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FONTBONNE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS

THE CRAFT OF CONSTRUCTING A CLASSROOM LIBRARY: STUDENT COLLABORATION IN BOOK SELECTION
FOR THE CLASSROOM LIBRARY

A Dissertation
SUBMITTED TO THE DOCTORAL FACULTY
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Education

By
Meredith Murray
St. Louis, Missouri
2022

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Abstract

Reading performance has been correlated to time spent in engaged reading. Additionally, positive attitudes toward reading, time spent reading, and reading proficiency have been shown to affect employment options, state of financial wellness, and overall quality of life and health into adulthood. How students contribute to book selection for classroom libraries may critically impact reading performance and attitudes toward reading, as books selected by teachers and school leaders may not be relevant, accessible, or interesting to the students for whom the books are selected. This mixed methods study examined factors around student collaboration in book title selection for the classroom library, including how teachers view collaboration, how teachers practice collaboration, how willing teachers are to increase collaborative practices, and needs that could be met to mitigate challenges around collaborative practices. Using a constructivist, grounded theory approach, data were collected via an electronic survey and an interview. Descriptive statistics provided context for themes found in coded, transcribed interviews. Results of the study suggest teachers positively view collaboration with students but financial resources, time in the school day, and curriculum demands limit how collaboration is practiced. Supporting teachers with discovery of new books and curriculum applications may increase collaborative practices. Lastly, an organizational improvement plan discusses how a children's literature and classroom library providing company can increase student voice and agency through rebranding a web-based classroom library inventorying and auditing system. Change management is discussed through the lens of Dr. John Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change.

Keywords: classroom library, reading material selection, elementary education, student participation, teacher-student collaboration, student voice, student agency, grounded theory, change management

Chapter One: Context of Study

"Intent is important but impact matters more."

--Rachel Hope

Introduction

Classroom libraries have proven to be critical in reading achievement. Students who have access to a well-stocked classroom library read 50% more than students who do not have access to a library, and increased time spent reading has shown to improve reading skills including vocabulary acquisition, word recognition, and comprehension (Allington, 2011; Huang et al., 2019; Locher & Pfof, 2020; Taylor et al., 1990; Yopp & Yopp, 2003). For this research, a classroom library is defined as any number of books in a classroom and accessible to students for voluntary, recreational reading (Allington, 2011, Catapana et al., 2009; Coppens, 2018). With the benefits of classroom libraries well-documented, it is unsurprising that only 11% of surveyed teachers reported having no books available for students in a classroom library (Statista, 2019).

The benefits of access to a rich classroom library are difficult to refute. Having a well-stocked library has been shown to improve every measure of literacy development, including comprehension, fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and oral language development (Locher & Pfof, 2020; McGill-Franzen et al., 1999; Taylor et al., 1990; Yopp & Yopp, 2003). Research in which classroom libraries are readily available has also indicated students have increased development in empathy, better understanding of social issues, and increased ability to understand and manage their emotions (Pytash, 2012). Impactful classroom libraries should provide access to a wide range of reading materials, reflect the identities and experiences of the students while providing perspectives beyond their own lives, and contain relevant, high-interest content (Gambrell, 2011; Fletcher et al., 2012; McGill-Franzen et al., 1999; Scullin, 2020; Worthy et al., 1999). In line with this research, teachers have reported student interest, student identity, and student experience as critical factors in selecting books for classroom libraries; however, the input

of students in making these book selections is missing, and teachers are selecting books through their own lenses (Lao, 2005; Fletcher et al., 2012). Without input from students, teachers may select titles that do not accurately represent their students or their students' interests, leading to frustration and misunderstanding.

Misunderstandings are frequently understood as a part of life, emerging from different perspectives and experiences. At best, these misunderstandings can lead to harmless interactions in which someone tries to explain their actions based on their intentions; in some cases, though, the disconnect between someone's intent and actual impact can lead to greater conflict, and even perpetuate cycles and systems of racism, inequity, and privilege.

A theme evident in research presented in Gorski and Pothini's *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education* (2018) was the intent of educators compared to the impact delivered. In each case, the educator desired to grow, develop, evolve, engage, or instruct their students in meaningful ways; however, the results were one or more students being marginalized. This can be discussed in-depth around one case study "I'm Not Black" (Gorski & Pothini, 2018, p. 93-95), where the intent of the educator was to create relationships between students, while the actual impact was a devolution in relationships. In this example, the well-meaning educator assigned an African American student to a new Nigerian student as a mentor assuming both identified as Black, and that the commonality would bring them together. However, by assuming this sameness between her students, the educator failed to acknowledge and positively support the differences that were dividing African American students and Nigerian students. The teacher made observations of her students and followed with decisions to partner them in mentoring relationships without their input or perspective. Ultimately, some harm was created even with the best of intentions to do good. This can translate to a wide range of classroom interaction and decisions from who students sit next to, to the instruction they receive, and even

something as innocuous as the bright and engaging books carefully selected for classroom library shelves and book bins.

This theme of intent versus impact is mirrored in the title selection process of organizations distributing children's literature and classroom libraries to the education market. One such organization, under pseudonym SoBo, is a provider of classroom libraries for school districts, literacy coaches and classroom teachers across the country, and describes itself as an expert in providing children's and young adult literature for the classroom, having spent decades helping build thousands of classroom libraries that fit every classroom need imaginable. The focus of the organization is providing education-based customers with the best selection of quality children's and young adult literature and exceptional customer service.

As with the case study "I'm Not Black" (Gorski & Pothini, 2018), teachers are approaching book selection with a specific intent, but may not be assessing the impact. At SoBo too, library curation and book selection does not include student input or collaboration with students. Rather, SoBo coordinates with teachers, literacy coaches, or procurement offices to inform book selection for classroom libraries further perpetuating the issue of neglecting student input. Opportunities for SoBo to shift this approach will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Currently, teachers demonstrate their desire to select books that align to student interest, student identity, and student experience by using the methods of observation of students, followed by surveying students (Murray, 2020). In one study, in which 27 public school teachers with classroom libraries made selections from a list of methods to gather information on student interests, observation was the most reported method used by teachers across years of teaching experience, followed by students completing surveys on their reading interests. This is consistent with research on the topics of reading material selection, engaging students in reading from a classroom library, or wanting to increase reading motivation (Lao, 2005; Fletcher et al., 2012; Nash et al., 2019). In a case study of a kindergarten

classroom, for example, where researchers were seeking to identify culturally responsive, literacy practices, the kindergarten teacher was found to be particularly effective due to the use of observation bringing books to the classroom that were relevant to the lives of her students. While observation can be a powerful method for learning about the interests and experiences of others, the case studies of Gorski and Pothini (2018) suggest it can also be inhibitive if assumptions remain unchecked.

In summary, across studies there is evidence of teachers relying on limited methods to inform the selection process for books made available to students in classroom libraries (Lao, 2005; Fletcher et al., 2012; Nash et al., 2019). Risks in relying on observation methods or interpretation of surveys include interference of teacher bias or misunderstanding the results. The intent of teachers is to inspire, captivate, and motivate students to read by building rich bookshelves for their readers, however the impact could be creating more disconnect between students and the titles on the shelf. With student collaboration, in which the students work synchronously with the teacher on a process or product toward an agreed upon goal, and (Lai, 2011), teachers may be more likely to avoid bias, misunderstanding, or unintended impact of the books selected for the classroom. This research explores how teachers perceive and practice student collaboration in book selection for classroom libraries, and how an organization like SoBo can shift concepts and practices to increase student collaboration in book selection for classroom libraries.

National Context

Students having more time and choices for independent reading are well documented as beneficial for overcoming resistance to reading, increasing time spent reading, reading achievement, and promotion of life-long reading (Fletcher et al., 2012; Gambrell, 2011; Heron-Hrubry et al., 2016; Virgil, 1994). Additionally, positive attitudes toward reading and reading proficiency into adulthood have been shown to directly affect employment options, state of financial wellness, and overall quality of life and health (Diallo, 2020; Rea, 2020). As such, it is significant that there be robust variety in classroom

libraries, and that the titles be of interest to the students to encourage volume of reading and time spent in active reading (Boyd et al., 2015).

Teachers believe they are thoughtfully selecting titles for student consumption and that they are providing titles students *want* to read (Lao, 2005; Fletcher et al., 2012; Heron-Hrubry et al., 2016). However, the attitude from students is that classrooms are not places where they will find books they want to read (Lao, 2005; Scullin, 2020), and resistance to selecting and reading books from the classroom persists (Gambrell, 2011; Lao, 2005; Scullin, 2020; Virgil, 1994). As students become frustrated by the lack of reading material that they judge to be accessible, interesting, relevant, and readable, they may turn away from reading. Reasons why students refuse to read books in the classroom have commonly been identified as not being interested in the topic, storyline, point of view, or format of the book, a general belief that books are not enjoyable, too challenging, or are seen as overwhelming (Babbin, 2021; Dempsey, 2015; Spear-Swerling, 2005). More urgently, the rate in which children read for fun dramatically decreases around third grade in a phenomenon known as “decline by nine,” and rarely do these students recover in rate of reading in later grades (Scholastic, 2019). In the “decline by nine” phenomena, attitude towards reading for enjoyment decreases between the ages of eight and nine. As a result, the frequency of reading books for fun drops between ages eight and nine as well, from 57% to 35% (Scholastic 2019). As frequency of reading has been correlated to reading achievement (Allington, 2011; Huang et al., 2019; Locher & Pfof, 2020 Taylor et al., 1990; Yopp & Yopp 2003), it is between ages eight and nine that students may be at most risk of falling behind grade level in reading proficiency. Third graders who cannot read on grade level today are on track to be the nation’s lowest income, least skilled citizens, and struggle with all areas of learning as 85% of the curriculum is taught by reading (The Children’s Reading Foundation, n.d.)

Additionally, in the Condition of Education 2020 report by the National Center for Educational Statistics, two-thirds of US fourth graders read below grade level, and two-thirds of students graduating

high school read below grade level (Hussar et al., 2020). These combined reports indicate that by grade three, the rate at which students read for enjoyment and the rate at which students' progress in reading both decline, and do not rebound. As these students graduate and enter adulthood, the impact on healthcare costs, welfare, and incarceration rates are staggering. For example, the inability to read and understand basic health information accounts for \$232 billion in health care costs each year, as issues with low literacy are connected to use of preventive services, timely diagnosis, and adherence to medical protocol (Gazmarian et al., 2005). In a 2015 report prepared by the National Council for Adult Learning, it was found that non-productivity due to unemployment related to low literacy skills cost the US economy \$225 billion or more each year (National Council for Adult Learning, 2015). Exiting school without proficiency in reading not only negatively impacts the life of the individual, but it is also an urgent issue for the US economy that can continue for generations.

Situational Context

Immersing children in print-rich environments fosters motivation to read, reading engagement, and later in life educational achievement and occupational standing (Sikora, 2019; Evans, 2010). In fact, having books in the home and reading aloud to young children are the two most important indicators of reading success later in life (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; National Center for Family Literacy, 2003). Growing up with few books in the home, or fewer than eighty books, resulted in below average literacy levels according to Sikora's surveys taken between 2011 and 2015 and spanning 160,000 homes across 31 countries (2019). In the last forty years, the onus for providing a print-rich environment and print-rich experiences has fallen on classroom teachers as greater income inequality results in critically scarce access to print materials (Neuman & Moland, 2016). One in six students live in poverty (Dawson, 2021), and access to age-appropriate books in economically depressed communities range from five to 18 books per household (Neuman & Moland, 2016). With the poverty rate projections for children being

dramatically impacted by COVID-19 (Giannarelli et al., 2021), teachers are increasingly taking responsibility for providing age-appropriate, high-quality books to young people.

Having this responsibility, teachers report wanting to provide interesting, relevant, and engaging titles for their students. It makes sense that if students are stakeholders in the library, then they should have agency in book selection. However, students are not identifying schools or classrooms as a space where books they want to read are readily available (Abodeeb-Gentile & Zawilinski, 2013; Scullin, 2020; Worthy et al., 1999), suggesting a disconnect between what teachers expect students to read and what students want to read. If students are not identifying the classroom as a place where interesting books are readily available, how can a classroom library provider (SoBo) support both teachers and students in practices for effective book selection that may increase autonomous student reading, and mitigate risk of underachievement in reading?

SoBo is a provider of classroom libraries for school districts, literacy coaches and classroom teachers across the country, and describes itself as an expert in providing children's and young adult literature for the classroom, having spent decades helping build thousands of classroom libraries that fit every classroom need imaginable. The focus of the organization is providing education-based customers with the best selection of quality children's and young adult literature and exceptional customer service.

While there is much research on how teachers can select and incorporate reading materials into classrooms, and multiple and varied studies on the positive impacts of having reading materials readily available in the classroom, there is minimal research on what guides a teacher to involve students in the selection of reading materials. Based on this gap, it is important to explore students as stakeholders in classroom libraries, particularly as research demonstrates that students may not have an active voice, agency, or democratic participation in book title selection for the classroom library (Gambrell, 2011; Lao, 2005; Virgil, 1994). Additionally, students do not identify the classroom library as a place to find literature they want to read (Lao, 2005).

This leads to the question: How can SoBo, in which the vision and mission is *a world where every child loves to read and to help educators inspire engaged reading*, leverage products and services to engage student voice, agency, and participation in book title selection for the classroom library or classroom bookshelf to ensure access to desired literature? SoBo has an opportunity to utilize data to support collaboration from students in book selection for the classroom library.

Personal Context

As a product manager at SoBo, the products I design, innovate, and launch need to account for student voice and agency in how titles are selected for their own consumption. By giving students a voice in book title selection, it is possible that the goals of the classroom library or bookshelf will be more readily achieved, resulting in students who feel college and career ready and who feel recognized and valued as active participants and owners of their literacy.

As a former classroom teacher and reading interventionist, I have a personal desire to ensure students have access to literature in the classroom that is relevant, compelling, and readable. I also believe that students are the primary stakeholders in the classroom library and as such should be active participants in the construction of it. In addition, I believe student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library generates a sense of agency, related to concepts of self-efficacy and autonomy. When students select the titles they want to see in the classroom library or on the classroom bookshelf, they are exercising their control as readers and as participants of the classroom.

Research demonstrates that student agency is missing in constructing a classroom library, with potential negative implications for reading achievement and democratic participation. As such it is worth exploring what teachers report about their own students' collaboration in the construction of a classroom library. Gaining insight into this can inform educators and potentially shift their process to be more student-active and student-inclusive.

Problem of Practice

While there is much research on how teachers can select and incorporate reading materials into classrooms, including books for classroom libraries, and multiple and varied studies on the positive impacts of having reading materials readily available in the classroom, there is minimal research on how teachers conceptualize and practice collaboration with students on book selection. It is important to explore this as students are key stakeholders in classroom libraries; however, research demonstrates they do not have an active voice, agency, or collaborative participation in book title selection for the classroom library (Gambrell, 2011; Lao, 2005; Virgil, 1994). Additionally, students do not identify the classroom library as a place to find literature they want to read (Lao, 2005). An assumption is that if students had a voice or more opportunity in the book selection process for the classroom library, then those students may more readily and more easily find titles they want to read and may engage in active reading for pleasure more often. However, little research currently exists on how teachers collaborate with students, and to what extent, in book selection for the classroom library.

This study sought to reveal aspects of how teachers conceptualize and practice collaboration with students in the book selection process for the classroom library, how likely teachers are to increase student collaboration, and what teachers believe is needed to increase student collaboration. This was identified as a critical first step toward developing an organizational action plan around leveraging products and services to address the reported concepts, practices, and needs.

Research Questions

The contexts for study and problem of practice have led to the following research questions for this study:

1. How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, conceptualize student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?

2. How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, practice student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?
3. How do concepts of student collaboration of general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five compare to reported practice of student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?
4. How likely are general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?
5. What do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, believe is needed to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?

Conclusion

With student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library, the intent and impact of the books selected may align more, with positive outcomes on active student engagement, ownership of learning, and reading achievement. Chapter one reviewed the national, situational, and personal contexts that support this study. Chapter two provides a review of literature that explores the factors in selection of classroom materials.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the need to understand to what extent students actively collaborate in book selection for the classroom library, and the implications of active collaboration. This chapter includes a review of existing literature that identifies internal and external factors influencing selection and collaboration of classroom materials, such as teacher preparation, years of experience, sociocultural factors, curricular mandates, and reported methods of student input, which served as a guide in developing the research questions for this study.

Review of the Literature

A review of the literature revealed common themes in factors for classroom material selection, with context for student collaboration. These themes were evident across grade levels, content areas, school type such as private or public, and across nations. Additionally, findings suggested that years of experience and education level create differences in how teachers select material and collaborate with students, as did perceived influence of stakeholders such as parents and administrators. Finally, social-cultural factors of the school or community, or across the material, impacted selection and level of student collaboration.

To review the problem more holistically, the literature presented includes findings on how teachers generally select classroom material with students, not specific to book selection for a classroom library. This choice was made to account for the limited research available around book selection for a classroom library and assumes that factors in selecting classroom material with student collaboration would transfer to book selection for a classroom library.

Teacher Background and Experience

The backgrounds and experiences of teachers influence student collaboration in the selection process. Background and experience can include education, personal experience, and personal interests. Because teachers rely on their own experiences in the selection process, a risk is implicit bias. However,

teachers consistently report, regardless of individual background and experience, that student interest, need, and representation is a primary motivator in book selection for a classroom library.

This is evident in a study by Lao (2005), in which 146 New York City public school teachers were surveyed on why they might spend their own money on classroom library books. Teachers reported wanting to share their passion for high-quality literature as one primary reason. This indicates that teachers approached book selection with their own construct of high-quality literature, as well as with the lens of what they would find exciting or engaging as opposed to what their students would find exciting or engaging. In a New Zealand based case study of five schools exhibiting “effective, regular, and sustained reading in upper primary levels” (p. 3), one strategy was to provide an accessible range of texts they considered students to enjoy, especially among male students. Reading material, including books, were presented to students based on what teachers observed in relation to reading discouragement, or books and reading material that students tended to abandon (Fletcher et al., 2012). Like the Lao study (2005), what students are presented with was through the lens of what the teachers perceived would be of interest to their students. In these cases, it is not evident that students collaborated on the books brought into the classroom. Rather, teachers made determinations based on their own judgment of quality literature, or their own observations and interpretations of what students appear to enjoy or not enjoy reading. This is explored further in the following section.

The Juxtaposition of Bias and Student Interest

Available research demonstrates that interest in reading predicts reading comprehension ability, and that students who enjoy reading perform significantly better than their peers who do not enjoy reading (Cheema, 2018; Gambrell, 2011; Heron-Hruby et al., 2016). As such, educators are motivated to select titles of interest for students and choose books that they perceive students will *want* to read. However, bias of the teacher in book selection is evident throughout the literature.

In a 2017 study performed in the UK, the design of reading lists prescribed to students was analyzed. All participants acknowledged selecting material based on perceived student use and self-directed selection (Scott & Inskip, 2017). This indicates that one's own experiences and concepts are immersed in the selection process, and without consciousness. While the participants stated that they kept the students in mind, the participants, composed of both librarians and teachers, selected material based on their own perceived notions of what was pupil centered. This theme emerged from the teachers and librarians having "face to face interactions" (p. 17) with students and matching readability to student interests to curate reading lists. However, there was no record of validating reading lists or curating lists with students. Participants also stated that they self-selected books based on literary merit and what they judged as quality literature, leaving room for bias based on their own values, experiences, and personal interests in reading material (Scott & Inskip, 2017).

