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I TOO HAVE A VOICE: THE LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF BLACK BOYS
ENGAGING WITH AND RESPONDING TO
AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE DEPICTING BLACK MALES

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A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education in Instructional Leadership

in the

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at

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2013

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Abstract

This study examined how the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influences the reading comprehension and the reading motivation of Black boys as demonstrated through oral, written, and creative expressions. Studies have been conducted using children's literature with Black boys to examine their social interaction with the literature. However, there is limited research with Black boys interacting with African American literature depicting African American males. This research built upon and extended previous studies to determine the impact of the use of African American literature depicting Black males as an instructional strategy to influence the reading comprehension and motivation of Black boys. This study considered the use of creative responses to this literature, such as drama, writing, and visual arts.

A qualitative case study design was employed. A purposeful sample of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys were recruited to participate in this study. The research took place in a northeastern city at a local community center from July 2011 to August 2011. Data were collected using several instruments. These instruments included a reading motivation survey, a reading inventory, semi-structured interview questions, interactive read-aloud book discussions, with oral and written responses from the boys. Triangulation of methods was utilized (survey, interviews, book discussions, and boys' written and illustrated

artifacts). Field notes were kept, and interviews were transcribed. All data were analyzed, and coded to identify patterns and themes that emerged from the data. Those themes were: The boys experienced new texts, had new reading aspirations and learned about their culture; the boys demonstrated comprehension of text through active engagement, discussions, drawings, and written responses; the boys experienced racial inequalities through literature; the boys were exposed to new mentors; the boys were empowered and could envision their futures through their summer reading; and, the boys demonstrated spiritual awareness. The result from the study indicate that using African American literature depicting Black males is a valuable tool that can lead to increased comprehension and motivation.

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APPROVAL PAGE



*School of Professional Studies
Department of Education and Educational Psychology
Doctor of Education in Instructional Leadership*

Doctor of Education Dissertation

I TOO HAVE A VOICE:

THE LITERACY EXPERIENCE OF BLACK BOYS ENGAGING WITH AND
REPPONDING TOO AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE DEPICTING BLACK
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*“For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil. I want to give you a future and a hope.”
Jeremiah 29:11*

*Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.
(Psalm 107:1)*

The process of completing this dissertation has been laborious and extensive. It could not have been accomplished without the persistent prayers and support of many caring individuals. However, it is most appropriate that I recognize my number one supporter and sustainer, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is to HIM I give ALL thanks!

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“Oh Give Thanks”

DEDICATION

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it.”
Proverb 22:6

This work is dedicated to:

The awesome memory of my parents, the late John Delano Washington, Sr.

and

Dessie Stevens Washington.

Thanks for the love, support, and Godly parental guidance you gave me during my childhood, youth, and adulthood. Your strength, encouragement, and support truly made this dissertation possible. I could not have done it without you.

Thanks and continue to rest in the New Jerusalem, where “Just men” are made perfect.

You would be proud.

I will always love you!!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The silent voices of young Black men in society are calling for our school system to educate, and prepare them and every child with the academic skills necessary to survive. Not only should students be taught to read but there is also a need to instill in all students a love of reading. Students should also be given an opportunity to read books that reflects and teaches them about who they are (Hale, 2004, 1982; Tatum, 2009). Reading is one of the main ways to access knowledge. Knowledge is power and power gives an individual the ability to act. Knowledgeable persons are educated persons, and educated persons are powerful individuals, who have the ability to change their life circumstances. However, not every person within our society is so fortunate, especially many children of color (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010).

As reflected in historical accounts, African Americans for generations were denied an education (Anderson, 1988; Harris, 1992; Kozol, 2005). After years of enslavement they embarked upon freedom and were unprepared to survive in a society that for years had enslaved them and stripped them of their identity and dignity. Their heart's desire was to receive the education they had so long been denied. They had come to realize that education was a powerful tool (Barton, 2004; Harris, 1992; Woodson, 1990). It was their ticket to a better life; there was a constant struggle in the endeavor of African Americans to become educated. They tried to get an education but most Whites were not willing to educate people they viewed as nothing more than slaves (Barton, 2004; Schneider & Schneider, 2000).

As the struggle for education continued, the education afforded to African Americans was not on par with that given to Whites. They were often educated in dilapidated buildings, with outdated textbooks or no textbooks at all and with limited finances and supplies

(Anderson, 1988). Many people considered African Americans second-class citizens and they received a second-class education (Anderson, 1988). Today students of color are still receiving a second-class education in many urban districts (Barton, 2004; Council of the Great City Schools, 2010; Edelman, 2012). The education received by many African Americans students today does not help them excel and become successful, productive citizens (Edelman, 2012). African Americans are often labeled slow learners, low achievers, under-achievers, disadvantaged, at-risk, and seriously emotionally disturbed (Delpit, 1995; Ferguson, 2000). These labels have been given a title, and have become known as “the achievement gap” (Council of the Great City Schools, 2010; Lewis, James, Hancock, & Hill-Jackson, 2008; Noguera, 2012).

The achievement gap, which is also known as the race gap (Bali & Alvarez, 2004), is a critical issue in education today. The race gap portrays the difference between Black and White achievement scores and the difference between lower socioeconomic class students and that of middle-class students across the nation (Bali & Alvarez, 2004). Students’ scores on standardized tests in reading and math are the guidelines, rightly or wrongly, used to determine the success of schools and districts in the United States (Kunjufu, 2011). Many students are affected by this achievement gap in the area of literacy (Bali & Alvarez, 2004). There are many challenges that may effect the progression of African American students (Kunjufu, 1986a; Leary, 2005). Teachers are cognizant that the progress towards educational parity for African American students has decreased and the educational gaps have widened (Gordon, 2006). Although the goal of many schools is to narrow the achievement gap there have been limited success in achieving that goal (Tatum, 2005).

Literacy learning and the ability to read and to comprehend are critical to one's ability to succeed in school and in life. If an individual is unable to read he will not be able to attain the best out of his educational experience (Trelease, 2001). "Research now shows that a child who does not learn the reading basics early is unlikely to learn them at all. Any child who doesn't learn to read early and well will not easily master other skills and knowledge, and is unlikely to ever flourish in school or in life" (American Federation of Teachers, 1999, p. 5).

Therefore, successful reading instruction more than anything else is a major responsibility of every school district because the ability to read and comprehend what one reads is such a critical issue (American Federation of Teachers, 1999). The goal of every district must be to educate its students to ensure that they become successful and productive citizens in the society in which they choose to live. Even though this is the goal, every child in every society does not achieve success. According to McGee (2004) poor Black children in the earliest grades are not getting the education they need and deserve. In many situations Black students achieve at lower levels than their White and Asian peers on state assessments throughout the country (McGee, 2004). The present educational condition of Black students in this country as a whole is critical. However, Black boys' achievement is of greater concern because they perform at a lower percentage than even Black girls and they continue to lag behind their White peers academically (Carlisle & Rice, 2002; Gordon, 2006).

The Council of the Great City Schools (2010) calls the achievement gap for African American males a "national catastrophe" (p. 5). Black boys cannot survive in an educational system where they are not making growth or improving academically. Their instruction cannot continue to be mediocre. It is imperative that they are encouraged and motivated to

become successful in the area of literacy and they must receive an education that will equip them for excellence (Hale, 1982). For the African American male this is a demand that must be supplied. In this study I sought to explore how the literacy needs of African American males can be met through interactively engaging with books that depict them.

Rationale for Selecting the Topic

Literacy is the heart of education and is the foundation upon which all learning is built. Heath and Street (2008) defines literacy learning “as a change in participation by an individual or a group in a set of social practices over time, including a change in the nature and structure of literacy practices as a consequence of people’s acting upon extant literacy practices” (p. 13). However, many Black boys are not achieving in the area of literacy. Clearly the current methods and materials used to instruct them are not working. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which African American literature that depicts Black males in positive and productive roles influences the reading comprehension and the reading motivation of Black boys. In most classrooms, young Black boys are not introduced to texts where they are able to view themselves or read about experiences that reflect and connect to their lives (Gangi, 2008; Tatum, 2009). If they were given this type of literature in the early grades their reading behavior could improve (Bishop, 1990). According to Tatum (2005) the use of male-oriented text with male characters is apt to engage boys emotionally as they deal with issues they care about and can personally relate. This may lead to an increase in literacy achievement, comprehension, and motivation (Tatum, 2005).

With African American males’ standardized test scores lagging behind their White counter-parts and even behind that of African American females, educators should be willing

to do whatever they can to increase the reading competency of Black males (Morrell, 2008; Tatum, 2009). Teachers, schools, and districts must become cognizant about the materials and books they use with Black boys. If reading culturally relevant text about Black experiences, heritage, and culture is able to increase the reading motivation of Black boys then Black boys should be introduced to and matched with Black literature that represents and mirrors them where they can see images of Black people engaged in activities typical of boys in their age group (Bishop, 2007; Tatum, 2005). These are the types of books that should be placed in classrooms and libraries throughout our nation. It is important for Black boys to read books that reflect their values and culture. Reading this type of literature will enable Black boys to use their background knowledge as a point of reference and make connections to their own lives (Routman, 2003). Black boys could have meaningful discussions about the books they read. This process could lead to a greater motivation to read, improved vocabulary, improved comprehension, and ultimately assist in closing the literacy gap, while opening the gateway that will allow them to become life-long readers and learners.

Statement of the Problem

The education of African American students continues to be unequal to that of White students (McGee, 2004). Black males continue to perform lower than their peers throughout the country on almost every academic indicator, but there has been no concerted national effort to improve the education, social and employment outcome of Black males (Council of the Great City Schools, 2010). The nation's report card and other sources indicate that only 12% of African American boys in fourth grade are proficient readers nationally and only 11% of African American students living in large cities perform at or above proficient levels

as compared to 38% of European American students nationwide (Kunjufu, 2011). According to the Connecticut State Department of Education (2010), the 2010 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) reading results show Blacks lagging behind their White counterparts in third grade (Table 1), fourth grade (Table 2), and fifth grade (Table 3). The literacy gap continues to be a major crisis across the nation and according to these statistics the gap continues to widen (Council of the Great City Schools, 2010).

Table 1

Grade 3 Reading CMT Scores for 2010

Group	Black	Hispanic	White
% Goal	31.8	30.6	69.1
% Proficient or Above	50.3	48.5	82.8

Connecticut State Department of Education (2010)

Table 2

Grade 4 Reading CMT Scores for 2010

Group	Black	Hispanic	White
% Goal	34.5	30.9	71.8
% Proficient or Above	50.6	46.4	83.5

Connecticut State Department of Education (2010)

Table 3

Grade 5 Reading CMT Scores 2010

Group	Blacks	Hispanic	White
% Goal	33.1	32.3	74.4
% Proficient or Above	51.2	49.5	86.3

Connecticut State Department of Education (2010)

Some state governors view poor reading ability as a precursor for crime and they determine prison growth based on fourth grade reading scores (Kunjufu, 2007). In America 1.5 million African American males are jailed in state or federal institutions or are on probation (Kunjufu, 2007). Ninety percent of these men enter jail illiterate (Kunjufu, 2007). According to Kunjufu (2007) once African American males are incarcerated many of them read more than those who are not incarcerated. Kunjufu (2007) states that if African American boys knew how to read, it is possible they could stay out of jail. Efforts must be undertaken in order to change the direction Black boys seem to be heading and to equip them with the tools necessary to accelerate and advance them in literacy specifically, and academically overall.

Potential Benefits of the Research

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze the impact and influence of the use of African American literature that depicts Black males on the reading comprehension and reading motivation of Black boys in grades three through five. Researchers such as Kunjufu (2011, 2007, 1989, 1986a, 1986b, 1985), Porter (1997), Majors and Billson (1992), and Hall (2006) have explored issues surrounding Black males. There has been some research conducted using culturally relevant children’s literature with Black students (Bell &

Clark, 1998; Gordon, 2000; Tyson, 1999; Williams, 2004). However, there has been limited research conducted using African American literature depicting Black males with Black boys. The results of this study can provide districts, schools, and teachers with instructional strategies that may effect change in the literacy learning of Black boys. In addition to books depicting Black men, this study considered the ways in which the boys interacted with those books ; the boys in this study responded to literature using drama, visual art, and writing. Teachers can match Black boys to appropriate and engaging literature because they may realize that Black boys academically benefit from having access to curricula that celebrate them and their culture while providing them with the skills needed to survive in this society (Hale, 1982). As Black boys read books about African American culture, issues, and the contributions of African American males they can embrace their rich heritage and become empowered with the desire to achieve greatness and impact their society in positive productive ways. This study was built upon the existing research and can add to the body of educational literature with regards to Black boys and literacy.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms were defined for the purpose of this research study:

1. African American children’s literature is literature that is suitable for young people from preschool to eighth grade. It reflects the social and cultural history of Black people in America and enables Black children to see images of Black people in the stories they read (Bishop, 2007).
2. Book clubs are small groups of students who share in the reading experience of a common book. The students share and listen to divergent ideas and different voices. They read and engage in meaningful book talk and conversations

(Calkins, 2001; Miller, 2002). These groups are student led book discussions (Daniels, 1994).

3. Check-It-Out-Circle is a strategy used to support book choice. It is a way to highlight a certain author, genre, or type of book. The goal is to have enough books for all students in a class on a specific topic or genre. All students are given a book and they are asked to silently preview the book. After a minute the book is passed to the student on the right. This process continues until all the students have had a chance to briefly preview each book (Sibberson & Szymusiak, 2003).
4. Gradual release of responsibility is the process by which learners move gradually from dependence to independence. Initially, explicit instruction is given. The teacher demonstrates and the student watches and listens. Next the student and the teacher share the responsibility; the teacher begins the process and the student is encouraged to take the lead as the teacher observes to identify what needs to be re-taught. Then the student takes the lead, practicing what has been taught, and finally, the student moves to independence (Miller, 2002).
5. Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) is an individually administered reading assessment composed of a series of graded word list and reading passages (Roe & Burns, 2007).
6. Interactive read-aloud is the process in which readers interact with the text as they activate prior experience and use that knowledge as a point of reference to learn new information, main ideas, and /or themes. Readers actively construct and or reconstruct meaning from the text by relying on prior experience to parallel,

contrast, or affirm what the author suggests. The teacher or an adult reads a book, which is a little beyond the students' reading level, to the children. Because they do not have to struggle with decoding, read-aloud time eliminates challenges students might experience during the reading process. All listeners have access to the same piece of literature at the same time, and students are able to think deeply about the text (Boyles, 2002).

7. Literacy is the combination of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It is the reader's ability to use these modalities to think about and act upon the world through words (Gee, 2001).
8. Reading comprehension refers to an individual's understanding of written text. It is the process by which the reader constructs meaning from text, based on his or her background knowledge (Carlisle & Rice, 2002).
9. Transmediation is the use of multiple symbol systems by an individual to express understanding and to make meaning of a text or work of art (Reilly, Gangi, & Cohen, 2010).

Review of Related Literature

This dissertation was informed by the following theories: culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994), critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), and transactional theory (Rosenblatt, 1991; 1978). The literature review was built upon culturally relevant research studies and studies focusing on specific instructional strategies which are further discussed in Chapter Two.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

According to Ladson-Billings (1994b) culturally relevant pedagogy is built upon the following: “Students must experience academic success, develop and maintain cultural competence, and develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo” (p. 160). The purpose of culturally relevant teaching is to empower students and lead them towards social change. It teaches students to be critically aware of the societies in which they live and the social inequities that they and others may experience (Ladson-Billings, 1994b). Students’ learning is more appropriate and effective for them. They are able to learn based upon their area of strength, through their cultural heritage, and through a variety of instructional strategies (Gay, 2010).

Critical Race Theory

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002) and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) critical race theory examines the role of race and racism in education and works towards the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin. It is a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintains subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This theory examines or sheds light on the way educational institutions marginalize people of color. Critical race theory is a theory that grew out of the legal aspect of race; it clearly identifies inequity in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Transactional Theory

Transactional theory, or reader response theory, is credited to Louise Rosenblatt (1978). It is best described as the complex multidimensional interaction that takes place between readers and the text that is being read. It involves many factors that interconnect including the thinking processes of the reader and also the purpose of the author of the text (Rosenblatt, 1978). The reader must draw on past experiences in order to make meaning. As the text is listened to or read the reader interacts with the text personally and draws meaning from it based on personal experiences and background knowledge (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Methodology

Research Questions

This is a qualitative case study of 10 Black boys who experienced through multiple pathways access to literature depicting Black males. This study examined the extent to which African American literature that depicts Black males in positive and productive roles influences the reading comprehension and the reading motivation of Black boys. This research was guided by the following questions:

1. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading comprehension of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys?
2. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading motivation of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys?
3. How does occasioning transmediation (creating meaning across symbol systems through drawing, writing, and enacting) in response to African American

literature depicting Black males create a space for Black boys to develop and express their voices?

Description of the Setting and the Participants

This study took place in an urban city in the northeastern region of the United States. The community's total population is approximately 82,951 people with a per capita income of 32,000.00. The school district has twelve elementary schools, grades preK-5; four middle schools, grades 6-8; two high schools, grades 9-12 and one vocational school, grades 6-12. The participants in this case study consisted of 10 Black boys who attended several schools in the district and were participating in a summer camp program at a local community center in an urban city in the northeastern region of the United States. For this study a purposeful sample was selected of third through fifth graders signed up by their parents to participate.

The community center where this study was conducted has served the city for 70 years and is a key advocate for approximately 150 low to middle class income children and youth from kindergarten to high school. The center provides an after-school program, a youth development program, and summer camp program where students can participate in educational, recreational, and enrichment activities.

Instrumentation

Qualitative data were collected using several instruments, including an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) (Roe & Burns, 2007); a pre- and post semi-structured interview; the Motivation to Read Profile survey (MRP) (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996); Interactive read-aloud book discussions, reading response journals to capture creative responses (drawing, poetry writing, and dramatic enacting), and a book log sheet.

Description of the Research Design

For the purpose of obtaining information for this study I conducted a qualitative case study research design (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Merriam, 1995). According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) qualitative research is a situated activity that places the observer in the world to observe in real life situations. Merriam (1998) states that qualitative research is a vehicle that enables the researcher to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with little disruption to the natural setting. Case studies are used in education and these studies are often conducted in the classroom (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Case study is used to shed light on a specific phenomenon of concern to the researcher and it is the most widely used approach to qualitative inquiry (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007).

Description and Justification of the Analyses

I used qualitative analysis procedures when examining the data. Participants completed the Motivation to Read profile survey (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996), a self-reporting survey measure, to assess their self-concept and value of reading. The boys also engaged in semi-structured interviews to gather information about them individually as readers. Interactive read-aloud book discussions took place three-to-four times a week over a six-week period. The participants responded to literature in their own creative, expressive manner allowing each boy's voice to be heard and to emerge.

The data were triangulated by methods. The following diagram illustrates the triangulation (see Figure 1).

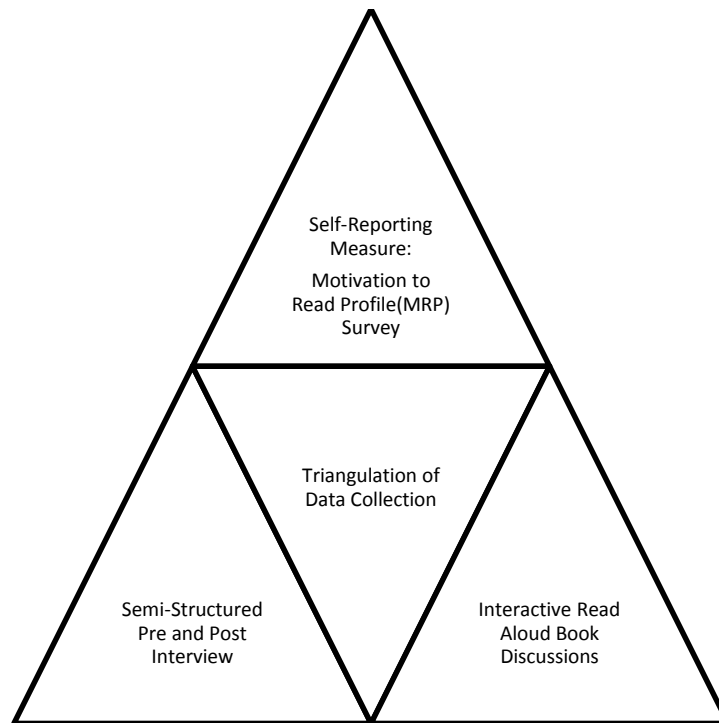


Figure 1. Triangulation of Data Collection

This triangulation supports several aspects of trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Krefting, 1999). To support confirmability participated in an external audit. To support credibility I audiotaped interviews and book discussions. The audiotapes were then transcribed (Krefting, 1999). To establish dependability and consistency I provided a dense description of the research methods employed and a dense description of the participants (Krefting, 1999). Finally, I used a reflexivity journal throughout the study to record all biases, frustrations and behaviors of the participants and myself (Krefting, 1999). Therefore, the four aspects of trustworthiness were substantiated in this study during both the data collection and analysis.

Data Collection Procedures and Timeline

The following procedures were followed during this qualitative research study. In July and August of 2011 I met with the participants at the community center three to four days a week for 60 minutes to collect qualitative data. During this time an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) (Roe & Burns, 2007), semi-structured interviews, the Motivation to Read Profile survey (MRP) (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996), and interactive read-aloud book discussions and written responses were used for data collection purposes. After the data were collected, read, and analyzed they were used to answer the research questions. The timeline for data collection was July and August 2011.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. I am an African American female who worked with Black boys using literature that depicts Black males; the boys may have been more receptive to a Black male. The study consisted of a purposeful sample of 10 Black boys, which is relatively small, and the results cannot be generalized to Black boys in other settings (Krefting, 1991).

Summary of Chapter One

This chapter laid the foundation for this study. I described the problems that Black boys experience in an educational system that is not presently meeting their needs. I stated the problem, the potential benefit of such a study, and I defined key terms. I presented three theories by which this study was guided. I shared the methodology and instrumentation used to gather the information. Finally, I shared the data collection process and timeline employed. Each section mentioned will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides a summary of the literature and research relating to Black boys and their literacy experiences as recorded by other researchers, educators and authors. This review of literature reveals the fact that African American students, especially males, are lagging behind their White peers academically (Carlisle & Rice 2002; Gordon, 2006). In the area of reading only 12% of African American fourth graders have reached proficiency or advance reading levels and 61% have yet to reach the basic level as measured by state standardized assessments (Gordon, 2006). There have been many reforms in the last several years to correct this problem with no substantial success (Trelease, 2001).

This review of literature lays the foundation upon which this dissertation is built. This chapter has been divided into four sections: historical perspectives, Black boys, theoretical frameworks, and research studies as related to the theoretical frameworks. The studies reviewed used certain methodologies and practices with various students, Black students, or Black boys. This section examined how these practices affected the students' literary growth and achievement. This dissertation was informed by the following theories: culturally relevant pedagogy, critical race theory, and transactional theory. These theories will be reviewed in an effort to understand the literacy experiences of Black boys as they relate to their reading comprehension and motivation.

Historical Perspectives

African Americans have suffered greatly since being brought to America from Africa against their will. African Americans have struggled to gain basic human rights and to gain access to literary acquisition for many years (Harris, 1992). African Americans were considered intellectually inferior to Whites and incapable of learning (Harris, 1992). During

enslavement it was against the law to teach enslaved African Americans to read. According to Schneider and Schneider (2000) when Frederick Douglass was a young slave his master's wife, Mrs. Auld, began to teach him to read. When Mr. Auld found out, this is what he had to say, "Now, said he, if you teach the nigger how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy" (p. 106). However, Frederick Douglass saw this in a very different way; he stated, "These words sank deep into my heart... I now understood... the White man's power to enslave the Black man From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom" (p.106).

According to Anderson (1988) in 1863 enslaved Africans were being emancipated, and public education was being developed as well. Blacks emerging from slavery had a great desire to learn to read and write. "It was a whole race trying to go to school. Few people were too young and none too old to make an attempt to learn" (Anderson, 1988, p. 5). In 1879 Harriet Beecher Stowe said as it relates to Blacks and their quest for education, "They rushed not to the grog-shop but to the schoolroom---they cried for the spelling-book as bread, and pleaded for teachers as a necessity of life" (as cited in Anderson, 1988, p. 5). However, Blacks were living in a society that denied them citizenship, the right to vote and their schooling took on a very different path than that of White Americans. The second-class education they received was indeed a means to keep them politically and economically subordinate.

As time went on many African American parents continued to desire that sacred right of education for their children. They, as Douglass, viewed education as a means of acquiring a type of freedom and liberty that could only be obtained through education. They realized

that an education was the true path to freedom. However, this task was not easily achieved and it did not come to fruition without much blood, sweat and tears (Harris, 1992).

Nevertheless, during post Civil War time educated Blacks established schools to educate Black children. In these schools students were taught reading, spelling, writing, grammar, diction, history, geography, arithmetic, and music (Anderson, 1988). Normal schools also taught using this standard curriculum and these schools added courses such as: orthography, map drawing, physiology, algebra, geometry, as well as theory and practice of teaching (Anderson, 1988). Though many Whites believed that Blacks were inferior and could not be educated (Barton, 2004) this was not supported by the curriculum and progress that Blacks continued to achieve in the area of education. On the contrary, Black leaders of this time believed that this curriculum countered the claims of Blacks being inferior (Anderson, 1988).

As early as 1876, the Republicans supported public education for all children regardless of race, but Democrats opposed such public education and strongly supported segregated education (Barton, 2004). Nonetheless, Blacks continued to work hard to educate their own. According to Anderson (1988) many schools started in the South such as the Tuskegee and the Hampton Normal schools, were geared towards educating Blacks. By the 1920s, Hampton Normal School in Virginia, admission was solely for the purpose of training teachers. This goal was achieved because “84 percent of the 723 graduates from Hampton’s first twenty classes became teachers” (p. 34). Black leaders realized that a good education was vital for African Americans and for the future of the nation; and they worked hard to make these provisions (Barton, 2004).

As time passed there were many struggles in the area of education for African Americans in America. But in 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in schools was illegal in the famous *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision. In 1956, in an effort to not move forward in this ruling Congress passed the “Southern Manifesto,” which denounced the court’s decision to end segregation. Many government leaders promised that there would never be mixed schools and many used military forces to keep Blacks out of their schools (Barton, 2004).

This has been the history of Blacks with regards to education for years since the Civil War. Educating the Black man was not a desired task, nor was it an easy task to carry out. It was difficult to get a suitable education from Whites who thought they were the superior race and who thought Blacks were nothing, and did not believe they were worthy of acquiring an education. It was not a secret that education and the ability to read were paramount. It was clear that literacy could shape and empower lives (Willis, 2002). According to Willis (2002) the education and literacy experience of African Americans throughout history displayed many examples of denial of access. Many southern states closed their schools so they would not have to permit students of color (Barton, 2004).

Barton (2004) further ascertained that many Democratic government leaders stood in the way of African Americans entering schools. They did not want Blacks in their schools getting the same education their children were getting. Barton says, “Today, as many Black students have become mired in urban schools that are often failing or deteriorating, Democrats are once again standing in the doorway, this time to keep Black students from getting out” (p. 93). In other words they are working to keep Black students in schools that are failing (Barton, 2004).

This is what Blacks have had to endure simply because they wanted an education. Today, Black students are not taught about the struggle that was involved in their receiving an education. According to Wiersbe (2003) “We certainly can’t ignore the past, but the past must be a rudder to guide us and not an anchor to hold us back” (p. 610). It is a good chance that if someone took the time to teach Black students that education was not something the White man desired the Black man to have and the struggle it took to get Blacks to where they are today, it might make a difference in how Black students approach their education (Myers, 2001).

However, many Black children are not aware of the struggle that preceded their being educated. Therefore, many young Blacks do not take their education as seriously as they could. There was widespread opposition for educating young Blacks as early as and probably before the 1800s but it is clear to see this opposition has continued and is still affecting Blacks in the 21st century. As Myers (2001) so eloquently states in his book, *Bad Boy: A Memoir*, “While we live our own individual lives, what has gone before us, our history, always has some effect on us” (p. 1). Still in our society today African Americans deal with the constant oppression by the dominant culture whether it is outright or subtly. According to Leary (2005) Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, which describes the dehumanization African Americans experienced during slavery, coupled with the scars that later generations still bear, may shed some light as to why African Americans are where they are today (Leary, 2005).

