for teachers to be well prepared for the diversity their students contribute to the learning environment. To provide equitable learning opportunities requires more than considering accommodations and modifications for students for whom English is not their first language. Teacher candidates must also support the level of learning that must take place for bilingual learners to be successful. There are also steps institutions preparing teachers could also consider, "ideally, Faculties of Education should take on the larger task of studying the divide between the teaching of MSRE (multicultural social reconstructionist education) and the response it receives in the schools" (Levine-Rasky, 2001, p. 316). These ideas are lined with challenges much harder to overcome, and "understanding young children's different processes in developing language and emergent literacies will help you see where your students have been, where they are now, and where they are going in their academic language and literacy development" (Wang, 2017, p. 77). Wang (2017) continues to explain that it is critical to have knowledge about your students' early linguistic development discrepancies which will help you anticipate potential advantages and challenges your students may have and reach them. For teacher candidates to reach all students, practices must change in their training first and foremost. Further, Kolano and King (2015) argue "as cultural mismatch increases in public school, teachers play an integral role in the school's success or failure of immigrant and minority students. Thus, higher education is tasked with the challenge of moving beyond pedagogy and methodology to mediating belief systems" (p. 4). Additionally, it is important to express, English learners are, in fact, emergent bilinguals (García, 2011). Chaparro, Green, Thompson and Batz (2021) discuss English learners as being bilingual because of the language and learning at home in addition to the language and learning at school in English. These children should be identified as bilingual as a function of equitable practices by educators (Chaparro, et al, 2021). It is important for such nuances to be tackled in teacher preparation programs to support all students.

Research Methods

We collected, analyzed, and coded all data, separately, in order to extract themes in the data (Creswell, 2014). We used axial coding, as proposed by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), to further confirm the themes that were initially found and capture the voices of the research participants. It was critical to us to present the voices of the teacher candidates in authentic ways by using direct quotations as often as possible.

Results and Findings

When asked to observe for literacy attributes during teaching, student learning, and within the environment, teacher candidates consistently observed and wrote about student behaviors and the management strategies used by the classroom teachers. While the instructors experienced disappointment in the candidates' lack of response about literacy, the quality and quantity of the responses were rich and ripe for analysis for different purposes—those related to behavior management and the candidates' perceptions of what was occurring in the classrooms. Themes in the responses focused on student engagement (recognizing that engagement is also important for literacy learning), how classroom teachers used proximity and redirection to refocus a single student or multiple students during the observed lesson, and analyzing the level of diversity in students' abilities and skills. There is little recognition of *why* the behaviors are occurring or what might have led to the behaviors. We have also noted assumptions that were made about the students either because they were bilingual learners or because they attended a school that is diverse and in a low socio-economic attendance area.

During the field experience, in addition to observing the classroom teachers while they taught lessons, the candidates taught morning and afternoon literacy lessons. The two lessons were connected through the use of children's literature and focused on vocabulary and comprehension strategies and skills. In between the two lessons, they had opportunities to debrief with the classroom teacher and collaborate with special education teacher candidates about how they could make modifications, accommodations or adaptations to their lessons from morning to afternoon. They were asked to identify a student in their group who could benefit from an accommodation or modification to succeed in learning the content of the afternoon literacy lesson. During these collaboration meetings, the focus on behaviors was striking. While the intent of the collaboration is for literacy-related concerns, nearly all of the conversations were about behaviors. The candidates were good at identifying the behaviors, but not what might be causing the behaviors to occur.

Identified themes that surfaced in responses by the candidates were 1) identifying engagement behaviors, 2) beginning understanding antecedents to behaviors, 3) identifying strategies the classroom teachers used to refocus/engage students, 4) the critical nature of relationship-building with students, and 5) misconceptions and generalizations about bilingual learners. Each theme is discussed next.

Identifying Behaviors

We understand that identified behaviors can impinge on a student's ability to learn the literacy-related aspects of the lessons, however there was little recognition by the candidates of a student's difficulty with content vocabulary or knowing letter sounds, for example. During one small group reading lesson, the teacher candidate, Leslie[1], noted that [s1] "had a hard time keeping his hands to himself," while also noting that he had strengths by being "super patient, never talked over people." Her strategies for working with [s1] later in the day were to assist him with "space bubbles" so that he could understand personal space and involve him in hands-on activities so that he would not bother other students. Leslie noted about another student, [s2], "talked over students often"; a strength for [s2] she notes is that he is "super knowledgeable on topic." In her afternoon lesson, she has all of the students in the small group practice raising their hands to model the behavior she desires in the student. Note that hand-raising is not a method of having students respond that would have been encouraged by instructors. There is no evidence in her written responses about why [s1] and [s2] are displaying the behaviors. For example, both students likely needed movement during the lesson and quite possibly already knew the content.

[1] All names are pseudonyms.

Beginning Recognition of Behavioral Antecedents

The teacher candidates in the literacy course began to understand their lack of knowledge about how to handle behaviors and that there are deeper reasons when students do not attend during a lesson. When discussing a student during collaboration time, a teacher candidate noted that the special education teacher candidate helped with understanding, noting, "Behavior problems and how to deal with them is something I know little about. The SPED students know a lot more. They put a 'why' to what things were happening." This candidate has a beginning understanding of what Lavay (2019) noted about taking a "humanistic approach [which] involves asking, 'Why?' or determining the underlying psychosocial causes of an individual's behavior. Humanistic methods focus on qualities of good character, personal and social responsibility, and cooperative-based development" (p. 7).

Recognition of Strategies Addressing Behaviors

The teacher candidates were also making connections between behaviors and strategies that address them. They recognized that strategies must be in place to minimize behaviors so that learning can occur for all students. When observing the classroom teacher during a phonics lesson, a teacher candidate identified that a student needed a visual tool in order to attend to the content of the lesson: "Student is an ELL. He is slow to participate with his peers in phonics activities. Very distractable [sic], but pays more attention when there is a visual aid." Another teacher candidate noted a student was motivated when music was incorporated into the phonics lesson: "Seems uninterested or least is not engaged. Very fidgety. Does seem to try to sing along with the class."

There is also recognition that small, subtle teacher moves can easily address a student's need and result in the student reengaging in the lesson. Even something as simple as proximity is noticed: "He moves closer to Ms. S. when she sees his need," resulting in increased participation. Shauna discusses "redirecting disruptive behavior without making a big deal" by using the student's name and asking the student a question about what was happening in the lesson "to regain focus."

Building knowledge about having strategies to address learner needs is critical and is further demonstrated during the candidates' own lessons. Leslie, for example, saw the need for active learning during lessons saying, "The main issue was difficulties with behavior when they were not physically doing something." She ends this particular part of her reflection by saying, "We will have to address needs beyond academics," clearly understanding that a lesson is only effective when other student needs are addressed.

Hadley described a concern for one of her students saying that the student had difficulty "staying focused on task at hand." She attempted to redirect the student back to the lesson but indicated that redirecting the student, referring back to classroom rules, and asking him questions directly was easy, "but didn't last." She noted her concerns for the student's ability to verbalize his thoughts and lack of confidence in "showing what he knows." The collaboration time with a special education candidate helped Hadley understand that this student needed a different kind of opportunity to respond, one that would allow the student think time and an opportunity to talk before he is pressed to answer the question that has been posed.

A caveat to note about what teacher candidates were able to identify as strategies addressing behaviors is that there is little recognition for what classroom and behavior management has entailed as far as what the classroom teacher has put into place at this point in the academic year. Hal noted that the students were compliant in following the directions and expectations of Mrs. C. He does not, however, demonstrate in his reflection acknowledgement of what Mrs. C. has taught her kindergarten students in the way of routines, transitions, and overall expectations for teaching in a structured, safe environment thus far in the year.

The Importance of Building Connections with Students

One particular teacher candidate, Bart, had a difficult time being positive about the overall field experience. Nearly all of his reflections focus on a student that impacted his ability to deliver his lessons smoothly. He was clearly frustrated, but also had difficulty seeking additional ways he might have managed the student. In fairness, the student also demonstrated behavior management issues for the classroom teacher. Bart does understand that time building connections with students impacts behaviors. "It was very hard for me to not be able to connect with [s3]. I tried everything I could, but nothing seemed to work. I can't help but take this somewhat personally." His reflection, clearly holding notes of exasperation, also demonstrated the need for expanding the tool box for teacher candidates' behavior management strategies. Bart has a working knowledge of how "working to connect with your students will help you in all aspects of your teaching. Building relationships with students takes time and effort" (Lavay, 2019, p. 5).