In the Lao study of 146 New York City public school teachers, teachers reported loving reading themselves and wanting to introduce new books to students that would also inspire a love of reading (Lao, 2005). While this was reported as an objective in book selection for classroom libraries, it is not known how teachers in this study became familiar with their students' interests. Rather, they selected books they judged as being of higher-literary quality, or to provide exposure to new genres. For example, teachers wanted to introduce students to well-known authors or award-winning books (Lao, 2005). Additionally, teachers wanted to provide books that students could identify with, particularly representation of low-income, urban characters. Lastly, teachers were interested in "good literature" (p.184) that would make their curriculum more accessible to students.

Similarly, teachers in a New Zealand study, in which participants sought to increase reading achievement, prioritized the needs of older, male students, perceiving that this was the lowest achieving group (Fletcher et al., 2012). As such, their selections for reading materials were motivated by what they observed to be of interest to this population, for example articles and books on BMX (a type of off-road

biking for racing or stunt riding) and magazines on music, sports, and video games. Meanwhile in a 2016 action research study, an English teacher focused on building her classroom library based on observed student interest in what their peers were reading and interest in film-releases of books. (Heron-Hruby et al., 2016).

Methods of Student Input

Existing literature revealed commonalities in how teachers report student participation in title selection for the classroom library. Two themes for involving students included anecdotal observation of students or through interest-surveys (Murray, 2020; Nash et al., 2019; Scott & Inskip, 2017, Heron-Hruby et al., 2016, Fletcher et al., 2012). A gap that exists is student collaboration, where collaboration is defined as students working synchronously with the teacher on a process or product toward an agreed upon goal (Lai, 2011). This was further supported in a study by Murray, in which classroom teachers were asked to report on their methods of student involvement in book title selection for their classroom library. Surveying and observing students achieved the highest frequency counts and were also reported as the primary ways to gather information around the personal interests of students, recurring as the most significant priority in students' influence and involvement in book title selection across the sample (Murray, 2020). As teachers report student participation or input using surveys or by observing students, it is limited to the perspective of the classroom teacher, and therefore open to bias.

Observation. The primary method reported for including students in title selection for the classroom library was observation. In one study of a New York City public school classroom, a kindergarten teacher reported observing that her students were interested in sports and as a result, she curated a basket of books that represented their sports interests (Nash et al., 2019). The teacher and researchers reported that students had input and agency, as the titles for the basket and others were selected with what the teacher observed as student interests, experiences, and culture. Similarly, teachers in a New Zealand study, in which participants sought to increase reading achievement in

reluctant readers, prioritized the needs of older, male students by observing their reading habits and their discussions with peers about what they were reading. As a result, these teachers sought out magazines for reading, and other reading material on music, sports, and video games (Fletcher et al., 2012). In the 2016 action research study, a secondary English teacher focused on building her classroom library based on observations of student interest of what their peers were reading and of interest in film-releases of books. (Heron-Hruby et al., 2016).

The method of observation of student interests and reading habits is evident in primary grades, secondary grades, and across school-types and nations. While observing students is a powerful way to inform teaching and learning, a form of member checking with students on title selection would validate observations and decisions made by teachers.

Survey. A survey or questionnaire may result in increased student involvement in determining topics, themes, or titles for a classroom library. This requires extending beyond observation by collecting and analyzing feedback from students. However, the use of surveys or questionnaires for classroom library selection was severely limited. Only one study indicated use of a survey. In the study by Scott and Inskip (2017), all teacher and teacher-librarian participants acknowledged selecting books based on interest reported by students in surveys (Scott & Inskip, 2017). Even with the use of the survey, the teachers and teacher-librarians reported culling the list based on their own concepts of literary merit and parental approval. This demonstrates that while librarians and teachers are in powerful positions with the ability to control access, choice, and range in student-reading, they may still feel beholden to external influences, creating greater disparity in student collaboration and input in book title selection.

It is unknown to what extent surveys are used to promote student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library, and whether they increase engagement in the classroom library over using observation of perceived student interest alone. Additional research is required to understand the benefit, if any, of utilizing student surveys in book title selection for the classroom library.

Representation of Students

Books in which students can see themselves and their experiences is a driving factor in book selection for the classroom library, and one way in which teachers may perceive they are including students in the selection process (Henderson et al., 2020; McNair, 2016). For example, teachers seek out literature they perceive to be representative of the cultures and experiences of their students (Nash et al., 2019). Additionally, teachers strive for large libraries reporting that larger-sized libraries may ensure more variety and diversity and increase the likelihood that students will find books they can connect with and feel motivated to read (Crisp et al., 2016; Gambrell, 2011; Lao, 2005; Howlett & Young, 2019). Diversity in classroom libraries and size of classroom libraries will be further explored in the sections below.

Diversity. Beyond personal tastes and interest of students in topics, themes, and genres, research has reported that students who can find books that are relevant to their own lives are more likely to read (Crisp et al., 2016; Gambrell, 2011; Howlett & Young, 2019). Checklists and procedures for eliminating bias from classroom libraries and ensuring diversity are increasing in availability to teachers. One such tool discussed in an article by professors in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas provides teachers with a 13-item questionnaire on determining the absence of bias in a book (Howlett & Young, 2019). Articles demonstrating the benefits and importance of increasing multicultural literature in the classroom, and the methods to employ towards that end, are readily available to practicing teachers (Crisp et al., 2016; Howlett & Young, 2019), and a Google search for “how to make my classroom library more diverse” yielded almost two hundred million results. A persistent issue with these tools, articles, and search engines is that, while they seek to empower the teacher in thoughtfully selecting diverse books, there is no discussion, tool, or method around student collaboration in this process, even as teachers are desiring to select literature that is relevant to their student population. In an article by Georgia Perimeter College Teacher-educator, author Flowers states

“teachers are the focal point of access, and we must share culturally competent tools as informed professionals” (Flowers, 2016, p. 34). Throughout the literature, while teachers and researchers clearly rationalize the need for practices that incorporate diverse and inclusive books, and place careful attention to the identities and lived experiences of students in book selection for the classroom library, the voice of the very audience for whom these books are intended is not included.

The abundance of literature on diversity, and the rationale for acquiring culturally competent practices in book selection, can be attributed to the increasing research that demonstrates classroom libraries lack diversity, even as publishers are providing more diverse titles (Crisp et al., 2016; Gambrell, 2011; Howlett & Young, 2019), and student populations are becoming increasingly diverse. In a study performed in Atlanta preschools, researchers found that books by or representing people of color accounted for no more than 6% of all books in classroom libraries where nearly all teachers self-identified as a person of color or identified students as non-White, and even fewer featured content, themes or topics representative of class, ability, gender identity, and linguistic diversity (Crisp et al., 2016). Teachers in the Lao study also reported feeling it was important to include reading material relevant to their own student population, as well as introduce their students to authors and cultures to “expand their awareness of their homelands.” (Lao, 2005, p. 184). Additionally, an urgent need for native language titles was expressed.

Library Size. According to the literature, teachers reported prioritizing large libraries to include diverse, relevant titles that would represent their students, with the perception that quantity would beget variety, and variety would beget relevance to and interest from students. For years, research around classroom libraries has centered on the quantity and variety of books, including that access to a wide range of reading materials may increase motivation to read (Coppens, 2018; Gambrell, 2011; Virgil, 1994). The actual number of books needed for an effective classroom library has changed over time and varies from study to study. Catapano (2009) reported a minimum of ten books for every student, while a

blog post from Scholastic claimed experts suggest 20 books per student (Newingham, n.d.). Research by Allington and Cunningham (2007) recommended as many as 750 titles in primary classrooms, and four hundred titles in upper elementary classrooms.

Studies indicate that teachers are responding to these recommendations. In the Lao study of New York City public school teachers, where the average classroom library size was reported to be less than 100 titles by over one third of participants, over half reported feeling they had an insufficient number of books in their classroom library, and that increasing the total number of library books in their classroom was the primary reason for spending their own funds on books (Lao, 2005). In book lists constructed by teachers and librarians at a private, tuition-based preparatory school, having the right quantity of books was a priority, wanting them to be “not exhaustive” but “inviting” and having enough options to ensure variety (Scott & Inskip, 2017, p. 18).

Just as Scott and Inskip’s participants described quantity in the context of ensuring variety, so did the participants in the study by Lao (2005). New York City school teachers who participated in the study prescribed to the perception that having more books would support variety, as over half reported that a goal of increasing the number of books in their classroom library would also “provide more variety and ample exposure to all genres” (Lao, 2005, p. 182), believing this would ensure that the library included something of interest for every student (Lao, 2005). Other studies recommended quantity to address variety in classroom libraries as well but suggested that book selection must also be performed with the lens of increasing genre and format (Coppens, 2018; Yop & Yop, 2005). For example, a study of the number of books available in grade one, grade three, and grade five classrooms from sixty elementary classrooms across five states found that while books per child and overall access to print was adequate, the number of books alone do not explain variance in reading achievement. One outcome of the study was discussing the significance of ensuring a wide variety of topic, interest, and readability to appropriately match the students (Hodges et al., 2019, p. 439).

Literature demonstrates that teachers should fill the classroom with interesting reading material, make time for reading, and allow choice in reading. Additionally, teachers should select texts that are relevant to the lives of their students and allow them to see themselves and their experiences in the text. The literature is rife with recommendations on how teachers can source these titles (Crisp et al., 2016; Gambrell, 2011; Lao, 2005; Howlett & Young, 2019); however, a large and concerning gap is collaboration from students as stakeholders in selecting books for the classroom library.

Curricular Objectives

Across the literature, there is evidence of educators, both novice and experienced, striking a tenuous balance between accounting for student interest and need, ensuring variety and diversity in reading material, and meeting the demands of educational reform or mandated standards. These expectations manifested from the teachers, their direct supervisors, their more tenured colleagues, and test scores. Results of navigating this balance and expectations included adopting materials used by colleagues in the context of the prescribed curriculum, independently selecting new materials to supplement the prescribed curriculum, and abandoning aspects of the prescribed curriculum (Burkhauser & Lesaux, 2017; Valencia et al., 2006). This suggests that regardless of mandated curriculum and the expectations of authority to adhere to it, educators will find a way to prioritize identifying and implementing supplemental materials that either better meet the perceived needs of their students or address perceived gaps in standard curriculum.

UK and US based studies have found that content was the most influential factor in material selection. However, how participants selected content varied; drivers for content included student interest, alignment to curriculum, and quality of the material (Burkhauser & Lesaux, 2017; Scott & Inskip, 2017; Grossman & Thompson, 2008; Valencia et al., 2006). In the study by Valencia et al. (2006), all four participants stated the prescribed or mandated district curriculum as a reference for selecting materials. This included either supporting the basal programs in place, the adopted state standards, or

content-area frameworks designed by curriculum committees at the district-level. Like the UK study of librarians and teachers designing reading lists, content that supports, aligns to, or achieves the expectations of the curriculum is highly influential. Supporting this notion additionally is the study by Burkhauser and Lesaux (2017). While the teacher-participants sought materials that would make the curriculum more accessible to their struggling and ELL students, the driving factor was not necessarily student-first, but curriculum-first and in response to pressure from principals to increase standardized test scores.

Principals may be prioritizing academic skills measured by state tests over individualized student growth in the wake of test-based accountability policies, most recently with the implementation of Every Student Succeeds Act (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015), which are frequently tied to accreditation (University at Buffalo, 2020). In the Valencia et al study (2006), the elementary teachers, while striving to select materials that holistically addressed content-area programs, kept the purposes outlined by school, district, or state frameworks top of mind. Likewise, middle, and secondary teachers were found to select materials that specifically addressed or achieved learning objectives in their curriculum (Grossman & Thompson, 2008).

Just as content alignment to the curriculum presented as a factor in selection, so did standard alignment to the curriculum. As such, teachers selected materials that deliver the content needed to achieve objectives outlined in national, state, or district standards and increase test results. This is reflected in the study by Burkhauser and Lesaux (2017) where teachers supplemented, extended, or added to the curriculum with new materials without omitting from the existing curriculum, to respond to authoritative pressure to increase test scores.

Conclusion of the Literature

The literature presented demonstrates that there are many factors, both internal and external, that teachers navigate when selecting material for the classroom, including their own teacher

preparation, personal background, the socio-cultural factors of their learning community, and stipulations of the mandated curriculum and standards. An assumption is that the same factors that influence teachers in selection of material for the classroom are the same factors that influence how teachers collaborate with students in book selection for the classroom library, and as such, teacher concepts and practices around student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library will be further examined in the research.

Additionally, the literature presented reveals that teachers believe students *are* collaborating, or have agency, in book selection for the classroom library, with the goal that the classroom library will offer interesting and relevant material that students will want to read. However, the methods reported demonstrate that students have limited collaboration in book selection. For example, the students were presented with titles after the selection process, in which perceived student interest and cultural background drove selection risking teacher bias or misinterpretation. Some form of member checking or response validation from students would allow teachers to confirm that the titles they select are truly meaningful, relevant, and engaging for students.

Introduction to Study

Research on classroom library curation revealed that teachers feel students participate in title selection for the classroom library, with the goal that the classroom library offers interesting and relevant material that students want to read (Lao, 2005; Fletcher et al., 2012; Heron-Hrubry et al., 2016). However, the literature also revealed that students have limited collaboration in book selection. In the studies reviewed, the students were presented with titles after the selection process, and teachers relied on their own perception of students' interests risking interference of their own bias or misunderstanding.

In a recent study that examined the influences and barriers to student involvement in book selection for classroom libraries, Murray (2020) found that teachers believe they are thoughtfully

selecting titles for student consumption and that they are providing titles that students want to read. The purpose of the study by Murray (2020) was to examine the influences and barriers to student involvement in book selection for the classroom library. The results indicate that while the participants value student interest with the intent to inspire voluntary, recreational reading, they also perceive individual student interest as a barrier since it is financially challenging to cater to individual student needs in reading. Additionally, student interest can be difficult to navigate when students lack the experience to understand and articulate their own reading interests. Finally, both the literature and pilot study indicate that methods of student collaboration are limited to observing students and surveying students and suggest that participants may need support in effectively engaging and empowering students in collaborating to build the classroom library.

In conclusion, teachers genuinely want students to enjoy reading and to feel successful in reading. Studies show that teachers desire to fill the classroom with interesting reading material, to make time for reading, and to allow choice in reading (Catapano et al., 2009; Fletcher et al., 2012; Heron-Hruby et al., 2016; Lao, 2005; Murray, 2020; Scott & Inskip, 2017; Scullin, 2020). However, a large and concerning gap is collaboration from students as stakeholders in selecting books for the classroom library, even as the literature also reveals teachers feel students have agency in book selection for the classroom library. Exploring perspectives on student collaboration in book selection would potentially increase support of teachers in effectively and efficiently engaging students actively in book selection for the classroom library, particularly as collaboration with students has demonstrated increased student engagement, higher levels of thinking, and improved academic performance (Ariffin, 2021; Densel, 2005; Fletcher & Shaw, 2012; Han & Gutierrez, 2021; Worsley et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Gaining insight into this selection process can inform how classroom literature and library providers support teachers in collaborating with students related to book selection for student-use.

Additionally, this research highlights gaps in SoBo's product offering and provides direction for future product development that will allow the company to better serve K-5 educators and students across the nation. In return, students will come to identify classrooms as places where engaging, interesting material they want to read is readily available.

The following chapter details the actions and methods of the study toward increasing understanding of the concepts, practices, and needs reported by teachers around student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Analysis Procedures

Introduction

The previous chapter presented a review of literature to provide context for this study. This chapter will describe the study design, including the theoretical framework and approach to the study, the setting of the study, the participants, source of data and procedures for collection of data, the strategies for analysis, and lastly threats to reliability and validity. The details in this chapter account for the actions and methods of the study toward increasing understanding of the concepts, practices, and needs reported by teachers around student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library.

Study Design

Theoretical Framework

The study used a social constructivism framework seeking understanding about the world in which participants live and work (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Social constructivism is a framework in which individuals pursue understanding of their world and developing their own interpretations that correspond to their experiences. In this case, the study sought to understand the concepts and practices of general education classroom teachers in student collaboration around book selection for the classroom library and relied on the participants' views of the situation under study.

Epistemological Stance

The study is approached from an epistemological constructivist assumption, in which it explored perceived truths, beliefs, and practices reported by participants to add to the researcher's view of what teachers perceptualize and enact when collaborating with students around book selection for the classroom library (Burkholder et al., 2020; Charmaz, 2008; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). An epistemological constructivist assumption requires the researcher to get as close as possible to the participants being studied to understand their concepts and experiences, and to construct or generate new understanding from the participants' interpretations of their concepts and experiences. The

objective was to understand the concepts, practices, and willingness to collaborate with students as expressed by teachers related to book selection for the classroom library using surveys and interviews.

Methodological Rationale

A convergent parallel design with a mixed methods approach guided this study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In a convergent parallel design, the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study are conducted concurrently. Data is analyzed independently, and results are interpreted together. In this study, a survey designed for quantitative data was implemented to understand how concepts and practices impact the level of student collaboration, where collaboration is defined as students working synchronously with the teacher on a process or product toward an agreed upon goal (Lai, 2011), and is specific to book selection for a classroom library. The survey design used Likert scale questions and ordinal scale, as the former allows for degrees of opinions, and even no opinion at all, and the latter evaluates a respondent's attitude towards a subject by using a set of ordered responses (Burkholder et al., 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Interviews collecting qualitative data were employed to extend, clarify, and add context to the survey responses.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study and the selection of participants was to explore what concepts and practices exist around collaborating with students in the book selection process for the classroom library. Additionally, the study seeks to discover how likely teachers are to increase student collaboration, and what teachers believe is needed to increase student collaboration. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, conceptualize student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?

2. How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, practice student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?
3. How do concepts of student collaboration of general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five compare to reported practice of student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?
4. How likely are general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?
5. What do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, believe is needed to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?

Instruments

A convergent parallel design with a mixed methods approach guided this study and included two points of data collection: surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Survey

The first instrument used in this study was an original online survey. The survey was designed by the researcher after exhausting the literature and not locating an instrument that would answer the research questions. The survey contained demographic questions, Likert-scale questions, and a ranking scale question requiring participants to rank given options. The survey was created using Survey Monkey and allowed the participants to complete the survey anonymously. The link to the online survey and recruitment email was disseminated via Outlook.

The survey included seven sections and was designed to measure five constructs: (1) concepts of student collaboration for book selection in a classroom library, (2) practices of student collaboration for book selection for a classroom library, (3) comparisons of concepts and practices of student collaboration for book selection in a classroom library (4) willingness to increase student collaboration for book selection in a classroom library, and (5) assessment of needs related to increasing student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library.

The first section included nine single-choice items and requested demographic information including years of teaching experience, highest level of education, employment status, grade level taught, institution type (public, charter, private, or magnet), general area of the institution (urban, suburban, rural, or remote), racial and ethnic background, age, and gender. These survey items were designed to confirm that the participant fit the selection criteria of full-time, classroom teacher of grade kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five, and to provide demographic context for the sample.

The second section included eight Likert-scale items and requested information about the student population with which the participant worked. This included attitudes about learning and education, general involvement in school-based decisions, academic performance, interest in school, state of home-life, and financial hardship. The items in this section were designed to assess how participants interpreted the home-life of their students, as well as student performance and engagement in school. Positive teacher-student relationships have been shown to lead to increased cooperation and engagement in the classroom, which may translate to increased cooperation, engagement, and collaboration in book selection for the classroom library (Han & Gutierrez, 2021). While not related to the research questions, this information provided context and additional factors for participants' views on student collaboration. Example survey items were "Indicate your agreement with how this statement applies to your students: my students care about learning and getting a good

education” and “Indicate your agreement with how well this statement applies to your students: my students live with hunger, poverty, or troubled family lives.”