Black Boys

It does indeed seem that the past has affected the lives of African Americans today. For so long education was denied to Black people. When they were able to engage in the

learning process, their experience was not on the level of White children. Instead of serving as “the great equalizer” American public education is serving as a portal for the cradle-to-prison pipeline for millions of poor children of color, which has led to school dropout, arrests, and incarceration (Edelman, 2012). Therefore, today America is faced with a “national catastrophe”: Are Black boys failing in our schools or are our schools failing Black boys? (Council of the Great City Schools, 2010; Haddix, 2009). In our society and in schools, “Black males are viewed as criminals or endangered species” (Ferguson, 2000, p. 77). Boys in third and fourth grades are treated like men and not children (Ladson-Billings, 2011). Ferguson (2000) studied the boys at Rosa Parks School and she found that “African American boys were doubly displaced: as Black children, they are not seen as childlike but adultified; as Black males they are denied the masculine dispensation constituting White males as being 'naturally naughty' and are discerned as willfully bad” (p. 80). Black males are often viewed as a threat to personal safety. They only make up 6% of the United States population but they consist of 45% of the inmates in state and federal prisons (Ferguson, 2003; Kunjufu, 2007).

Data indicate that African Americans and African American males specifically are not performing well academically (Tatum, 2005). Regardless of what has been tried, this gap has not been eliminated or reduced. On the contrary the gap seems to be increasing (Gordon, 2006). According to Kunjufu (1986a) when African American students begin school they enter with enthusiasm and an eagerness to learn. These young African American males come to school motivated. They trust their teachers and they want to please them (Kunjufu, 1986a). At this time many of them have the ability to thrive at the rate of their White counterparts (Kunjufu, 1986a). However, according to Kunjufu (1985), African American

boys take a downward spiral in the area of academics after third grade. Once the enthusiasm they enter school with is lost the academic decline is inevitable and is never regained (Kunjufu 1986a, 1985). As a result of this decline we have an academic achievement gap that has never been closed (Thompson, 2004). This gap between African American males and their peers has been an ongoing dilemma in education for many years (Gordon, 2006). Even though there were some gains made in the 1960's, 1970's, 1980's and 1990's these gains were not significant enough to make a difference between the African American males and their Asian and White peers (Gordon, 2006). The African American male reading scores have been an issue in many schools throughout the United States. Even though there have been many reforms in the last several years to correct this problem, there has been no substantial success and these scores have not changed in 30 years (Trelease, 2001; Young, Wright, & Laster, 2005). These scores, as do their scores in many other subject areas, trail their Asian and White grade level peers (Thompson, 2004).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Schools today consist of diverse population of students. Teachers can no longer teach a "one size fits all" curriculum (Tomlinson, 1999, p. viii). In the early 1990s Ladson-Billings studied the traits and characteristics of teachers to determine how their beliefs and behaviors in the classroom impacted the academic success of their African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1994a). Through this study culturally relevant pedagogy became an important theory in education. This theory suggests that educating the student should be matched to the culture students bring from home. The purpose is to use methodologies that students can connect to or relate to in their lived experiences. This type of instruction leads to greater success and academic gains (Ladson-Billings, 1994a)

According to Ladson-Billings (1994a) culturally relevant pedagogy is “a type of teaching that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes” (pp. 17-18). The foundation of Ladson-Billings’ (1994b) culturally relevant pedagogy is built upon the following: “Students must experience academic success, develop and maintain cultural competence, and develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo” (p. 160). The purpose of culturally relevant teaching is to empower students and lead them towards social change. It teaches students to be critically aware of the societies in which they live and the social inequities that they and others may experience (Ladson-Billings, 1994b).

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an approach similar to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. This theory identifies a way of looking at race relations within the United States and attempts to help us understand it. Legal scholars in the early 1960s recognized that many of the changes and rights achieved by people of color and especially Blacks during the Civil Rights movement were no longer being recognized. These theorists aggressively work to change the racial issues that they foresaw (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). Blair (2009) and other researchers such as Solórzano and Yosso (2002), and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) attribute the foundation of this theory to Derrick Bell. The movement began as an issue in the legal arenas, but spread into other disciplines including education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Critical Race Theorists study race from the premise that racism is ordinary and is the usual way of society. These theorists believe that racism is a common, daily experience for people of color (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). According Leary (2005), racism is a symptom

that is engrained in the very fabric of the American society. Racism, at times very subtle, still affects many aspects of people's lives, especially people of color (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001).

Blair (2009) states that, "CRT is a means to unveil the deep-rooted barriers encountered by people of color" (p. 9). Schools have many policies and practices in place that are supposed to help all students but many of these practices center around race. Therefore, this theory is important to and for education as it relates to the classroom dynamics, academic testing, and curriculum biases (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This theory examines or sheds light on the way educational institutions marginalize people of color. It is used to look at the normative acceptance of Whiteness (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In the educational system White stories are privileged in educational contexts and the stories of people of color are distorted and silenced. This study attempts to counteract this notion of White supremacy and give voice to students of color.

Critical race methodology offers a way to understand the experience of people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). It focuses on the stories and experiences of students of color by giving them a voice (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Critical race theory points to the fact that race matters in the day-to-day decisions of school administration with regards to issues that affect students of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Critical race theory is a lens that enables a discourse about race, class, and gender to be the centerpiece for an analysis of African American males' underachievement (Howard, 2008).

Transactional Theory

Louise Rosenblatt was one of the best-known theorists of reader response or transactional theory. Rosenblatt was interested in the reader's unique response to text and she greatly impacted the teaching of literature. Rosenblatt believed that the act of reading literature involved a transaction, not an interaction. She believed that each individual responded to a piece of text differently because his or her individual beliefs and background knowledge played a major part in how meaning was constructed (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Rosenblatt placed the act of reading on a continuum, which had two different stances. According to Rosenblatt (1978) the reader uses two opposing stances to help construct meaning of the text. The process and movement along this continuum is personal and the meaning constructed is determined by the knowledge the reader brings with him or her. Rosenblatt's two stances in reading are efferent responses and aesthetic responses. The efferent stance is when the reader responds to the text literally, focusing on the facts, craft and the literary analysis. The efferent stance is usually the type of response that students use during instruction, when reading a text book or when a teacher is preparing his or her students for a test. The other stance is the aesthetic response, which is considered more private. It focuses on feeling, memories, and lived-through experiences. Aesthetic responses are just as important because in these responses the individual is able to express and convey his or her unique thoughts as he or she discusses and responds to text (Rosenblatt, 1978). Rosenblatt's theory of reading being a transaction between the reader and the text is one of the foundational frameworks in this study. This theory coupled with culturally relevant text helped students to freely transact with the text and construct meaning.

Research Studies

This review of related literature will focus on researchers who implemented different methodologies with students to foster improvement in reading comprehension and reading motivation. Some of the studies were conducted with different ethnic groups, who used culturally relevant pedagogy, some were conducted with mixed gender groups and some were conducted with all males. I include different ethnic groups because there are few studies that focus completely on Black males. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the different pedagogical strategies and how they impacted the participants.

Jiménez (1997) investigated the strategic literacy knowledge, abilities, and potential of five low-literacy Latina/o students in middle school. The researcher examined various ways to meet the needs of Latina/o readers who have not successfully acquired the necessary literacy skills in Spanish or English. Jiménez wanted to find ways to meet the academic learning needs of these students, many of whom were learning English as a second language. Their teacher for the study identified students who were experiencing difficulty with English language learning. Three students were selected from two classrooms, “a self-contained special education classroom and a self-contained at-risk bilingual education classroom” (Jiménez, 1997, p. 229).

The researcher observed the students for six months to gather data about the participants’ literacy abilities. The student participants were given the task of reading a text silently. Then they were asked to retell, providing as much detail as possible. Culturally relevant and familiar texts were used in all lessons. This gave students a language experience that was important for them and allowed them to use their prior knowledge and lived experiences in the comprehension process. Jiménez wanted to know how the students might

respond to instruction that emphasized a strategic approach to interacting with high quality culturally relevant children's literature. The research findings suggest that when students read culturally relevant texts they are able to make connections to their own lives and background, thus being able to make inferences and ask the necessary questions to foster understanding and comprehension. These students demonstrated that under the right circumstances, with the right instructional methods and materials, they could be motivated and could become successful readers.

Gordon (2000) in a qualitative study used a culturally responsive framework in order to examine African American students' responses to literature. Four African American fifth grade boys were chosen as the sample. These boys were in the same self-contained class and represented the only African American boys in the fifth grade. These boys were involved in a pre-post interview and their teacher also completed a questionnaire. The participants read independently and also participated in read-aloud events. All the literature read by the boys was African American literature that was written and illustrated by African Americans. The characters were African American and the text and setting portrayed African American culture. Various genres were used in the study. The participants read four novels independently and the researcher read nine picture books to the students. The students then responded to culturally responsive prompts orally, through discussion, and through writing in a response journal.

To analyze the students' responses, Gordon used Rudine Sims-Bishop's eight cultural element story descriptors. The results suggested that in an effort to meet the social and emotional needs of African American male students, teachers should broaden the materials

used for instruction and vary the delivery of their instruction as a means to improve reading. The participants found it unusual that the selection of literature featured African American characters because the literature they usually read lacked this feature. As determined by Sims-Bishop's eight cultural element story descriptors, the findings of this study revealed that the utilization of African American children's literature and a culturally responsive framework has the potential to increase male involvement and interaction with this type of literature. Through this study African American males were able to gain awareness about their heritage and through discussions their critical thinking was stimulated.

Williams (2004) in a qualitative study explored the relationship between culturally matched and unmatched materials on the reading comprehension of African American students in grades three through five. This study took place in two urban schools, one in a northeastern region and the other in a southern region of the United States. There were 150 students involved, 50 from each grade level. Groups of students were read a story in which an African American was the protagonist and the European American character was the antagonist. Class A was given a picture of the protagonist and the antagonist. Class B was given a picture of the protagonist. Class C read the story but did not receive any racial clues.

The findings showed that culturally matched materials did not influence reading comprehension as measured by oral reading fluency. African American students did not orally read with better understanding when presented with materials from their cultural frame of reference. The type of reading passage did not influence fluency or comprehension in grades three through five. African American students who read poorly did so when reading African American text or when reading European American text. The type of reading passage did not seem to influence fluency or comprehension in grades three through five.

This study failed to support the hypothesis that culturally relevant materials influence reading success and comprehension.

A study conducted by Donovan, Smolkin, and Lomax (2000) examined the type of text that was best suited to achieve and improve comprehension; researchers firmly believed that there is a positive correlation between time spent reading and reading achievement (Donovan, Smolkin, & Lomax, 2000). Their study focuses on the importance of getting just right books or books of interest that might be above their reading level into the hands of students. This study examined the readability of the books self-selected by low, average, and high ability readers during their independent reading time. It also examined the difference in the amount of storybooks versus information books selected by boys and girls of different reading abilities (Donovan, Smolkin, & Lomax, 2000).

This was a two-year study conducted with the same teacher who worked in two different schools over the course of two year. The study took place in a large school district in the Southwestern United States. The students were from a military base and the surrounding area, and the families were from the low to middle socio-economic classes. There were 11 boys and 10 girls, the reading ability of the class varied. There were 9 low ability readers, 7 average ability readers, and 5 high ability readers. During year two the teacher worked in a brand new school in the same district. The families were upper middle class; there were 9 boys and 11 girls in the class. There were 5 low ability readers, 9 average ability readers and 5 high ability readers.

Using the district's mandated word recognition placement inventory test the reading levels of students were identified for this study. This test was administered at the beginning of the year and at each reporting period. The reading program was a balanced literacy

approach. There were two reading periods each day. One reading period was designed for teachers to work with students using leveled text in an effort to improve comprehension and fluency. The second reading period was a recreational self-selected reading time where students chose books from the classroom library and were able to read for about 30 minutes. Students were encouraged to read in pairs, small groups or independently depending on their preference (Donovan, Smolkin, & Lomax, 2000).

The data were collected after six weeks. The study commenced in March and ended in April. The findings showed that regardless of the reading ability level students continuously chose books above their reading level at least 61.3% of the time. This was consistent with both boys and girls. The students chose books on their level at varied rate, low ability students chose books at their level 16% of the time, average ability readers chose books at their level 35% of the time and high ability students usually chose books above their reading level (Donovan, Smolkin, & Lomax, 2000).

The results of this study showed that students were intrinsically motivated to read books that were informational and often above their reading ability level. Students' ability to self-select text and read for sustain periods of time effected both their comprehension of text and motivation to read over the six week period of time (Donovan, Smolkin, & Lomax, 2000).

A study conducted in a rural school in Washington State (Whitney, 2004) was dealing with the challenge of improving reading comprehension and motivation. There were 21 teachers in the school with 335 students. There were 54% males and 46% females, and the ethnicity of the students varied. They were 58% Hispanic, 29% Native American, 10% Anglo American, and 2% Asian American, and 1% African American. Eighty-seven percent

of the students were eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. The administration was challenged in two ways with the school reading instruction. First, they wanted to know how achievement was influenced by affective factor, and secondly they wanted to know how they could work as a school to help every child grow in literacy. After examining these two challenges it was decided that as a school they would implement a one-hour literacy workshop everyday from 1:25-2:25 for 10 weeks, Monday-Thursday (Whitney, 2004). Twenty-one groups were formed by ability consisting of 11-27 students in a group. Every student was given an attitude survey and an informal reading inventory. During the reading time the following occurred: teachers did a short mini-lesson, the teacher met with students individually to discuss the books they were reading, students read to or with their peers, and students read independently for sustained periods of time. After 10 weeks students were given the same attitude inventory and an informal reading inventory.

The results were analyzed using a *t*-test ($f=.000$). The literacy workshop, which provided increased independent reading time, had a significant effect on reading achievement score on the IRI in 10 weeks. Male students' reading scores improved from 2.3 to 3.3 and females' scores improved from 2.1 to 2.7. Within ethnic groups, Hispanic students' scores increased from 1.7 to 2.2, Native Americans scores increased from 2.5 to 3.5 and Anglo American students' score increased from 3.2 to 4.0 (Whitney, 2004). The literacy workshop did not have any significance regarding students' attitude towards reading. This was possibly due to the short amount of time the treatment was implemented. However, positive behaviors between both staff and students were observed during the hour literacy block. This study supports the fact that if students are consistently and explicitly instructed in reading as

well as given time to read for sustained periods of time reading comprehension will improve (Whitney, 2004).

Another study conducted by a high school teacher, Julie Lause (2004), used the reader's workshop model with ninth and tenth graders with success. Julie Lause designed a curriculum that transformed her students. At the beginning of the school year her students did not identify themselves as good readers. These students, like so many of their peers, had stopped loving reading in fourth grade and were now just reading as an academic exercise (Lause, 2004). In this study, Lause's (2004) goal was to enable her students and she wanted them to once again enjoy reading. Her methodology was to combine required text with free-choice reading text to build reading skills.

Each student read in class on the first day for 45 minutes to give the researcher an idea of how many pages each could read. Required books were then passed out to the class with a completion date based on the information she had acquired through their reading. During the ten-week quarter students were to read and discuss the required text in class and read for 45 minutes per night for 10 weeks. According to Lause (2004), it was essential to connect her students with books of interest and to facilitate meaningful dialogue about the books they read.

The results of this study in the use of reader's workshop for one year were as follows. At the beginning of the year, 65% of the students did not consider themselves as readers. By the end of the year, 95% of the students considered themselves readers. At the beginning of the year 14% of the ninth grade students were reading fewer than 15 pages per reading session. By the end of the year only 2% of the class was still reading 15 pages or less. By the end of the year more than 44% of the students' reading speed increased from 15 to 35

pages in each reading session. Only 8% of the class was reading more than 35 pages at the beginning of the school year. By the end of the year, 28% of the students were reading more than 35 pages per reading session. Not one student could read above 50 pages per reading session at the beginning of the year. By the end of the year, 10% of the students could read 50 or more pages during a reading session (Lause, 2004).

In this qualitative design study, the researcher recorded individual interviews with students as they shared about their own personal reading journey. The researcher identified five types of readers: struggling, reluctant, eager, avid, and expert readers. A student in each of these five categories shared how he or she changed as a reader through the year. This study supported the fact that readers develop by reading (Lause, 2004). Students will develop as readers and be motivated to read as they read about things that matter to them. In this study, these ninth grade students were given opportunity to read; they were given choice and challenge. As a result their speed, comprehension, and motivation improved.

Reading aloud to children daily is a method that is beneficial and has the ability to eliminate the literacy problems if teachers, parents and adult caregivers would implement it daily (Fox, 2001). Research indicates that reading aloud to children is important (Calkins, 2001). It is a time when children are engaged in meaningful conversation, which ultimately sharpens the child's brain (Fox, 2001). These conversations are also linked positively to IQ development. The more teachers, parents and adults talk to children the more developed their language skills will become (Fox, 2001). This increase in language skills through discussion will help children develop comprehension which will lead to improved academic reading success (Carlisle & Rice, 2002). The studies that follow are studies that employed read-alouds as an instructional strategy.

A study conducted by Webster (2001) analyzed the influence of interactive storybook read-alouds on the literacy development of five first graders. The participants in this study were the teacher who was an African American female, four African American females and one Latino male. The students were selected for this study because they scored the lowest on the beginning of the year first grade district wide Diagnostic Survey assessment on letter, sounds, and word identification. The researcher examined how read-aloud in a class of 24 students directly impacted the literacy development and comprehension of the five focal students who were not yet readers.

The books used in this study represented the ethnic groups and had characters to whom the children could relate. The books were culturally relevant, and all books were read orally. The students' comprehension was assessed three times: at the beginning of the study, eight weeks into the study and at the end of the study using the scales of questions assessment which had four levels of questions. Each correct response received five points. A retelling guide developed by the researcher was also used to assess the students' written retells. This retell guide was also used daily as an instructional tool to facilitate written responses after each read-aloud.

Data collection included the students' test scores (pre-, middle-, and post-) field notes, audiotape transcripts, the teacher's written observations recorded in a literacy log, and artifacts of children's work. The data were analyzed by assessing the responses on a 5-0 point scoring rubric to determine the students' listening comprehension. The students' written responses were scored using a 12-point maximum scoring rubric. The findings of this qualitative research design were assessed through formal and informal means. On the district wide diagnostic survey substantial gains were made in letter, sound, and word

identification. On the letter identification portion of the assessment the participants' average score on the pre-test was 65% and on the posttest 99%. On the sound identification portion of the assessment the students' average scores increased from 41% to 100%. On the listening comprehension portion of the assessment the participants' average scores increased from 19% to 90% from the beginning to the midpoint of the study and from 90% to 100% on the posttest. At the beginning of the study the students had little knowledge of character, sequence, or how to create a new ending. As they practiced the daily read-aloud there were noticeable gains in their ability to answer questions and in overall retelling ability. All students made gains in the listening comprehension from the pre-test to the posttest. On the written retelling section of the assessment there were also noticeable gains. At the beginning of the study students were hesitant to write. By the end of the study their spelling had improved, and conventions of writing had improved. The students' written retells were longer, they could remember more characters, and they could now put events in sequential order. The students had made continuous growth over the 16 weeks in all areas (Webster, 2001).

The results of this study indicated that the five students' comprehension improved from the pre-test to the posttest. There was definite literacy growth in each participant. Overall, this study indicated that the students greatly benefitted from read-aloud and discussions even as young as first grade (Webster, 2001).

A qualitative case study conducted by Oueini, Bahous, and Nabhani (2008) examined the impact of read-aloud strategy on children's vocabulary development and comprehension skills. The participants in this study were 53 five- and six-year-old kindergarteners, 27 girls and 26 boys, from economically disadvantaged homes who were learning French as a second

language, Arabic being their native tongue. These participants were in two different classes, entering school lacking the basic home literacy experiences in French that parents often provide for their children.

There were two questions that guided this research: What is the impact of a read-aloud strategy on young children's vocabulary development? What is the impact of a read-aloud strategy on young children's comprehension skills? In the study, stories were read to students daily for 10 weeks from February until the end of April. The two teachers planned lessons and shared them with the language coordinator. During the read-aloud, students interactively engaged with the text. At the end of each week the students drew their favorite part of the story and then wrote something about their drawing. Data were collected through researcher's observation of the lesson. This allowed the researcher to watch the children in their natural setting conversing and interacting freely with the text. The researchers kept a written journal of their observations. The sessions were also audio taped and then transcribed. Students wrote independently using inventive spelling in response journals, telling about the story they heard and they were also expected to use the targeted vocabulary to which they were introduced. Finally, seven students from both classes were randomly selected based on their general academic performance. These students were then divided into high and average achievers to conference with the teacher. The stories were reread to the students and they were then asked to define the vocabulary. This conference was also audio taped and transcribed.

In this study the researchers found that the children's listening and speaking abilities were more developed than their reading and writing abilities. The children gained in their vocabulary development, students were able to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words,

and learned new words through repeated exposure. The researchers also determined that the open-ended type questions used during the reading of the story encouraged imagination and did not limit the students' answers thus leading to improved comprehension as the students were able to think about, talk about, and connect the ideas of the story. Students were able to think about the events that happened in the story and were able to synthesize the events and reach an understanding of what was happening in the story. The ability to orally discuss the story being read helped to build the skills needed to comprehend the text (Oueini, Bahous, & Nabhani, 2008).

The findings in this study revealed that read-aloud coupled with the introduction of vocabulary and oral discussion did enhance and improve the vocabulary acquisition and the reading comprehension of young children. The read-aloud strategy could be used with students of all ages to help improve reading comprehension (Oueini, Bahous, & Nabhani, 2008).

In a qualitative case study conducted in an inner city school in the northeast region of the United States by Alberti (2010), the researcher examined the role of reader response theory with young African American boys in an elementary school classroom. The boys were able to freely respond to critical issues that arose in the diverse literature being used in their classroom. The researcher wanted to see if the recognition and validation of the boys' responses gave them a positive experience with reading and school in general (Alberti, 2010). The participants in the study were four African American boys, and from these four boys the researcher collected data about their feelings as they interacted with text relating to race, class, and gender. In this qualitative research study the researcher wanted to answer the following question: In a third grade classroom where children are encouraged to employ

critical literacy in response to children's literature, how do African American boys respond to literature with diverse representation of race, class, and gender (Alberti, 2010).

The researcher employed the following methods to collect data. The students participated in whole class read-alouds. They were able to respond freely to the story and make any personal connections that would help them formulate an understanding of the text. The students also met in small-guided reading groups where they read books at the independent level dealing with critical issues. The whole class group discussion and the guided reading group sessions were audio taped. With the whole class discussion the researcher did selective transcribing, meaning within 24 hours of the taping he listened to the tape and only transcribed the responses of the four focal boys in the study. These transcripts were then crosschecked with field notes taken during the read-aloud (Alberti, 2010).

The guided reading group had three girls in it as well. During these sessions full transcripts were taken. Discourse analysis was used allowing the researcher to examine closely how the participants discussed the critical issues in the literature and positioned themselves in relation to one another through the language they used. The participants also completed written responses after discussing the literature with the whole class. Other data collection methods were writing, drawing, and the reflective memos of the researcher, which was a major component of the data analysis written once a week before, during, and after data the collection period. This journal reflected on the researcher's teaching and it had notes about how the research was progressing (Alberti, 2010).

To analyze the data the researcher used open coding based on the comments participants made or things they wrote. Axial coding connected the open coding categories into broader categories and themes. The researcher was able to develop 13 categories. These

13 categories were then reduced to four specific categories finally formed from the open coding. The four specific categories were gender, race, home, and inter-textual connections. To further analyze the data the researcher looked at each category and recorded how many times each boy responded within each category. The category yielding the largest responses was in the first category, gender. The boys spoke 82 times about gender in the text. The next largest category was race; here the boys spoke 52 times. The inter-textual category yielded 20 responses and the home category only yielded 8 responses.

The researcher determined that the boys were more willing and open when discussing certain categories than when discussing other categories. The boys did not openly discuss issues of class but they did speak openly about gender issues because this was for them a personal subject, and they could make definite connections to the subject. When the boys discussed race they always did it from a historical perspective and they would refer to slavery and segregation or how Black people were not treated equally during those times.

Alberti (2010) concluded that this study allowed the boys to discuss texts about critical issues and to construct meaning from the text as they interacted with their peers. The boys gained a greater understanding of critical issues as they discussed the stories with their peers. They realized there are issues that they should not ignore but that they should discuss openly in doing so they would further understand themselves and the text they read.

Summary of Chapter Two

This chapter provided historical perspectives on the education of African Americans in the United States since the end of African enslavement in 1863, and, further, provided, specific to this dissertation, historical and current perspectives on the education of Black boys. Also discussed were the theoretical perspectives on which this study is founded:

culturally relevant pedagogy, Critical Race Theory, and transactional theory. I focused on Black boys, and I used culturally relevant pedagogy to instruct them in reading. My study built upon this theory in that through the book discussions and transmediation I helped boys express their voices. Research that focuses on Black boys in grades three to five is limited, therefore, I used studies that employed culturally relevant pedagogy, self-selected reading, and reading over time.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methods and procedures used in this qualitative study. In this study African American literature with a strong African American male presence was shared with Black boys to observe the influence this type of literature had on their reading comprehension and reading motivation. The data collected in this study represented Black boys' voices as they engaged with and responded to the text. This chapter also includes my biography, a description of the setting, a description of the participants, and the research questions used to guide the study. A description of the research design, instrumentation, data collection procedures and timeline, description of data analysis process, the limitation of the study, trustworthiness and the ethic statement are all recorded in this chapter.

Researcher's Biography

According to Merriam (1998) "The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p. 7). Researchers must be cognizant and cautious about personal biases they have as they relates to the area of research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, it is profitable for the reader to become familiar with the researcher in an effort to understand her personal interest in the study (Merriam, 1998).

I am the great-great granddaughter of Mr. Jack and Moriah Summerall, my mother's grandparents. They were slaves in Baxley, Georgia. My maternal grandfather worked on the land of a wealthy White man in Georgia for a period of time. Soon he decided to go and work for another White man. The man he initially worked for wanted my grandfather to continue to work for him. When he refused, the White man confronted my grandfather. Consequently, my grandfather pulled him off his horse and pinned him to the ground. Then

another White man grabbed my grandfather to do him harm; fortunately, my grandfather was able to get away from the men alive. However, the act of him pulling a White man off his horse and pinning him to the ground with great force which was punishable by death. My grandfather only wanted to work where he pleased so he could provide for his family but a White man tried to hold him back and forced him to continue to work for him. In order for my grandfather to escape death, he was taken out of Georgia in a coffin to Florida. The rest of the family was secretly transported out of Georgia to Florida by night. As a result of this incident my mother was raised in Daytona, Florida and eventually moved north. I mention my grandfather and this event because through it I learned about the oppressions and the struggles of Blacks early in my life.

My father also grew up in the segregated south. He was born and raised in Alabama, and was a World War II veteran. He was honorably discharged and he moved north. My parents met and were married. From their union they raised three sons, and one daughter. My parents provided a safe and loving home for my brothers and me. Although neither of my parents were college graduates they represented the generation of African Americans who had lived through the ugliest realities of segregation, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights era. They wanted more for their children, and they worked hard to provide a better life for them. My oldest brother enlisted in the United States Marines, and served his country faithfully during the Vietnam War. My other two brothers are both college graduates. The second oldest graduated from a Historically Black University in the South and my youngest brother graduated from a large university in the Northeast; he then continued on to receive a MBA from a large university in Illinois.

I think it is because of my three older brothers that I became interested in understanding young Black males and their struggles. They were my first participants because they were the first Black boys who I studied and learned many things from. They played sports, they were literate, they set goals, and they achieved their goals. They represented for me Black males who took three different roads, ended up in three different places, but each had a sense of accomplishment in their lives. I looked at the lives of my brothers and I figured if they can make it so can others. Black boys do not have to be a statistic, strung out on drugs, incarcerated, dejected, or become a liability to society. With positive influence, goal setting, God, and an education, Black boys can make it.

This is the premise for the belief I have in studying Black boys. There is so much negative information circulating about the lack of success of young Black men. I have chosen to study them as it relates to their literacy experiences. I believe they can be successful and achieve academically. It is my hope that something I learn or implement will help change the tide of negativity directed towards Black boys growing into manhood.

I am an African American female educator and an ordained minister. From kindergarten to eighth grade I was educated in the public school system in the Northeast and then I attended a private girl's high school. After graduating high school I attended Fisk University, a Historically Black University in Nashville, Tennessee for two and a half years and went on to graduate with a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration from Clark Atlanta University, in Atlanta Georgia. I have a Masters of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of Bridgeport, in Bridgeport Connecticut, and a sixth year diploma in Administration from Sacred Heart University, in Fairfield Connecticut.

I have always loved school and the knowledge I was able to acquire from teachers and peers. I did not always do as well in school as I could have, but I did not let that impede upon my goal to educate myself and to become a lifelong learner. It was not until college years that I truly understood that my education was one of the most important things I could accomplish. With the help of God, my family, and education I believed that anything could be accomplished and therefore, in my life many goals have been achieved.