Shauna worked with a student who was easily distracted by others in the classroom. This is problematic for this student during this particular field experience because of the numbers of teacher candidates and supervising faculty that are in and out of the classroom during the day. While Shauna noted that this is difficult for the student, she worked at "keeping him focused by assigning him a 'teacher role'," which made the student "feel important and made him want to do a good job." Shauna figured out a way to make a connection with the student that also addressed his ability to focus during the lessons she was delivering.

Misconceptions about Bilingual Learners

In the school setting for the field experience, about one-third of the students are from homes where English is not the primary spoken language. Most students that fall into the bilingual learner's category speak Spanish at home. Many of these students and their families have recently arrived in the United States. Not surprisingly, the candidates have difficulty distinguishing between behaviors that might be surfacing because a student simply does not understand the lesson in English versus a student who is displaying issues not related to language. Part of the problem here is that the teacher candidates do not know which students are learning to speak English prior to teaching their lessons.

Hadley and Brenda both made assumptions about multilingual students and their knowledge of English words or their English-speaking skills. Brenda wrote, "there was one student who was ell [sic] and he coulden't [sic] hardly understand anything only certain words." Hadley wrote, "ELL learner [sic] has really developed English skills." Jessica noted that the collaboration process was useful for her: "Collaboration assisted in getting the student more involved and emerged [immersed] despite [sic] the language barrier. Focusing on vocabulary and illustrations to decode the story helped." Shauna makes some generalizing statements about diverse learners noting, "...I learned students from diverse populations need different attention, different focuses and different ways of learning."

Discussion

Blurring of Classroom and Behavior Management

Behavior management and classroom management in teacher preparation programs are usually the focus of a single course often taught in the early stages of preparation. Classroom management techniques are often focused on cooperative learning strategies that are modeled throughout teacher preparation programs depending on each instructors' abilities to incorporate and use these strategies while teaching. The principles of behavior management may also be woven into

multiple courses over a several semester period of time. Candidates often blur classroom management versus behavior management. We can assume that distinguishing between the two is not emphasized enough or concepts for the two are woven together leaving candidates with undeveloped definitions of both. Perhaps a first step for educator preparation programs is to clearly define what is meant by classroom management and behavior management as well as how classroom management may or may not assist with behavior management.

The Value of Field Experiences

During field experiences, teacher candidates are in an influential stage considering, prior to these experiences, their interactions are theoretical. However, identifying the best strategies for providing support and feedback to help candidates make connections between research and practice remains a challenge in the field. Students often leave a teacher preparation program equipped with content knowledge about what to teach and ideas about curriculum and activities, but are perhaps less skilled in actually providing opportunities for children to learn and how to foster positive interactions with children (Laparo et al., 2012). Although teacher candidates take coursework that is structured to provide them background on theory, teaching, research, and practice, many programs do not include courses dedicated specifically to prepare teachers to handle behavior challenges. Even when such courses are included, there is a lack of research on how best to prepare preservice teachers to teach students with diverse behavioral needs (Freeman & Freeman, 2014). Observing and assessing the guidance strategies of preservice teachers is particularly important given their unfamiliarity and continued training and learning. Time still remains for others to positively influence the behaviors and methods of these preservice teachers so that, as they transition to student teaching and first years of teaching, their guidance strategies will be more refined and positively impact classroom quality.

Novice teachers are challenged with balancing theory with student instruction. Since skill improves with experience, emotional competency of new teachers may not develop at the same time as intellectual competency. The transition from learning about teaching strategies to a brief teaching internship only prepares individuals to teach content, whereas teaching expertise and the effectiveness of good pedagogy happens several years into the teaching experience (Romano, 2008).

Prevention before Intervention

Helping candidates understand antecedents to behaviors prior to field experiences and then allowing time in the field to observe for behaviors prior to content teaching could be valuable in filling the behavior management toolbox for education majors. We prefer the use of high-quality teaching videos *before* going to a field experience to assist candidates in identifying antecedents, even subtle ones, with facilitation by a university instructor. Modeling the identification of the antecedents, then asking candidates to work in small groups to identify and discuss them, then assigning candidates the work independently is a scaffolded way to approach what is expected once in the field. Debriefing is critical immediately following the field experiences so that candidates can demonstrate their thinking about what the antecedents were, but also how the classroom teacher either succeeded or was unsuccessful in diffusing a situation with a student.

Tapping into The Expertise of Classroom Teachers

When teacher candidates observe skilled classroom teachers in action, it is common for the classroom teacher to narrate what they are doing during a lesson including why they are doing it. Experiences tell us that they are also good at sharing what behaviors candidates may see in the classroom. But, could they also narrate the subtler ways that they may redirect and intervene when they recognize a small behavior that could escalate into a bigger one? During observations for

behavior management, this kind of narration could assist candidates in understanding an antecedent that they lack the expertise to note. Lavay (2019) discusses how observing master teachers could help candidates develop behavior management skills writing, "this would help future teachers to enter the teaching profession with the confidence to help their students take responsibility for their own behavior, empower student learning, cooperate effectively with others, and contribute positively to their school and their society" (p. 8).

Implications

The field experiences for the teacher education program at the university where the research was conducted have increased in quality and quantity over the past ten years. They begin earlier in the program, occur in many districts, and are scaffolded from observations at entry to the program to small group teaching at mid-level, and to larger group/whole class instruction during the final year of preparation. As a result, candidates indicate they feel better prepared for their first year of teaching. Our research has demonstrated that specific improvements can occur to facilitate more meaningful field experiences that address candidates' concerns, especially for learning literacy methods. It is common in teacher preparation programs for one course to be devoted to literacy methods, and it is valuable for multiple field experiences to occur during such a course. Assisting candidates in understanding very specific literacy instruction skills prior to time in the field assists them in observing carefully. These teaching skills should be modeled in the university classroom prior to those experiences, allowing candidates low-risk opportunities to observe their instructor or their peers prior to observing in a classroom full of students. Teacher candidates report needing more specific knowledge about literacy skills including phonemic awareness, phonics, building vocabulary, and teaching all of those skills to students learning English and students with special needs. While student teaching, they also indicate they need additional knowledge about teaching from specific literacy curriculums and how to navigate what they have been taught in the university classroom and what is expected of them in their first teaching position.

Conclusion

A number of questions regarding teacher preparation for classroom management remain to be addressed. However, through direct, confidential communication with newly graduated teachers it is discernible to focus more on preparing new teachers for times when a student is in crisis. Novice teachers must be able to identify emblematic behaviors and practice strategies for responding when a student is in distress; all while learning and maintaining their own emotional boundaries. It is true, when teachers know content, maintain organization, and have clear expectations and routines, students will know what to expect, resulting in a dependable ebb and flow of classroom life. A first-year preschool teacher noted this in an assignment recently,

> A problem I had at the beginning of the school year was using methods of cognitive engagement. I focused so heavily on classroom management that I don't feel that I gave them the freedom to connect with each other and achieve higher level thinking. Since identifying this problem I've implemented strategies such as turn and talks, drawing pictures, and making anchor charts which list student responses (Carman, personal communication, January 18, 2021).

The unfortunate reality is there are much harder conflicts and challenges that occur for reasons beyond a teacher's control. These variables include students' lack of access to food, bullying, physical or psychological abuse, toxic stress, neglect, mental health, and learning abilities, to name a few. In most cases, these interactions are feeble and leave very little time for processing. This is an inefficient time for recalling and practicing management strategies. Although many behaviorally-

based instructional practices have been shown empirically to promote student achievement, it is unknown to what extent teachers receive adequate training in these methods.

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SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS WITH LITERACY INSTRUCTION:
SMALL CHANGES TO GRADUATE LITERACY PROGRAMS THAT CAN HAVE A BIG IMPACT

Elizabeth A. Morphis
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Abstract
Since 2018, there has been an increase in the use of the term *Science of Reading* (SoR), which is a method of teaching reading that is connected to an understanding of reading and reading development that aligns with scientific research (Shanahan, 2020). Teachers who are new to the classroom may be unfamiliar with SoR and teaching practices that align with this pedagogy. Institutions of higher education, specifically graduate literacy programs, are in a position to support and mentor new teachers with the current shift in literacy instruction. This article addresses changes that can be made to graduate course content in order to support new teachers, particularly during this shift to a new method of literacy instruction. This article offers ideas for how higher education can play a role in better preparing new teachers for SoR instruction.