The third section included five five-point Likert-scale items and requested information on student activity related to the classroom library and the participant’s level of satisfaction with student activity around the classroom library. This included frequency of students browsing for books in the classroom library, frequency of students reading books from the classroom library, degree to which the participant feel’s student can find books they want to read in the classroom library, degree to which students collaborate with the participant in choosing books to place in the classroom library, and level of satisfaction with student engagement in the classroom library. Five-point Likert scale questions have been successfully used to explore concepts teachers may have on student engagement (Han & Gutierrez, 2021), and are used in the third section of the survey to assess how respondents viewed student engagement in the classroom library and to provide context for participants’ views on student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library.

The fourth section related to the first research question on concepts of student collaboration for book selection in a classroom library. This section included 13 items and requested that participants use a five-point Likert scale to indicate their level of agreement with statements with how well a statement described student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library. Five-point Likert scales have been successfully implemented in understanding concepts in the field of education and as such were included in the survey design (Crary, 2019; Bezci & Sungur, 2021; Han & Gutierrez, 2021) Additionally, research on student collaboration has defined collaboration as an active process, in which students have time to think and reflect on their activity (Morze et al., 2019). As such, statements for assessment included active, dedicated time for students to participate in book selection. Statements included “teachers and students decide together which books to add to the classroom library” and “students suggest books to add to the classroom library.”

The fifth section related to the second research question on practices of student collaboration for book selection for a classroom library. This section included thirteen items and requested that participants use a five-point Likert scale to indicate their level of agreement with statements about their current practices of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library. Five-point Likert scales have been successfully implemented in the reporting of practices by teachers in the field of education, and as such were included in the survey design (Han & Gutierrez, 2021; Truxaw et al., 2008). Statements for assessment included “I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library” and “I take suggestions from my students on books to add to the classroom library.”

The sixth section related to the fourth research question on willingness to increase practices of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library. This section included thirteen items and requested that participants indicate the likelihood of adopting practices involving students in book selection for the classroom library through single-choice selection. Another way to consider the likelihood of adopting new practices is as openness to change and assessing teachers’ openness to change using survey has been successfully implemented before (Crary, 2019). As such, it was included in the survey design. Response options for respondents in this section were: “I already do this and will continue doing it,” “I do not do this and would start doing it,” “I already do this and will stop doing it,” “I do not do this and would not start doing it.” Survey items included statements such as “I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library” or “I take suggestions from my students on books to add to the classroom library.”

The seventh section related to the fifth research question on what participants viewed as needs for increasing student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library. This section included one item, an ordinal scale, and requested that participants rank provided options on how much impact it would have on increasing practices of student collaboration. Items to rank were: Financial support for adding books to my classroom library, More control or ownership of the books added to my classroom

library, Courses/workshops on engaging my students with books to add to my classroom library, Networking with other teachers on engaging my students with books to add to my classroom library, An automated, digital way for students to engage with books to add to my classroom library, and Other. Participants indicated the most impactful option as one, the second most impactful option as two, and so on until all options were ranked.

Each survey item also included an optional comment field for participants to extend their responses. The final survey item was open-ended for any additional comments on the topic of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library. Data collected from the survey were stored on a password protected computer that only the researcher had access to. The complete survey is provided in Appendix A.

Interview

The second instrument used was a semi-structured, open-ended emergent interview protocol developed by the researcher. A semi-structured interview requires respondents to answer preset open-ended questions for focus and consistency across interviews while allowing flexibility and emergent conversation between the participant and researcher; additionally, the protocol still provides structure for replication across participants or for future study (Burkholder et al., 2020; Seidman, 2006). Including open-ended, emergent interviews as a method for data collection allows the researcher to collect and interpret meaning through how participants describe their experiences, feelings, attitudes, and preferences, and fits the constructivist grounded theory approach to the study (Charmaz 2008; Roberts, 2020). Interviews were conducted as a flexible and more in-depth examination of the topic under study compared to survey alone.

The interview protocol was informed by the sample interview protocol provided in Burkholder et al. (2020) *Research design and methods: An applied guide for the Scholar-Practitioner* (p.151), and included a scripted introduction, thirteen preset open-ended questions, four potential probes, and a

scripted conclusion. Additionally, the protocol included an option for interviewer observations and reactions.

The opening six questions were introductory and exploratory in nature, beginning broadly while remaining in theme of the topic under study. These questions were designed to elicit knowledge about, and attitudes related to the participant's experiences in their classroom setting and with their students, while also seeking to promote a good interview interaction (Burkholder et al., 2020; Roberts, 2020). For example, "tell me about the school you teach in", "tell me about your students this year", "how do you get to know your students", and "tell me about the reading habits of your students."

The latter half of the interview questions were designed to elicit in-depth responses specific to answering the research questions and target specific aspects of student collaboration processes related to book selection for the classroom library. For example, "how are books to add to your classroom library selected?", "how do students participate in selecting books to add to your classroom library?" and "tell me about collaborating with your students on selecting titles to add to the classroom library." Additionally, probes were included to gather deeper information from the participants such as "Please tell me more about..." and "What did you observe...?" (Burkholder et al., 2020; Roberts, 2020)

In summary, the interview protocol was designed to gather context and insight into the professional environment of the participant and the population they served, into the practices of the teacher in book selection for a classroom library, and into the practices of the teacher in collaborating with students in book selection for a classroom library. Interviews were conducted via Zoom and transcribed. The transcribed interviews were then emailed to participants for member checking. The complete interview protocol is provided in Appendix B.

Study Setting and Participants

The study occurred during the fall 2021 school year. Data were collected over the months of October and November. Potential participants were identified through the SoBo database. SoBo, a

pseudonym, is a for-profit provider of classroom libraries to school districts, literacy coaches and classroom teachers across the country, and describes itself as an expert in classroom library curation and children's literature. With permission, contacts and leads were mined from the SoBo market database. A SoBo contact is defined as an individual who has placed an order or requested a quote from SoBo for classroom books. A SoBo lead is defined as an individual who has not placed an order or requested a quote but has indicated interest in SoBo content by opting in to receive SoBo email. Participants were selected to receive the survey using the following criteria: general classroom teacher of kindergarten, grade one, grade two, grade three, grade four, or grade five. The participants were not specific to a geographic region or state, and all participants were located within the continental United States. Additionally, candidates were not excluded based on age, gender, race, or other sociocultural, economic, or demographic factors.

Data Collection Procedures

This study used convenience sampling to identify participants. Convenience sampling is an example of non-probability sampling, in which the sample is drawn from a population nearby or easy to reach (Burkholder et al., 2020). In this case, a sample of teachers in K-5 were easily accessible via the SoBo database and this researcher's position within the company. Recruitment began with deploying the survey (Appendix A) to the pool of potential participants. The survey was delivered via an emailed link, with the informed consent form in the body of the email. Potential participants were informed of the significance of the study, as well as any risks with their participation via the approved informed consent form. The survey was administered once, and participants were only asked to complete it once.

The survey was deployed in September 2021 and remained open for six weeks. 7,201 contacts and leads that matched the role of Teacher K-5 in the SoBo database received the survey via an emailed link. 173 opted to participate, demonstrated by completing the survey. The timing of year and re-entry to schools following the COVID-19 pandemic may have accounted for a lower than anticipated response

rate. Additionally, it was found that an issue with the SoBo email server was delaying email to recipients. When this was resolved, the response rate increased by 253%. Thirty-one completed surveys were excluded where the participant indicated they did not fit the selection criteria, meaning they had moved into a role that was not a classroom teacher of kindergarten, grade one, grade two, grade three, grade four, or grade five. An additional twenty-six surveys were excluded due to the participant not completing the full survey.

Of the remaining 116 participants, ninety-two responded they could be contacted for an interview. Again, convenience sampling was used to identify interviewees. All ninety-two participants who responded affirmatively for an interview were contacted to expedite the collection of interview data. Following this initial outreach, stratified sampling was used in a second round of outreach. Stratified sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of the population into smaller sub-groups (Burkholder et al., 2020). This method was employed to increase the diversity of the interview sample and to increase the likelihood that perspectives would be more representative of the surveyed population. Sub-groups included in the second round of outreach included: male, teaching experience less than three years, non-White racial and ethnic background, and rural placement. The demographics of the surveyed population and the interviewed population are detailed in the section below.

Fifteen interviews were scheduled, and thirteen interviews were held. Two participants were excluded when it was revealed they did not lead or manage their own classroom and classroom library. Rather, they served in supporting roles as a Literacy Interventionist and a Special Education co-teacher, respectively. This left eleven viable interviews for transcription and analysis. Interviews were conducted via Zoom or phone call over a two-week period in November 2021. Interviews were recorded and the initial observations and reflections were recorded on the Interview Protocol form (Appendix B). Interviews were transcribed using Temi, an online speech to text transcription service that utilizes advanced speech recognition software to transcribe audio. The transcribed interviews were then

emailed to the interviewees for member checking and given two days to respond with edits or modifications. Member checking allows participants to review their transcripts and verify the data (Burkholder et al., 2020). Two interviewees confirmed their transcripts as accurate, and the remaining interviewees did not reply. Member checking did not result in any edits to transcripts.

Sample Demographics

All counted surveys and interviews were from participants who were employed full time as a classroom teacher of kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, grade 4, or grade 5. The following sections describe the demographic information of participants.

Table 1

Respondent Demographic Information (Survey N=116, Interview N=11)

Survey Item	Response Options	Survey (N=116)		Interviews (N=11)	
		N	%	N	%
Years of teaching experience	>10 years	70	60.3	9	81.8
	7-10 years	24	20.7	1	9.1
	4-6 years	19	16.4	1	9.1
	1-3 years	3	2.6	0	0.0
	<1 year	0	0	0	0.0
Highest level of education toward teaching	Associate degree	0	0	0	0.0
	Bachelor's degree	23	19.8	2	18.2
	Master's degree	72	62.1	6	54.5
	Post-grad/doctoral degree	16	13.8	1	9.1
	Other certification	5	4.3	2	18.2
Grade level taught	Kindergarten	12	10.3	0	0.0
	Grade 1	13	11.2	2	18.2
	Grade 2	25	21.6	3	27.3
	Grade 3	22	19.0	2	18.2
	Grade 4	17	14.7	0	0.0
	Grade 5	27	23.2	4	36.4
Institution type	Public	109	94.0	10	91.9
	Charter	5	4.3	0	0.0
	Private	2	1.7	1	9.1
General area of the institution	Urban	24	20.7	5	45.5
	Suburban	73	62.9	5	45.5
	Rural	18	15.5	1	9.1
	Remote	1	0.9	0	0.0
Racial/ethnic background	Asian or Pacific Islander	4	3.4	0	0.0
	Black or African American	1	0.9	1	9.1
	Hispanic or Lantinx	6	5.2	0	0.0
	Native American or Alaskan Native	0	0.0	0	0.0
	White or Caucasian	103	88.8	9	81.8
	Multiracial or Biracial	1	0.9	1	9.1
	I prefer not to respond	1	0.9	0	0.0
Age range	21-30	16	13.8	1	9.1
	31-40	39	33.6	2	18.1
	41-50	34	29.3	4	36.4

Survey Item	Response Options	Survey (N=116)		Interviews (N=11)	
		N	%	N	%
	51+	26	22.4	4	36.4
	I prefer not to respond	1	0.9	0	0
Gender	Female	110	94.8	11	100.0
	Male	5	4.3	0	0.0
	Non-binary	0	0.0	0	0.0
	None of these describe me	0	0.0	0	0.0
	I prefer not to respond	1	0.9	0	0.0
Racial/ethnic background of students	Asian or Pacific Islander	3	2.6	0	0.0
	Black or African American	2	1.7	0	0.0
	Hispanic or Lantinx	15	12.9	1	9.1
	Native American or Alaskan Native	2	1.7	0	0.0
	White or Caucasian	56	48.3	8	72.7
	Multiracial or Biracial	15	12.9	0	0.0
	Other	23	19.8	2	18.2
Reported Background of Students as Living with Hunger, Poverty, or Troubled Family Lives	Agree	42	36.2	4	36.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	20	17.2	0	0.0
	Disagree	54	46.6	7	63.6
Reported Background of Students as Receiving Free or Reduced-price Meals at School	Agree	55	47.4	4	36.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	10.3	1	9.1
	Disagree	49	42.2	6	54.5

Years of Teaching Experience

The distribution of teaching experience reflects the population of teachers in the United States according to the 2017-2018 National Teacher and Principal Survey published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in September 2020 (Taie & Goldring, 2020). In the NCES report, 61% of teachers reported more than 10 years of teaching experience, 24% reported 4-9 years teaching experience, and 14% reported less than 4 years of teaching experience (p.11). The high number of interview participants with more than 10 years' experience is unsurprising given the research on new teachers and the challenges they face when entering the classroom, such as establishing classroom management and mastering the curriculum to which they will be held accountable (Goodwin, 2021). It may mean that novice teachers are unlikely to prioritize completing a survey or performing an interview.

Highest Level of Education Toward Teaching

Like years of teaching experience, this distribution is consistent with the 2017-2018 National Teacher and Principal Survey published by the National Center for Education Statistics in September 2020 (Taie & Goldring, 2020). In the NCES report, 48% of teachers reported holding a Master's degree, 40% reported holding a Bachelor's degree, and 9% reported holding higher than a Master's degree. Four

percent were teaching with less than a Bachelors' degree (p.13). Given the high number of interviewees who had greater than seven years of teaching experience, they have had time in the field to pursue a Master's degree or higher.

Grade Level Taught

It was anticipated that participants would be more representative of grades 3-5 than grades K-2, as schools and districts may be adhering to the U.S. Department of Education's expectations that children be reading by age 8 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.), typically occurring by grade 3. Teachers in these grade levels may be more likely to have classroom libraries for independent and autonomous use by older students. Additionally, COVID 19 dramatically impacted primary grade levels, where students are learning critical social emotional skills for attending school, as well as foundational reading and math skills (D'Souza, 2021). With the disrupted school years, teachers of grade kindergarten, grade one or grade two may be prioritizing school readiness and reading foundations, making it less feasible for independent and autonomous use of a classroom library.

Area and Type of School Setting

The high number of public-schools in the sample trends with the American student population, in which 90% are attending a public-school (Bouchrika, 2021), and in which 45% of public-schools are set in a suburban location (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

Racial/Ethnic Background

This demographic distribution continues to be consistent with the 2017-2018 National Teacher and Principal Survey published by the National Center for Education Statistics in September 2020 (Taie & Goldring, 2020). In the NCES survey, 79% of all public-school teachers identified as White, 7% were Black, and 9% were Hispanic. Two percent identified as Asian and less than 1% identified as Pacific Islander. Approximately 2% identified with two or more races. (p.7).

Age

This is again consistent with the 2017-2018 National Teacher and Principal Survey published by the National Center for Education Statistics in September 2020 (Taie & Goldring, 2020) in which they found the average age of teachers to be 42 years old (p.9).

Gender

The high percentage of survey participants identifying as female trends with national statistics, as 89% of teachers in the year 2017-2018 and teaching elementary school were female and 11% were male (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

Reported Racial/Ethnic Background of Students

The racial/ethnic background of students as reported by participants was more diverse than the sample population itself. Twenty percent (N=23) of survey participants described their students as Other, with “mix of all” being the most primary reason for this selection and 18% (N=2) of interview participants described their students as Other, with “mix of all” being the most primary reason for this selection. This description is consistent with findings from the National Center for Education Statistics, in which the number of students enrolled in public-schools identifying as White or as Black has decreased while students identifying as Hispanic or as two or more races has increased (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021b).

Reported Background of Students as Living with Hunger, Poverty, or Troubled Family Lives

The reported background of the student population with which participants work showed most participants as working with populations not experiencing frequent hardship. This contradicts national data on hardship during the time of study, which reported that 45% of all children were in a household experiencing substantial hardship (Sherman et al., 2020). Teachers working with students and families facing significant hardship may have been less inclined to participate in the study as they prioritize supporting the welfare of students, or these teachers may not have established classroom libraries due to funding constraints (Cappella et al., 2008; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.-a)

Reported Background of Students as Receiving Free or Reduced-price Meals at School

While the population of participants reported more than half of their students receive free or reduced-price meals at school, it is challenging to attribute this to the socio-economic status of the population with which the participants work. Many schools across the nation increased access to non-needs-based meals during and following the COVID-19 pandemic (Jabbari et al., 2021).

Data Analysis Procedures

A grounded theory approach guided analysis of the data to generate understanding related to the concepts, practices, needs, and attitudes toward student collaboration in the book selection process for a classroom library. Grounded theory is a method in which the researcher derives a general theory of process or action grounded in the views of participants in a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Specifically, this study employs grounded theory from a constructivist perspective, and focuses on participant's interpretations of the area of inquiry, and the researcher derives meaning from these interpretations (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Research findings would ultimately contribute to product or knowledge development, services provided, or reform thinking on how classroom library and literature providers can impact student collaboration and engagement in classroom library book selection and will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Quantitative Analysis

Responses to the survey consisted of quantitative data. Quantitative items required single choice response, Likert-scale, and ranking scale. The data from the survey were entered and saved into an electronic spreadsheet for summarizing and analysis. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics provide quantitative summaries and observations about the data set (Christopher, 2016). Percentages and means were used to report on concepts of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, practices of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, willingness to increase student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, and needs that must be met to consider increasing student collaboration in book

selection for a classroom library. The descriptive statistics used to summarize survey responses is detailed in Chapter Four.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data was captured in the semi-structured, emergent, open-ended interview and added clarification and elaboration to survey responses. Guided by inductive reasoning, the qualitative data responses were coded during multiple readings to detect and create emergent categories (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Coding began with an initial reading of the eleven transcripts. Then, each transcript was read again through the lens of a research question, resulting in each transcript being read no less than five times, and responses were coded in relation to each research question. Emergent categories were sorted and compared to develop themes, and inductive reasoning was used to generalize theory related to research questions (Burkholder et al., 2020) Theories derived from coding are summarized in Chapter Four.

Rigor of the Research

Rigor is associated with the reliability and validity of research, referring to the accuracy and consistency of data collection, analysis, and communication of findings (Burkholder et al., 2020). In a mixed-methods design, and leaning into a grounded theory approach in which the researcher derives meaning from the participants' interpretations of their experiences, it is critical to identify and mitigate threats that may emerge from bias, and establish practices that enhance the reliability and validity of the research (Burkholder et al., 2020; Buss & Zambo, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Validity

Validity is a strength of qualitative research, which was included in the mixed methods design of this study, because qualitative research primarily draws on the authentic voice and experience of the participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation of data from two sources - survey and interviews - also increased validity of the study. Data triangulation involves using multiple sources of data to investigate and understand processes, views, or phenomena to test the consistency of findings and

increases the chance to control or mitigate some of the threats influencing results (Burkholder et al., 2020; Carter et al., 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018.) Furthermore, interview participants had an opportunity to member-check their transcripts and ensure the data collected was correct. Member-checking occurs when data are returned to participants to check for accuracy with their experiences (Birt et al., 2016; Burkholder et al., 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Finally, the survey and interview protocol are easily replicated and transferable to be repeated or used for future study.