I have served my community as an educator for 26 years. I hold three teaching certifications: Pre-K through third grades, fourth through eighth grades, and Remedial Reading and Language Arts K-12th grades. I have taught elementary school since 1987, where I began my teaching career as a fourth grade teacher in a parochial school. After three years I began to work in the public school system as a fourth grade teacher for three years, a second grade teacher for seven years, and a literacy specialist/coach/teacher for 10 years. I am presently a third grade teacher working in an urban school district in the northeastern section of the United States. In my 26 years I have worked with many administrators, teachers, students, and parents. I have noticed that many Black students do not perform as well as their White counterparts. However, when I work with many of these students and implement certain pedagogical methodologies I have found them to be successful.

I enjoy teaching very much. I sometimes think I became a teacher as a result of the influence that my aunt had on me without my even realizing it. My dad had four sisters and three of them became teachers. They were teachers during a time when schools were segregated in the south. One of my aunts, who I will call Ms. L, worked in schools in Alabama and in Tennessee. During the summers in the early 1960s she, an aunt who worked in Florida, and many of their friends would come North during the summer to work to

supplement their yearly income. I can remember during many summers these women would come to my home on their days off. This would be a time of good food, laughter, and many stories about life as a teacher. What I found most interesting about these women was that they had a true purpose. They were educated and they had the task of educating a generation of Black children whose mothers and fathers had been denied an education. They understood that when they entered their classroom everyday they had the task of equipping their students for a society that did not want them to succeed. They were preparing their students to be the best that they could be because that was the only way they were going to be able to succeed in society.

As did my aunt, I view my role as an educator as a commission to do all I can to help students rise above the allegations, stereotypes, and statistics, which say they cannot achieve and be successful. My personal life experiences, some I have shared and many I have not, laid the foundation for my research. Therefore, despite the statistics, the intent of this research was to examine the reading comprehension and motivation of Black boys and to investigate how to meet the needs of this underserved population because I believe they can be successful.

Description of the Setting and the Participants

This study was conducted in an urban city in the northeastern region of the United States. The community's total population is approximately 82,951 people with a per capita income of \$32,000. The school district has 12 elementary schools, grades preK-5; four middle schools, grades 6-8; two high schools, grades 9-12 and one vocational school, grades six to twelfth. For the purpose of this study a purposeful sample was selected. The sample

included Black boys who attended a six-week summer program at a community center in this city.

The Josiah Youth Community Center (JYCC) (all names are pseudonyms) where the study was conducted has served the city for 70 years and is a key advocate for approximately 150 middle to low-income children and youth from kindergarten to high school. The center provides an after-school and summer program where students can participate in educational, recreational and enrichment activities.

Selecting of Participants

The participants in this study were a purposeful sample. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2005) a purposeful sampling is the process of selecting cases that are likely to be “information-rich” with respect to the purposes of a qualitative research study. The district in which the study was conducted is diverse. The boys in the study attended six of the twelve elementary schools. Several of the boys attended the same school and already knew each other. The sample population was all Black boys, and represented students in third to fifth grades, ranging in ages from eight to eleven. Six of the 10 boys lived with their mother and siblings. Two of the boys lived with their father, mother, and siblings. One boy lived with his mother, stepfather, and siblings, and one boy lived with his father and a younger brother. The study was presented to the parents during the parent’s orientation and they chose to have their son participate in the study. All the participants in this study were a part of the Josiah Youth Community Center’s summer camp program.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this qualitative case study:

1. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading comprehension of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys?
2. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading motivation of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys?
3. How does occasioning transmediation (creating meaning across symbol systems through drawing, writing, and enacting) in response to African American literature depicting Black males create a space for Black boys to develop and express their voices?

Description of the Research Design

For the purpose of obtaining information for this study I conducted a qualitative case study research design (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005; Merriam, 1998). According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) qualitative research is a situated activity that places the observer in the world to observe in real life situations. Merriam (1998) states that qualitative research is a vehicle that enables the researcher to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with little disruption to the natural setting. Case studies are used in education and these studies are often conducted in the classroom (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Case study is used to shed light on a specific phenomenon of concern to the researcher and it is the most widely used approach to qualitative inquiry (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, 2005).

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007) the goal of qualitative researchers is to understand human behavior and experience. These researchers want to understand how the participants being studied construct meaning and they proceed to try to describe what the

meaning is they have processed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). According to Lather (1988), and Roman and Apple (1990) as cited by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) the qualitative researcher is further defined as one who studies people who have been marginalized with the hope that through the observation, study, and the use of the data gathered they will be able to empower their participants. This empowerment can cause the participants to take control of their situation or inequity and use the information to mobilize and move towards social change.

Parents were introduced to this study during the summer camp's parent orientation night. Interested parents signed consent forms and their sons signed assent forms. All parents with sons in third through fifth grades were afforded this opportunity. Ten parents granted permission for their sons to participate in the study. All the boys with parent permission were invited to participate. Each boy, his school, and the community center were given pseudonym names to protect their privacy.

Ten Black boys ($n = 10$) volunteered to participate in this study. The study examined how the use of African American literature depicting African American males would influence the boys' reading comprehension and reading motivation. The boys participated in interactive read-alouds, where they responded to the text through written expressions, drawings, and dramatizations. They read independently and participated in student led book discussions for six weeks. One goal of the study was to expose the boys to African American books depicting Black males. This was done through the use of a Check-It-Out-Circle. I sought to empower these Black boys to use their voice as a means to gain greater access to books for their classrooms, schools, and libraries that portrayed characters that looked and acted like them in positive ways. These books would teach them their culture and history while giving them the opportunity to express their voices as they read and discussed the

events in the books from their perspective and understanding, and would ultimately help to positively effect change in their lives and the lives of other Black male students.

During this study the boys responded to the text they read in a variety of ways. Not only did they orally discuss the stories, but they wrote poems, drew pictures, and acted out scenes from the stories as well. These responses represented the individual and collective voices of the boys. I was able to engage the boys in rich discussion, read the boy's journals, examine their drawings, and observe their dramatizations of stories as a means to gather dense data and create triangulation of data sources (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Instrumentation

Data were collected using several instruments. These instruments included an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) (Roe & Burns, 2007); pre-interviews and post-interviews; the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) survey (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzone, 1996); interactive read-alouds; student-led book club discussions and opportunities for creative responses (drawing, writing, and enacting); response journals; a book log sheet; anecdotal notes; field notes, and reflexive journal.

Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)

This is a self-reporting inventory and is administered individually (Roe & Burns, 2007). This inventory was developed for students in pre-primer to twelfth grade and the purpose of the inventory was to identify a student's reading level. The inventory consists of two sets of graded word lists and four forms of graded reading passages. The passages are both fiction and nonfiction and increase in difficulty. I met with each boy individually to complete the IRI. The boy read a passage orally and then he answered 8-10 comprehension questions that focus on specific reading skills. In this study the IRI was used to assess the

student's oral reading and comprehension. It was also used to ensure that appropriate text levels were used throughout the study when the boys were reading independently.

Semi-Structured Interviews with Students

These interviews were held at the Josiah Youth Community Center (JYCC) (pseudonym) in a northeastern city. The interviews were conducted in the conference room or a classroom depending on the space availability on the day of the interview with third, fourth, and fifth grade boys at the beginning of the study and at the end of the study. Each interview was conducted individually and lasted approximately 20 minutes. I asked approximately seven questions in the pre-interview and approximately seven questions in the post-interview along with follow-up questions to clarify their responses (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007).

The interviews were one of the sources I used to gather information during the study. The interviews also afforded me with the opportunity to ask questions that emerged during the discussion in-group session that needed to be explored in greater depth (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Interview number one was conversational in nature. I used this as a time to get to know each boy individually. Each boy was asked approximately seven open-ended questions about their reading behaviors and reading interests. I also used this first interview as a time to inquire about any African American literature the boys had read. The second interview, which was given during the final week of the study, was used to gather information about what the boys had learned from their summer reading. I also used this interview to assess the benefit of the study for each boy and to find out if the types of books read during the summer were books they would like to continue to read. During the second interview each boy was asked to identify one character from a book read during the summer

that he felt he was most like. I was able to further question the boys as to why they were most like this character and what it was they learned from this character. This one-to-one query shed a great deal of light on what the boys learned during the study as they listened to the read-alouds and read their own independent books. The pre- and post-interview questions appear in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) Survey

This instrument was developed by Gambrell, Codling, Palmer, and Mazzoni (1996) as a tool to help teachers understand how students are motivated and become active and engaged readers. It assesses students' reading motivation by evaluating their self-concept as readers and the value they place on reading. The instrument was developed specifically for grades two-to-six. This reading survey is a 4-point Likert-type, self-reporting group administered survey. It contains 20 questions that are orally read to all students. The responses to each question range from one to four points. The Motivation to Read Profile Survey was field tested in order to gather reliability and validity. Three classroom teachers who were also graduate students critiqued over 100 items. Only the items that received 100% agreement were chosen as possible survey questions. The chosen items were submitted to four classroom teachers, who sorted the items into three categories: self-concept, value of reading, and not sure or questionable. This was the way the developers gathered construct validity. Internal consistency of the MRP survey was assessed using an alpha statistic, which revealed a high reliability for both third grade (.70) and fifth grade (.76) (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1995). To establish interrater reliability, two raters compared the responses to items on the survey and the interview of two highly motivated and three less motivated readers who were randomly chosen. The raters independently compared

the data and there was an interrater agreement of .87 (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996).

In this study the Motivation to Read survey was administered to all 10 participants during the first whole group session. The summer program teacher who worked with me administered the survey. During this time I observed the participants.

Interactive Read-alouds

According to Hahn (2002) a read-aloud is simply reading a book aloud to one child or a group. Reading aloud to children gives them new understandings on many subjects that they can only encounter through books. Therefore, reading aloud to students should be a daily activity especially in classes where students have reading difficulty (Hahn, 2002). The children listen to an adult read different types of genre and then engage in talking about the book (Hahn, 2002). The book may introduce or reinforce a certain skill or strategy. The book could mirror a kind of reading a teacher wants the students to focus on, in this case African American literature. The book could have a message or value to reinforce or create a lively debate or discussion. These interactive read-aloud sessions were held at the community center three to four days a week for 60 minutes for six weeks during the summer of 2011. Questions were used to generate discussion before the story was read, during the interactive read-aloud, and after the read-aloud. I read the story, stopping at certain points to engage the boys in oral discourse about the events occurring in the text. After the read-aloud the boys would discuss the characters, sharing what they learned from their actions and engaging in lively discussion (Hahn, 2002).

The prompts used by the students in oral and written responses during group sessions and independent reading were adapted from Gangi (2004) and Sibberson and Szymusiak

(2003) as well as created by the researcher. Sample prompts and questions are in Appendix C.

Student Led Discussions

In the gradual release of responsibility model, I began the group sessions with interactive read-alouds. After four weeks the boys were prepared to lead the book discussions. During this time four of the older boys worked in pairs to lead two small group sessions. They read a fiction short story and a nonfiction text with the boys and then facilitated the discussion. During these sessions I observed the student interactions.

Response Journal

The participants were given response journals to record their written and illustrated responses to books, poems, short stories, and DVDs used during the study. After some sessions the boys were given specific prompts to address. At other times they were allowed to choose how they wanted to respond to the session through a free-write or a drawing. The boys used their response journal during their interactive read-alouds and book club discussions. The response journal was a place for each boy to record his thoughts and feelings throughout the study. The journal could be used to indicate reflections, record favorite lines of text, and ask questions as they read interactively, and discuss the African American literature. To gather information to answer the research questions I read all journal entries.

Book Log

All the boys recorded the books read during the research study in their book log. They recorded the books they read independently. The purpose of the book log was to enable the participants and me to examine the participants' overall reading progress. In this

log each participant recorded the title, author, date the book was started, and the date the book was completed. The book log appears in Appendix D.

Anecdotal Notes

After each session I wrote quick notes about each boys' behavior and engagement during the session. If the participant did or said something interesting or provided information-rich responses I would record notes to remember the behavior.

Field Notes

Field notes were written daily to describe what happened during the group session. Even though I taped each session, these notes were useful to record observations and actions that could not be recorded on tape.

Reflexive Journal

According to Creswell (2007) the researcher has to be conscious of the biases, values, and experiences that she brings to the study. Therefore the purpose of this reflexive journal was to help me guard against biases that could occur during the data collection process. After each session I wrote in my reflexive journal as a means for maintaining reliability and validity.

Data Collection Procedures and Timeline

The following procedures were followed during this research study.

1. Approval obtained from the Western Connecticut State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (May 2011).
2. Approval obtained from the director of the community center (June 2011). (See Appendix E.)

3. Consent was obtained from the teacher at the center who would be working directly with me (June 2011). (See Appendix F.)
4. Consent from parents and assent forms from participants were obtained (June-July 2011). (See Appendix G and Appendix H.)
5. The research study took place at the Josiah Youth Community Center (pseudonym) (July-August 2011).
6. All participants were individually administered the Informal Reading Inventory (July and August 2011).
7. All participants completed the Motivation to Read profile Survey (MRP) (July 2011).
8. Pre-semi-structured interviews were administered to all participants (July 2011). (See Appendix A.)
9. All participants were involved in interactive read-aloud group discussion sessions (July-August 2011).
10. All participants completed a post Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) (August 2011).
11. Post semi-structured interviews were administered to the 10 participants (August 2011). (See Appendix B.)

Description and Justification of the Analyses

I used qualitative analysis procedures when examining these data. As data were collected it was dated and organized. Each student and the center were given pseudonyms. Participants were given pre- and post-interviews. These interviews were audio taped and then transcribed; they were read and reread many times. Participants completed the Motivation to Read profile survey, a self-reporting survey measure to assess their self-concept and value of reading (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). These scores

were analyzed and the boys were ranked according to the scores. The boys were also engaged in semi-structured interviews to gather information about them individually as readers. They had pre- and post-interviews. These interviews were audio taped and then transcribed. The transcripts were read and reread many times. Interactive read-aloud (see Appendix I) and book club discussions took place four to five times a week. The participants were able to respond to literature in their own creative, expressive manner allowing each boy's voice to emerge.

The data were triangulated by methods (MRP-self report instrument, IRI, interviews, and oral, written and visual responses). This supports several aspects of trustworthiness, credibility, dependability and confirmability (Krefting, 1999). To support confirmability I audio taped interviews. To establish dependability and consistency I provided a dense description of the research methods employed and a dense description of the participants (Krefting, 1999). Finally, I used a reflexivity journal throughout the study to record all biases, frustrations, and behaviors of the participants and me (Krefting, 1999). Therefore, the four aspects of trustworthiness were substantiated in this study during both the data collection and analysis.

To begin final analysis all data were organized in a manner so that they could be studied with ease. I put all students' information in individual file folders. These folders included individual pre- and post-test interviews transcripts, group session transcripts, IRI assessment scores, MRP survey raw data and scoring sheets, attendance records, response journal, drawings and individual narratives. This was done so that all information for each student was readily available for data analysis.

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008) analysis is the process of examining and interpreting data in an effort to bring order to it, to construct meaning from it, to gain understanding from it and to develop knowledge about what you are studying from the data collected. My analysis commenced once my data were collected. I analyzed each individual case based upon the data I collected through interview transcriptions, group session's transcripts, and student artifacts.

I hand-coded data from interview transcriptions, group session transcriptions and my field notes and reflexivity journal. The first cycle coding phase (Saldaña, 2009) generated 282 codes (see Appendix J). I formed themes based on Bernard and Ryan's eight observational techniques. The techniques that related to my study and helped to develop my themes were: repetition, indigenous typologies, in vivo coding, similarities and differences and theory-related material (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). I then used the first and second coding cycles as presented by Saldaña (2009) and the thematic analysis techniques of Bernard and Ryan (2010) as a method to assist me to generate six themes to analyze and discuss findings.

Finally, to improve the dependability of the data analysis and coding process I participated in an external audit. A principal who holds her doctorate in an urban school district in the Northeast, and who graduated from the Western Connecticut State University Instructional Leadership program, completed the audit (see Appendix K).

Prior to the audit, the auditor met with me in December 2012 to discuss data management related to analysis. She recommended that I organize data into individual files and group files. Each individual file contained individual pre- and post-test interview transcripts, group session transcripts, IRI assessment scores, MRP survey raw data and scoring sheets, attendance records, response journals, drawings, and individual narratives.

Initial coding occurred in relation to the research questions for pre-interviews, group sessions, and post-interviews.

When the data were provided to the auditor, I reviewed the data in each file with the auditor. Transcription was provided for each group session, pre- and post-interviews. A master code list was provided for initial and second-cycle codes, categories, and themes. The auditor referred to the transcription throughout the intercoder process to determine agreement and disagreements with initial and second-cycle coding. Upon disagreement, the auditor would reread the original text more than once to substantiate disagreement. The auditor also reread text to substantiate agreements as well.

The auditor used an intercoder reliability formula to determine the percentage of agreement among transcribed coded materials. There was a high level of agreement with the initial and second-cycle recoding derived from the transcription (see Appendix K).

Limitations of the Study

The limitations to this study are as follows. I was an African American female working with Black boys using literature that depicts Black males and working to help them create and express their voice about the impact the literature has on them as Black boys; the boys could have been more open to a Black male teacher. The study consisted of 10 Black boys so the sample was small and the results cannot be generalized to Black boys in other settings (Krefting, 1999).

Trustworthiness

In an effort to evaluate the trustworthiness of the study the following strategies defined by Krefting (1999) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) were employed to increase the rigor of the study and for others to assess the truth-value of the findings.

Credibility

To support credibility during the data collection process I used prolonged involvement; I worked with the boys for six weeks. I had direct contact with them three to four times a week for about one hour to an hour-and-a-half. The boys became accustomed to seeing me at the center even after their sessions. I was able to build trust with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). On occasions when I missed a day, and then returned the boys would always want to know why I was not there on the previous day. A reflexivity journal was also utilized to support credibility. Every day I recorded concerns about the students, setting, and methodology, as well as general comments and thoughts. I was an instrument in the study, therefore, it was important for me to record all biases, frustrations, and behaviors of the participants and myself as a means to continuously reflect as data were collected and analyzed (Krefting, 1999). During each interview I would restate the participants' response to ensure that what was being recorded was what the participants meant to say. If the responses were not recorded accurately the participant could restate and further explain his response (Krefting, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During the interviewing process questions were reframed if needed to help the participants understand what was being asked so that the most efficient response could be gathered. Interview questions were often expanded upon based on the participant's response. These follow-up questions lead to a more in-depth and clarifying response. Data were triangulated by methods (MRP-self report instrument, IRI, interviews, and oral, written and visual responses). This triangulation supports several aspects of trustworthiness, credibility, dependability and confirmability (Krefting, 1999).

Confirmability

To support confirmability I audiotaped interviews and group sessions and then these audiotapes were transcribed (Krefting, 1999).

Dependability

To establish dependability I provided a dense description of the research methods employed and a dense description of the participants (Krefting, 1999). I also used code-recode procedures during data analysis. This was the process of going through the data coding it and then leaving that data for at least two weeks before returning to it to recode and determine if the results were the same or different (Krefting, 1999). I also participated in an external audit.

Transferability

Finally, I provided dense descriptions of the participants, setting and methods “to allow others to assess how transferable the findings are” (Krefting, p.179). Therefore, the four aspects of trustworthiness were substantiated in this study during both the data collection and analysis.

Ethics Statement

Permission to participate in this study was secured from the director of the local community center, the reading teacher working at the community center who would assist in the study, the parents of the students participating in the study, and the students participating in the study. To ensure confidentiality, the community center and each participant was assigned a pseudonym. The participants were informed of their right to withdraw from this study at any time. All data were stored in a locked file cabinet in my office. The data was maintained until the findings were presented at Western Connecticut State University, after

which time the data will be kept in a locked file cabinet for up to three years and then they will be destroyed.

Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter provided information about the researcher, a description of the setting where the study was conducted, as well as a description of the participants. I also explained the method used to gather the data, the design, instrumentation and details about how the data were collected, and analyzed. I shared how truth-value was maintained throughout the data collection process and the data analysis process. This study was implemented as a way to afford elementary age Black boys the opportunity to read, discuss and respond in writing and through transmediation to books that mirrored them.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA AND EXPLANATION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings of this qualitative case study, which examined the influence that African American texts depicting Black males had on the reading comprehension and reading motivations of Black boys, as well as the voices that emerged as Black boys listened to, discussed, and responded through transmediation (acting, drawing, and written responses) to African American text depicting Black males is discussed. The study findings are presented using data gathered from each participant in which background information, interviews, survey, a reading assessment, group discussion and post-interviews were used to create an individual profile. The participants' grades and school information is presented in Table 4. Participants have been given a pseudonym to protect their confidentiality. The findings are guided by the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading comprehension of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys?
2. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading motivation of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys?
3. How does occasioning transmediation (creating meaning across symbol systems through drawing, writing, and enacting) in response to African American literature depicting Black males create a space for Black boys to develop and express their voices?

Description of Setting and Participants

Description of Josiah Youth Community Center

The Josiah Youth Community Center (JYCC) is an important part of the cultural make-up of the Northeast region city of the United States where the study was conducted. The JYCC has served the youth of the city for more than 73 years. The center is a safe haven for many youth. It is located on a corner lot, and has a basketball and tennis court on one side, and a parking lot and a church on the other side. Both sides represent a type of refuge. The church has been a moral compass and a sign of strength in the African American community. The basketball court also represents a place of refuge for many young Black boys who played on the courts for hours and hours instead of hanging around in the streets. In the rear of the building are picnic tables and a playground.

The JYCC has a warm inviting, academic learning environment where students from diverse backgrounds are able to come each day to participate in a variety of programs that address the educational, enrichment and recreational needs of the whole child. The staff and board of the JYCC have accepted the call and challenge to help close the achievement gap. They work to prepare students to first advance from one grade to the next by providing support to students and families as they move through the local schools. Ultimately the goal of the JYCC is to put programs in place to ensure their students graduate from high school on time and are college ready. The JYCC is committed to providing a learning environment where their students are able to feel loved, valued, and have fun as they learn.

Description of the Participants

Ten Black boys participated in this study during the six week summer camp session in 2011. The boys completed third through fifth grades at seven out of the twelve elementary schools in the district. The following tables provide information about the participants with regards to the school they attended, their scores on the Motivation to Read Profile Survey, their Informal Reading Inventory, and their attendance during the six-week study. The information on the tables serves as an introduction to each participant and the information will be further discussed throughout the study.

Table 4

Participant's Information

Student Pseudonyms	School Pseudonyms	Grade
John	Hope	4 th
Jared	Victory	3 rd
Jahi	Frederick Douglas	5 th
James	Frederick Douglas	5 th
Justin	Frederick Douglas	5 th
Jonah	Frederick Douglas	4 th
Joel	Thurgood Marshall	3 rd
Jude	Macedonia	4 th
Jordan	Victory	5 th
Joshua	Langston Hughes	5 th

Table 5
Motivation to Read Survey Scores

		Motivation to Read Survey Scores					
		Self Concept as a Reader		Value of reading		Full Survey	
Participants	Grade	Raw Scores	%	Raw Scores	%	Raw scores	%
John	4 th	37	92	40	100	77	96
Jared	3 rd	36	90	38	95	74	92
Jahi	5 th	37	92	35	87	72	90
James	5 th	33	82	35	87	68	85
Justin	5 th	34	85	28	70	62	77
Jonah	4 th	29	72	30	75	59	73
Joel	3 rd	29	72	27	67	56	70
Jude	4 th	28	70	24	60	52	65
Jordan	5 th	29	72	19	47	48	60
Joshua	5 th	23	57	19	47	42	52

Note: The raw score for each subscale is 40 and the total score is 80

Table 6

Informal Reading Inventory Accuracy Scores

Participants	Grade	Graded Reading Passages Accuracy Scores			
		2	3	4	5
John	4 th	100%	99%	95%	
Jared	3 rd	98%	94%	97%	95%
Jahi	5 th	100%	100%	99%	99%
James	5 th	99%	100%	99%	99%
Justin	5 th	98%	96%	97%	95%
Jonah	4 th	96%	96%	95%	*
Joel	3 rd	99%	99%	*	*
Jude	4 th	98%	100%	98%	*
Jordan	5 th	100%	96%	99%	96%
Joshua	5 th	99%	100%	100%	95%

Note: * Indicate that the participant did not read that level texts

Table 7

Informal Reading Inventory Comprehension Scores

Participants	Grade	Graded Reading Passages Comprehension Scores			
		2	3	4	5
John	4 th	62.5%	75%	30%	
Jared	3 rd	75%	60%	70%	35%
Jahi	5 th	50%	70%	80%	65%
James	5 th	75%	80%	80%	80%
Justin	5 th	55%	65%	60%	60%
Jonah	4 th	50%	75%	80%	*
Joel	3 rd	40%	80%	*	*
Jude	4 th	30%	75%	75%	*
Jordan	5 th	30%	90%	60%	35%
Joshua	5 th	80%	85%	65%	40%

Note: * Indicate that the participant did not read that level texts

Table 8

Attendance for July

	6	7	11	12	13	15	19	20	21	25	26	27	28	29
John	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Jared		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jahi		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
James		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Justin		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jonah		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Joel		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jude		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Jordan	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Joshua	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	3	8	6	10	10	9	10	10	10	9	10	9	8	8

Table 9

Attendance for August

	8/1	8/2	8/3	8/4	8/5	8/8	8/9	8/11	8/12
John	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Jared	X	X		X	X	X		X	
Jahi	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
James	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Justin	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jonah	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Joel	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Jude			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jordan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Joshua	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	9	9	9	10	10	8	8	10	9

Student Narratives

John

John attended Hope Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the fourth grade. John lives with his mother and has five siblings, two older sisters, an older brother and a younger sister and brother. John is the fourth child in the family. He enjoys playing video games, and his favorite school subject is math.

During his pre-interview John said he “Liked to read at night on his bed.” He also stated that he enjoyed reading fiction and non-fiction books about animals that were extinct. His favorite book was *Charlotte’s Web* by E. B. White, who also was his favorite author. On a survey completed by John, to understand his reading motivation, John scored 40/40 or 100% in the area of valuing reading and 37/40 or 92% in the area of self-concept as a reader (see Table 5). He had the highest score on this survey of all the boys in the study, which supports his love for reading.

John was a good oral reader. When he read to me at the beginning of the study using an informal reading inventory he was able to complete the second, third, and fourth grade passages in less than one minute. He read the second grade passages with 100% accuracy, the third grade passage with 96% accuracy, and the fourth grade passage with 95% accuracy (see Table 6). He was able to decode the text well but his comprehension on the passage was not as good. On the second grade passage his comprehension was 62.5%, on the third grade passage his comprehension was 75%, and on the fourth grade passage his comprehension was 30% (see Table 7). When responding to the comprehension questions, he did not take any chances. If he knew an answer he would respond, if not, he did not make an attempt to answer the question. I do not think the passages in the assessment were interesting to John,

which may have contributed to lower comprehension scores; therefore his level of comprehension was not high.

John attended 13 of the 18 group sessions (see Table 8 and Table 9). He wore a hat during 12 out of the 13 group sessions; it was like his own personal trademark. When others saw John, they saw John in a hat. He was usually quiet but he did share his thoughts during discussions. His comments were insightful and demonstrated his understandings of the text. He always followed instruction and was eager to listen and learn. When reading “I Too” by Langston Hughes John felt that Hughes wanted him to learn “That sometimes your problem can be your solution” (Group Session Transcriptions, July 13, 2011). In session nine we read and discussed *Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream* by Deloris Jordan and Roslyn M. Jordan (2000); all children's literature used in this study may be found in Appendix M. John was very interested in this book. During this discussion he shared that his life aspiration was to become a lawyer. He also stated that he would like to be the president. When asked why, he said, “The president is the boss of everything.” He ended this session by stating that Michael Jordan inspired him to, “Don’t give up and keep trying” (Group Session Transcriptions, July 27, 2011).

During independent reading time John was always engaged in his book. He took this time of reading very seriously. It seemed as if he viewed independent reading as an opportunity to learn and gain new knowledge and information. He genuinely valued reading and this was supported by the MRP where his overall score on the value of reading was 40/40 or 100%. During this time and for take home reading John read the following books: *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* by Elizabeth MacLeod (2007), *Game, Set,*

Match, Champion: Arthur Ashe by Crystal Hubbard (2010), *Duke Ellington* by Andrea Davis Pinkney (1998), and *The Treasure Hunt* by Bill Cosby (1997).