Keywords: in-service teachers, teacher education, literacy, reading, science of reading

Introduction

New teachers are a valuable asset to schools because they bring new energy, new ideas, and new hope into the schools where they are hired to teach. New teachers just entering the profession can provide different perspectives and support to veteran teachers by giving them fresh ideas to infuse into their teaching and guidance with innovative technologies and digital platforms that are quickly entering the classroom space. While entering the teaching profession is a challenging endeavor at any time, it is even more difficult at this particular time due to added pressures, curriculum changes, and increased responsibilities. Therefore, in order to better prepare and support new teachers, teacher education programs, specifically graduate education programs, can provide mentorship, particularly in the area of literacy instruction.

Over the last few years, the Science of Reading (SoR) has gained popularity in literacy instruction, and many districts and schools have responded by including more instruction on foundational skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding (Schwartz, 2022). This can

be difficult for new teachers entering the field, who may have learned more about Balanced Literacy methods of teaching reading during college and graduate school. This article seeks to explore how to better prepare new teachers for literacy instruction related to the SoR, particularly in programs of higher education.

Conceptual Framing

This article is framed by sociocultural conceptions of literacy, specifically New Literacy Studies (NLS). NLS has informed the design of the graduate courses I teach as well as my instruction because teaching literacy is more than teaching students the technical skills of reading and writing. Instead, teaching literacy is situated within social and cultural practices (Street, 1984) meaning that people participate and use literacy in different ways depending on their context.

Sociocultural Conceptions of Literacy

New Literacy Studies (NLS) highlights cultural and social aspects of literacy that are connected to specific contexts (Street, 1984, 2005a), and emphasizes the role of power in valorizing particular forms of literacy over others. In terms of education, NLS has expanded the focus of reading and writing in the school context from discrete reading and writing skills to the social practices connected to reading and writing for real purposes across a range of settings (Street, 2005b). Street (1984) distinguished the different perspectives of literacy by the autonomous model and the ideological model.

The autonomous model of literacy views literacy as a set of neutral skills typically taught in schools and learned in order to read or write, which are considered to have a universally positive effect on a person's cognitive skills (Street, 2005a). The autonomous model serves a specific purpose, to pass dominant or Western values onto others (Street, 1984), and schools are considered social institutions responsible for the act of transferring these values onto children. Street (1984) argued that although autonomous models perpetuate normed understandings of literacy, literacy is in fact an ideological construct, intimately dependent on context and addressing the various ways that groups of people participate in the social practices of reading and writing. Through this ideological model, literacy is more than the technical skills of reading and writing; rather, it is a way of taking meaning from an environment (Heath, 1983; Street, 1984), which means that literacy varies from situation to situation (Street, 2005a) and is connected to power, social structures, and particular worldviews (Street, 2003).

It is necessary to consider sociocultural practices as the field of literacy is in the midst of a pendulum swing, and consider ways to support this generation of new teachers as they are learning to teach reading and writing to elementary students.

Review of the Literature

The Evolution of Literacy Instruction

Recently, there has been a shift in literacy education, and schools and districts are moving from Balanced Literacy curricula to SoR programs. Sudden and drastic changes in literacy education are nothing new. There is great public interest in how literacy is taught to students because the ability or inability to read has an impact on students' futures (Shanahan, 2020). Due to this interest from the public, literacy instruction, and particularly reading instruction, has been described as a pendulum that swings between meaning making and phonics (Nichols, 2009). This succession of competing ways of teaching reading, known as the Reading Wars, has a long history in the United States and each pedagogy has strong advocates as well as rivals (Cambourne, 2021). Whole language instruction versus phonics instruction has been the primary way that the debate around literacy

instruction has been framed (Cambourne, 2021). The whole language supporters believe that reading should emphasize meaning making and learning to read will occur naturally for children (Petscher et al., 2020). While phonics proponents argue that learning to read is not a natural process and children need explicit and systematic instruction (Hanford, 2019).

So, how does this shift between pedagogical philosophies happen? Historically, the shift from one way of teaching literacy to the other method of literacy instruction begins when there is an idea about literacy instruction that is said to help all students and this idea has been left out or ignored by the other side (Shanahan, 2020). This can be seen with the rise of SoR and how it has moved into the spotlight. Supporters of SoR argued that Balanced Literacy curricula did not explicitly teach instruction focused on decoding—specifically phonics and phonological awareness—and this deficit is the cause of many students not being able to read at grade level (Hanford, 2018, 2019; Shanahan, 2020). Due to increased concerns from the public about how children are taught to read, SoR has taken center stage and offered instructional solutions to address these concerns from parents.

Since 2018, the term SoR has been more visible in the news and media (Hanford, 2019). However, this term is not new. Science of Reading is a term that has historically been aligned with research on pronouncing and decoding words (Shanahan, 2020). In other words, it is "knowledge about reading, reading development, and best practices for reading instruction obtained by the use of the scientific method" (Petscher et al., 2020, p. 268). Based on these definitions, SoR emphasizes the teaching of matching letters to sounds and word recognition skills. In terms of changes to classroom instruction, at the elementary level, the discussion on SoR has centered on children's ability to decode words (Hoffman et al., 2021). In practice, this has meant an increase in phonemic awareness, phonics, and high frequency word instruction as well as explicit and systematic instruction on learning to decode. When learned, these skills will support students' ability to comprehend the texts (Castles et al., 2018).

Teaching literacy is complex, and so are the many students in our classrooms. With the recent pendulum swing to SoR, it is clear that we as a society are still grappling with how best to teach children to read (Shanahan, 2020). This new generation of teachers, therefore, is stepping into a long history of debates around literacy instruction, and which method is best to teach children to read.

Supporting New Teachers with Their Literacy Instruction

One way to support to new teachers with the changes in literacy curriculum is to provide mentorship that improves the attitudes and instructional skills of the new teachers towards the SoR instruction. The first five years of a teacher's career is a crucial time. Teachers who receive the necessary support in the early years of their careers typically continue to grow throughout their careers as effective teachers for their students.

Brown et al. (2020) conducted a study in Canada where new teachers were supported with mentoring. The new teachers had the opportunity to discuss their experiences in the classroom and share the lessons that they created. From these collaborations, the new teachers were able to develop and increase their confidence as teachers. In addition, the mentors provided the new teachers with ideas for their classroom and instruction as well as helped the new teachers identify areas of their teaching to develop and strengthen. In terms of supporting literacy instruction, Spangler (2013) found that providing students with the space and opportunity to speak with one another about their English teaching and make connections to the literature in the field supported their English instruction. A big take-away from both studies is that the new teachers had a safe and supportive learning environment where they were able to learn from each other and try new lessons in their instruction.

While this work is often done in school districts, there may not be adequate time devoted to mentoring new teachers and spending the time to hear their lesson ideas (Guise, 2013). Also, some new teachers are hesitant to share their struggles with veteran teachers or with administrators. Graduate schools of education, therefore, are in a position to support new teachers who are enrolled in their programs. However, if schools of education are to be involved in supporting new teachers, then they need to listen to the needs of new teachers as well as to the needs of districts and schools (Rust, 2019). Teacher educators, therefore, can be agents of reform. They can initiate, develop, and promote new approaches to assist new teachers so that they receive the necessary support with their instruction and successfully remain in the field (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018).

Methodology

In this teacher inquiry study (Goswami et al., 2009), I endeavored to document student learning of literacy instruction related to SoR including their implementation of SoR literacy lessons. I wanted to reflect on my own teaching during times of transition in the literacy field and investigate what teaching methods best supported new teachers. For this study, I asked the following research questions: (a) How can graduate literacy programs better prepare new teachers for instruction related to SoR? and (b) What changes to graduate instruction need to be made to mentor and support new teachers with literacy instruction?

Setting and Participants

The setting for this study was a comprehensive college outside of New York City. It is a public liberal arts college that enrolls approximately 4,500 students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In terms of the School of Education, degrees and certifications are offered for undergraduate students and graduate students. The Graduate Education Literacy Program is a five-semester program that leads to professional certification in Literacy Education. Upon completion of the program, the students earn their literacy specialist certification and can work as classroom teachers, literacy specialists, or literacy coaches.

During the Fall 2022 semester, 17 students were enrolled in the reading course I was teaching. Sixteen students in the course were new to the teaching profession and in their first five years of their teaching career. These 16 students completed their undergraduate degrees during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many students taught in virtual or hybrid formats. Additionally, these students learned about Balanced Literacy during their undergraduate courses. During the course of the Fall 2022 semester, they were beginning to teach through SoR programs and curricula. Many of the students were questioning how to best support their own students with literacy instruction.

Researcher Positionality

Dyson and Genishi (2005) ask researchers to consider their roles and identity within the classroom space. I approached this study aware that I have overlapping identities which include identifying as a white female with middle-class roots, a Greek American, and a former elementary school teacher. I am a literacy professor and the coordinator of the Graduate Education Literacy Program.

