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Integrating the Funds of Knowledge to Impact the Literacy Learning Experience for Students with Disabilities

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INTEGRATING THE FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE TO IMPACT THE LITERACY LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

by

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Dedication

It is my genuine gratefulness and warmest regard that I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Stephen. Your love and support helped me accomplish the ultimate goal through one of the hardest years of my life. Your source of inspiration gave me the strength when I wanted to give up. I appreciate all of the responsibility and hard work you put into the house chores when I couldn't get up from the computer. I am thankful for you each and every day.

Also, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, for always pushing me towards my goals. I couldn't imagine finishing without you there telling me it was going to be okay. Thank you for always believing in me when I wanted to give up.

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to examine the impact on the literacy learning experience for students with disabilities when integrating the funds of knowledge into the curriculum. Prior to this research, students were given books with no relevance to their at home literacy. The curriculum was missing components of a framework that included the sociocultural perspectives of diverse learners. The participants for this study were three eight year old students. Two of the students were males and the one student was a female. The study was conducted during a 30-minute pull-out reading support. The students were interviewed to gain a better insight of their funds of knowledge. Based off of their results, these topics were incorporated into our small group reading. Qualitative research was utilized in the study. A teacher's research journal, surveys, student interviews, and student journal responses were used to collect and analyze data from the small group sessions. The data that was collected was analyzed through the use of triangulation and coding of student conversations and work to determine patterns and themes that emerged from the study. Based on the data analysis, emotions, lack of confidence, personal interests, and rapport and trusting relationships were four major themes that contributed to a stronger literacy learning experience for the students when the funds of knowledge were integrated into the curriculum.

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Introduction

"Even today, although we would hope that these deficit conceptualizations would belong to the dustbin of history, we can still find evidence in some teacher training programs and in the popular mind that students' culture within their households is viewed as deficient in cognitive and social resources for learning" (Gonzalaz, Moll, Amanti, 2005, p. 34-35)

"I love this book!" stated the overly excited student. Michael is a seven year old, 1st grade student who enjoys building legos and participating in outdoor activities. He believes he is a good reader but gets bored when he reads. "I know so much about the bald eagle." As I sat and watched him skim through the book, I could tell how interested he was with this topic selection. I thought to myself, "This book selection was random and I did not know it was going to cause such a reaction." As we moved through the lesson, our conversation was led by his background knowledge of our country. He was looking at each page and reading fluently throughout the book. "How could this be?" I thought to myself. Yesterday's book selection was the same level and yet….. Did the level not matter? Did I connect to an interest of his? As each page progressed and I pondered these thoughts, I could not help but feel excited that he was thrilled to be reading. I began jotting down ideas that sparked his attention. "How could I use these ideas or themes in my tutoring lessons?" I asked myself.

As we finished up the lesson, I displayed the selection of books from the website Reading A-Z on my screen. I asked, "What book would you like to read tomorrow?" I scrolled through the pages of the website for him to take a look. "Can we look at the flag

book?" he asked. I clicked the *America's Monuments* book and previewed the pages with him. As he looked through the pages, he could not wait to share everything he knew about different monuments. "We went there before!" he stated as he pointed at the Washington Monument. I could tell I was making connections to his family travels and literacy at home. At this moment, I thought, "I think I'm connecting to his funds of knowledge." I began feeling better about our lessons because I knew I had the resources of his culture within the household to implement into our learning experience.

Purpose Statement

Teachers have always questioned how students might show more improvement in reading with books of their interests and interests and incorporating those interests into classrooms. Many teachers assume that students are performing poorly with their reading because they are struggling to comprehend or fluently read a text. As teachers, we struggle to see the big picture in front of us: What are they struggling with? How would they read if it were a book of interest? Would it change the results? What if we incorporated a topic of interest or a topic they know a lot about? Would this change their reading behaviors? The purpose of this research is to study the impact on the literacy learning experience for students with disabilities when integrating their funds of knowledge into the curriculum. "The funds of knowledge (FoK) approach is acknowledged as an essential aspect of culturally responsive education" (Hogg & Volman, 2020, p. 864). When implementing a culturally responsive education into our classrooms, it is important to recognize the needs of our students in different ways.

Story of the Question

After learning and incorporating the funds of knowledge in my clinical tutoring

sessions at Rowan University, I was interested in how to integrate it into my small

reading groups. I had always known that incorporating students' interest into a lesson will

enhance their ability to participate more in the classroom. I have always spent time

researching creative lessons or activities to incorporate, but never reflected on how and

where to gather this information from. Why did I not think to dig deeper into my

students' funds of knowledge? After reading the article, *Misunderstanding Families* by

Monica Marsh and Tammy Vorbeck, I instantly began reflecting on how my school

incorporates the cultures of families and my own teaching experiences. I asked myself the

following questions: How could I use the funds of knowledge in my own classroom?

How would my students feel? Would this help their perceptions on reading? It seemed

like a million questions running through my mind.

As I continued to research more on this topic, I tried my hardest to use the

concept in my clinic tutoring sessions. The COVID-19 virus caused our tutoring sessions

to be virtual in that all of our lessons were taught through the computer. Resources were

displayed for the student to see on the screen. I did not know where to start. I was already

feeling flustered from having to tutor using an online platform that I could not even begin

to think of how to incorporate the funds of knowledge into my lessons. However, I knew

I owed it to my past students to at least try. I began by interviewing the student and

parent together. I used questions from a student survey, as well as points from the funds

of knowledge handout given to us in class. By the end of the interview, I knew about

some of the students' family values, traditions, chores, outings, educational activities,

family occupations, etc. It was a lot to take in but I felt as though there were a lot of activities I could do with this information. I began prepping for my first tutoring session. I instantly selected a book of the student's interests or so I thought. The next day, I taught my lesson to the student expecting that it would be fabulous because I used what I thought was his funds of knowledge in my lesson. Instead, he wasn't interested. He spent a lot of the time trying to side track the conversation. I felt defeated. What did I do wrong? I reviewed the information and decided to provide the student with a choice of reading. I planned two different comprehension lessons for the next day. I was ready for whatever he was going to choose.

The next day, I displayed the two covers on the screen. I asked the student to choose what book he wanted to read today. He was thrilled. He instantly chose the bald eagle book and began telling me all about the bald eagle. I was shocked. I never thought he would choose this book. As we read and made connections throughout the book, I noticed that he was making connections with his father being a police officer. Was this the reason he was interested in the book? Did I dig deeper into his funds of knowledge? Why did I choose the bald eagle book? What information did I use from the family survey? I was intrigued with how enthusiastic the student was with this book selection. As we wrapped up the lesson, he began asking me what we were going to be reading the next day. I decided to continue with the selection of choices. I did not display books on his level. Instead, I brought up books that were a higher level and allowed him to choose what to read next. He chose to read about America's monuments. Furthermore, he read through this book fluently. He connected with many monuments and discussed all the vacations he went on while also learning how to use different comprehension strategies. I

knew I was on to something. I was drawing on his own experiences and connecting them with comprehension lessons. At this point, I knew I wanted to become a teacher-researcher who developed engaging and meaningful learning experiences using my students' funds of knowledge. Thus, began the journey of integrating the funds of knowledge into my small reading groups.

Due to COVID-19 impact on our school, our lessons were instructed differently than the clinic tutoring sessions. Some of our lessons were done in person and virtually at the same time whereas summer clinic lessons were all virtually. The students in the research study were not in the same cohort. One student was in cohort A and the other two students were in cohort B. However, one student switched to all-remote learning in the middle of the study. This impacted our lessons by restricting the students to have the book physically in their hands. Instead, the book was projected on our screens. However, if the students were in-person, they were able to physically have the book in hand. During the summer clinic tutoring sessions, there was only one student on the screen who viewed the book virtually and didn't have the opportunity to have the book in a physical situation. Also, the summer tutoring sessions were manageable with one student online. For those students who were instructed online and in-person at the same time, it was difficult to manage the behaviors and participation of those at home. The environment of the students determined their answers to the questions or activities that were being instructed.

As described in the introduction, this research question arrived after being introduced to the funds of knowledge in our summer clinical. My intent in implementing a funds of knowledge framework was to help my students incorporate their at home

literacy experiences into my classrooms. According to Llopart and Esteban-Guitart (2017), "The assumption was that the educational process can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about their student's households and their everyday lives" (p. 259). Most importantly, this approach would draw on student experiences to enhance learning in all content areas by embodying the linguistic and cultural resources that support student's learning within the classroom. In turn, teachers would make use of their student's funds of knowledge by integrating it into their curriculum to further enhance their literacy environment.

It is possible for teachers to use the funds of knowledge of their students to create a learning experience for everyone. According to Gonzalaz, Moll, Amanti (2005), "Our analysis of funds of knowledge represents a positive (and, we argue, realistic) view of households as containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great potential utility for classroom instruction" (p. 75). It is important for educators to use the cultural and cognitive resources of their students to enhance their classroom instruction. Chesworth (2016) asserts that the "Informed by sociocultural perspectives of learning, the concept of funds of knowledge acknowledges the richness of experiences associated with children's active participation in multi-generational household and/or community activities" (p. 296). In other words, the teacher needs to gain an understanding of the child in order to make the connections between school and home happen. How can we change the environments of our learning experience?

A key component of integrating the funds of knowledge into the curriculum is the interpretation of children's interests. Hedges, Cullen, and Jordan noted (2011), "Teachers' engagement with learners' interests strengthens learners' motivation, effort,

memory, and attention" (p. 186). The role of everyday experiences that children engage in is a part of the authentic learning opportunities that teachers need to view positively. Moreover, "teachers who fail to capitalize on children's learning gained in informal settings would therefore appear to ignore a rich source of children's prior knowledge, experience, and interests" (Hedges, Cullen, Jordan, 2011, 188). I needed to dig deeper into this sociocultural perspective. As a part of this research, I hope to understand what funds of knowledge the students bring to their learning experience and how it will affect their performance.

Statement of the Research Problem and Question

The purpose of this study is to examine how students with disabilities respond and view the literacy learning experience when their funds of knowledge are integrated into the reading curriculum. Thus, the research question I plan to investigate is as follows: What funds of knowledge do students bring to their learning experience? Sub questions that guided my inquiry included: How would the funds of knowledge help choose books for each student? Does gender play a role? What will the learning experience or curriculum look like? What effect will it have on the students' performance? Do student's perceptions of their reading skills change when they choose their reading materials?

Organization of the Thesis

The following chapters outline the organization of the thesis. The four chapters detail my teacher's research in a qualitative way. Chapter two focuses on the review of the literature that has connected and influenced this study. Chapter three discusses the procedure of the study, data sources, data analysis, and the context of the study that

includes information on the community, school, and classroom. Also, it gives a detailed

description of the participants of the study. Chapter four discusses the data found during

the study along with an analysis of its major findings. The final chapter explains a

summary of the study's conclusion, limitations, and recommendations for future

research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Classrooms in the United States have drastically changed over the years. Educators always look for ways to change our curriculum to fit the needs of students. These efforts to build curriculum around the engagement of students often lack the conceptual framework of looking at students' diverse cultural backgrounds. Many believe that literacy instruction is only taught in schools in which the students' home environment does not contribute to their learning. However, the concept of the funds of knowledge has pointed out that family literacies have their own contribution to the literacy development of students. According to Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992), "Our analysis of funds of knowledge represents a positive view of households as containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great, potential utility for classroom instruction" (p. 134). Using the cultural and cognitive resources found within the homes of students provides teachers with valuable knowledge to broaden their literacy curriculum. Chapter two presents a review of literature pertaining to funds of knowledge and how it impacts the learning experience of students when integrating it into the curriculum. The first section outlines the theoretical framework of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and how this connects with the funds of knowledge. It is followed by a review of literature that supports creating a stronger literacy learning experience for students when the funds of knowledge are integrated into the curriculum.

Theoretical Framework

Culturally Relevant and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Gloria Ladson-Billings defines culturally relevant teaching as a pedagogy of opposition in which it represents three criteria; "(a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (1995, p. 160). In order for students to fit this criteria or feel accepted in school or achieve academic success, they need to feel like they are a part of the classroom. Culturally relevant teaching requires the teachers to meet the academic needs of their classrooms by allowing the students to be a part of the process. In other words, teachers can utilize a student's culture and interests as a vehicle for learning. Being that culturally relevant pedagogy has a goal to support multiculturalism and multilingualism, Gloria Ladson-Billings pointed out different ways this theory has been conducted in her article, *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* (1995). She believes teachers need to look deeper into their practice and, "produce students who can achieve academically, produce students who demonstrate cultural competence, and develop students who can both understand and critique the existing social order" (p. 474). This practice helps our students accept their cultural identity and assist our colleagues into looking at their teaching practices.

Jacqueline Jordan Irvine (2012) noted that , "CRP has four important pedagogical influences on student learning that should be included in the training of special educators: developing caring relationships with students while maintaining high expectations,

engaging and motivating students, selecting and effectively using learning resources, and promoting and learning from family and community engagement" (p. 271). Additionally, when educators are informed about the foundation of CRP, classrooms become filled with multicultural books, materials, and resources. Educators can relate their classroom procedures and curriculum to accommodate all students from diverse backgrounds.