During the post-interview John shared that he felt some of the books we read during the summer made him feel sad and made him think about slavery. He referred to the “Mother to Son” poem specifically. He felt he was most like Michael Jordan because he liked to play basketball with his friends. John felt the books we read during the summer taught him, “If you can believe you can accomplish stuff.” He said, “I learned that I have to keep on trying to reach my goal” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). When asked where or how he learned that he said, “I learned this from reading about Blacks and their struggles” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). He went on to say, “I am very interested in African American books.” However, he stated that he does not really read these types of books during the school year but he would be interested in reading them. He said he would tell his teacher to, “Get more African American books” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). John felt all students would benefit from reading African American stories “Because they are encouraging. They tell about people who tried to reach their dream and at the end, they reached their dream. It showed that they never gave up” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Jared

Jared attended Victory Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the third grade. Jared lives with his mother, and has an older sister who lives in Texas. Jared’s favorite school subject is math and he likes to search for rocks during his free time, thus his life aspiration is to become an archeologist.

During his pre-interview Jared said he “Mostly reads at home in his room.” The best book he ever read was *Chicken Soup for the Soul for Kids*. This was his favorite book

because it talks about “How people in their life become greater like than before. Sometimes it is funny. It has pictures in it and it has bubble letters that are funny” (Interview Transcription, July 6, 2011). His favorite author was Beverly Cleary and he was able to name the following books written by her such as: *Ramona and Her Father*, *Beezus and The Stage Fright of Ramona*. He said the last African American book he read was about Martin Luther King Jr. and Harriet Tubman (Interview Transcription, July 6, 2011). Jared said he enjoyed reading fiction, non-fiction, and biography books. He said, “When I see a book, I look at the title or I just pick it up and start reading it if I think it is interesting” (Interview Transcription, July 6, 2011). During his pre- and post-interview, Jared was vocal and expressive as he answered questions. Because he appeared to be very vocal, as a literacy teacher I was anxious and curious to see how he would respond to the literature as we read and discussed the text. When taking the MRP he had the second highest score of the boys in the study. In the area of self-concept as a reader he scored 36/40 or 90% and in value of reading he scored 38/40 or 95% (see Table 5). It is apparent that Jared perceives himself as a reader and he placed high value on the importance of reading.

When Jared read orally he sometimes read very quickly and other times he read very slowly. He often omitted words and did not go back to correct them but just kept going. Getting through the text appeared to be the only thing that mattered. He was able to read the second grade passage with 98% accuracy, the third grade passage with 94% accuracy, and the fourth grade passage at 97% accuracy (see Table 6). His comprehension on the second grade passage was 75%, on the third grade passage was 60%, and on the fourth grade passages his comprehension was 70% (see Table 7). When responding to the comprehension questions he answered with great confidence but his responses were often incorrect. He was

similar to Justin who did the same thing. These two boys were so confident that if one did not know better one would think for sure their answers were correct and that they knew exactly what they were talking about.

Jared attended 16 of the 18 group sessions (see Table 8 and Table 9). He was usually vocal. He always wanted to share his thoughts during discussions. His comments were usually lengthy but he did not always answer the question he was asked. He quickly figured out the purpose of the Check-It-Out-Circle; he said, "I think we are doing it because we will get to see and read books that we never heard about" (Group Session Transcription, July 19, 2011). During group session six we read *Ben's Trumpet* by Rachel Isadora (1979). When asked what does Ben play he said, "Trombone"; another boy in the group corrected him, but he thought his answer was right (Group Session Transcription, July 21, 2011). Another book used during a group session was *Howard Thurman's Great Hope* by Kai Jackson Issa (2008). During this session Jared was actively engaged. This story was read in two parts and he had a great deal to say in both sessions. Jared felt that this was a good story. He said one thing he learned from Howard was, "That he never gives up." In the story, Howard Thurman, whose father had passed away, had to take a train to school, which was a dream of his father's for him. Howard needed three dollars to check in his luggage, but he did not have enough money. He sat down and started to cry when a man walked up to him and gave him the money. When Jared saw the illustration of the man he said, "The shadow looked like an angel." Jared was the first one to notice the shadow of the angel in the picture. Then, he said, "It looks like his father" (Group Session Transcription, August 8, 2011). When asked what he liked about the story he said, "He doesn't like to give up so he tries to make things

happen” and said, “He motivates me to not give up and to keep going to what your dream is” (Group Session Transcription, August 8, 2011).

During independent reading time Jared read several books. One of the books that he really wanted to read was *When Daddy Prays* by Nikki Grimes (2002). He genuinely valued reading and this was supported by the MRP where his overall score on the value of reading was 38/40 or 95% (see Table 6). Jared seemed to enjoy the act of reading but he did not always comprehend what he read. However, this did not deter his enjoyment with the act of reading and he still perceived himself to be a good reader. Other books Jared read were: *I and I: The Story of Bob Marley* by Tony Medina (2009), *Getting Through Thursday* by Melrose Cooper (2000), and *Joe Louis: My Champion* by William Miller (2004). Jared also picked the following chapter books to read during the summer: *Safe at Home* by Sharon Robinson (2007) and *The Ben Carson Story* by Gregg Lewis and Deborah Shaw Lewis (2002).

During the post-interview Jared shared that reading African American books during the summer made him feel, "Surprised, because he never got to read all these books" (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). Jared felt he was most like Howard Thurman. He said he liked him, “because he never gave up on his father’s and his dream of what he wanted to be and he made a difference.” The most important thing that he learned was “I always had a dream that I wanted to go to high school and college and he motivated me because he made his dream come true, which I want my dream to come true” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). When asked how this study helped him he said, “It helped me to learn about Black American people that I never read about” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). He stated that he does not read the type of books we read during the

summer during the school year but he would like to read them. He said, he “will buy these types of books through the book clubs so he can read them more” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). Jared felt it was important for Black boys to read the types of books he read during the summer. He went on to say, “Some Black kids don’t get to read these books in the summer or in the school time and this is not fair” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Jahi

Jahi attended Frederick Douglas Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the fifth grade. Jahi lives with his father, mother, and he has a younger sister and brother. His cousin also lives with him. Jahi’s favorite school subject is math.

Jahi is one of the older boys in the group. He was definitely one of the leaders in the group but his leadership qualities needed to be channeled in the right direction because he did not follow instructions and usually had to be asked more than once to do something. He could be forceful and outspoken. He often made sarcastic comments to the other boys in the group and he was always telling on someone or telling someone to stop doing something to him. He seemed to have the potential to be a good student but his behavior was often a problem when it was not monitored.

On a survey Jahi completed to understand his reading motivation he scored 37/40 or 92% in the area of self-concept as a reader and 35/40 or 87% in the area of valuing reading (see Table 5). He read several books by Beverly Cleary and named the following books he had read: *Ralph S.*, *Ramona and Beezus*, *Ramona Age 8*, and *Dear Mr. Henshaw*. Jahi enjoyed reading books that had a lot of action and made you want to keep reading to the next page to see what was going to happen. His favorite book was *We Beat the Streets: How a*

Friendship Pact Led to Success by Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, Rameck Hunt, and Sharon Draper (2005). He said this was his favorite book because “It was interesting how they came from the streets and ended up being doctors” (Interview Transcription, July 6, 2011). He also liked to read books about people like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and he had read books about both of these men. The last time he read an African American book was during the last month of school when he read a book about Jackie Robinson.

Jahi read well orally. On the reading assessment his reading accuracy was very good. He read the second and third grade passages with 100% accuracy and the fourth and fifth grade passage with 99% accuracy (see Table 6). He was able to decode the text well but his comprehension on the passages was not as good. On the second grade passage his comprehension was 50%, on the third grade passage his comprehension was 70%, on the fourth grade passage his comprehension was 80% and on the fifth grade passage his comprehension was 65% (see Table 7).

Jahi attended 17 of the 18 group sessions (see Table 8 and Table 9). He was very vocal and he seemed to have a wealth of background knowledge to bring to many of the stories. As we read and discussed the stories he always had something to share. His thoughts and ideas were usually insightful and his comments demonstrated an understanding of the text. During the first group session the boys completed the Motivation to Read Profile Survey at the end of this session Jahi said he was, “Bored.” He further stated, “It’s just like school” (Group Session Transcription, July 12, 2011). However, during this same session there was conversation about quitting and he adamantly stated, “I’m not quitting,” and the other boys responded as he responded by all chiming in and saying, “I’m not quitting” (Group Session Transcription, July 2011).

During the next group session I performed the poem “I Too,” and then we read “I Too” by Langston Hughes. Jahi liked this poem and he immediately shared another short story he had read by Langston Hughes, “Thank you Ma’am.” The boy in the poem was sent to eat in the kitchen; Jahi saw this as an opportunity. He said, “He will get so strong and no one will be able to tell him what to do anymore” (Group Session, July 13, 2011). Jahi was inquisitive about many things. The boys watched Denzel Washington performing “I Too Am America” in the Great Debaters so the next day when we read “Mother to Son” Jahi asked, “Can we watch some poetry videos?” (Group Session Transcription, July 15, 2011).

There was a time when I did not go to the center. The next day when I returned Jahi immediately asked me, “Where were you yesterday?” (Group Session Transcription, July 15, 2011). Another day I arrived at group only to be asked by Jahi, “What is your first name?” To which I responded, “Merle.” Jahi said, “I knew it, I knew it. I heard someone call you that, and I knew it.” Jahi was always asking questions about what we were doing and why we were doing it. He was going to do whatever was planned, but he needed to have clarification and he was not afraid to ask questions.

During independent reading time Jahi always seemed engaged in his book. The first book he read was *I and I: The Story of Bob Marley* by Tony Medina (2009). When he finished reading this book he was eager to get another one to read. This was the case every time he finished a book. Other books Jahi read during the summer included *Your Move* by Eve Bunting (1998), and *Master Man: A Tall Tale of Nigeria* by Aaron Shepard (2001). He picked *Five Bold Freedom Fighters* by Wade Hudson (2001), as his take home reading book.

Jahi said, if he could do this program again the one thing he would change is, “Read more stories, because I only got to read a little bit this summer” (Interview Transcription,

August 11, 2011). This is an interesting comment because Jahi had read several books during the summer. This comment supports the fact that when given the opportunity to read and choose certain books Jahi realized there was so much available to him and he wanted to read as much as he could. He shared that reading African American books made him feel, “Proud to be a Black person because of all the trouble we went through and how hard it was to have the life we have today” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). He felt he was most like Michael Jordan because “He never gave up.” He felt the most important thing he learned from Michael Jordan was, “To keep on trying” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). Jahi was the only boy in the study who said that the types of books he read during the summer he also read during the school year. He stated that these books were available to him at school and in the library and he was motivated to continue to read them (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

James

James attended Frederick Douglas Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the fifth grade. James lives with his mom and older brother. James is a pleasant student; he seems to enjoy reading and it appears he reads a lot on his own at home. He likes to play basketball and football and his favorite school subject is math. His life aspiration is to become a professional football player.

James said he enjoyed reading at night before going to bed and on the weekends. He often came to group and shared with me about a book he had read at home or was reading at home. On a few occasions he even brought in a book from home that he was reading. On a survey completed by James to understand his reading motivation James scored 35/40 or 87% in the area of valuing reading and 33/40 or 82% in the area of self-concept as a reader (see Table 5). James enjoyed reading books about animals, history and comic books. At the

beginning of the study, he said he like to read anything that interested him and the best book he ever read was *The Tale of a Fourth Grade Nothing* by Judy Blume, who also was his favorite author. Other books that he had read were *Fudgemia*, and *Double Fudge*. He said the last time he read an African American book was on the Sunday before the study began but he could not remember the name of the book. He proceeded to tell me about the book and as he did I recognized the story as being *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* by John Steptoe (Interview Transcription, July 6, 2011).

James's oral reading was decent. He was at times fluent and other times he read choppily and word by word, depending on the difficulty of the passage. When he read an informal reading inventory his reading accuracy was very good. He read the second grade passages with 99% accuracy; the third grade passage with 100% accuracy and the fourth and fifth grade passage with 99% accuracy (see Table 6). His comprehension on the second grade passage his comprehension was 75%, on the third, fourth and fifth grade passage his comprehension was 80% (see Table 7). James scored the highest in the area of comprehension out of all the boys in the study. The fact that he seemed to read consistently at home reading may have been a contributing factor.

James attended all 18 of the group sessions (see Table 8 and 9). He was one of the older boys in the group but he was not as forceful or as outspoken as three of the other older boys (Jordan, Jahi, Justin). Often during the sessions in fun Justin and Jahi would make sarcastic comments to him. James always laughed it off and never responded to their comments. He appeared to have a lot of potential but he needed someone to pull it out of him. James did not always talk during group sessions but he seemed to be glad to be in the group. He led one of the student led book discussions; he was prepared and developed

thought-provoking questions. He did not always assertive but when he spoke or asked questions he did it with confidence (Group Session, August 4, 2011).

James did not always make comments about the text being read, but he often had some interesting comments about other things. During session three some of the boys started complaining. One boy out of the 10 boys was saying the sessions were going downhill. Two boys out of the 10 boys wanted to do things a little differently. James was fine with the group. He wanted it to be known that he was not in the group that was complaining. He said, "I did not complain" (Group Session, July 15, 2011). During one session he entered the class and in a way that only James could do it he said, "Is this group for the whole camp time? I was just asking" (Group session, July 19, 2011). In session five the boys listened to and discussed the book *Keepers* by Jeri Watts (2000), a book about a boy named Kenyon, who loves to listen to his grandmother's stories that have been passed down orally through his family. Little Dolly mentions that the keeper is the one who holds all the family's history and stories. Kenyon wants to be the keeper but he is told he cannot be the keeper because he is a boy. At the end of the story Kenyon surprises Little Dolly with a handmade book of all her stories that he has written because he spent the money for her birthday gift on a baseball glove for himself. Little Dolly is so touched by Kenyon's book that she realizes that the keeper does not have to be a girl but can be a boy. James did not really participate in the discussion of the story, but at the end of the session he said, "The room was too hot, the session was too long, but I liked the story" (Group Session, July 20, 2011). James was definitely a helpful addition to the group. His interesting comments, positive attitude, and pleasant smile were always refreshing.

During independent reading time James seemed to be engaged in his book. James, as with John, took his time reading seriously. It seemed as if he viewed independent reading as an opportunity to learn and gain new knowledge and information. He did not talk regularly in-group but he was motivated to listen to and read the books presented to him. James had the highest consistent scores on the reading comprehension passages the boys read with me at the beginning of the study. It appeared that James did quite a bit of independent reading at home and he was always eager to share about a book he was reading. During the summer he read the following books: *The Black King of the Kentucky Derby* by Crystal Hubbard (2008), *Jalani and the Lock* by Lorenzo Pace (2001), *Paul Robeson* by Eloise Greenfield (2009), and he started reading *The Ben Carson Story* by Gregg Lewis and Deborah Shaw Lewis (2002) but because of limited time, he did not finish it.

James said that reading African American books made him feel like he had to read more about the people so he could learn more about what they did when they were alive. He felt he was most like Kenyon in the *Keeper*, “because sometimes I get off topic. I think about someone else and I end up thinking about something different.” He said the most important thing he learned was, “to think of others more than me” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). James felt it was important for Black boys to read the types of books he read during the summer so they could learn more about their race (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Justin

Justin attended Frederick Douglas Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the fifth grade. Justin lives with his mother and two sisters, one older sister and one younger. He likes to play basketball and football. His favorite subject in school is vocabulary. When he grows up he wants to be an electrician.

During his pre-interview Justin said he “Likes to read on the floor in the library.” On a survey completed by Justin to understand his reading motivation he scored 28/40 or 70% in the area of valuing reading and 34/40 or 85% in the area of self-concept as a reader (see Table 5). Justin enjoyed reading mysteries, non-fiction books, historical fiction books and comics. His favorite book was *Stolen Children* by Peg Kehret (2008), who also was his favorite author.

At the beginning of the study he read an informal reading inventory to me. He read the second grade passages with 98% accuracy, the third grade passage with 96% accuracy, the fourth grade passage with 97% accuracy and the fifth grade passage with 95% accuracy (see Table 6). His comprehension on the passages was not as strong as his decoding skills. On the second grade passage his comprehension was 55%, on the third grade passage his comprehension was 65% and on the fourth and fifth grade passage his comprehension was 60% (see Table 7). When responding to the comprehension questions his level of understanding varied. He always answered questions with confidence even when the answer had misinformation or it was completely wrong.

Justin attended all 18 of the group sessions (see Table 8 and 9) and he always had something to say. He was one of the most talkative boys in the group. He did not necessarily always talk about what we were talking about but he was always engaged in a conversation. Justin spoke his mind and he was definitely one of the leaders in the group. If I left the room I was certain that Justin would be one of the boys who would take control of the group and tell everyone else what to do.

When reading “I Too” by Langston Hughes, Justin felt that the boy was sent to the kitchen because he was Black. He interpreted tomorrow as being “Later” then he was going

to be able to sit at the table. Justin felt that Hughes wanted him to learn “That if you keep on trying and never give up that in the future what goes around comes around” (Group Session Transcription, July 13, 2011). When reading *Ben’s Trumpet* a discussion came up about Black musicians not being able to play in certain places and how the boys felt they should deal with this situation. Justin felt the best way to handle the people who would not let them play in certain places was “To eliminate them” (Group Session Transcription, July 21, 2011). Justin was the only boy who seemed to react violently to the text being read. However, this was not surprising to me because the way he acted with the other boys showed that, at times, he could have a volatile temperament.

During independent reading Justin read the following books: *Master Man* by Aaron Shepard (2001), *DeShawn Days* by Tony Medina (2001), *A Wreath for Emmett Till* by Marilyn Nelson (2005) and for his take home books Justin picked *Five Famous Writers* by Lynda Jones (2001) and *Five Notable Inventors* by Wade Hudson (1995).

Justin shared that reading African American books “made him feel confident.” By confident he said he meant, “Never give up and to keep moving” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). He felt the study taught him that, “You need to always succeed in your dreams,” “You always can succeed,” and “It showed me that there is always a way” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Justin felt the books they read during the summer told him what other young boys did when they grew up to become men. And he felt the book showed him what he should do, what he should reach towards. As a young Black boy he said, “I am motivated to keep moving forward. Don’t fight back because in the end I will be successful and they will be

nothing.” He felt, “Young Black boys should read the books we read during the summer so they could know what to do in the future” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Jonah

Jonah attends Frederick Douglass Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the fourth grade. Jonah lives with his dad and younger brother. He enjoys playing basketball and football and his favorite school subject is writing. His life aspiration is to become the Vice President of the United States of America one day.

On a survey completed by Jonah to understand his reading motivation he scored 30/40 or 75% in the area of valuing reading and 29/40 or 72% in the area of self-concept as a reader (see Table 5). Five of the boys in the study scored higher than Jonah and four of the boys scored lower than he did. Jonah enjoyed reading fiction books. He liked reading series such as *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Junie B. Jones*, *The Magic Tree House* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. His favorite series was *The Chronicles of Narnia* and from that series he had read *The Last Battle* and *The Magician's Nephew*, which was his favorite book. He said the last time he read an African American book was last year in school for a whole class project on Martin Luther King, Jr.

When Jonah read to me at the beginning of the study using an informal reading inventory his reading accuracy on the second and third grade passages was 96% and his accuracy on the fourth grade passage was 95% (see Table 6). His comprehension score increased by grade; on the second grade passage his comprehension was 50%, on the third grade passage his comprehension was 75% and on the fourth grade passage his comprehension was 80% (see Table 7). He responded well to the comprehension questions and could recall details from the story with ease.

Jonah attended 17 of the 18 group sessions (see Table 8 and 9). He was a pleasant, eager little boy. He is a short, stocky, cubby cheeked little boy with dreamy brown eyes. He really wanted to be in the group and each day he eagerly came to group ready to participate. He liked receiving things and would usually ask for more than one for example; when he was given his journal he asked for one to keep at home. Jonah was one of the younger boys in the group but he participated during most group sessions and he ranked second as being the boy who spoke the most during group, superseded only by Justin who ranked number one.

When reading “I Too,” by Langston Hughes Jonah felt the poem might be about someone singing to or about America. This was an interesting comment because as the group went on I found out that he liked music so it was interesting how he connected what he most liked to do to his prediction. When reading *Ben’s Trumpet* he was very engaged in the session. He was able to infer and figure out what might happen. During this session he shared that he liked the piano and that he use to play the drums (Group Session Transcription, July 21, 2011). In each session Jonah revealed a little more about who he was and what he believed. When listening to and discussing *Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream* by Deloris Jordan and Roslyn M. Jordan (2000), Jonah made several interesting comments; he felt that “Michael's success was not really the salt "but the prayers and the fact that he prayed each night” (Group Session Transcription, July 27, 2011). Jonah continued to focus on the prayer aspect found in the books as he listened to and discussed *Howard Thurman’s Great Hope* by Kai Jackson Issa (2008), he again noticed that prayer helped make things happen for Howard just like it did for Michael. He realized that Howard was able to go to high school because, “His grandmother prayed for him.” Jonah appeared to have an understanding of prayer and what it could do. He seemed to be familiar with it and

he believed in what it could do because when asked what he was learning from Howard Thurman to motivate him he stated, “To pray for things you really want to happen” (Group Session, August 8, 2011).

During independent reading I noticed that Jonah struggled with certain books he attempted to read. I observed that while reading independently he would watch the other boys and not really read but as the boys around him would say they completed their book he would immediately say he was done as well. He read the following books: *You Can Do It* by Tony Dungy (2008), and *Game, Set, Match, Champion: Arthur Ashe* by Crystal Hubbard (2010). However, the Arthur Ashe book was too difficult for him and so instead I suggested he pick a different book that he might enjoy more. I became concerned about his reading ability and tried to match him to books that I felt he would be successful reading. Jonah did not have a high concept of himself as a reader but he did seem to value reading, which might explain why he made every attempt to read, or appeared to read in spite of his struggle. It was often hard to match him to books he could read and would enjoy. One book that he did read and seemed to enjoy was *Shop Talk* by Juwanda Ford (2004). This was a book about a little boy who describes his visit to the barbershop; he includes the people he sees there, how they interact, and how the conversation in the barbershop is different from anywhere else he goes.

Jonah shared that reading African American books made him feel like, “I should read them more often because they are great books. They are about people when they were kids who wanted to be something and when they grew up they got to be what they wanted to be” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). When asked what character he was most like he thought he was like Ben in *Ben’s Trumpet* because, “I don’t have drums at home but I like to

play the drums. Sometimes when I am on the bus and stuff I pretend that my lap is a drum.” When asked how reading these books in the summer helped him he said, “All the books I read were about Black males who wanted to be something and they got it when they grew up. They were getting their dreams. It helps me so that when I grow up I can be a drum player and a piano player because I want to play the piano too.” He went on to say that the study motivated him to, “Go to college and get a good education so I can buy my own drum set so I can play it” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). When I asked Jonah if he could suggest one book for his teacher to read what book would he suggest, he said, “I would suggest stuff by and about Langston Hughes because he is the one who made me want to read more Black history books.”

Finally, Jonah felt it was important for Black boys to read these types of books “because it can teach them lessons and when you try to do something they (the books) can make you want to do it more and more.” He felt other Black boys should have the experience he had during the summer “because they can learn to chase their dreams and not try to give up” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Joel

John attends Thurgood Marshall Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the third grade. He lives with his father, mother, an older brother, and he has a dog. Joel likes to play football and basketball and his favorite school subject is science. When he grows up he wants to be a professional basketball player.

Joel said he reads at home laying on his bed and the best book he ever read was the Magic Tree House book series. He did not have a particular title but he said he liked to read these books because they have a lot of information, a lot of details and he liked the characters (Interview Transcription, July 6, 2011). Joel also said he liked to read non-fiction books

about animals like monkeys and dolphins. On a survey completed by Joel to understand his reading motivation Joel scored 27/40 or 67% in the area of valuing reading and 29/40 or 72% in the area of self-concept as a reader (see Table 5). This is a low score in both categories, which indicated that Joel really did not value reading nor did he have a high self-concept of himself as a reader. However, in his post-interview Joel said, “I changed as a reader because I use to not like to read but now I do” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

When Joel read to me at the beginning of the study using an informal reading inventory his oral reading of the passages was very slow but his accuracy was very good. He was only willing to complete the second and third grade reading passages, which he read with 99% accuracy (see Table 6). He started the fourth grade passage but it was too challenging and he asked if he could stop reading it. On the third grade passage his comprehension was 40% and on the fourth grade passage his comprehension was 80% (see Table 7).

Joel attended all eighteen of the group sessions (see Table 8 and 9) and most of the time he said he liked the group. Joel had a cute, but solemn face, he was serious and he hardly ever smiled. Having just completed third grade he was one of the younger boys in the group and he usually listened to what the other boys said and did not talk too much. However, during session nine the boys listened to and discussed *Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream* by Deloris Jordan and Roslyn M. Jordan (2009); the older boys left early to go on a field trip and during this session Joel’s behavior observably transformed. On this day he became very assertive and he became the leader in the group. He shared his thoughts and at the end of the session he took the lead as they worked to dramatize the story. This was truly a pleasant surprise watching the way he just took control. He made the

suggestion that the group should be just the younger boys. During the sessions that followed Joel talked more and more. He is probably the student for whom I saw the most growth.

When I first met with him he was quiet and seemed resistant. I really had to reassure him this was all right and he did not have to worry but could feel comfortable and be himself. I did not think he would want to stay in the group but I spoke to him during the second meeting and I told him to relax and try to just enjoy the group. He seemed to have taken my advice because he participated and he kept coming.

During independent reading time Joel would read because that was the expected task, but he usually struggled. During this time it was evident that reading was not his favorite thing to do. Joel read the following books: *The Barber's Cutting Edge* by Gwendolyn Battle-Lavert (2004), *Jalani and the Lock* by Lorenzo Pace (2001), and *Gettin' Through Thursday* by Melrose Cooper (2000) but he had to abandon this book because it was too difficult for him. As take home books Joel picked *The Day I Saw My Father Cry* by Bill Cosby (2000) and *By My Brother's Side* by Tiki and Ronde Barber (2007).

He was excited in a quiet reserved way. His comments were short and to the point but they were accurate and full of deep thoughts. It was great having him in the group and he enjoyed being in the group as well.

Jude

Jude attends Macedonia Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the fourth grade. Jude lives with his mother and his grandfather. He has an older brother but he does not live with him. Jude said, "My dream is play in the NBA, because I love basketball" (Interview Transcription, July 6, 2011).

Jude said he read at home and at school but most of his reading is done at school during his class reading time. He said his school does reader's workshop and that is when he

reads. He has reading homework but he does it at the JYCC during the after school program. On a survey completed by Jude to understand his reading motivation Jude scored 24/40 or 60% in the area of valuing reading and 28/40 or 70% in the area of self-concept as a reader (see Table 5). His score in both categories were relatively low denoting that he did not really value reading nor did he have a good self-concept about himself as a reader. The fact that he stated that most of his reading is done in school and very little time spent home reading would support these scores. He said he enjoyed reading non-fiction books about sports and that his favorite sport was basketball. His favorite book was *Chicky Dicky's Animal Pancake* by Jennifer E. Sheehan (2003) (Interview Transcription, July 6, 2011). He said the last time he read an African American book was in February. The name of the book was the *African Family* and he read it in school.

On the informal reading inventory Jude read the second and third grade passages in less than one minute. He read the second grade passages with 98% accuracy, the third grade passage with 100% accuracy, the fourth grade passage with 98% accuracy and the fifth grade passage with 95% accuracy (see Table 6). He did not seem to try hard on the comprehension portion of this inventory. When I asked a question if he was not sure of the answer he just said, "pass." On the second grade passage his comprehension was 30%, on the third grade passage his comprehension was 75%, on the fourth grade passage his comprehension was 75% and on the fifth grade passage his comprehension was 35% (see Table 7).

Jude attended 13 of the 18 sessions (see Table 8 and 9). He missed several days consecutively and I thought he was not going to return to group. When he returned he did not give a reason as to why he had not been coming; he just continued as usual. He was usually quiet and he presented this exterior that made one think he did not want to be

bothered, but behind that exterior was a gentle giant with a beautiful smile. In each session he did share a little. He had well-thought-through, insightful responses and his comments demonstrated his understandings of the text.

During independent reading time Jude only read one book, *Mr. Lincoln's Way* by Patricia Polacco (2001). It took him several sessions to finish it even though he said he had read it in third grade. Other books that he saw during the Check-It-Out-Circle that he wanted to read were *Willie and the All-stars* by Floyd Cooper (2008) and *Barack Obama* by Nikki Grimes (2008). Jude missed several days with no excuse and because of his inconsistency in attendance he did not take home books to read, therefore, the only book he read was *Mr. Lincoln's Way* by Patricia Polacco, which I think was fine with him because he wrote in his journal on the last day in bold letters "I HATE READING" (see Figure 2).