Using additional sources of data would have enhanced the rigor of the research (Burkholder et al., 2020), such as performing observations or taking ethnographic field notes. Additionally, selection of participants was not controlled beyond the selection criteria, and differences such as age, maturity, language, or attitude could have affected the results. There was also limited control on setting and timing of when the survey was completed. Lastly, the position of the researcher as a former educator and current SoBo employee may have brought unintended bias to the research design and interpretation of the participants' experiences.

Reliability

A strength of reliability was that the survey instrument captured exact responses from individual participants, including exact wording and phrasing in open comment fields. Additionally, interview transcripts were checked for accuracy by the researcher and member-checked by participants, resulting in no edits to transcriptions. Furthermore, drift coding was controlled by continually comparing data with the codes and their definitions in a codebook, and by writing memos to assess what the researcher was thinking about or learning during analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). The codebook can be found as Appendix C. Lastly, peer debriefing with a dissertation committee member allowed for testing and defending of codes and themes beyond the sole interpretation of the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Response bias may be a threat, in which participants may have responded in a way that makes them appear more favorable (Burkholder et al., 2020; Lavrakas, 2008). Survey fatigue could have also occurred where respondents become tired or bored of the survey tasks, impacting how they would respond (Lavrakas, 2008; Porter et al., 2004). Additionally, the research was conducted independently, with the absence of second or third researchers whose involvement may have resulted in improved intercoder agreement and interrater reliability for consistency in identifying codes and emergent themes.

Conclusion

This chapter described the setting of the study, as well as the participants, sources of data and procedures for collection of data, the strategies for analysis, and lastly threats to reliability and validity. The next chapter will introduce the analysis of data, including the reliability of measures, procedures for analysis, results of analysis, and lastly any additional factors regarding results.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Results

Introduction

The previous chapter described the study design, including the theoretical framework and approach to the study, the setting of the study, the participants, source of data and procedures for collection of data, the strategies for analysis, and lastly threats to reliability and validity. This chapter accounts for the analysis of data, including the reliability of measures, procedures for analysis, results of analysis, and lastly any additional factors regarding results.

Analysis Introduction

This section examines the data for contextual information around concepts, practices, and needs related to student collaboration in book title selection for the classroom library. Following subsections will discuss the reliability of the selected quantitative and qualitative measures, the analysis procedures of each, and the analysis results of each. Remaining factors regarding results will also be discussed.

Reliability of Chosen Measures

Developing an unbiased and reliable survey can be challenging (Burkholder et al., 2020; Fowler, 2013;), and surveys inherently come with several limitations including low response rate, survey fatigue, respondent bias, inaccurate or inconsistent self-reporting, and misunderstanding survey questions (Burkholder et al., 2020; Fowler, 2013; Lavrakas, 2008; Porter et al., 2004). However, the quantitative measures in the survey gathered categorical data, without having inherent order, and can be easily accessed and transferred by others or used for future research (Burkholder et al., 2020). Additionally, percentages and means of reported concepts of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, practices of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, willingness to increase student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, and needs that must be met to consider increasing student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library are easily repeated and transferred. Although the data provided significant circumstantial information, there was a lack of

other quantitative data, owing to the sample size and survey as the only instrument for collection of quantitative data. However, the categorical data collected provided context and support for interpreting qualitative data.

The researcher used interviews as an additional data source to extend and clarify survey responses. Qualitative data consisted of transcribed interviews coded for themes, and member checking against transcriptions was employed to ensure accuracy of the data (Burkholder et al., 2020). There was also minimal risk of observer effect, as participants were not under observation (Burkholder et al., 2020). Additionally, an interview protocol was used and is easily replicated for transferability (Burkholder, et al., 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Added measures with triangulation of data would have increased the reliability of data. For example, observing participants would have provided a deeper look into their individual circumstances around concepts and practices in student collaboration for book selection for the classroom library than responses to the survey and interview protocol alone (Burkholder et al., 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Lastly, researcher subjectivity should not be overlooked as there were not multiple researchers implementing the study, and analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data is unique to one researcher (Burkholder et al., 2020).

Analysis Procedures for Quantitative Data

Discrete data captured by the 173 respondents to the electronic survey was exported to Excel for summarizing and analysis purposes. The data were cleaned and numerically coded, and participants with missing data, or where responses identified the participant was outside the selection criteria, were excluded from analysis. This left 116 participant responses for analysis. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentages and means. Descriptive statistics provide quantitative summaries and observations about the data set (Christopher, 2016). Groupings by percentage and means were used to represent participant information related to concepts of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, practices of student collaboration in book

selection for a classroom library, willingness to increase student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, and needs that must be met to consider increasing student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library. Additionally, a paired *t*-test was used to find the *p*-value, and thus the significance of variance, between whether the same group of respondents had different mean scores on their reported concepts of student collaboration, and their reported practices of student collaboration. A paired *t*-test can be applied to test whether the same group has different mean scores on different variables; in this case the variables were concepts of collaboration, and practices of collaboration (Datanovia, 2019; Saint-Germain, 2001). Data analyzed and discussed pertain to the percentages and means of responses from the surveyed population.

Analysis Procedures for Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were collected via recorded Zoom and telephone interviews, and recorded audio was uploaded and transcribed using Temi, an online speech to text transcription service that utilizes advanced speech recognition software to transcribe audio. The transcribed interviews were then emailed to the interviewees for member checking and given two days to respond with edits or modifications. Member checking allows participants to review their transcripts and verify the data (Burkholder et al., 2020). Member checking did not result in any edits to transcripts.

Transcripts were uploaded and analyzed using Taguette, an online, open-source coding software for qualitative research. Multiple readings of the transcriptions were performed, and the data were approached with open coding to segment the data and allow themes to emerge. Using an iterative process guided by inductive coding to allow themes to emerge, a codebook was generated to address the research questions: participant information related to concepts of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, practices of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, willingness to increase student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, and needs that must be met in order to consider increasing student collaboration in book selection for a classroom

library. Codebooks contain lists of codes, definitions of codes, and examples of how codes were used in practice. Codebooks are significant as they allow the researcher to remain focused and serve as a reference throughout the coding process, providing context and avoiding drift codes. (Burkholder et al., 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). The codebook was peer debriefed with a dissertation committee member, supporting validity of the data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Open coding began with an initial reading of the eleven transcripts. Open coding includes breaking up textual data into discrete parts for analysis and categorization (Burkholder et al., 2020; Mills et al., 2010). Each transcript was read multiple times through the lens of a research question, resulting in each transcript being read no less than five times, and data were coded in relation to each research question. Following open-coding, axial coding was employed to provide clearer insight into common characteristics in the data and draw connections between codes (Allen, 2017; Burkholder et al., 2020; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). The grounded theory approach, which guided this study, requires axial coding to investigate relationships between concepts or categories that emerged during the open coding process (Allen, 2017, Burkholder et al., 2020; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). Finally, selective coding was used to articulate themes and patterns to generate theory related to the research questions under study (Burkholder et al., 2020, Mills et al., 2010; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).

Results of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were collected via electronic survey (Appendix A). Participant responses were exported to Excel, and Excel functions were used to summarize descriptive statistics and analyze variance. Summaries of findings related to concepts of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, practices of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, willingness to increase student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, and needs that must be met

to consider increasing student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library. The following sections present the findings of the quantitative data related to each research question.

Research Question One

The first measured construct used a Likert scale and was related to research question one: How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, conceptualize student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? To assess this, survey participants responded to questions with the degree to which they agreed that statements describing involving students in book selection for the classroom library counted as a collaborative act. These statements specifically required providing space, time, or student voice to engage in the decision-making process together, or for students to give feedback on choices made for the classroom library. Other statements described students as active owners of the classroom library and specifically required that students maintain or manage aspects of the classroom library. Lastly, survey questions related to what degree participants agreed with statements about student collaboration as a mechanism for increasing engagement in the classroom library.

Table 2

Agreement with Statements as Concepts of Student Collaboration (N=116)

Survey Item	Strongly agree =5		Tend to agree=4		Neither agree nor disagree=3		Tend to disagree=2		Strongly disagree=1		Mean (SD)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1 Teachers and students decide together which books to add to the classroom library.	16	13.8	41	35.3	23	19.8	28	24.1	8	6.9	3.25 (1.17)
2 Students give feedback on books for the classroom library to the teacher.	29	25.0	60	51.7	16	13.8	10	8.6	1	0.9	3.91 (0.90)
3 Students have a say in deciding books for the classroom library.	21	18.1	49	42.2	20	17.2	23	19.8	3	2.6	3.53 (1.08)
4 Students suggest books to add to the classroom library.	42	36.2	46	39.7	16	13.8	9	7.8	3	2.6	3.99 (1.03)
5 Teachers provide time to students to choose books to add to the classroom library.	24	20.7	20	17.2	22	19.0	40	34.5	10	8.6	3.07 (1.30)
6 Teachers add books suggested by students to the classroom library.	48	41.4	46	39.7	14	12.1	6	5.2	2	1.7	4.14 (0.94)

Survey Item	Strongly agree =5		Tend to agree=4		Neither agree nor disagree=3		Tend to disagree=2		Strongly disagree=1		Mean (SD)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
7 Teachers remove books as suggested by students from the classroom library.	9	7.8	26	22.4	37	31.9	32	27.6	12	10.3	2.90 (1.11)
8 Students are owners of the classroom library.	19	16.4	38	32.8	31	26.7	18	15.5	10	8.6	3.33 (1.18)
9 Students maintain the classroom library.	28	24.1	48	41.4	20	17.2	15	12.9	5	4.3	3.68 (1.11)
10 Students contribute their own books to the classroom library.	6	5.2	25	21.6	26	22.4	37	31.9	22	19.0	2.62 (1.17)
11 Students choosing books to add to the classroom library will increase how frequently students look for books in the classroom library.	49	42.2	43	37.1	17	14.7	7	6.0	0	0.0	4.16 (0.89)
12 Students choosing books to add to the classroom library will increase how frequently students read books from the classroom library.	59	50.9	34	29.3	16	13.8	7	6.0	0	0.0	4.25 (0.91)
13 Students choosing books to add to the classroom library will increase their level of engagement in the classroom library.	71	61.2	33	28.4	8	6.9	4	3.4	0	0.0	4.47 (0.77)

Activities in which students make suggestions or provide ideas for books to add to the classroom library tend to be agreed with as an act of collaboration, whereas creating time in the school day for students to choose books themselves was not viewed as an act of collaboration. Additionally, participants tended to agree that collaboration was specific to adding books to a classroom library rather than removing books. Comments provided indicated that it was not something they had thought to discuss with students or had encountered before.

Regarding student ownership or management of the classroom library, 49% (N=57) agreed with this as an example of collaboration, whereas 24% (N=28) disagreed. Time to teach students how to maintain the library was cited as a challenge, as was monetary investment in the library, where the library was viewed by the respondent as “school-owned” or as “teacher-owned.” 27% (N=31) neither agreed nor disagreed. However, participants tended to agree that collaborating with students included maintenance of the library but making contributions from their own collection of books does not count as collaboration. Lastly, participants agree that student collaboration would increase how often students engage with the classroom library.

Research Question Two

The second measured construct used a Likert scale and was related to research question two: How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children’s literature providing company in the last three years, practice student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? To assess this, survey participants responded to statements with the degree to which they agreed with statements as describing their own, current practices involving students in book selection for the classroom library such as “I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library” or “I take suggestions from my students on books to add to the classroom library.” These statements specifically required providing space, time, or student voice to engage in the decision-making process together, or for students to give feedback on choices made for the classroom library. Other statements described students as active owners of the classroom library and specifically required that students maintain or manage aspects of the classroom library. Lastly, survey questions related to what degree participants agreed with statements that student collaboration practices had functioned as a mechanism for increasing engagement in the classroom library.

Table 3

Agreement with Statements as Practices of Student Collaboration (N=116)

		Strongly agree=5		Tend to agree=4		Neither agree nor disagree=3		Tend to disagree=2		Strongly disagree=1		Mean (SD)
Survey Item		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library.	20	17.2	38	32.8	30	25.9	26	22.4	2	1.7	3.41 (1.07)
2	I receive feedback from my students on books for the classroom library.	37	31.9	47	40.5	20	17.2	10	8.6	2	1.7	3.92 (1.00)
3	My students have a say in deciding books for the classroom library.	22	19.0	44	37.9	27	23.3	20	17.2	3	2.6	3.53 (1.07)
4	I take suggestions from my students on books to add to the classroom library.	45	38.8	51	44.0	11	9.5	8	6.9	1	0.9	4.13 (0.91)
5	I provide time to my students to choose books to add to the classroom library.	26	22.4	20	17.2	20	17.2	40	34.5	10	8.6	3.10 (1.33)
6	I add books suggested by students to the classroom library.	44	37.9	54	46.6	12	10.3	5	4.3	1	0.9	4.16 (0.84)
7	I remove books as suggested by students from the classroom library.	7	6.0	29	25.0	37	31.9	30	25.9	13	11.2	2.89 (1.09)
8	My students are owners of the classroom library.	25	21.6	36	31.0	26	22.4	18	15.5	11	9.5	3.40 (1.25)

Survey Item	Strongly agree=5		Tend to agree=4		Neither agree nor disagree=3		Tend to disagree=2		Strongly disagree=1		Mean (SD)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
9 My students maintain the classroom library.	21	18.1	52	44.8	19	16.4	15	12.9	9	7.8	3.53 (1.16)
10 My students contribute their own books to the classroom library.	7	6.0	23	19.8	25	21.6	33	28.4	28	24.1	2.55 (1.23)
11 Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students look for books in the classroom library.	33	28.4	35	30.2	37	31.9	10	8.6	1	0.9	3.77 (0.99)
12 Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students read books from the classroom library.	36	31.0	34	29.3	34	29.3	11	9.5	1	0.9	3.80 (1.01)
13 Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased their level of engagement in the classroom library.	39	33.6	40	34.5	29	25.0	6	5.2	2	1.7	3.93 (0.98)

Activities in which students make suggestions or provide ideas for books to add to the classroom library tended to be agreed with as current practices of collaboration, whereas creating time in the school day for students to choose books themselves was not agreed with as a current practice. Additionally, participants tended to agree that current practices are specific to adding books to a classroom library rather than removing books. The most occurring response for removing books as suggested by students was neither agree or disagree as a current practice, with the most common comment being that respondents had never thought to ask for this feedback or organically experienced this feedback from a student.

Like research question one results, 53% (N=61) of participants strongly agreed or tended to agree that their current practices include students as owners of the classroom library and 25% (N=29) strongly disagreed or tended to disagree. Comments included that while students have access to the books in the library, the books belong to the school or the teacher. However, participants tended to agree that current practice includes student maintenance of the classroom library.

While students making contributions from their own personal collection of books is not a widespread practice, students making suggestions or having a say in what is added to the classroom library were agreed with as current practices. Participants who perform these practices reported that

they have increased overall student engagement in the classroom library. However, the most frequently occurring response to “Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students look for books in the classroom library” and “Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students read books from the classroom library” was “Neither agree or disagree”, which may be due to the percentage of participants who responded that deciding with students which books to add to the classroom library (24.1%, N=28), and students having a say in deciding books for the classroom library (19.8%. N=23), is not currently part of their practice.

Research Question Three

The third measured construct used an independent, two-tailed, paired *t*-test at alpha level 0.05 to compare the mean scores found in research question one and research question two. This construct was related to research question three: How do concepts of student collaboration of general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five compare to reported practice of student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? To assess this, the mean of survey responses measuring the degree to which participants agreed with statements as concepts of a collaborative act were compared to the mean of survey responses measuring the degree to which participants agreed with statements describing their own practices using a paired *t*-test. These statements specifically required providing space, time, or student voice to engage in the decision-making process together, or for students to give feedback on choices made for the classroom library. Other statements described students as active owners of the classroom library and specifically required that students maintain or manage aspects of the classroom library. Lastly, survey questions related to what degree participants agreed with statements that student collaboration practices had functioned as a mechanism for increasing engagement in the classroom library. The assumption for this analysis is that concepts would align with practices, and indicate no variance when compared.

Table 4

Mean Differences of Respondent Concepts and Practices (N=116)

	Survey Item - Concepts	Mean (SD)	Survey Item - Practices	Mean (SD)	t-value	p-value
1	Teachers and students decide together which books to add to the classroom library.	3.25 (1.17)	I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library.	3.41 (1.07)	-1.11	0.27
2	Students give feedback on books for the classroom library to the teacher.	3.91 (0.90)	I receive feedback from my students on books for the classroom library.	3.92 (1.00)	-0.07	0.94
3	Students have a say in deciding books for the classroom library.	3.53 (1.08)	My students have a say in deciding books for the classroom library.	3.53 (1.07)	0.00	1.00
4	Students suggest books to add to the classroom library.	3.99 (1.03)	I take suggestions from my students on books to add to the classroom library.	4.13 (0.91)	-1.08	0.28
5	Teachers provide time to students to choose books to add to the classroom library.	3.07 (1.30)	I provide time to my students to choose books to add to the classroom library.	3.10 (1.33)	-0.20	0.84
6	Teachers add books suggested by students to the classroom library.	4.14 (0.94)	I add books suggested by students to the classroom library.	4.16 (0.84)	-0.22	0.83
7	Teachers remove books as suggested by students from the classroom library.	2.90 (1.11)	I remove books as suggested by students from the classroom library.	2.89 (1.09)	0.06	0.95
8	Students are owners of the classroom library.	3.33 (1.18)	My students are owners of the classroom library.	3.40 (1.25)	-0.43	0.67
9	Students maintain the classroom library.	3.68 (1.11)	My students maintain the classroom library.	3.53 (1.16)	1.04	0.30
10	Students contribute their own books to the classroom library.	2.62 (1.17)	My students contribute their own books to the classroom library.	2.55 (1.23)	0.44	0.66
11	Students choosing books to add to the classroom library will increase how frequently students look for books in the classroom library.	4.16 (0.89)	Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students look for books in the classroom library.	3.77 (0.99)	3.14	0.00*
12	Students choosing books to add to the classroom library will increase how frequently students read books from the classroom library.	4.25 (0.91)	Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students read books from the classroom library.	3.80 (1.01)	3.53	0.00*
13	Students choosing books to add to the classroom library will increase their level of engagement in the classroom library.	4.47 (0.77)	Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased their level of engagement in the classroom library.	3.93 (0.98)	4.70	0.00*

**Results are significant*

Respondents reported higher agreement that students choosing books to add to the classroom library would increase how frequently students look for books in the classroom library ($M=4.16$, $SD = 0.91$) as a concept than found in the practice of collaboration, $t(232)=3.14$, $p=.00$. Respondents also reported higher agreement that students choosing books to add to the classroom library would increase how frequently students read books from the classroom library ($M=4.25$, $SD= 0.91$) as a concept than found in the practice of collaboration, $t(232)=3.53$, $p=.00$. Lastly, respondents reported higher agreement that students choosing books to add to the classroom library would increase their level of engagement in the classroom library as a concept than found in the practice of collaboration, $t(232)=3.93$, $p=0.00$. These results may be due to the number of participants who did not agree that these are current practices in their classrooms, while agreeing that the practices align with their

concepts of student collaboration. This suggests that while the respondents view collaboration as a mechanism for student engagement, it is not currently practiced. Item 3 was noted as showing a p -value of 1.00 and a t -value of 0.00 which can result when the data set is identical and indicates no change in mean scores (Dahiru, 2008).