Django Paris (2012) built his theory on the culturally relevant and responsive theories to expand to sustained cultural practice:

> We need a new term and a new approach that will not only more accurately embody some of the best past and present research and practice but will also offer pre-service and in-service teachers a way of both naming and conceptualizing the need to meaningfully value and maintain the practices of their students in the process of extending their students' repertoires of practice to include dominant language, literacies, and other cultural practices. (p. 95)

Paris used the new term, culturally sustaining, as a way for our teaching to be more than responsive to the cultural experiences of our students. He believed it was important to support multilingualism and multiculturalism in our practices while focusing on getting our students to relate to classroom procedures and lessons. When teachers offer opportunities of diverse learning inside a classroom with a culturally sustaining pedagogy in mind, students will respect and embrace each other's differences. As stated by Paris (2012), "…teachers and students must bring together and extend the various activities and practices of these domains in a forward-looking third space" (p. 94). Within this third space, students can identify as experts in the field, in which they can be utilized

as a resource. Teachers can build lessons and topics grounded in the student's life experiences. As stated by Irvine (2012), "Well planned and carefully constructed cooperative/team learning strategies and flexible ability grouping are particularly effective in classes containing diverse learners" (p. 271). Most importantly, using student life experiences and backgrounds in the classroom allows students to take ownership of their education.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory is another theory that Gloria Ladson-Billings used in education to encourage diversity in the classroom. According to Maria C. Ledesma and Dolores Calderon (2015), "Ladson-Billings and Tate,proposed that Critical Race Theory (CRT), a framework developed by legal scholars, could be employed to examine the role of race and racism in education" (p. 207). In the area of Critical Race Theory, it is important to never view students as less than their abilities but to look at shortcomings in educational systems and practices. Most importantly, Critical Race Theory can be used as a guide to help educators "expose and challenge contemporary forms of racial inequality, which are disguised as "neutral" and "objective" structures, processes and discourses of school curriculum" (Yosso, 2002, p. 93). Critical Race theory continues to be explored in many ways throughout all forms of curriculum. Understanding how to link culture and school so that we can ensure minority students can relate to the curriculum is a key perspective in the Critical Race Theory. Counternarratives have been used to bridge the gap of engaging the reader and emphasizing aspects of race talk. This approach allows the reader to develop a deeper sense of familiarity and logics that are communicated through their culture or community backgrounds. It is important to understand what the

Critical Race Curriculum in education might look like. Maria C. Ledesma and Dolores Calderon examined the development of Critical Race theory in education. They reported (2015) that the critical race curriculum has the five tenets of the Critical Race theory,

> Acknowledging the central and intersecting roles of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination in maintaining inequality in curricular structures, process, and discourses; challenge dominant social and cultural assumptions regarding culture and intelligence, language, and capability, direct the formal curriculum toward goals of social justice and hidden curriculum toward Freirean goals of critical consciousness; develop counter discourses through storytelling, narratives, chronicles, family histories, scenarios, biographies, and parables that draw on the lived experiences students of color bring to the classroom; utilize interdisciplinary methods of historical and contemporary analysis to articulate the linkages between educational and societal inequality. (p. 209-210)

It is important to understand that the traditional curriculum prepares students of color in terms of upper and middle class interests. It maintains hierarchical social and economic power of what is believed to be a white society, in which it doesn't connect to the opportunities within their culture or community. These areas of systematic inequality in schools need to change how students look at the world. It is important to use the basis of Critical Race Curriculum that allows our educators to begin with the experiences within the community. The structure of our curriculum should be developed around these lived experiences.

Social Cultural Theory

The importance of recognizing and building on a student's family background within their community is centered on the framework of a socio-cultural perspective. Social cultural theory is a broader concept of culture that explains the interaction between people and the culture they live in. The roots of this theory go back to the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner. Bronfenbrenner (1975) stated that this perspective had four different levels of influence that affected children's development. Each level influenced how human development occurred. The levels focus on the following systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and the macro-system. The microsystem is the first level that correlates to the child's immediate environment. For example, this could be the parents, siblings, and any other members living in their households. The next level, mesosystem, is an interaction between teachers, staff members, or other places the student interacts with. The exosystem is a level where the student does not necessarily interact within. Examples can include local or national events. Lastly, the macro-system refers to the cultural beliefs and values of the family.

It is important to look at these systems and relate them to CRP. Each system or level defines how human development occurs. It involves home environments, interactions with teachers, students and family members while also incorporating the cultural beliefs and values of families. These levels and systems make up the foundation of how culturally relevant pedagogy is represented in the classroom. Using multicultural literature that connects to the basis of these levels can open up an opportunity for students to grow through a cultural lens while also increasing academic success. According to Hedges, Cullen, and Jordan (2011), "Sociocultural theories accentuate the importance of

recognizing and building on children's family and community learning and knowledge" (p. 25). Additionally, it is important to study the relationship of families in order to understand a student within your classroom.

There were many connections between Bronfenbrenner's theory and Vygotsky's view on learning. Each of them believed that learning occurs through social interactions and relationships but in different ways. As stated before, Bronfenbrenner believed learning to occur throughout different systems where the child can be influenced through these systems. Vygotsky (1978) described this theory as a social process in which social interaction contributes to the development of cognition. He felt as though the social play of children would provide diverse knowledge and experiences into their personal life. In other words, he believed that learning occurs through diverse cultures of students and others. Hogg (2012) reports, "Thus, understanding a household's FOK (funds of knowledge) provides insight into the household's zone of proximal development, which can be applied to support learning at school" (p. 54). The conceptual framework of funds of knowledge connects the importance of Vygotsky's theory and how it builds on learning about children's diverse backgrounds.

Funds of Knowledge

Viewing learning through lense of funds of knowledge (FoK) is a way to enhance family engagement and connect home and school. Moll and Gonzalez developed a research approach in order to understand households within a working-class Mexican community. Within their research they used a combination of ethnographic observations, interviews, and case studies to report the claim, "....that by capitalizing on household and

other community resources, we can organize classroom instruction that far exceeds in quality the rote-like instruction these children commonly encounter in schools" (Moll, Gonzalez, Amanti, 2005, p. 71). Most importantly, teachers need to learn and apply the student's household cultures to their classroom practices in order for students to create connections within the context of the classrooms. Moll et. al. (2005) state,

> The purpose of drawing on student experience with household knowledge is not to merely reproduce household knowledge in the classroom. Working-class students are not being taught construction, plumbing, or gardening. Instead, by drawing on household knowledge, student experience is legitimated as valid, and classroom practice can build on the familiar knowledge bases that students can manipulate to enhance learning in mathematics, social studies, language arts, and other content areas. (p. 43)

When drawing on household knowledge, it provides greater opportunities for students to connect to the classroom learning. Additionally, it allows educators to validate students' lived experiences and provide greater opportunities for student learning.

Hogg and Volman (2020) reported that, "All students' 'virtual backpacks" contain experiences, values, dreams, talents, fears, passions, resources, and more, and the virtual backpacks of students from middle-class White families are more likely to be anticipated and honored by their mostly White middle-class teachers, because they are somewhat known to them" (p. 862). In this case, it was important to recognize how minority students can be nurtured to develop a meaningful curriculum to support equitable school outcomes. A culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy is

considered to be effective ways for schooling to incorporate these beliefs because it encompasses the funds of knowledge into the classroom practices. The funds of knowledge approach gives teachers the cultural resources to tap into the experiences those students have outside of the classroom.

Hogg (2012) stated, "Use of students' and households' FoK in schools potentially creates classroom settings where this process is replicated. This means that students learn to use important cultural tools, including reading, writing, mathematics, and discourse modes, with the teacher actively "creating the social and cultural conditions for (this) socialization into 'authentic' literacy practices" (p. 54). It provides students with the knowledge that is relevant to their life, in which the use of community resources is fundamental in supporting classroom learning. It's important for teachers to focus on finding meaning in the activities rather than giving unrelated facts. Once teachers develop this concept into their classrooms, they can create content using student's backgrounds that allows students the opportunity to assist with adding knowledge to the classroom pedagogy.

Family Literacy

As educators, we can promote and learn from the family. When we learn from the families, we can use what we learned to select resources and adapt instruction. Family literacy is another way to incorporate a student's success in the classroom. Keis (2006) reported, "When families are given the opportunity to interact with quality literature that reflects their lived experiences and validates their culture, literacy becomes meaningful to them" (p. 14). He describes the term family literacy as, "the role that literacy plays in

family, home, and community life" (p. 16). Many culturally diverse populations forms of literacy are ignored in traditional school settings. However, understanding the term family literacy can help incorporate the cultures of diverse students in our school's curriculum. In order to have an open communication with the families and school, it's important to look at the critical pedagogy of family literacy programs. According to Ihmeideh and Al-Maadad (2020), "The critical aim of FLPs is to build strong relationships between home and school and help family members support their children in literacy activities" (p. 1). When building a strong relationship between home and school, it allows the family culture to be shared. Another way to enhance family literacy is to connect children's literature with lived experiences. Keis (2006) pointed out that, "Children's literature offers a viable avenue for promoting dialogue and critical reflection for immigrant and culturally diverse communities" (p. 13). Children's literature can serve as a tool to bridge the gap between home and school. Additionally, family literacy is a term that correlates with all families and presents findings that look different in all homes. When teachers are able to understand the FOK of families, they are able to develop a sense of quality instruction that reflects lived experiences and validates all different cultures in their classrooms.

Engagement

Responding to Picture Books through Visual Art

In their qualitative study, Maneti and Kevin (2014) created opportunities for their students to respond to literature through the use of visual art. The visual art was a way into the children's funds of knowledge that recreated their literacy pedagogy. To

accomplish this, Mantei and Kervin) used the picture book, *Mirror*, to help students make

text to self connections through the use of personal artwork created by the students. The

created space was made for students to share their FOK experiences through art while

engaging in a picture book through the use of literature circles. It was reported that, "The

students' artworks appeared to reveal something of their personal identities and their

competence within the out of school communities with which they engage" (p. 89).

Additionally, the students were able to have a sense of control and competence in sharing

their personal interests that allowed them to feel successful in the instructional practice.

Regardless of the different decoding abilities or cultural backgrounds, the students were

able to respond to the picture book without having to struggle. Arizpi and Styles (2003)

stated, "that some students considered by their teachers as struggling readers, are in fact

more experienced and articulate interpreters of the visual" (p. 71). Furthermore, using

this pedagogy was a way for teachers to gain insight into the FOK of their students and

help plan for future instructional practices.

Students with Individualized Education Plans

For special education practices, it is important to have more opportunities for

instruction to be responsive to student's cultural background as well as their disability.

When students with disabilities are able to connect to outcomes of the lesson they are

able to perform with confidence. Gay (2002) reports that "The best quality education for

ethnically diverse students is as much culturally responsive as it is developmentally

appropriate, which means using their cultural orientations, background experiences, and

ethnic identities as conduits to facilitate their teaching and learning" (p. 614). Although it

appears simple to facilitate their teaching and learning, Gay (2002) explains that

educators often confuse students with disabilities to look "normal" like students with cultural and ethnic differences. Being that there are inappropriate and unreasonable pedagogical actions, it places students at an economic disadvantage with the classroom. Comfort (1992) explains that:

> Teachers may not know how to plan for children who do not fit the mold, so they become scared and resentful of these students and their parents. Teachers may sense that they will not be able to provide the child with an appropriate learning environment, that their teaching may be criticized, and that they will be accountable for a child who they could not serve. Thus, teachers confront themselves on a daily basis with their own perceived failure. A teacher who is in this situation is likely to begin to blame the child for not learning. (p. 102)

Educators need to be prepared to provide the child with an appropriate learning environment that allows the student to feel accepted, comfortable, and ready to learn. In doing so, educators can be equipped with the tools to use a culturally responsive teaching approach. Gay (2002) describes culturally responsive teaching as "a comprehensive endeavor that is engendered in all dimensions of the educational enterprise, including diagnosing students' needs, curriculum content, counseling and guidance, instructional strategies, and performance assessment" (p. 619). Most importantly, when educators use a culturally responsive approach and conceptualize students' FOK, they will have more of an advantage to succeed with the classroom.

Children's Interest used to Create Curriculum

Johnson and Johnson's (2016) study focuses on an approach that gives students the opportunity to incorporate their own interests in the design and implementation of the classroom lessons. The study was conducted in a 4th grade classroom with two Latin students who came from Spanish speaking contexts. Each student was an ELL student with one receiving speech therapy services. The main focus of the study was to determine the effects of the students' motivation and engagement during the conducted lessons. Johnson and Johnson describe the importance of motivation and engagement as, "We have described how both motivation and engagement are affected by student involvement and personalized learning strategies are given the opportunity to draw on their own lessons and, in turn, how this impacts their investment in their education" (p. 112). Most importantly, there was a positive effect on higher productivity during the literacy activities. They concluded that , "The activities were meaningful to them because they were based on their literacy practices and experiences outside of school" (p. 116). The students were familiar with and positively saw themselves within the curriculum which connected them to the lessons. Furthermore, Johnson and Johnson found that, "By empowering ELL students as classroom leaders and honoring the wealth of cultural capital they bring to school every day, teachers can counter the hegemony of academic and linguistic standardization that continues to marginalize culturally diverse students and communities in U.S. schools" (p. 117).