Jude said he felt reading African American books "Was fun because I got to read about new people" (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). He said in *Howard Thurman's Great Hope* by Kai Jackson Issa (2008) he learned not to give up and to keep trying. When I asked him if the study had helped him he said, "It did not help me." However, he said he would like to continue to read the types of books we read during the summer. Jude said if he could suggest one book for his teacher to read to his class it would be *Howard Thurman's Great Hope* because "it is a great book and it encourages you to not give up but to keep trying." He felt it was important for other Black boys to read the type of books he read during the summer so they could learn stuff (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Jordan

Jordan attends Victory Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the fifth grade. Jordan's favorite school subject is math. Jordan lives with his mother, and he has one

older sister and two younger sisters but they do not live with him. Jordan said, “When I grow up I want to own a Footlocker, so I can have all the sneakers I want.” Jordan was interesting; he did not talk a lot in group but when he did he always spoke his mind. On the second day of the study when I assessed him, he did not really seem too interested in being in the study. He seemed to have a tough hard exterior, and at first I could not read him well. He continued to come to the group and even though he said the study did not benefit him, he was a benefit to the study because of his input.

Jordan said he read at school and at home. He read at home to complete his homework and he read at school when he finished his work. On a survey completed by Jordan to understand his reading motivation Jordan scored 19/40 or 47% in the area of valuing reading and 29/40 or 72% in the area of self-concept as a reader (see Table 5). According to this survey Jordan does not value reading and his self-concept of himself, as a reader is low. In his post-interview Jordan shared that during the summer one thing he had learned about himself, as a reader is that, “I like to hurry up and get it done with” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). This is how he viewed himself as a reader and it had not changed he still felt this way. The best book he ever read was *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney; this was his favorite book because it is funny. Jordan did not have a favorite author and the last time he read an African American book was in February or March the name of the book was *The Legend of Freedom Hill* by Linda Jacobs Altman (2003).

In the beginning of the study when Jordan read to me using an informal reading inventory, he did well reading the graded passages and his accuracy was very good. He read the second grade passages with 100% accuracy, the third grade passage with 96% accuracy, the fourth grade passage with 99% accuracy and the fifth grade passage with 96% accuracy

(see Table 6). He was able to decode the text well but he did not do as well on the comprehension. On the second grade passage his comprehension was 30%, on the third grade passage his comprehension was 90%, on the fourth grade passage his comprehension was 60% and on the fifth grade passage his comprehension was 55% (see Table 7). When answering the comprehension questions he was quick to respond with “I do not know.” He did not really try to answer the questions and, therefore did not do well in the area of comprehension.

Jordan attended 17 of the 18 group sessions (see Table 8 and 9). He did not talk much in-group at the beginning. By the third group session Jordan felt, “The group was going like downhill” (Group Session Transcription, July 15, 2011). During the fourth group session we did a Check-it-Out-Circle and Jordan didn’t like any of the books he viewed. As the session continued he felt the group was getting more boring but he kept coming. During the sixth session Jordan began to talk more than he had in any other group and after this he continued to participate regularly in discussions. He was one of the leaders in the student-led book discussion. During the first student-led group session he became angry with his partners and would not help lead but during the second student led discussion he was put with another student and they worked well together. He prepared for the group and he did a great job leading the discussion.

During independent reading time Jordan made himself comfortable. He was often engaged in his book and at times he would put his feet up on a chair and lean back as he read. Jordan read *Willie and The All-Stars* by Floyd Cooper (2008) and *You Can Do It* by Tony Dungy (2010). His take home reading books included *Darnell Rock Reporting* by Walter Dean Myers (2006) and *Brothers of the Knight* by Debbie Allen (2006).

During the post interview Jordan said that reading African American books make him feel the same; they had no effect on him. Jordan clearly felt this study had not helped him at all. He said he was not motivated to read African American books because “I don’t pay attention if it is about White people or Black people. I just read the book if it looks interesting” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). He felt he was most like Michael Jordan because he liked basketball and this was both of their favorite sport. He said the most important thing he learned from Michael Jordan was “To never give up.” If he was to suggest his teacher read one of the books we read this summer to his class he would suggest *Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream* by Deloris Jordan and Roslyn M. Jordan (2000), because he liked the book (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Jordan felt it was not important for Black boys to read the types of books we read during the summer. He said, “You can read whatever book you want and still get information from it and you don’t have to read a certain book to get information.” Therefore, he did not feel that it would make a difference to other boys if they had this experience (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Joshua

Joshua attends Langston Hughes Elementary School and in June of 2011 he completed the fifth grade. Joshua lives with his mother, step-dad and has three siblings, an older sisters, an older brother, and a younger brother. He enjoys playing basketball and football and his favorite school subject is math. When he grows up he wants to be a professional football player.

During his pre-interview, Joshua shared with me a little about his reading behaviors; he said he usually read when doing his homework so he reads in the kitchen of his home. He said the best book he ever read was *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney. He likes this

book because it tells about the life of kid named Greg and the book has drawings like a comic book. His favorite author is Jeff Kinney who is the author of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. He has read all the books in the series. On a survey completed by Joshua to understand his reading motivation Joshua scored 19/40 or 47% in the area of valuing reading and 23/40 or 57% in the area of self-concept as a reader (see Table 5). He had the lowest score on this survey of all the boys in the study. These results proved interesting because he stated in his pre-interview that he enjoyed reading fiction and non-fiction books and he really enjoys reading about real things and wrestling and during independent reading time he was always engaged in his book. During the school year he had read two African American books that he could remember, one was about President Barack Obama and the other one was about Mae Jemison, a Black woman astronaut.

Joshua read well orally. When he took an informal reading inventory he was able to complete the second, third, and fourth grade passages in less than one minute. He read the second grade passages with 99% accuracy, the third grade passage with 100% accuracy, the fourth grade passage with 100% accuracy and the fifth grade passage with 95% accuracy (see Table 6). His comprehension on the second grade passage was 80%, on the third grade passage his comprehension was 85%, on the fourth grade passage his comprehension was 65% and on the fifth grade passage his comprehension was 40% (see Table 7).

Joshua attended all 18 of the group sessions (see Table 8 and 9). He seemed to have a sad countenance, always appeared to be mad with an attitude and could be resistant. He was probably the most difficult boy to work with in the group. Most days he left the group saying he was not coming back but he always returned. In the post-interview Joshua said, "When we were to come in I did not feel like coming in: "I didn't feel like coming in because I felt

like it might take up my time, but once I got here I felt pretty happy” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). Joshua did not often volunteer to share during group. In the beginning of the study if I called on him he would let me know that he had not raised his hand and he would not answer my question. As time went on he would share periodically but only when and if he felt like it. When he did share his ideas and comments were insightful. He has good background knowledge about many things. He participated the most during one of the student led small group discussion when they were reading a non-fiction biography about Elijah McCoy.

During independent reading time Joshua seemed like he was always engaged in his book. This was surprising because his scores on the MRP did not seem to support his desire to read books. He would finish a story and would then write a response to what he read without complaint. This was the one time during group he actually seemed to enjoy and he was always focused. In his post interview he stated that he enjoyed reading the books about people he had never read about before. Some of the books he read were *Love to Langston* by Tony Medina (2006), *DeShawn’s Day* by Tony Medina (2003), *Master Man: A Tall Tale of Nigeria* by Aaron Shepard (2001) and he began a chapter book, *The Friendship* by Mildred Taylor (2009).

During the post interview Joshua made some interesting comments that supported his being in the group. I point this out because he was probably the most resistant but he still got a lot from the group sessions. Joshua said reading African American books made him feel “happy because he was learning about his culture.” When I asked Joshua which character he felt he was most like in the books that we read this summer, he said the character was “Howard Thurman, because me and him have a dream of becoming successful in our lives.”

He said he learned “That he never gave up” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). When Joshua described himself as a reader he said, “I mostly didn’t read much but now I do. Before I didn’t like to read but now I do.” He added, “The types of books we read made me want to read because I was able to pick books about African Americans and I could learn about other people and their lives.” Joshua shared that the types of books we read during the summer he did not read during the school year and he said he would not like to read them that much. He also shared that the books did not motivate him. Joshua said if he did this program again the one thing he would do differently is, “I would not have an attitude” (Interview Transcription, August 12, 2011).

Description of the Summer Reading Program

The summer reading program was set up to be a part of the daily camp activity of the boys in the study. The Josiah Community Center had a reading time scheduled in the day for their campers. During the reading time when we met the boys were able to do a variety of literacy related activities. There were a total of 18 group sessions during the six-week camp session. The group sessions included eight teacher-led interactive read-alouds, five Check-It-Out-Circles, five silent reading sessions, and two student-led group discussions as well as six days of assessments, three days at the beginning of the study and three days at the end of the study. Some days a combination of activities took place (see Table 10 and Table 11). The attendance of the boys varied during the six-weeks (see Table 8 and 9). However, there were usually 8 out of the 10 boys present in every session and they participated in the combination of activities, which took place each day.

Table 10

Daily Sessions and Activities for July

Date	Day	Activity	Materials or Text
July 6	Wednesday	Assessments	IRI
July 7	Thursday	Assessments/Pre-interviews	IRI/Pre-interview Questions
July 11	Monday	Assessments/Pre-interviews	IRI/Pre-interview Questions
July 12	Tuesday	Survey	Motivation to Read Profile Survey
July 13	Wednesday	Written response- List famous African American males we know	Response journals
		Read-aloud Choral reading Oral discussion Response-drawing	“I Too” by Langston Hughes Collection of African American children’s literature
July 15	Friday	Check-It-Out-Circle Read-aloud Oral discussion	“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes
		Response-Poetry writing	Response journal
July 19	Tuesday	Check-It-Out-Circle	Collection of African American children's literature
		Set up take home folders	Pocket folders for each boy
		Check-It-Out-Circle	Collection of African American children's literature
		Picked books for independent reading Independent reading session Response-orally shared about independent reading book	

Table 10 (continued)

Daily Sessions and Activities for July

Date	Day	Activity	Materials or Text
July 20	Wednesday	Read-aloud Oral discussion	<i>Keepers</i> by Hanel Watts
		Written response: What is your favorite part of the story? Why?	Response journal
July 21	Thursday	Read-aloud Oral discussion	<i>Ben's Trumpet</i> by Rachel Isadora
		Response-drawing	Response journal
		Independent reading Wrote responses to books they finished	African American Literature
July 25	Monday	Viewed a DVD Oral discussion	<i>The Red Sneakers</i> by Jeffery Rubin and Mark Saltzman
July 26	Tuesday	Silent reading day	African American children's literature
July 27	Wednesday	Read-aloud Oral discussion	<i>Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream</i> by Deloris Jordan and Roslyn M. Jordan
		Response-boys acted out a scene from the book	
		Independent reading Wrote responses to books they finished	African American Literature
July 28	Thursday	Read-aloud Oral discussion	<i>Coming Home: From the Life of Langston Hughes</i> by Floyd Cooper
		Silent reading Responses: wrote responses for books completed	Response journal
July 29	Friday	Check-It-Out-Circle DVD	African American children's literature Finished <i>The Red Sneakers</i>

Table 11
Daily Sessions and Activities for August

Date	Day	Activity	Materials or Text
August 1	Monday	Silent reading day Picked chapter books	African American children's literature
August 2	Tuesday	Discussed plans for the last few session Met with student group leaders	Chart paper <i>Shawn and Uncle John</i> by John Steptoe <i>Elijah McCoy</i> by Wade Hudson
August 3	Wednesday	Student led fiction discussion (two groups) Oral discussion Response: Each group acted out a scene from the story	<i>Shawn and Uncle John</i> by John Steptoe
August 4	Thursday	Student led fiction discussion (two groups) Oral discussion	<i>Elijah McCoy</i> by Wade Hudson
August 5	Friday	Silent reading Read-aloud	<i>Howard Thurman's Great Hope</i> by Kai Jackson Issa
August 8	Monday	Oral discussion Read-aloud Oral discussion	<i>Howard Thurman's Great Hope</i> by Kai Jackson Issa
August 9	Tuesday	Assessments/Post-interviews	IRI/Post-interview Questions
August 11	Thursday	Assessments/Post-interviews	IRI/Post-interview Questions
August 12	Friday Last Group Session	Response: Final journal entry Celebration	Response journals Cupcakes, juice, and certificates

Findings

To analyze the data collected during the study, I read and re-read pre-and post-interview transcriptions, group session transcriptions, field notes, my reflexive journal, students' written responses, and viewed their drawings. I also listened to audio tapings of interviews and group sessions. All data were coded as presented by Saldaña (2009). During the first coding cycle 282 codes were generated (see Appendix J). In the second coding cycle, after codes were collapsed, merged or eliminated as a result of repetition or infrequency, the list decreased to 40 codes (Saldaña, 2009). Once I developed a list of codes, I continued to examine data transcriptions in an effort to generate themes resulting from my codes (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). A total of six themes were generated (see Table 12). I also provided an overview of each of the six themes as they are related to research questions, and instruments used in the data collection process (see Table 13).

Table 12
Number of Codes per Theme

Theme	Number of Second Cycle Codes	Percentage of Total
One: The boys experienced new text, had new reading aspirations and learned about their culture	1. Author	22%
	2. Books	
	3. Setting	
	4. African American Books	
	5. Motivation	
	6. Reading	
	7. New aspirations	
	8. Cultural realities	
	9. Literary genre	
Two: The boys demonstrated comprehension to text through active engagement, discussions, drawings, and written responses	10. Comprehension strategies	35%
	11. Metacognitive strategies	
	12. Reading strategies	
	13. Reading skills	
	14. Reading activities	
	15. Active engagement	
	16. Active participation	
	17. Engagement	
	18. Enjoyment of reading	
	19. Focus on reading	
	20. Voice	
	21. Emotions	
	22. Feeling	
Three: The boys experienced racial inequalities through the literature	23. Character traits	5%
	24. Inequalities	
Four: The boys were exposed to new mentors	25. Race relations	8%
	26. Famous African Americans	
Five: The boys were empowered and could envision their future through their summer reading	27. African American males	20%
	28. Influential mentors	
	29. Importance of education	
	30. Importance of learning	
	31. Persistence	
	32. Personal goals	
	33. Leadership	
	34. Ownership	
	35. Aspirations	
	36. Vision of the future	
Six: The boys demonstrated spiritual awareness	37. Spiritual roots	10%
	38. Church	
	39. God	
	40. Prayer	
Totals:	40	100%

Table 13

Research Question, Themes, and Related Instruments

Research Question	Theme	Instrument
1. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading comprehension of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys?	<p>Theme Two: The boys demonstrated comprehension to text through active engagement, discussions, drawings, and written responses</p> <p>Theme Three: The boys experienced racial inequalities though literature</p> <p>Theme Four: The boys were exposed to new mentors</p> <p>Theme Six: The boys demonstrated spiritual awareness</p>	<p>1. IRI</p> <p>2. Group Sessions</p> <p>3. Written Responses</p>

Research Question	Theme	Instrument
2. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading motivation of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys?	Theme One: The boys experienced new text, had new desires, and learned about their culture Theme Four: The boys were exposed to new mentors	1. MRP 2. Student Interviews 3. Field Notes 4. Group Sessions
3. How does occasioning transmediation (creating meaning through drawing, writing, and enacting) in response to African American literature depicting Black males create a space for Black boys to develop and express their voices?	Theme One: The boys experienced new text, had new desires and learned about their culture Theme Four: The boys were exposed to new mentors	1. Group Sessions 2. Written Responses 3. Drawings 4. Student Interviews

To get an initial understanding of the boys as readers I administered an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) at the beginning of the study. The IRI was analyzed for each boy as a running record to determine an accuracy score at different grade levels beginning with the grade two reading passage. When completing the graded reading passages all of the boys scored at least 95% to 100% on the passages. No one scored lower than 95% accuracy when reading orally (see Table 67). This data represented the boys' ability to read texts at their grade level and in some cases above their grade level, which indicated that the boys had learned to successfully decode the text without difficulty. With the IRI the area of concern was the comprehension section. The boys were asked eight-to-ten specific skilled type questions with each passage. The passing benchmark score was 80%. The boys' scores ranged from 12.5% to 90% (see Table 67).

The Motivation To Read Profile Survey (MRP) was also only administered at the beginning of the study. It also provided interesting information into the boys' value of reading and their self-concept as readers. None of the participants chose reading as a favorite subject. Several of the boys stated that reading was not something they enjoyed doing prior to the summer experience. Jude, when asked if he would try this program again said, "Yes" (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). However, when I read his final journal entry he stated emphatically that he would not do this program again because he literally hated reading; see Figure 2. Even though Jude participated in-group discussions he allowed his voice to be heard in his final journal entry.

8/12/11

Let me tell you about my
Summer Reading Experience:

It was OK but I
wouldn't do this
next year because I
HATE READING!!!!
I only read when I
have to.

Figure 2. Jude's final journal entry

It was ok but I
wouldn't do this
next year because I
HATE READING!!!!
I only read when I
have to.

On the MRP the boys' overall full scale score ranged from a high of 96%. The highest scorer was John who valued reading at 100% and his self-concept of himself as a readers was 92% to Joshua who scored the lowest according to this survey, his value of reading score was 47% and his self-concept as a reader was a mere 57%. This substantiated the behavior of these two boys during group sessions. John was engaged in the discussions and was very interested in the books he read. Joshua was often disengaged in the discussion and said, "He did not always want to come to group" (Interview transcription, August 11, 2011). The other boys in the study scores fell between John and Joshua's scores. Their involvement and motivation during the study seemed to be in alignment with their scores (see Table 5).

Themes

Theme One: The boys experienced new text, had new reading aspirations and learned about their culture

Table 14

Theme One Findings

Theme	Category	Second Cycle of Codes
One: The boys experienced new texts, had new reading aspirations and learned about their culture	Reading books and activities	Authors Books Settings
	African American Literature	African American Books Motivation Reading New reading aspirations
	Culture	Cultural Realities
	Genres	Literature Genre

Theme one emerged from the following nine codes: Authors, books, settings, African American books, motivation, reading, new reading aspirations, cultural realities, and literature genres (see Table 14). As the study progressed it was clear to see that the boys were being exposed to books they were not accustomed to but in the process they learned many new things.

At the beginning of the study the boys shared that they had read books by such White authors as Judy Blume, Beverly Cleary, Jeff Kinney, and E. B. White. For example, John’s favorite book was *Charlotte’s Web* and Joshua and Jordan enjoyed reading *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book series because they said it was funny. They had read these books during the

school year. Sometimes they read at home in their room and for comfort many read on their beds or relaxed on a couch.

As the boys continued to participate in the group sessions they were exposed to different genres of African American text. Though 9 out of 10 of the boys were not used to reading African American books, they enjoyed reading this type of literature and 7 out of 10 of the boys desired to read more African American books. When the boys were asked how they felt about reading African American literature, they made comments such as the following.

In one-on-one interviews at the end of the program, Jared said, “It made me surprised because I never got to read all these books” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Joel said, “Excited, I got to learn more things about African Americans that I didn’t know” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). John said, “Sad, It made me think about slavery” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Jude said, “It was fun because I got to read about new people” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Jonah said, “I should read them more often because they are great books about people when they were kids and when they grew up they wanted to be something, and when they grew up they got to be what they wanted” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Justin said, “Confident... never give up” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). James said, “I had to read more about African Americans and I wanted to learn more about what they did when they were alive” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Joshua said, “Happy because I was reading about my culture” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Jahi said, “Proud to be Black, because of all the trouble we went through and how hard it was to have the life we

have today” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Jordan said, “The same. After reading them I felt the same” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011).

Based on the previous comments most of the boys felt that reading these books allowed them to learn more about their heritage and culture. However, when the boys were asked if they read the types of books we read during the summer during the school year, they made the following comments: Jared, Justin, John, Jonah, and Joshua said, “No or not really” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Jude, James, Jahi, and Jordan said, “Sometimes” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Joel said, “Only during Black history month. Each month we learn about different things. So we have to wait until the month we are supposed to read them. If it is a sports book I can read it any time. But the books like we read we read in February” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011). Even though four of the boys shared that they read these types of books sometimes it was clear that overall they were not exposed to these types of books on a regular basis. They did not often have access to African American books.

I went to the library on July 7, 2011 to get more books for the boys to read. I discovered that there were not a lot of books available for elementary age boys to read with Black characters. I spoke briefly to two librarians and they confirmed these observations (Field Notes Transcriptions, July 7, 2011).

This theme also addresses research question 2: How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading motivation of third, fourth and fifth grade boys?

The boys were definitely motivated to read the books presented to them during the summer. This was evidenced during their independent reading time and the discussions that

followed. During independent reading the boys were engaged and afterwards they would often share orally with the group or write about the book they completed in their response log. Jahi, one of the oldest boys in the group and one of the leaders, when asked if he could do this program again what would he do differently stated, “Read more stories...Read more stories about other people because I only got to read a little bit this summer” (Interview Transcriptions, August 11, 2011).

The boys’ exposure to African American literature was a key factor and it was evident that the boys enjoyed reading and discussing the text and that they desired in most cases to read more African American texts.

Theme Two: The boys demonstrated comprehension to text through active engagement, discussions, drawing and written responses

Table 15

Theme Two Findings

Theme	Category	Second Cycle of Codes
Two: The boys demonstrated comprehension to text through active engagement, discussions, drawings, and written responses	Metacognitive strategies	Comprehension strategies Metacognition Reading strategies Reading skills Reading activities
	Summer Reading	Active engagement Active participation Engagement Enjoyment of reading Focus on reading
	Voice	Voice Emotions Feeling Character traits

Theme two emerged from the following 14 codes: Comprehension strategies, metacognition, reading strategies, reading skills, reading activities, active engagement, active participation, engagement, enjoyment of reading, focus on reading, voice, emotions, feelings, and character traits (see Table 15). During the study there were 12 group sessions where the boys engaged in interactive read-alouds. During this time, books were read orally to the boys. According to Hahn (2002) read-aloud is a time for the person reading to paint the story on the canvas of the child's imagination. Read-aloud is an opportunity to read a story with built in time for questions, comments, and short discussions as the readers move through the text to clarify meaning without breaking the flow of the story (Hahn, 2002). I read the text and at different points I stopped and asked literal questions such as who, what, when, where, and why, type questions (see Appendix C). The first four types of questions can be answered directly from the text; the reader can go back into the text to find the answers. Sometimes higher order open-ended questions were asked, such as "Why do you think that happened?" or "How do you think the character felt?" or "Why do you think the character responded that way?" These questions are not right in the text. The boys had to use what they knew about the story and their own personal understanding to answer these questions. These questions led the boys into rich conversations about the literature as they built their discussion around the comments made by each other.

The boys were usually very engaged in the discussions and they often used their background knowledge as well as metacognitive strategies of predicting, noticing, visualizing, questioning, and synthesizing to help them understand the story. Two examples of how the boys used strategies to understand the story were seen during the reading of two Langston Hughes poems, "I Too Am America" and "Mother to Son." When I introduced the

poem and the poet, Jahi immediately said, "I read a story by him called 'Thank you Ma'am'; it was about this woman and this kid tries to rob her" (Group Session Transcription, July 13, 2011). He was using his schema of what he already knew about the author. He was also able to give a brief summary about the story. He apparently had some knowledge of Langston Hughes, which he was able to bring into the discussion.

As we moved forward with these poems the boys were able to make valid predictions such as: Jordan predicted that the story would be about "African Americans who are living during slavery and they want to sing but they're only letting White people sing" (Group Session Transcriptions, July 13, 2011). Through Jordan's prediction a level of comprehension is evident. He understands the darker brother was not able to do the things that Whites could do. Jordan further pointed out that he used what seemed to be his problem as his solution by stating, "He makes it (the fact that he goes into the kitchen) into a solution" (Group Session Transcriptions, July 14, 2011). He, like the other boys, understood that even though he was sent to the kitchen he could use it for his advantage.

As we continued to read poems by Langston Hughes the boys used metacognitive strategies to comprehend the text. During the group session while reading "Mother to Son," the boys showed their understanding by writing a response to the mother in the poem. Their written responses showed their understanding of a mother who had a difficult life but wanted a better life for her son. The boys began to interact with the text. They posed questions about the boy in the story. Some of the questions the boys asked centered around the future outcome of the boy in the poem. Jonah asked, "I wonder if the kid will have a good life?" (Group Session Transcriptions, July 14, 2011). James wanted to know, "What about the

dad?" The boys comprehended this poem and felt that Langston Hughes wanted them to keep going and not give up. This was their brief discussion about Hughes's message.

Mrs. R.: "Who wrote this poem?"

Boys: "Langston Hughes."

Mrs. R.: "What do you think he wants you as readers to get from this? What does he want you to learn from this poem?"

Jordan: "Have a good life."

Jared: "If something happens to you don't just give up right away."

James: "The mother is trying to get her son to keep moving. Not to give up."

Justin: "I think she is trying to let him have a good life and not..."

Jahi: "So he won't have the life she had" (Group Session Transcriptions, July 14, 2011).

It is very clear from the comments of these five that the boys understood this poem. From this point forward these boys understood that an important message conveyed in the literature they read during the summer was their need to not give up. This point will be discussed further as I continue to talk about the findings of this study. The boys were able to express their understanding of what the mother in the poem was trying to convey to her son in a written response. The following response showed their understanding as they share with the mother how they felt about what she said to them about her life as Justin, James, and Joshua responded to their mother with their writing of Son to Mother (see Figures 3, 4, and 5).