Research Question Four

The fourth construct measured was related to research question four: How likely are general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? To assess this, survey participants responded to statements indicating the degree to which they were likely to adopt practices involving students in book selection for the classroom library. Response options included: "I already do this and will continue doing it," "I do not do this and would start doing it," "I already do this and will stop doing it," and "I do not do this and would not start doing it." These statements specifically required providing space, time, or student voice to engage in the decision-making process together, or for students to give feedback on choices made for the classroom library. Other statements described students as active owners of the classroom library and specifically required that students maintain or manage aspects of the classroom library. While survey questions related to what degree participants agreed with statements that student collaboration practices would function as a mechanism for increasing engagement in the classroom library were included, they were discounted from analysis as they were found to be irrelevant to the construct.

While response options included "I already do this and will continue doing it," "I do not do this and would start doing it," "I already do this and will stop doing it," and "I do not do this and would not start doing it," only response options "I do not do this and would start doing it," and "I do not do this

and would not start doing it” were included in analysis. These response options indicate a likelihood to increase student collaboration practices versus status quo or decreasing student collaboration practices.

Table 5

Likelihood to Increase Student Collaboration Practices (N=116)

	Survey Item	I do not do this and would start doing it =2		I do not do this and would not start doing it =1		Mean (SD)
		N	%	N	%	
1	I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library.	46	39.7	6	5.2	1.88 (0.32)
2	I receive feedback from my students on books for the classroom library.	29	25.0	2	1.7	1.94 (0.25)
3	My students have a say in deciding books for the classroom library.	35	30.2	9	7.8	1.80 (0.41)
4	I take suggestions from my students on books to add to the classroom library.	21	18.1	0	0.0	2.00 (0.00)
5	I provide time to my students to choose books to add to the classroom library.	41	35.3	25	21.6	1.62 (0.49)
6	I add books suggested by students to the classroom library.	15	12.9	0	0.0	2.00 (0.00)
7	I remove books as suggested by students from the classroom library.	31	26.7	43	37.1	1.42 (0.50)
8	My students are owners of the classroom library.	19	16.4	26	22.4	1.42 (0.50)
9	My students maintain the classroom library.	26	22.4	7	6.0	1.79 (0.41)
10	My students contribute their own books to the classroom library.	33	28.4	36	31.0	1.48 (0.50)

Participants seem more likely to adopt activities in which students make suggestions or provide ideas for books to add to the classroom library, whereas creating time in the school day for students to choose books themselves was less likely to be adopted. Additionally, participants indicated they would adopt practices specific to adding books to a classroom library rather than removing books. Participants who do not already view students as owners of the classroom library are less likely to adopt this view. The most common comment for not starting to think of students as owners was personal investment by the teacher in the classroom library. Participants who are not already having students maintain the classroom library appeared more willing to adopt this practice. Lastly, participants who are not currently practicing students contributing their own books to the classroom library are more likely to not start this

practice, with the comments indicating students did not possess books to contribute to the classroom library or that they did not want to accept books from the homes of their students.

Research Question Five

The fifth construct measured was related to research question five: What do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children’s literature providing company in the last three years, believe is needed to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? To assess this, survey participants ranked options as one, two, three, four, five or six, in which one would have the most significant impact on ability to increase student collaboration, and six would have the least significant impact on ability to increase student collaboration. indicated the most impactful option as one, the second most impactful option as two, and so on until all options were ranked. In analysis, the option ranked in first place had a weighted score of six, the option ranked in second place had a weighted score of five, the option ranked in third place had a weighted score of four, the option ranked in fourth place had a weighted score of three, the option ranked in fifth place had a weighted score of two, and the option ranked last had a weighted score of one. The means of the weighted scores were calculated to determine the overall rank of the option and determine the order of significance on increasing student collaboration.

The options provided were: “Financial support for adding books to my classroom library,” “More control or ownership of the books added to my classroom library,” “Courses/workshops on engaging my students with books to add to my classroom library,” “Networking with other teachers on engaging my students with books to add to my classroom library,” “An automated, digital way for students to engage with books to add to my classroom library,” and “Other.”

Table 6

Needs to Increase Student Collaboration Practices (N=116)

Survey Item	1 (w=6)	2 (w=5)	3 (w=4)	4 (w=3)	5 (w=2)	6 (w=1)	Rank Score
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	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 Financial support for adding books to my classroom library	86	74.1	9	7.8	7	6.0	6	5.2	5	4.3	3	2.6	5.3	
2 More control or ownership of the books added to my classroom library	13	11.2	36	31.0	25	21.6	15	12.9	22	19.0	5	4.3	3.9	
3 Networking with other teachers on engaging my students with books to add to my classroom library	1	0.9	22	19.0	41	35.3	36	31.0	16	13.8	0	0.0	3.6	
4 An automated, digital way for students to engage with books to add to my classroom library	8	6.9	20	17.2	19	16.4	29	25.0	32	27.6	8	6.9	3.3	
5 Courses/workshops on engaging my students with books to add to my classroom library	6	5.2	19	16.4	20	17.2	25	21.6	37	31.9	9	7.8	3.2	
6 Other	2	1.7	10	8.6	4	3.4	5	4.3	4	3.4	91	78.4	1.7	

Financial support for adding books to the classroom library emerged as having the most significant impact on increasing student collaboration in the book selection process. Having more control or ownership of the classroom library was second. Networking with other teachers on student collaboration practices was third. Having an automated, digital way to engage students in the book selection process was closely followed by courses or workshops on engaging students with books to add to the classroom library as fourth most impactful. Finally, having time, space, and organizational systems were reported as having an impact on increasing student collaboration processes for the classroom library.

Results of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were collected via recorded Zoom interview or telephone interview, and interviews were guided by the interview protocol (Appendix B). Interviews were transcribed using an online audio-to-transcription software, and transcriptions were coded to articulate emergent themes related to concepts of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, practices of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, willingness to increase student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, and needs that must be met in order to consider increasing student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library. Twenty-nine codes emerged from the multiple, iterative readings, and these codes were organized into six themes.

Table 7

Themes of Qualitative Data

	Theme	Description	Example quote
1	Access	Existing student-access to books and reading material.	"Our library at school is incredibly robust. So it's not as necessary for the children to have, you know, as huge of a selection in, in the classroom library."
2	Objectives	Intended purpose(s) of books in the classroom library.	"I've also tried to be pretty deliberate about finding diverse [books]. We're a very homogeneous community...And so my kids just do not get exposed to people who do not look like them very often. And so I try to do my best to make sure that books can provide that at least to some extent that they can have an idea that the whole world doesn't look like our little town does and <laugh> people have different experiences."
3	Gathering information	How teachers gather information about their students.	"I see what they're reading and I think, Ooh, kids are liking x books. Like I do not have any of those. Like I'm gonna put those on my list and get myself some more."
4	Methods of student input	How teachers report involving students in growing the classroom library.	"They read their library books from the school and they ask me, do you have any more of these? And if I do not ... I should get some more of those books. So I definitely take recommendations from the kids if I see what they love reading and try to increase my number of that kind of book."
5	Challenges	Perceived challenges of directly, explicitly, or systematically collaborating with students in growing the classroom library.	"I would just love to have an infinite budget <laugh> to purchase books. I wish I could give each child a catalog and say, <laugh> pick, you know, pick some things that you like."
6	Teacher identity	Relates to personal views of self, books, reading, and/or the classroom library	"I know they love those, but I intentionally removed [Diary of a Wimpy Kid] from my library because it's about middle school and we're second graders. So even though they think they're funny, I just did not feel like it was necessary."

The following sections present the findings of the qualitative data related to each research question.

Research Question One

The first construct measured was related to research question one: How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature supplying company in the last three years, conceptualize student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? To gather perspectives, interview participants were asked to describe how students might take part in selecting books to add to the classroom library, and to talk about collaborating with students on selecting titles to add to the classroom library. During the coding process, it emerged that participants agreed that collaborating with students is a "good idea" and that directly or explicitly collaborating with students on title selection for the classroom library was not formally or procedurally practiced. Rather, a concept of collaboration conveyed by participants is that by gathering student information and incorporating that information into books chosen for the classroom library, they are, although indirectly, allowing students to guide the books selected.

Additionally, concepts of collaboration are impacted by the intended objectives of reading from the library. Lastly, the amount of access students have to books through a well-established classroom library or through a school library may impact concepts of collaboration for adding books to a classroom library. Teacher identity, gathering information, objectives, and access are further discussed in the following subsections.

Teacher identity. First, interview participants indicated that collaborating more with students was a “good idea,” saying “having kids help pick books for the classroom is a great one; I actually really like it” and “I wish I had better ways to [have students pick books for the classroom library]”. Additionally, interview participants expressed their own love of reading or love for books and appeared to consistently be seeking ways to instill that in their students, reporting “I’m sort of known as the teacher who gets kids to love reading. I love reading, and it definitely shines through.” Another participant said “[Getting kids to read is] my thing. I feel I do a really good job of getting kids to be hooked on reading.” Participants demonstrated pride and a great deal of personal investment into their classroom libraries, pointing to time, effort, and money to source, organize, and display the books in their classroom libraries. Participants reported on average having 3,000 titles available for their students, found through thrift shops, garage sales, loyalty programs, giveaways, and discount stores, and hours spent organizing books into levels, genres, authors, or series, to ensure they could be easily found by students. Several participants ensured their classroom library could be viewed during the interview, saying “I love having all these books...I am proud of it. I have a ton of books” and “I love my classroom library...and work really hard to make it pretty.” In summary, how a teacher identifies as a reader or lover of books, and their desire to share that with students, may impact how positively they conceptualize collaborating with students in adding titles to their classroom library, as they continually seek ways to spark a joy for reading in their students.

Gathering information. Second, interview participants indicated that by gathering information about their students and applying that information to choosing books for the classroom library, they are, indirectly, including students in the book selection process. Information about students was reported as repeatedly, and informally being gathered through talking with students, hearing students talk to each other, and general observation of habits, activities, and behaviors. For example, reporting “[my students] naturally talk to each other. And then book, discussion groups, we, or whenever we're talking about stories we read, they often talk about connections they've made with their personal lives.” Information was gathered more formally through surveys, collecting student-writing, or conferencing. One participant succinctly stated that making good book choices for students is “a teacher that's paying attention.” By continually gathering information about their students' lives, their experiences, and their interests, teachers felt confident in selecting books that were relatable and engaging for their students and described this as how they conceptualize collaborating with their students.

Objectives. Next, the intended objectives of the books in the classroom library may impact how a teacher conceptualizes collaboration. For example, if the purpose of the classroom library books is to support achieving a curriculum or grade level standard, is to increase variety of book types that students are exposed to, or to simply be a repository of the most engaging books possible to motivate students to read, that may impact how a teacher thinks about collaborating with students for adding books to the classroom library. Four participants talked about the books they look for as windows, serving to expand their students' knowledge of perspectives, people, cultures, and societies beyond their own. For example, “...I pushed, and I pushed books that have diverse characters... because I want kids to learn about people from around the world.” Another four participants discussed adding variety to their students' reading repertoires, exposing students to new authors, genres, or topics. Every participant referenced students needing to see themselves in what they read, saying:

Having children have the opportunity to read and find themselves in those books, you know, whether it's because the parents got divorced and they're going back and forth between one household and another household, or they've got, you know, sibling issues...that's one of the things that I look for when I'm buying books.

The goals that a teacher wants to achieve with the titles in their classroom library may impact how they think about collaborating with students, as the priorities of filling a gap, introducing new reading material, or ensuring representation may be viewed as in the best interest of the students and therefore an act of collaborating with them.

Access. Lastly, how much access a student has to reading material may impact how a teacher thinks about collaborating with students for adding titles to the classroom library. That is, the teacher may not feel they need to grow their classroom library, and that the first act of collaborating with a student is to assist the student in finding a book of interest in the existing classroom library or centrally located school library. All eleven participants described having expansive classroom libraries, a robust school library, and access to on-line reading material. When describing collaboration or what collaboration looks like, each first provided examples of matching students to books already placed in the classroom library or school library rather than directly collaborating on new books to add to the classroom library. For example, "if somebody says, do you have any books about gorillas? I'm like, let's see, open the curtain, like gorillas, there's this one, there's this one. There's this one." Another participant expressed similarly saying:

I usually do a little introduction [to my classroom library] and explain how it's organized and then make sure that, you know, this is the box about sports and this is the box about horses and you know, all of the robot books are here. So I try to kind of really point out to them what sort of categories I have, hoping that something will spark their interest.

When teachers perceive that students already possess access to a wide variety of reading material, collaboration may be thought about more as an act of matching students to books rather than collaborating on adding titles to the classroom library.

Research Question Two

The second construct measured was related to research question two: How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, practice student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? To gather perspectives, interview participants were asked to describe how they include students in selecting books to add to the classroom library, and to describe what collaborating with students on selecting titles to add to the classroom library looks like in their classroom. During the coding process themes of gathering student information and more direct ways of methods of including students emerged and are discussed in the following subsections.

Gathering information. Interview participants primarily reported their practice of collaborating with students as ensuring that student interests, backgrounds, and experiences were accounted for in the selection process for adding books to the classroom library. Participants relied on informal, unstructured talk with their students, listening to talk between students, observation of students' habits, activities, behaviors, and interactions, and attending the extracurricular activities of their students to anecdotally inform the topics, themes, and types of books that students might find relatable or interesting. For example, describing collaboration as "I see what they're reading and I think, Ooh, kids are liking x books. Like I do not have any of those. Like I'm gonna put those on my list and get myself some more." Another participant reported:

I have a bunch of girls who are interested in gymnastics right now. So, you know, I'll go to used bookstores and stuff and be on the lookout for something, I think that, you know, would be interesting to them.

More formally, teachers gather information through student writing samples, surveys, and conferencing, describing:

I just looked in everyone's journals from this morning, and I've got everything from like asking me about Harry Potter to talking about, their grandma just died and someone else talking about making a dinosaur out of a balloon and paper. So I think the journals are a good way to kind of just see what's going on, what they like, and find books that fit.

Another participant went on to say "I send surveys home to the families at the beginning of the year, tell me about your kid. You know, things that they love doing outside of school, what do they enjoy doing in school?" Conferences with students and parents functioned as another source of information to gather ideas for books, such as:

I had a conversation with a parent during a conference, and she mentioned, her son loves, like how things work and how they go together. So I started collecting books on robots, mechanics...and showed him where to find them [in the library].

In short, identifying and procuring books with student interest and experience in mind was articulated as a practice of collaboration by participants.

Methods of student input. Participants also reported more concrete methods of student input, beyond gathering information about students to guidebook choices for the classroom library. Two more concrete methods of student input were candid inquiry, in which students candidly, and ad hoc inquired around whether a particular title, author, series, or topic was available in the classroom library, and making recommendations, in which students suggested, ad hoc, that a title, author, series, or topic be considered for adding to the classroom library. In the case of the latter, the student might initiate the recommendation, or the teacher may have solicited for the recommendation.

In the instances of candid inquiry, they were commonly described as the teacher being receptive to when a student inquires around whether a particular book or topic is available in the classroom

library and adding it to the classroom library if it is not already there. For example, a participant reported:

Students read their library books from the school, and they ask me, do you have any more of these? And if I do not, I have that in my head, like that's, I should get some more of those books.

Another participant said:

A student asked me about a book that I had in the book safe. And one of my students was asking about it and I'm like, oh, it looks like I no longer have it. And the library no longer has it. So I know one of my students is interested in it, so, you know, I'll keep an eye out for that one.

Being open to the inquiries students have about whether they have access to a book, and following through on procuring the book, is reported as a practice of collaborating with students.

Additionally, participants reported being receptive to suggestions initiated by students, and two participants had semi-structured processes for soliciting student suggestions to add books to the classroom library. Like candid inquiry, participants described cases in which a student may suggest that they get more books on a particular topic or from a particular series or author rather than inquiring if it is currently available in the classroom library. For example, a participant described students telling her what books they would recommend for the following year's class, a conversation she described as "organic" that occurred when assisting her in packing up the classroom library. Other participants described semi-structured procedures for taking and evaluating suggestions from students such as having students write on sticky notes the books they would like to see added as part of their morning bell-work, or needing to accompany a recommendation with a written rationale. Candid inquiry and being receptive to student suggestions, whether organic and impromptu, or intentionally solicited were all described as ways participants practice collaboration with students in adding titles to the classroom library.

Research Question Three

The third construct measured was related to research question three: How do concepts of student collaboration of general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five compare to reported practice of student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? To assess this, descriptions of how respondents view collaborating with students were compared to descriptions of how respondents include students in selecting books to add to the classroom library. Teacher identity, objectives of the books in the classroom library, and access emerged as primary factors in how concepts of collaboration compared to practices of collaboration. Challenges to collaboration such as time and financial resources, may also impact how teachers practice collaboration compared to conception of collaboration, and these challenges will be discussed further in relation to research question four. The following subsections under research question three will discuss teacher identity, objectives, and access as factors in comparing concepts of collaboration and practices of collaboration.

Teacher identity. Being a teacher known for their love of reading and classroom library, as well as view of themselves as a reader and book lover, appeared to impact how positively participants viewed collaborating with students in book selection for the classroom library, all calling it a good idea, and expressing wanting to find ways to involve students even more. For example, a participant reported, “The idea of having kids help pick books for the classroom is a great one. I actually really like it. Um, I'm trying to figure out ways of making that happen.” Another participant said, “[My students] do not do much [in book selection for the classroom library]. And...so I wish that I had a better way to do that.” In practice though, participants primarily relied on gathering anecdotal student information to inform teacher-directed selection of books for the classroom library, such as using observation and conversation with their students to learn of their interests and experiences. Participants were also receptive to candid inquiries and suggestions from students on books to add to the classroom library, and a few had semi-structured procedures, such as collecting suggestions on sticky notes. A key difference between conception and practice is that while all participants indicated that collaborating

with students was a good idea, and began to ideate ways to implement this into classroom learning or routine, the current practice of collaboration was informal, unstructured, and did not directly or systematically include students.

Objectives. Objectives of the classroom library can also account for differences in how teachers conceptualize collaboration with students and practice collaboration with students in book selection for the classroom library. Objectives of the classroom library included supporting achievement of curriculum or grade-level standards, providing students with engaging and relatable literature to promote motivation to read, exposing students to wider ranges of reading material, and introducing students to the perspectives, characters, cultures, and experiences of others. While participants viewed the concept of collaboration positively, they indicated that involving students too much might contradict the intention of titles being added to the classroom library. One participant said, “I’m not thinking [my students] are incapable [of collaborating with me] I just do not know if I did not choose the books... [there would be so many books my students] may never even know about,” while another reported:

So there are a few parameters [in how my students choose books], as far as... something too far above a grade level for where they are. And I do not want a kid just looking through [the book] but actually working on reading skills.

While participants agreed with the conception of collaboration as a good idea, and something to strive for, their current practices indicated that the objectives of reading from the classroom library can be a factor in how collaboration is practiced compared to their conception.

Access. Participants reported that students have a great deal of access to books and reading material via an established classroom library, school library, and on digital platforms. Students having access to a wide range of literature may impact how teachers practice collaboration with students to add to the classroom library compared to how they conceptualize it, due to not feeling an urgent need to add more books. Rather, the discussed practices of collaboration were related to assisting students

with finding books within the established classroom library or school library. Additionally, methods of student input such as candid inquiry were also centered around the established classroom library or school library. For example:

I help kids choose books all the time. You know when they finish a book, I would say half my kids will come to me and ask me to help them choose their next book. And usually I'll scour my room and I'll pull out four or five choices and say, you know, go sit down and read the first couple pages of each one, see which one grabs you.

Another participant reported:

Our library at school is incredibly robust. So it's not as necessary for the children to have, you know, as huge of a selection in the classroom library. And which sounds kind of weird considering there's easily 4,000 books in the classroom. <laugh> but, um, you know, it's, it's, we have a very, very, very good school library with librarians who are bringing in new books all the time, both fiction and nonfiction.