I approached this teacher inquiry study from a similar place as the students in my course. At the start of my teaching career, there was a shift to Balanced Literacy curricula, and I experienced the quick change from one pedagogy to another, just as my students were facing. As a new teacher, who was not in graduate school, I had to learn about the teaching methods and practices that aligned with Balanced Literacy, without support or mentorship.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected during the Fall 2022 semester. This study was designed as a teacher inquiry study so that I could take account of my classroom practices during this time of change in the literacy field. I made modifications to my teaching and collected data in the form of observations of the students during class sessions, student work from assignments, and student reflections at the end of the semester to determine if the changes I made to my teaching helped prepare the new teachers for literacy instruction related to SoR. In order to reflect on my teaching and the changes that I was making to my teaching, I kept a teacher journal where I recorded my thoughts on what I observed in my teaching and in the students' reactions to the lessons as well as notes about what is happening in the field of literacy education, and personal notes about the changes in instruction that the students shared with me from their schools and classrooms.

Data analysis began at the same time as data collection so that it did not accumulate (Falk & Blumenreich, 2005; Goswami et al., 2009). I read through and organized my notes and the students' work after each week's class (Hubbard & Power, 2003). As I read the data, I looked for categories from my observations and the students' work. The category that occurred most frequently was the connection between the class readings, assignments, and activities to literacy instruction. The following section explains this category in more depth.

Findings

In order to support new teachers, the curriculum in the literacy class I was teaching needed to shift to meet their needs and support their understandings of SoR. Just as in the elementary grades, literacy in higher education is more than the technical skills of reading and writing. I had to connect the content to the students' teaching backgrounds and implement teaching practices that aligned with the context of what was happening in schools.

Readings to Address Teaching Strategies that Align with SoR

In Fall 2022, many elementary schools where the students in my course were teaching began to make curriculum changes to literacy programs. Many districts and schools were moving from Balanced Literacy programs to SoR curricula. In their schools, they were hearing different definitions of SoR, and had many questions about how to implement strategies that aligned with SoR. In order to give the students an understanding of SoR and concrete ideas that they could incorporate into their instruction, I decided to include two books into the course. The first was Jan Burkins and Kari Yates's (2021) book *Shifting the Balance: Six Ways to Bring the Science of Reading into the Balanced Literacy Classroom*. This book outlined shifts in Balanced Literacy instruction that align with SoR and address the foundational skills that may be missing from a Balanced Literacy curriculum. The next book that I included in the course was Julia B. Lindsey's (2022) book *Reading Above the Fray: Reliable Research-Based Routines for Developing Decoding Skills*. This text provided the concrete strategies that the students wanted to learn and were ready for them to implement quickly. In order to make the reading of these texts as collaborative as possible, I made the decision to teach in the form of book clubs. The students were grouped by the grade levels they were teaching, and each week they were assigned to read a few chapters. As they read the books, they were asked to try out a strategy from the books that they found helpful into their teaching. The students were expected to come to class with the strategy they tried out and either student work or some type of documentation of how the elementary students did with the strategy to discuss with their groups. The goal of this exercise was to immediately connect the readings into the students' classroom instruction.

The students found the format of the book clubs helpful. One student, who is a second-year teacher, said that "having sessions in which new teachers can share, collaborate, and converse about

what is happening in the field of literacy education is really essential." He continued that "this is a way that professors can help facilitate events or times for students to receive support and rely on one another for guidance." Being a new teacher during a time when literacy instruction is shifting is challenging. The choice of texts allowed the students to understand why reading instruction was shifting as well as how they can make modifications to their current instruction. Another student commented that this format of instruction provided "material that I can bring directly into my classroom. This was something that really matters to my teaching."

At the end of the semester, I invited Julia Lindsey, the author of *Reading Above the Fray* to speak to the students. This was a powerful teaching moment for the students. After giving an overview of her work, she took time to answer questions from the students. This gave them the opportunity to ask about the strategies from her book that they implemented with their elementary students. After the discussion, one of the comments was that this experience was "constructive because it allowed us to ask about the scenarios we face in our own classrooms and with our students."

Observations of Literacy Instruction

As new teachers, my graduate students are observed by the administrators in their school districts. A few teachers commented that it is challenging to ask questions if they do not understand the administrator's feedback after a formal observation. They wanted support on their literacy teaching, and they particularly wanted feedback about whether or not their lessons aligned with SoR. One student shared, "I want to make sure I am providing appropriate and meaningful instruction within the classroom. I could use support so that I know I am making the right decisions in the classroom and feel confident in my reading and writing lessons."

In order to provide new teachers with support on their literacy instruction, an assignment was included where they had to video record two of their literacy lessons. The goal of this activity was to support the students and help their teaching grow. They were able to select any type of literacy lesson to record. But the lessons had to connect to the strategies that they learned in *Shifting the Balance* (2021) or *Reading Above the Fray* (2022). After teaching the two lessons that aligned with SoR instruction, students were partnered up. First, they met to discuss the lessons that they taught and explained the goals of the lesson and how they connected to SoR instruction. This was structured like a pre-observation meeting that teachers have with administrators. Part of the discussion centered around the areas of their teaching that were successful and then addressed the modifications that could be made in future lessons. The students also shared their reflections on whether or not the elementary students understood what was taught. The next step was to view each other's lessons and provide their partner with feedback. Finally, the students came to class with their feedback and shared it verbally and provided each other with written feedback that they could use in the future.

The format of this assignment allowed each student to receive feedback from a peer as well as from me. Furthermore, one of the benefits that I did not anticipate was that the students saw how their peers approached literacy instruction connected to SoR and were able to take ideas from their peer's lessons. After the feedback was given, I asked them to reflect on the experience. One student commented that, "having time to share, compare, and listen to one another was extremely beneficial. This was a properly facilitated environment, and being able to openly discuss the highs and lows of our literacy instruction had numerous benefits for the individual who was sharing and for the other partner who was part of the discussion."

The context matters when teaching, and I took that into consideration for this assignment. In order to tap into the social nature of literacy and the collaborative nature of teaching, this

assignment took place towards the end of the semester so that the students were comfortable with one another and thus were open to sharing their teaching.

Implications

This study contributes to the conversation of new teacher mentorship, and specifically focuses on how graduate schools of education can support new teachers with their literacy instruction during a time when there is a shift in pedagogy and instructional practices. Teaching in the field of teacher education and working with students who are new teachers during this current iteration of the Reading Wars has reinforced the need for teacher educators to make connections to the literacy field, particularly the instruction that is needed in the classroom. Teacher educators, therefore, must address new theories and methods of teaching literacy and provide students who are new teachers with an understanding of how these changes occur in classroom instruction. A big take-away from this study is the need to have a strong connection between the content in graduate courses and the field. Particularly during times of change, schools of education need to pivot and implement pedagogy that aligns with what is being taught in elementary schools. If we truly want to support young students and teach them to read, then this work needs to be covered in schools of education.

The findings from this teacher inquiry study show that graduate schools can be responsive to the needs of new teachers and implement instruction and resources that will enable new teachers to understand different methods of literacy instruction, in this case SoR, and how to design literacy instruction that connects to this pedagogy. Additionally, this study highlighted that in order to mentor new teachers, graduate course content must align with the field of literacy education. An area that this study did not address was the quality of new teachers' literacy instruction, as it related to SoR. Therefore, an area of future research that could further contribute to the field is to study the role of mentorship from graduate education and how it contributes to the quality of new teachers' literacy instruction over time.

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REVIEW OF *EXPANDING LITERACY: BRINGING DIGITAL STORYTELLING INTO YOUR CLASSROOM*

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Abstract
Brett Pierce's recent book *Expanding Literacy: Bringing Digital Storytelling into Your Classroom* (Heinemann, 2022) provides accessible, research-based instructional strategies and assessment for integrating digital literacy practices in classrooms, while honoring students' existing literacy expertise and creating more equitable classroom spaces.

Keywords: literacies, digital literacies, digital storytelling, equity

While definitions of literacy have expanded over the past several decades to include digital spaces and practices, teachers still seek concrete methods of integrating digital practices into K-12 classrooms amidst a steadfast testing culture privileging print-based literacies. Digital literacies open a world of possibilities as they allow the integration of multimodal systems of meaning, thereby increasing the range of what teachers can (and arguably should) take up with students in literacy classrooms. Brett Pierce's book *Expanding Literacy: Bringing Digital Storytelling into Your Classroom* (Heinemann, 2022) offers concrete methods for critically engaging students in multimodal practices.