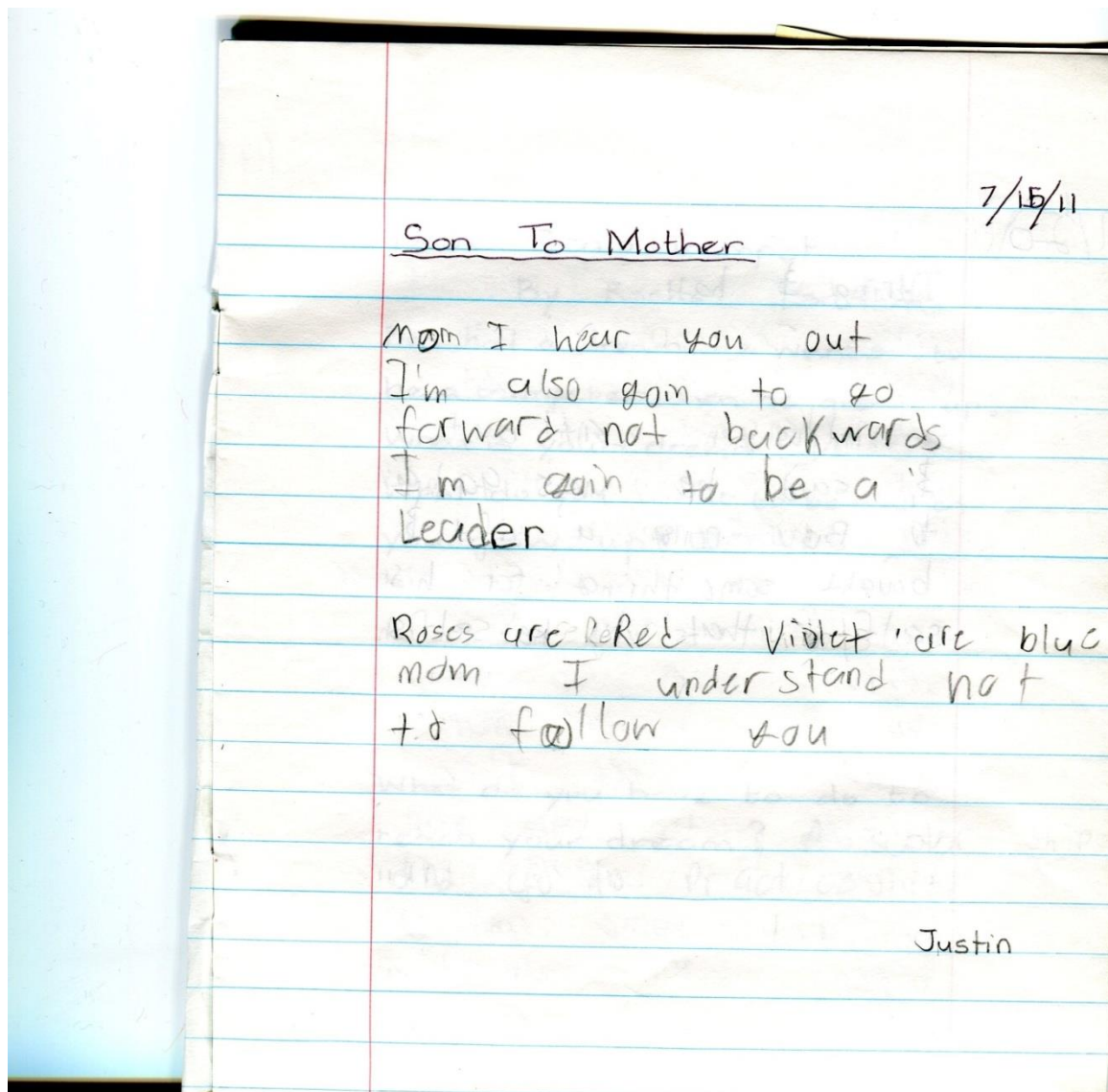


Figure 3. Justin's Son to Mother Written response

Son to Mother

Mom I hear you out
I'm also goin to go
forward not backward
I'm goin to be a
Leader

Roses are red violet are blue
Mom I understand not
To follow you

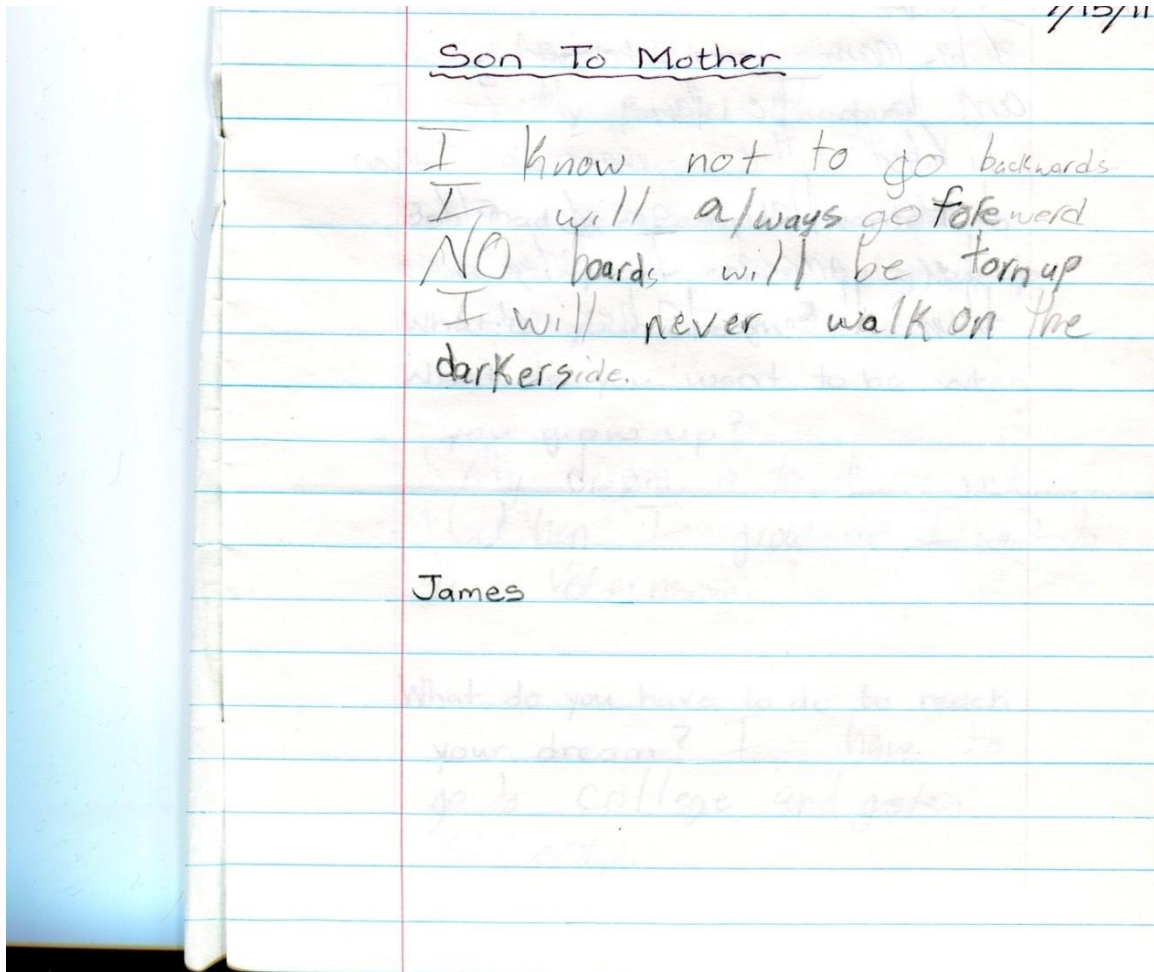


Figure 4. James's Son to Mother Written response

Son To Mother

I know not to go backwards
I will always go foreward
NO boards will be torn up
I will never walk on the
darker side.

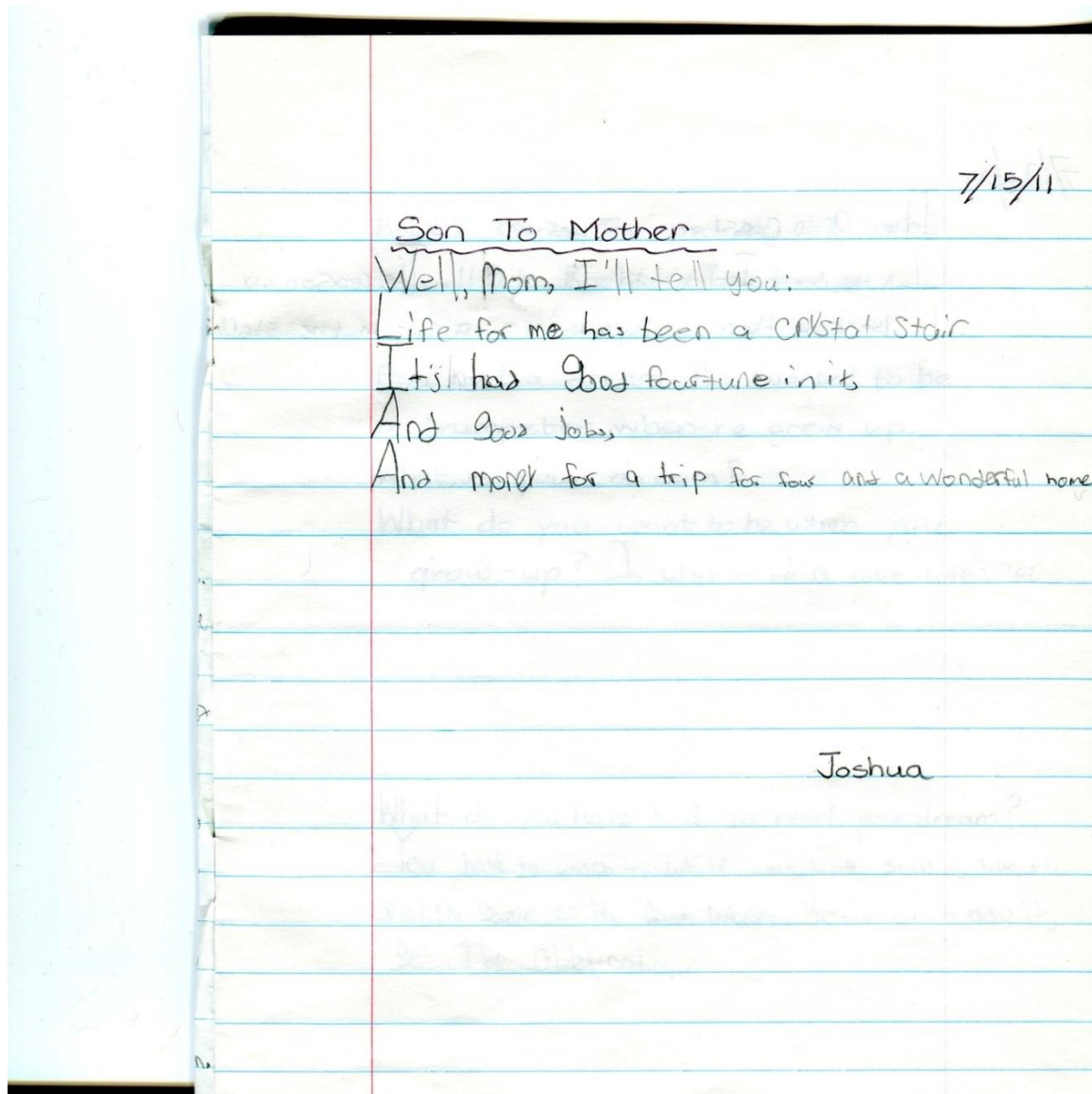


Figure 5. Joshua's Son to Mother Written response

Son To Mother

Well Mom I'll tell you

Life for me has been a crystal stair

It's had good fortune in it

And good jobs

And money for a trip for four and a wonderful home

Theme two also addresses research question one, How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading comprehension of third, fourth and fifth grade Black boys as well as research question three, How does occasioning transmediation (creating meaning through drawing writing and enacting) in response to African American literature depicting Black Males create a space for Black boys to develop and express their voice? The comprehension of the boys was evident and their voice was clearly heard as they responded to the mother in their written response. They had learned from her and their goal was not to do as she had done and not to live as she had lived. She wanted better for her son and they wanted to do better. All the boys wrote responses to this poem in the response journal. Three of the boy's responses are shown in Figures 2,3, and 4.

Theme Three: The boys experienced racial inequalities through literature

Table 16

Theme Three Findings

Theme	Category	Second Cycle of Coding
Three: The boys experienced racial inequalities through the literature	Racial Issues	Inequalities Race relations

Theme three emerged from the following two codes: Inequalities and race relations (see Table 16). During the study the boys listened to and read silently books about African American males who had made some type of contribution to our society. Many of the books were about people who were trailblazers and their contributions had come connected with issues of race. Through reading the literature the boys were able to see that a price had to be paid for them to enjoy many of the things they enjoy today. The good life they vowed to

have as they wrote to their mother in their son-to-mother writing had come to them today at a high price, paid for by those who had come before them.

There were several books where the discussion of racial inequality came up during the study. During these discussions the voices of the boys emerged. As we read the literature they could clearly comprehend the injustices that took place and they had definite feelings and emotions about those injustices. In “I Too” when making predictions Justin said, “Maybe he wanted freedom for the Blacks so they could have rights to everything” (Group Session Transcriptions, July 13, 2011). After reading the entire poem the boys discussed what thoughts came to their minds. Justin stated, “When company comes over he has to eat in the kitchen-because probably White company’s coming over” (Group Session Transcriptions, July 13, 2011). As the discussion goes on Justin, who had been very engaged in this poem, had an “Ah Ha” moment; this was his comment, “Ok, now I get it. Right now people have control over him and he will be in control and he will tell others what to do” (Group Session Transcriptions, July 13, 2011). This poem clearly expressed racial division. The boys discussed it and Justin in his final comment was able to bring it all together for the group. In an effort for the boys to express their voice and their feelings I asked them to illustrate the poem as they visualized it in their minds.

For many of the boys’ drawings their comprehension was expressed as they depicted the Black boy alone in the kitchen while others were eating and enjoying a meal with family and or friends (see Figures 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). Jonah showed a boy standing alone in the kitchen with food, but there is a group at the table and he has been excluded (Figure 6). Jordan showed a group of people eating together; he divides the people eating with a line showing the separation and he darkens the boy’s face completely so the viewer knows there

is a difference (Figure 7). Jude's picture is very similar to Jordan but it is more distinguished. Jude draws a line down the middle. He has the group at the table and over their head he writes "White." Then on the other side of the line he has an individual and in large words he writes "Black Boy," which is a striking statement. The boys definitely comprehended this poem and they understood the injustices. The Black person was ostracized because he was different (Figure 8). Joel's illustration is also included because even though he does not have a line of separation he has the White person sitting in a comfortable chair with a big drinking glass and then in the middle of the page, is the Black boy small and insignificant sitting alone (Figure 9). The final illustration presented is Joshua's picture; Joshua does not illustrate the person with food, in a dining room or in a kitchen, but he depicts his character standing alone in protest simply stating, "I want respect." His picture and comment says volumes about how he feels and how he thinks the darker brother in the poem must feel (Figure 10).

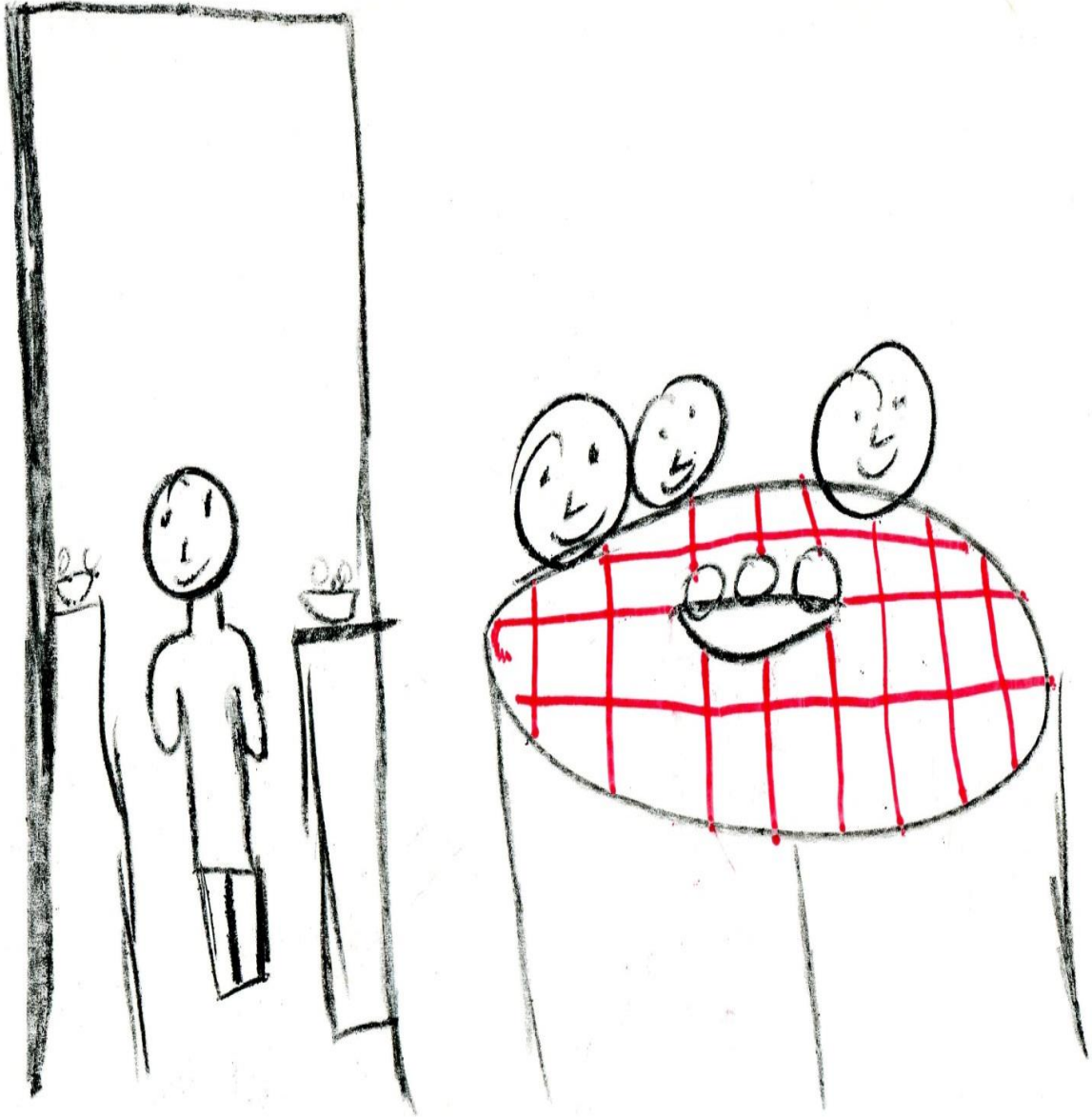


Figure 6. Jonah's "I Too" Illustration



Figure 7. Jordan's "I Too" Illustration

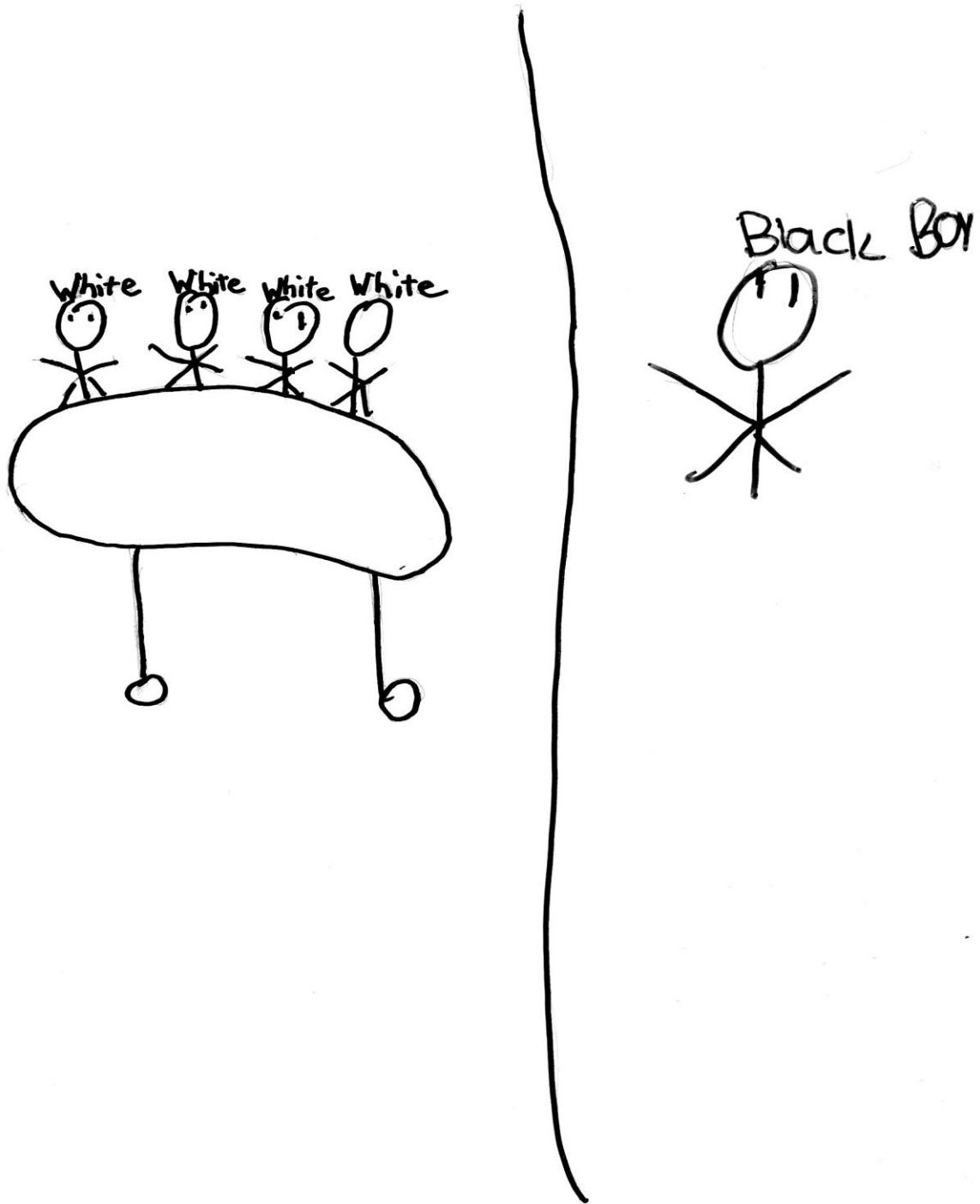


Figure 8. Jude's "I Too" Illustration

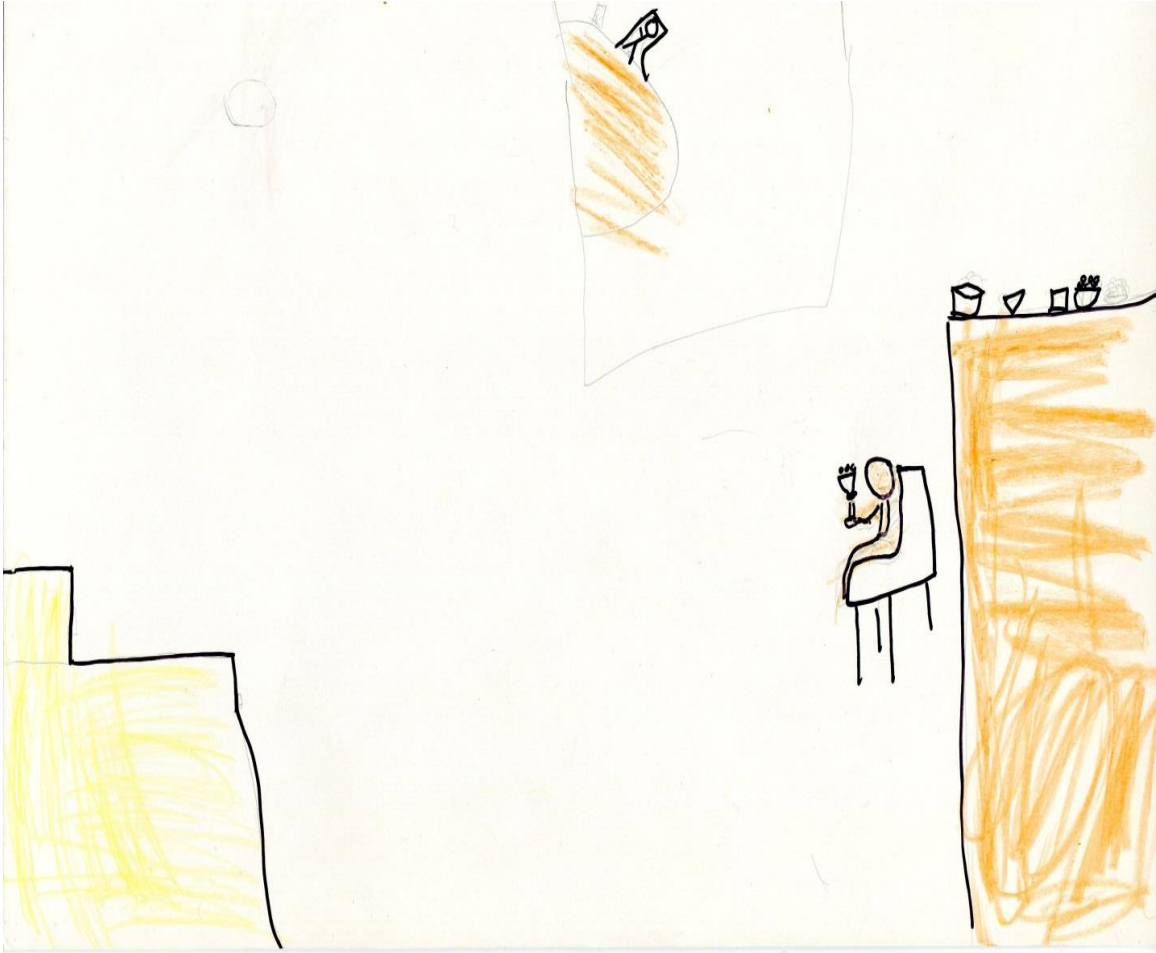


Figure 9. Joel's "I Too" Illustration

I Too

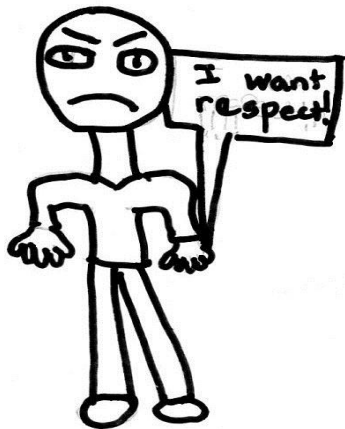


Figure 10. Joshua's "I Too" Illustration

Rosenblatt (1991) explains:

The reader brings to the text a reservoir of past experiences with language and the world. If the signs on the page are linked to elements in that reservoir, these linkages rise into consciousness. The reader recognizes them as words in a language; the child is often slowly making such connections. All readers must draw on past experiences to make the new meanings produced in the transactions with the text. (p. 445)

Through literature one can learn lessons and learn how to react to situations before they ever happen (Carson, 1999). As these boys encountered racial issues in the stories read during the summer the boys reacted and responded in different ways. When reading *Ben's Trumpet*, a story that takes place in Harlem during the 1920s about a young boy who yearned to learn how to play a trumpet and become a jazz musician, we discussed the fact that Blacks were not able to play music in White owned clubs. As a result Blacks opened jazz clubs of their own. This was their discussion about how they felt about not being able to play in White jazz clubs.

Mrs. R.: "If you were a jazz musician during Ben's time how would you feel about not being able to play in clubs?"

Jordan: "Sad."

Jared, "Sad, because that is my future and I want to play with the band. He wanted to change the world so people can play with each other."

Jonah: "Mad, sad, and disappointed because he can't play in White clubs and the White musicians can" (Group Session Transcription, July 21, 2011).

The boys felt that today there are still times when they are not allowed to go to certain places because of the color of their skin. They did not give specific examples and I did not

continue to discuss the issue. In response to *Ben's Trumpet* the boys drew pictures (See Figures 11, 12, 13, and 14). Justin drew a store where trumpets could be bought because in the story the boys realized that Ben needed a trumpet in order for his dream to come true (Figure 11). Jonah and Jared drew musical instruments symbolizing the trumpets. Through their illustrations one is able to gauge their comprehension, see their artistic abilities, and feel the music (Figure 12 and 13). John, in his drawing, showed a band playing on a stage and people dancing. His picture expresses the facts that even though they could not go into White clubs, Blacks created places where they could come together to listen, enjoy and, dance to their music in their own clubs (Figure 14).