In another study, Hedges (2011) found it essential to use an interests-based curriculum that looked at ways teachers recognized and engaged in children's interests through popular culture. The children were able to reference popular culture through vast

experiences. Hedges (2011) suggests that, "Despite its popularity with children as an interest, popular culture was a contentious site of curriculum co-construction between children and teachers" (p. 27). It appears that when using popular culture to construct the curriculum, it becomes a popular item with students. Allowing students to bring objects, ideas, information, etc. to the classroom to represent themselves within the curriculum is beneficial to all.

In another study, Hedges, Cullen, and Jordan (2011) found that "families were powerful primary sources of influence on children's funds of knowledge-based interests and inquires" (p. 192). This study was conducted to report on how the teachers used children's experiences and interests to engage and recognize within their curriculum. Teachers used family-based funds of knowledge and community-based funds of knowledge where they looked at popular culture, cultural events, interactions at home, as well as parent participation. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that, "The importance of teachers recognizing and responding to children's funds of knowledge-based interests is highlighted as one key argument for moving early-childhood education towards a deeper understanding and interpretation of the term children's interests as a major source of curriculum" (p. 201). When teachers recognize and implement the children's funds of knowledge into the curriculum, it will help connect the children's learning between home and school.

Children's Literature/Culturally Relevant Texts

Children's literature is a viable avenue for incorporating the funds of knowledge into the culturally diverse classrooms within school districts. Keis (2006) reported that

"the use of culturally relevant children's books in classrooms and family literacy projects can serve as a springboard to creative dialogue, critical reflection, and the "coming to voice" that is so essential to the literacy process" (p. 16). In order for students to respond and make connections to the texts being taught in the classroom, they need to be able to relate to the characters. It is important for them to find characters or situations that they relate with when they read books. Many of the books being used in the classroom are centered around one particular culture. The use of multicultural literature offers the cultural diversity that all students need. Keis (2006) maintains that "if we are to provide a truly meaningful and relevant education, we must recognize the talents and knowledge that exist in the families and make them an integral part of our curriculum" (p. 19).

In order to accomplish this Michael-Luna (2008) suggests that "schooling should be a place where students can see themselves and their ways of knowing in the texts, practices, and peers" (p. 291). In this study, Michael-Luna (2008) examines how early elementary Mexican-origin bilinguals respond to a Martin Luther King Jr. literacy event. It appeared that the students' diverse backgrounds were not represented in the text selection which led to resistance in making connections with the text. Michael-Luna (2008) points out "teachers can adapt lessons to address multilinguals' concerns and understanding when teachers are open to hearing student resistance to racial or cultural assumptions presented in texts" (p. 289). In order for the students to feel connected within the lesson, they need to be able to see themselves in the curriculum.

Conclusion

The literature presented suggests that a culturally sustaining classroom allows for a space that contributes to a student's culture, language and identity. When FoK is integrated into the curriculum, the students are encouraged to grow and become competent readers. Research has shown the benefits of utilizing the FoK into the curriculum as well as how school practices sustain student's cultures using the funds of knowledge approach. The next chapter will discuss the research design and methodology used in this research study. Information about the school and participants will be presented. In addition, the data sources and analysis will be highlighted.

Chapter 3
Research Design/Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, the context of the study and methodology are discussed. The beginning part of the chapter illustrates the context of the study where a description of the community, school, classroom, and participants is discussed. In order to protect the confidentiality of the school, district, and case study participants, the school and community were given pseudonyms. Following the discussion of the context is the procedure of the study, data sources, and data analysis.

Research Paradigm

This study, completed during the Fall of 2020 and Winter of 2021, explores the impact on the literacy learning experience for students with disabilities when integrating the funds of knowledge into the curriculum. The research methodology for this study follows a qualitative inquiry approach to collect and generate rich data to understand what funds of knowledge students bring to the learning experience. According to Shagoury and Power (2012), "At its best, teacher research is a natural extension of good teaching. Observing students closely, analyzing their needs, and adjusting the curriculum to fit the needs of all students have always been important skills demonstrated by fine teachers" (p. 3). I employed a qualitative inquiry approach because it allowed me to build relationships, which is essential for this study. This approach allowed me to look for patterns and themes when investigating students' interests and integrating them into the curriculum. Moreover, Shagoury and Power (2012) maintain that it is a natural extension

of good teaching, in which it involves the skills and activities that are already a part of the classroom.

This study focused on observations of students during small group instruction to observe their actions and literacy habits when their funds of knowledge are integrated into the curriculum. In an ethnographic study, Hedges, Cullen, and Jordan (2011), argue that, "using funds of knowledge to ascertain children's interests provides a more analytical way to respond to these interests than present approaches based on recognizing children's choices of play activities" (p. 3). They concluded that providing this theoretical framework would consist in a, "positive way for teachers to acknowledge the richness of children's lives, collaborate with parents in children's learning, and reduce the disjunction between homes and centers cited earlier" (p.14). When we look deeper into a child's life or home connections, we bridge the gap of communication from home and school.

Context of the Study

Community

Falcon Elementary School is located in the borough of Falcon. The borough of Falcon is a small, rural town made up of about 1,800 people. The town does not have any super markets or large known stores. Many of the resources come from the surrounding towns. Recently, a Dunkin and Dollar General were established near the school. These two establishments were big features in the development of the town. Although they do not have corporate businesses in the town like ShopRite or Walmart, they do have a variety of small business owners. The school is surrounded with forests, houses, and farmland. Also, there are two playgrounds and baseball fields surrounding the school.

The economic status ranges from household to household. According to the Census reporter (2017), 8.1% of people were living below the federal poverty line. English is predominately the main language spoken with Spanish having a small percent. The majority of residents in the town hold cultural values that stem from a second or greater generation of European descent (Irish, Italian, Germans, etc.) The community engages in a wide range of outside activities. The Falcon Drug Alliance holds basketball clinics and a summer camp, whereas the Falcon Athletic Association has baseball and softball teams. Many of the students from the district are a part of these activities.

School

Falcon Elementary School is the only school located within the district. Since the town is very small, the school is considered to be a NJ School Choice District. According to the Falcon School website (2020), "The New Jersey Inter-district School Choice program provides the opportunity for non-resident students to attend Folsom School at no cost to their parents/guardians. This program also includes transportation options for School Choice students. The School Choice program covers grades kindergarten through eight" (para. 1). A majority of the school population are choice students. Students come from the surrounding areas. There is a wait list for students waiting to get into the school. The school population consists of about 400 students in grades Pre-K to 8th grade. There are two classrooms per grade level. However, there is only one Pre-k. The classes are generally small with about 25 kids to a class. There is a special education teacher assigned to each grade level as well as three interventionists who are a part of pull-out instruction. The students receiving special education services are mainstreamed as the school does not have a self-contained classroom. If a student requires the placement of

self-contained, then they are sent back to their home district (if they are a choice student) or out of the district to a school that has the appropriate program. There are a total of eighty-nine to ninety special education students.

Each day begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m. Grades 2nd through 5th grade are departmentalized and switched for math, science, social studies, and English language arts (ELA). All classrooms are equipped with Chromebook, IPADS, and SMART boards. The school has a wide range of special area classrooms. The programs include library, gym, computers, Spanish, TAG (talented and gifted), art and music. These specials are taught on a six day rotation. The schedule is currently different; however, due to the COVID-19 protocols and scheduling. Since the school is very small, the middle school department and classes are taught in the same building; however, they rotate on a different schedule with different electives to choose from. Some include digital arts, digital photography, financial literacy, etc. Along with special area teachers, the school district has a school counselor, child study team, and a nurse.

The percentage of students experiencing housing insecurity is very low. About thirty percent of students, however, live below the federal poverty line. One hundred percent of kids receive free lunch due to the funding granted since the COVID-19 pandemic. The school provides events for parents such as our SOAR breakfast, International Day, Halloween parade, along with the individual classroom events. Home and school association meets monthly to make decisions for school assemblies, Santa Shop, Book Fair, etc. These events are well-attended.

Staff members come from all areas surrounding our small town. The staff is very experienced, in that many have obtained multiple certifications. Some teachers have a

certification in Special Education and Elementary Education, while others obtained masters in school counseling. Also, some staff members are returning to school to obtain a Masters in Math Coaching. In the area of experience, there are teachers who have been there for up to twenty-five years or more, while others only being two years. All of the teachers are full-time, but part-time aides are also employed in the building. The school provides many opportunities for professional development, about one in-service a month. Professional development programs are based on learning more about programs in the school or topics that are turned-key from teachers who went to an out of district workshop.

Classroom

Students in need of services are pulled from their English Language Arts block to the reading support classroom for 30 minutes of extra support in reading. The lessons are taught in small groups. The groups range from two to three students in grades 1st through 5th grade. Within the small groups, the five components of literacy are addressed and taught. The students learn strategies for decoding, fluency and comprehension. Each student has specific IEP goals and objectives that they are working on. Some students who are in the Intervention and Referral Services are working on specific measurable achievable relevant time-bound goals. Typically, I see each student two to four times a week for 30 minutes. My students are seated around a round table with me in the center. Due to the COVID restrictions and protocols, two students were placed six feet away from each other and myself, while I instructed two other students on the computer through google meet.

Participants

The students participating in the study are three, third grade students ranging from the ages of eight to nine years old. Five students in total were asked to participate in the study; however, only three students returned consent forms to use their data in the study. Of the three students, two are boys and one is a girl. All of the students identify as "white/Caucasian." Their primary language is English. All of the students are receiving special education services. Their classifications range from communication impaired to specific learning disability. They receive extra pull-out support in reading during small group instruction. In addition, two of the students receive speech and language services.

During the small group instruction for reading, the speech teacher is there to teach. Prior to the data collection, the students were told about the research and their role within the study. The students were asked to participate through parental consent.

Procedure of the Study

This study was conducted from October 2020 to January 2021. The study took place in the reading classroom during the participants' reading support blocks. Data collection took place during the small group reading sessions for approximately 25-30 minutes. The following outlines the procedures of the study.

- Week one: Obtained parental consent to use student data in the form of surveys, audio recordings, observations, questionnaires, and journal responses.
- Week two: Began collecting data on the students' funds of knowledge through the use of the following surveys: Me and My Reading profile (Appendix A), Student Interview Survey (Appendix B), and Parental Survey (Appendix C). Discussed

the research study and role with the participants involved. Conducted a parent survey to understand the funds of knowledge within their household.

- Week three: Continued collecting data on the participants' funds of knowledge and interests. Took notes on how they interacted with the wide range of books placed on the table. Administered the benchmark testing assessment, Fountas and Pinnell.

- Week four: Began implementing read alouds with Tell Me Prompts. Introduced sketch books as their journal responses to help with their prompts. Took notes on what picture books were selected and their connections/sketches to the book. The use of multicultural texts and topics was used to promote student responses.

- Week five: Displayed different decodable books. Participants chose a book to begin using to read aloud. Observed how they interacted with the book, what they connected with and why they chose that particular book.

- Week six: Began implementing activities with the read aloud book, *Thanksgiving at the Tappletons*. Modeled and discussed ways to make connections with the book in the beginning. Students continued to sketch in their journals while listening to the book out loud. Observation notes and sketches were used to document student talk and participation about their perception of their reading abilities and skills.

- Week seven: Began implementation of guided reading groups with non-fiction books. Information from surveys, interests, and questionnaires supported the guided reading activities and selection of books. Discussed what it meant to make connections and build background knowledge. Used observation notes to report

on student interactions with one another and book selections. Had students
sketched text-to-self connections in their personal sketch journals.

- Week eight: Continued to use student's backgrounds and funds of knowledge to
support guided reading groups. Continued to take notes with the effects it has on
the students' performance and how gender played a role.

- Week nine: Implemented Read Aloud activity on the book *Thank you Mr. Falker*.
Made personal connections with the character in the book through the use of
visual art. Created a self-portrait to display selfie traits about oneself and sketched
a portrait of an important person who has helped them. Observations and journal
responses focused on what the learning experience looked like and what funds of
knowledge was brought or connected with this book.

- Week ten: Conducted student questionnaires about what their favorite part of our
small group activities was, why they liked that part, and what could be changed
about the reading lessons. Continued to take notes about the students' interactions
with discussions and activities.

- Week eleven: Conducted a post survey to gain insight into how the students'
attitudes and feelings have changed about reading. Continuation of activities and
practices outlined in previous weeks.

- Week twelve: Administered the winter benchmark assessment, Fountas and
Pinnell.

Data Sources

In order to understand the impact on the literacy learning experience for students with disabilities when integrating the funds of knowledge into the curriculum, a variety of sources of data were collected. The qualitative data collected included classroom observations, teacher researcher journals/researchers' field notes, interviews/surveys, and material artifacts (student journals/sketchbooks). Materials for the study include critical digital tools such as laptops or iPads and video cameras.