Pierce frames the book within equity and participatory culture. In short, students already participate in digital spaces through various activities such as, but not limited to, social media and content creation, video gaming, and fan fiction. Curating digital literacy practices in the classroom affords students the skills to participate and interact in communities beyond the classroom walls; it offers opportunities to broaden the conversation, not just as a consumer and curator of information but as a creator. Digital compositions arguably have their own rhetorical structures and grammatical moves that teachers can leverage to teach students in digital spaces while connecting to the structures and language of more traditional curricula and standards.

At the core of Pierce's framing for this work is the argument that change is omnipresent. We cannot avoid it, and digital modalities are part of that. Teachers experience anxiety around integrating digital learning because they feel they don't have a firm handle on the tools and technologies themselves. Yet, because students are already participating in digital spaces, they bring technical knowledge and expertise that teachers can position them to share in the classroom while remaining focused on the content of which they are already masters. We can also use this type of

work to create spaces of play and risk-taking in classrooms for students as they problem-solve through their use of technology, which changes almost daily.

The central strength of this book for teachers looking to take up this work is its accessibility through offering concrete activities and projects to try in the classroom. The book is structured with a clear arc to support students in creating digital stories focusing on rhetorical aspects of digital storytelling such as sound, imagery, words, and music. It also connects the process to traditional curricular processes such as research, creativity, development, and production (think of this as the final "paper" in a writing process). It exposes students to varying genres they encounter in the real world (I mean, no one ever goes on to take standardized tests as an assessment in the work force) such as television, radio, and the Internet. In addition to the 24 activities offered in the book, Pierce also offers how-to guides and tutorials for these genres.

At the end of the day, the question of assessment always looms over students and teachers. Pierce does not ignore this component of learning and teaching. He offers a model for assessing students' skills that breaks the learning into four categories for mastery: content, storytelling, digital, and human skills. Pierce then offers criteria for each category with descriptors to support it. This model makes the assessment of a learning process and product that can feel nebulous to teachers more concrete. It also grounds assessment in criteria typically encountered in the English language arts classroom such as scene, story style and elements, characters, and dialogue. Notably, these criteria can be tweaked to fit specific assignments, but the groundwork is laid.

Expanding Literacy: Bringing Digital Storytelling into Your Classroom assists teachers seeking concrete ideas for integrating digital literacy practices in their classrooms. It supports them in honoring students' existing literacy expertise and creating more equitable classroom spaces that do not privilege singular types of knowledge.

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A MEANS OF LIVING, SEEING, AND TEACHING THROUGH HAIKU

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Abstract
Natalie Goldberg's *Three Simple Lines: A Writer's Pilgrimage Into the Heart and Homeland of Haiku* was reviewed by several Kansas Association of Teachers of English members who participated in a book study. Goldberg's text is applicable not only for one's own creative pursuits, but it is also valuable for instruction of haiku in ELA classes and social-emotional activities. No matter where one is on their life or pedagogical journey, there's something for everyone to unpack from Goldberg's text.

Keywords: book review, haiku, Natalie Goldberg, creative writing, ELA, English, education, poetry, curriculum, lesson plans, social-emotional learning, mindfulness

If one passage were to encapsulate Natalie Goldberg's memoir on haiku, *Three Simple Lines* (2021), it is this: "[T]his is how we learn to write. We fall in love with an author and realize we are what we love. No separation" (p. 27). How easy it is to identify oneself with the author that first sparked one's love for reading, who drove the creative writer to start their own novel, who led the individual to become a teacher. Goldberg's inspiration was Buson; however, he is not the sole focus of her text. She also explores Basho, Issa, Shiki, Chiyo-ni, and Ginsberg as those who greatly influenced her work. Nevertheless, as Goldberg developed affinity for her mentors, it is just as simple to fall in love with Goldberg while reading this text.

Living and Seeing through Goldberg

Goldberg's candid travel narrative helps readers understand her as a poet and inspire themselves to follow in her footsteps. Each of the aforementioned Japanese poets has their own section in her text, where Goldberg ventures on both literal and figurative pilgrimages to visit their graves, their histories, their traditions, and their overall contribution to the evolution of haiku tradition. Goldberg's text helps to unpack the complexities of humanity alongside the simplicities and ambiguities of haiku.

One invaluable part of Goldberg's text is the history of the canonical haiku poets. Their histories are something people do not traditionally learn in Western education, and Goldberg provides a delicate taste of what each has to offer. These vignettes are the perfect opportunity for any educator—elementary through post-secondary—to quickly brush up on some historical and cultural context and add a bit more depth to lessons on haiku. Basho's innovation distills the renga form to produce haiku through observation of nature and reflection on humans' transitory existence. Buson, a painter and a poet, chose to follow the Way of haiku that Basho founded; the second generation haiku master's poignant lines tie together nature and emotion and capture Goldberg's poetic imagination. Issa's haiku endears him to Goldberg, who offers up his wry humor and robust range of emotions in poetry that develops across personal tragedy. Shiki, whose criticism of Basho reveals his predecessor's humanity, recovers Buson and offers his own haiku to express the cruel frailty of humanity's short life and honor nature's elemental power. Finally, Chiyo-ni's haiku expresses the "sad beauty" or "understanding and acceptance of impermanence" as she connected with diverse communities (Goldberg, 2021, p. 95).

The last poet in that list, Chiyo-ni, is also the only woman. Basho and Buson, frequently exhibited in both Eastern and Western textbooks as exemplars, may be the only connection to haiku for an average reader; thus, the audience may find themselves on a journey of discovery like Goldberg (2021), who posits, "I knew when I listened to Ginsberg, so many years ago, that women were involved but not mentioned [in haiku tradition]. I am not a patient person, but in this one way I am—I listen to the boys and wait with certainty that the women will be revealed. They have to—they were there too" (p. 97). In a conversation relayed to the reader, Goldberg reveals that even some Japanese students who were familiar with Chiyo-ni did not know that the writer was a woman. Erasure is too often a problem, regardless of culture, but it has a solution: teach more women writers and acknowledge their contributions to the craft; teach more multicultural and non-Western writers so that more students witness themselves and their histories or cultures reflected in the educational canon.

Issues of translation inform engagement with haiku, which can seem a simple form. Western educators who seek to understand spiritual, linguistic, and cultural contexts will benefit from this text's adept explanations of the poetry and its contexts. If one does not know the tenets of Buddhism or the concept of Zen, much of the instruction of haiku becomes surface-level at best, trite or hackneyed at worst. How might the Western perspective shape our thinking and teaching? Goldberg's friend Mitsue provides insight into the difference of the linguistic perspective: "English builds from the inside out. Japanese from the outside in. The inside of Japanese is hollow, soft, empty of a personal self. You don't have to say everything. It can be ambiguous. Less is better. Least is best" (Goldberg, 2021, p. 73). Zen is key to understanding the linguistic focus, something that might be difficult for ego-centric Western students whose culture values the individual over society.

Luckily, the linguistics and spirituality also tie to culture, and the advice Mitsue gives may allow for teachers in the West to create a connection:

> *Jibun* equals 'self.' Sometimes Japanese uses *I*, but not the concept of *I*. We think of another person and almost enter the other person's consciousness. We try to stand with the other's point of view. In the Japanese language we can even change what we are saying right in the middle if we see evidence that the other person doesn't like or agree with us. We want harmony. This is what matters. (Goldberg, 2021, p. 73)

Any English teacher worth their snuff should see connection to other Western texts canonically taught, like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and its core themes of empathy and justice and considering others' perspectives, walking a moment in their shoes. After all, that's what Goldberg eventually did.

When put into practice, one should hopefully recognize their students following Goldberg's path, as she herself grew from ignorant American to culturally conscious over the text. Goldberg offers an intimate view of her selfishness, naivete, and later wisdom. In an early scene, Goldberg (2021) knowingly breaks a cultural more by asserting her dominance at a hotel and ordering dessert from a closed kitchen; furthermore, later—upon learning more about Japanese culture—she naively forgets to wrap and decorate some presents for her mentor Harada (pp. 53-114). Finally, she returns to the states and works in a writing group and humbles herself and her ego, exposes her poems to criticism, and also works to become a mentor herself by providing constructive feedback to her peers (and, technically, the audience reading this book).