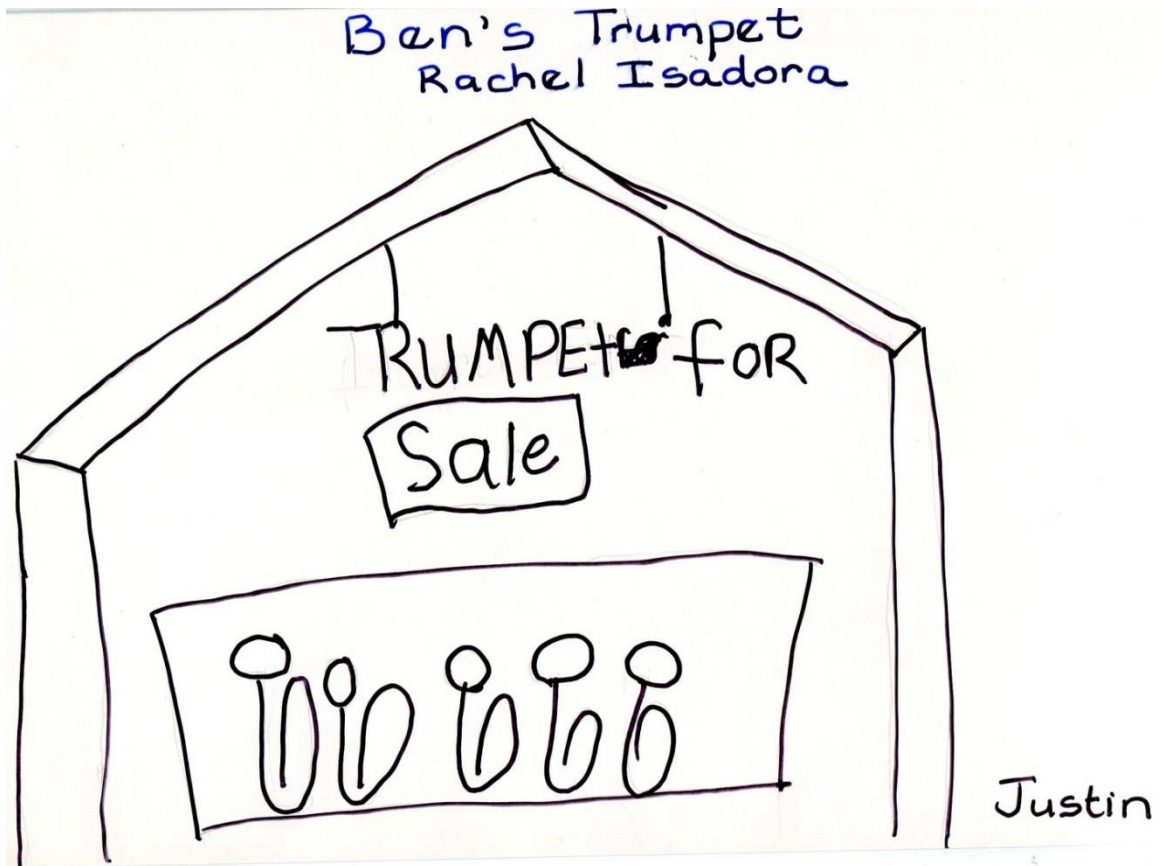
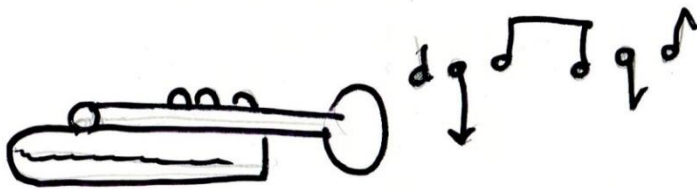


Figure 11. Justin's "Ben's Trumpet" Illustration

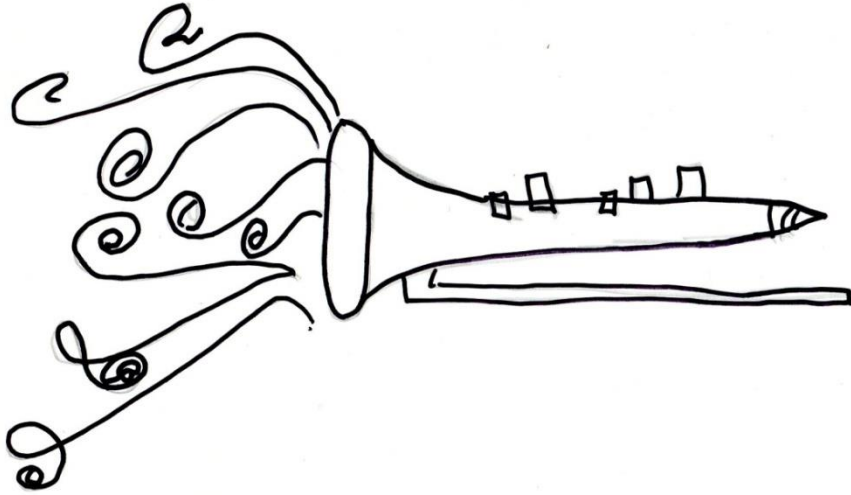
Ben's Trumpet
Rachel Isadora



Jonah

Figure 12. Jonah's "Ben's Trumpet" Illustration

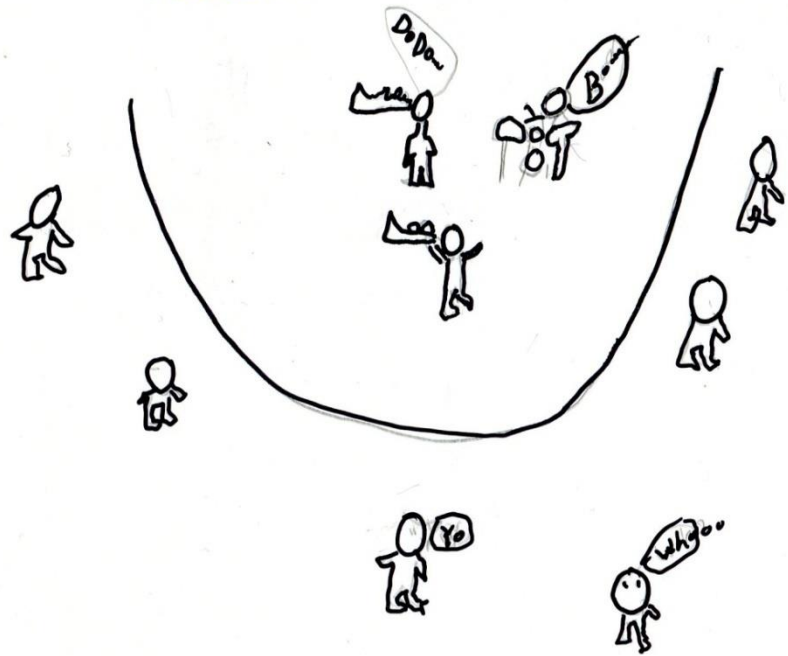
Ben's Trumpet
Rachel Isadora



Jared

Figure 13. Jared's "Ben's Trumpet" Illustration

Ben's Trumpet
Rachel Isadora



John

Figure 14. John's "Ben's Trumpet" Illustration

When the boys were doing the student-led book discussion they were divided into two groups and they read about Elijah McCoy, who invented the lubricating cup for the steam train. Even though his invention was needed people did not accept it because he was Black. When his group finished reading and discussing the text, Jared commented, “Black does not mean they can’t do stuff” (Group Session Transcriptions, August 4, 2011). Other boys also commented on the issue of race and the unfair treatment shown to Elijah. For example: Jahi said, “They did not think it would work because he was Black” (Group Session Transcriptions, August 4, 2011). When I asked the boys what did you learn from him (Elijah McCoy) that you could take away from this lesson today? The following comments were made: Jahi said, “Never give up.” Jonah said, “Just because you are Black does not mean you can’t be smart...” (Group Session Transcriptions, August 4, 2011). The boys recognized racial inequalities and they also realized that this was wrong. At the end of the session when I asked, "What does this motivate you to do?" a few of the boys responded as follows:

Jonah: “Work hard so I can get my education.”

Jahi: “Never give up easily on your dream or it will never work.”

Joshua: “If you fail keep going” (Group Session Transcription, August 4, 2011).

The boys could identify racial issues but they were motivated to keep doing their best to prove people wrong and to show that Blacks could do the job as well. However, not everyone in the group viewed the Black/White situation this way. It was during this group session that Jordan voiced race-related information. In the second group there was a discussion about segregation. Justin and Jordan were the student leaders. This was their discussion:

Jordan: "Does Elijah get to do what he wants since there is segregation?"

The boys realized that he did not and they also voiced that it was not fair.

At this point I had joined this group

Mrs. R.: "How does that make you feel--the fact that he is smart he was denied a job because of the color of his skin?"

Boys: "That's messed up."

Jordan: "I want to bleach my skin."

Mrs. R.: "Why?"

Jordan: "Because. So I can blend in and do the stuff I want to."

Mrs. R.: "So do you feel because of the color of your skin you can't do..." "What do you mean bleach? You want to bleach your skin?"

Justin: "Like Michael Jackson."

Jordan: "Yeah."

Mrs. R.: "And become what?"

Justin: "White?"

Jordan: "A lighter skin color."

Joseph: "Like me?"

Jordan: "No"

Justin: "Like that wall?"

Mrs. R.: "And what color is that wall?"

Boys: "White."

Mrs. R.: "Why do you think you should bleach your skin White?"

Jordan: "Because if my skin color is White you can do the stuff you want to do."

Justin: “It’s not fair.”

The boys continued this discussion for a short period and Jordan ended the discussion with this final comment:

Jordan: “If I could still be Black and do the stuff I wanted to do I would” (Group Session Transcription, August 4, 2011).

Just as Joshua’s illustration for the poem “I Too” (see Figure 10) clearly voiced how he felt, in this dialogue with Jordan his voice is clearly heard. He shared the injustice that he felt and he expressed how he felt these injustices would best be dealt with. Not only did these boys experience racial issues through the text, but they also dealt with these issues in their personal lives.

Theme three addressed research question one and three. The boys showed they comprehended and internalized issues of racial inequalities that were presented in the literature and in their personal lives. They also allowed their voices to be heard as they illustrated the racial inequalities as evidenced in their artwork for, “I Too,” and as they talked with Jordan about his desire to bleach his skin White.

Theme Four: The boys were exposed to new mentors

Table 17

Theme Four Findings

Theme	Category	Second Cycle of Coding
Four: The boys were exposed to new mentors	Role Models	Famous African Americans
	Mentors	African American males Influential males

This theme emerged from the following three codes: African Americans, African American males, and influential mentors (see Table 17). At the beginning of the study the

boys were asked to list the famous African American males they had read about. When the list was compiled it consisted largely of entertainers and sport figures; very few other African American males were listed (see Appendix L). When asked to identify some famous African American males about whom they had heard and share something they knew about the person, the new list still had many entertainers and sport figures.

As the study progressed the boys were introduced to many new African American males through literature. They heard many stories during the interactive read-aloud session and they were able to choose books to read independently during the Check-It-Out-Circle. By group session 10 the boys had been involved in five interactive read-alouds, three Check-It-Out-Circles and three silent reading sessions (see Table 10). When asked to name some of the people they were learning about during independent reading time several new names came up such as: Arthur Ashe, Bob Marley, George Washington Carver, and the Kentucky Derby Jockey. The Check-It-Out-Circle was instrumental in introducing the boys to new books. Even if they did not get to read a particular book they were able to preview the book, have their curiosity piqued and if others else read the book they would often hear a retell or summary of the book.

When the boys described the books they read they said the books they read were all about Black males. When they were asked to share some of the things they learned from the men in the books, some of the boys made the following comments:

Jared: "Worked and made their dreams come true."

John: "Trying to reach their goals."

Jude: "Kept trying."

Jonah: “Getting their dreams of what they wanted...they never gave up” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

Justin also pointed out that the men in the books, “Told us that when young Black boys grew up to become men this is what they should do like what we should reach to” (Interview transcription, August 11, 2011). When Jahi was asked why we read the type of books we had, he said, “Oh, because they had courageous people and Black Americans and we learned more about our history” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). The boys realized that the men in the stories they read had interesting lives, which they could learn from and follow as examples.

This theme addresses research question one and two. The boys were able to learn from the lived experiences of the African American men they read about. They were able to comprehend what they experienced and learned from their examples. The boys were also motivated to read more books about these men and other African American males because they recognized there were many lessons to be learned. I think John and Jared summed this section up very well with their comments: John said, “Most of the African American stories are encouraging,” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011) and Jared said, “What we read were great books and everyone should have a chance to read them” (Interview transcription, August 11, 2011).

Theme Five: The boys were empowered and could envision their future through the summer reading experience

Table 18

Theme Five Findings

Theme	Category	Second Cycle of Coding
Five: The boys were empowered and could envision their future through their summer reading experience	Importance of education	Importance of education Importance of learning
	Perseverance	Persistence Personal goals Leadership Ownership
	Vision of the Future	Aspirations Vision of the future

Theme five emerged from the following eight codes: Importance of education, importance of learning, persistence, personal goals, leadership, ownership, aspirations, and vision of the future (see Table 18). As the boys in the study listened to and engaged in the interactive read-aloud they continued to focus on the fact that education and learning were very important in the lives of the people they read about and it was also important in their personal lives.

When I asked the boys what they wanted to be when they grew up their responses were as followed: James and Joshua wanted to become professional football players; Joel and Jude, professional basketball players; Justin, an electrician, John, a lawyer, Jared, an archeologist, Jonah, the vice president of the United States, and Jordan wants to own his own Footlocker so he could have all the sneakers he wants (Group Session Transcription, July 29, 2011).

The boys expressed many times during the study the importance of getting a good education and the importance of learning new things, which they were able to do as they read the books during the summer. The characters in the books encouraged the boys in different ways. Joel said he was motivated, “To work hard in school” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). Jude said he envisioned that he would, “Go to college and do something great with his life” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). The characters or the books did not impact Jordan, at all. He said, “It (the characters and the books) did not motivate me to do anything” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011).

The boys read about many men who “never gave up.” Regardless of the situations they faced the men kept pushing forward. This was a recurring topic of discussion from the onset of the study. This empowered them to believe in their dreams and in what they could be. When I asked the boys to name a character from the books we had read that they felt they were most like and share what they learned about the character and or what they learned from the character, Jared, Jude and Joshua picked Howard Thurman. Here are their comments: Jared said, “I always had a dream that I wanted to go to high school and college and he motivated me because he made his dream come true. I want my dream to come true too” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011); Jude said, “I learned not to give up and to keep trying” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011); and, Joshua said, “That he never gave up” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). Joel, John Jahi, and Jordan all identified with Michael Jordan. The most important thing they learned from him was as follows: Joel said, “That you should never give up and keep on trying” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011); John said, “That if you believe you can accomplish stuff” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011); Jahi said, “To keep on trying” (Interview

Transcription, August 11, 2011); and Jordan said, “That he never gave up” (Interview Transcription, August 11, 2011). These characters taught the boys that they needed to be persistent if they wanted to reach their goals in life. They understood that if they kept trying they would be able to reach their personal goals in life as the mentors they had read about had done.

The boys were empowered and envisioned their future; theme five addressed research questions one and two. It addressed research question one because the boys realized and comprehended that the men they read about did not give up until their goals were accomplished. They were able to grasp this important truth, articulate it to others and embrace it as a personal goal for their own life. Theme five addresses question three because the boys were able to voice their own future goals and desires. They were able to see that others before them had reached their goals and they too could achieve if they did not “give up.”

Theme Six: The boys demonstrated spiritual awareness

Table 19

Theme Six Findings

Theme	Category	Second Cycle Codes
Six: The boys demonstrated spiritual awareness	Spiritual Realities	Spiritual roots Church God Prayer

Theme six was informed by four codes: Spiritual roots, church, God and prayer (see Table 19). During the study the boys read a few books where they began to have a discussion, which centered on church and their knowledge of religion. The Black church has

had a profound effect on the lives of African Americans from the time of slavery until this present day. Even during the time of enslavement Christianity was not denied the enslaved African Americans as education was (Schneider & Schneider, 2000). The role of religion and faith were central and critical in the survival of African American slaves (Leary, 2005). It was this spiritual foundation that helped our ancestors cope with the difficult life, which they had to endure. Therefore, as this study unfolded it was interesting but not surprising to see how religious discussion evolved in the boys' discussions. Although these discussions were brief, they were powerful and evidenced that spiritual roots were very much a part of the fabric of these young boys.

This discussion came up several times; the first time was during group session two at the end of reading the poem "I Too," Joshua said, "It's just like church, the guy sounds like a preacher" (Group Session Transcription, July 13, 2011). The other boys immediately chimed in and began to create a church service saying, "Hallelujah" (Group Session Transcription, July 13, 2011). This was very much the tone of the writer during this era. They would have written with that feeling of call and response, which was very much a part of the Black church. It was interesting that the boys picked up on the tone in this poem.

Another example of this occurrence was during group session nine, when the boys listened to and discussed the book, *Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream*. In this story Michael Jordan wanted to know how he could grow taller. His mother told him that they would put salt in his shoes and say a prayer every night. As I read the book Joel chimed in, by saying, "I think it's not the salt. I think it's just because he is praying." Jonah said, "Yes"; Jared, "I believe it's the prayers" (Group Session Transcription, July 27, 2011). Then I asked the boys, "What makes you say that?" Joel said, "Because salt doesn't make

you grow.” Jared said, “Your connection with God and sometimes he makes your dreams come true” (Group Session Transcription, July 27, 2011). This seemed like a profound statement for a nine-year-old boy. On this day the younger boys in the group were very excited and they chose to respond to this story by acting out the scene of what happened the day Michael returned to the park to play basketball after his mom had prayed for him and he had practiced (Group Session Transcription, July 27, 2011).

A final example of a time when the boys demonstrated spiritual awareness was while reading *Howard Thurman’s Great Hope*. Howard had a desire to continue his education past the seventh grade, which was not typical for Black boys during this time. Many things had worked in Howard’s favor; I asked the boys, “What are you learning from Howard so far that you can use to help motivate you?” Jared said, “That he never gave up”; Jonah said, “To pray for things you really want to happen” (Group Session Transcription, August 5, 2011). I asked the boys, “What makes you say that?” Jonah’s response was, “His grandmother prayed for him” (Group Session, August 5, 2011). As in the case with Michael Jordan in a previous group session, the boys in the study realized things happened when you pray. Again, this was an indication that they understood and could relate to God’s intervention even when reading a story. During this read-aloud session the boys also noticed an interesting finding in the illustration. In the story there was a stranger who came to Howard and gave him the money he needed to put his baggage on the train so that he would be able to fulfill his dream of going to high school. After Howard checked in his baggage and went outside to thank the man he could not find him. During the reading and discussion of this part in the book Jared said, “The shadow looks like an angel. It looks like an angel--it looks like his father” (Group Session Transcription, August 8, 2011). When he first said this, I

continued to read and kept going with the discussion. However, during the final discussion of the book he brought it up again. This time I felt it was worthy of investigating. Here is the discussion that resulted:

Jared: “On the page where the guy is dressed in worker clothes the shadow looks like wings.”

Mrs. R.: “The shadow looks like wings?”

James: “It looks like an angel.”

Mrs. R.: “I’m going to that page because you guys have observed something that I totally overlooked.” (Turned to the page)

Boy: “There are wings.”

(Group Session Transcription, August 8, 2011)

The boys were able to make inferences with this story to show they comprehended at a higher level. They were able to make spiritual connection in this story based on their own background knowledge. This theme addressed research question one and three.

Summary of Chapter Four

In this chapter a descriptive narrative of each boy in the study and the study’s location have been presented. The study’s findings were discussed and presented using the following six themes:

1. The boys experienced new text, had new reading aspirations and learned about their culture
2. The boys demonstrated comprehension to text through active engagement, discussions, drawings, and written responses.

3. The boys experienced racial inequalities through literature.
4. The boys were exposed to new mentors.
5. The boys were empowered and could envision their future through their summer reading experience.
6. The boys demonstrated spiritual awareness.

These themes emerged through the analysis of group sessions, researcher observations, survey data, the informal reading inventory data and pre-and post interview data. These themes, as well as the research questions that guided this study, were the lens through which the findings of this study were presented.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I endeavor to bring closure to this study that examined the influence that of exploring African American literature depicting Black males had on the reading comprehension and reading motivation of Black boys in third through fifth grades. I will discuss the findings as they relate to the literature. I will discuss the implications the results of this study provides for education, the limitations of this study, as well as give recommendations for future research in this very important area in education.

Summary of the Study

African American students achieve at lower levels than their White and Asian peers in reading as measured by state standardized tests across the country. This is an ongoing problem throughout our nation. However, Black boys' achievement is even more alarming. In 2010, the Council of the Great Schools called the achievement gap for African American males a "national catastrophe" (p. 5). They further stated that, although it is a catastrophe it is not an area that is being aggressively addressed in an effort to change the situation or alleviate the problem (Council of the Great City Schools, 2010). One of the major causes for this achievement gap is the African American male's seeming inability to effectively engage in the reading process with success. Reading affects every area of academics and it is paramount. Therefore, a good foundation in reading is essential in order to be successful in school and in life.

In this study I examined the impact and influence that African American literature depicting Black males had on the reading comprehension and reading motivation of Black boys in grades three through five. I conducted this study in the Northeast region of the United States and I used several instruments to collect data. A self-reporting survey was

employed as well as an informal reading assessment. The boys also participated in semi-structured interviews and they participated in interactive read-aloud book discussions. The data were collected, transcribed and then analyzed to assess the influence they had on the boys.

Research Questions

This research was guided by the following questions:

1. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading comprehension of third, fourth, and fifth grade Black boys?
2. How does the use of African American literature that depicts Black males influence the reading motivation of third, fourth, and fifth grader Black boys?
3. How does occasioning transmediation (creating meaning across symbol systems through drawing, writing, and enacting) in response to African American literature depicting Black males create a space for Black boys to develop and express their voices?

Review of Findings and Discussion

In this study I collected all the data and I transcribed the interviews and group sessions. I read and reread interview and group session data and coded the transcribed data (Saldaña, 2009). The data were further examined and a total of six themes emerged (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). They are:

1. The boys experienced new text, had new reading aspirations and learned about their culture.
2. The boys demonstrated comprehension to text through active engagement, discussions, drawings, and written responses.

3. The boys experienced racial inequalities through literature.
4. The boys were exposed to new mentors.
5. The boys were empowered and could envision their future through their summer reading experience.
6. The boys demonstrated spiritual awareness.

Theme one focuses on the fact that the boys read new texts and they learned many new things about African American men and about African American culture. This theme supports research question two. The boys were motivated to listen to and read African American texts they were exposed to during the summer. They demonstrated this during their independent reading time, and during independent reading all the participants seemed engaged in their reading. When they finished a book they immediately asked for a new one or they would write in their response journals. On many occasions they verbally shared their learning with the group during share time.

Being able to choose the books they wanted to read and having the books available also added to their ability and desire to experience and interact with new texts. This was supported by the study conducted by Donovan, Smolkin and Lomax (2000); they determined that students were intrinsically motivated to read informational books and that when students could self-select their books and read for sustained periods their comprehension of text and their motivation to read improved.

The books they read allowed them to learn about their culture. In the book *Ben's Trumpet*, the jazz club was named the Cotton Club, and it was located in Harlem, New York. They connected this to Langston Hughes, the writer of two poems we studied, who lived in and wrote about Harlem. This motivated them to want to read the poetry book *Harlem* by

Walter Dean Myers. They learned about the struggles of Black men, the inequalities they experienced but they also read about the triumphs and successes. They learned that successes were attainable if one kept working and did not give up. They learned that between the cover of a book they could go anywhere, be anybody, and do anything (Carson, 1999).

Theme two examines how the boys showed they comprehended the books read to them aloud and their own independent reading text by being actively engaged. This engagement was demonstrated during group sessions and in the boys' individual written responses and drawings. This theme supports research question one, which dealt with comprehension and research question three, which dealt with transmediation.

The boys usually demonstrated they understood the text through their verbal discussion. As the text was being read the boys became actively involved with it. They entered into the text using past experiences, as well as their present state and interest; this influenced their transactions with literature (Rosenblatt, 1978). At times they would answer questions from an efferent stance using a factual point of view because the answer was right in the text (Rosenblatt, 1978). At other times the boys' emotions would be touched. The character would experience something that the boys would comprehend and relate to from an emotional point of view. During this time the boys responded using the aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Most of the books the boys read and discussed they were able to personally connect to the text. The text was culturally relevant to their lives and they were able to draw from those experiences and construct meaning and understanding. The boys in this study, as did the students in the Jiménez (1997) study, were able to use their prior knowledge and lived

experiences in the comprehension process. Research supports the fact that comprehension will take place as students are able to relate to the text they are reading in a real and personal way. It is understood that not every text children come in contact with will they be able to connect to personally, but if they are taught how to use their prior knowledge and understand the text this will assist them. They will then have strategies to implement as they read unfamiliar text and will still have the ability to understand the text. This is an explicitly learned strategy and is best learned with text that is culturally relevant. They will comprehend culturally relevant text because the books honored and nurtured who they were (Tatum, 2009). As a result of reading books honoring the boys or representing them, the boys were motivated to read and listen to the stories. The boys further showed they comprehended the text by writing poems and answering questions about the text (see Figures 3, 4, and 5).

Theme three dealt with the issue of racial inequality. The boys were very clear about the fact that there were racial differences in the world, and one boy even said he wanted to bleach his skin White. They comprehended and understood that in the book they read there were certain things that Blacks could not do and they thought this was unfair. Critical race theory, which is one of the foundational theories used in this study, clearly speaks to the fact that race is a part of every aspect of life, education, and of our society (Howard, 2008). Racism is engrained in the fabric of American society and relationships between Blacks and Whites are still a major challenge today (Leary, 2005), as is the choice of books used in schools. Several of the boys wondered why they did not have access to texts depicting Black men and boys in the schools they attended. One boy revealed that he was exposed to these texts only in February during Black History Month.

The boys in this study experienced racial inequalities as they read and discussed stories about African American men. They saw how Black men were not allowed to play in White jazz clubs as they read *Ben's Trumpet*, so the Black jazz players opened their own clubs. They experienced racial inequality as they read *Coming Home: From the Life of Langston Hughes* when Langston's father was not allowed to practice law because he was Black and had to move to Mexico to do so; they saw how this act of inequality also broke up a family that was never brought back together again. They experienced inequalities in *Howard Thurman's Great Hope* where Black schools only went up to the seventh grade. After that, Black children were expected to find a job unless they had money and could be sent to high school at their parent's expense. The White children could continue their education for free. They also saw inequalities as they read about Elijah McCoy, who invented the lubricating cup for the steam engine train. His invention was needed and it was useful but people did not want to use it because he was Black and they figured a Black man could not invent such a thing. These were many of the boys' insights as they read and interacted with the text.

These inequalities were in books, but for African American boys and men they are very real. This study presented a platform where boys could discuss these inequities and voice their true feelings and concerns. This was a valuable experience for the boys because even though the inequities were present the boys were able to see how the Black men in the text conquered and rose above the situation. This was important because in each of these stories the Black man still succeeded. The boys demonstrated their personal feelings about the inequalities as they listened to "I Too Am America" by Langston Hughes. During this reading the boys clearly identified with the equality of the main character, and they

responded to this poem through drawings where they clearly identified the separation between Blacks and Whites (see Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9). One of the boys spoke volumes when he simply made a sign stating, “I want respect” (see Figure 10). The boys were able to see that even though obstacles present themselves one must continue to move forward as did the men in the stories.

Implication for Educators

In light of the fact that African American boys continue to lag behind their peers in reading it is necessary that this issue be addressed. This “national catastrophe” can no longer be overlooked. It is apparent that what educational systems presently are doing is not working. Therefore based on this study educators should consider using African American literature with Black boys through read-aloud so they can learn about their culture and heritage. The boys should then be allowed to respond to the text through discussions, drawings, writing, and dramatizations. The type of response to the literature should not be limited to a paper and pencil tasks; teachers should allow for variety and creativity in their responses. This strategy could be used early in the educational career of Black boys, who need to see and hear stories about them. This could be a good beginning source that would motivate students to want to read, and this practice could lead to improved vocabulary and critical thinking as questions about the books are asked of the boys as they engage in active discussions. Discussions could provide opportunity for efferent and aesthetic responses (Rosenblatt, 1978). The books should be culturally relevant and the teacher can teach on social themes (Ladson-Billings, 1994b). Read-alouds could be a successful teaching strategy but they must be carefully planned in order to ensure success.

Educators must be aware of the types of books they expose Black boys to. They must endeavor to match boys with books that they can relate to, connect with, and grow from as individuals. These boys need to see they are mirrored in the text that they read in a way that they come to realize that they do matter.

Theme four dealt with the boys learning from the men in the books they read and how the lives of these men served as mentors. According to Kunjufu (2007), 68% of Black boys are raised in fatherless homes. The street and television have taught these boys to be aggressive, not to cry, and to show little emotions or affection (Kunjufu, 1985). However, this macho image and tough exterior that has been shaped by society and the media can change if the boys have relationships with powerful male role models (Kunjufu, 1985). Fathers are the most important role models in their son's life. If the father is absent the boy has an even greater need to have a positive male figure in his life. In today's society it is said that mentoring young boys is a powerful tool that can change lives. Black boys need Black mentors (Hall, 2006).

At the beginning of the study the boys were familiar with men such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, sport figures, and entertainers. Early in their reading career teachers need to introduce Black boys to African Americans who have made meaningful contributions in other fields as well; these men will also serve as role models and mentors and be figures the boys can emulate.

Through reading books Black boys were exposed to mentors. In each of the books we read they met male characters with positive traits from which they could learn. They learned how to react to certain situations and they learned how to persevere despite obstacles. After many group sessions the boys reflected on how the character never gave up. Through

reading many of the boys said they were inspired to go to college as they learned from Howard Thurman in *Howard Thurman's Great Hope*. It was evident that as the boys read about these men they began to think and express positive thoughts. They set goals and high expectations for themselves. They met new mentors and they were motivated by their lives.

Theme five was used to discuss how the boys were able to envision their futures. In theme four the boys met mentors and were able to identify with men of high moral character. They learned from their struggles with inequalities as they read about how these men persevered and never gave up. As the boys discussed the stories each day it was clear that they began to think about their future. They identified with the strong character of the men in the books and determined that they did not have to give up and that they would keep moving toward their goal. The boys were envisioning their futures. Some of the boys shared that their aspirations were to become a NBA basketball player or a NFL football player. Others envisioned themselves as the president or vice president. They envisioned themselves as electricians, and as an archeologist. They began to see that they could be whatever they wanted to be if they worked hard at it. These books and the discussion opened up their minds to the many opportunities that were before them. They saw what their future could be and they believed they could achieve it because others had done it before them.

Theme six reflected upon the spiritual roots that the boys in the study had, which emerged naturally. Throughout history African American have always had strong religious roots (Schneider & Schneider, 2000). It was those old spirituals that enslaved Africans sang while they worked; these songs have travelled down through history and have kept the Black man strong. Throughout Black men's struggle religion and God were always their source of strength. Even today, African Americans represent the most Christian community in

America (Barton, 2004). Therefore, as the boys read and discussed books with religious themes, they would address it. They believed that if you prayed that sometimes God would help your dreams come true. They did not believe the salt in Michael Jordan's shoes really helped him play better; they believed it was the prayers. It was clear that these third, fourth, and fifth grade boys were familiar with God, prayer, and religion. They were not hesitant to discuss it and they attributed the success of some of the men to the prayers that someone had prayed for them.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations in this study were as follows: This study was conducted during the summer and not during the regular school year. The outcome and participation could have been different if it was done with a group of boys in one particular school. The boys were all volunteers and students who already sought assistance for academics and enrichments. They were already predisposed to want assistance to improve, whereas students who did not attend the JYCC would likely have responded differently. The sample size for the study was relatively small and the findings cannot be generalized to all Black boys. Black boys in a different setting might respond differently to the read-alouds. I did not have reading baseline data for each boy from their individual schools with regards to their reading levels and reading behaviors. Although I did administer an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) and a self-reporting method survey to obtain some background information, I could not be certain that the information is actually reported with fidelity. This was done during the camp day sessions and the boys may not have done their best on the assessment because it was summer and the assessment may have reminded them of a school setting, and as far as they were concerned school was out.

Finally, this study was conducted by and African American woman working with Black boys. The boys may have been more open and verbal if they were working with a Black male. The discussion may have been different and the boys may have been more transparent with an all male group.