The first data source included observation of student discussions captured in a researcher's journal. Field notes were taken within the journal to capture the students' discussions, interactions, thoughts, as well as the researcher's thoughts and questions. During the read aloud or guided reading lessons, I would jot down notes as students discussed or participated within the lesson. The notes included the thoughts the students had as they listened to the read aloud or read out loud, how the students responded to the topics discussed, how they interacted with the books or topics, the questions that were proposed, what questions were proposed, and the interests of the student's selection of books.

The second data source utilized was interviews and surveys. Students participated in one-on-one the interviews and surveys. Prior to beginning the small group reading lessons, students participated in interviews using the Me and My Reading Profile survey and a student interest interview. These same surveys were administered with each student while the surveys took about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The questions focused on students' attitudes and feelings towards reading, interests in reading, and their reading experiences outside of school. The surveys and interviews captured their perceptions

towards reading, interests about reading, and how their experiences with reading outside of school influence their reading behaviors within school. Individual questionnaires and surveys were administered during small group discussions to gain insight into how students' attitudes and feelings have changed about reading.

Another data source included material artifacts. The material artifacts used were student journals that were in the form of a sketchbook. The sketchbooks were utilized by having the students sketch or draw their thoughts or connections throughout the different books we were reading. Sketchbooks were chosen because all three students had an interest in drawing or sketching rather than writing.

Data Analysis

The data from the three diverse family contexts was cross-analyzed to look for patterns and emerging beliefs about family literacies, life histories, and funds of knowledge. The research questions were used to guide and analyze through reading of the data in a constant comparative technique.. One of the methods used in inductive analysis was the coding process. According to Creswell and Ollerenshaw (2002), the coding process in inductive analysis begins with an initial reading through the text data, moving onto identify specific segments of information, then labeling the segments of information to create categories amongst your data. After labeling segments to create categories, it was stated to "reduce overlap and redundancy among the categories," and then finally, "creating a model incorporating most important categories" (Creswell and Ollerenshaw, 2002, p. 266). Memos were written to capture recurring themes and categories. This was followed by grouping those notes into categories while looking for patterns or themes across my data.

Triangulation was also used in this study. According to Shagourney and Power (2012), "triangulation is the use of multiple different sources, methods, investigators or theories to confirm findings" (p. 144). Most importantly, this process helped strengthen the analysis of the research study. Data sources that were utilized included observation notes, interviews, surveys/questionnaires, and material artifacts (student journals/artwork). Understanding the literacy learning experience patterns of the students with disabilities and how they impacted the curriculum when integrating it with the student's interests was the goal of this study. As students participated in discussions, they made connections by drawing in their student journals. In addition to the student journals, a researcher's journal was used to take notes and observations on how they reacted, expressed, and adapted to the different activities that were implemented in our small group. The findings of this study are detailed in Chapter four.

Conclusion

The next chapter focuses on the analysis of the data collected throughout the study. The chapter will display descriptions and themes that were revealed throughout the data collection process.

Chapter 4

Findings of the Study

It is in this sense that education for cultural sustainability involves going beyond

mere tolerance or recognition of the cultural fact. It also entails, from the

perspective of funds of identity, incorporating the voices of learners through

artifacts created by them that allow the objectives, subjects and curricular content

to be contextualized and personalized. (Esteban-Guitart, Lalueza, Zhang-Yu,

Llopart, 2019, p. 10)

Chapter 3 outlined the research paradigm, context of the study, procedure of the

study, data sources, and data analysis used in this research study. This chapter focuses on

data collection that assists in finding the impact on the literacy learning experience for

students with disabilities when integrating the funds of knowledge into the curriculum.

Also, it focuses on answering the following questions: Do student's perceptions of their

reading skills change when they choose their reading materials? How would the funds of

knowledge help choose books for each student? What effect will it have on the student's

performance? Although the focus of this study was not increasing students' reading

levels, their reading levels were examined at the end of the study after integration of the

funds of knowledge in the curriculum.

I began by interviewing the students to see how they thought of themselves as a

reader. I used the "Me and My Reading" profile to understand their perception as a

reader. According to Marinak, Malloy, Gambrell, and Mazzoni (2015), "Motivation to

read is a critical consideration for educators because literacy learning requires an

interaction between cognitive and affective factors. Motivation is associated with several

important correlates, such as higher reading achievement, greater conceptual understanding, and a willingness to persevere when reading tasks become challenging" (p. 51). Also, I interviewed them using the Student Interview Survey to understand their interests outside and inside of school to assist with the motivation in groups. This interview allowed me to understand what kinds of books they were interested in as well as getting to know them on a personal level. After interviewing the students, I conducted interviews with the parents to understand the funds of knowledge within their household. Then I selected different texts of interest to see how the students responded to picking out a book of choice. I observed the behaviors and developed read aloud lessons that incorporated "tell me" prompts, sketch books, and journal responses using a wide range of books they selected during the book observation period. Also, I selected books using the information provided by the parental survey. Within our small group, the students received instruction through read alouds and guided reading groups. Finally, I administered a student questionnaire about which part of our small group they enjoyed the most, why they liked that part, and what could be changed about the reading lessons. Most importantly, the students were given a post survey to determine their insight on how their attitudes and feelings have changed about reading. Chapter four will outline a case study of each student (pseudonyms are used), themes, and patterns from the data collected in the study.

Curriculum

It is important to understand the current and past third grade curriculum before looking at the findings of this research study. The third grade reading curriculum is based upon fiction novels; non-fiction guided reading groups, vocabulary, and writing, not on a

particular commercial reading program. Instead, the curriculum is created by reviewing state standards and finding supplemental activities to use with the novels assigned. Each year the students are required to read novels that are a part of the curriculum such as *Henry Huggins, Beezus and Ramona* by Beverly Cleary or *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White. Guided reading groups provide targeted instruction in-between each novel study. The novels used are usually not within the level of reading for my struggling readers. Within these lessons, the students are required to listen to the book out loud and respond to RACE (restate, answer, cite, extend) questions. They interact by making connections and thinking about what is happening in the text. However, this interaction is not by choice. Instead the students are required to read these books because that is what the curriculum states. No meaningful connection to students' cultural lives inform the book selections.

Prior to this school year, the students in this study would often express their opinions about these novels, typically stating how they were boring and hard. They did not seem to be making any real connections with the text. Moreover, the texts are centered on one particular cultural background, a "white, middle-class norm." Overall, the students in this study perceived themselves as terrible readers. Often, I would share strategies on how to help them understand the text better, but I was troubled that they were reading books that had no personal connection to their own cultural background? We teach them the strategies to decode and comprehend, but little to help them to see the purpose in reading. How do we as educators allow them to see themselves as a reader when they don't have the confidence in themselves? It was not until my interviews with these students where I finally saw the big picture.

I noted in my teacher's research journal,

> This is my second year teaching these students and I knew they had strong
> feelings about reading but after listening to how honest they were through these
> surveys, I feel as though I have a different perspective on what reading should
> look like for them.

The next section will discuss the participants and the similarities and differences in the themes of the study.

Participants

Maria: "Trying to Figure Out the Words."

Maria (pseudonym) is an 8 year old, third grade student who enjoys using her imagination. She wants to be a DJ when she gets older because she likes music. She has a positive attitude and knows how to make her peers smile. Maria is in the 3rd grade inclusion classroom, where she has two teachers, a general education and special education teacher. She remains eligible for special education and related services under the classification of specific learning disability due to the weaknesses in reading comprehension, basic reading skills, and reading fluency. These weaknesses negatively affect her progress in the general education setting. Along with the support in the inclusion classroom, Maria receives pull-out support in reading. She receives pull out support in an Orton Gillingam based program, the Sonday System, four times a week for thirty minutes. This method is a multi-sensory, phonics technique that assists with reading instruction. Maria has received this support for two years now.

Overall, she is in good health, in which her behavior, personal, and social development appear to be within normal limits. In the area of social skills and peer relations, Maria enjoys spending time with her peers. She is always ready to help a friend while also expressing her feelings to her peers and teachers. Throughout the school year, Maria is evaluated using various tools including MAP, Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark System, teacher observations, and assessments. In the beginning of the school year, Maria was an independent D (end of kindergarten) on the Fountas and Pinnell assessment.

Maria lives with her immediate family in a rural neighborhood. She resides with her mom, dad, and little brother, as well as her pet. Her mom works as a secretary and her dad works in construction. When she is at home, she enjoys sitting on her bed, watching TV, and playing the game, "The floor is lava." When she was asked this question in the student interview, her face lit up as she talked about the game. It appears that she believes the game is fun because "it is kinda funny." When I asked her if anyone reads to her at home, she replied, "Mommy reads to me when I can't figure out something, like my schoolwork." Although Maria kept referring to school work as something her Mom read to her, the parental survey displayed a different response.

The conversation between the parent and I during the parental interview revealed some important insights into their home literacies. Our conversation began by discussing what reading and writing looked like in their home. The parent reported, "Reading is important in our home. We read books at night before bed. We don't do much writing at home. This is usually where she and I begin to fight." It appeared that the family engages in reading and writing in the community by attending church and playing softball. The

mom reported that when she was little she would point things out in stores. The grandfather spends a lot of his time helping with her children. Although he picks them up from school every day, he cannot help with homework. I asked the parents to discuss some things that they are doing to help their child in school. They reported that, "I try to read chapter books with her at home and help her with her homework. I just want her to be a better reader. It's tough sometimes. I am not the teacher." In order to find more information about what chapter books were being used at home, I asked, "Do you read the chapter books to her or does she read them to you?" In their home, they try to do both by helping her with the words. Some of the chapter books they read together are Harry Potter, but also reading books from school like Henry Huggins. To wrap up our conversation, I asked the parent to share something she wished her child's teacher knew about the family. She replied, "We try to help Maria with her reading but sometimes it is hard."

Based on the parental interview, it appears that reading is important in the home. However, it can be a struggle between Maria and her mom. In this exchange, I learned that mom and Maria choose chapter books to read at home. From this response, it appears that chapter books are chosen because she is in third grade. Also, it is relevant that Mom feels it is hard to help her with reading at home. After our conversation about the importance of reading at home, we began discussing the literacies within the home. The family enjoys spending time with one another during the holidays as well as going to different parks together. They enjoy cooking with one another on the holidays while also going on vacation.

In the *Me and My Reading Profile* and *Student Interview*, Maria was able to share the perception of herself as a reader. The score was broken down into different subscales such as self-concept, value, and literacy out loud. When looking at the responses in each subscale, it appears that Maria believes she is an incompetent reader. She does not believe she has any reading success when thinking about herself as a reader. She responded to the reading profile by choosing items like, "I am not a good reader." "For me, learning to read is really hard." "For me, reading is really hard." Maria's reading profile informed me that she feels sad when she reads out loud to someone because she does not like to read out loud. Also, she feels reading is okay and she spends some of her time reading books out loud. She does not like to read at all in front of others or in her free time. Although Maria does not perceive herself as a good reader, she feels becoming a reader is very important. She circled the option of "very important" when she was asked to fill in the sentence, "Learning to read is _____."

These findings were also evident in the interview I conducted with Maria using the student interview sheet:

Mrs. LoSasso:	Do you like to read?
Maria:	No, because it is boring, gets you frustrated when you can't figure out a word.
Mrs. LoSasso:	Do you think you are a good reader?
Maria:	Not really.
Mrs. LoSasso:	What do you think is the hardest part about reading?

Maria:	Trying to figure out the words.
Mrs. LoSasso:	What do you do when you come to a word you don't know?
Maria:	I look through the packet you gave me or call my mom. Sometimes, I just sit and look at it.
Mrs. LoSasso:	What kinds of things do you do when you have reading at school?
Maria:	I try to go along with them but I don't always keep up.
Mrs. LoSasso:	Do you think reading will be important to you?
Maria:	Kinda.

It is evident that Maria does not see herself as a reader. Although she uses the strategies she is taught in the classroom, she does not have the confidence to state that she is a reader. Throughout this interview, Maria stated that she enjoyed reading non-fiction stories, specifically with the topic of animals. Our first activity included a wide range of books of interests as well as topics that were discussed in our interview. The books were all different reading levels. I gave Maria the opportunity to look through the books and pick three she would like to read in our small group. I noticed she was eager to go to the animal books. As she pulled out the books, she shared all different kinds of facts about the animals that were on the cover. I could tell her she was eager to read these types of books due to her enthusiasm. This allowed me to confirm some of her interests for later guided reading lessons.

Once I was able to gather more information about my students' interests and background, I began introducing the concept of "Tell me" prompts. Maria was given her sketchbook/journal and asked to decorate the cover with all of her favorite things. I explained the idea of our sketchbooks/journals as a way for her to make text-self connections through visual art. She was excited because art was one of her favorite subjects. In order to connect with cultural backgrounds of traditions during the holiday of Thanksgiving, I laid out different types of Thanksgiving Day texts for read alouds. After looking at the covers of the book, Maria picked the book, *Thanksgiving at the Tappletons*, by Eileen Spinelli. As she looked through the book, she began recalling all the moments of her past Thanksgiving dinners while sketching a picture in her sketchbook. She was eager to begin as she flipped through the book. As she sketched, we began a discussion about traditions:

Mrs. LoSasso: What is a tradition?