Teaching Haiku

Aware of her audience, Goldberg provides a lesson plan at the back of the text. However, there are other ways that this book can inform instruction. Keywords for activities below may be helpful:

- Buddhism's tenets: the core of existence is suffering; suffering has causes; suffering has an end; there are causes to bring about suffering's end
- Haibun: a prose description (e.g., prose poem, memoir, diary) followed by a haiku
- Haiga: in its most basic, art accompanying a haiku
- Haiku: a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, in English following the pattern of three lines with the syllabic pattern of 5-7-5; it evokes often contrasting, natural images surrounding an insight or truth
- Jibun: the concept of *self*, but it is more of an awareness of the self in relation to others and society, a *self-us/we*
- Zen: meditation and awareness of outside nature informs the inside self

Haiku and American Transcendentalism

When one considers how all of these pieces fit together, introducing haiku and ideas from Goldberg alongside a unit in American literature on transcendentalism is a fitting connection point; it is common knowledge that the transcendentalists, especially Emerson, borrowed philosophical elements from these same tenants of Buddhism, Zen, and Eastern cultural values and blended them with those of Western Protestantism. Too often, teachers wax as philosophical as Emerson and Thoreau, boring students to tears with *Walden* and excerpts from *Nature*. Discussions about Japanese culture, values, mores, and haiku can ease students into what might otherwise be inaccessible.

Scaffolding and Differentiating Haiku

Goldberg acknowledges that there is value in both nature and syllables to haiku; however, despite the tensions, it is important more to focus on the Zen and the experience of haiku, and one can break the rules. When teaching haiku, it may be beneficial to focus on grade level and grades of scaffolding: for example, younger writers could focus on syllables and imagery and punctuation, but more advanced students can loosen rules on the haiku and delve further into the experience of the haiku and Zen.

Social Emotional Learning

Take a class on a nature walk (leaving cellphones inside), and walk in silence. Encourage them to notice what's around and outside of themselves and what it reveals to them (meditation). The longer the silence and observation, the better. Upon returning to the classroom:

- have students write a *haibun*: a prose description of the experience followed by a haiku;

- have students write a haiku and cross-collaborate with art students to create *haiga*: artistic illustration around a haiku. Alternatively, students could write haiku and create *haiga* themselves. One could even create a modern *haiga* via Instagram (or other social media) pictures accompanying haiku descriptions;
- or, have students write a haiku about the experience.

Virtual Field Trips

Continue to develop understanding of Japanese poetry and have a virtual field trip to the Niiyama Poetic Japanese Pottery exhibit (see references).

Final Thoughts

Regardless of how one decides to approach Goldberg's text, its value is evident. Haiku is more than a poem or a simple lesson; it is a means of living, teaching, and seeing that all should consider:

> What is the Way of haiku? Bare attention, no distractions, pure awareness, noticing only what is in the moment. Being connected to seasons, unconnected to self-clinging. And then, out of that, composing your experience in three lines that go beyond logic, that make the mind leap. In the center, a taste of emptiness. A frog, a crow, a turnip – the ordinary right in front of you is the realm of awakening. Pure Zen but not Zen. (Goldberg, 2021, p. 5-6)

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Author Biographies

Nathan G. Whitman (he/him), M.A. English, B.A. Secondary English Education & Creative Writing, is the current Kansas Association of Teachers of English President and the Editor in Chief of its *Voices of Kansas* journal. He has been a KATE and NCTE member since 2012. He teaches English at Derby High School USD 260 and is also an adjunct professor at Hutchinson Community College and WSU Tech. He is a recipient of the 2014 Kansas Cable Telecommunications Horizon Award and a member of the Kansas Exemplary Educators Network. He can be reached at nwhitman@usd260.com and on Twitter @writerwhitman.

Beth Gulley is a Professor of English at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, where she has taught developmental writing, composition, and literature since 1998. She holds an MA in English Literature from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and she earned a PhD in Curriculum Theory from the University of Kansas in 2009. Her academic publications include "Feedback on Developmental Writing Students' First Drafts" in the *Journal of Developmental Education*, "Kehinde Wiley's Paintings: Men As They Could Be" in *Kansas English*, "MLA 8: We Are Here, But Should We Have Come?" in *Literacy and NCTE*. In addition to supporting adjunct faculty and mentoring new faculty at JCCC, Beth serves on the boards of Flying Ketchup Press, the Riverfront Reading Committee, the Writers Place, and the Kansas Association of Teachers of English. In 2016-2017 she took a sabbatical to teach at Northwestern Polytechnical University in Xi'an, China.

Lori Muntz (she/her), Ph.D. English, has been a KATE member for two years and presented at the 2021 KATE Conference. She has been an English instructor at Seward County Community College in Liberal, KS, for three years, where she taught first year composition, creative writing, and American Literature. Muntz moved from Kansas to Iowa in summer of 2022 to teach at Southeastern Community College in Burlington. She is a reader for the *Little Patuxent Review*.

Mary Harrison's classroom library at Wichita West High School

TEACHING TIPS

Delight and Inspire

Beth Gulley, Column Editor
Johnson County Community College

When we put out the call for teaching tips this year, we did not have a theme in mind. However, as the submissions rolled in, one emerged. The selections in this column highlight the ways we as teachers listen to our students. This deep listening enables us to intervene in students' learning experiences in order to create a lasting positive impact on our students' lives.

Listening helps us recognize when what we are doing stops working, and we make changes. This is what Curtis Becker describes in his teaching tip about a new way to give feedback to middle school writers. We hear what our students are saying by what they are not saying aloud. Jeremy Gulley reminds us of this in his teaching tip about what students will volunteer when they trust us. We create opportunities for students to hear from each other and from historical figures as Marianne Kunkel and Carolyn Nelson demonstrate in their assignments.

In addition to listening to our students, these selections remind us that the classroom can be a place of joy. While reading the teaching tip selections, I was reminded of the preface of *Teaching to Transgress* by bell hooks. The revolutionary idea that has stayed with me all these years since I first read it is that learning should be empowering, and learning should be fun. As hooks describes her own schooling, "Attending school then was sheer joy. I loved being a student. I loved learning. School was the place of ecstasy—pleasure and danger. To be changed by ideas was pure pleasure" (1994, p. 3).

So often outside forces steal the joy from educational spaces, so it is great to be reminded that learning can delight and inspire.

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Author Biography

Beth Gulley is a Professor of English at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, where she teaches developmental writing, composition, and literature. She holds an MA in English Literature from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and she earned a PhD in Curriculum Theory from the University of Kansas in 2009. She is on the board of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English.

Teaching Tip: Give Effective Feedback to Young Writers

Curtis Becker
Holton Middle School

As a new teacher, I struggled to find a method of evaluating writing without spending "months" grading 80 essays and providing meaningful feedback at the same time. As I was student teaching, my mentor gave me a list of canned phrases to write on papers. When she retired, I was also gifted a collection of rubrics for any occasion. Unfortunately, students only looked at rubrics and feedback as grade justification. If they were happy with the grade, most didn't even look at the paper.

I went to grad school several years into my teaching career. During my English MA program, I explored many topics including effective feedback. My research and writing at the time, combined with my observations of actual students, led me to one conclusion: I would need to persuade them to value feedback. Since students did not see it as a means to improve—they had no motivation to do so—I had to flip the tables on them. They wanted to move through the project as quickly as possible, so I embedded the feedback and used it as a gatekeeper for the next step.

I ditched the overly-detailed rubrics and after-the-fact feedback, and introduced feedback while the project was progressing. Students are now given a step-by-step checklist. Each step culminates with a mini-conference that I sign off on when complete. During the conference, I give feedback and expect it to be implemented before I sign off on the step. The last conference is over a completed first draft; all feedback must be addressed and reflected in the final draft. This approach is also great for students with special needs: I modify and accommodate as I give feedback.

Now, when I grade, I check for my initials on each step. I compare the first draft to the final draft, and if all is correct, I record an "A." During the project, while I was modeling a procedural writing process that includes the implementation of feedback, I was grading. I can now get through a stack of essays in a couple of hours. Students receive points for completing each step, so they tend to buy-in to the whole process. When we start a paper/project, I tell them that regardless of their previous essay writing, they can easily achieve an "A"; they just have to follow the directions.

Author Biography
Curtis Becker is an author and educator, currently teaching at Holton Middle School in Holton, KS. During almost twenty years in the classroom, Becker has taught at the middle school, high school, and college/university levels. He lives in Topeka and is a part of the local writing community and a frequenter of many open mics and coffee shops in the area. His book, *He Watched and Took Note*, a collection of poetry and flash fiction, can be found at/ordered by major booksellers and local bookstores.

Teaching Tip: Inspire Empathy Using a Hands-On Lesson About the Japanese Internment

Carolyn Nelson
Wheatland High School

I used this lesson plan in my freshman class in fall 2022 after we had completed George Takei's graphic memoir *They Called Us Enemy*, which is about the Japanese American incarceration during World War II. I adapted this from an idea from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where visitors can take the identity of a real person as they tour the museum.