With the perception that students have a great deal of access to literature, growing the classroom library, and involving students in that process, may not feel urgent.

Research Question Four

The fourth construct measured was related to research question four: How likely are general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? To gather these perspectives, interview participants were probed to talk more about collaborating with students being a "good idea" and extend their responses to the survey in which they had indicated the degree to which they were likely to adopt practices involving students in book selection for the classroom library. Factors impacting likelihood to

adopt practices involving students in book selection for the classroom library included teacher identity, objectives, access, and challenges. These themes are discussed in the following subsections.

Teacher identity. Being a teacher known for their love of reading and classroom library, as well as view of themselves as a reader and book lover, appeared to impact how positively participants viewed collaborating with students in book selection for the classroom library, all calling it a good idea, and expressing wanting to find ways to involve students even more. For example, a participant reported:

I'm trying to figure out ways of making that happen. You know, whether it's every, every month or every other month asking the students as a homework assignment to make a recommendation and write a review of a book that they think should be added to the class library and, uh, you know, having kids give presentations on that.

Another participant said, “[My students] do not do much [in book selection for the classroom library]. And...so I wish that I had a better way to do that” and recounted how it was something her mentor teacher did monthly with students. A third participant said it would be “good project-based learning.”

Having a positive outlook on reading, books, and classroom libraries seems to be a critical factor in how a teacher might view increasing student collaboration in the book selection processes; however, it was noted that ideas for increasing student collaboration were tied to teaching and learning outcomes. This is discussed further in the next subsection *Objectives*.

Objectives. Objectives of the classroom library included supporting achievement of curriculum or grade-level standards, providing students with engaging and relatable literature to promote motivation to read, exposing students to wider ranges of reading material, and introducing students to the perspectives, characters, cultures, and experiences of others. Increasing student collaboration practices in book selection for the classroom library appeared specifically related to curriculum or grade-level standards, in which collaboration with students would help achieve a teaching and learning outcome. For example, one participant ideated how they might have students include a written

rationale with any recommendations they have for adding books to the classroom library. Another participant discussed increasing collaboration with students as part of an assigned project, culminating in class presentations. Yet another participant described student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library as “great project-based learning,” and further probing revealed students might inquire into general reading interests of their classmates or grade level to make recommendations.

Furthermore, a participant said, “It feels like it would be a separate teaching moment to like, talk about how to make good suggestions.” In short, participants were willing to entertain ideas of increasing student collaboration practices where clear connections to teaching and learning could be made.

Access. Interview participants reported having large, established classroom libraries, access to centrally located school libraries, and access to on-line reading material via school-provided digital platforms. One participant described how she connects her students with the public library located across the street to increase access to books. Students having access to a wide range of literature may impact how teachers perceive increasing student collaboration, largely due to not feeling an urgent need to add more books, particularly evident where a participant asked “Is [student collaboration] something where new teachers who do not have a library already established, tend to ask kids for recommendations so that they'll have books that kids want to read?” Where access to books was perceived to be abundant, increasing practices of student collaboration was not expressed as urgent. Rather, participants discussed how they might connect students to literature readily available in the classroom library and school library.

Challenges. While participants viewed student collaboration in book selection positively, and ideated ways to increase practices around this, specifically where it related to teaching and learning outcomes, key challenges were articulated. These challenges were expressed as limiting factors in ability to increase student collaboration practices and include budget, time, space, and discovery.

Budget. Budget refers to the financial resources participants have to acquire books for the classroom library. All interview participants cited budget as a challenge to increasing student collaboration practices. Interview participants indicated that they are the primary funders of their classroom library books, and source them from thrift shops, discount stores, loyalty programs, giveaways, and garage sales. One participant said “I would just love to have an infinite budget <laugh> to purchase books. I wish I could give each child a catalog and say, <laugh> pick, you know, pick some things that you like.” Other participants shared similar sentiments, and in response to whether they can follow through on candid inquiries and student suggestions, it came down to “if I have the money.”

Time. Time refers to the time available in the school day to collaborate with students on book selection for the classroom library. Participants said they might increase student collaboration practices “depending on how much time we have,” further explaining with comments such as “It’s time I’m not teaching and it’s, it’s valuable time for the kids, but it’s also, you know, it’s, it’s time it’s missing. And so how to, how to fit in [collaboration] becomes problematic.” Another participant said:

I just do not know if I can take the time to have them say, oh, we want this one. We want this one. I would have to probably give them like a specific list and say like, which one do you think we should get?

Collaborating with students on book selection may not currently be viewed as academic in nature, and making time to collaborate with students directly and systemically is unlikely to be prioritized.

Space. Space refers to the physical space available for housing books. Like the theme of access, teachers with a large and tenured classroom library may perceive that they have enough books for their students in the classroom and simply do not have space to bring in more. Participants described “I haven’t bought as many books recently, and why is that? No space. <laugh> no, seriously, I believe books like a lot of freaking space,” “[the books] are sucking up space”, and “I’m sort of bursting at the

seams.” Having physical space to store, organize, display books was conveyed as critical in being able to acquire more books, with or without student collaboration.

Discovery. Lastly, discovery was found to be a challenge in increasing student collaboration practices for adding books to the classroom library. Discovery refers to how teachers and students discover new books to make recommendations and choose titles. Over half of the participants discussed discovery of new books, authors, and series or knowing what is available as a challenge for both teachers and students toward being able to collaborate effectively on growing the classroom library. One participant described trying to read a new picture book a week to know what new books are available and determine if they would be “good-adds” to the classroom library. Other participants turn to social media for recommendations and updates on new books. More informally, participants take peer recommendations from colleagues. One participant articulated:

I feel like I do not have a way to find out about new kids’ books... I do not feel like I'm meeting a lot of new books. I do feel like there's lots of great new books coming out that I do not know about unless I stumble into them by accident.

Discovery seemed more important in relation to having familiarity with books that students might candidly inquire about or recommend. For example, participants expressed needing to feel confident in the books students were asking about or recommending, and discomfort in recommending something or procuring something they did not readily know anything about.

Research Question Five

The fifth construct measured was related to research question five: What do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children’s literature providing company in the last three years, believe is needed to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? Perspectives on this were gathered by probing interview participants to talk more about the challenges they perceived to increasing student

collaboration practices and what they felt might be needed to mitigate those challenges. As previously discussed, challenges include budget, time, space, and discovery.

Budget. Budget refers to the financial resources participants have to acquire books for the classroom library. All interview participants cited budget as a challenge to increasing student collaboration practices. Interview participants indicated that they are the primary funders of their classroom library books, and source them from thrift shops, discount stores, loyalty programs, giveaways, and garage sales. In the survey, financial support also ranked first as having the most significant impact on ability to increase student collaboration practices in book selection for the classroom library.

Time. Time refers to the time available in the school day to collaborate with students on book selection for the classroom library. In previous sections, participants indicated that they would consider adding student collaboration practices if they had more time, and if it did not feel like it detracted from academic or instructional time. While time consistently emerged as a challenge to collaborating with students around book selection for the classroom library, participants were unable to articulate how to mitigate this challenge beyond “if we had more time.” Time also appeared in the open comments on the survey.

Space. Space refers to the physical space available for housing books. In previous sections, participants indicated that they were unable to regularly collaborate with students and add more books due to constraints on space. Like time, participants cited space as a challenge but were unable to articulate a solution beyond needing more space. Space also appeared in the open comments on the survey.

Discovery. Discovery refers to how teachers and students discover new books to make recommendations and choose titles. Over half of the participants discussed discovery of new books, authors, and series or knowing what is available as a challenge for both teachers and students toward

being able to collaborate effectively on growing the classroom library. Some ways participants mitigate the challenge of discovery is to join social groups specific to the sharing of books, take peer recommendations, or purchase professional development books that include bibliographies. On the survey, taking professional courses or accessing professional resources ranked fifth for, and networking with teachers ranked third.

Additional Factors Regarding Results

Data collected from the second section of the survey, which requested information about the student population with which the participant worked, provided additional context for results. The items in this section were designed to gather information about how respondents perceive student performance and engagement in school. Positive teacher-student concepts and relationships have been shown to lead to increased cooperation and engagement in the classroom, which may translate to increased cooperation, engagement, and collaboration in book selection for the classroom library (Han & Gutierrez, 2021). Additionally, if teachers identify their school as a place where students are encouraged to participate in decisions, that might also impact the level of collaboration. While not directly related to the research questions, this information provided context and additional factors for participants' views on student collaboration.

Table 8

Agreement with How Statements Apply to Students and Place of Teaching (N=116)

Survey Item	Strongly agree=5		Tend to agree=4		Neither agree nor disagree=3		Tend to disagree=2		Strongly disagree=1		Mean (SD)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1 My students care about learning and getting a good education.	51	44.0	55	47.4	6	5.2	3	2.6	1	0.9	4.31(0.76)
2 My students show good academic performance.	31	26.7	52	44.8	16	13.8	14	12.1	3	2.6	3.81 (1.05)
3 My students find school interesting.	47	40.5	58	50.0	8	6.9	3	2.6	0	0.0	4.28 (0.71)
4 My students are involved in decisions that affect them at school.	12	10.3	41	35.3	34	29.3	25	21.6	4	3.4	3.28(1.03)

1	My students can find books they want to read in my classroom.	73	62.9	37	31.9	4	3.4	2	1.7	0	0.0	4.56 (0.65)
2	My students collaborate with me in choosing books to place in my classroom library.	29	25.0	40	34.5	24	20.7	19	16.4	4	3.4	3.61(1.13)
3	I am satisfied with the level of student engagement with the books in my classroom.	38	32.8	60	51.7	8	6.9	10	8.6	0	0.0	4.09 (0.86)

Respondents generally perceive that students can find books they desire to read in the classroom library, and demonstrate satisfaction with the level of student engagement in the classroom library, reporting that students browse for books and read books from the classroom library at least a few times a month. If student engagement is perceived to be satisfactory, and if students are perceived to find the books they want to read in the classroom library, teachers may not view student collaboration to grow the classroom library as urgent.

The mean score ($M=3.61$) of respondents to “my students collaborate with me in choosing books to place in my classroom library” was lower than the mean scores related to research question two on practices of collaboration, such as “I take suggestions from students on books to add to the classroom library” ($M=4.13$) and “I add books as suggested by students to the classroom library” ($M=4.16$). It was closer to mean scores in which students have a more active role such as “I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library” ($M=3.41$) and “my students have a say in deciding books for the classroom library” ($M=3.53$). Word choice for the survey items may have impacted results. However, when compiled with additional data results it is more likely that respondents are demonstrating that the active participation of students, as expressed through words like “collaborate,” “have a say,” and “decide with” occurs less frequently than activities like “taking suggestions.”

Other additional factors emerged from the data that may impact participants’ concepts of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, practices of student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library, willingness to increase student collaboration in book selection for

a classroom library, and needs that must be met to consider increasing student collaboration in book selection for a classroom library. One such factor is the age-level of students, impacting both what participants deem as appropriate for the age-level of the students, and the perceived capacity of students to select books for the classroom library. For example, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* was referenced by two participants as books they know their young students have expressed interest in, but deem the content of the book more appropriate for upper elementary or middle school. As for the perceived capacity of students to perform book selection, one participant reported she did not think her kids would know how [to select books] and would have to be taught, and another reported that she was not confident her students knew enough books to assist with book selection.

Another factor was the inclusion of district issued classroom libraries designed to support the curriculum. While this impacted only one participant, who continued to maintain their personal classroom library along-side the district-issued one, it is likely that there are teachers who are required to only include or allow access to district-issued or district-approved books. This would limit, or completely remove, students from the book selection process.

Lastly, respondent bias cannot be overlooked, in which the participant responds in a way that favorably presents them to the researcher. It is possible that respondent bias influenced how participants responded to the survey and the interview questions.

Conclusion

Chapter Four discussed the reliability of the chosen measures, as well as the procedures for data analysis, results of data analysis, and any additional factors regarding results. The following chapter discusses the implications of the data and future applications to an organizational improvement plan. Discussion of the data includes complementarity of the quantitative and qualitative data, the relationship of data to extant literature, and connections to theory. Future applications include

implications for practice and an organizational improvement plan. Lastly limitations of the study are discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The previous chapter reported the reliability of measures, procedures of analysis, and results of analysis. In this chapter, the data and future applications to practice are discussed. Additionally, an overview of the study and the study's findings are provided. Discussion of the data includes complementarity of the quantitative and qualitative data, the relationship of data to extant literature, and connections to theoretical framework. Application to practice implications and an organizational improvement are detailed. Lastly, limitations of the study will be discussed.

Study Overview

While there is much research on how teachers can select and incorporate reading materials into classrooms, including books for classroom libraries, and multiple and varied studies on the positive impacts of having reading materials readily available in the classroom, there is minimal research on how teachers conceptualize and practice collaboration with students on book selection. It was important to explore this as students are key stakeholders in classroom libraries; however, research demonstrates that students may not be active collaborators in book title selection for the classroom library (Gambrell, 2011; Lao, 2005; Virgil, 1994). Additionally, students do not identify the classroom library as a place to find literature they want to read (Lao, 2005). An assumption is that if students had a voice or more opportunity in the book selection process for the classroom library, then those students may more readily and more easily find titles they want to read and may engage in active reading for pleasure more often. However, little research currently exists on how teachers collaborate with students, and to what extent, in book selection for the classroom library.

The purpose of the study was to explore what concepts and practices exist around collaborating with students in the book selection process for the classroom library. Additionally, the study sought information related to how likely teachers are to increase student collaboration, and what teachers believe is needed to increase student collaboration. A convergent parallel design with a mixed methods

approach guided the study and included two points of data collection: surveys and semi-structured interviews. A constructivist grounded theory approach guided analysis of the data to generate understanding related to the concepts, practices, needs, and attitudes toward student collaboration in the book selection process for a classroom library. Quantitative data gathered via the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentages and means, and qualitative data from interviews were iteratively coded during multiple readings to detect and create emergent categories. Findings of the data are discussed in the next section, *Study Findings*.

Study Findings

This study sought to reveal aspects of how teachers conceptualize and practice collaboration with students in the book selection process for the classroom library, how likely teachers are to increase student collaboration practices, and what teachers believe is needed to increase student collaboration. This was identified as a critical first step toward developing an organizational action plan around enhancing or developing products and services to address the reported conceptualizations, practices, and needs. The contexts for study and problem of practice led to the following research questions for this study:

1. How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, conceptualize student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?
2. How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, practice student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?
3. How do concepts of student collaboration of general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five compare to reported practice of student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?

4. How likely are general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?
5. What do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, believe is needed to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?

Findings are discussed in the following subsections, and organized by research questions.

Research Question One

The first construct measured was related to research question 1: How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, conceptualize student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? The analysis revealed that teachers positively view collaborating with students on selecting books for the classroom library and believe it would increase the overall engagement students would have with the classroom library. Being receptive to the recommendations and inquiries from students for titles, authors, series, or topics emerged as a conception of collaborating with students. Additionally, teachers may conceptualize student collaboration as incorporating the interests and experiences of their students into what is selected for the classroom library, although students may not be directly providing input on the selection of books. Concepts of collaboration may be impacted by how a teacher identifies themselves as a book lover or reader, and by the intended objectives of reading from the classroom library such as wanting to increase the variety of students' readership. Concepts of collaboration may also be impacted by the amount of

access students have to reading material through a well-established classroom library or school library, where building or adding to the classroom library is not a priority.

Conceptualizing collaboration as accounting for student interests and experiences, and as being receptive to the inquiries and recommendations of students around books, suggests teachers desire to select reading material for the classroom library that is relatable and of interest to their students.

However, the practice of direct, intentional collaboration with students, while viewed as an act of collaboration, is not commonly practiced. Findings related to practice are discussed in the next section, *Research Question Two*.

Research Question Two

The second construct measured was related to research question 2: How do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, practice student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? Like findings related to research question one, data analysis suggested that teachers believe they are practicing student collaboration when they are receptive to inquiries, suggestions, or ideas from their students on titles, series, topics, or authors to add to the classroom library. Additionally, teachers perceive that their practice of collaboration with students includes the repeated and informal gathering of information about their students' lives, interests, and experiences, which is then used to inform book selection. More formal practices of collaboration may include the teacher soliciting ideas from students, through talk or in writing, and these practices are more likely to occur during non-instructional time and times of transition.

Practices of collaboration may be impacted by the amount of access students have to reading material through a well-established classroom library or school library, where building or adding to the classroom library is not a priority. Instead, the practice of collaboration was described as matching a text to a student or assisting students in finding a readily accessible book to check out.

Research Question Three

The third construct measured was related to research question 3: How do concepts of student collaboration of general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five compare to reported practice of student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? Data analysis showed that how teachers conceptualize student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library is also how they practice student collaboration, specifically around how teachers gather information about their students to inform book selection and how receptive teachers are to students when inquiries and recommendations for books are made. The significant variance that emerged is that teachers may agree with and positively view direct, intentional collaboration with students, but are not currently including direct, intentional collaboration with students as part of their practice. Objectives of the books in the classroom library, and readily available access to books also emerged as factors in how concepts of collaboration compared to practices of collaboration. For example, teachers may view the concept of collaboration positively, but involving students too much might contradict the intention of titles being added to the classroom library. Regarding access, if students have a great deal of access to literature, growing the classroom library, and involving students in that process, may not feel urgent.

Challenges to collaboration such as time and financial resources, may also impact how teachers practice collaboration compared to conception of collaboration, and will be discussed further in relation to research question four.

Research Question Four

The fourth construct measured was related to research question 4: How likely are general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? Consistent with findings of the previous

research questions, teachers may be more likely to adopt practices in which students make suggestions or provide ideas versus creating time in the school day for playful collaboration. Additionally, how teachers view books and reading may impact how likely they are to increase student collaboration. For example, if a teacher believes in the value of classroom libraries and is motivated to have students become engaged readers, they may be more likely to adopt collaborative practices for book selection. Furthermore, teachers may be more willing to increase student collaboration practices where clear connections to teaching and learning can be made.

Teachers may be less willing to increase student collaboration where high levels of personal investment in the classroom library have been made. For example, if teachers have spent multiple years and their own personal funds sourcing books, and spent considerable time and effort organizing and setting up their classroom, they may be less willing to incorporate direct practices of collaboration. Another factor in not increasing student collaboration practices is if students are perceived to already have access to a wide range of reading material in an established classroom library or centrally located school library. Where access to books was perceived to be abundant, increasing practices of student collaboration was not expressed as urgent. Lastly, challenges that may impact how or if a teacher increases student collaboration include financial resources, time constraints, physical space for acquiring more books, and ability to become familiar enough with books to determine comfort around making them available in the classroom library. How teachers report these challenges could be mitigated is discussed in the next section, *Research Question Five*.

Research Question Five

The fifth construct measured was related to research question 5: What do general education teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, three, four, or five and who have interacted with a classroom library and children's literature providing company in the last three years, believe is needed to increase student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library? Increased financial support emerged

as the primary way teachers could increase student collaboration practices for the classroom library. A 2018 report from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that approximately 94% of public-school teachers are spending between \$250 and \$750 out of pocket per year for additional classroom supplies, including books (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018), while inflation-adjusted pay for educators has decreased as much as 15% between 2000 and 2015 (Allegretto & Mishel, 2016). For many teachers, being able to collaborate with students on adding to the classroom library may come down to having the funds to do it.