Maria: Something that happens the same every year.

Mrs. LoSasso: Do you have any traditions?

Maria: Yes, we have a lot of traditions.

Mrs. LoSasso: I see that you are sketching a picture of something.
          Do you mind sharing?

Maria: I made a connection to a page in the book. Daddy makes
            the turkey but we help. My brother makes a mess all the
            time, like the mess in this photo. We always have to make

two turkeys because one time the turkey got burnt and the

mashed potatoes exploded everywhere.

Maria's illustrated artwork offered me the opportunity to develop an understanding about her at home literacies and life values. Maria listened to the read aloud while sharing many texts-to self-connections through the visual art. Figure 1 displays Maria's artwork that was discussed in the above conversation.

Figure 1

Maria's Thanksgiving Artwork

After our first read aloud activity, we moved on to our guided reading groups. All of the students were able to choose from the selection of books that I gave them prior to the lesson. All of the books were topics of interest gathered by the student interviews.

The first book chosen was called, *How I care for my pet?* As we previewed the text, Maria was asked to tell me about her pets by sketching in their sketchbooks. She shared how she takes care of her pets. As we read through the book, I noted how well Maria was using her decoding abilities when she was fluently reading. Also, she was volunteering often to share her connections or sketches. The next book was called, *Tree Animals*. When I gave Maria the book, I asked her to preview it by looking through it. I observed her behaviors and recorded her statements:

> Maria's facial expressions turned to a smile when I handed her the book. Her
> enthusiasm was showing as she pointed at the different pages and showed her
> background knowledge of the woodpecker and owl. She stated that she watched a
> show on A*nimal Planet* about owls. Her statements began with, "Did you know?"
> and "The show stated..." I noticed how she moved through the pages and viewed
> the illustrations. As she viewed the illustrations, she showed her facts about the
> animals on that page. When turning to the Koala page, Maria jumped up and
> asked, "Can I read this page? I know a lot about koalas." This was the first time
> Maria volunteered to read out loud.

Maria responded to this text with enthusiasm and confidence. It was evident in her reading that this book created a space for her to make connections and provide meaningful opportunities for her to identify as a reader.

In December, I transitioned back to the read-aloud of picture books that allowed Maria to make text to self-connections through images in children's literature. I chose the book, *Thank You, Mr. Falker* because the character exhibits similar feelings as Maria did

in our interview session. I wanted to provide an understanding of the text through her own self-perception and capture her values and practices. We began our book discussion by previewing the book and thinking about our responses to the question, "Have you ever really wanted to learn something? How did you do it and who helped you? Maria responded with, "learning how to ride a bike." She stated that her dad helped her. Before we began reading, I reviewed our procedures of the tell me prompts and asked her to think about how she is similar and different from the character, Trisha. As we read through the book, we stopped to chat about the character and the events that were occurring in the book. I noticed that Maria was sketching. Figure 2 presents Maria's artwork that she begins explaining below.

Figure 2

Maria's Artwork During Read aloud
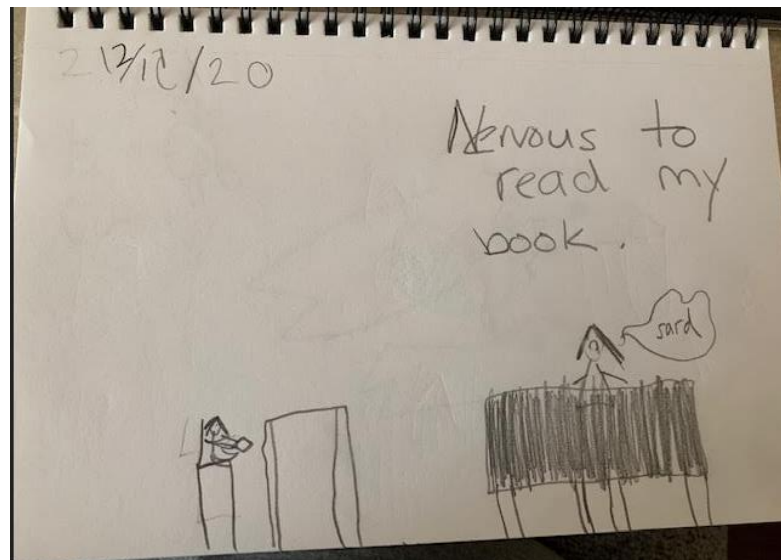
When I asked her about her sketch, she responded with, "It's about a time I felt frustrated and threw my book at my mom like Trisha did. This is me standing up needing to read out loud. I wrote scared because that's how I was feeling." As we wrapped up the lesson for the day, I made notes in my teacher's journal:

> Maria was very eager to share her response as I began reading. I noticed how connected she was with the story. When asking her to use descriptive words to connect to the reader, she used words like frustration, nervous, and mad. I was shocked that she didn't instantly use the word sad as it appeared that the character, Trisha, was sad in the book. Were these the same feelings she was feeling about with herself as a reader?

When we continued the lesson the next day to finalize the reading of the book. We concluded our lesson with responding to the following questions: Have you ever felt bad or good about yourself? and How does this story make you feel? Maria responded with a time she felt bad about herself in 2nd grade because she had to read in front of the class. She began shaking her head and saying it was the worst thing ever. When I asked her to share a time she felt good about herself, she had a hard time making those connections. Since I was aware that she enjoyed softball, I asked her to share an experience with that. Her posture straightened up and her finger pointed in the air as she stated, "Oh yeah, I forgot softball. I always feel good when I hit the ball. Did you know I am pretty good at softball?" I was glad that we ended that part of the conversation with a positive attitude. It showed me that when we connect to something outside of school, it makes a difference with how the behaviors and reactions change. Our final question, How did the story make you feel? concluded our connections with the book. She

responded with, "Sad because it happened to me." I asked her to explain more about this and she responded with, "Before I started coming here, I was not good at reading but now I can see myself getting better." Her statements were becoming more positive in regards to how she was thinking about herself.

As a final reflection and activity to the book, *Thank You, Mr. Falker,* I asked her to sketch herself and an important person in her life that has helped her grow in any way. Although I asked her to write traits that described herself and the person, she struggled with the spelling portion. This activity was completed on our Google Meet platform, as it was Maria's remote day. Even though I helped her with the spelling and displayed some examples, she wanted to state them out loud instead. Figure 3 demonstrates her self-portrait and a portrait of myself. She chose me as the person who has helped her grow. When she spoke about herself she used the words, eager, happy, proud, frustrated to describe herself. She pointed to the portrait of me and stated, "This is you because you are helping me grow as a reader."

Figure 3

Maria's Self-Portrait and Important Person Portrait

I was happy to see that she chose positive words to describe herself. It was evident that her confidence was improving.

Our final activities concluded with a student questionnaire and a post survey to gain insight into how her attitude and feelings have changed about reading. Maria answered the questionnaire by sharing how she enjoyed the books about animals. She stated that she loved reading with those groups because she knew a lot about them. She wanted to share with me that if we used books like this all the time then she would not be scared to read. For the post-survey, she colored in a majority of the happy faces that indicated she loved the statements. Some statements included: How I feel about reading at school, How I feel about reading with someone, How I feel about myself as a reader. When I administered the Fountas and Pinnell assessment for the winter benchmark data, Maria did not exhibit expressions of defeat when she read through the three books I gave her. She was happy to share the knowledge and strategies that she learned throughout our

small group sessions. Her middle of the year independent reading level was an F (beginning of 1st grade), indicating that she increased by two reading levels.

Michael: "It is Easier to Talk than Read."

Michael (pseudonym) is an 8 year old, third grade student who enjoys dressing professionally every day for school. He wants to be a businessman or president when he gets older. Michael is in the third grade inclusion classroom, where he has two teachers, a general education teacher and a special education teacher. He remains eligible for special education and related services under the classification of other health impaired. Due to his diagnosis of Apraxia of Speech, Michael struggles with the decoding and spelling of words. Along with the support in the classroom, he receives pull-out support in reading as well as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Michael has received reading support for two years and the other therapies since he was in pre-k.

Overall, he is in good health, in which his behavior, personal, and social development appear to be within normal limits. However, it was reported that he has a sensitivity to blue and red dyes. Throughout the school year, Michael is evaluated using various tools including MAP, Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark System, teacher observations, and assessments. In the beginning of the school year, Michael was an independent F (middle of first grade) on the Fountas and Pinnell assessment.

Michael lives with his immediate family in a rural neighborhood. He resides with his mom, dad, and older sister, as well as his dog Blue and fish, Jack. When he is at home, he enjoys playing Minecraft, dressing-up, legos, and hanging out with his family. I asked him what makes dressing up fun. He replied with, "It feels like I'm being a

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different person or character. I have all kinds of costumes too." When I asked him if anyone reads to him at home, he replied, "My mom reads the hard words or directions to me. I enjoy reading to my fish." Since he opened up the conversation about reading to his fish, I felt it was appropriate to continue asking the questions on the student interview sheet. When I asked him if he likes to read, he replied with, "Yes, but not sometimes. I like to draw. That's like my thing. I'm good at drawing." Drawing seemed to be the topic for a while as he described all of the things he drew before. He went on to explain about how he gets upset when he misses art because he needs to go to OT or PT in the morning. He did not like the special's schedule either due to the COVID changes. He wanted to have art once a week, not every four weeks. I thanked him for sharing his concerns with the new schedule and I stated that I would ask his case manager if they could change the service time for OT and PT. I could tell he appreciated that and he was ready to move on to the next question:

Mrs. LoSasso:	Are you a good reader?
Michael:	No, because I mess up sometimes.
Mrs. LoSasso:	What do you think is the hardest part?
Michael:	Saying the words. It's easier to just have a conversation. I mess up on writing too. It's like how to put the words together.
Mrs. LoSasso:	Well, what do you do when you come to a word you don't know?

Michael:	I'll stop and skip over.
Mrs. LoSasso:	What kinds of things do you do when you have reading at school?
Michael:	Read it because you are forced too.

It was evident that Michael had strong feelings about reading. I noted that he shared struggles that were not mentioned in the questions. He was open and receptive to sharing his responses. I could tell he thought of reading as something he had to do in school instead of enjoying it. He stated that he gets books from the library and the book shelves at his house. He enjoys reading about animals and spiders. Also, he likes reading fiction books that have humor or "happy" feelings in them. In all, he likes that, "school teaches you most about stuff you don't know about." He stated that he thinks reading is important because it will help him be a businessman one day. Based on these responses, I was eager to see what his responses would be in the *Me and My Reading Profile*. However, I wanted to get the parental survey completed prior to administering the reading profile.

Based on the parental survey, reading and writing is important in their household. They spend a lot of time hiking and being out in nature. A lot of times they will spend time looking at maps or signs on the trails. Michael's older sister is involved in sports so the family enjoys time within the community participating in softball. It was reported that they try to read different books at home but a lot of the time it is spent doing homework or projects. Mom stated that she is constantly trying to make sure Micheal is progressing with his services as well as utilizing the resources that are available to him. She believes that she is a strong advocate for him and appreciates all of the extra help the school

provides to him. When I asked her to describe something she wishes her child's teachers knew about their family, she replied with, "It was very hard in the beginning. I wish some of the teachers would understand how far we've come and how hard he works at getting his speech to be okay." From the interview, I could tell that Michael's mom has a strong opinion about reading. It appears her main goal is for Michael to succeed.

In the *Me and My Reading Profile* and *Student Interview*, Michael was able to share the perception of himself as a reader. The score was broken down into different subscales such as self-concept, value, and literacy out loud. When looking at the responses in each subscale, it appears that Michael believes he is an incompetent reader. He does not believe he has any reading success when thinking about himself as a reader. He responded to the reading profile by choosing items like, "I am not a good reader." "For me, learning to read is sort of hard." "For me, reading is really hard." However, some of his answers didn't match his opinion of himself as a reader. For example, it appears he likes to read books to himself but feels happy when he reads out loud to someone but thinks it is okay to read books out loud to someone else. In our prior interview, he stated that reading was important; however, his response to "Learning to read is _____," was "not very important." This indicates two different responses about the same type of question. Most importantly, he indicated that, "I think becoming a reader is very important." Michael's reading profile informed me that his answers were different for questions that were similar in context. He feels reading is okay and spends some of his time reading books out loud. He does not like to share his ideas about books or reading with others. Although Michael does not perceive himself as a good reader, he would feel okay if someone gave him a book as a present. Although there were

inconsistencies in the responses, I noted some general statements in my teacher's journal:

> My one student showed different views from the interview and reading profile.
> His reflection of himself showed through the following statements: "I mess up
> sometimes." "It's easier to talk than read." "I know I'm not a good reader either."
> I had to hold back my tears as he kept bringing up these different statements. His
> opinion changed in the reading profile. Why was that? Some of the statements
> didn't relate to the questions being asked or were different but I felt as though he
> felt more comfortable in the interview setting. He shared that he was an artist
> multiple times. He wanted me to know that was a strength. Did he think the
> reading profile was a test? I felt as though I was beginning to build a rapport with
> him. I was listening to him.