Implications for Future Research

As a result of this study I have suggested ways in which this study can be further enhanced and expanded upon.

There could be a study with Black boys reading African American literature and then using critical literacy and open-ended responses for a longer period of time to capture their understanding and to determine if the use of African American literature does in fact improve the reading scores of Black boys.

To further explore the influence of interactive read-aloud with discussion and transmediation on the reading comprehension and reading motivation of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in a whole classroom setting.

Compare students in two classes; in one class use traditional literature and in the other class, at the same grade level, use read-aloud African American literature with critical issues. In both classes there should be interactive discussions as the books are read. At the end of the designated time assess students' comprehension to determine if there was a difference in the reading comprehension and motivation of the student who read and discussed the traditional literature or the students who read the African American literature.

Conduct a longitudinal study on a cohort using read-aloud daily as the main reading instructional tool from kindergarten through third grade and determine how the students'

reading comprehension and motivation improves when assessed at the end of third grade as compared to a class that uses a traditional reading program.

Conclusion

This study suggests that the reading comprehension and reading motivation of Black boys in the third through fifth grade can be influenced by interactive read-alouds that depict Black males. During the six weeks of the study the boys demonstrated continual comprehension of the text as demonstrated through oral discussion, written responses, graphic representation in drawings and dramatic presentations. The boys also demonstrated their motivation to read books depicting Black males during independent reading as well as voicing their desire to read these types of books on a regular basis.

The act of listening to the story allowed each boy to hear the same text and then be able to synthesize, evaluate, and communicate efferent and aesthetic responses to show an understanding of the story or to express feelings about social issues that concern them. There was a running theme, which the boys learned throughout the study that journeyed with them and seemed to have been woven in most of the stories read and that was that they should “Keep trying and never give up.”

The result from the study indicated that using African American literature depicting Black males is a valuable tool that can lead to increased comprehension and can also increase and motivate students to want to read and learn more about their history and culture. This study has shown that it is crucial to not just teach students to read but to give students text that they can identify with and learn from. Through the act of reading students can go wherever they want to go and become whatever they want to become. It is after this act of reading that they are able to share what they have learned and how that learning has impacted

their lives. It is through the act of reading and sharing that all students, Black boys included, can grow as individuals, meet mentors and learn from the lived experiences of others.

In conclusion, I do believe that reading aloud books that can teach history while depicting Black male figures is one gateway to lead to knowledge and can open the doors of discussion that could benefit the boys, improve their comprehension, motivate them to want to read and teach them good moral characters about manhood. More importantly this time of reading allows boys to have a voice. They were able to express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, hopes, and disappointments. They can be whatever they desire to be because they can see that others before them have made it. This experience can offer an opportunity for positive reflection and cultivate futuristic visions. Boys can come to understand who they are as individuals and come to realize that they have a voice that is powerful and forceful. They must be given an opportunity because their voice is important and it needs to be heard. African American boys can no longer be silent, for they too have a voice.

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Appendix A: Students Pre/Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Student Pre-Interviews

1. When and where do you do most of your reading?
2. What was the best book you read?
3. What made it your best book?
4. Some people have a favorite author.
Have you ever read lots of books by one author?
Who is the author?
What are some of their books?
5. Can you tell me the last time you read an African American Book?
(These are stories about African American and African American themes)
6. How often do you read African American Books?

Appendix B: Students Post/Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Post-Interview

1. How did reading African American books make you feel?
2. Think about all the books we have read this summer, the ones I read to you and the ones you read in book clubs. Think about the main character in one of the books.
Which character do you think you are most like?
Why?
What was the most important thing you learned from the character?
3. In what way if any was this study beneficial to you?
4. What did you learn about yourself as a reader?
5. In what way if any have you changed as a reader?

Appendix C: Open-Ended Book Discussion Questions

Book Club Discussion Questions
(Types of questions that were used)

1. What did you learn from the main character in this book, short story, poem, or DVD?
2. In what way is the main character like you?
3. In what way is the main character different from you?
4. What did the main character do in the story that really impressed you? What stands out most vividly in your mind?
5. How did the character's action(s) motivate you? What did he encourage you to do?
6. What did the main character's action(s) motivate you not to do? Explain.
7. If you could be this character would you be him? Why or Why not?
8. If you could meet the main character and ask him any three questions what would you ask him? Why would you ask these questions?
9. What racial issue(s) were presented in this book, short story, poem, or DVD?
10. How did the main character deal with or confront the racial issue(s)?
11. If you were this character how would you have dealt with or confronted the racial issue(s)? Be specific.

Reader Response Prompts for Book Club Discussion and/Journal Writing

After reading the story:

What did you **like** and/ or **dislike**?

What did the story **remind** you of?

In your life

In other books you've read

What **thoughts and feelings** did you have as you read?

A time when you were in a **similar situation**

What did the literature make you **wonder** about?

What **surprises** you while you are reading?

Something in the book you have **never thought about**

Characters in the story who are like people you have known

The things you are **confused** about

The **questions** you have after reading

The **things you would do differently** if you were one of the characters

The **advice** you would give to others if you were one of the minor characters

What would happen if you could step into one of the illustrations in a picture book

The changes you would make **if you were the author**

The changes you would make **if you were the illustrator**

Adapted from *Encountering Children's Literature: An Arts Approach* by Jane Gangi, which is based on Louise Rosenblatt

What did you picture in your mind when _____?

What did you notice about the way the author wrote the book?

What language or images did you find powerful?

Adapted from *Still Learning to Read* by Sibberson and Szymusiak

How was the main character in the story treated?

Why was he treated this way?

Was his treatment right or wrong? Explain.

If you were _____ would you react the same way or differently?

Explain

Researcher created questions

Appendix D: Book Log

Book Log

_____ 's Book Log

Week _____

Date _____

Date Began		Date Finished
	Title	
	Author	
	Title	
	Author	
	Title	
	Author	
	Title	
	Author	
	Title	
	Author	
	Title	
	Author	
	Title	
	Author	
	Title	
	Author	

Appendix E: Director of the Community Center Consent Letter



WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Education and Educational Psychology

181 White Street

Danbury, CT 06810

Dear (Director of the Community Center),

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University. This program requires that I design and implement a dissertation research study. The title of my dissertation proposal is **I TOO HAVE A VOICE: THE LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN BOYS ENGAGING WITH AND RESPONDING TO AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE.**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine and analyze the impact and influence of the use of African American literature that depicts African American males on the overall reading comprehension and motivation of Black boys in 3rd – 5th grade.

To collect data for my study, I will administer a Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) survey to assess the boy's self-concept as readers and the value they place on reading. I will conduct semi-structured interviews to assess factors that influence the types of books the boys read at school and at home. It also assesses the boy's overall reading behaviors. An Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) and a Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) will be administered to informally assess the boy's oral and silent reading comprehension. Interactive read-aloud and Book Club discussions will allow the boys to creatively and expressively interact with African American literature depicting African American males. There will also be a focus group for the parents of the boys in the study to assess information about the boy's school and home literacy experiences from parent's perspective. Finally, there will be a home reading component where the boys will be encouraged to read independently, log books and journal, as well as enjoy a shared reading experience with their parent weekly.

The research study has been reviewed and approved by Western Connecticut State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). It is hoped that the results of this study will help district, schools and teachers understand how to better meet the literacy needs of African American boys.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. All information collected during the study will remain confidential and pseudonyms will be used. Data collected during this study will only be used for research purposes. Parents of students who will participate will sign an informed consent letter. The students will also sign a letter agreeing to participate. Participants may withdraw at anytime during the study.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via telephone at (203) 326-0112 or via email at mbrumble2001@yahoo.com. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below and return this letter in the self addressed stamped envelope enclosed.

Sincerely,
Merle B. Rumble
Mbrumble2001@Yahoo.com

Jane Gangi, PhD
Associate Professor, EdD in Instructional Leadership
gangji@wcsu.edu

I agree that the study describe above can be conducted at (Name)

Please Print Name

Please sign

Appendix F: Teacher at the Community Center Consent Letter



WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Education and Educational Psychology

181 White Street

Danbury, CT 06810

Dear (Teaching Staff at Community Center),

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Instructional leadership at Western Connecticut State University. I am currently working on a dissertation study. The title of my dissertation proposal is **I TOO HAVE A VOICE: THE LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN BOYS ENGAGING WITH AND RESPONDING TO AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE**. I have obtained the permission from the director of the Community Center to conduct my study during the summer at the center.

This study is designed to examine and analyze the impact and influence of the use of African American literature that depicts African American males on the reading comprehension and motivation of African American boys in grades 3rd -5th grade.

To collect data for my study, I will administer a Reading Motivational Profile (MRP) survey to assess the boys self-concept as readers and the value they place on reading; I will conduct semi-structure interviews to assess factors that influence the types of books the boys read at school and at home it also assesses the boys overall reading behaviors; an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) and a Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) will be administered to informally assess the boys oral and silent reading comprehension; Interactive read-aloud and Book Club discussions will allow the boys to creatively and expressively interact with African American literature depicting African American males; There will also be a focus group for the parents of the boys in the study to assess information about the boys school and home literacy experiences from a parent's perspective; Finally, there will be a home reading component where the boys will be encouraged to read independently, log books and journal as well as enjoy a shared reading experience with their parent weekly.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by Western Connecticut State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). It is hoped that the results of the study will help districts, schools, and teachers understand how to better meet the literary needs of African American boys.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. All information collected during the study will remain confidential and will be used only for research purposes. Parents of students who will participate will sign an informed consent letter. The students will also sign a letter agreeing to participate. Participants may withdraw from the study at anytime during the research if they desire.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign and return this form. In the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed.

Sincerely,
Merle B. Rumble
(203) 326-0112

Jane M. Gangi, PhD
Associate Professor EdD in Instructional Leadership

mbrumble2001@yahoo.com

gangji@wcsu.edu

I agree to participate in the dissertation study of Merle B. Rumble.

Please Print Name

Please sign

Date

Appendix G: Parent Consent Letter



WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Education and Educational Psychology
181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Instructional leadership at Western Connecticut State University. I am currently working on a dissertation study. The title of my dissertation proposal is **I TOO HAVE A VOICE: THE LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN BOYS ENGAGING WITH AND RESPONDING TO AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE**. I have obtained the permission from the director of the Community Center to conduct my study during the summer at the center.

This study is designed to examine and analyze the impact and influence of the use of African American literature that depicts African American males on the reading comprehension and motivation of African American boys in grades 3rd -5th grade.

To collect data for my study, I will administer a Reading Motivational Profile (MRP) survey to assess the boys self-concept as readers and the value they place on reading; I will conduct semi-structure interviews to assess factors that influence the types of books the boys read at school and at home it also assesses the boys overall reading behaviors; an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) and a Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) will be administered to informally assess the boys oral and silent reading comprehension; Interactive read-aloud and Book Club discussions will allow the boys to creatively and expressively interact with African American literature depicting African American males; There will also be a focus group for the parents of the boys in the study to assess information about the boys school and home literacy experiences from a parent's perspective; Finally, there will be a home reading component where the boys will be encouraged to read independently, log books and journal as well as enjoy a shared reading experience with their parent weekly.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by Western Connecticut State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). It is hoped that the results of the study will help districts, schools, and teachers understand how to better meet the literary needs of African American boys.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. All information collected during the study will remain confidential and will be used only for research purposes. Parents of students who will participate will sign an informed consent letter. The students will also sign a letter agreeing to participate. Participants may withdraw from the study at anytime during the research if they desire.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign and return this form. In the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed.

Sincerely,

Merle B. Rumble
(203) 326-0112
Mbrumble2001@yahoo.com

Jane M. Gangi, PhD
Associate Professor, EdD in Instructional Leadership
gangij@wcsu.edu

Student Participation

I, _____, the parent/legal guardian of the student minor below
(Printed name of parent or guardian)

acknowledge that the researcher has explained to me the purpose this research study, identified any risks involved, and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my child's participation. I voluntarily consent to my child's participation. I understand all information gathered during this project will be completely confidential.

Student/Minor Name: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Date _____

Appendix H: Student Assent Letter



WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
**Student Information Form to
Participate in a Research Study**

Dear Student,

My name is Mrs. Rumble. I am a reading teacher in the Norwalk Public School District. I am also a student at Western Connecticut State University. I would like you to be a part of an exciting study I am doing to learn more about students like you. I will send a permission slip home with you. But first, I would like you to know about my study.

I am studying how reading African American Literature depicting African American males impact and influence the reading comprehension and reading motivation of African American boys in 3rd-5th grades.

To collect my data for this study I would like you to help me by completing a Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) survey and a conversational interview. In this survey and interview you will have an opportunity to express your feelings and thoughts about reading. I will ask you to complete an informal reading inventory assessment (IRI and BRI). This will assess your oral and silent reading comprehension. You will participate in Interact read-aloud and Book Club discussions where you will be able to creatively and expressively interact with African American literature. I will ask you to read at home, log the books you read and complete a journal entry after reading. Finally I would like you to read a book or chapter of a book with your parent once a week and journal about that experience. This study will provide you with some fun activities to complete your summer reading. I hope you will consider being a part of my study.

When the study is completed I hope to have valid information to help educators understand how to better meet the literacy needs of African American boys. I will not use your name in the study. The information collected will have nothing to do with report card grades. All of the information will be kept private.

You will be a volunteer for this study. You may withdraw from the study at any time during the research. If you are willing to a part of my research study please sign the attached form.

Thank you,
Mrs. Rumble
Mbrumble2001@yahoo.com

Jane M. Gangi, PhD
Associate Professor EdD in Instructional Leadership
gangij@wcsu.edu

Yes, I would like to be in this study. I agree to participate in the dissertation study of Merle B. Rumble.

Please print and sign your name below:

Print student name

Student signature

Appendix I: Interactive Read-aloud Books Chart

Interactive Text Used in the Study

Title	Author	Genre
"I Too"	Langston Hughes	Poetry
"Mother to Son"	Langston Hughes	Poetry
<i>Keepers</i>	Hanel Watts	Fiction
<i>Ben's Trumpet</i>	Rachel Isadora	Fiction
<i>Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream</i>	Deloris Jordan and Roslyn M. Jordan	Biography
<i>Coming Home: From the Life of Langston Hughes</i>	Floyd Cooper	Biography
<i>Shawn and Uncle John</i>	John Steptoe	Short Story
<i>Elijah McCoy</i>	Wade Hudson	Biography
<i>Howard Thurman's Great Hope</i>	Kai Jackson Isssa	Biography

Appendix J: Master Code List

Master Code List

1. A lighter color
2. Accept what happened to us
3. Act like yourself
4. Acting
5. Action books
6. Always a way
7. Angel
8. Anger
9. Animal books
10. Arthur Ashe
11. At home
12. A lot of information
13. Autobiographies
14. Background knowledge
15. Be strong
16. Be yourself
17. Beverly Cleary
18. Biographies
19. Black History month
20. Black people helped make the world better
21. Black people tried to help other Black people be successful
22. Blacks work there
23. Bob Marley
24. Books
25. Book choices
26. Book Clubs
27. Books were not really long
28. Bored
29. Boring
30. Buy books
31. Can accomplish stuff
32. Can succeed
33. Change skin color
34. Change the world
35. Characters I liked
36. Chase their dreams
37. Check-It-Out-Circle
38. Check-It-Out-Circle-helpful for choosing books
39. Choice-pick books we like
40. College man
41. Comedian
42. Comics
43. Complexity of text
44. Connection
45. Confidence

46. Could practice reading
47. Courageous people
48. Culture
49. Details
50. Diary of a Wimpy Kid
51. Did not allow Blacks
52. Didn't fight/Don't fight back
53. Didn't read
54. Disappointed
55. Disappointed vs. Proud
56. Do something great with my life
57. Don't try to things you can't
58. Do the Check-It-Out-Circle
59. Don't get to read these books
60. Don't give up
61. Don't have a lot of African American books
62. Don't just give up
63. Don't let anyone tell you what to do
64. Don't read much...now I do
65. Dreams of becoming successful in our lives
66. Education
67. Eliminate them
68. Engagement
69. Encouragement
70. Encouraging
71. Encouraging you to not give up
72. Enjoyment
73. Entertainer
74. Equal rights
75. Everyone should have a chance to read these books
76. Exciting books I didn't have at home
77. Famous
78. Famous Black males who did something
79. Fantasy
80. February
81. Feel surprised
82. Fiction
83. Football player
84. From poverty to riches
85. Fun
86. Funny
87. Funny pictures
88. Five finger rule
89. Get education
90. Get a good education
91. George Washington Carver

92. Going forward
93. Go to high school
94. Go to college
95. Good life
96. Got lessons in them
97. Great books
98. Group ownership
99. Had a good time
100. Hallelujah
101. Happy
102. Hard books help your reading
103. Harriet Tubman
104. Heritage
105. Historical
106. History
107. History books
108. Homework
109. Howard Thurman
110. Heaven
111. I can pick books about an African American
112. I can sound out the words
113. I don't think it wasn't the salt, it was the prayers
114. I learn a lot
115. I like that book
116. I use to not like reading but now I do
117. If you fail keep trying
118. If you keep on trying and never give up
119. I'm not quitting
120. Imagination
121. In control
122. In room
123. Indifference to problem
124. Individualistic
125. Inequality
126. Inference
127. Inquisitive
128. Interested in African American books
129. I want to bleach my skin
130. Jackie Robinson
131. Jeff Kinney
132. Judy Blume
133. Just because you are Black does not mean you can't be smart
134. Kind of sad
135. Keep climbing the stairs
136. Keep doing it you'll get better
137. Keep doing read-aloud Keeping on trying

138. Keep picking books we want to read
139. Keep trying
140. Kept going
141. Kept trying
142. Knowledge
143. Knowledgeable
144. Lack comprehension
145. Leadership
146. Learn how Blacks were treated
147. Learned about the history of Blacks
148. Learn stuff
149. Learning
150. Learn about Black people
151. Learn about other people and their lives
152. Learn about other people who helped Black people
153. Learning about us
154. Learning about stuff about Black people
155. Learning more about the history of us
156. Learning more about them (Blacks)
157. Learning new things you didn't know
158. Like church
159. Like school
160. Literal comprehension
161. Literal recall
162. Looks like an angel
163. Mad
164. Made me want to read more
165. Mae Jemison
166. Make their dreams come true
167. Made places to play music
169. Magic Tree House Series
170. Main characters
171. Malcolm X
172. Martin Luther King, Jr.
173. Metacognitive strategies
174. Michael Jordan
175. More African American books
176. Movies (DVD's)
177. Mystery
178. Mysteries
179. Narnia Series
180. Never gave up
181. Never give up
182. Never give up easily on your dream or it will never work
183. Never gave up on his dream
184. Never give up but keep on moving

185. Never got to read all these books
186. Nice
187. No money
188. No one telling him what to do
189. Non-fiction
190. Not fair
191. Not fair-can't eat at the table
192. Not to be mean to anybody just because of the color of their skin
193. Not to give up
194. Not try to give up
195. Noticing
196. On my bed
197. Only during Black History month
198. Pay back violence
199. People becoming better
200. People wanted to be something they got it when they grew up
201. People who are important
202. Poems
203. Poor
204. Practice makes you better
205. Prediction
206. Probably only did that to Blacks
207. Problem solving
208. Protest
209. Proud to be a Black person
210. Purpose
211. Questions
212. Questioning-Thin/Thick/Right there
213. Ramona Age, 8
214. Reach for goals
215. Reach my goals
216. Read books we never read before
217. Read about new people
218. Read African American books in February
219. Read better
220. Read great books
221. Read more about your culture
222. Read more stories
223. Read just for fun
224. Reader's Workshop
225. Reading
226. Reading about my culture
227. Relax on the couch
228. Retell
229. Sad
230. Scholarship

231. Segregation
232. She prayed for him
233. Should read them more
234. Slavery
235. Slavery solved
236. Smart
237. So I can blend in and do stuff I want to do
238. So I can learn
239. Sounds like a preacher
240. Sport books
241. Starting to read
242. Stay in school
243. Stolen Children
244. Successful
245. Summarizing
246. Synthesizing
247. Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
248. Teaches lesson
249. Text to self
250. Text to text
251. Text to world
252. That I am a good reader
253. The people in the story never gave up
254. To keep on trying
255. To pray
256. To see how well/good we are at reading
257. Treat people equally
258. Treating us mean
259. Trying to reach their goal
260. Unfair
261. Vision of the future
262. Visualization
263. Vocabulary
264. Want to change things
265. Want to make a difference
266. Want my dreams to come true
267. Wasn't that good got better
268. We can overcome anything
269. White
270. White advantage
271. Whites could go to school/lacks could no
272. Whites enjoy stuff
273. White-good education
274. White supremacy
275. Wrestling books
276. Who was Barack Obama?

- 277. Won't work Black man made it better
- 278. Work hard
- 279. Work hard in school
- 280. You need to always succeed in your dreams
- 281. You should always follow your dream
- 282. Your connection with God and sometime He makes your dreams come true

Appendix K: Audit Trail Results

Credibility for data collection

- Triangulation: Independent Reading Inventory, Pre/Post Interview, Group Interview, Journals & Illustrations

Inter-coder reliability for data analysis

Theme One: The boys' experienced new text, had new reading aspirations, and learned about their culture **(.93)**

Theme Two: The boys demonstrated comprehension to text through active engagement, discussions, drawings and written responses **(.97)**.

Theme Three: The boys experienced racial inequalities through literature **(.96)**.

Theme Four: The boys were exposed to new mentor **(1.0)**.

Theme Five: The boys were empowered and could envision their future through their summer reading **(.96)**.

Theme Six: The boys demonstrated spiritual awareness **(1.0)**.

Appendix L: Famous African American Males We Know

Famous African American Males

Name	Who are some famous African American males you have read about?	Who are some famous African American males you have heard about? Tell me something you know about the person.
1. Justin	Jackie Robinson Malcolm X Martin Luther King, Jr.	Martin Luther King, Jr.: He saved us from slavery Denzel Washington: He is in movies Kevin Hart: A comedian-seriously funny
2. John	Jackie Robinson	Martin Luther King, Jr.: wished for freedom
3. James	Martin Luther King, Jr. Jackie Robinson Malcolm X Terry Cruz Kevin Hart	Martin Luther King, Jr.: He fought for freedom
4. Joshua	Martin Luther King, Jr. Jackie Robinson	Jackie Robinson: He was the first Black person to play major league baseball
5. Jared	Martin Luther King, Jr. Jackie Robinson Jessie Owens	Michael Jackson
6. Jude	Lebron James Jackie Robinson Dwayne Wade Shaq	Lebron James and Dwayne Wade play on the Heat in the NBA.
7. Joel	Jackie Robinson	Jackie Robinson: got spit at on the baseball field
8. Jonah	Jackie Robinson Martin Luther King, Jr.	I know Martin Luther King, Jr. is super famous because he made Blacks and Whites be friends.
9. Jahi	Malcolm X Martin Luther King, Jr. Jackie Robinson	Denzel Washington Muhammad Ali Kevin Hart

10. Jordan

Jesse Owens
Jackie Robinson
President Barack Obama
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Malcolm X

Lebron James
Kobe Bryant
Michael Jordan
Michael Jackson
Denzel Washington
Ice Cube
Cedric-the Entertainer
Terry Cruz
Kevin Hart
Eddie Murphy
Martin Lawrence
Bow Wow
Brandon T. Jackson

Appendix M: African American Children's Literature Used in the Study

African American Children's Literature Used in the Study

Adler, D. A., & Casilla, R. (Illus.). (1997). *A picture book of Jackie Robinson*. New York, NY:

Holiday House.

Allen, D., & Nelson, K. (1999). *Brothers of the knight*. New York, NY: Dial.

Battle-Lavert, G., & Holbert, R. (1994). *The barber's cutting edge*. San Francisco, CA:

Children's Book Press.

Bunting, E., & Ransome, J. (1998). *Your move*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace.

Collier, B. (2000). *Uptown*. New York, NY: Holt.

Cooper, F. (2008). *Willie and the all-stars*. New York, NY: Philomel.

Cooper, F. (1996). *Mandela: From the life of the South African statesman*. New York, NY:

Philomel.

Cooper, F. (1994). *Coming home: From the life of Langston Hughes*. New York, NY: Putnam's.

Cooper, M., & Bennett, N. (2000). *Gettin' through Thursday*. New York, NY: Lee & Low

Books.

Cosby, B. (2000). *The day I saw my father cry*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Cosby, B. (1997). *The treasure hunt*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Curtis, G., & Lewis, E. B. (Illus.). (1998). *The bat boy and his violin*. New York, NY: Simon &

Schuster.

- Davis, S., Jenkins, G., Hunt, R. (2005). *We beat the street: How a friendship pact helped us succeed*. New York, NY: Dutton.
- Dungy, T. (2008). *You can do it!* New York, NY: Little Simon Inspirations.
- Ford, J. G. (2004). *Shop talk*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Greenfield, E., & Ford, G. (Illus.). (2009). *Paul Robeson*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
(Original work published in 1975)
- Grimes, N., & Collier, B. (Illus.). (2008). *Barack Obama: Son of promise, child of hope*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Grimes, N., & Ladwig, T. (2002). *When Daddy prays*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books.
- Haskins, J., Benson, K., & Andrews, B. (Illus.). (2006). *John Lewis in the lead: A story of the Civil Rights Movement*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
- Hudson, W. (2001). *Five bold freedom fighters*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Hudson, W. (1995). *Five notable inventors*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Hopkinson, D., & Colón, R. (Illus.). (1999). *A band of angels: A story inspired by the Jubilee Singers*. New York, NY: Atheneum.
- Hubbard, C., & Belford, K. (Illus.). (2010). *Game set match champion: Arthur Ashe*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
- Hubbard, C., & McGuire, R. (Illus.). (2008). *The last Black king of the Kentucky derby*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

- Hughes, L., & Pinkney, B. (Illus.). (1960). *The dream keeper and other poems*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Hughes, L., & Lewis, E. B. (Illus.). (2009). *The Negro speaks of rivers*. New York, NY: Disney/Jump at the Sun.
- Issa, K. J., & Dawson, A. L. (2008). *Howard Thurman's great hope*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
- Isadora, R. (1979). *Ben's trumpet*. New York, NY: Greenwillow.
- Jones, L. (2001). *Five famous writers*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Jordan, R., Jordan, D., & Nelson, K. (Illus.). (2000). *Salt in his shoes: Michael Jordan in pursuit of a dream*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Kehret, P. (2008). *Stolen children*. New York, NY: Dutton.
- MacLeod, E. (2007). *George Washington Carver: An innovative life*. Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can.
- Medina, T., & Watson, J. J. (Illus.). (2009). *I and I*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
- Medina, T., & Christie, R. G. (Illus.). (2002). *Love to Langston*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
- Medina, T., & Christie, R. G. (2001). *DeShawn days*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
- Miller, W., & Pate, R. S. (Illus.). (2004). *Joe Louis, my champion*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
- Miller, W., & Riley-Web, C. (Illus.). (2001). *Rent party jazz*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

- Miller, W., & Christie, R. G. (Illus.). (1997). *Richard Wright and the library card*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
- Mitchell, M. K., & Ransome, J. (Illus.). (1993). *Uncle Jed's barber shop*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Myers, W. D., & Myers, C. (Illus.). (1997). *Harlem*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Myers, W. D. (1994). *Darnell Rock reporting*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Nelson, M., & Lardy, P. (Illus.). (2005). *A wreath for Emmett Till*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Pace, L. (2001). *Jalani and the lock*. New York, NY: PowerKids.
- Perdomo, W., & Collier, B. (Illus.). (2002). *Visiting Langston*. New York, NY: Holt.
- Pinkney, A. D., & Pinkney, B. (Illus.). (1998). *Duke Ellington: The piano prince and his Orchestra*. New York, NY: Hyperion.
- Raschka, C. (1992). *Charlie Parker played be bop*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Raschka, C. (1993). *Yo! Yes!* New York, NY: Orchard.
- Richardson, C. K. (2005). *The real slam dunk*. New York, NY: Puffin.
- Robinson, S. (2006). *Safe at home*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Saltzer, M. (Producer), & Hines, G. (Director). (2002). *The red sneakers* [DVD]. United States: Showtime Entertainment.

Shepard, A. (2000). *Master man: A tall tale of Nigeria*. New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.

Step toe, J. (1997). *In Daddy's arms I am tall: African Americans celebrating fathers*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

Step toe, J. (2003). *The Jones family express*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

Step toe, J., & Lewis, E. B. (Illus.). (1997). *Creativity*. New York, NY: Clarion.

Step toe, J. (1969). *Stevie*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Taylor, M. (1987). *The friendship*. New York, NY: Dial.

Watts, J. H., & Marshall, F. (Illus.) (1997). *Keepers*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

Williams, M., & Christie, R. G. (Illus.). (2005). *Brothers in hope: The story of the lost boys of Sudan*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.