This lesson is designed to create empathy among students for the Japanese Americans who were imprisoned in the camps. Students were instructed to pack a suitcase with real clothes and items they would need if going on a trip. They did not know where they were going, what the weather would be like, or how long their stay would be, just like the Japanese Americans. I gave an incentive of points for completing this, and each student brought a suitcase.

When they entered the classroom, each student was given an authentic "tag" such as the Japanese Americans were given during their travel time. It had the name of a real person who lived at Camp Amache (an internment camp in Colorado about 3.5 hours from our school). Each tag had a few questions on the back. The student used this link to the Amache Camp Directory Map (University of Denver) to open a map and answer the questions on the back of the tag, including their "home" during the internment and basic information about family and camp life. A sample of the tag follows the lesson plan.

Before they started working on the website, I demonstrated on the Smart Board how to operate the map (5-10 minutes). After that, the class aid and I circulated around the room to help them find answers (20 minutes). When everyone found their answers, we shared the information orally. Students also explained what they had in their suitcase that would be helpful for life in the camp and what they wish they had packed (5-10 min). This is a small class, so times might have to be adjusted for larger groups.

Following that, we listened to part one of an audio of Sab Shimono, a Japanese American who was incarcerated at Camp Amache as a young boy, just as George Takei was incarcerated at Camp Rohwer as a young boy. Students were given a cloze listening sheet to complete as they listened to the audio.

The next day we concluded the audio and researched activities their assigned person would likely have done at Camp Amache. This information was obtained from the Camp Amache website under the historical significance tab.

This was one of the most successful lessons we have had in this class. Even though students thought it was 'weird' to bring a suitcase to class, students from other classes asked many questions about the suitcases, and it generated a lot of excitement and enthusiasm. In addition to the factual information, my ultimate goal of reinforcing empathy for others was achieved. Encouraging empathy for others is ongoing, but this was a successful step in the process. I definitely plan to try this lesson again with other classes.

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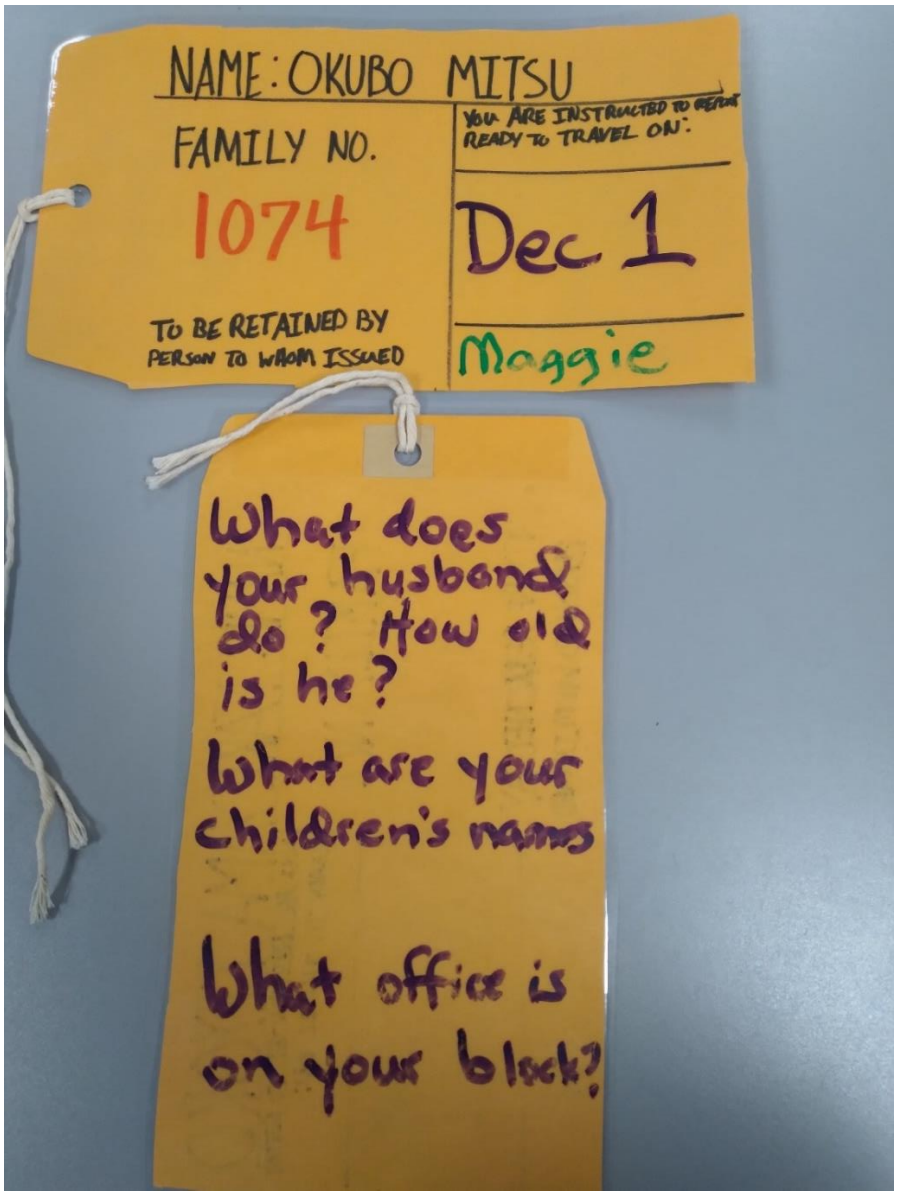

Author Biography

Carolyn Nelson is an English teacher at Wheatland High School in Grainfield, Kansas. She grew up in Northwest Kansas and has travelled many roads just to end up a few miles from her childhood home. Carolyn has a B.A. and a M.A. in English. She has been fortunate to travel much of the United States as well as a few other countries, including short trips to Japan, Canada, Mexico, Germany, and a nine-month stay in France. It's safe to say she enjoys travelling! Carolyn also enjoys reading the stories of many different cultures. People and their stories are fascinating to her.

Teaching Tip: We Really Need to Listen

Jeremy M. Gulley
Fort Scott Community College

I would like to offer more of a reminder than a tip. Listen. In fall 2022, I taught a general literature class at a small community college in which we read, in part, *The Time Traveler's Wife,* by Audrey Neffenger. In one scene, the author lists books found in Henry's apartment. The books contained heady authors like Aristotle and William Burroughs, but also a copy of *Winnie the Pooh*. I asked the class why they thought the character had *Winnie the Pooh* with all these other books. They told me that the character probably had this children's book when he was a child and it served as a reminder of innocence and simpler times, so he kept it.

I then asked the students what books they have kept as adults that they enjoyed as kids. One student, when asked, demurred and shook her head. I pressed again and she whispered, "I didn't have any books." In response, I asked what books she wished she had. She said, without hesitation, "*The Little Mermaid*."

Because I believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to read and enjoy children's books, even if they aren't children, I bought her a book of Disney princesses and also *If you Give a Mouse a Cookie* and gave these to her in class. The student was overwhelmed and told me they were her first children's books she'd ever had. The next week a classmate brought some of her own books to share with this student.

Since we do not have a formal library in our school, all of the students decided to create a "Take a book, leave a book," area in our small school. This way, they said, anyone who walks through the door can have an opportunity to read. This moment reminded me that the classroom is about more than the subject matter being taught, and how it's important to listen, really listen, to what's being said.

Author Biography
Jeremy Gulley likes to teach, travel, meet interesting people, and have adventures.

Teaching Tip: Delight in the Thrill of Collaboration

Marianne Kunkel
Johnson County Community College

Ever since I worked for a literary journal as a graduate student and helped plan events that paired an author's reading with a musician's original song, artist's ceramics display, or a photographer's black and white prints, I've loved interdisciplinary collaborations. So, it's been thrilling over the years to incorporate interdisciplinary projects into the English classroom. Most recently, in my Introduction to Children's Literature classes at Johnson County Community College, I collaborated with a biology professor to form pairs of students across our two classrooms; pairings occur after her zoology students put forward a list of animals and my students each sign up for an animal. The end product is a children's picture book in which the animal is the main character, and the plot must balance biological accuracy with literary creativity. Sound difficult? It can be, but the joy is in the collaborative steps along the way.