The trusting relationship was being built within the interview process. Michael's answers to the reading profile did not match his responses to the interview questions. His enthusiasm and attitude was different for each one. It was important that I took notice of these behaviors during our activities.

Our first activity included a wide range of books of interests as well as topics that were discussed in our interview. The books were all different reading levels. I gave Michael the opportunity to look through the books and pick three he would like to read in our small group. He was the only student in the group for this lesson because the other students were absent. I noticed he was eager to go to the books about animals and drawing. He stayed away from the books abouts artists and picked up the books that

talked about clay. These books were decodable books, in which there were small stories containing vowel patterns. As he looked through them, he stated, "These look like they are all easy." He stopped at the small story, *Three Cheers for the Five Senses*. I asked him to share why he chose that book. He replied with, "I like the cover and that it has a lot of r-patterned words. I'm practicing my r's in speech." The cover was a picture of a woman making clay artwork. I explained the idea of the sketchbook and modeled the first page of the story. He began by reading the next page. After reading, he instantly grabbed the sketchbook and began drawing. I asked him what he was noticing or connecting too? He replied, "The art in the pictures it's like weird artwork. My sister likes to make clay objects." His sketch was an image of his sister making a clay object. He went on to state that he likes to sketch more than use clay. He continued to read as he approached the next page. He stated out loud, "When I was little, my mom, sister and I made a minion cake for my birthday." Figure 4 displays a picture of his tell me prompt that relates to his family making the birthday cake. I asked him, "Is that something you like to do with your mom?" He replied, "Yes, my sister and I like to bake. We make brownies all the time." I enjoyed our conversations about his at home literacies during this activity. I could tell he was interested in his book selection. He read fluently through the pages while making connections.

Figure 4

Michael's Family Baking a Cake Together

The following days continued with digging deeper into his cultural background. In order to connect with cultural backgrounds of traditions during the holiday of Thanksgiving, I laid out different types of Thanksgiving day read-alouds. After looking at the covers of the book, Michael picked the book, *Thanksgiving at the Tappletons*, by Eileen Spinelli. This was the same book Maria picked the day before. Due to the COVID policies in our school, the students were taught on separate cohort days. Michael was the only individual in this group because the one student was absent and Maria was completing assignments remotely on the computer. I made an observation that day in my teacher's journal:

After displaying the same books as I did for Maria's group, I noticed that Michael chose the same book, *Thanksgiving at the Tappletons.* How could it be that both students, in different groups, chose the same exact book? Was there something about the cover? Did they both relate to the features of the book? How did this relate to their family practices?

As he looked through the book, he was pointing and laughing at the pictures. He was eager to begin as he handed me the book. I read out loud as he laughed and sketched in his book. We stopped in between to share our tell me more prompts. He shared about how the family watches football on Thanksgiving even though he is not a fan. Also, he began sharing how he loves to help cook and set the table. He stated that it's a family tradition to set the table with his sister. I asked him to share his drawing. He said he connected with how the table was set in the book and how the family was sitting around the table. He said that is important because everyone needs to be able to talk. Figure 5 represents his sketch of his family sitting around the table. He discussed the idea of their outfits looking like Pilgrims but stated that it is not really what they wear on Thanksgiving. Towards the end of our lesson, I noted that Michael stated, "This is easier than writing, I can actually think about the book and not worry about how I am going to write." This statement allowed me to believe that Michael was enjoying the sketchbook. It allowed the read aloud activity to open up his responses to his at home literacies.

Figure 5

Michael's Thanksgiving Table

After our first read aloud activity, we moved on to our guided reading groups. The first book chosen was called, *How I Care for My Pet?* As we previewed the text, he was asked to tell me about how he takes care of his dog, Blue. Michael began sharing that he feeds and plays with him. Since Michael had a dog, he was able to share an additional detail with each page. His sketch consisted of his entire family including Blue at a park. Figure 6 is a representation of his sketch. He labeled each person and stated that going to the park and on hikes is something they do all the time. The next book was called, *Tree Animals*. Throughout the book, he had a lot of questions that were not related to the animals in the book but animals with similar characteristics. One thing I noticed was that he was really participating within the text. When we completed guided reading groups in our past year, he rarely participated.

Figure 6

Michael's Family at the Park

The beginning question, Have you ever really wanted to learn something?, for the *Thank you Mr. Falker* book activity sparked interest in Michael. He replied with, "I try to help myself but I like to build legos or draw." Before reading the book out loud, I asked Michael to refer to the question on the board, "Do the encounters in this book remind you of something that has happened to you?" I wanted him to think about himself as a reader here and be able to reflect back to the interview questions where he stated he wasn't a good reader. As I read on, Michael stated that he was relating to the character when she was nervous because he remembers being nervous like her in kindergarten. When we arrived at the part where the character Trisha is struggling with reading, Michael stopped to point something out:

Michael:	Can we stop here for a second?
Mrs. LoSasso:	Sure. Tell me more about what you are thinking.

Michael: It's making me feel sad that she thinks of herself

like that. This is why I draw more because I

struggle with reading like Trisha.

Michael was beginning to connect with the character. He was opening up to be more descriptive about himself as a reader. He enjoyed the conversation because it did not involve paper and pencil. Instead, it involved myself giving him the attention and allowing him to do something he loved, draw. When Michael was asked to share his self-portrait at the end of the book, his character was a great depiction of himself. Figure 7 gives a view of his self-portrait. He made sure to add a tie to his attire and his facial features. The one thing I found interesting was that he labeled himself as having messed up hair and used the word "frustrating" to describe himself. He illustrated himself with blood shot eyes and stated that he was exhausted. When I asked him to share why he drew himself in this way, he replied with, "School is exhausting me right now. Especially our social studies presentations." Michael did not give a positive description of himself. Instead he was illustrating how he felt at that moment in school. Later on in the day, I found out Michael had to give a social studies presentation. It appears that he was frustrated and nervous for this presentation; however, I was happy that he shared the responses that he did during our small group. It showed me how he perceives himself when something is hard. His depiction was accurate in that his mood was different that day.

Figure 7

Michael's Self-Portrait
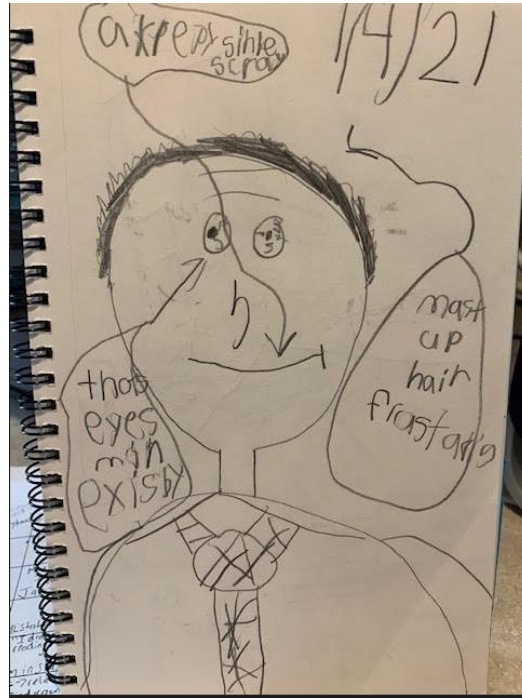
When the student questionnaire and post survey were given to Michael, I was

surprised by some of the responses. He liked decodable books the best because he could

talk about art. He said he enjoyed that I shared lessons about animals and asked if I could

change it to every day instead of a couple days a week. When he completed the post-

reading survey, I was worried that he was going to put in all negative answers like he did

with the first reading profile. I informed him that it was not a test. It was for me to

understand how he felt as a reader. He colored in a majority of great and loved faces. As I

look back on Michael's experience, I cannot help but wonder if his responses were based

on his attitude that day. It appeared that on the days he had to complete something

stressful in the classroom, he gave me more negative responses. When he was in an excited or non-stressful mood, his answers were geared towards being positive or honest. When I administered the Fountas and Pinnell assessment for the winter benchmark data, Michael stopped throughout the books to make connections and question the topics being discussed. He appeared ready for each book as we kept moving up in levels. He stated that he thought it was a good thing we kept reading. When I asked him why, he replied because I know I am doing good. His middle of the year independent reading level was an I (end of first grade), indicating that he increased by four reading levels.

Jay: "I am Not a Good Reader."

Jay (pseudonym) is an 8 year old, third grade student who enjoys being a creative thinker. He wants to be a cop when he gets older. Jay is in the 3ʳᵈ grade inclusion classroom, where he has two teachers, a general education and special education teacher. He remains eligible for special education and related services under the classification of communication impaired. Along with the support in the inclusion classroom, Jay receives pull-out support in reading. He receives pull out support in an Orton Gillingam based program, the Sonday System, four times a week for thirty minutes. This method is a multi-sensory, phonics technique that assists with reading instruction. Also, he receives speech related services, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Throughout the school year, Jay is evaluated using various tools including MAP, Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark System, teacher observations, and assessments. In the beginning of the school year, Jay was an independent F (beginning of 1st grade) on the Fountas and Pinnell assessment.

For the 2020-2021 school year, Jay began the year as an all remote student before switching to in-person instruction. In November, the student switched back to all-remote, where he did not attend many of our online sessions. Since he was absent from school, he did not participate in a majority of the activities. Prior to his switch to all-remote, I was able to administer the beginning surveys, student interview and *Me and My Reading Profile*.

Jay lives with his immediate family in a rural neighborhood. He resides with his mom, dad, and older sister, as well as his dog and two cats. When he is at home, he enjoys relaxing, eating, and riding his dirt bikes. He was very interested in telling me about the dirt bike track he has at his home. He enjoys going through the mud and over the hills. When I asked him if anyone reads to him at home, he replied, "My mom, once in a while." He stated that he likes to read. Some of his favorite books are the ones he reads to his cousin, Gigi, and animal books. He did not mention any specific titles or authors. Although Jay was available for the student interview sheet, Jay's mom was not available for the parental survey.

In the Me and My Reading profile, Jay pointed out many opportunities of how he was not a "good" reader. He responded with responses like, "I am not a good reader," "For me learning to read is really hard," and "For me reading is really hard." Although he had these strong feelings about reading, he believes that becoming a reader is very important. Also, he pointed out that it is important to learn to read. Jay feels sad when he has to read out loud to someone and thinks it's great when someone else reads out loud to him. Clearly, it is evident that his perception is that he does not think of himself as a reader but knows it's important to learn. It appears that he wouldn't mind if someone

gave him a book or that libraries are an okay place to spend time. He has some favorite books but couldn't think of them in our student interview.

Conversation between Jay and I during the student interview:

Mrs. LoSasso:	What do you think is the hardest part of reading?
Jay:	When you get stuck on a word.
Mrs. LoSasso:	What do you do when you don't know a word?
Jay:	Tap it out.
Mrs. LoSasso	What do you like most about school?
Jay:	Lunch.
Mrs. LoSasso	Do you think reading will be important to you?
Jay:	Yes, you'll need to read a lot of stuff.

Our conversation conveyed some important information. It appears that Jay does not like when he gets stuck on a word but knows to use the tap it out strategy to help. As stated in the above *Me and My Reading Profile*, Jay continues to state that he believes reading will be important to him. Although Jay knows to use his strategies when he comes across a word he does not know, he seems to be lacking the confidence that he is a good reader. When I introduced the activity that allowed him to look through the books of bins, I noticed that he was still reflecting on himself as a terrible reader. I noted this in my teacher's journal: He stated many "I" statements that concluded with reading being hard. As he looked through the books, I didn't notice any patterns or themes of books that

he mostly went too. Instead, he looked through every bin but never picked up a book. Generally, he would skim through by pushing each book to the side. If the other student pulled out a book, he would simply look at the book the student was referencing. He followed up with comments from their conversation but didn't want to spark up his own. He stated things like, "Reading gets boring, especially when you can't figure out words," or "I go along with the others in the class when they are reading, but I lose my spot a lot." I thought this was a good strategy. He was being very open with these comments. I could tell I was opening up a trusting relationship.