Having more time available in the school day may also be needed to increase collaborative practices. With states and districts having instructional time requirements, which outline the number of hours and minutes of instructional time required in the day, it is understandable that teachers would perceive they do not have time to engage in collaboration (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Additionally, teachers may view collaboration around book selection for the classroom library as not part of the academic day. COVID 19 may also have increased demands on how teaching and learning time is spent during the school day. Finding ways to integrate collaborative practices around book selection for the classroom library may require clear connections or rationale related to academic outcomes. Physical space capacity may also need to be planned for to increase collaborative practices around book selection for the classroom library, and is likely to be more of a consideration for teachers with well-established, large classroom libraries.

Lastly, discovery resources, or resources that aid with the ability to find and become familiar with new books, could positively impact collaborative practices around book selection for the classroom library. Resources that support being able to discover new books easily and efficiently, for both teachers and students, would increase knowledge of books, and that knowledge would lend itself to more productive collaboration. Discovery resources seemed particularly significant to increasing teacher-familiarity with books that students might want to choose for the classroom library. In today's age of

legislative bans on books and censorship of reading material, it is understandable that teachers would want to feel safe and secure in the literature they are providing in their classroom libraries (Harris & Alter, 2022; Pendharkar, 2022).

In summary, teachers may both conceptualize and practice collaboration as accounting for student experience and interests books selected for the classroom library and being open to the inquiries and recommendations from their students as they come forward, rather than conceptualizing and practicing collaboration directly in planned, set aside time. How collaboration is conceptualized and practiced may be impacted by how the teacher views the objectives of the classroom library and how much access students already have to literature. Crafting collaborative experiences as part of the curriculum could be a way to increase, and rationalize, collaborating more directly with students. Additionally, increased financial support for books and having systems or processes for discovering and becoming familiar with new books could positively impact collaborative practices.

Complementarity of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The descriptive results from quantitative data were complementary to the themes derived from the qualitative data. For example, quantitative data demonstrated respondents view student collaboration and practice student collaboration around book selection for the classroom library as “adding books as suggested” or “taking suggestions” from students. In qualitative data, this collaboration was elaborated on as “candid inquiry” and “taking recommendations.”

Another example of complementarity between data sets was the context provided for accounting for student interest and lived experiences in the books the teacher ultimately selects for the classroom library. The theme of “gathering information,” revealed that respondents frequently, continually, and semi-formally gather information about the interests and lives of their students through talk, observation, student-produced writing, and survey. The information is then applied to the books that teachers preview or procure for the classroom library. This indirect method of involving students, in

which what teachers believe they know about their students guide the selection process rather than direct collaboration with students, is mirrored in the mean scores of responses to survey items “I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library” ($M=3.41$), “I provide time to my students to choose books to add to the classroom library” ($M=3.10$), and “My students collaborate with me in choosing books to place in my classroom library” ($M=3.61$). These survey items require more active and direct student participation in the book selection process, and are lower than the mean scores indicating a more passive approach to collaborating with students such as “I take suggestions from students on books to add to the classroom library” ($M=4.13$) and “I add books as suggested by students to the classroom library” ($M=4.16$). Teachers may perceive that they are fulfilling collaboration with students by accounting for their interests and accepting suggestions from students around the books students are interested in.

Quantitative data and qualitative data further complemented one another around challenges and needs in collaborating with students in book selection for the classroom library. Budget or financial resources were all cited in interviews as a challenge to increasing student collaboration practices. In quantitative data, financial support ranked first as having the most significant impact on ability to increase student collaboration practices in book selection for the classroom library. Time and space were also brought forward in qualitative data as challenges to collaborating with students around book selection for the classroom library. While time and space were not directly accounted for in the survey, which gathered quantitative data, both were referenced in open comment fields accompanying survey responses. Lastly, discovery emerged in the qualitative data as a challenge and a need, referring to the ease in which teachers and students could discover new books for the classroom library. Discussion around discovery included connecting with colleagues and other teachers via social channels, or seeking out professional resources for book lists. In the quantitative data, networking with teachers ranked third out of six options for having the most significant impact on increasing student collaboration practices.

Complementarity was particularly evident in how concepts of collaboration compared to practices of collaboration. Quantitative data showed low variance in how participants perceive collaboration and how participants practice collaboration, indicating that participants are practicing their concepts of collaboration, particularly in the areas of how teachers gather information from students for book selection or engage students in book selection. Greater, significant variance existed between statements where student collaboration practices would act and had acted as a mechanism for increasing engagement in the classroom library. A higher number of participants indicated belief that student collaboration would increase engagement in the classroom library, while not currently practicing student collaboration around the classroom library. In qualitative data, all respondents viewed direct collaboration with students as a good idea and expressed wanting to find ways to integrate it into the school day. In practice though, participants primarily relied on gathering anecdotal student information to inform teacher-directed selection of books for the classroom library, such as using observation and conversation with their students to learn of their interests and experiences. Both quantitative and qualitative data showed that while respondents indicated that collaborating with students was a good idea and positively viewed, the current practice of collaboration was informal, unstructured, and did not directly or systematically include students.

Relationship to Extant Literature

Results demonstrated respondents may both conceptualize and practice collaboration as accounting for student experience and interests in books selected for the classroom library and being open to the inquiries and recommendations from their students as they come forward, rather than conceptualizing and practicing collaboration directly in planned, set aside time. How collaboration is conceptualized and practiced may be impacted by how the teacher views the objectives of the classroom library and how much access students already have to literature. Crafting collaborative experiences as part of the curriculum could be a way to increase, and rationalize, collaborating more

directly with students. Additionally, increased financial support for books and having systems or processes for discovering and becoming familiar with new books could positively impact collaborative practices. These results connect to extant literature in several ways.

Available research has demonstrated that interest in reading predicts reading comprehension ability, and that students who enjoy reading perform significantly better than their peers who do not enjoy reading (Gambrell, 2011; Heron-Hruby et al., 2016). As such, educators are motivated to select titles of interest to students; that is, books that educators perceive students will want to read (Fletcher et al., 2012; Lao, 2005; Murray, 2020; Scott & Inskip, 2017). This was consistent in the results of the study as respondents reported gathering information about their students to inform the books they selected for their classroom library, or being open to and taking suggestions from students for the classroom library. However, direct and active collaboration may not be occurring despite respondents viewing collaboration positively. Considerations such as objectives of the classroom library and ties to the curriculum may limit the extent to which teachers collaborate with students.

Across the literature, there was evidence of educators, both novice and experienced, striking a tenuous balance between accounting for student interest, ensuring variety and diversity in reading material, and meeting the demands of educational reform or mandated standards. Drivers for book selection not only included student interest, but also alignment to curriculum, and quality of the material (Burkhauser & Lesaux, 2017; Scott & Inskip, 2017; Grossman & Thompson, 2008; Valencia et al., 2006). Like the literature, the results of the study showed that the goals a teacher wants to achieve with the titles in their classroom library may impact how they think about collaborating with students. Objectives of the classroom library included supporting achievement of curriculum or grade-level standards, providing students with engaging and relatable literature to promote motivation to read, exposing students to wider ranges of reading material, and introducing students to the perspectives, characters, cultures, and experiences of others. While respondents viewed the classroom library as for

the students, they indicated that involving students too much might contradict the objectives of titles being added to the classroom library. Additionally, increasing student collaboration practices in book selection for the classroom library appeared specifically related to curriculum or grade-level standards, in which collaboration with students would help achieve a teaching and learning outcome. While participants agreed with the conception of collaboration as a good idea, and something to strive for, their current practices indicated that the objectives of reading from the classroom library can be a factor in how collaboration is practiced compared to their conception. Ultimately, both the literature and the results of the study indicate that teachers are strongly influenced by the curriculum, and teaching and learning goals.

Another finding of the study like the literature was the theme of informal and semi-formal gathering of information around the lives of students and their interests to guidebook selection for the classroom library, including use of observation and survey (Murray, 2020; Nash et al., 2019; Scott & Inskip, 2017, Heron-Hruby et al., 2016, Fletcher et al., 2012). In the study, respondents relied on observation, talk, student-produced work, and limited use of surveys to gather information about their students and apply that to book selection. In both the literature and the study, an evident gap is active and direct collaboration with students, where collaboration is defined as students working synchronously with the teacher on a process or product toward an agreed upon goal (Lai, 2011). Rather, teachers rely more on their concepts of student interests and reading habits to guidebook selection for the classroom library.

Relationship to Theoretical Frameworks

The study used a social constructivism framework seeking understanding about the world in which participants live and work (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Social constructivism is a framework in which individuals pursue understanding in their world and develop their own interpretations that correspond to their experiences. In this case, the study sought to understand the concepts and practices

of general education classroom teachers in student collaboration around book selection for the classroom library, and relied on the participants' views of the situation under study. Additionally, perceived truths and beliefs reported by respondents were explored to add to the world view of how teachers may conceptualize and practice student collaboration around book selection, and the challenges and needs related to student collaboration around book selection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Burkholder et al., 2019). The purpose of the study was to construct knowledge around what concepts and practices exist around collaborating with students in the book selection process for the classroom library. Additionally, the study sought to discover how likely teachers are to increase student collaboration, and what teachers believe is needed to increase student collaboration.

The results of the study did provide knowledge and understanding around how the respondents view and practice student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library, and the challenges and needs related to student collaboration in that context. The results indicated that while respondents view collaboration positively, and possess a desire to deliver engaging literature to students through the classroom library, it is challenging to practice direct and active student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library when considering financial resources, time in the school day, and prioritizing academic curriculum. Rather, respondents rely on anecdotal information constantly gathered from students through talk and observation to select books, and the input of students in book selection exists primarily as candid inquiries or ad hoc suggestions. Additionally, while viewed positively, student collaboration may not be a priority where students are perceived to already have robust access to reading material through a well-established classroom library or school library.

Study Limitations

Several limitations were evident in the study, such as sample size, the challenges associated with survey research, and subjectivity related to the interpretation of results. The first limitation to address is that of sample size; a larger sample size would have been more representative of the larger

population and added new or different perspectives. For example, perspectives of teachers working in urban settings and perspectives of novice teachers were missing. Additionally, most respondents reported working with student populations not experiencing frequent economic hardship, while national data indicates more students than ever are experiencing economic hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Sherman et al., 2020). Another limitation regarding the sample is that selection of participants was not controlled beyond the selection criteria, and differences such as age, maturity, language, or attitude could have affected the results.

Another limitation is associated with the use of gathering data via survey. Developing an unbiased and reliable survey can be challenging (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Burkholder et al., 2020; Fowler, 2013;), and surveys inherently come with several limitations including low response rate, survey fatigue, respondent bias, inaccurate or inconsistent self-reporting, and misunderstanding survey questions (Burkholder et al., 2020; Fowler, 2013; Lavrakas, 2008; Porter et al., 2004). There was also limited control on setting and timing of when the survey was completed. Additionally, survey development did not include measure of internal consistency, such as Cronbach's alpha, to ensure reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Future research should look at the validity and reliability of the instrument.

Lastly, the role of the researcher may have limited the study and findings. Researcher subjectivity should not be overlooked as there were not multiple researchers implementing the study, and analysis and interpretation of the data was unique to one researcher (Burkholder et al., 2020). Research was conducted independently, with the absence of second or third researchers whose involvement may have resulted in improved intercoder agreement and interrater reliability for consistency in identifying codes and emergent themes leading to results. Lastly, the position of the researcher as a former educator and current SoBo employee may have brought unintended bias to the research design and interpretation of the participants' experiences.

Implications for Practice

The results of the study indicate teachers genuinely want students to enjoy reading and to feel successful in reading. Teachers may strive to fill the classroom library with books that are of interest to the students by gathering information about what their students enjoy and are interested in and using that information to guide book selection for the classroom library. Additionally, teachers are receptive to the suggestions and recommendations that students may make for books to add to the classroom library. However, direct and active collaboration with students, in which teachers and students synchronously work together toward an agreed upon goal, is not evident. Collaboration around book selection for the classroom library may be impacted by financial resources, teacher-decided objectives for the library such as alignment to the curriculum or exposing students to wider ranges of literature, time in the school day to collaborate, and not perceiving an urgent need to add books to the classroom library where a large classroom library already exists. These findings have several implications for practicing for classroom library providers such as SoBo, and for future research.

Classroom Library Providers

Practicing teachers value classroom library literature that represents their students and that they believe students would feel motivated to read. Teachers may account for selection of this literature primarily through using anecdotal information about the lives and interests of their students. While teachers view collaboration positively, and the results of the study indicate that teachers believe collaborating with students in book selection for the classroom library would increase student engagement with the classroom library, teachers may not be practicing direct and active collaboration due to time constraints, limited financial resources, or not seeing applications to teaching and learning outcomes.

Implications for providers of classroom library materials and services include addressing the challenges reported in the study. For example, seeking ways to simplify or make more efficient the

practice of student collaboration around the classroom library. This could include reevaluating pricing structures to ensure equitable access to books, offering discovery tools to make it easier to find and review new literature, and providing lesson support on integrating collaborative practices into the school day. Moreover, to emphasize student voice and agency in book selection for the classroom library, providers could reevaluate platforms such as websites, and channels such as outbound marketing for inclusion of students. Additional implications for one classroom library provider, SoBo, is discussed in greater detail in the section, *Organizational Improvement Plan*.

Future Research

Further research on the topic of student collaboration and student engagement around the classroom library would increase knowledge on if and how collaborative practices increase student-use of the classroom library. Additionally, future research exploring student collaboration, student-use of the classroom library, and reading performance should occur to expand on the impact student collaboration around the classroom library may have on student reading achievement. Determining correlation or causation relationships may result in additional funding for classroom library material and opportunity to prioritize collaborative practices around the classroom library within the school day and as having a critical role in teaching and learning outcomes.

Organizational Improvement Plan

The proposed Organizational Improvement Plan discusses student voice and agency, and therefore collaboration, in book title selection for the classroom library; specifically, how a children's literature and classroom library providing company (SoBo) can increase collaboration with students through rebranding a web-based classroom library inventorying and auditing system (CLIA). Change management is discussed through the lens of Dr. John Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change.

SoBo is a provider of classroom libraries for school districts, literacy coaches and classroom teachers across the country, and describes itself as an expert in providing children's and young adult

literature for the classroom, having spent decades helping build thousands of classroom libraries that fit every classroom need imaginable. The focus of the organization is providing education-based customers with the best selection of quality children's and young adult literature and exceptional customer service. To further support the management of classroom books and libraries, SoBo launched a classroom library inventorying and auditing system (CLIA), a self-described ground-breaking web-based management system for classroom libraries. CLIA was initially designed to make it easy to manage the check-in and check-out process, and later developed to analyze the classroom library for insights and suggestions on expanding the classroom library based on gaps and student checkout habits.

The study and reviewed literature revealed commonalities in how teachers report collaborating with students in book selection for the classroom library. First, student involvement in this process is limited to the gathering of information about students to inform teacher-directed book selection. Teachers may also practice taking organic suggestions from students. Second, teachers view collaboration with students positively, and believe it would increase student engagement in the classroom library. However, limitations such as financial resources, time, and ease of discovering new books make it challenging to incorporate student collaboration around book selection for the classroom library.

This led to the question, how can SoBo, in which the vision and mission are *a world where every child loves to read and to help educators inspire engaged reading*, increase engagement with students and support collaboration between teachers and students in book selection for the classroom library? SoBo has an opportunity to leverage its proprietary, web-based classroom library inventory and auditing tool (CLIA) to support active participation from students in book title selection for the classroom library. The intention of CLIA is to provide teachers with a tool for managing the check-in and check-out process of classroom library books, to serve as a database for teachers and students of the titles included in the classroom library, including subject, leveling, and genre information, and to provide students with a

virtual browsing option for titles included in the classroom library. In this regard, CLIA is achieving its intended outcomes. Additionally, teachers can use insights such as number of check outs and reviews from students to gauge popularity of titles, which in turn can inform educators what new titles could be selected or purchased to add to the classroom library.

As a product manager in the organization, the products I design, innovate, and launch need to account for student voice and agency in how titles are selected for their own consumption. By giving students a voice in book title selection, it is possible that the goals of the classroom library or bookshelf will be more readily achieved, resulting in students who feel college and career ready and who feel recognized and valued as active participants and owners of their literacy.

Students are a key stakeholder in classroom libraries; however, research demonstrates that they do not actively collaborate with teachers in title selection for the classroom library (Gambrell, 2011; Lao, 2005; Virgil, 1994). Additionally, students may not identify the classroom library as a place to find literature they want to read (Lao, 2005). If students had a voice or more opportunity in the title selection process for the classroom library, then those students may more readily and more easily find titles they want to read and may engage in active reading for pleasure more often. Additionally, more teachers and districts would adopt CLIA to inform their title selection and purchasing decisions, thereby increasing revenue for the organization. Considering CLIA's current state, the vision is that there is opportunity to increase student voice and agency in title selection for the classroom library towards those outcomes.

Change Readiness

To assess for change readiness, I referred to my Action Plan Project on Becoming a Culturally Responsive Leader, which addressed functionality of CLIA and the opportunity to increase student agency in book title selection for the classroom library through its use. In the Action Plan Project, data from organizational stakeholders and one independent CLIA user was collected and analyzed. Each

stakeholder participated in an open-ended, three-part questionnaire on student input and student use of CLIA in title selection for the classroom. The questionnaire was distributed and received via email. The three-part questionnaire is included in Appendix D.

Findings

All stakeholders identified CLIA as a predominantly teacher-facing tool, where the primary use of CLIA by students is to browse titles available in the classroom library as well as check titles in and out of the classroom library. Features in which students might influence title selection or title-purchasing decisions were reported as:

1. Teacher-visibility to multiple checkouts of a title, which may spur purchase of additional copies or new titles in that genre, by that author, in that series, or containing similar subject matter.
2. Teacher-visibility to student review and star-ratings on titles read by that student. This is an optional feature that teachers can choose to display or not and require or not. Additionally, the review and rating must be approved and published by the teacher. A positive review or rating from a student may prompt peers to check out the title as well, thereby increasing the number of checkouts and the perceived popularity of that title.

The responses were consistent across stakeholders, and they represented distinct roles and interests. Even where the questions were geared toward student-use of CLIA, the responses were centered on the teacher's use of the tool. This confirms that student voice and agency in CLIA is limited; however, the tool has not been designed or messaged around this concept, so it is not surprising that stakeholders responded as they did. What was surprising was that the responses did not directly indicate that stakeholders view this as an issue. An additional question gauging level of satisfaction in features used by students that may influence title selection or title-purchasing could have revealed more on this.

These findings matched the expectations of stakeholders and the intended outcomes of CLIA. Additionally, these findings align with the literature as far as how student voice and agency currently

exist in title selection for the classroom library. The gap that persists, and that is perpetuated by CLIA, is the limited participation of students as key stakeholders in selecting desired texts for the classroom library or classroom bookshelf. This survey and analysis revealed that SoBo could do more to support student agency; combined with the literature and study, the foundation for making change to CLIA is well-grounded.

Theory for Framing Change

A theory for framing the evolution of CLIA is Dr. John Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change (Kotter Inc, n.d.). Each step is discussed in the context of a business case, required at SoBo for business prioritization and resource allocation. Additionally, the 8-Step Process aligns to the product development visioning (Goetzmann, 2019), and is referenced in these steps as well.