The biology professor and I have a similar vision for making this project fun and also challenging. She steers her students toward offering unique animals, such as the tardigrade, dik dik, or secretary bird, and once my students sign up for the animal of their choice (sign-up sheets are easy to construct on Canvas or other learning management software), the zoology and children's literature students meet in-person. At the meeting, the zoology student delivers a one-page fact sheet about the animal and answers any questions my student might have about placing this animal into a plot-driven book. I give my students a 32-page storyboard template in which they can map out text (no more than 400 words for picture books) and sketch illustrations. The zoology student then peer-reviews this storyboard, serving as a fact checker for biology accuracy. This is the point at which some of my student's ideas to place their animal in a restaurant or portray them wearing clothes get nixed, and although this step can sometimes be frustrating for my students, they learn the important lesson of doing research on a subject that is outside their personal experience.


Students display the children's book they collaboratively wrote, illustrated, and published.

After the storyboard process and a green light from their zoology partner, my students fill out a paper packet with their final draft, and I ship this off to be professionally printed. Each student gets a free copy of their book, and bigger than the smile on their face to hold a book they authored are the smiles on the children's faces who get to hear the stories; our on-campus day care kindly allows our zoology/literature student pairs to read their animal-themed picture books to their toddler and Pre-K classes. There isn't a better test of whether a children's book works than to read it in front of a young, wiggly audience. And there isn't a better feeling than to stand in the day care with the biology professor and her students and know that what we made together couldn't have been made individually, that we needed each other's expertise to create something special and learn the value of blending disciplines.

Author Biography

Marianne Kunkel is the author of *Hillary, Made Up* (Stephen F. Austin State University Press) and *The Laughing Game* (Finishing Line Press), as well as poems that have appeared in *The Missouri Review*, *The Notre Dame Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Rattle,* and elsewhere. She is an Assistant

Professor of English at Johnson County Community College. She holds an MFA in poetry from the University of Florida and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. While earning her Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, she was the managing editor of *Prairie Schooner* and the African Poetry Book Fund. She is the co-editor-in-chief of *Kansas City Voices* and *Kansas City Voices Youth*.

Mary Harrison's classroom library at Wichita West High School

HE MADE A FEDERAL CASE OUT OF IT: STEVEN FRANK'S *CLASS ACTION* AND THE SALVATION OF CHILDHOOD

Mackenzie Decker
Westridge Middle School

In Steven Frank's 2018 novel *Class Action*, middle-schooler Sam realizes something needs to change. When his teacher sends home a practice test to take over the weekend, Sam snaps. He stands on his desk holding up a hand-drawn "NO HW" sign and encourages others to do the same. When Sam is suspended his journey begins.

Sam solicits the help of his neighbor, retired attorney, Mr. Kalman. Together they, his sister Sadie, and his three best friends, Catalina, Alistair, and Jaesang sue the school district.

The case moves through the legal system, all the way to the Supreme Court. Across the country other students are inspired to join the fight against homework. Sam inspires students across the country to regain their childhood.

Foster's *How to Read Like a Professor, for Kids* mentions the importance of a quest in young adult literature. Frank's 2018 novel includes this quest and its five important components.

a. quester: Sam
b. place to go: The courts
c. stated reason to go: To ban homework
d. challenges and trials: Sam is suspended; the first two courts throw out Sam's petition; raising money for attorney fees; Sam's mom loses her job because of the lawsuit; Sadie's grades start to slip from lack of focus.
e. real reason to go: Give children their childhoods back and alleviate school-related stress.

Some readers might also enjoy the multicultural study aspects of the novel. While the main focus of the novel is the pressure the American education system puts on students, there is a wide range of diversity. For example, Catalina is Hispanic and speaks Spanish throughout the novel. Jaesang is a second-generation Korean immigrant who talks about his grandparents' inability to speak English.

Middle school readers can identify with characters, as Sam and his friends have a wide variety of interests including basketball, cooking and piano.

An appeal to teachers teaching literary terms is the author's playful use of literary concepts like oxymoron, as in this example: "'An act of civil disobedience,' Sadie says. 'Civil disobedience in a classroom, is an oxymoron. There is nothing civil about a disobedient boy.'" (p. 36).

Because Sam has to find his voice to stand up to the adults around him, students can learn to respectfully disagree with the systems that directly affect them. While his suspension shows that

actions have consequences, students can learn that some battles are worth fighting. Sam accepts the suspension because he realizes there is a bigger picture, and that his subsequent act of defiance can change the course of history.

The author also mentions real life court cases like *Goss vs. Lopez*, and includes a glossary of legal terms in the back. This opens an opportunity for teachers to introduce law and politics. Along with learning their legal rights, students also see how law affects teachers.

What I like best about this novel is that Frank is a fantastic storyteller who makes you want to keep flipping the pages. While the premise of the book is not realistic, having a fantasy world where homework could be made illegal is heartwarming.

If parents do not find this book appropriate, then Dave Barry's *The Worst Class Trip Ever* could be a suitable alternative. Both books have Washington D.C as a location, focus on middle school students, and include a quest.

Author Biography

I am a Tulsa, Oklahoma native currently living in Lenexa, Kansas. I graduated from Pittsburg State University in May of 2022. This is my first of year teaching. I currently teach a reading intervention course for eighth graders in Shawnee Mission School District. My favorite novel is *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte, and my favorite book series is Outlander by Diana Gabaldon. I have a five-year-old orange tabby cat named Charlie, and he is my best friend. You may reach me at deckermackenzie@gmail.com.

GRAPHICALLY CONTRASTING CULTURES: A REVIEW OF JERRY CRAFT'S *NEW KID*

John Franklin
Pittsburg State University

Jerry Craft's 2019 Coretta Scott King and Newbery Medal-winning novel *New Kid* is a thought-provoking, aesthetically pleasing study in comparison-and-contrast between protagonist Jordan Bank's home life in his neighborhood (Washington Heights, near the George Washington Bridge in New York City) and his school life where he is a new 7th grader (Riverdale Academy, an elite and exclusive prep school) that benefits from the medium: graphic literature.

For example, Chapter 2 "The Road to Riverdale: There and Back Again" delightfully depicts middle-schoolers on the First Day of School. Craft's artwork allows us to see students as universally alike (they're zombies), while the backgrounds of settings from Washington Heights to Inwood to Kingsbridge illustrate diversity in shops and languages that reflect local—and, eventually, contrastive—cultures. At the end of Chapter 6 "Jordan Banks: The Non-Winter Soldier," Craft reverses the journey, showing Jordan's change in attitude and personality as he takes the bus from school across the bridge and on home. Both chapters are rich in content in ways that I am not sure words could convey.

The book relates the usual middle school angst with a bit of bullying, cliques, loneliness and misguided teachers on campus while at home the conflict is mostly between Jordan's parents: his mom (an upwardly mobile corporate drone) wants him to climb the academic ladder to eventual economic success while his dad (who manages the local neighborhood community center) wants him to cultivate sensitivity to his racial heritage. Jordan escapes parental disagreement by drawing in his sketchbook; and, by hanging out with his grandfather, the novel's stellar sympathetic adult.

New Kid should appeal to students new to middle school. The author provides a variety of characters in whom they may see their classmates, their teachers, and themselves.

Craft is not only a skilled artist, he is also verbally sly. For example, my students and I delighted in recognizing some of the popular culture/film/TV allusions in chapter titles. Among the fourteen chapters are these reverberations:

"The Hungry Games: Stop Mocking J";
"Upper Upper West Side Story";
"Straight Outta South Uptown";
"A Kwanzaa Story"; and,
"The Socky Horror Picture Show."

Each chapter's beginning is—as you can imagine—appropriately illustrated to reflect and reinforce its references.

If you want to offer an alternative or augment this book with another great graphic novel about being a new student at middle school, then you can't go wrong with *Awkward* by Svetlana Chmakova. Or, if you want to go totally verbal, then consider *The Wednesday Wars* by Gary D. Schmidt.

Author Biography

John Franklin (BA Rice, MA Miami of Ohio, PhD Florida; certified to teach English and economics) began his career at Jones High School in Houston. During that time, he combined his love for literature with a love of travel, spending 12-week summers biking or backpacking to visit the settings of the drama, fiction and poetry he loved to teach: Scotland for *Macbeth*; London for Dickens; Canterbury for Chaucer; and the Lake District for Wordsworth. One Fourth of July he ventured further abroad, discovering himself atop the Acropolis in Athens, thinking, "Here I am at the birthplace of democracy on the birthday of the greatest democracy that has ever existed." He has spent his life since then appreciating and sharing his good fortune. John Franklin (pronoun he) is a Professor of English and Director of English Education at Pittsburg State University in Southeast Kansas where he teaches Literature for Middle and Secondary Schools. He may be reached at jfranklin@pittstate.edu.

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