After our three different conversations, I could tell Jay's opinion of himself was not changing. He was trying to make a point to me and I could tell he wanted to be heard. Jay was absent from our holiday read aloud activity and the decodable book small group reading. He attended one of our sessions when reading aloud the book, *How I care for my pet?"* Everything was displayed on the screen for him as he was learning from home at this point. This was a struggle because he was not as focused as the other students. He read aloud but did not share his opinion or participate in our conversation. Instead, he logged on and off, telling me he was having Internet problems. Also, he missed our next guided reading group with the book, *Tree Animals*. At this point in our schedule, he was not attending our online sessions at all. Once we began the activity with the book, *Thank you, Mr. Faulker*, Jay began attending our online sessions again. When I asked Jay, Have you ever really wanted to learn something?, I noticed he was hesitant to answer. Being that he was completing these activities in his home, in the kitchen, I could tell this was going to be a struggle for us. I opened up this trusting relationship before when he was in-person learning and now I needed to figure out a way to open up with other adults

around. Once I could tell he was hesitant to answer, I asked if he could share his answers in another room. He liked that idea and moved to his bedroom. He replied to the question by telling me that he really wanted to learn handwriting. Before reading the book out loud, I asked Jay to refer to the question on the board, "Do the encounters in this book remind you of something that has happened to you?" I wanted him to think deeper about how the character and himself can relate to one another. Jay was using a notebook that he had at home for his sketches during our read alouds. He was not eager at first to show me his drawings. He was interacting with the conversation but shared his answers after the other students shared their responses. When I asked him to reflect on the following questions, Have you ever felt bad or good about yourself? and How does the story make you feel? Ee responded with "sad and happy." I went back to the first question and asked him again, but he shrugged his shoulders. I felt like I lost the open relationship I had with him in the earlier months. We developed more of a relationship and conversation when he was learning in person.

Finally, we moved on to our next day's lesson. I was happy Jay attended because I wanted to see if he would share his sketch. I asked him to sketch a person who is important to him and I could tell he was eager to share. He grabbed the piece of paper and pencil that was next to him and began drawing. I was wondering where the sketchbook went but I did not bother to ask. I was focused on how well he responded to the directions. Figure 8 is a representation of Jay's important person and his self-portrait. Although these were supposed to be two different sketches, he did choose to share over the screen. He did not want to state any selfie-traits but he did reply that his dad was important to him. When I asked why, he shrugged his shoulders.

Figure 8

Jay's Self-Portrait and Important Person Sketch
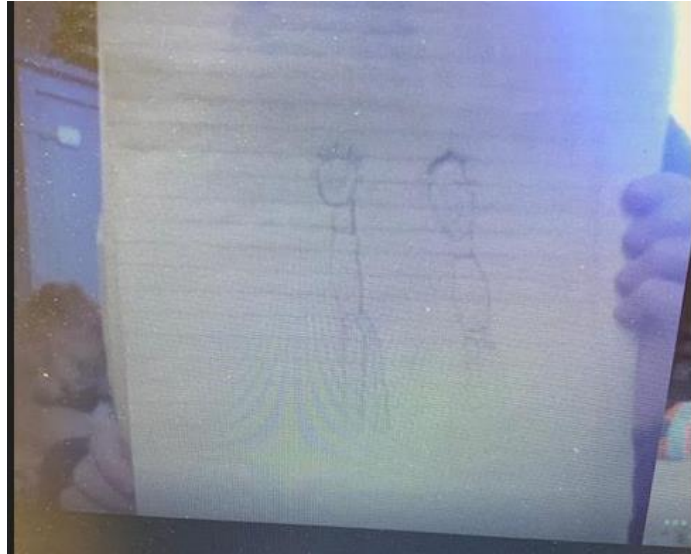
This was my last interaction with Jay for the month of December. He did not log

on anymore for our online sessions. A few weeks after Christmas break, Jay transitioned

back to in-person learning. Although we were done with our activities for this research

study, I wanted to give him the opportunity to fill out the student questionnaire and post

survey. Since there was so much time in between, he left a majority of the answers blank

for the student questionnaire. For the post survey, he colored in a mix of great and okay

faces. Based on the virtual instructional mode, it seems like being on the computer rather

than in person really impacted him. It appeared that once he transitioned to remote

learning, I was not seeing the same person I saw when he was in-person. His attitude was

different and behaviors were different. When I administered the Fountas and Pinnell

assessment for the winter benchmark data, Jay fluently read but struggled with self-

correcting words that changed the meaning of the context. His middle of the year

independent reading level was an H (middle of 1st grade), indicating that he increased by two reading levels.

Themes

Throughout this study, I identified fifteen codes, then further into four major themes. These themes include emotions, lack of confidence, personal interests, and rapport and trusting relationships.

Emotions

There were many different emotions throughout this research study. The students experienced different emotions when sketching and interacting with the different books or interviews. In our interview discussions, the students discussed the emotions they experienced when they shared their thoughts and feelings about being a 'good' reader. The data showed that they felt sad and frustrated when I asked them specific questions about their reading behaviors or skills. In the *Me and My Reading Profile*, the students circled words like sad when they referenced how reading made them feel or how learning to read made them feel.

When looking back on the activity with the book, *Thank You, Mr. Faulker,* the observations and comments reported that the students felt sad for the character. They were connecting with their own personal experiences of reading out loud, presentations, etc. The data showed that they used descriptive language like "frustration, nervousness,"and made when they were referring to the connections between the character, Trisha. In another example, the data showed the student connecting to the character by stating, "It's making me feel sad that she thinks of herself like that. This is

why I draw more because I struggle with reading like Trisha." When looking at the self-portraits of the students, they reflected with words like "frustrated, angry, and sad." Their interpretations were based on their attitudes of that day as well. These attitudes were based off of a social studies presentation that was being given that day. It shows how the emotions of the students change with the activities that are being completed in the classroom.

Although the feelings of sadness and frustration were expressed in our small group, the students exhibited enthusiasm, excitement, and eagerness when their topics of interest were implemented into our reading lessons. The FoK activities showed how satisfied and engaged the students were when they were able to connect to the activities. One example was the integration of sketchbooks. Being that the students had a mutual interest with art and writing was not their favorite subject, I utilized the sketchbooks as a way to incorporate their FOK into our lessons. The students were able to independently share their emotions by creating artwork that opened up a window into their understanding of the text. It was clear that allowing them opportunities to draw or share their experiences of culture increased their engagement with the books. Frey argues (1985), "that responding to literature through visual art is not only the easiest symbolic form for children to grasp but also a fundamental act of imagining" (p. 78). The literacy experience opened up emotions of enthusiasm and eagerness that provided opportunities for meaningful discussions. It was clear that the data showed how the students were eager to share their discussions when they were able to read the types of books they knew a lot about.

Lacking the Confidence

Throughout the study, the participants used a common language that referenced many opportunities of them lacking the confidence in themselves. The student interviews and reading profile sheets showed that the students lacked the confidence to perceive themselves as a reader. Comments like, "Mommy reads to me when I can't figure out something, like my school work," or "I am not a good reader," indicate that the students are not confident enough to try. The students discussed specific times where they were not confident in themselves. For example, reading and presenting in front of the class were two examples shared by the students that demonstrates their low self-esteem.

It is interesting to see how well they exhibited the strategies and resources they learned in our small group when reading out loud. Many of them shared examples of what they do when they come across a word they do not know. However, they still perceive themselves as being a terrible reader. Although their perceptions lack the confidence of what they do well, they all believe that it is important to learn how to read. When their FOK was integrated into our small group curriculum, there were examples of positivity when reading out loud. They were volunteering to read while also sharing their background knowledge on the topics. In other words, the data showed that personal interest boosted their confidence in providing them with a space to engage in a book.

Personal Interests

The books used in this study were connected to the personal interests of the students involved in the activities. The student interviews, conversations, and *Me and My Reading Profile* provided a clear understanding of what each student enjoys reading. It

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was well documented that the interaction between the student and the chosen books created a meaning-making environment that allowed them to connect to their own personal interests. For example, statements like, "I enjoy reading non-fiction books, like books with animals." According to Genishi and Dyson (2009), it's important for children to be given time to play, draw, talk, hear, and tell their own stories across multiple means of media. Furthermore, the student's artwork provided insights into how the students were connecting to the texts. Allowing them to have the ability to draw to express their thoughts or connections opened up a positive learning environment. One example showed the student eagerly grabbing the book while sharing all types of facts about the animals on the cover of the book. She was interested in the book because she felt confident in the topic. Most importantly, one of her personal interests was the topic of animals. Statements like, "Did you know…," "The show stated…," and "Can I read this page? I know a lot about Koalas," clearly indicating that personal interests develop a different kind of reader.

Another way the students were able to connect to their own personal experiences or interests was through the use of visual art and sketching. Throughout the interviews and conversations, it was noted that art was a way that the students were able to express themselves. It was noted that statements like, "I like to draw. That's like my thing. I'm good at drawing," allowed me to dig deeper into this personal interest. In other words, their illustrated artwork offered me the opportunity to develop an understanding of their at home literacies and life values. The book, *Thanksgiving at the Tappletons*, offered examples of personal connections to their at home literacies. The students each picked the same book on separate occasions. They sketched easily and explained their artwork in

detail. We made meaningful discussions that offered them the opportunity to consider

their social and cultural practices of themselves and others. According to King (2001),

"The Literature Circle is thus a means of creating a community of readers where both

readers and reading can be valued and where both teachers and children can learn from

and support each other, recognizing reading as an active creative process" (p. 36). This

book was able to engage the students by allowing them to be recognized for their artistic

values as well as learning about others. In sum, I was able to see how well the students

connected with each other and to the books when they were presented personal interest

books.

Building a Rapport/Trusting Relationships

"School connectedness is the extent to which students feel attached to at least one

caring and responsible adult at school" (Miller, 2021, p. 115). This term was important

when looking at the data of this research study. The students needed to feel connected to

our group but also with our relationship. Since I was working in an online environment

and some in-person days, it was important to provide quality instruction while also

incorporating a culturally responsive platform. We needed to develop an open

relationship where our thoughts and feelings could be shared. In my opinion, the most

important part of this study was to build a rapport and trusting relationship with the

students in my group. Miller stated (2021), "Caring teacher-student relationships help

students feel accepted, liked and connected to others and support students' perseverance

and attainment." In the study, *A Light in Students' Lives K-12 Teachers Experiences (Re)*

Building Caring Relationships during Remote Learning, Miller discusses the ethics of

care and how "caring teachers engage students in dialogue about their interests and needs,

listen attentively, and express empathy" (p. 116). The most important part of demonstrating care is using positive and respectful communication. Also, the one to one teaching that occurred within our small groups impacted how we built our relationships. The interview process was the first step in building that relationship where they would begin to feel accepted, liked, and connected to myself and others. It was the beginning of our positive and respectful communication. Statements like, "I know I'm not a good reader," "I mess up sometimes," indicated that they were becoming comfortable with trusting the environment by being honest about themselves.

Our activities were another way that the students and I showed respect for one another. We listened and talked to each other to establish and build a community within our group. In my research journal, I noted that the students were opening up to me by sharing their perceptions as a reader. They were comfortable with telling me how they felt as readers. It was evident that they felt safe to share their classroom experiences and the difficult situations they dealt with on a daily basis. One conversation led into the student discussing how stressed he was with presenting his social studies report later that day. He was striving to discuss these fears and feelings as he sketched his self-portrait in his notebook. In another example, the student was beginning to positively respond to our activities by identifying as a reader. She concluded one of our conversations with, "I can see myself getting better." The post survey results indicated that the students had a more positive perception of themselves as a reader by coloring in a majority of happy faces on statements like how I feel as a reader, how I feel about reading with someone, or how I feel about reading at school. Most importantly, the results of the Fountas and Pinnell assessment indicated that all three students had an increase in reading levels. As stated by

Held (2006), "When students trust those who care for them, they can develop well and flourish" (p. 42). Although there were moments of flourishing and positivity exhibited in our small group, the transition from in-person instruction to remote learning caused a loss of connection with one of my learners. It was evident that this learner was different on the computer rather than when he was in person. In all, the students and I were able to build trusting relationships through our words and interactions. We displayed respect, care, perseverance, and trust that included listening, observing, being open, and engagement in the FoK activities that were implemented.

Conclusion

In conclusion, all of the students showed progress when integrating their funds of knowledge into the curriculum. The student's performance using books and activities that correlated to their funds of knowledge led to a stronger literacy experience where they saw themselves as readers. Chapter five presents the conclusions, limitations, and implications of the study. Also, it will discuss recommendations for further research of this topic of study.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The students were so engaged in the lessons today. They were volunteering to read with eager expressions. Although they were so excited to begin reading, I needed to reassure them that we needed to build our background knowledge first. Maria's confidence has grown immensely throughout our small group sessions. She was the first to volunteer to share her knowledge about sea animals. I was amazed with how well her discussion was keeping the other students engaged. As we discussed the knowledge she pulled from her schema, she kept interrupting to read first. I needed to redirect her so that we could focus on the activity we were completing first. I was happy that she was so eager to begin but wanted to ensure that she understood our focus of the lesson. I could tell that using the books that they had interests in or based off of their selections allowed my lessons to be productive. They didn't exhibit those negative behaviors that were occurring in the beginning of our study. Most importantly, I believe we learned from one another throughout this study. - *Teacher's Journal*

This final chapter reviews the findings of the study and conclusions that can be made based on the research findings. In addition, the chapter discusses implications as well as suggestions for future researchers to consider. Lastly, the chapter concludes with final thoughts.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine how students with disabilities respond and view the literacy learning experience when their funds of knowledge are integrated into the reading curriculum. To conduct the research, three third grade students were observed in a small group setting in two different atmospheres. Due to COVID-19, the students were placed into two different cohorts. During this study, some students were online learning while other students were in-person learning. A teacher's research journal, student surveys, interviews/questionnaires, and student journals were used to collect data during our instructional meetings. The findings suggest that the integration of the funds of knowledge into the curriculum led to a stronger literacy learning experience for students with disabilities. The findings also suggest that when student's choices and interests are utilized in small groups, there is better student motivation, engagement, and a positive increase in reading behaviors. Throughout the study, changes in the students' attitudes towards reading as well as an overall development of reading was noted. I feel this was due to the integration of funds of knowledge (FoK) into the curriculum.