Step 1: Create a Sense of Urgency. The first step, creating a sense of urgency, is well-supported by the literature, study findings, and CLIA stakeholder findings. A clear problem is the lack of active collaboration with students in construction of the classroom library, which CLIA perpetuates. Additionally, as schools emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is great urgency related to accelerating learning, which student engagement, collaboration with students, and cooperative learning can positively impact (Lima & Siebra, 2021; Supina et al., 2021; Wuryandani & Herwin, 2021). In the context of SoBo, the business opportunity would be identified in terms of projected revenue earned due to supporting accelerated learning with a tool that actively engages students and facilitates collaboration.

Step 2: Build a Guiding Coalition. Communicating this information to the product team as part of step two in the process, building a guiding coalition, would potentially put development needed to increase student collaboration on the CLIA product roadmap and in business prioritization.

Step 3: Form a Strategic Vision and Initiatives. In step three, forming a strategic vision and initiatives, a business case would apply. This would address the opportunity in terms of total addressable market, return on investment, impact, reach, and resources.

Step 4: Enlist an Army of Volunteers. In the business case, I would also address step four, “enlisting an army.” This would require bringing in marketing, sales, customer service, and educator focus groups to guide development and marketing of CLIA as a student-collaboration tool.

Steps 5, 6, and 7: Enable Action by Removing Barriers, Generate Short Term Wins, and Sustain Acceleration. Steps five, six, and seven would be reoccurring as part of the design and development sprints for CLIA, in which the product team would regularly meet with stakeholders to identify and remove barriers, celebrate incremental successes, and sustain momentum.

Step 8: Institute Change. Finally, the launch of new, teacher-to-student collaborative functions of CLIA would be communicated and celebrated, with a cadence of monthly updates.

Overall, Kotter’s 8-Step Process for Leading Change closely aligns with the cycle of product development and design, which SoBo is already familiar with and receptive to. Using this model to implement change allows employees to operate with a minimal learning curve, allowing the plan to execute more efficiently and effectively.

Identification of Potential Solutions

When considering the vision for change, there are several opportunities. First, for students to interact with CLIA there must already be titles populated in it. There is currently no student-facing feature or function that engages students in initiating a classroom library or selecting the titles that will be found in it, and this is primarily performed by teachers or committees of teachers as discussed in the literature review and study findings. Second, the primary use for students as reported by stakeholders is browsing titles and checking titles in and out of the classroom library. Students may have the option to write reviews or rate the books they read if the teacher sets that preference in CLIA. These primary uses

of students require students to interact with the titles that are already placed in the classroom library by the teacher or library-owner. Finally, CLIA has teachers using the same limited methods of collaboration evident in the literature and study: anecdotal gathering of information. In this case, the teacher is observing or surveying the check-in and check-out habits of students and may or may not use those observations to inform selection or purchase of new titles.

One short-term area to address is messaging to teachers how CLIA can support selection of titles that students want to read. Though limited, check out trends and student reviews can further indicate student interests and increase the likelihood that the teacher is selecting or purchasing titles for the classroom library that students want to read. The data from the CLIA analysis showed that these are two readily-available features that stakeholders believe will allow students to participate more in title selection or title-purchasing decisions; however, we currently do not message on the CLIA platform or in CLIA marketing collateral the significance of these student-facing features and how they can support teachers who strongly desire to select books that inspire students to read, or engage students in these features as a way to drive title selection. Lastly, with this messaging, teachers may be less likely to view collaborating with students as sacrificing academic time, while opening a new avenue for book discovery, as students can utilize CLIA directly to engage with content and functions for finding new books. This approach is potentially a low-effort and high-impact change, as it requires no design or development of new features while offering customer education on leveraging existing functionality in new ways to increase student collaboration.

Long-term changes would include enhancing CLIA by scoping and developing new functions that have been shown to increase student engagement, that value student voice, and that address the challenges identified in the study. Three ways to do this include adding the ability to create and manage polls, develop machine learning or algorithms to target reading interests, and embedding social channel functions, such as a newsfeed. First, adding in the ability to create and manage polls, in which teachers

and students can easily vote and tally topics, themes, authors, or books to add to the classroom library, can collect and aggregate student feedback automatically. The use of polls to interact with students has been shown to increase engagement from students while effectively informing instructional strategies. Interacting with polls also only requires minutes while delivering highly valuable insights and demonstrating to students that their opinions matter (Chih-Yuan Sun et al., 2014; Odeh et al., 2022).

Second, developing machine learning capability, in which book data and check-in and check-out habits of students improves automatically through repeated use, can predict for students and teachers new books to review, aiding in discovery of titles. This would mean expanding the database of titles to beyond what is only added to the classroom library by the teacher, providing access to SoBo's rich database of titles and by extension forthcoming titles from publishers.

Finally, implementing social channel functionality, such as newsfeeds and discussion platforms, is an accessible and increasingly universal way to engage in discourse. In CLIA, teachers and students could engage in discourse around the library titles they enjoy or do not enjoy, share new books they have read or are discovering, and post lists and images of books they might like to see added to the classroom library. Discussion platforms have the added benefit of increasing student engagement over in-person discussion alone (Morse, 2021).

Measuring and Communicating Change

Engaging in the organizational improvement plan process required a deeper evaluation of missing voices in title selection for a classroom library, and how a product provided by SoBo to teachers perpetuates limited student collaboration around selection of desired texts. As a product development manager, a goal of mine is to ensure the products and product features we launch are student-centered and facilitate their voice, agency, and autonomy in their reading lives. This requires multiple departments and individuals for successful execution. For example, innovating the product, determining messaging, training for our sales teams, and identifying micro-markets to target. Success specific to how

well the product incorporates student voice and agency could be measured with stakeholder feedback indicating that our products are student-facing and student-centered, including an evaluation of functions used by students and to what extent it expresses student voice and facilitates collaboration. An even more inclusive evaluation of success would be including students as stakeholders when gathering feedback.

The first step of product analysis would be performed in thirty days, with product development and innovation occurring over the next sixty to ninety days. A relaunch to market could occur six to nine months from analysis, with contingencies on development and marketing resources. Gathering feedback via surveys or focus groups would occur at thirty days, mid-development, and prior to execution of the product. It will not only be significant to create products that are student-centered and that provide voice and agency in their reading lives, but to also lead the product development process and ongoing maintenance in a way that promotes student-agency. This would include making clear the student-centered objective of the product and ensuring it is evident in how the product is ideated, designed, refined, messaged, and delivered. This would also include effectively communicating this goal to developers, business owners, marketers, and most importantly the end-users.

Limitations of the Organizational Improvement Plan

The most significant limitation at SoBo, being a smaller, family-owned company is resource allocation. While the work required in the proposal can be rationalized for business opportunity and business buy-in, it is a reality that it may not be the most urgent priority of the business. The question then becomes “when can the work be performed” versus “is this work that should be done.” By continuing to support and communicate the significance of student collaboration to business leaders and stakeholders, and demonstrate its positive impact on other areas of the business, I can maintain the importance of the work until the business is able to prioritize it. Additionally, this could be supported as “business critical” if competitors shift to focusing on student-facing systems, processes, or applications

to penetrate new markets or win business from SoBo, so monitoring the actions and predicting strategy of SoBo competition will also be an important way to garner support.

By following this process and remaining committed to the vision of student-centered products, I believe that I can support my organization in delivering products to students that acknowledge them as active participants in their own reading, and overall supporting reading achievement and gratification in reading. With this approach, I believe my organization will more readily achieve the vision and mission: *a world where every child loves to read and helping educators to inspire engaged reading.*

Conclusion

To revisit the national context of this study, having more time and choices for independent reading are beneficial for overcoming resistance to reading, engaging more in reading, and in overall reading achievement and promotion of life-long reading (Coppens, 2018; Donovan et al., 2000; Fletcher, Grimley et al., 2012; Gambrell, 2011; Grice, 2018; Heron-Hruby et al., 2016; Hudson & Williams, 2015; Kasten & Wilfong, 2005; Little & Hines, 2006; Virgil, 1994). Additionally, positive attitudes toward reading and reading proficiency into adulthood has been shown to directly affect employment options, state of financial wellness, and overall quality of life and health (Diallo, 2020; Rea, 2020). As such, it is significant that there be robust variety in classroom libraries, and that the titles be of interest to the students to encourage volume of reading and time spent in active reading (Boyd et al., 2015). Teachers demonstrate, in both the literature and the study results, a desire to provide students with books that are relevant, accessible, diverse, and most importantly of interest to their students. (Murray, 2020; Lao, 2005; Fletcher et al., 2012; Heron-Hruby et al., 2016).

Despite the limitations of the study, the results of the study provided context for how teachers view and practice student collaboration in the interest of providing students with titles they are motivated to read and encouraging growth in reading. The results suggest that teachers believe student collaboration will increase engagement in the classroom library; however, teachers may not currently

practice student collaboration around the classroom library. While teachers may view direct collaboration with students as a good idea and express wanting to find ways to integrate it into the school day, in practice teachers may primarily rely on gathering anecdotal student information to inform teacher-directed selection of books for the classroom library, such as using observation and conversation with their students to learn of their interests and experiences. The current practice of collaboration may be informal, unstructured, and do not directly or systematically include students. SoBo has an opportunity to support integration of student collaboration into the school day with CLIA, which would facilitate more formal and structured inclusion of students in book selection for the classroom library.

In closing, there is much to explore, and perhaps much to gain, from continuing to understand student collaboration concepts and practices in the construction of how students identify and perform as readers, and the role educators and educational providers play in this construction. The ability to steward the titles students have access to in a classroom library is only one aspect of how students participate in their reading identity. By continuing to question and investigate, I believe I can add depth and breadth to theories and practices around student constructs of identity, performance, and achievement. After all, it is not just about developing a classroom library, it is about developing our students as readers.

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Appendix A: Survey

We appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. Please tell us about yourself by selecting the response that fits you best.

1. How many years' experience do you have as a lead classroom teacher, excluding supporting or co-teaching roles?
 - a. Less than 1 year
 - b. 1-3 years
 - c. 4 - 6 years
 - d. 7-10 years
 - e. More than 10 years

2. What is your highest level of education toward teaching?
 - a. Associate degree
 - b. Bachelor's degree
 - c. Master's degree
 - d. Post-master's certification/doctoral degree
 - e. Professional accreditation/certification
 - f. Other

3. What grade level do you primarily teach in your current position?
 - a. Kindergarten
 - b. Grade 1
 - c. Grade 2
 - d. Grade 3
 - e. Grade 4
 - f. Grade 5
 - g. I do not primarily teach any of these grades in my current position.

4. What is your current employment status in your current position?
 - a. Full time
 - b. Part time
 - c. Less than part-time

5. Which best describes the institution at which you are employed?
 - a. Public
 - b. Charter
 - c. Magnet
 - d. Private
 - e. Homeschooling
 - f. Other

6. Which best describes the general area of the institution at which you are employed?
 - a. Urban
 - b. Suburban
 - c. Rural
 - d. Remote

- e. Other

7. Which of the following best describes you?

- a. Asian or Pacific Islander
- b. Black or African American
- c. Hispanic or Latinx
- d. Native American or Alaskan Native
- e. White or Caucasian
- f. Multiracial or Biracial
- g. A race/ethnicity not listed here
- h. I prefer not to respond

8. Which of the following best describes you?

- a. I am age 21-30
- b. I am age 31-40
- c. I am age 41-50
- d. I am age 51 +
- e. I prefer not to respond

9. Which of the following best describes you?

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Non-binary
- d. Self-describe:
- e. I prefer not to respond

We appreciate your willingness to share about yourself. For the following section, please tell us about your group of students by selecting the response that fits them best. For most questions, you have the option to share more about your response.

10. Which of the following best describes your students?

- a. Asian or Pacific Islander
- b. Black or African American
- c. Hispanic or Latinx
- d. Native American or Alaskan Native
- e. White or Caucasian
- f. Multiracial or Biracial
- g. A race/ethnicity not listed here
- h. Other

11. Indicate your agreement with how this statement applies to your students: my students care about learning and getting a good education.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

12. Indicate your agreement with how well this statement applies to your students: my students are involved in decisions that affect them at school.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

13. Indicate your agreement with how well this statement applies to your students: my students show good academic performance.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

14. Indicate your agreement with how well this statement applies to your students: my students find school interesting.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

15. Indicate your agreement with how well this statement applies to your students: my students care about learning and getting a good education.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

16. Indicate your agreement with how well this statement applies to your students: my students live with hunger, poverty, or troubled family lives.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

17. Indicate your agreement with how well this statement applies to your students: most of my students receive free or reduced-price meals at school.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

We appreciate your willingness to share about your students. In the following section, please tell us about your classroom library by selecting the response that fits you best. For most questions, you have the option to share more about your response.

For this section, and all questions using “classroom library”, a classroom library is defined as: any number of books housed in your classroom that students can access for voluntary, recreational reading.

18. Do you have a classroom library, or books in your classroom available for students?

- a. Yes
- b. No

19. How often do most of your students browse for books to read in the classroom library?

- a. Every day
- b. A few times a week
- c. About once a week
- d. A few times a month
- e. Once a month
- f. Less than once a month

Comment:

20. How often do most of your students read books from the classroom library?

- a. Every day
- b. A few times a week
- c. About once a week
- d. A few times a month
- e. Once a month
- f. Less than once a month

Comment:

21. To what extent do you agree with this statement: My students can find books they want to read in my classroom.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

22. To what extent do you agree with this statement: My students collaborate with me in choosing titles to place in my classroom.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

23. To what extent do you agree with this statement: I am satisfied with the level of student engagement with the books in my classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

VI. Now you will be asked about your ideas on student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library. For this section, a classroom library is defined as: any number of books housed in your classroom that students can access for voluntary, recreational reading.

Please select your level of agreement from the following statements about how it applies, if at all, to your ideas on student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library. You have the option to share more about your response to each statement.

24. Teachers and students decide together which books to add to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

25. Students give feedback on books for the classroom library to the teacher.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

26. Students suggest books to add to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

27. Students have a say in deciding books for the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

28. Teachers provide time to students to choose books to add to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

29. Students are owners of the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

30. Students choosing books to add to the classroom library will increase how frequently students look for books in the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

31. Students choosing books to add to the classroom library will increase how frequently students read books from the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

32. Students choosing books to add to the classroom library will increase their level of engagement in the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree

- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

33. Students maintain the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

34. Students contribute their own books to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

35. Teachers add books suggested by students to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

36. Teachers remove books as suggested by students from the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

V. Now you will be asked about student collaboration in book selection for your classroom. For this section, a classroom library is defined as: any number of books housed in your classroom that students can access for voluntary, recreational reading.

Please select your level of agreement from the following statements about whether it applies to student collaboration in book selection for your classroom. You have the option to share more about your response to each statement.

37. I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree

- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

38. I receive feedback from my students on books for the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

39. I take suggestions from my students on books to add to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

40. My students have a say in deciding books for the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

41. I provide time to my students to choose books to add to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

42. My students are owners of the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

43. Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students look for books in the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

44. Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students read books from the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

45. Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased their level of engagement in the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

46. My students maintain the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

47. My students contribute their own books to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

48. I add books suggested by students to the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

49. I remove books as suggested by students from the classroom library.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Tend to agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Tend to disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Comment:

VI. Now you will be asked about revising student collaboration in book selection for your classroom. For this section, a classroom library is defined as: any number of books housed in your classroom that students can access for voluntary, recreational reading.

Please select the response that best describes your thoughts in revising student collaboration in book selection for your classroom library. You have the option to share more about your response to each statement.

50. I decide with my students which books to add to the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

51. I receive feedback from my students on books for the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

52. I take suggestions from my students on books to add to the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

53. My students have a say in deciding books for the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

54. I provide time to my students to choose books to add to the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.

- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

55. My students are owners of the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

56. Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students look for books in the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

57. Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased how frequently students read books from the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

58. Students choosing books to add to the classroom library has increased their level of engagement in the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

59. My students maintain the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

60. My students contribute their own books to the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

61. I add books suggested by students to the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

62. I remove books as suggested by students from the classroom library.

- a. I already do this and will continue doing it.
- b. I already do this and will stop doing it.
- c. I do not do this and would start doing it.
- d. I do not do this and would not start doing.

Comment:

VII. Now you will be asked about what might be needed to increase student collaboration in book selection for your classroom. For this section, a classroom library is defined as: any number of books housed in the classroom that students can access for voluntary, recreational reading.

Please rank the following based on how much it would impact increasing any of the above practices for student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library, where 1 is having the most impact and 6 is having the least impact.

- a. Financial support for adding books to my classroom library
- b. More control or ownership of the books added to my classroom library
- c. Courses/workshops on engaging my students with books to add to my classroom library
- d. Networking with other teachers on engaging my students with books to add to my classroom library
- e. An automated, digital way for students to engage with books to add to my classroom library
- f. Other: _____

VII. Is there anything more you'd like to share with me on the topic of student collaboration in book selection for the classroom library?

VIII. May we contact you for an interview and further elaboration or clarification on responses? If we may contact you, please check yes and provide your email. Participants will be entered to win a \$25.00 Amazon e-gift card following the interview.

IX. Thank you for your participation in this survey! Please enter your email for a chance to win a \$25.00 Amazon e-gift card.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date of interview:

Start time:

End time:

Mechanism for recording interview:

Name of interviewer:

Name of interviewee:

Position/Role of Interviewee:

Introduction:

Thank you for taking your time to meet with me today. As you know, this interview will contribute information for a research study intended to examine concepts and practices of student collaboration in the book selection process for classroom libraries and in what ways, if any, that can inform student engagement. You have indicated informed consent by completing the survey, but as a reminder, you may decline to answer any question you do not wish to answer, or withdraw from the interview at any time. This interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes. With your permission, I will be making a video recording of the interview and taking notes. It will only be used by me, and helps make sure I did not miss anything from our conversation. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions	Interviewee Responses	Interviewer Observations/Reactions
What drew you to the field of teaching?		
Tell me about the school you teach in.		
Tell me about your students.		
How do you get to know your students		
How do you gather information about your students' lives and interests?		
Tell me about the reading habits of your students.		
How are you connecting your students with books they might find interesting?		
Tell me about your classroom library.		
How do students interact with your classroom library?		
How are books to add to your classroom library selected?		

How do students participate in selecting books to add to your classroom library?		
Tell me about collaborating with your students on selecting titles to add to the classroom library.		
Is there anything else you'd like me to know about what we've discussed today?		

Potential probes:

- Please tell me more about...
- How did you know...?
- What did you observe...?
- What did you experience...?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time today. I very much appreciate you contributing to this study. After this, I will share a brief summary of the study's findings to check for accuracy. May I contact you if I need any clarification?

Appendix C: Codebook

Theme	Description	Codes
Access	Existing student-access to books and reading material	established classroom library
		school library
		digital access
Objectives	Intended purpose(s) of reading books from the classroom library	student interest
		curriculum & standard
		variety
		perceived literary merit
		window
		mirror
Gathering information	How teachers gather information about their students	age level appropriateness
		talk
		observation
		survey
		student writing
Methods of student involvement/student input	How teachers report involving students in growing the classroom library	extracurricular attendance
		student interest
		student suggestions
		candid inquiry
Challenges	perceived challenges of directly/explicitly/systematically collaborating with students in growing the classroom library	student contributions
		time
		budget
		space
		student ability
Teacher Identity	relates to personal views of self, books, and/or classroom library that may be an additional factor	discovery
		book familiarity
		pride
		book lover
		teacher favorites
		personal investment
		age-level appropriateness
		"good idea"

Appendix D: Organizational Improvement Plan Questionnaire

1. Would you describe CLIA as a teacher-facing tool or as a student-facing tool?

2. What is the primary function of CLIA for students as users?

3. Describe features of CLIA in which students might influence title selection or title-purchasing decisions for a classroom library.