Conclusions

The main goal of the study was to see the impact of the literacy learning experience for students with disabilities when integrating the funds of knowledge into the curriculum. I wanted to know the impact that the funds of knowledge would have on student's perceptions of their reading skills and the effect it would have on the student's reading performance. In order to gather the answers to these questions, I researched various teaching methods and activities to motivate and engage the students through their cultural backgrounds and interests. Most importantly, the methodological approach and

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instructional plans were influenced by past and current research on the funds of knowledge.

Based on the research, it can be concluded that the use of student's funds of knowledge supports students' motivation and engagement when their topics of interest are incorporated. The use of their personal interests showed how satisfied and engaged the students were when the students were able to connect to the activities. Keis (2006) points out that the concept of family literacy is often ignored by traditional schooling. Prior to this instructional practice of incorporating students' backgrounds and interests, students had no connection to the curriculum presented in the classroom. The texts were unrelatable and provided no meaning to their personal backgrounds.

In addition, Mantei (2014) pointed out that using artwork was a powerful source to gain insight into children's funds of knowledge. In this study, it was clear that allowing the students opportunities to draw or share their experiences of culture increased their engagement with the books. The students exhibited enthusiasm and excitement when their topics of interests were incorporated. It was well documented that the interaction between the student and the chosen books created a meaning-making environment that allowed them to connect to their own personal interests. Findings suggest that allowing them to have the ability to draw to express their thoughts or connections opened up a positive learning environment. When the students were asked to write in response to reading, it was difficult for them to understand the comprehension of text. A lot of time was spent thinking about how to organize or spell out their thoughts. Instead, it opened up a positive learning environment that allowed them to be more efficient because they were able to draw out their responses. This provided them with a more detailed

explanation when speaking out loud. Overall, it was an enjoyable experience that took away the negative behaviors of not knowing what the book was talking about.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that confidence is another factor that supports students' motivation and engagement. After noticing and hearing the students' perceptions of reading when they were asked to define themselves as readers, it was evident that the learning experience needed to change. Once they were given opportunities of choice and interest in the reading materials, they began to flourish in classroom discussions. Their responses were valid and interactive. They transferred these skills in their reading and journal responses. They recalled details about the text, made personal connections, incorporated their background knowledge, and shared their opinions in open discussions. Most importantly, it allowed them to build a rapport and trusting relationship with their group members and teacher. Their motivation and engagement revealed that they valued and recognized the relationships with their teachers and peers. Miller (2021) believes that, "When students realize the teacher truly values and respects them, they see instruction and corrections as they are intended to be tools to facilitate growth and the acquisition of new skills" (p. 122). The students of this study felt accepted and connected to others in which it allowed them to have the willingness to learn and participate successfully in the small group.

In addition, the students were able to increase their reading levels by two or three levels at the end of this study. In this study, employing various reading strategies and teaching methods as well as providing them with opportunities to share their personal experiences fostered the success in the increase in their reading levels. The small group setting played a major role in the success of this study. The students were able to attain

one-on-one instruction that led to the increase in their reading comprehension and decoding skills. As a result, each student grew in the areas of motivation and engagement in regards to their personal interests, reading perceptions, peer/trusting relationships, and reading levels.

The last finding in this study was the instructional approach used. The students were taught in a small group setting. On some occasions, the students were taught on a one-on-one approach because of lack of attendance or because they were the only one in their cohort. This type of instruction may have impacted the increase in reading levels or positive interactions among myself or one another. Normally, small group sessions occur with three or more students, whereas this type of instruction was more individualized. The confidence of the students flourished when they were able to have one on one conversations with the teacher. It allowed them opportunities to flourish and draw conclusions about what they were reading. Most importantly, the findings suggested that students with low self-confidence flourish more when they are given the time to speak with the teacher on their own. As a result, each student grew in the areas of motivation and engagement in regards to their personal interests, reading perceptions, peer/trusting relationships, and reading levels.

Limitations

Throughout the research study, there were some limitations that could have impacted the results of the study. The school where the study was conducted had specific guidelines in regards to instruction and the environment due to the Coronavirus pandemic. All schools in New Jersey closed down in March 2020, leaving the school to

change their protocols for the 2020-2021 school year. In Fall 2020, the school opened up full-time, four days a week with Wednesdays being an all-remote day. The students were broken up into three different cohorts, A, B, and C. Since the students in this study were placed into different cohorts, instruction was implemented through the use of google platforms. The live instruction was given through Google Meets with assignments being posted on Google classroom. Students were allowed to switch cohorts at any time during the school year. This made it difficult to keep track of grouping or activities/assignments given. Also, it provided different views of the students when in different atmospheres.

Along with switching cohorts, students and teachers were placed in quarantine for safety purposes and different occasions. This made it difficult to continue planned in-person activities as well as having students not attend live online sessions. The inconsistencies with students switching to online and in-person instruction caused different experiences and responses. If full-time in-person instruction could have been provided, it would have allowed for authentic responses to the instructional practices given.

Another change that occurred during the course of this study was one of the boys missed a majority of the sessions. Jay (pseudonym), a third grade student, initially began the school year in-person but changed to all-remote, where he did not attend many of the online sessions. This caused him to miss out on many opportunities in the small group. Prior to him changing to all-remote, he was able to provide open, rich responses to the conversations. When he was at home, he didn't provide any feedback but instead stayed quiet on the screen. The transition from in-person instruction to remote learning caused a

loss of connection with him. Although it is not certain, the setting of school being at home impacted the sharing of his responses.

Lastly, another limitation was that the study did not take place for the entire school year. Conducting the research for the entire school year would have given additional data when the students transitioned to five, full days in April. It would have provided the students and myself the opportunity to see how our small group sessions would have evolved with more in-person instruction.

Suggestions for Further Research

When looking at suggestions for further research, it is important for schools to provide more understanding for what motivates and engages students. This research could be beneficial and helpful to educators when planning their instructional practices. Most importantly, further research in understanding family literacy will always be helpful for educators to work with culturally diverse populations. The current study could have expanded over the entire school year as opposed to half of the year. Conducting this research over the course of the entire school year may have contributed to additional information as well as presenting new information in regards to their end of the year reading levels. Also, it may have provided additional information when the school opened up five days a week. Another suggestion for future research is to encourage researchers to look at students with different cultural backgrounds. Using participants from a whole class rather than a small group may yield additional or new information on how students are motivated and engaged in a whole class setting.

I would encourage future researchers to include more paternal involvement in the research process. Due to COVID-19, parental involvement was limited because of the no visitor policies within the school district. Parents were interviewed through the use of telephone or Google Meet. One way to obtain more information in regards to their funds of knowledge would be to observe the students in their home environment or outside activity. Another suggestion would be to invite parents or family members into the classroom to participate in learning about the students' culture. A final suggestion would be to use a pedagogy to connect teaching methods to an interest-based curriculum that incorporates culturally diverse literature. According to Richard Keis (2006), "Literature opens doors to the interior, allowing people to explore their own identity and values, and it opens windows to other worldviews that increase knowledge and foster cultural understanding" (p.13). In order to take this a step further, researchers need to select culturally relevant books that fosters the culture and life experiences of the students within our communities. As mentioned previously, it is beneficial to incorporate an interest-based curriculum to keep them motivated and engaged in classroom activities and discussions.

Final Thoughts

In conclusion, there are many positive effects when building relationships and trust into the classroom. Previous research suggests that the funds of knowledge can support classroom learning and build on the culturally responsive learning activities of our diverse learners. Most importantly, the funds of knowledge can bring motivation and engagement to the learning experience of students with disabilities. Also, it helps with increasing their confidence in regards to their reading behaviors and attitudes. The

students were able to articulate their responses towards the discussions and activities presented in the small group. After conducting this study, I realized how important it is to include the students' personal interests as well as culturally relevant texts into our small group reading sessions. I hope to encourage other educators to use the funds of knowledge concept to help motivate and engage students.

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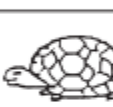
Appendix A

Me and My Reading Profile

Name: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

What grade are you in?

1.	2.	3.
Kindergarten	First grade	Second grade

I am a _____.

1.	2.
Boy	Girl

Do you like to read books all by yourself?

1.	2.	3.
Yes	It's OK	No

Learning to read is _____.

1.	2.	3.
Not very important	Sort of important	Very important

What kind of reader are you?

1.	2.	3.
I am not a good reader	I am an OK reader	I am a very good reader

My friends think reading is _____.

1.	2.	3.
Really fun	OK to do	No fun

How do you feel when you read out loud to someone?

1.	2.	3.
Happy	OK	Sad

Do you tell your friends about books you read?

1.	2.	3.
Never	Sometimes	A lot

For me, learning to read is _____.

1.	2.	3.
Easy	Sort of hard	Really hard

When someone reads books out loud to me, I think it is _____.

1.	2.	3.
Great	OK	Boring

Do you like to read books out loud to someone else?

1.	2.	3.
No	It's OK	Yes

(Continued)

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	I think libraries are _____.		
	1.	2.	3.
	A great place to spend time	An OK place to spend time	A boring place to spend time
	How do you feel about reading?		
	1.	2.	3.
	I don't like it	It's OK	I like it a lot
	I spend _____.		
	1.	2.	3.
	None of my time reading books	Some of my time reading books	A lot of my time reading books
	How do you feel when you are in a group talking about books?		
	1.	2.	3.
	I do not like to talk about my ideas	I sometimes like to talk about my ideas	I always like to talk about my ideas
	How would you feel if someone gave you a book for a present?		
	1.	2.	3.
	Mad	OK	Happy
	How do you feel about learning to read?		
	1.	2.	3.
	I like it a lot	It's OK	I don't like it
	Do you like to read when you have free time?		
	1.	2.	3.
	No	It's OK	Yes
	How do you feel about reading with others?		
	1.	2.	3.
	I really like it	It's OK	I don't like it at all
	Do you have "favorite" books?		
	1.	2.	3.
	Lots	Some	None
	For me, reading is _____.		
	1.	2.	3.
	Really hard	Sort of hard	Easy
	I think becoming a good reader is _____.		
	1.	2.	3.
	Very important	Sort of important	Not very important

Appendix B

Interview Survey

Student Interview, Grades K–4

Name: _____ Grade: ____ Date: _____ Examiner: _____

1. Do you have any brothers or sisters? Any best friends? What about pets?

2. What are some things that you like to do at home?

3. What makes these things fun?

4. Does anyone ever read to you at home? Who? When? What?

5. Do you like to read?

6. Do you have any favorite books or authors? What are they? Why do you like them?

7. Are you a good reader? Why or why not?

8. What do you think is the hardest part about reading?

9. What do you do when you come to a word that you don't know?

10. Where do you get the books you read at home? (Probe further if necessary: library, stores, gifts, etc.)

11. What do you like most about school?

12. What kinds of things do you do when you have reading at school?

13. What would you like to do when you are older?

14. Do you think reading will be important to you?

Appendix C

Parental Survey

Parent Survey

Student Name:_____ Family Name:_____ Date:_____

What activities do you like to do in your family? (indoor/outdoor activities)

What does reading and writing look like in your home?

How is storytelling, music, or other forms of literacy used by members of your family?

How does your family engage in reading and writing in the community? (ex. Church, shopping, sports)

What are some things that you are doing to help your child in school?

Who are some of the people helping you as well? What are they doing to help you?

What is something you wish your child's teachers knew about your family?

Name one celebration you enjoy with your family.

What are some of the jobs of the members of your family?

What is one educational activity your family does outside of school?

What are the interests and traditions your family enjoys?

What activities, traditions, celebrations and customs do you value?

Appendix D

Student Questionnaire

Student Questionnaire

Name:_____

1. Tell me about one of the activities we did that you enjoyed the most. What did you like about it?

    _____

_____

_____

_____

2. What made them fun?

    _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What could I change about the reading lessons?

    _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Post-Student Survey

READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

Directions: Read each statement. Color the box that shows how you feel about each one.

	Love it!	Just okay.	Don't like it.
How I feel about reading at home:	😊	😐	🙁
How I feel about reading at school:	😊	😐	🙁
How I feel about reading by myself:	😊	😐	🙁
How I feel about reading with a buddy:	😊	😐	🙁
How I feel when someone reads to me:	😊	😐	🙁
How I feel about writing:	😊	😐	🙁

	Great!	Just okay.	Not good.
How I feel about myself as a reader:	😊	😐	🙁
How I feel about myself as a writer:	😊	😐	🙁

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